

missionaries telling the story of India's suffering womanhood, of China's burdened lives, of the teeming shepherdless multitudes in all lands. Yes, she had worked to make her Band a success, she liked to push things; she loved the bright, young faces that looked up into hers. But in very shame she bowed before the Christ who died for her. He had been forgotten in the midst of life's cares and ambitions, and even in the work she called for Him. She consecrated herself anew to God, and marvellous was the change wrought in her life when the love of Christ became the all constraining motive. That alone makes service a true success. In the farewell meeting she told the women of her longing to work in future only for her Lord. She did not know then that an old friend had stolen into the meeting and was saying to himself as he heard her earnest words, "If it please God, Nellie, we will serve Him together."

## II.

The church was gaily decorated with gorgeous summer flowers, and woman's skill had made the set tables temptingly beautiful. The young pastor had just returned with his bride, and in this western town there was a hearty welcome and a grand reception for the young couple. Nellie Murray in those seven years had developed into a noble womanhood, and she entered upon her duties as pastor's wife with the same energy which had characterized her girlhood days. She had come to these people with a heart full of love for men. Was it not the flock her husband tended, and was she not his helpmeet? When formal introductions were over and set speeches had all been made, men and women gathered in little social groups. Mrs. West took occasion to ask concerning woman's work in the church, and especially when and where the Woman's Mission Circle met. The answer was not pleasant to hear: "Oh, the Circle meets supposedly every month, but in reality it holds a meeting whenever enough are present." Mrs. West entered the Circle meeting on the first Thursday of the month, she found the lady of the house and one visitor discussing the finest recipes for strawberry shortcake. Various household topics occupied their attention for half an hour then the president said: "Shall we have a meeting? Our Circle has been going at such a poor dying rate that I think we had better disband altogether. Only four pay fees and only two ever come." Mrs. West spoke quickly: "May I not join? I can count one. Let us have a meeting to-day: the Lord is here." The president read a chapter, they prayed, and parted. Nellie took time to think the situation over, then she resolved that something must be done. Two such meetings were enough. Three months later the three were again together when Nellie spoke abruptly: "I have something on my mind, can I let it out?"—"We certainly need some new ideas. We

shall be glad to hear from our pastor's wife," they said—"Now my heart aches, doesn't yours? A church of over one hundred women, 500,000,000 heathen women in the world and only three who care. And Jesus died for all! It rests upon us to wake the others up."

"What can we do? We've tried. Years ago we had a good Circle but somehow it's all gone to pieces and I'm discouraged. I used to ask women to come, but they are all too busy. They say our meetings are dull and missions are dry. To be sure, there is not much to come to now. Besides, we have a struggle to make ends meet in the church, and the Ladies' Aid is all they can attend."

"Missions dry! Then we'll have to get some moisture in somewhere. We have been praying; let us work now. This is what I've been thinking. Let us send dainty little invitations to every woman in the church inviting them to spend an afternoon with us. We will need two weeks to get ready. We shall give them a fine missionary programme, then we will spring this Mission Circle question on them and make a new organization. Let us call this Circle dead. What think you?" It took three heads with three tongues to get their ideas "under way." In a few days the prettily written invitations were mailed. All were asked to be present in the church parlors to aid in attending to a matter of necessary and important business. Strange for women, they were curious to know what was up! About sixty answered the summons. A committee welcomed them at the door. Fresh flowers perfumed the room. What meant the new mottoes on the wall? "The King's business requireth haste," "The women who publish the tidings are a great host," "Go ye into all the world."

"There, I warrant you we're in a missionary meeting, I do declare!" exclaimed Mrs. R., who always did believe so heartily in home missions. Mrs. S., who heard the loud whisper, spoke her fears: "The minister will come off short for salary if the people get to giving so much money away. We have hard times now." But hush, the meeting is about to begin. Heartily they sang grand old Coronation. The president of the defunct Circle caught an inspiration from the song and discouragement fled as she looked into the faces of sixty women. A season of prayer led them to the very throne of the Mighty One. Then a Bible reading on the women of the New Testament was given by the secretary of that defunct Circle. Hearts were touched anew by the thought of the Canaanitish woman's great faith, of the widow's gift of her all, of the love of those who followed Jesus even to the cross and to the sepulchre, of Dorcas's busy needle, of Paul's helpers, of the mother who trained Timothy in the Scriptures. What an inspiring host of helping women the world has known! "What are we all but what the Gospel has made us? Look at the condition of heathen women and see in them a picture of ourselves except for the grace of God."