

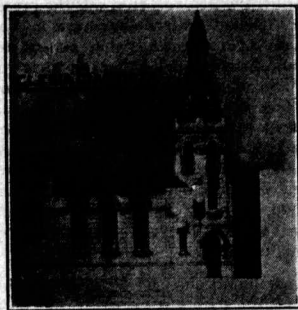
Our Work Abroad

DEDICATION OF THE FIRST PROTESTANT CHURCH IN LA PAZ

By Mrs. Mary Pattullo Plummer

The long awaited "estreno" has at last taken place. The dedication of the first protestant church in La Paz, our Baptist church, was fittingly celebrated at very interesting services on December 14-17. This may mean little to those who do not know the history of the work here, but to the missionaries in Bolivia it means a great victory; an overcoming of ever-increasing difficulties and of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Even after the first church that we were building had to be given up because of the strong Catholic opposition and the second was successfully started on a much superior site, troubles did not cease. The city council demanded that one wall be torn down because they claimed that it was not exactly in accordance with the plans, but although several months have elapsed they have not yet been able to find the alleged variation from the plan. Two weeks before the opening, the carpenter who was making the benches decided to move to another city and carefully sent word to Mr. Wintermute after he had gone; as it is exceedingly difficult to get one man to finish the work of another here, this did not make the troubles of the "pastor" any lighter. Then the day before the opening the electric light company being Catholic and prejudiced refused to turn on the light. But everything worked out right, because unknowingly these people were working against an overwhelming majority, as we heard one minister say, "One and God are a majority."

Saturday night saw the La Paz missionaries, those from the farm, from Cochabamba, and Oruro working hard to put on the finishing touches. There was carpet to lay, curtains to hang, sweeping and tidying and arranging of flowers to be done, but by eleven o'clock all was ready, and we were able to stand back and say that it was well. The interior of the church has a quiet, dignified, worshipful appearance, quite unlike the gaudiness displayed in the cathedrals of South America. Also this little church has a steeple to beckon the many passers by on the Prado



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to come within and hear of God. It has an excellent situation on this important boulevard, very much better than that of the first church which was forced to come to naught.

And now what about the services? They began with Sunday School at ten o'clock on Sunday morning. There was no lack of audience. The place was filled with representatives from all classes in society who eagerly listened to Mr. Hilleyer's object story on Gideon. Although the Indians generally have their lesson in Aymara they sat quietly, getting what they could of the Spanish. At eleven an English service was held at which Mr. Plummer, the new missionary for Peniel Hall Farm, spoke from Ephesians 2: 20-22. At this gathering there were many "gringos" or foreigners present who had not attended an English service for many years, although one has been held quite regularly in the Methodist Hall. This was an inspiring service. The home-like appearance, the sermon, and realization of what this temple meant brought a tear to more than one eye. But the evening meeting was the big event of the day. From eight till eleven it continued, the building packed to the doors; even the street car outside was stopped because of the huge crowd. Among the people, a policeman could be picked out here and there, a precautionary measure, as one man had sworn he was going to throw bombs into the building! But