

PEARLS

From the

DEEP



By

VIOLET E. TURNER

Author of "Lazarus at the Gate"

United Aborigines' Mission
"Mildmay Centre," Gawler Place, Adelaide

**What do YOU know about mission work among the Aborigines
of Australia?**

READ

"PEARLS FROM THE DEEP"

**The story of Colebrook Home for Half-Caste Children at Quorn,
South Australia.**

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT IT.

"There runs through the whole book a humble and Christ-like trust in the promises of a Heavenly Father who loves the unwanted, and, humanly speaking, unlovable waifs belonging to the aboriginal tribes. . . . Numerous pictures help the understanding of those who read these present-day miracles of joyous childhood, who, in very reality, become 'Pearls from the Deep'." "Keswick Quarterly."

"'Pearls from the Deep' gives one some idea of the noble work carried on for the upbringing of aboriginal children, saving them from degradation. The story is told in such simple and straightforward language that it commands attention."—"Presbyterian Banner."

"Pastor J. Wiltshire, in a foreword to this interesting booklet, writes: 'An arresting manifold story. We have here on the one hand the disclosure of the white man's saddest tragedy, and on the other, a tribute to the persistent, prevailing love of God.'"—"Christian Witness."

"Miss Turner's book has provided thrilling reading for me, as I have been in close touch with the Colebrook Home and the children referred to in the book. I have seen them under all conditions—in the Home, at their play, at school, and in church. They are always the same bright, happy little souls: a living witness to the love that has rescued them and a wonderful monument of the transforming grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—From Rev. H. A. Miller, Quorn, S.A.

"A delightful book. The authoress has portrayed in fascinating detail the life of aboriginal and half-caste children. The book teems with living interest. The difficulties of mission work are thoughtfully discussed, its joys and sorrows pass before the reader in language full of feeling and sympathy."—"Australian Christian World."

"No more practical effort to help the unfortunate half-caste children has ever been made than the splendid work of Colebrook Home. 'Pearls from the Deep' gives a graphic story of the Home and its inmates."—"Evangelical Witness."

"A splendid little book. It has literary merit and is clear and captivating in its style. It lays hold of you. It is a missionary deputation in itself, and you will be blessed if you entertain the deputation in your home."—"United Aborigines' Messenger."

PEARLS from the DEEP

*The story of Colebrook Home
for Aboriginal Children, Quorn,
South Australia*

**As a token of deep gratitude this book
is inscribed to Dr. Chas. Duguid**

BY

V. E. TURNER

*United Aborigines' Mission
Adelaide*

FOREWORD.

Pearls from the Deep is an arresting manifold story. The aim of the writer is not journalism — she is too obviously in earnest. We have here, on the one hand, the disclosure of the white man's saddest tragedy, and on the other, a tribute to the persistent, prevailing love of God. It is the story of a Christianity that is colour-blind, whose primal reason for loving is that He first loved us. Christian heroism is seen all through bringing hope to the hopeless. Here some of God's grandest saints carry on His work, who came to seek and to save the lost.

Miss Turner has written out of a heart of love for those about whom she has written, and with a mind well stored with first-hand information. The command of detail, ever illuminative to the reader, is that of one whose life has been spent in daily contact with the subjects of her narratives.

J. WILTSHIRE.

Pearls from the Deep.

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear."

Gray.

"Oft when the Word is on me to deliver,
Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare.
Desert or throng, the city or the river
Melts in a lucid paradise of air —
Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented with the show of things.
Then, like a rush, the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet call.
Oh, to save these. To perish for their saving;
Die for their life, be offered for them all."

F. W. H. Meyers.

Two miles from the northern township of Quorn, in
South Australia, a signboard with the words,

*"United Aborigines' Mission
Colebrook Children's Home,"*

directs to a concrete house standing back from the road,
shaded by big gum trees. It is a pleasant, homely, red-
roofed place, with wide verandahs that look as though
made for children to play in. Usually a couple of perams
are out there, tied around with mosquito nets to shield
their little occupants from dust and flies.

Just inside the front door the first object that meets
the eye is a card with the well-known motto:

"Christ is the Head of this house,
The unseen Guest at every meal,
The silent Listener to every conversation."

Thus, all who enter here know that the Lord Jesus Christ
has the place of honour at Colebrook Home.

Even before one sees the children, one must notice the absence of those qualities that go to make a perfect institution—the severe whiteness, the polish, the uniformity, the atmosphere of law and restriction. This place was never meant to be an institution, but a real home; and the only restriction its little inmates know is the law of love by which they are gently governed, as the sisters train them for a place in the community here, and in the Kingdom of Heaven hereafter.

The children who live in Colebrook Home are half-caste aborigines, rescued from the degradation of camp life. The pearls that adorn a king's diadem once lay in the darkness of the deep, until by sacrifice of personal comfort one went down into the waters and brought them up into the light. Pearls to adorn the diadem of the King of kings are these little dark children of Colebrook Home, brought up from the depths of ignorance, superstition, and vice by missionaries who have followed their Master along the path of self-abnegation.

In these pages we introduce to you some of these precious gems, and in some measure reveal the deep places where they lay before they were raised to the light of love and peace. May God use their sad story to arouse Christian sympathy for them, and for the many like them who are yet down there in the darkness, waiting for the hand that will draw them into the light.

"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

Chapter One.

"The First Child"

"Even so, it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

The story of Colebrook Home has its beginning in the journey of Miss Annie Lock to Oodnadatta in 1924, although at that time such a thing as starting a children's home was far from her thoughts.

Miss Lock, twenty-five years a missionary to aborigines, left Adelaide in faith, as Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, "not knowing whither she went." but convinced that God was calling her to take the Gospel to the natives of the Far North.

Stopping at Marree on the way, she met a little aboriginal girl of ten years, named Rita. This child and her sister had been living at one of the sheep stations, in training for domestic service. The sister was bright and smart, but their mistress pronounced Rita as senseless and useless, and she decided to be rid of her. She found another home for her in Marree, but the new mistress must have found the child useless too, for she decided to take her to the Afghan camp.

In later days, when Rita was a fine Christian young woman, capable and reliable, it was hard to understand how these women could have regarded her as of no value, but that was before she knew anything of the love of Christ, as revealed through His missionaries.

What would such a young girl be doing in an Afghan camp? There can be only one answer — she was destined to be the wife of an Afghan.

Let us pause here to consider this matter. Afghans coming to Australia must leave their wives behind, as Afghan women are prohibited immigrants. There is nothing; in their religion to prevent their making a marriage of convenience here; indeed, the Koran applauds a plurality of wives as a virtue. Although it is

seldom that a white woman will marry an Afghan, it is not at all difficult for him to buy a native girl for a wife. To buy? Yes, the man pays a price to the girl's father and claims her as his purchased possession. Some of these marriages are merely by verbal contract, but others are legalised.

The Afghan makes a fairly kind husband, but the sad part of it is that so many of these purchased wives are little more than children, while their husbands may be old men. We have in mind a beautiful young girl of thirteen, who was legally married to an Afghan of about sixty. The marriage was consummated by a minister of the Gospel.

The little bride had not been told that she was to be married. She had never seen a marriage service, and did not understand the meaning of the words she dutifully-repeated after the minister. Not being able to write, she put a cross on the register where she was directed, thereby signing her consent to this travesty of a Christian service.

The bridegroom paid the minister his fee, and then tried to take his bride home. But the child stoutly refused to go with him. When he attempted to enforce her obedience she broke away from him and fled, screaming, back to her father's camp.

The next morning the irate bridegroom presented himself and his grievances to the girl's father. "Where's that woman I bought from you?" he demanded.

The father brought her out from her hiding place and handed her over to her husband, explaining that she must go with him — and thrust out thus she had to go.

This story was told by a member of the U.A.M. in a meeting in Adelaide. At the close of the address, a woman came up to her and said, "I am so glad you told that story. Every word of it is true. My brother knew that the girl was to be married, and he tried hard to prevent it. In spite of all his protests the thing was done, and it broke off the friendship between himself and the minister."

Yes, it is true, and this is not an isolated case. What becomes of such unions? The couples live together happily

enough until the husband wants to return to his own country, when he calmly deserts his aboriginal wife.

A native girl named Rosie was married to an Afghan in Oodnadatta. After twelve years he told her that he was going back to his own country, and that as she had been a good wife to him he would pay her for her faithfulness. He handed her a cheque, telling her not to cash it for three days.

Four days later Rosie went to the mission house in great distress, to tell the missionary that she had tried to cash the cheque at the bank, but it was valueless. The missionary went to the police, who telegraphed to Adelaide to have the man intercepted. It was too late. He was already on the sea, leaving his wife penniless.

Some time later an aboriginal man wanted to marry her. Rosie had lived in civilisation for most of her life, and at that time was becoming softened toward the message of the Cross as preached by the missionaries. She knew that it was not Christian to marry this man without a legal separation from the other.

Had she been a white woman she would have had no difficulty in obtaining a divorce from her absconding husband, but nobody bothered about the rights of this native woman, and this redress was not granted her. So she threw her scruples to the winds and went away with her lover, and from that time her faint desires after Christ perished.

Now to resume our story of Rita, who was to be married to an Afghan because nobody wanted her. Ah, yes, somebody wanted her, and God was lovingly watching over this little girl.

Miss Lock, stopping at Marree on her missionary journey, heard of this child and her probable fate. Instantly all the mother-love of her heart was stirred to action, and she went to the police and offered to take Rita herself. One would have thought that this woman, going to a place as yet unknown, with no human guarantee of support, would be the last who could saddle herself with a native child. But Miss Lock had been trusting the Lord

too long to doubt Him now, and she believed that if He called her to take this child He would provide all that was necessary for her food and clothing. It was not the first time she had thus saved a little child without stopping to count the cost, and God had never failed her.

Police consent was given, and when the missionary decided a few days later to go on to Oodnadatta, she had Rita with her as travelling companion.

Arriving at the terminus of the railway, as Oodnadatta then was, Miss Lock saw the need for a work to be done among the natives. Of these there were two distinct types. The first were the camel boys employed by Afghan teamsters. These were used to the ways of civilisation, were well provided for, understood English, and readily responded to the Gospel message.

The second type was harder to deal with. They were the nomadic blacks that came into Oodnadatta in the course of their wanderings, made a camp outside the town, of any odds and ends of rubbish that they could pick up, settled there for perhaps a few months, and then disappeared into the bush from whence they had come.

They understood little, if any, English, were steeped in superstition, and altogether most difficult of approach. The camel boys have gone, but the camp natives are still there, presenting the same problems to missionaries of later days as they did to Miss Lock when first she met them.

There being no mission house, she took a room with the use of a kitchen in a boarding house, where Rita had her first lessons in reading and writing, and her first knowledge of the Saviour.

Miss Lock had no thought that out of her action in rescuing Rita there would come into being a settled mission home for aboriginal children, but such, in the province of God, was to be the outcome of it. Three years after she was taken from Marree, Rita, with other children subsequently rescued, went to Quorn at the founding of Colebrook Home.

Had Miss Lock been endued with prophetic vision



The Australian Aboriginal in His Camp-life.



A Little Bush Girl.



Asleep in the Bush.

as she gave Rita her first lessons in prayer, she might have seen three pictures of the girl's future, the sight of which would give her joy.

I. The first picture is that of a dark-faced girl of twelve years talking to the Sister at Colebrook Home.

"Sister," she says, "I feel so unhappy about my sister."

"Do you, Rita?" is the reply, "why are you unhappy?"

"Because she has no one to tell her about the Lord Jesus. I wish she could come here and learn about Him."

"Yes, I wish she could come," says the Sister. "Have you ever prayed about it, Rita?"

The earnest young face lights up. "Yes, I pray every day, and ask the Lord Jesus to send Bessie here. And I believe He will, too."

A day comes when the Chief Protector of Aborigines writes to the Mission, asking if they will accept charge of a native girl who, apparently, has no one to care for her, and is becoming uncontrollable. The child is accepted, and Rita's prayer is answered; for it is her sister Bessie.

In the next picture Rita is eighteen years old. The second Sister of the Home is away, and the matron has no one to depend on for help but Rita.

"I'll do everything I can to help, Sister," she says, as she takes the place of a missionary in the Home.

The first week she takes the kitchen work. There is no lack of voluntary helpers in the preparing of breakfast, for Rita is a great favourite with the children, and they all love to help her. Breakfast ready, the little ones take their places at the table. Rita gives a quick look down the rows to see that everyone is paying attention, and then she announces the hymn for morning devotions. There is no fidgeting or whispering, the children know that when Rita takes prayers they must mind what she says. A chapter of Scripture is recited, and then all heads are reverently bowed as Rita leads them in prayer. She prays earnestly that God will bless this Home and supply all needs. She prays for missionaries on the other stations and for the council; and finally, for her own people out in the bush, that they might soon hear of the Lord Jesus and be saved. Then the children sing "grace" and break-

fast is served. Rita keeps perfect order throughout the meal, the power of her own personality being strong enough to command respect and obedience.

A little later, with the children away at school, Rita is left alone in the kitchen to prepare the dinner. She makes excellent stew, soup, pastry, cakes. Moreover, she knows how to do such things with the limited resources of a mission kitchen, and can turn out a light cake with a minimum supply of butter and eggs.

The next week Sister takes her turn in the kitchen and Rita does duty at the washtub and the sewing machine — always cheerful and willing in the midst of an amount of work that would strike dismay to the hearts of most white girls of her age.

It was a little enough thing when Miss Lock took that child into her care that day in Marree, but seeing what has come of her action we can say,

"Little is much, when God is in it.
Man's busiest day is not worth God's minute.
Much is little everywhere
If God the labour do not share.
Go work with God, and nothing's lost.
Who works with Him does best and most.
Work on. Work on."

Now for the third scene.

It is breakfast again at Colebrook Home, and one can see at a glance that something is amiss. The children come into the dining-room quietly and sadly, some with eyes red with weeping. Rita quietly helps Sister to serve the porridge, her own face serious and her eyes red.

Sister leads in prayer, commending to the Lord's gracious care this dear girl, now twenty-one years of age, who is leaving the shelter of the Home to-day to take a position. Tears flow afresh, for the children are affectionate, and Rita is greatly loved. They sing, "God be with you till we meet again," and then march out of the room without their usual carefree chatter. Rita is going. They can't believe it. She has been there for eleven years. Some of them can remember when they first came to Colebrook, frightened and shy, and how

Rita's friendly face helped them over that first strange period. She had been always with them. How could they manage without her now?

She goes around to each one for a farewell kiss. She takes up the babies in the nursery and hugs them to her for the last time, wetting their little faces with her tears. She bids good-bye to the older girls, who are her dearest friends, and then she is driven away to the station, with every child in the Home waving and calling after her.

You see the older girls going off into a corner when the buggy is out of sight, to have a quiet cry by themselves. Half an hour later they all run across the paddock to see the train go past. Along the railway fence they sit, ready with handkerchiefs or anything else they can wave to Rita as she goes away out of their lives. The girls from the kitchen have snatched up their tea towels for this purpose, and Sister pretends not to notice this innovation. Everyone is there, even to the babies in their prams, and Peter the pet lamb. The little ones stand Peter up on his hind legs by the fence.

The train comes into sight, the towels and handkerchiefs are waved amid parting cheerios that the passenger cannot hear. One boy jumps down from the fence to wave Peter's paw, that no inmate of the Home will be missing in the final farewell, and as the train passes we see a dark face leaning out of the window, and catch the flutter of a solitary handkerchief. Rita has gone.

She acquits herself well in her new life. Messages come from her mistress praising her cleanliness, her willingness, her capability. But there is a gap at Colebrook Home, for they have lost their first child.

Chapter Two.

The Opened Door.

"Who knows, I thought, that He may stretch His hand
And pick them up. 'Tis written in the Book
He heareth the young ravens when they cry;
And yet they cry for carrion."

—Mrs. Browning.

In that district west of Oodnadatta that goes by the general designation of "Out-West," a lubra died, leaving two half-caste sons. She was buried by her own people, and the old men of the tribe talked of burying the children with her, for what was the good of half-caste children in a native camp? It was hard enough for them to find food for their own little ones, without having to feed a white man's boys as well.

But the boys were saved from that fate. The father took the younger boy, Sidney, and another man took Paddy. For a time Paddy lived a vagabond sort of existence, tramping about with his guardian from one station to another, until eventually they came to Oodnadatta. The white man immediately found his way to the hotel, and the child wandered about the town until someone found him and took him to the Mission, where Miss Lock was still living in the boarding house, accompanied now by Miss Iris Harris, a fellow-worker. Evidently, there was something in Miss Lock's face that inspired confidence, for as soon as Paddy saw her he announced that he was going to stay with her. When the guardian came to get him, the missionaries refused to give him up.

It was in miniature a forecast of another scene that was to come into Miss Lock's life a few years later, when she would face a police officer who tried to take from her two little native girls who clung to her and screamed with terror. As she was to gain the later battle, so now she gained it against this man who would have ruined Paddy's body and soul had he been suffered to keep him. She made application to the police for the custody of the child,

and the other had to go away and leave Paddy with her. So there were now two children in their care, Paddy and Rita. What did it mean? Was God leading them to start a children's home? They were ready to follow His leading, but were careful not to proceed a step without His definite guidance.

Although convinced that if this were His calling He would supply all needs, they knew that such a work started in presumptuous self-will would end in failure. So they waited, praying for further leading while they gave themselves to the work that lay at hand.

The leading came through the request of a station owner that Miss Lock go out with him and bring back his little half-caste son. The missionaries had found no favour in the eyes of the station men, who viewed with suspicion their interest in the natives. This made it all the more remarkable when one of them so far overcame his prejudice as to come to Oodnadatta purposely to approach the missionaries with this request.

Miss Lock's heart responded to the call, but she was wise enough to see that in this apparent answer to prayer she must walk circumspectly, that no advantage be given to the adversary. She told the man that she would give him an answer next day, and, together with Miss Harris, she laid the matter before the Lord in prayer. As the two women prayed about it, the conviction grew stronger and stronger that this thing was of the Lord, and that they were to go forward.

Each felt a call to that visionary "Out-West." Miss Harris longed to take the Gospel to the natives of those distant parts, and her companion was eager to make enquiries as to half-caste children.

When the station owner came the following day Miss Lock told him that she would go with him, if Miss Harris and the two children, Rita and Paddy, might accompany her. He had not expected such a number of passengers, but was so anxious to get his little boy into mission care that he would take all who cared to come. Arrangements were made to start the next day. A great day of prepara-

tion was held in the mission kitchen, the missionaries baking enough food to last them on their journey. While they prepared their hampers the man went to the hotel to get something to cheer him on his way.

The time for departure came, but not the driver. He was still getting his something of cheer for the way. They waited all day, and at last had to unpack their provisions and settle down for the night. They expected an early start the day after, but their driver was still imbibing, and it took him a long time to sleep off the effects of what he had taken.

By this time all Oodnadatta knew that the missionaries were going out with Mr. X. to his station, and free and critical were their comments. "It is a mad thing to do," was the general verdict. However mad the journey might be, it was still madder to have to wait three days for their driver to be sober enough to take the wheel, but at last the well-laden motor truck was on its way, with four passengers, a folding organ, and a hamper of freshly-baked cakes and bread to replace what had been eaten during the time of waiting.

A couple of hours' travelling brought them to a tidy little brush hut, the home of a half-caste man and woman. After the miserable wurlies they had seen in the Oodnadatta camp, it was a change for the missionaries to see, such a comfortable home. They went inside. There were two rooms, furnished and clean. The occupants, who had been brought up by white people and could speak English, gave the travellers welcome to their home.

The first thought of the missionaries was to tell these people of Christ. Soul-winning is never far away from a missionary's thoughts. To their surprise they found that they were both Christians. It had happened in this way.

Some months previously a white man from Oodnadatta had called in to see Jack. He passed on some items of news from the town, one astonishing thing being that there were now missionaries there.

"Missionaries." said Jack. "What are missionaries?"

"They are women who have come to tell the abos. about God," was the reply. Jack was interested, but mystified.

"Who is God?" he asked.

The white man scratched his head and tried to remember what he had been taught in Sunday School.

"Well — er well, I don't know much about it myself, to tell you the truth, but they say He made the world, and that His Son Jesus came down from the sky to die for the sin of the world. I stood outside the church door one night and heard them tell the people that if they believed in Jesus He would take them to heaven, but I don't believe a Word of it myself."

Jack looked thoughtful. Scanty as had been the information, he rather liked to think that someone had taken the trouble to come to Oodnadatta to teach the natives, and he wanted to know something of what they were teaching.

"Have those women got any books about Jesus?" he asked.

"Why, yes, they've got the Bible, you know," said the other.

"Have they got any more Bibles?"

"Oh, I suppose so. Anyway, when I go back I'll ask them for a Bible and I'll bring it here next time I come."

Accordingly, the next time this man came out from Oodnadatta he brought with him a copy of the Holy Scriptures for Jack. The half-caste man had learned to read. Eagerly he turned over the pages of the Book to find something about Jesus, but was disappointed to find no mention of the Name in the early chapters. He was about to give up the search when the leaves blew apart, and there, in the New Testament, was the Name of Jesus.

Every night after that, these two would sit by the fire while Jack read aloud from the sacred pages, and as they read the entrance of God's Word gave light to their dark souls. With no other agency but the working of the Holy Spirit as they read, they yielded themselves to the One who "loved them, and gave Himself for them."

Jack told his story to the visiting missionaries, the first Christians he had met, and as they heard the simple testimony they could only say, "This is the Lord's doing. It is marvellous in our eyes."

"I pray," said Jack, in answer to a question about his devotions. "When I am breaking in horses and I get one that won't go, I just hold up my hand, and then it goes all right."

"Why do you hold up your hand?"

"I hold up my hand, and God, He take hold of it, and then everything go right."

It was a simple enough definition of prayer, but who could expound more fully the response of Almighty God to the heart that turned to Him in faith?

"In even savage bosoms
There are longings, strivings, yearnings.
For the good they comprehend not:
And the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness
And are lifted up and strengthened."

—Longfellow.

As long as they could trespass on the time of their driver, the missionaries talked to these simple, faithful souls of the things of God, their own hearts gladdened and their own faith strengthened by what they had heard.

They had hoped to reach a cattle station before night-fall, but the time spent in Jack's hut meant that they were still out on the track when it became dark, and there was nothing but to camp there, with the intention of getting an early start in the morning.

But no early start was made. Something had gone wrong with the engine in that inexplicable way that motors have of giving trouble, and no amount of pushing would make the truck go. They waited all the morning in the hope that help would be coming, but hour after hour passed and no one appeared.

In the afternoon Miss Harris took Paddy in a search for water. They had no knowledge of the place, but commended themselves to the Lord's guidance and protec-



Half-caste Babies.



Children's Home, Oodnadatta, 1926 (now used as a home for missionaries).
(See Chapter Three.)



Sister Hyde Mending Children's Boots.



The First Seven Children — Rita, Paddy,
Ruth, Sidney, Parker, George, Mona.

tion as they set out and, after walking four miles, they were able to fill their cans from a claypan of water. Another night had to be spent on the road.

Undaunted by their misfortunes, the missionaries and children had their time of evening worship, singing hymns to the accompaniment of the little folding organ. It may have been the first time that the sound of praise to God had ever been heard in that district, but there was no human ear to hear except that of the driver, who sat aloof some distance away.

The next day they knew that there must be a determined effort to reach a cattle station. There could be no more days of waiting along the road for help that might be a week in coming. Early in the morning, before the sun rose, Miss Harris and Paddy set off on a nineteen-mile walk to the nearest dwelling. Weary and sore, they eventually arrived at the homestead. Their request that someone go back and bring in the stranded car was readily granted, for people outback are always prepared to help others in need; but for herself Miss Harris saw no look of welcome.

One of the most bitter experiences of our missionaries in those days was to bear the scorn of every white person in a wide district. That two women should separate themselves from all that they held dear, in order to live in loneliness and poverty among the natives, called forth no feeling of admiration or respect from their neighbours, but only of contempt and slander. The missionaries had to learn to suffer reproach for His dear sake until, by their own blameless lives, they wore down the opposition and proved the value of their work.

Miss Harris, a lady of culture and refinement, arriving tired and dusty after a long tramp, encountered a look of utter contempt from the station owner's wife. Weary as she was, it was an humiliation to accept the rest so grudgingly proffered, and rather than stay where she was obviously not wanted she went back with the mechanic to the truck.

Another night had to be spent in the open, and on the

following day the whole party proceeded to the station, where the engine was repaired. They then resumed their journey.

Six hours later they arrived at another station, where they visited some native camps. Their hearts were saddened to see poor, ignorant dark people who knew nothing of the Saviour's love, but there was no time for much more than a word of cheer in passing, and they were on the track again into wilder and wilder country.

For the last stage of the journey the passengers and their luggage had to be transferred to a buggy, as the road was now too rough for motor travelling. Just as they were ready to start in the new conveyance, the driver noticed a broken spring, and everything had to come off again ere it could be mended. By that time it was too late to go on, and yet another night had to be spent in the open.

The driver was frankly astonished at these delays. "These things ought not to come to missionaries," he said. "With God's people on board everything ought to *go* all right." But the missionaries, knowing that He makes "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord," were not dismayed at the many setbacks. They sat down to their little organ for evening prayers.

Two miles away a group of natives heard the sound of singing, and went to see what they thought was a white man's corroboree. Just beyond the circle of light from the missionaries' campfire, they hesitated and asked timidly if they might come. Gladly the invitation was given, for it was such an opportunity of service for Christ that the missionaries had not expected in that barren country.

It was the organ that had drawn them. Their curiosity was unbounded as they felt the instrument, looked inside it and under it, to find its secret of sound. Finally, they decided that the magic was in the white woman's fingers, and they sat down to hear more of the wonderful music.

Hymn after hymn was sung, each one accompanied

by fervent prayers for these dear dark people whom God had sent to them out of the night. They prayed, too, for the man who sat and listened. Then they took out a roll of Bible pictures and lovingly told the story of redeeming love.

These people understood English, and followed the directions of their teachers when told to close their eyes and talk to Jesus, but whether any of the story had really been comprehended the missionaries did not know. They could only leave the result of their effort with the Lord. The natives went away praising the "Good-fella-white corroborree," and the missionaries turned again to prayer, their own hearts burdened with the need of this race of despised people.

The next morning the buggy, with its mended spring and its heavy freight, started off on the last stage of the journey, and just before dark they arrived at their destination. Their driver was now their host, and as there was no white woman to do the honours of the homestead the missionaries had to be their own hostesses. During their stay at the station they had full charge of the home, one doing the cooking and the other superintending the work of the natives at the well, watering the livestock. The little child for whose sake they had come on this long journey soon became friendly with them.

Their first night's rest was disturbed by two things. The first was the strangeness of a wire mattress after six nights of lying on the ground, and the other was the sounds of corroborree in the distance where several tribes of natives were meeting. This was an ominous sound to their host, who took a revolver to bed with him because the natives had threatened to take his scalp. But to God's children there came no thought of fear. Safe in His keeping they slept, and when morning broke all was quiet and their host still wore his scalp.

A couple of weeks were spent at this station, pending the arrival of the police motor that was to take them home again. During that time there were many opportunities

of meeting with the natives of the district and of giving them the delight of listening to the organ.

The sweet story of Jesus was told to them, but only He knew how much of it was understood. Those dark folks were not used to hearing of anyone loving them, and it was hard for them to grasp such an incredible story.

A visit was paid to a neighbouring station, where there was a tiny half-caste baby. The little mite was four days old when the mother received these astounding visitors. There was only one room in the home, and that served as living room and as sleeping place for a white man, two lubras, and a three-year-old half-caste boy. Now there was this other little child in this awful place.

The missionaries asked the young mother how many children she had had. "Four," she said. "All finish. Me bin finish 'em. All same colour this one." They had all been half-caste babies, and she had killed them all. The visitors pleaded with her to save this baby, and she promised to do so, but it was never seen after that. They asked her how she had killed her little ones, and quite unashamed, as though it were the natural thing to do, she told them that she had taken them out into the bush, filled their mouths with sand, and left them there to choke.

These things that are so hard to write about, and so distressing to read, are actually being done in this land of ours, by those poor, ignorant natives who are waiting. For what? For you, perhaps, with the story of what Christ did for your soul. The more Miss Lock saw of conditions in these far places, the more convinced was she that God was calling her to establish a Home for the unwanted little half-castes.

A young aboriginal girl of about fifteen years, with a half-caste child of about one year, was met on one of the stations. As the young mother had very little idea of caring for her child, the missionaries offered to take them both back to Oodnadatta. The girl gladly consented. When they returned to their Mission they already had the nucleus of a children's home, for, besides Rita and

Paddy, there were now Nancy and her baby George, and the child for whom the journey had been taken.

Yet another was added to the list when Paddy's father brought little Sidney into Oodnadatta, and, seeing that the elder son was being cared for by someone else, he thankfully handed over the younger one as well, and went off without any encumbrances.

Chapter Three.

Entering in by Faith.

The five children under Miss Lock's care lived in an iron shed at the back of the boarding house. There was no furniture. They slept in boxes, sat on boxes, ate their meals at a table made of boxes nailed together and covered with oilcloth. Their clothing and dishes were stored in box cupboards. This work had materialised so quietly that before anyone quite realised what was happening the Mission Council found itself facing the fact that a children's home had actually come into being, although as yet it was but an iron shed.

The missionaries slept in the house until they found that the shed was receiving attention from men who thought it funny to frighten the lives out of little native girls, sending them shrieking across the yard crying out, "Sister, oh Sister, he'll kill me."

If there were any humour in such happenings, the Sisters failed to see it as they soothed the trembling, sobbing children, and tried to get them off to sleep again.

The only way of saving their precious charges from such sudden fright was by shielding them with their own bodies at night. The two stretchers were taken out of the bedroom and placed across the doorway of the shed. The children then slept peacefully, but their guardians had much to endure from their position in a public yard, open to the gaze of any who cared to come in from the street.

When the perpetrators of these practical jokes found that they could no longer get into the shed, they went around to the back of it and, with pieces of wire pushed through holes in the wall, pulled Rita's hair as she lay in her bed, waking her with a sudden start. It took Rita years to overcome the state of nervous fear brought upon her in that place. Long after, in the security of Colebrook Home, she would frequently cry out in her sleep, "Sister, oh Sister, he'll kill me."

In December, 1925. Miss Lock left Oodnadatta for a long furlough, and Miss Ruby Hyde took her place as matron of the children's work.

Miss Hyde, a graduate of Melbourne Bible Institute, was trained for children's work at the Bomaderry Children's Home, New South Wales. One could scarcely imagine a greater contrast than that between the beautiful surroundings of the home she left, and the dreary, gibberstrewn plains of Oodnadatta; nor that between the comfortable mission home at Bomaderry and the iron shed with its box furniture.

With cheerful courage she shouldered the new responsibilities, never sparing herself in the service of Christ, and her work has been wonderfully used and blessed of God.

The Home at Quorn was built up from those brave beginnings at Oodnadatta, by the devotion, the energy, the undaunted faith of its matron; but the foundations were laid in Miss Lock's self-sacrificing love and her obedience to God's voice when He said to her, "Take these children and nurse them for Me."

Early in 1926 the South Australian Council of the Mission, deeply impressed by Miss Lock's story of the half-caste children, decided to respond to the need in the name of the Lord, and to establish a Children's Home at Oodnadatta.

To the calculating mind of reason it would have been sheer folly to undertake such a project without making appeals for funds, but faith makes no calculation of the her soul anchored in His immutable promises.

A period of prayer was spent for the necessary fund and for the guidance of God in this great enterprise, and within a month He had set His seal on this call to service by the gift of two hundred pounds.

There still remained one hundred and fifty pounds of the amount needed to purchase the cottage that was to be the new Home. At that time there were pressing needs in other parts of the Mission, and a call to prayer for a thousand pounds went out to the missionaries in the various fields, and to the councils in the home bases. One day was set apart for this special appeal, the whole of the Mission uniting in believing prayer for that sum. A fortnight later, the Headquarters Council received an anonymous donation of one thousand pounds, and, among other needs of the Mission, the Children's Home was supplied.

Whatsoe'er He bids you, do it,
Though you may not understand.
Yield to Him complete obedience,
Then you'll see His mighty Hand.
Fill the waterpots with water—
Fill them to the very brim.
He will honour all your trusting,
Leave the miracle to Him.

Bring to Christ your loaves and fishes,
Though they be both few and small.
He will use the weakest vessels.
Give to Him your little all.
Do you ask how many thousands
Can be fed with food so slim?
Listen to the Master's blessing.
Leave the miracle to Him.

A comfortable little cottage in Oodnadatta was purchased for three hundred and fifty pounds, and the missionaries thankfully moved their family from the boarding house to take possession of this Home that God had given them.

As other children came in and the housekeeping expenses grew, the missionaries found that the real test of their faith was not so much in the special efforts of prayer as in the patient, persistent, believing laying of all

needs before the Lord. It was more spectacular to pray in a large amount of money, but it required no greater faith than is required for the faithful dependence on God for the supply of daily needs as they come.

The children, catching the spirit of faith and prayer by which their Home was sustained, came to know God as El Shaddai and Jehovah-Jireh, the Almighty God, the Lord who will provide. In such an atmosphere of devotion they grew spiritually as well as physically, and as they prayed God called His servants here and there to participate in this work by prayer and by gift.

Dr. Gratton Guinness, when conducting a home on similar lines of dependence on God, wrote: "Money matters may be, must be, a means of grace to those who have no banker but their Father in Heaven, and great need of money for the Master's work. We have found them so. Is money needed? We must pray, — and there is little danger of formality when the payment of the baker's bill depends on a speedy answer.

"Does money come in? We must praise; for we realise so vividly His hand in its coming, that our hearts are naturally turned heavenward to thank God ere we take pen in hand to thank men.

"Is any expenditure suggested? We must seek guidance from above; for while, if we spend according to His will, He is sure to provide the funds, if we spend according to our own will we may be left to our own devices."

In this sequence of prayer and praise God has mightily used the missionaries who have taken Him at His word in places where their very lives have depended on His - faithfulness.

We shall now make the acquaintance of others of the little pearls whom God placed in this Home to be fashioned into gems for His crown.

Chapter Four.

The Story of Molly.

"Hast Thou not said that whatsoe'er is done unto Thy weakest and humblest one is even done to Thee?"—A'Kempis.

In one of Oodnadatta's wretched little wurlies, a young aboriginal girl lay with her chin propped up in her hand, intently looking into the face of her baby.

Lubras from other wurlies squatted around, smoking their pipes and chattering together, but Molly had nothing to say, for in her heart there was a haunting fear that kept her lips closed. There was no cot or pillow for the little one, no bed for herself. She drew her old blanket closer around them as she lay on the ground, and she thought of the train that was on its way from Adelaide, bringing back her husband, the black tracker, from a police trip down south.

The doorway of her wurlie darkened, and Molly saw the missionary bending down to look in.

"How are you to-day, Molly," she said, as she stepped into the wurlie, still bending down to keep from knocking her head against the roof. She took up the tiny baby and looked at it, Molly watching her with terror in her eyes; and the same thought was in the mind of each of them.

The little one, like all aboriginal babies, had been a honey colour when Miss Harris had come into the wurlie a fortnight before, and had found the wee stranger there. It should be turning dark by now, but there were no signs of this natural change in the tiny face. Molly and her husband were both full-blooded aboriginals. Could it be possible that the baby was a half-caste? With the unspoken query in her eyes, she looked at the mother and read the answer in the forlorn young face at her feet. Molly began to whimper.

"Me too much frighten," she said. "Bob summons me." What her idea of a summons might be it was hard

to tell, but it was evident that she was afraid to face her husband.

The missionary comforted her a little by saying that she would meet the train, and see Bob before anyone else could tell him what had happened; but when she was left alone again the fear returned. She wondered if she could do anything to turn the baby black. She had been in the homes of white women, and had seen them put black stuff on their stoves, and she resolved on a bold plan of deception.

Calling one of the lubras, she asked her to go to the shop and buy a tin of black ezywurk and a brush. She would not give up the hope of having a black baby, even if she had to remedy nature's defect herself. When Miss Harris returned to the camp in the afternoon, a strange smell greeted her near Molly's wurlie. A stranger sight greeted her when she went inside, for the dear little baby was black enough now. The ezywurk was all over its body, between the wee toes and fingers, up into the head and ears, and sticking the hair together like glue. Even Molly did not look quite satisfied with her handiwork, for in spite of all her efforts, the baby still was not like the other babies of the camp.

As for the missionary, she was horrified at this treatment of her little pet, and she hurried her off to the mission house to see what a hot bath would do for her.

Ezywurk might be easy-work to get on, but the missionaries found that it was not easy-work to get off, and when baby returned to her mother later on there were still traces of black which only time could obliterate. Yet Molly had to admit that it was an improvement on its former shiny, sticky appearance.

As she had promised, Miss Harris met the train and begged the returning husband to be kind to his little terror-stricken wife. But he strode off to the camp in anything but a kind mood, vowing that he would turn them both out when the baby was a little older.

Molly never left her wurlie after the arrival of her baby. Day after day she sat dejectedly on the ground

with the little one in her arms, and when urged by the missionary to take the baby for a walk out in the fresh air she just shook her head and said, "Too much 'shamed. Me sit down camp all time." And "sit down camp all time" she did, until grief and shame wore away her young life.

When baby was three months old the missionaries were aroused one night by a sudden sound of wailing in the camp. That wailing could mean nothing but death. Who was it? Taking a lantern, they made their way down to the camp, to find a number of lubras wailing around a corpse tied up in a sack. It was Molly, who had laid her poor head down by her baby for the last time. The sad heart was still at last — her grief had killed her.

The men were preparing to move camp, and many dogs were prowling around and sniffing at the sack. The missionaries were afraid to go away, lest the remains of the poor girl were left to the mercy of the dogs, so they induced the men to dig the grave at once, and at three o'clock in the morning they buried Molly by the light of the lantern.

Molly had never confessed Christ as Saviour, but who knows whether at the last, with death drawing near, she called on Him and that dear Friend of outcasts and sinners revealed Himself to her and spoke peace to her troubled soul. She had been the subject of many prayers, and the missionaries laid her to rest not without hope that she would share in the glory of the first resurrection, through the blood "shed for many, for the remission of sins."

After the burial the old grandmother brought the innocent cause of all this sorrow and placed her in the missionary's arms. "Here, Sister, you better take baby," she said. "I can't look after her,"

The next day Molly's wurlie, with everything she had owned or used, and the baby's clothes were all burned by the native men, and the whole camp shifted to a position far enough way to ensure them safety from Molly's spirit, should it haunt the scene of her death. She had been

treated by them with indifference and scorn during the months of her wretchedness, but now that she was dead they regarded her with superstitious fear, and did not even mention her name lest the departed spirit might hear, and come to them.

Up at the mission house, the tender love for which the mother had pined was being lavished on her baby. No white mother could have cared for her little one more devotedly than this little one with the tragic beginning was cared for. At first they had to make up a bed for her in a box, praying that the Lord would send a cot for her use. Soon afterwards that prayer was answered, and their precious treasure was in a cot of her own.

A U.A.M. missionary, coming to Adelaide from the North, thought that he had only to present a few facts to government officials in order to get protection for the native women and redress for their wrongs. But the only answer he received to his words of burning appeal were, "There is no proof of such things." He proceeded to show the proofs, but was cut short with the injunction to keep quiet, as it was no use stirring up a lot of trouble.

We have no other purpose in these pages but to present actual facts, which speak more effectively than volumes of denunciations; and we would say this, that anyone looking for proofs can find plenty of them at Colebrook Home, and scores of them wandering miserably in the bush.

Molly is dead, as others like her are dying every day. But her baby lives — as many others like her are not suffered to live. She is enjoying the happy girlhood that was denied her mother, and is growing up in an atmosphere of love, because she found the shelter of Colebrook Home.

Out of the Depths.

There came to Oodnadatta Mission House a sun-burnt man from one of the cattle stations. He had something on his mind, for out there in the bush from whence he had come were his two little half-caste children, and his conscience was troubled at the thought of their neglected condition.

He could see no present or future help for them. Who wanted them, those atoms of humanity? He could do nothing with them himself, out in the open air as he always was; he had nothing to teach them, no good example to set them, not even a home to share with them.

They ran wild with their native mother, but not with the native tribe, for they were not wanted there. They just belonged to the station, like the sheep and the cattle, and were likely to grow up with as little attention to their morals as those animals received.

The father seldom bothered about them, but when he did give them a thought it was with an uneasy mind, as though he would better their condition if he could.

Someone told him that the missionaries in Oodnadatta were taking such little ones as his, and were giving them just the kind of home that his wildest dreams had desired for them. He went to see for himself if this incredible thing could be true, and found that it was even as he had been told.

There was the place, and as he sauntered past in his shyness he saw several little ones of the same colour as his own children; but oh, how different these were in every other respect. They looked happy, clean, nicely-clothed, well fed. He knew that at that moment his own son and daughter would not be clean or clothed, would possibly not be well fed, and as for being happy, he had never seen in the bush such radiant little faces as these in the mission house garden.

He went in and asked for the matron. Mils Hyde heard his story, the story of many a white man in the North. It was not her province to blame the father, but to save the children, and she readily acceded to his request that she go out in the mail car and bring back his little ones.

She started off not long after seeing him. Three or four hours' travelling brought her to a cattle station where she was given tea and a bed for the night. There is no limit to the hospitality of the station folks, and by this time the earlier mistrust towards the missionaries had given place in the hearts of the station owners to respect and confidence.

At noon the next day, after some further hours of travelling, they reached a cattle station where dinner was served.

Never forgetting that she was a missionary to aborigines, Miss Hyde asked if there were any native people about the place. Her question met with a look of curiosity from the manager. What did this white woman want to see the "niggers" for? Nobody ever troubled about them.

"Oh, yes," he said, "there are some down in the creek," and he stared after her as she made her way down to the place indicated. If she had asked to see his prime-cattle, he thought, there might be some sense in her query. But as for niggers — well — one usually kept as far away from their camps as possible.

Down in the creek-bed they were camped, a small group of fourteen or fifteen natives, with naked black bodies and unkempt hair freely matted with grease and dirt. One had a rabbit roasting in the fire, and the others squatted about waiting for it to be done. No such preliminaries as skinning or cleaning had been observed — the animal was cooking in the coals just as it had been dragged from its burrow.

The surprise of the natives at seeing a white woman approaching their camp was no less than that of the man who had directed her there. She spoke to them, but they regarded her with wondering silence.

She produced a roll of Bible pictures and tried to tell them of Jesus, but the look of stolid wonder only deepened. One man looked slightly intelligent, as though he understood something of what was being said, but the rest just stared woodenly. They could see, however, that this amazing visitor was trying to be friendly, and they read in her face something of that language of love that is more powerful than the spoken word. So they, too, tried to show friendliness.

"My brother," said one, pointing to another.

"My brother," said the other man.

"My brother," they all said, each one pointing to his neighbour. That being the extent of their English vocabulary they could say no more, and the missionary left them, feeling that nothing had been achieved by her efforts.

"My brother," they had said. Yes, and they are our brothers too — in the flesh — but it is convenient for us to forget this. They are so dirty, we say, and so diseased, and lazy, and beggarly.

Why are they dirty and lazy and beggarly? Their fathers were not so. They hunted from morning till night, the exercise keeping their nude bodies healthy and warm. There was a plentiful supply of native grasses and game for their food. Then the white settlers came, with their over-stocking of the country. The wild creatures of the bush were destroyed to save the herbage for cattle and sheep, and the native grass that was as medicine to the natives was eaten by the invading animals.

Whatever might be said against rabbits, they have assuredly saved the lives of many natives, who have nothing to hunt now but the bunny. This is woman's work. Now that there is no bigger game for the men to hunt they have become "hangers-on" around the stations, glad to get any scraps of food that the white men give them. The inactivity has robbed them of the splendid health of their fathers.

Moral and physical degeneration have gone hand in hand, as they usually do. The old tribes had strict moral

codes, rigidly enforced. The detribalising of the natives has meant the breaking down of those old, wise laws and, as Dr. Duguid has said, "We have robbed them of their old religion and have given them nothing in return."

There are few groups of natives in settled areas that do not include some children of lighter colour, the result of the loosened moral codes.

There are few, too, who know anything of Christ and His redeeming love. We who have such a glorious heritage of spiritual wealth are allowing these brothers to perish of spiritual hunger at our very doors.

So our Mission Sister went on her way with sad-thoughts of these she had to leave to their darkness.

The journey resumed, Miss Hyde reached her destination towards the close of the day — a little home on the outskirts of civilisation. Perhaps "home" is too good a word to use. It was merely a shed or shelter in which perishable goods were stored from the weather. Human beings, not being regarded as "perishable," slept out in the open or under trees or carts or any other object that afforded them shelter.

There were a number of lubras about the place, most of them carrying half-caste children in their arms.

Some of these had met Miss Hyde in Oodnadatta, and their dark faces were wreathed with smiles of welcome as they saw her again. They were expecting her. For one was the mother of the two little ones she had come for. and the father had told her of the missionary's coming.

More sophisticated than those she had met in the creek-bed further back, these came forward with childish eagerness to speak to the white woman, and to conduct her to the tent erected for her sleeping apartment.

The mail car went on its way, but Miss Hyde was to wait here until it returned from its round of the distant stations.

It is not every day that the station lubras have a white woman to visit them, and Miss Hyde was amused at their attention to her. They stood around her tent door, chatter-



Evelyn, Secretary of the J.C.E.



Rita Superintending "Toothbrush Drill."



Colebrook Home, Quorn, 1927.
(See Chapter Six.)



Out for a Ride with Sister Rutter.

ing freely. She took out her roll of Bible pictures and started to talk to them of the Saviour. There was no unappreciative audience this time. They listened intelligently. Each face lighted up with joy as she told them of One who loved them and gave Himself for them. It was good news, and they wanted to hear more, but the missionary did not want to arouse the ire of the white employers by keeping the lubras from their work, so she sent them away with the promise that she would tell them more in the morning.

The next morning there was very little work done by the lubras — they were crowding around the visitor to hear more of that wonderful story. It was told simply, that these simple-hearted women might understand the message, and the missionary could see by the faces of her hearers that it was reaching their minds and their hearts.

"Tell 'em more, Sister," they urged, as she closed the book. "Tell 'em more about that good fella one Jesus. We want to hear more." They would not leave her. When she walked into the bush they followed in a group, and when she sat down they sat at her feet to hear over and over again the story of Jesus.

Her heart glowed with the telling. She had given up home and friends, devoting her life to God, that He might use her as a channel of His grace to such as these despised black women. The time was so short. She prayed that God would keep her message in their hearts in the days to come, when they would no longer hear that precious Name except in blasphemy.

One of the listening lubras held a whining infant in her arms, while a little girl of three years warily watched the visitor from the shelter of her mother's side. These were the children she was to take back to Oodnadatta. She was surprised to find that the baby was sixteen months old, for his emaciated body was as helpless as that of a six-months child. The tiny, listless face had the worried look of an old man.

The lubras had told the little girl that a white woman

was coming to take them away, and at the first sight of Miss Hyde she had darted off into the bush like a little frightened animal. Her father brought her back and tried to pacify her with sweets, but she was trembling with fear, and it was some time before she would go near the missionary.

It would have been disastrous to the interests of the Mission had she, on this her first visit, carried off a couple of screaming, protesting children, and she prayed that the little girl might be kept quiet when the time of departure came.

Back came the car from its mail round. Goodbye to the friendly lubras with their newly-awakened desires after God. Oh, it was hard to leave them like that. What would become of the seed of Truth she had this day planted in their hearts? Would it wither and die for want of care? Would the tender shoot be choked by aboriginal superstitions, or white men's infidelity? Would the story be forgotten, as time went on and nobody came to remind them of it? She had done her best in the planting; she could not stay to water the seed and gather in the harvest.

There would be no one now to sit in the tent door and tell these women of the "Good-fella-one Jesus," but it gave her comfort to remember that the risen Lord had sent the Holy Spirit to "teach them all things, and to bring all things to their remembrance." So, commending them to God and praying that He would attend to the watering of her seed of Truth, she left them.

Tell the glad story of Jesus, "who came.
Full of compassion, the lost to reclaim;
Tell of redemption through faith in His name:
Tell the glad story again.

Colebrook Home.

When there were twelve children in the Home, the Lord led the Mission to take a further step in faith, a step that had an important bearing on the future of this work.

The Mission desired to give the half-caste children such a training as would help them to merge into the white population. This they were unable to do so long as the Home was in close proximity to an aboriginal camp. Some of the little ones had relatives in the Oodnadatta camp, and it was not possible to segregate them from their own people. The only way to do this was by taking them away where they could no longer see the natives or hear the sounds of corroboree.

After much prayer for guidance, it was decided to remove the children to a place further south, where there were no aborigines. Government authorities were not willing that the children come any nearer to Adelaide than Quorn. Although there were disused buildings much nearer than that that the Mission had hoped to use as a Home, the restriction was taken as from the Lord, and a search was made around Quorn for a suitable house. Mrs. Searle, of that town, was a help in this search, and a small cottage was rented until sufficient funds were in hand to buy a property.

It was called Colebrook Home, as a loving tribute to the President of the U.A.M. Headquarters Council — a man who had done perhaps more than any other person for the work and the workers of this Mission.

In May, 1927, Miss Hyde took her twelve charges on the long journey of over four hundred miles from Oodnadatta to Quorn. None of them had ever had a train ride before, and to them it was a wonderful experience to rush over the country hour after hour, but to the matron it was not all joy, especially with five tiny tots, one of whom, Parker, was suffering from infantile paralysis.

Their arrival in Quorn was expected. Mrs. Searle had arranged something like a civic reception, with the mayor and other prominent townspeople to welcome them to the town. Miss Hyde stood on the platform of the railway carriage, handing out babies to those waiting on the station. Perhaps the mayor had not bargained on receiving a black baby in his arms, but as one after another was passed down there was a general laugh that broke down any barriers and cemented a friendship at once.

Then the older children followed, each carrying some luggage, and they were ready to find their new home.

It was not the time for making speeches of welcome. They showed their greetings in a more practical way by all marching off with the babies and the luggage up the hill to the Home. Arrived there, another surprise greeted the weary travellers. Mrs. Searle and others had formed a "working bee," and the place had been thoroughly cleaned inside and out. Floors were scrubbed, windows cleaned, yard swept, and everything possible had been done to make the place more home-like.

It was a gracious gesture of goodwill that will not soon be forgotten.

At the school the headmaster had also paved the way for a generous reception of the Home children.

When it was known in Quorn that a Home was to be opened there for half-caste children, he told the school children that dark-skinned boys and girls were coming to the school, and that the white children must do all they could to make them happy. He warned them of punishment if he heard of any child teasing or ill-treating the little new-comers. The result of this splendid attitude was that when the Home children, feeling shy and self-conscious, made their appearance at the school, they were immediately overwhelmed with kind attentions from the white children.

Some of them had begged an extra apple or piece of cake for their lunch, that they might share it with a Home child; and when, at recess time, our shy little ones would have crept off to a corner out of sight, the others took

their hands and made them join in the games. Never before had they been treated as equals by white people, and it had a wonderful psychological effect on them. It made them hold up their heads and take their place in the school on an equal footing with children in better circumstances than themselves. There is no doubt that they would have' been too frightened to learn anything had it not been for the remarkable kindness shown them by teachers and scholars. Before long, some of them were carrying off prizes and attaining top places in their classes.

Little Sid, a dear, winsome laddie of five years, became the pet of the school. In lesson time he was the despair of his teachers, who could not persuade him to keep his eyes on his work instead of letting them roam off to the clouds through the window. But when lessons were done and books thankfully put away, the teachers would stand Sid on a seat and get him to sing to them. The sweet, clear, little voice breathed out many a message of the Lord in such words as, "Everybody ought to love Jesus."

They were as entranced by his quaint sayings as by his singing, for Sid took years to drop the bush vernacular.

"How did you hurt your arm?" they asked, pointing to a scar that had been caused in infancy by a burning piece of wood.

"Tree all day been fall on it," was his enigmatical reply.

In the Home Sid caused many a laugh. He shut up a captured rabbit in the dormitory, and when asked why he had taken it out of its cage, he said, "Sister, him all day get losed if him stay out there."

On another occasion Sister had gone out for the afternoon, and on her return had found the shed untidy. When she set the little ones to tidy it. Sid said, "Sister, you all day go out, come back, all day find not clean."

Why these things should have been of "all day" duration is best known to Sid.

Missionaries coming to Colebrook Home in later years

can scarcely realise what inconveniences had to be endured while it was still in its beginnings. It needed a matron of Miss Hyde's strong faith and practical energy to stand a strain that would have brought the soul of a weaker woman to despair.

The stove was a small Dover, and there was no saucepan in the place. The only cooking vessel was a camp oven standing on legs an inch high. When placed on the stove the legs made a space between the oven and the stove that greatly retarded the cooking. All the food for twelve children had to be cooked in this way.

There were no chairs. The matron hoped that no visitors would come, as she could not ask them to sit down.

To add to these trials, whooping cough broke out among the children soon after their removal to the new Home, and Miss Hyde had very little rest for some weeks. One good thing eventuated from this sickness, however, for Miss Rutter was transferred from Oodnadatta to assist the over-worked matron and, except for a short time spent at Swan Reach, she has been the devoted second Sister of the Home since that time.

Gradually prayer was answered and the necessary furniture came. One great need was a sewing machine. The children were just as earnest as the Sisters in praying for this. One day a cheque came, with a note to say that the money was for a machine. Rita was in the room when Sister Hyde opened the letter, and heard her say fervently, "Praise God, here is the sewing machine." The girl ran outside to be the first to take the good news to the other children.

"Come quick and see," she shouted, "God has sent us a machine." They ran excitedly in to see the machine that must, surely, have dropped down from the skies, and their disappointed faces were a study when they saw nothing but a piece of paper in Sister's hand. Not until that insignificant slip of paper had been exchanged for a Singer drop-head machine did they have any joy in that answer to prayer.

In answer to prayer a new stove came to replace the

small Dover, the house was made more comfortable with beds, tables, chairs, curtains, cooking utensils, and dishes, and the washing was made easier by gifts of copper, tubs, and wringer. No money was spent on such things unless specially ear-marked, as all monetary donations were needed to buy food; so each gift as it came was accepted as a real love-gift from their Father in Heaven in answer to definite prayer.

Clothing comes under the same category. Not six-pence of the Home funds has been spent on clothes. Every garment worn during these nine years has come as a special gift. Several Christian Endeavour Societies have given valuable help by undertaking to clothe a child, sending parcels for their own special child each half-year. It is amusing to see the air of possessive pride with which the children open the parcels.

"My ladies sent me these things," they will say.

New or secondhand clothing, if left in the Adelaide Office of the Mission, is sent to Quorn freight free, by courtesy of the Chief Protector of Aborigines.

Another important item in the Home is wood. Sisters and children have walked miles to bring in armfuls of sticks for the kitchen fire, and a gift of firewood is a very welcome boon.

They were praying for wood at one time, when Sister, standing at the front door, saw a wagon coming up the road loaded with wood. She was just wishing that it might be for them, when the children saw it and called out, "Here comes the wood, Sister." They had no doubt of its destination, for had they not been asking the Lord for it only that morning? Yes, it was for them. It turned in at the Home gate, and the driver said, "I thought I would bring you a load of wood, Sister."

With so many little mouths to feed, jam is another constant need. At one time, when the supply of jam was getting low and they were in prayer for more, Sister Hyde was met by a woman in the street who said to her, "Oh, Sister, would you like some pie melons? I have some, if they would be of any use to you." The next day they

had a supply of freshly-made melon jam on the table.

Another time, as she emptied the last pot of jam for the children's tea, Miss Hyde lifted up her heart in prayer for more jam for the next meal; and that day a case of fruit came from a person who had never before contributed! to the Home.

One of the Home children, writing of a time of special prayer, gives us a picture of the kind of prayer training they are receiving. Incidentally, too, it goes to explain how this Home has been enabled to continue without any subsidy, or without any other method than prayer, of raising the funds. Such importunate prayer as we have described in this letter *must* have an answer. The child writes :

"To-day we have made it a special matter of prayer. Every two hours Sister Hyde would ring a bell and we would leave whatever we were doing and go into our room in little separate groups, and have a little quiet time in prayer and reading God's Word. We always pray for all the missionaries, and for our Council in Adelaide, and all the kind people in other towns who help us by sending food and clothing. We do feel that we have a lot to thank God for. He is supplying our daily food every day, and He knows just what we need before we ask Him. It is most lovely to think that God loves black boys and girls as well as white ones. We do praise Him because He first loved us. We will never forget you dear, kind people, who are helping us boys and girls in the Home."

When the number of children had grown to eighteen, there was need for a larger dormitory, and after earnest prayer, in which, as usual, the children joined, the money came and the room was built. Writing of this answer to prayer, Rita says:

"just a few lines to thank you all for helping us to pray for more room, so that we can have more children in the Home to learn about the Lord Jesus Christ, who died that we might have eternal life and that we can all go to heaven. I have got a sister named Bessie. God has answered my prayer in sending her to the Home. I have

got to pray for my other sister to come in and learn about the Lord Jesus. I do thank God for sending His Son to die on the cross for me, and that I might have everlasting life."

It is good to hear the comments of the children themselves on these answers to their prayers.

"Stand still and see
The victories thy God will gain for thee.
So silent, so irresistible.
Thy God shall do the thing impossible."

A few years passed, and once again the Mission was confronted with a move. There were now nearly thirty children in the Home, and the place was far too small for the growing family. If others were to come, there must be more room for them; so again the need was laid before the Lord, this time the prayer being for a Home that should meet any requirements for future expansion.

The writer well remembers a time spent at Colebrook Home during the time of prayer for larger premises. One evening the children were called in for prayer, each one having been instructed to learn a verse of Scripture dealing with the subject, to recite at the meeting.

The bell rang, and the children came into the room that served as kitchen, dining-room, ironing room, and general living room. To see the many uses to which it was put was sufficient evidence of the need for a new Home.

Miss Hyde was in charge of the meeting. She drew out the spirit of reverence, inherent in native people, by leading the thoughts of her little ones to the Saviour, and what He had done for them. Then, still with that reverent atmosphere, they had a season of singing.

The Colebrook singing has become famous in the Mission. Nothing pleases the children more than to gather around the little organ and sing hymn after hymn. They know by heart dozens of hymns and choruses, and a number of chapters of Scripture.

As they sang our eyes wandered around the group, and we pictured each child as he had been when first he came to the Mission Home. We could see again, in

memory, the frightened, wild little faces, the dishevelled hair, the expression of blank ignorance, almost stupidity, that had characterised them then.

Now, what a change had been wrought by the grace of God! Faces eager and full of animation, eyes sparkling with health and happiness, voices raised in songs of praise to Him who had called them out of darkness into His marvellous light—such they were now, and our hearts followed their voices in praise for what He had done.

Singing over and Scripture verses recited, each head was bowed as they all joined audibly in prayer. Naturally and simply, without any hesitancy, each voice took up the theme of prayer. Knowing that God, who desires that His children everywhere approach Him with the faith of a little child, would not fail to answer this prayer of perfect, childish trust, we believed that the Home for which they prayed would be given in His time.

After the meeting, the children went to bed. But the spirit of the prayer was still with them. The matron, hearing voices in the dormitory, looked in and saw half a dozen little girls kneeling up in their beds having a time of supplementary prayer. One was just saying, ". . . and please, dear Lord Jesus, give us a bigger Home, so that lots more boys and girls can come here to learn about You."

The present Colebrook Home, with its wide spaces and its roomy verandahs, is a direct answer to those prayers for a "bigger home." It cost over six hundred pounds, all of which has come in without personal solicitations, by those whose hearts God has touched with this great need of caring for the half-caste children.

"Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds." Ps. 36: 5.

Chapter Seven.

Two More from "Out-back."

On their first trip "Out-West," the missionaries caught a glimpse of a lubra with three little girls, the youngest a baby in arms. They soon disappeared into the bush, at the instigation, as the missionaries afterwards learned, of the children's father. This man was, perhaps, the most bitterly antagonistic of all the station people to the messengers of the Cross. He would not stay to speak to them, but went off and hid himself in the bush until they had returned to Oodnadatta.

The Sisters longed to have the two elder girls, who had sweet little faces, but the attitude of the father gave them scant hope. However, these children were placed on their prayer list, and they looked to the Lord to send them in.

Two years passed by. Miss Lock had left the North and the new Home had been established in Oodnadatta.

One day Miss Harris and Miss Hyde were at dinner when they heard a buggy draw up outside. They went to see who their visitors might be, and they were surprised to see this family from "Out-West" for whom they had been praying.

In the front seat of a dusty buggy was the white man with the lubra and a little month-old baby. In the back seat were the three little girls whom they had seen before.

In a matter-of-fact voice the man said that he had brought his little girls to the Mission and would be glad if they would have the lubra for a few days as well until he was ready to go back.

Only waiting for an affirmative reply, he proceeded to fling off the blankets and baggage they had used on their journey, and then he drove off and left them all standing outside the Mission House. It would be difficult to describe the joy of the missionaries at this signal answer to prayer. There had been no sign of friendliness towards them, they could see no reason why this man

should have suddenly decided to give them the children ; but whatever might be the outward reason for the change, they knew that God had given them two more little ones to train for Him.

The children were sights to behold. They wore galatea dresses so long that they tripped over them as they walked. The poor mother had done her best to prepare her girls for entrance into Mission life, and was rather proud of the long dresses. The first thing was to give them a bath and to wash off the dirt of a young lifetime from body and hair.

The mother hardly recognised them when they came out to her sweet and clean, with hair curled and wearing new frocks. She was induced to let the baby have the same strange experience of a bath.

A few days later the father returned to take the lubra and the two younger children back to the bush. At sight of the transformation wrought in his children he sat down in the Mission kitchen and bowed his face in his hands, great tears trickling down his cheeks.

"Sister," he said, "they are just everything to me. I don't know how I can part with them, but I know it is the best thing for them."

They stood and watched the buggy go off out of sight, praying that God would yet send them the other little ones it was bearing away. They could not tell what might be the thoughts of these girlies as they saw the last of their parents, and the last link with their old life going out of their sight. Whatever they thought, they could not express themselves to the missionaries, for they knew no word of English. They were very shy, but gave no trouble.

Three months after this, the Home family moved to Quorn, and these little new-comers went to school with the others. The younger one was an exceptionally bright child. She soon learned not only English, but the spirit of Christian love in the Home. Nine months after they had driven up to the Oodnadatta Mission House this child came home from school and said to the matron, "Sister,

tell a girl about Jesus."

Miss Hyde hardly realised that the little girl knew about Jesus herself in the short time she had been able to understand what was said to her. The child went on:

"I said to a girl at school, 'Do you know about Jesus?' and she said, 'You tell me some story about what you learn.' So I said to her, 'Jesus loves you,' and the little girl said, 'I want to love Jesus too.' "

How is that for an attempt at soul-winning, on the part of a little six-year-old child who had known nothing of the Saviour herself until a few months before?

They had been in the Home two years when their father wrote to the matron asking that they might go home for the Christmas holidays, and enclosing" the money for their fare. She was perturbed at the thought of these dear little ones going back to the life they had left, even though it was only for a holiday, and it was with many prayers for their spiritual and physical safety that she packed their things and let them go. '

When they came to her two years before, they had nothing but the dresses they wore. Now they were going back with a good supply of clothing, nice little new frocks, underwear, shoes and socks. In their suitcases were their brushes and combs, toothbrushes, towels, and last but not least, their Bibles.

No anxious mother could have admonished a departing child more than Sister did these little ones.

"You won't forget to say your prayers, will you?" "You won't forget to sing for Jesus?" "You will say your grace before meals?" "Keep your clothes nice. Don't let them get too dirty before you change them, and try to get someone to wash them for you." "Don't forget to clean your teeth and do your hair." And so on, and so on.

They went back in the train, excited at the thought of the long journey and the meeting with their father and mother. The father had come to Oodnadatta to fetch them, but it was some days after their arrival before he was sober enough to take them home, and they had to stay at the mission house with the missionaries while they

waited. Perhaps he was not sober then, for on the way out the things were not roped on securely enough, and some of the children's new clothes were lost.

They were to have stayed a month. But a fortnight later the father brought them back to Oodnadatta ready for the south train. One could scarcely credit the change that a fortnight had wrought. The children were dirty and ragged, their spare clothing had been lost, their faces wore a look of haunting fear that spoke eloquently of the things they had seen and heard, both in their father's home and in the native camp.

He brought them back. "Sister," he said, "I am ashamed to think that I took them out there. I will never take them there again. I am just amazed at what the Mission has done for them in such a little time. They are too nice and too well behaved to go back with me. That kind of life isn't good enough for them. And if the Mission can do that for them, they shall have the others too."

He looked at them, troubled at the change that had come into their appearance in a fortnight, and continued, "I could see they were beginning to lose their nice ways, and I wouldn't let them stay out there to be ruined." He loved his children, but could give them no home life. The mother, a full-blood aboriginal, knew nothing but camp life and could not speak English. What chance had the children under such conditions? Add to these natural drawbacks the fact that vice stalked open and unashamed in those places, and that the worst sins of both blacks and whites were perpetrated before them, and it will readily be seen why the Mission is so anxious to bring half-caste children away and give them a good moral training.

He kept his word. Six years have passed since he saw them last, but no other attempt has been made to take them home. And we now have the younger brother and sister as well.

The visitor heard voices in the Home dining-room, and peeped in to see what was going on. Three girls were

seated at the table intent on some work which could not be seen from the door, so the visitor went forward to the table. The eldest of the three, a big girl of sixteen with a very dark face, was pushing little coloured balls along a frame and counting them as she moved them, under the direction of a bright young half-caste girl of fourteen, while another curly little girl watched the proceedings with interest, and tried to count the balls.

The visitor stood waiting to hear the lesson, but the young teacher blushed with embarrassment, and the scholar put her head down on the table and giggled and squirmed; so the visitor took pity on their shyness and left them to their counting.

The teacher was the girl who, eight years before, had made her first sweet, little attempt at winning her school-mate to love Jesus. She had gained her Q.C. Certificate the year previous, and was now helping with the work of the Home.

Ada, her scholar, was one of three children who had recently come down from Barrow Creek. Her half-caste father had heard of Colebrook Home as a place where native children are trained and cared for, and he coveted its teaching for his own three wild, ignorant youngsters. Ada could scarcely be called a child any longer, but she was entirely ignorant and he wanted her to learn something of housecraft.

He wrote to the Sisters, asking if they would take his children, and promising to pay their fares to Quorn and to provide for their maintenance while there.

There is a law that half-caste children are not to be taken from one State to another. We have yet to see the value of a law which is broken every day, for the black mothers carry their half-caste children across the border without knowing that there is such a thing as a border, or a law either, while the white fathers who care for their half-caste children do the same.

Yet, a few years ago, when Miss Lock took a little sick half-caste girl from Central Australia into the Northern Territory for medical attention at Darwin, which

she could not get any nearer, keeping her there a fortnight before she brought her right back to the home of her tribe, she was fined three pounds for breaking this inexplicable law, which probably she did not know existed. The Methodist minister, who kindly gave her a ride in his motor car as far as the railway at Katharine, was fined thirty shillings for aiding her in the criminal action.

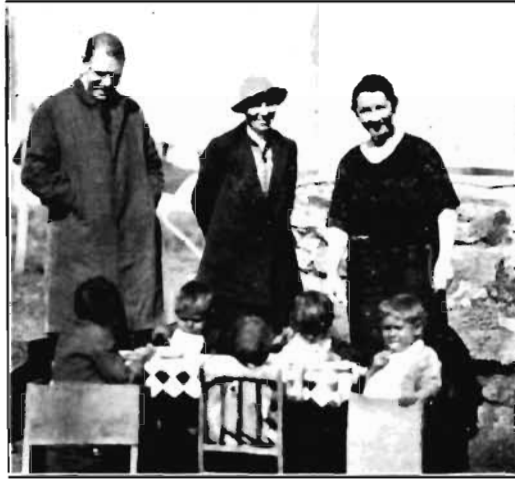
The father at Barrow Creek, however, obtained the written permission of the police at Alice Springs for his children to travel to Quorn, which explains why we have three Central Australian children in a South Australian Home.

We have to shut our ears to the cry of numbers of other needy little ones from Central Australia. Not only half-caste children have been kept from the Home by this law. Miss Lock rescued a full-blood child in Central Australia from certain starvation. She was in a most pitiable plight when the missionary found her. For nearly two years she was lovingly cared for, and by that time she was able to run about on strong little legs that were useless to her when she first met Miss Lock. When the missionary was to return to South Australia she wished to bring with her the six children whom she had taken and saved in the same way, but the law against transporting half-castes forbade her. These she placed in the Home for half-castes in Alice Springs. The little full-blood child could not be admitted there, and the missionary sought permission to bring her to Colebrook Home. The permission was refused, and the child had to go back to the camp where there was no one to care for her. We wonder if she is alive to-day.

Well, we thank God for those we have, among them the three from Barrow Creek. Their father is the only man who pays anything for the keep of his children. He entirely provides for them at the Home. They could not, of course, speak English. The younger girl and the boy went to school at Quorn, with a view to helping them to pick up something of the lessons until they were able to grasp the language. The older girl was too old to go to



Colebrook Home. Quorn, 1935.



Sisters Hyde and Rutter and Visitor, with
Colebrook Home Babies.



Daisy, of the U.A.M. Home, Bomaderry
N.S.W.

school and sit in the infants' class, so our Q.C. girlie was given the task of teaching her at home.

Her young teacher is managing this work so well that the Sisters begin to have visions of some of their children acting as teachers to the next generation of aboriginal children. It is a well-known fact that the natives are the best teachers of their own people.

One of our Quorn girls (half-caste) went to help the missionaries at Nepabunna, a Mission Station in the Flinders Ranges. She was given a class in the Mission Sunday School, and the missionary said afterwards that she herself could not explain the lesson as well as this girl did. She understood so well the mind of the native, and just how to express herself to the understanding of a native child.

It was only six years since she had been a wild little girl in a native camp until the day when the Oodnadatta policeman had come to take her away to the Mission.

What a strange world it had been after that! She was taken to the native camp at Oodnadatta that some sort of a garment might be put on her naked little body to make her presentable to the missionaries. Clothes were not much more abundant at the camp than they had been on her own back, and it was some time before a boy's shirt was found for her, the owner having to go bare-backed while his one garment was worn by the little girl. Then one of the lubras took her up the street to the house where the missionaries lived.

She had never been in a house before, and did not like the restriction of the four walls any more than she liked the bath that the missionaries gave her, or the much brushing that was given her wiry, tangled hair before it was made smooth. She could not understand a word of what was said to her, and nobody could understand what she was saying. Yes, it was a strange world indeed, until the wonderful new experience of being loved warmed her heart and brought out a response of affection to these women who were so kind to her.

She had been seven years old then, when she came

in her ignorance and dirt to the mission house, and she knew better than the missionary did how to teach other children as ignorant as she had been. The only emotion she had known at that time had been fear — fear of the dark, fear of the departed spirits, fear of the terrible kerdaitcher man. She remembered how that primitive emotion of fear had gradually faded away under the care and protection of the Mission Home, and how the thought of a loving Father in Heaven had come to her as sweet antidote to any returning fears. She knew, better than the missionary, how to apply that balm to the fearful hearts of the camp children, and to place their little feet on the heavenly path.

So we trust that God will use some of our children to be missionaries and teachers to the Aborigines, and to give back to Him in loving service to others something of what the Missions Sisters have given to them.

Chapter Eight.

Ethel.

"My soul rejoices to pursue
The steps of Him I love,
Till glory breaks upon my view
In brighter worlds above."

—Cowper.

Camp visitation is an important part of the Mission work at Oodnadatta. In the church the natives listen patiently enough to the message, but when questioned about it afterwards it is apparent that they have understood but little. The "one-by-one" method of dealing with them in their own camps is more effective than the preached word.

Their wurlies are made of cast-off rubbish from the town, too low to allow one to stand upright in them, and too small to be healthy homes for a family, not to mention the mangy dogs that are attached to every camp.

One lubra made a little wurlie for herself, but she had so many dogs that by the time they had crowded in, there was no room for her. So she slept outside with her head in a box for protection against the weather, while the dogs retained undisturbed possession of the wurlie.

With the terrific heat of a tropical summer, the reek of unwashed human bodies, and the inevitable vermin, the missionaries found the wurlies almost unbearable; yet often it was necessary for them to crawl into them and attend to some sick native lying on the ground, or a newborn babe that had arrived in a world that gave it little sympathy.

Nothing but the love of Christ constraining them could have held them to such work, yet gladly they went forward. For His sake they counted it all joy to serve Him in the most trying circumstances, so that they might minister to the souls of the natives.

When first the Mission started at Oodnadatta they were met with a varied reception by the people. Some were glad to see them and proud to be noticed by them, Others were apathetic and would not put themselves to the trouble of speaking to the missionaries; for the native takes no pains to hide his feelings or to be polite if he does not want to. A few were openly hostile.

One such was old Jenny. She hated the missionaries and did not try to hide it. When they came to the camps and gathered the natives around them for Bible stories and prayer, Jenny would sit scornfully by her wurlie and spit at the name of Jesus, to show her contempt for the new teaching. The old customs were good enough for her; she wanted none of these new ways.

There lived with Jenny a bright young full-blood girl of ten years, her cherished granddaughter Ethel, the only child of her parents and the idol of their hearts.

When old Jenny refused to hear the message of the Cross, Ethel would creep out and listen, drinking in the words of the missionary. She seemed, in her childish way, to be trying to make up for the discourtesy of her grandmother, for she always had a smile of welcome for them

and a pleasant word as they drew near. She soon learned to sing the Gospel choruses, and she regularly attended all the services at the church.

Gradually the old woman's antipathy faded. Perhaps her fondness for the little girl made her more tolerant towards Ethel's white friends. Almost imperceptibly she became more friendly herself, until she began to watch for their coming as eagerly as the child herself. She would then sit quietly listening to the Gospel stories, and when she saw that some of her people could not understand the English she would take the picture book and explain it to them herself.

Now that her confidence in God's servants had been Avon, it was not long before she gave the love of her poor, starved old heart to the Master whom they served, and in her old age, nearing the grave as she was, Jenny found peace.

Little Ethel left Oodnadatta to go with her parents to a cattle station about a hundred miles away. A hundred miles is as nothing to these people. There were many natives camping at that place. Ethel sang to them the Gospel choruses she had learned at the Mission, and before long she had taught them to sing them too.

Up at the homestead the mistress heard the strange sound of hymn-singing at the camp. She had once sung Gospel choruses herself, and the sound brought back a flood of memories to her. She caught the melody and began to hum the tunes, and from that she went on to singing until in the house, as well as in the camp, there were sounds of praise to Christ.

Ethel had no thought of taking the role of instructor. She sang out of the pure joy of her own Christ-filled soul, and everyone else caught the infection and sang too.

Meanwhile, the great change had been made at Oodnadatta. Miss' Hyde, with her twelve little charges, had gone to Quorn, and Miss Delia Rutter had taken her place in the Mission House, which was now used only as a residence for missionaries. Miss Rutter's home was in England. She had come to Australia intending to return

in five years to her own people, but the call of God to the aborigines came, and she put aside the natural longings for her own home and stayed in the land of her adoption to minister to its primitive people.

Oodnadatta was her first mission field, her previous work having been in the Children's Home in N.S.W. She soon grew to love the natives, especially old Jenny, who was now growing in grace and learning to trust the Lord.

One day when going the rounds of the camp, Miss Rutter found Jenny very ill. She did what she could for the old lubra, making her as comfortable as her miserable surroundings would permit, and then she said:

"Would you like me to pray for you?"

"Oh, yes," said Jenny, "you pray 'long that Good One up there.' "

"Shall I ask Him to make you better?"

The sick woman said, "Yes," and attentively followed the prayer. As she looked down at the drawn, wrinkled old face with its mop of dirty, tangled hair, the missionary felt that it would not be long before the Lord took old Jenny to Himself. Death seemed to be on its way.

The next morning, very early, the old lubra was up at the Mission House, her face shining with joy.

"Oh, Jenny," exclaimed the missionary, "are you better?"

"Yes, Sister," was the reply. "You prayed 'long that Good One up there.' He came along all shining, touched me, made me well." There could be no doubt that the Lord had appeared to Jenny in a dream or a vision, and had laid His healing touch on her in answer to prayer.

Once more the Mission staff was changed. Miss Rutter went to Quorn to help Miss Hyde with her large family, and Mr. Will Wade and his bride, nee Miss Harris, had charge of the Oodnadatta work.

To the Mission house, two years after the opening of this chapter, came Ethel with her father and mother. The girl was now twelve years old. She was very thin, but the same light of love shone in her eyes, and she was still devoted to her Saviour.

Her parents were troubled about her. She was beginning to attract the attention of the white men and they wanted to keep her for her proper tribal husband. Would the missionaries keep her with them, and let her go to school? Yes, they would certainly do that, they said, but why not send Ethel to Colebrook Home, where she would be quite safe and well cared for.

At first the parents demurred over this suggestion. They felt that in Quorn she would be too far away from them. If she stayed in Oodnadatta they could see her sometimes. But the missionaries prevailed on them to allow her to go, with the promise that she should come back when it was time for her to marry her tribal husband.

Every little aboriginal girl has her husband allotted to her from birth, and to marry another man would be as great a crime against their law as it would be for us to flout any of our country's laws. The Mission does not attempt to interfere with these aboriginal laws. Ethel, being a full-blood native girl, must return to her people for the normal life of the native.

The missionaries rejoiced to see their little favourite, on the train, en route for Quorn. They knew that in the shelter of the Home she would be better cared for than even in the Mission House at Oodnadatta. The parents waited at the rail town for news of their absent one, and great was the rejoicing when, some weeks later, a letter came to them, written by Ethel herself, who could not write a word before she left Oodnadatta. That letter was a most treasured possession.

About this time, the old grandmother went to be with the Lord. Mr. Wade attended her in her last hours, and she died trusting Jesus, though she had never completely thrown off her old superstitions. It is hard for these old people of the camps to drop the beliefs which are ingrained in their very nature, but we know that many of them have that simple faith in Christ that accepts His pardoning grace while still believing in the things they were taught in childhood. Missionaries who have been privileged to uplift the Cross of Calvary before these dying people have

testified that at the last it was to Jesus they turned their eyes. The old beliefs have slipped away in the glory of the approaching mansions, in that better land where there are no distinctions of colour.

Now let us follow Ethel to Quorn, where an altogether 'different life awaited her from anything she had known "before. She did not feel strange, for she knew Sister Hyde and most of the children, but it must have been a strange experience to her to have to sit in school and learn lessons, she who had been used to running about like a little wild thing in the camp. She had to go in the infants' class and learn her sounds with them.

But she was eager to learn all she could, and in the Home she delighted the Sisters by her bright, happy disposition. It was a joy to her to be in the company of those who loved her Lord, for she had a real and lasting spiritual experience, and nothing pleased her better than to talk or sing of Christ. She loved to take part in the meetings with the other children.

A couple of extracts from missionaries' letters will give an idea of the kind of meetings they have at Colebrook Home. The first is from Mrs. A. Wyld, who says: "The singing of the children is something that one could never grow tired of hearing, and best of all, it is always spiritual songs they sing. It is really inspiring to hear them. A few Sundays ago eight of the little ones did not go to church, so they asked, 'Could they have Junior Endeavour on their own?' It was wonderful to see them going through the meeting, especially as they did not know someone was watching them. They had singing, then one to pray, then they quoted a few verses of Scripture. It was all done so reverently, and if by chance any of the boys were not quite as good as they ought to be, they were instantly reprov'd by one of the leaders — themselves not more than seven years of age. Then they sang, 'Jesus Loves Me,' and when they came to 'Yes, Jesus loves me. the Bible tells me so,' they seemed to put such feeling into it that I thought of the words referred to by Jesus in Matt. 21 : 16, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise.' "

The other extract is from a letter of Miss Elsie Tyler during her time of service at Colebrook: "You would have enjoyed our meeting on Sunday evening had you been present. The children all took part. Evelyn was in charge. Even the babies were allowed to sit up and were quite prepared, as Sister Hyde had said all must do something. Each one was asked what he or she would do. Some sang, some prayed, others repeated Scripture. Stephen, aged three, got a start with his chorus before anyone could give him the note, and ended with a grunt. We had all we could do to keep from laughing out. When he finished everyone gave him a clap. Each of the wee ones sang a chorus, and did so well. Evelyn read Gen. 22: 1-14, and gave a very clear explanation of it. It was a most enjoyable time, and the Sisters sat back and did nothing. We have many times like this, as they are a blessedly happy crowd." (Evelyn was one of the native children.)

That was the sort of thing that pleased Ethel most, and there was plenty of it, for the children all love singing and services.

Usually a new child takes some time to overcome his shyness sufficiently to take part in the meetings, but Ethel entered into the spirit of the Home at once, and was always ready to give a testimony of the Lord's goodness to her.

The Sisters, hearing her, and seeing the light in her face as she spoke of her Redeemer, visualised a time when she would be gathering some of her own people together to tell them of Him. Surely, they said among themselves. God was preparing this dear girl for something better than camp life. Surely she would be a missionary some day.

God was indeed preparing Ethel for something better than an aboriginal camp, and was preparing for her, too. a better place than her father's wurlie. He had chosen this child in the furnace of affliction, and was to be honoured by her testimony, not by preaching, but by patient suffering.

She had not been at the Home very long before she showed signs of lung trouble. There was little doubt that

she had the disease before she left Oodnadatta, for in a few months at Quorn it had developed so rapidly as to make her a danger to the other children.

What was to be done with her? There was no way of isolating a patient at the Home, and the other children must be safeguarded. She must go away at once.

Permission to bring her to Adelaide for hospital treatment was refused on the ground that "if we started to bring these people to the Adelaide Hospital we would soon have it full of them." We were enjoined to send her back to Oodnadatta. Well, the Mission knew that at that place there were no means of caring for her, and it was with deep sadness that she was sent back.

On her return the missionaries took the poor, weary, little girl into their Home to await the coming of her parents, who had been sent for as soon as it was known that she was coming.

The parents came hurrying back on hearing the news, and were shocked to see the wasted form, the thin, sunken cheeks of their darling. In their ignorance they attributed her condition to the kind of food she had had at the Home, and they announced their intention of taking her away.

"She too thin," they said. "She want bush tucker."

The missionaries, who had so lovingly tended her, were now no longer allowed to do anything for her. Jealously the parents guarded her from the smallest attention. They took her back to the camp, and from that time they never permitted the missionaries to be alone with her, or to do anything to help her. She had no invalid's food, but just the damper and black tea that the other natives ate.

Several times Mr. Wade endeavoured to see her, and each time he went to her wurlie he saw a black doctor leaving it. What the man had been doing to the poor girl he did not know, but she was so utterly exhausted by his treatment that she lay unable to move or to speak.

The only thing that the missionaries could do for her through that heart-breaking time was to give her the pleasure of music. They would go up near her wurlie to

hold their services, so that she could listen to the choruses she had so much loved. At such times she would send out a message asking for her favourites, "Sing Them Over Again to Me" and "Some Day I Shall Be Like Him."

And thus, lying on the ground in a vermin-infested camp; with dogs crowding around her; an ignorant witch doctor worrying her with brutal treatment; without proper food or care; with no vestige of comfort; and denied the spiritual help that had been so precious to her, this Christian girl of twelve years passed seven long weeks, until the Lord took her home.

One day someone came running and told the missionaries that Ethel was "close-up finish," and even as they hastened to the camp they heard the sudden piercing wail that told that the end had come.

Mrs. Wade tells the rest of this sad story.

"At 3.30 we were at the camp, and a pitiable sight was witnessed. We saw a man undergoing most severe treatment and handling from the other men. His hands were turned backwards and forwards, fingers the same, then he was bumped about vigorously, then covered with a blanket. This was the custom of the tribe. The nearest relative of the dead they almost kill.

"We turned our attention to the others, and there was the grief-stricken mother and a crowd of women wailing out their grief. It was difficult to get the mother from the body. How our hearts ached for them!

"Only a limited number were allowed to go to the grave, the rest stayed and wailed in the camp. Oh, the helpless misery, the hopelessness and darkness manifest in that camp as we left it.

"We claimed the victory of Calvary for that service, and as the body was placed in the grave the Christian service conducted, we rejoiced to talk of Ethel's entrance into Glory.

"As we visited the camp that afternoon, we saw, and still see, men and women with yellow faces, women with hair plastered with pipe clay, and signs of native corroborees for the dead.

"It is five weeks since Ethel's death, and still they mourn. What effect has this had on our work?"

"Words cannot really express. The parents are most bitter against us, and blame us for their girl's death. They have turned the natives against us. The camps are broken up and scattered so that it is difficult to reach the people at all and almost impossible to get them to a service.

"Some might say, surely it was not worth while giving that girl a chance. But to know that she was indeed a child of God and is now in His presence, saved from darkness and superstition of her people calls forth praise.

"It certainly was worth while, and we shall yet see God triumphing in our midst, and the opposition to us and the Gospel broken down, but only *as you pray.*"

Chapter Nine.

Bruce.

"We want the young for Jesus;
Be this our best employ.
No mission could be nobler,
Or fraught with sweeter joy.
For e'en the tiniest jewel
Shall shine in Jesus' crown,
And sparkle there for ever
When time itself has flown."

Fanny, the native goatherd, went out each day from the camp at Oodnadatta to mind goats for the local policeman, taking three-year-old Bruce with her.

Happy enough was he, playing all day by his mother's side, and helping her to drive home the goats in the cool of the evening. Bruce's father was a white man. The constable told the missionaries that he should not be growing up in ignorance in a native camp, so Bruce was placed on their prayer list as one whom the Lord would give them for training.

One day the goats were late, and their owner went

to look for them. He found Fanny slowly driving them home, with Bruce on her back and a newly-born infant in her arms.

For a week she camped under a tree near the town, and every day the missionaries — at that time Miss Rutter and Mrs. Eaton — took food to her, made from extra rations allowed by the police.

Sunday came. Miss Rutter left the Mission House early, to see Fanny before the morning service, and on her way to the lonely camp she heard that the little one was dead. She hastened to the spot, sending a lubra back to the Mission House for clothes in which to bury the little corpse.

The poor mother was sadly lamenting her baby, while Bruce looked wonderingly on.

The native men were all away for corroboree, and the missionary was in a quandary. Who was to dig the grave? She was quite prepared to do it herself if need be, for missionaries are used to turning their hands to anything in an emergency, but she naturally wished there were a man about to relieve her of the necessity.

While praying for guidance she looked up and saw a strange native man approaching. God, who had seen the need before it arose, had directed him to the spot. In answer to Miss Rutter's request that he dig the grave, he replied, "Yes, me do it all right," and he did it.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Eaton had conducted the service in the church, and the two women held a simple burial service over the little baby, and laid it to rest.

When the men returned from their corroboree the whole camp was moved three miles away, for even a baby's spirit is regarded with superstitious fear.

Bruce was suffering from that scourge of the North, sandy blight. Miss Rutter asked his mother to leave him behind when she went with the goats, so that his eyes might have attention.

One morning, on going to the camp, she found Bruce there, trying to shield his poor eyes from the light.

"Did Fanny leave him here for me to look after him?" she asked a lubra.

"No," was the reply, "Fanny said him sit down along-Mission now." which meant that Fanny had decided to let him live at the Mission.

That was what the missionaries most desired, but they were too wise to take him themselves.

"We will have him when you bring him," Miss Rutter said, as she went away. Soon afterwards a lubra brought the child to the Mission House. Gladly the missionaries took him in, gave him a bath, and kept him contented and happy all day; but in the evening the lubra returned, saying, "Fanny come home, want Bruce." And back he went to the camp.

The following day little Bruce was left in the camp, and the old lubra explained that he had cried so much to go back to the missionaries that Fanny did not want him any more.

"Fanny not want him now. Him sit down all time long Mission." And that night Fanny herself brought him to the missionaries, saying, "Him sit down all time 'long here." Thus was Bruce placed in the care of the Mission.

From the first he was quite satisfied with his new life, delighting to hear the Bible stories that the Sisters told him. He loved a picture of the Good Samaritan that hung on the wall. "That man *bega* (sick)," he would say. He was well used to seeing *bega* men. and women too. lying helpless and unheeded on the ground, though he was too young to see the significance of the priest and the Levite who passed by on the other side.

While Bruce was still in the Mission House Fanny took ill, refusing the food that the missionaries took to her. She lay in her miserable wurlie, her malady fast becoming serious through her abstinence of nourishment. The missionaries were troubled and perplexed. They went to prayer about it, and it was revealed to both of them that "black-fellow magic" was at the bottom of the trouble. The next morning Mrs. Eaton went alone to the camp, and after a quiet talk won the sick girl's confidence. Fanny confessed that she had been boned, and declared that she would die of the curse.

A native with a grudge against her had cursed a piece of bone and had stolen up to her camp at night and placed it where she would see it in the morning. She was sure that nothing could save her from death. Her food would be poison, the air she breathed would be charged with evil, and there was no way of averting the curse. So she went back to her wurlie and lay down to die.

The missionary tried to allay the girl's fears by saying that the bone had no power to harm her, but Fanny had known the power of this superstition too intimately to be disillusioned by anything that a white woman might say. From childhood she had trembled with fear at every mention of the dreaded "kerdaitcher man" and his death bone. She had known many of her people to have been "boned," and in every case death followed. The victim had lain down in utter despair, only to be carried out of his wurlie to the grave. Now it was her turn. No use to tell her that the bone had no power. The white woman did not know everything.

Vainly the missionary attempted to point her to the Omnipotent One who had power greater than that of the "kerdaitcher man," and who could save her from the grip of her terror. Fanny had never heeded the message of the Cross, and now in her need she was unable to find comfort and help there.

So her visitor had to leave her in her misery. What could be done? The two women prayed for wisdom. It was a wrestling against spirits of wickedness in high places, for the immortal soul of a native woman.

Miss Rutter went to the camp the next day with a pot of antiphlogistine. With much ostentation she made a plaster and put it on Fanny's body.

"Leave it on," she said, "until it wears off by itself. When it comes off you will be better."

She left the patient with something of the look of woe replaced by a more peaceful expression in the big

brown eyes. Would it work? Continually they prayed, for they well knew that the evil one would not easily relinquish his victim.

But hope had returned to Fanny. She began to eat her food, her strength revived, and a fortnight later, when the dried plaster dropped off her body, she walked out of her wurlie a healed woman.

Meanwhile, our little laddie Bruce had left Oodnadatta and had gone to be one of the inmates of Colebrook Home.

It is night time. Sister Rutter, now stationed at the home at Quorn, is seeing the boys to bed.

First they wash their hands, faces, and feet in an enclosure called, by courtesy, "the boys' wash room," using for their ablutions some separator bowls sent by a friend in Adelaide. How very useful those bowls are! Some are used in the laundry for washing clothes, some in the bathroom for washing children, some in the house for washing floors. People ask us what they can send to Colebrook Home, and we say, "Anything." We are grateful for anything strong and serviceable, be it clothing, furniture, crockery, or separator bowls. All find a use.

So the boys get washed ready for bed, while across the verandah we hear the girls chattering in *their* "wash-room," as they clean the dust off their hands and faces before going to bed.

Then into the dormitory, and Sister patiently sits on a bed while the little boys undress, which they do by jerks and starts, having a thrust at one another and a gay laugh while they do it. The liveliest of them all is Bruce.

The others are standing in their pyjamas waiting to say their prayers, but Bruce is having a bit of fun on his own, butting his blankets and pillows until you wonder however he will set into them. At last all are ready. They kneel on the floor by their beds and say, all

together, "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child."

Prayers over, there is a wild rush to see which one is in bed first, and merry little Bruce has to be sorted out of his tumbled blankets and tucked in.

"How many boys are there in the Home?" someone asks. They all know quite well, but it is a good excuse to pop up their heads and sit up to count the beds in the room. Some are empty, as the older boys are still in the dining-room doing their homework. The little ones count eleven beds, and decide that there are eleven boys in the Home.

"No, twelve," says one, "'cos David's a boy." David sleeps in the nursery.

"No, thirteen," cries out Bruce, "'cos Peter's a boy."

Peter, the pet lamb, is so much an inmate of the Home that, of course, he has to be included in the count, and the remark gives Bruce an excellent excuse for standing up in his bed with a dark grey blanket wrapped all around him.

He is put back again, once more tucked up, and Sister leaves them with a last injunction to "be good boys and not make a noise." She goes back to the sitting room, where she is valiantly trying to knit a bootie for baby Joy.

Ten minutes pass, and then comes a small, pyjama-clad figure to the door. "Sister," says a voice in deepest tones of injury, "they won't stop making a noise when I tell them." And there stands Bruce, blinking in the light of Sister's lamp.

Sister Rutter goes back with him to the dormitory, but if there had been any cause for his complaint it is not there now. The cherubs are all presumably asleep, and their self-constituted monitor tumbles into his own bed again, with a "Good-night, Sister," and is soon in the land of forgetfulness.



Mona and Stephen.
(See Chapter Ten.)



The Colebrook Home Junior Endeavour
Society.



The Home of a White Man and a Lubra.
From such places many of our children
have been saved.



Tea-time for the Babies.

Chapter Ten.

Mona.

Sister Hyde was sorting clothes. About twenty petrol cases stacked together, with a curtain drawn down over them, did duty for a wardrobe.

It was not often that our matron made any complaint about the conditions under which she worked; her usual comment was. "We must make it do; it is all for His sake. He will supply in His time." But she did give a sigh as she looked at her improvised cupboard, and thought how much nicer she could keep the clothes if they were in a dust-proof, closed-in set of shelves.

Little Mona, two years of age, sat by her side as she folded garments and replaced them in the boxes after the raid that the children had made on them. Mona was the baby and the pet of the Home. She watched as Sister took up some baby clothes that had fallen out on to the floor.

"Whose dress is that?" she asked.

"That is a little dress that you wore when you were a baby," was the reply.

"Why haven't we got a baby to wear it now?" was the next question.

Miss Hyde said, "Would you like to have a baby?" and, at an emphatic nod from the child, she continued, "Why don't you ask the Lord Jesus to send us one?"

Mona thought this suggestion over, and decided that it would be well to put it into practice at once.

"Let's ask Jesus now," she said.

So Sister, busy as she was, took the little girl on her knee and prayed that if it were God's will He would send them a little baby. Then Mona, well satisfied, slipped off her knee and ran out to play.

It was just a little incident to Sister, and would have been forgotten, but Mona did not forget it.

That evening, at the close of the family prayers, Mona started to cry.

"What is the matter?" asked the matron.

"You didn't ask Jesus for a baby," was the sobbing complaint, and Sister had to add the petition before she could be pacified.

At night, when the little ones were in bed, tucked in for the night, Sister said, "God bless you, children," as was her custom, and from Mona's bed came the appeal, "Say good night to our baby."

Gravely Miss Hyde responded, "Good night, little baby, God bless you and help you to grow up to love Jesus."

Every night after that, for six months, she had to say good night to the imaginary baby. And often, during the day, Mona would leave her play and seek out Sister Hyde, to request prayer for the baby. With loving patience the child's petition was always heard. No one has ever heard our matron turning away one of her precious babies, no matter how busy she might be. One day, after one of these requests, she said to Mona:

"You know, when the baby comes he will not know anything about Jesus."

"I'll tell him," promptly replied the child.

All unknown to those at the Home, a little life at Oodnadatta was hanging in the balance, and the baby for whom they were praying was being prepared for the place that was ready to give him such a loving reception.

A native woman died, some distance from Oodnadatta, leaving a baby a few hours old, and three other boys. There was no place in the camp for a motherless infant, and it was decreed by the old men of the tribe that he must die.

The story has been told us that the wee baby was tied up in a sack and put at the back of one of the wurlies ready for death at the hands of the old men, and that a lubra, touched with pity for the tiny, friendless mite, rescued it and hid it in her own wurlie. For two months she did all she could to care for the little one, until she managed at last to get it to the hands of the missionaries at Oodnadatta.

By that time he was two months old, and a more pitiable little creature it would be hard to imagine. In spite of the lubra's care, he was terribly under-nourished, and his little body was covered with sores. His limbs were like thin sticks and the little face was pinched and drawn.

As soon as she could get him away to Quorn, the Oodnadatta missionary did so, and great was the excitement at the Home when it was known there that four new children were coming. The baby was placed in a dress basket on the kitchen table at the Home, and the children crowded around to inspect and admire him. Miss Hyde's heart had been smitten at sight of the poor little mite, but to the children he was just perfect.

Mona's admiration for him knew no bounds. Softly stroking the wasted little hands she said, "My baby. Jesus sent him to me." Having prayed in perfect faith, she was now ready to appropriate for herself the answer that the Lord had sent. For a long time Stephen was known as "Mona's baby."

Mona did not forget to tell the baby about Jesus, as she had promised. One day she was rocking the pram and talking to him. Sister Hyde heard her say, as she bent over the pram, "Little Stephen, do you know that naughty mans put nails in Jesus' hands and feet, and they killed Him and put Him in a big hole, and put a stone over it. But He pushed away the stone and came up alive again, and went to heaven. And some day He is coming back, little baby, and He will take you up to heaven to live with Him always."

Thus one native baby, barely three years old, told to another native baby the story of the Cross, where One died for all peoples and kindreds and tongues. And the matron, listening, was well satisfied to see the spirit of evangelism so early displayed.

We have already mentioned the prayer life of the Home. An instance in Mona's early childhood will show how naturally the little ones turn to God in prayer and praise.

She had been blinded for several days by sandy blight, and the other children were concerned lest she never open her eyes again. They prayed earnestly that Mona might be made to see.

The little ones were in bed one night, with Rita in the nursery "in charge" until they went to sleep. Looking across the room to Mona's cot, Rita was surprised to see the child's eyes open. She rushed outside in her excitement and called the other children to come and see the wonderful thing that had happened, and there was a scampering of feet from all directions into the nursery.

The missionaries in the next room suddenly heard voices singing "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow." Following the sound they went to the nursery door and looked in. There, grouped around Mona's cot, was every child in the Home — some in pyjamas, just as they had jumped out of bed at Rita's call. They were singing the Doxology as a tribute of praise to Him who had heard their prayer and healed their little companion, while Mona sat in her cot and beamed at them like a little queen receiving the adulation of her subjects.

When they saw the missionaries standing in the doorway they hastened to tell them the glad news.

"Look, Sister, Mona's eyes are open."

"God heard our prayers, didn't He, Sister?"

"Yes, Sister, it is just like the time He opened the blind man's eyes. And now He has opened Mona's eyes."

The missionaries could say little, their hearts were too full. Pleased as they were to see the little girl with sight restored, it was a greater joy to know that the first thought of the others had been to give God thanks. In that moment they felt that their labours for these children had not been in vain, and they thanked God and took courage to go forward.

Mona was six years old when the Lord came into her life as a living reality.

Miss Hyde was in bed, nearly asleep. Down the passage came the patter of little feet, and Mona entered

her bedroom. "Sister," she said, "I can't go to sleep. I am thinking about the Lord Jesus all the time. I can hear Him calling me, and I want to give my heart to Him."

Miss Hyde thought it better to take this quietly, so she just replied, "You are a good girl to want to love the Lord Jesus. Now go back to bed and go to sleep."

Mona went back to bed, but soon returned to Sister's bedside.

"I can't go to sleep, Sister. I want to give my heart to the Lord Jesus."

"What do you want to do?" asked Sister, and Mona answered, "I want to pray."

So the missionary put her arms around the child and prayed for her. Then she said, "Now go back to bed." But Mona said, "No, Sister, I want to pray too."

The little girl prayed, as she knelt at Sister's bed, and in a definite and straightforward surrender she gave her heart to the Lord. Young as she was, the teaching of the Home had borne fruit, and she could not rest until she had settled the matter of her soul's relationship with the Saviour. The next day she gave evidence in her bright, happy face that it had not been a passing fancy, but that she had really found Christ. She came home from school that afternoon and sought out Miss Hyde to tell of her first victory.

"Sister, I didn't wriggle all day."

Perhaps it was as great a victory for this active child to keep still in school and not "wriggle" for the whole of a day as it would be for an older person to resist a more serious temptation. The Lord had accepted the young life consecrated to Him, and had already begun to teach her the power of the indwelling Christ. One more story about Mona.

Three years passed. She was tall for her nine years, and very active. If you wanted to find Mona you would not look for her among the girls quietly playing with

their dolls, you would go outside where the boys were getting their knees grubby over a game of marbles, and the grubbiest one of the group would be Mona, the best player of the lot. Or you would see her flying after George to get a ride behind him on the horse, or swinging on the gate with her face one big smile. But in spite of her boyish tendencies, she was taking an interest in the housekeeping, and enjoyed a lesson in the mysteries of cake-making. She liked to get the recipe book and choose some cake that had ingredients far beyond the Home purse. Why couldn't they have the things to put in those lovely cakes? They were all in the grocer's shop. It was explained to her that people who depend on what the Lord sends in, as they did, must not be wasteful of His money, and a Mission Home must be satisfied with plain cakes. "We are too poor, Mona, we cannot buy things like that." "Yes, Sister, we *are* poor, aren't we?" sighed the girl. And then, as though to soften the admission, she quickly added. "Poor in money — but rich in God."

She thought of ways and means of bringing in enough money to buy the things she wanted, and could think of nothing but to earn it herself. "When I grow up," she said, "I am going to work in a shop and get a lot of money, and then I can buy bread for the Home." "You can have a shop now, if you like," said Miss Hyde.

It was a Saturday afternoon. Mona rushed off to build her shop while Sister made up little parcels of currants, raisins, almonds, pieces of soap, sweets, and anything she could find for the stock-in-trade. Then she hunted for halfpence, as she must supply the customers as well as the shop.

When all was ready, Mona took her place as the important shopkeeper, and the other children came to buy. It did not take long to clear out all the stock, and Mona found herself the proud possessor of twenty halfpennies, which she took to the baker's shop and exchanged for two loaves of bread. They enjoyed their bread and jam all the better that night, because they had all helped to buy it.

Chapter Eleven.

Glimpses of Life at Colebrook Home.

I. Paddy's Return.

When Paddy was thirteen years of age he left the Home to work on a sheep station. It was the first breach in the happy Home family, and very sad were they all at the parting. He came back for a holiday a year later, and Miss Hyde writes of his home-coming:

"We have had great excitement in the Home, when Paddy returned for a short holiday. Bob and Sid met the train. The children were having their tea when the train came in sight, but the meal was soon finished and a rush was made for the yard, where each tried to get a good vantage spot from which he could see Paddy waving from the train. Even in the nursery the babies were waving through the window, quite sure that Paddy could see them. As soon as he could be seen coming up the road permission was given the children to go and meet him, and there was one wild rush. Big girls picked up the little ones and carried them on their hips, and the whole family trooped off to meet and escort home their old playmate. He was only in the house two minutes when the new gramophone was brought out for his inspection, and while he was having his tea every child clustered around the table gazing at him.

"What a wonderful boy was Paddy. After tea he sat back on his chair, hands clasped on crossed knees, enjoying to the full the admiration of the other children.

"Bob asked for the old organ that he might show Paddy how well he could play 'Jesus Loves Me.' Evelyn wanted the new organ that she might show her skill at playing.

"Then the children had some singing, and never had their voices sounded sweeter. We could not help thinking of Paddy as he was when he first entered the Home, and now, seeing what he has become, our hearts were lifted up in thankfulness to our Heavenly Father. May we be kept faithful in the saving and building up of these little ones for Him."

2. *One Saturday Morning.*

The first streaks of dawn were in the sky when the visitor awoke. What *was* that sound she heard, like the dropping of hard round objects to a floor? Suddenly the thought struggled into her sleepy brain that the boys were playing marbles in their dormitory at five o'clock in the morning.

The visitor slipped out of bed and went to the dormitory window. Faintly discerned in the dim light were six or eight little boys sitting up in bed practising at firing marbles down the length of their beds, whence they dropped to the floor and rolled away with a clatter. The visitor spoke as sternly as one just aroused from sleep feels justified in speaking to the young culprits, and quickly each little head was back on its pillow.

One bed was empty. "Where is Stephen?" asked the visitor. A grunt of disgust came from Parker's bed.

"Oh, *him*," he said, in most injured tones, "*He's* gone to Sister Hyde's room. *He* goes there *every morning*. *He's* the pet."

And it did not require much insight to see that Parker was torn between a desire to go to Sister's room too, as he had often done when he was Stephen's age, and a consciousness that he was too old now for such petting. He could imagine Stephen at that moment cuddled up in Sister's bed, with her arms around him as she talked to him, and all of Parker's passionate love for Sister was welling up in a fierce jealousy against Stephen.



Bringing In Wood from the Creek.
(See Chapter Eleven.)

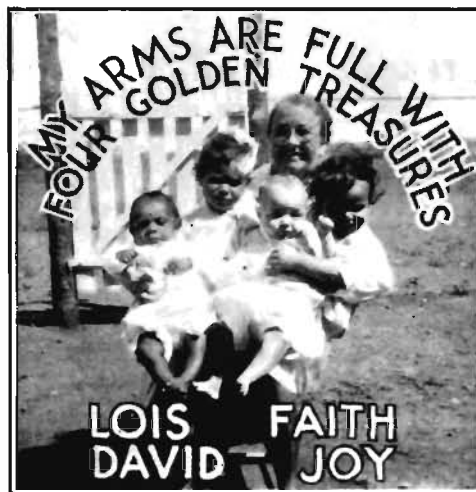


A Gift of Cabbages.



Dressmaking Class.

Bessie turns up the hem of Lynda's new dress. Emily at the machine. Ada taking lessons.



Sister Hyde with an Armful of Babies,
Colebrook Home.

The visitor went back to bed. Six o'clock struck, and two girls came across the yard from their room to light the fire and put on the porridge for breakfast. A few minutes later the dressing bell rang, and the quiet was broken by a babel of voices, as girls and boys hurriedly dressed. This was Saturday. No silly old lessons to-day, but a lovely long time for playing.

Some of them had work to do before breakfast, such as Geoffrey, whose turn it was to set the breakfast.

This was not such a simple task as it sounds. Each plate and spoon had to be carefully examined for identification marks, for if a child took his place at the table and found someone else's plate set before him, great would be his indignation until the missing article was restored. One plate had a blue mark underneath. Geoffrey put that in Eileen's place. The next had a chip out of the side. That was Ray's. Another, with a certain flaw, was put down to Ruby.

So he went on, until all the plates were satisfactorily placed, and then the spoons had to pass through the same rigid examination for the tiny scratch or mark that distinguished one from another. The children regard this private ownership of dishes as a game. They do not realise that much of their immunity from colds and other infections is due to their never using one another's things.

While Geoffrey's interesting work was in progress, the visitor saw a procession of small boys, headed by Mona, racing along the path after heavy motor tyres. Mona should have been milking the cows, but this vast expenditure of energy was much more exciting than to sit down quietly with a milk bucket, so her long legs joined the chase of the tyres. Quite six times they made the circuit of the house and yard, the last time breathless and panting, but with speed unabated. Suddenly they heard the breakfast bell, and the tyres were left to run themselves to a standstill and drop to the ground, while the children hurried off to take their place in the line outside

the dining-room door. They marched inside to a hymn tune.

Usually it was "Onward, Christian Soldiers," but this time the tune was "Marching Beneath the Banner." This was a favourite with them, and only the visitor saw the incongruity of a lot of boys and girls going in to breakfast to the sound of, "We'll march to the fight with our armour bright." It reminded the visitor of little Faith, two years old, who was fond of singing, "Tangles, tangles, tangles I was in; Tangles, tangles, because of Adam's sin."

The innocent, chubby face did not look greatly concerned over tangles of sin.

On Saturdays and Sundays the older girls are allowed to conduct family prayers, and this morning it was Lynda's turn. Under her instructions the others sang, recited Scripture, and prayed with as much reverence as though Sister were there. Emily and Ada carried in the big porridge pot, and soon everyone was busy with breakfast.

The meal over, all who were old enough to have a job went to work. In the kitchen Bessie washed the dishes while Geoffrey, proud and important in a big bag apron, wiped them. The boy who is appointed to kitchen duty would not change places with those trundling tyres or playing marbles outside, for Saturday is a wonderful morning in the kitchen.

Geoffrey eyed the delightful mixture of flour and milk and currants that Sister Rutter was stirring in a bowl, and he hoped that she would not scrape all of that lovely batter off the sides when it was poured into the cake tin, but would leave some for a small kitchen boy to scrape off with his finger.

There were some apples in the corner too. It was not often that such luxuries came their way, and the kitchen boy was not going to throw any of the juicy cores and skins to the fowls after Sister had made her pie. They were the perquisites of the boy who spent Saturday morning helping in the kitchen.

In the nursery Sister Hyde was feeding her babies, watched by three or four little girls. To see David and Joy having their bottles was a never-failing source of entertainment to the family, and it was a proud little girl who was given permission to take a baby in her arms as he had his meal.

When the babies were fed and wheeled outside for their morning sleep, Martha, the "nursery girl," put away their tiny garments and tidied the nursery.

Out in the boys' dormitory Dave and Steve were making beds, and having plenty of fun over it. They wondered why Sister came to the door more often than she went to the girls' dormitory, where the same work was going on with much less noise. It really was most inconvenient to be in the midst of a somersault among the blankets and to hear a voice at the door telling one to hurry up and get the work finished.

Lynda had the copper ready for the baths, and those who had no work to do were called in for a scrub. The visitor wondered how long it would take to bath such a large family, but it was all done in a short time. The **tub** on the laundry floor was not left empty a moment. As soon as one child stepped out another hopped in, Lynda doing the washing while Sister Hyde rubbed the little bodies dry and handed out the clean clothes. One tub of water had to do service for several children, for water is too precious at Colebrook Home to allow of any extravagance.

Bathing over, Lynda and Emily took up the discarded garments, put them into a tub of water and soon had them washed and flapping on the line. Every day is washing day, for the children go to school each morning in clean clothes.

The visitor strolled down to the creek. After her came running Mona and Nancy. "Are you going for a walk? Can we come?" Entertaining little companions they were, as they skipped along by her side.

"Our teacher at school is *so* kind," said Mona. "I think she must love the Lord Jesus. She never gives us dark children the stick, but only stands us in the corner when we are naughty."

"Are you naughty at school?" asked the visitor.

"Sometimes," admitted Mona. Quickly changing a subject that was becoming rather too personal, she went on, "A boy at school called Allen 'black.' "

"Did he? Well, never mind. He doesn't mind being black, does he?"

"No, of course not," answered the girl. "It doesn't matter, does it? The Lord Jesus loves us just the same, *whatever* colour we are, doesn't He?"

Nancy picked up some bleached bones and was told that they were a rib bone and a collar bone, so then they had to try to wear them and imagine that they were cows going to the slaughter house.

Round a bend of the creek there was a waterhole where slimy frogs lived under stones in the green, stagnant water. The little girls led the visitor to this spot, and had the joy of catching frogs and letting them slip through their fingers back into the water. While engaged in this entrancing game, they saw Sister Hyde approaching with a number of the children. "Don't let them see us," they said, "or we'll have to get sticks." But the usual Saturday stick-gathering was not to be avoided, and they went off to do their part.

To keep down the Home expenses, the children have to scour the creek-bed for sticks. Often this is made a game or an excuse for a picnic. When told that there was to be a picnic they would ask, "Is it a wood picnic or a coal picnic?" The wood picnics are spent along the creek-bed and the coal ones along the railway line, and each child comes home with arms full of the particular kind of fuel that was found at the "picnic" ground.

It was no wonder that Sister Hyde felt it necessary to come with them to get wood, even in the midst of a busy morning. Martin and Sid climbed trees to break off dead branches, and the others roamed the creek-bed looking for sticks and fun. Bruce and Steve made off for the waterhole to find a few frogs before settling down to work. The girls, after looking for spiders in the dry bark, collected armfuls of sticks and piled them in heaps. Stephen chased a lizard over the stones until it was time to go back, when his woeful little face at not having any wood to carry moved the hearts of the girls, so that they gave him some out of their heap. No child who cannot show Sister an armful of wood on Saturday morning is allowed to play in the afternoon, but Stephen is quite satisfied to gather his armful by proxy.

Peter the lamb had come with them, as he always did, and Nancy thought that he was having too easy a time of it, with nothing to carry. So she placed her own load on his back and caressed his woolly face as she walked along by his side.

After many endearing terms she said to him, "We're going to eat you, Peter. What do you think of that?"

Back they came with their sticks. The visitor thought of the many hours that are spent in this way, and she wondered how long those light sticks would last in the kitchen fire. A man could get a wagon load of wood for the Home in little more time than it takes to gather all these bundles.

Before dinner the "praise bell" was rung, for a friend had sent a case of fruit, and the little ones are taught to render thanks to God for all His mercies.

They assembled at the sound of the bell. Sister told them of the fruit and others gifts that had come in, for which they must give God thanks. One little one said, "And for making Faith better," for Faith had been ill, and was now running about again. So, for the gifts of

food and of healing, they sang, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

And there we will leave these children who have become so dear to us.

We look around the little group again before bidding them farewell.

Tall Bessie, seventeen years of age, and the eldest now that her sister Rita has gone, holds in her arms Baby Joy, just awakened from sleep. Bessie is almost full-blood, with the dark skin and big, expressive eyes of her race. Joy is so fair that we cannot see any aboriginal traits in her at all.

Martin, tall and noble-looking, and as dark as Bessie, holds wee David, the only full-blood child in the Home.

Mona stands first on one foot and then on the other as she sings, but no one expects Mona ever to keep still.

Little Nancy's bright face as she sings praises to God shows no indication of the tragedy of her birth. Little she knows of tragedy, life is all joy to her.

Twenty of these children have white fathers. As we realise what they have been saved from, and see them now in their joyous childhood, we join our praises with theirs and say:

"How good is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend,
Whose love is as great as His power,
And neither knows measure nor end.

'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home.
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come."



Children of Colebrook Home with Missionaries and Council Members.