

That was my first contact with the Board of Home Missions. It did much to convince me that there is life in the Church. In fact, I have never doubted its vitality.

When years afterwards I heard this verse used as a text for a sermon, "Before they call I will answer," I knew what it meant. I knew the promise was not vain. Thomas Hall had come to us across the snow before we called. Before we knew there was the slightest chance of anyone's hearing us if we did call in that wild waste of snow and silence.

THE ROMANCE OF RELIGION

It is strange about Religion! Strange that it ever should have become a stiff and formal thing. It all began in a Great Adventure. One young man with an Idea. A young man of great beauty and charm, who loved children and birds and flowers, and taught the people on the hillsides; who walked the stormy waves and commanded them to be still; who healed the sick and raised the dead and fed the hungry; and taught the people about a new way of living, a kindly, friendly, forgiving way, full of joy. Who said strange and wonderful things and talked to women, and children, and publicans. Who told His followers that if they tried to save their lives they would lose them; that if anyone asked them for their cloak, to give their coat also; urged them to go the Second Mile with people, and forgive those who wronged them.

Surely it was a generous, lavish, overflowing gospel that he preached. But even His disciples did not understand the full import of all He said until they had seen Him die and rise again, and then they knew even Death could not bind Him. Then the whole divine plan was revealed, and they knew that the spiritual life is the real one and nothing else matters much. With that vision they were ready to face the world. And did face it! Unafraid!

People are still carrying that message and it is of them I am going to write, and the writing is not a task, but a pleasure.

Religion may have grown cold and formal in carved pews and high vaulted cathedrals, but not on the mission fields where the need is great and men and women are hungry. There are no theological differences there, no hair-splitting.

THE SPIRIT OF OUR HOSPITALS

In one of our Mission Hospitals north of Edmonton, a Ruthenian woman lay tossing in pain. She had been brought in, fatally injured by a runaway team. She knew no English, but when the missionary doctor came he was able to speak to her in her own tongue, and did his best to quiet her fears. But her agony of mind increased as the night wore on. The doctor was a man of imagination and understanding, so he called for candles, which he lighted and placed at the foot of the bed. Red Christmas candles they were, but to poor Mary Ragowski, about to