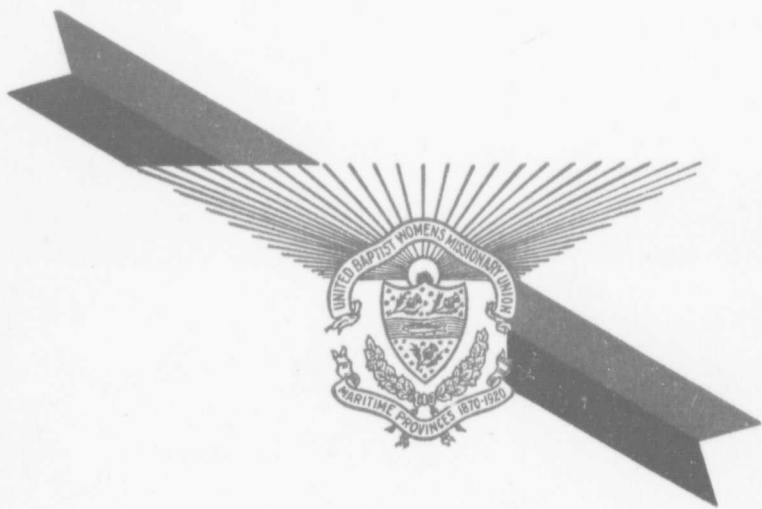


# OUR PIONEER



Our Pioneer.

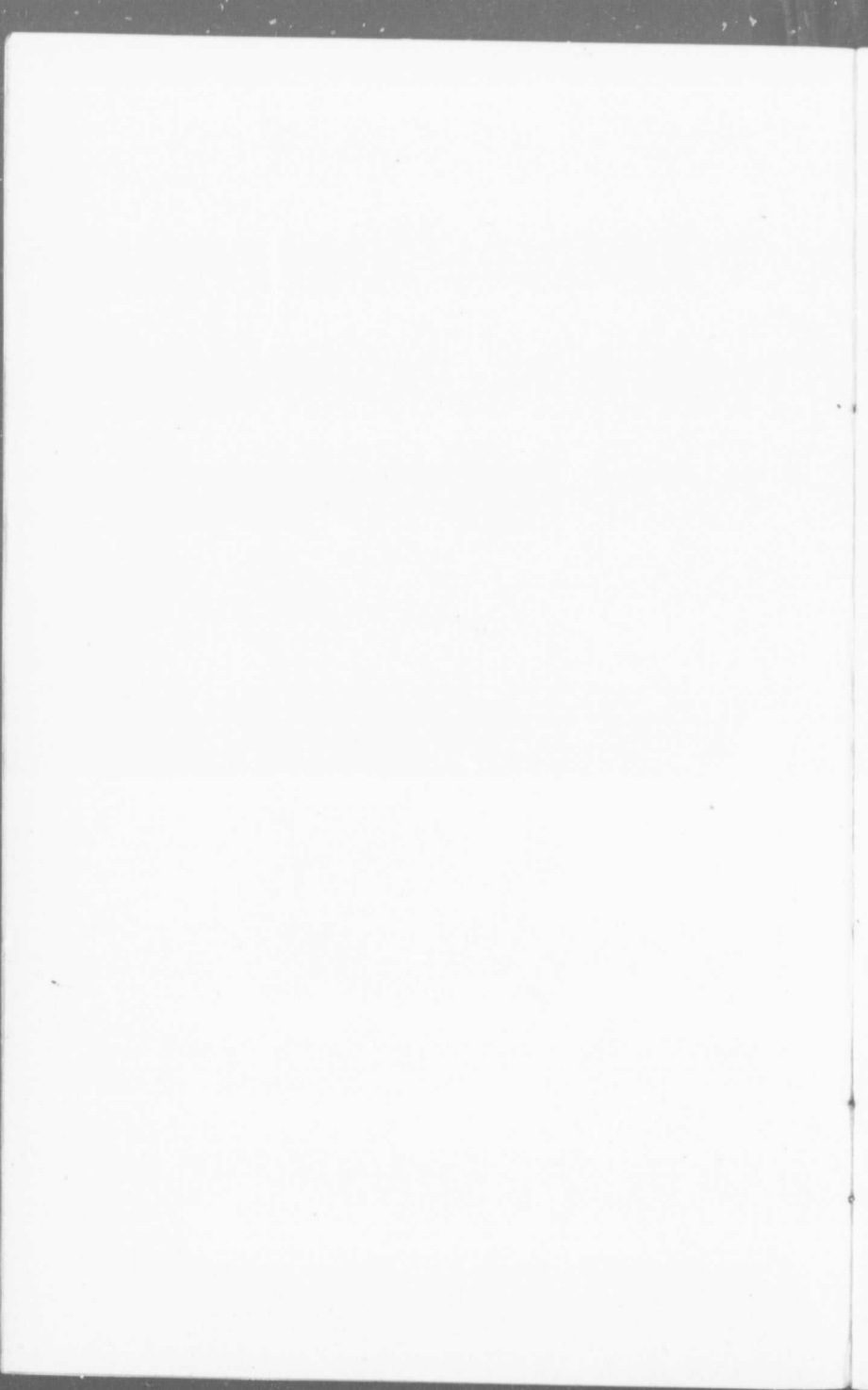


MISS NORRIS

*The Lord giveth The Word.*

*The women that publish the tidings are a great host.—Psalm*

68: 11 (St. Version.)



OUR PIONEER  
IMPRESSIONS

REGARDING

MRS. H. M. N. ARMSTRONG

BY

D. A. STEELE, D. D.

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One thing I do.....I press on toward the goal,  
unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ  
Jesus.—Philippians 3:13, 14.

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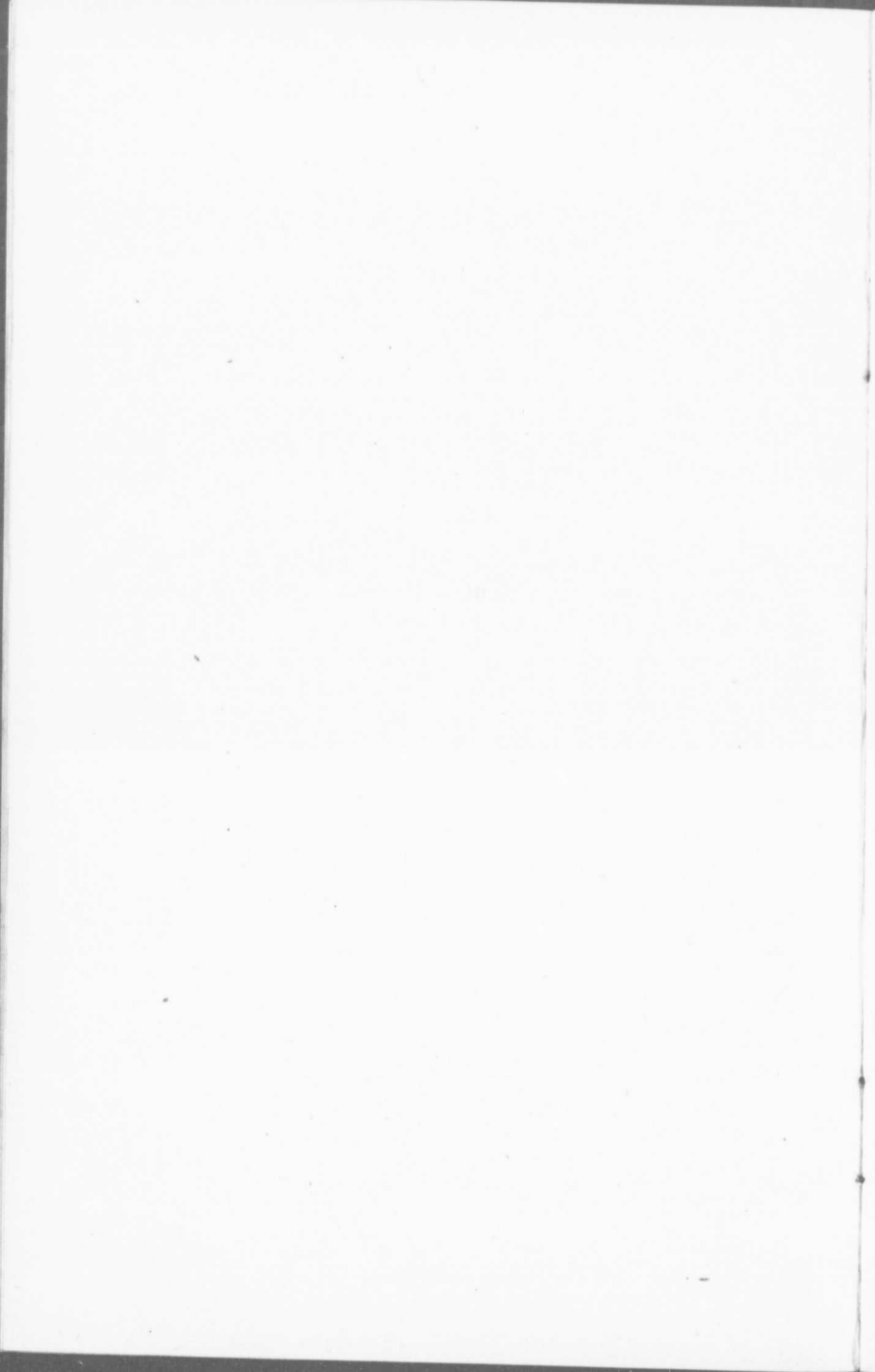
To the United Baptist Women's Aid Societies of the Maritime Provinces, these Impressions of their Founder are dedicated by their mutual Friend.

D. A. STEELE.

40 Rupert Street  
Amherst, Nova Scotia.

1920.





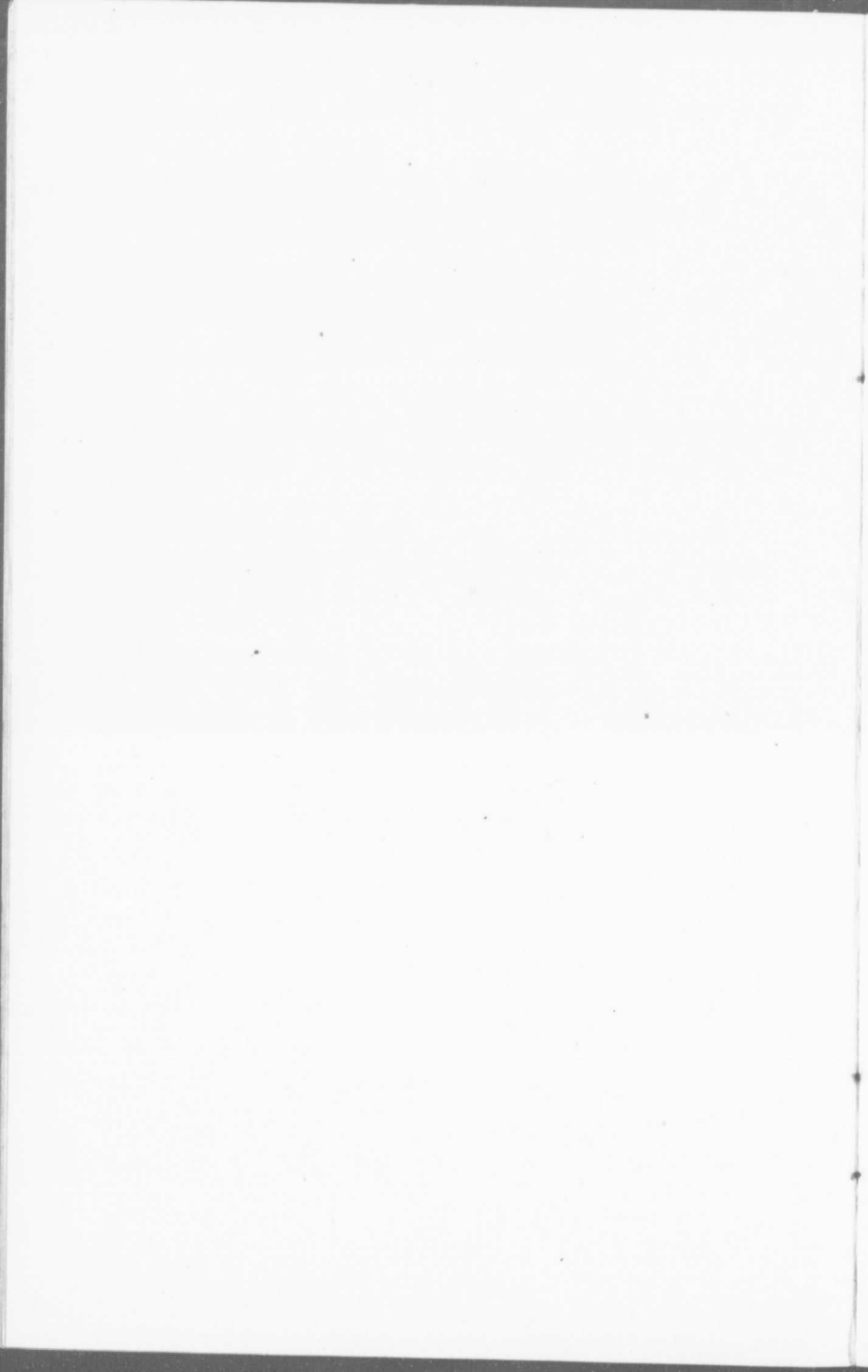
## FOREWORD.

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All the introduction that is necessary is, that I know more about Mrs. Armstrong outside of her immediate family, than any one else, especially of her early life, and of the motive of her life work.

I have endeavored to give the facts as they occurred, and have verified the dates given. I was her pastor, and her life long friend. It seems fitting that something should be prepared for the fiftieth anniversary of the organization of the Women's Aid Societies, and I have ventured to recall old memories, as well as to consult the records of the past. I regret that I cannot do more than to present my Impressions. A full Biography I am unable to undertake.

D. A. S.



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## IMPRESSIONS.

### Hannah M. N. Armstrong.

By D. A. Steele, D.D.

→ Hannah Maria, the oldest daughter of George and Hannah Norris, was born at Canso, Nova Scotia, on November 30, 1840. She attended a private class, consisting of the two daughters of Spinney and Martha Whitman, and some members of the Whitman connection, among whom were Pamela Bigelow, afterwards wife of Rev. J. F. Kempton, and Sarah Bigelow, who became the wife of Rev. J. W. Manning D. D. There were probably other connections who were pupils, but Mr. Whitman was responsible for the salary of Miss Rivett a lady of good family, who taught not only the fundamentals of education, but whose manners had an influence on the young ladies.]

Sarah, surviving daughter of Spinney Whitman, married Rev. D. A. Steele, Miss Norris became the wife of Rev. W. F. Armstrong D.D. Thus four wives of ministers came from that small group of school girls, all connected by family ties. The text books were preserved by Mrs. Steele, and I find that they were such as were used in the Seminaries of the day, providing a good grounding in English literature, History, Geography, and other matters, which formed part of the best private teaching of the middle half of the nineteenth century. Our Public School System had not as yet been instituted, but there was another school kept by a Mr. Hardy, which some of these ladies attended at another time.

→ Miss Norris attended the Normal School at Truro, in 1861, and there came under the influence of Rev. Alex. Forrester, D.D., and Theodore H. Rand D.C.L. She gained a high standing there, and I remember Dr. Rand directing my attention to her as a young woman of outstanding ability.

Miss Norris taught school in her native place for some time.

When the writer settled there as Pastor in 1865, I found her and some others of the pupils above mentioned diligently laboring among the poor and the sick, and teaching in the Sunday Schools.

My friend was a member of the Congregational church, having been admitted by a baptism which was neither sprinkling nor immersion. The minister poured water upon her head. With this, however, Miss Norris must have had misgivings. She laid the matter before me, and I referred her to the New Testament, without influencing her by my views. After some days, she told me that she had made up her mind on this important matter, and asked me to baptize her. I informed her that our custom was to lay the case before the Church, and that she had better come to our next Conference meeting. She did so, and after stating her experience, was received, and on Sunday, March 25, 1866, was baptized in the harbor, in sight of her home. She was the first person to be baptized by me. It must have been a struggle, for her people thought this step unnecessary. But as in all other difficulties, she went firmly on in her chosen way.

In 1869, we find her teaching in the Ladies' Seminary at Wolfville. While engaged thus, she was brooding over her life work, and pondering over the method by which she could reach the East.

It was during this period that she became acquainted with Mr. W. F. Armstrong, of North Sydney, who was at that time studying at Acadia, to whom she was married at Rangoon, Burmah, January 31st, 1874.

Miss Norris preceded the other missionaries, who formed our staff, in the meantime applying herself to the acquisition of the Karen language in which she hoped to teach the gospel of her Lord. She was sent out by the F. M. Board of the Maritime Provinces, but although supported by us, she, as well

as Rev. W. George and wife and Miss DeWolfe, were virtually under the direction of the A. B. M. Union. This was in 1871, the year in which the Independent Mission was resolved upon at the Convention in Yarmouth. She soon gained a knowledge of the Karen tongue, (or dialect of this particular tribe she was to work with, the Sgau Karens.) In eight months from the time of her arrival upon the field, she had attained, beside a familiar acquaintance with the Sgau Karen dialect a sufficient knowledge of the Pwo Karen to be able to take that up at any time. In a letter she remarks, "I cannot tell how it is that I find so little trouble with the language." Afterwards, her talent increased, until at last, she had "gained other five." Our belief is that the Lord himself makes his own instruments. Certainly, people use their advantages, exercise their common sense, and as the master teaches, add to them talents.

In Canso, outside the currents of the great world, there were advantages, which perhaps aid rather than hinder the missionary spirit. On the bookshelves there were the stories of Carey, of Livingstone, and best of all, the two volume Life of Judson, by Dr. F. Wayland, (presented by the lady before mentioned as the teacher, to Mr. and Mrs. Spinney Whitman). These were interchanged among the neighbors, and left indelable impressions on the young women, and helped Maria Norris to understand the needs of the countless millions of idolaters. But how came it that all this came in her way? There is a guiding Hand, as there always has been to lead the chosen servants, to stir longings to do something for the promotion of the Kingdom. Reading the lives and work of the pioneers, hesitating at the bare idea of doing as they did,—turning over in one's mind the hardness of the task, and the surrender of one's affections for the home and all its comforts,—still the call matures, until at last the full-orbed idea is before the unknown lassie, and the resolution takes form—"I must yield my life to this tremendous under-

taking." These chosen souls tell us, how the idea was limned out before them, as on canvas, that as their years increased and their knowledge of the Lord expanded, they were more strongly convinced that they must go out into the dark places, taking their taper with them. What questionings, what suggestions, rose before such young people. Pleasure sings her Syren song, Can I give up all? What are "functions," bridge-parties, dances, to such souls? As chaff driven by the wind. Like Mary they "choose the better part"—they are prepared by their monitor, ever whispering as they read the books, or as they watch the rise and fall of the tides, and the flight of the birds, or enjoy the golden glory of the sunsets, "What is all this to thee?—Follow thou me."

So the unassuming girl, with her shrewd, yet kindly eyes, slowly made up her mind. One of our leaders, a Deacon and a Senator, had evidently been studying her. He said to me, when we were talking over the immense undertaking of an Independent Mission, "If that little girl takes the bit between her teeth, where will she lead us?" We had to reckon in those days. But after all, it was all in our day's work, and we united, women and men, to bid her go, and do her part in sapping the strong fortress. God was guiding us all.

The MOTIVE which drives one is something worth looking at. Miss Norris was not subject to illusions regarding missionary endeavor. She was not a lady who was the subject of romantic ideas. The glamour of the Orient did not appeal to her practical nature. She was not thinking of a pleasant bungalow, with a retinue of servants, and a salary whereby she might support them. Her one thought was that which has sustained the messenger of the Gospel in every age, the love of Christ and the love of her fellow creatures. Neither was she ready to put her religion on the same basis with the great religions of the East. Her sole idea was, "I have been re-born myself, I have been bought with a price, even the precious blood of the Lamb of God. There is no other name

under heaven or among men whereby men must be saved, and I will present that to pariah, priest, and prince. I particularly desire to show this Saviour to my sisters of other faiths, knowing that only by this means can they be liberated. They must become new creatures in Christ Jesus, and my one desire is to go to them, and spend my life in telling them the story of the great redemption."

She made up her mind that her Master was bidding her to do this, and she dare not take an easy position at home. She might have had a home, filled with old fashioned furniture and old silver, and contented herself with teaching a Sunday School class—only she dare not. "GO" said the Master, and she resolutely made the attempt. "I am ready," said the young teacher, "only be Thou with me." "Go" was the answer: "I am with you always."

### 1. Genesis.

We are always curious as to whence a personage comes. Mrs. Armstrong was one of whose ancestry we should like to know all we can. In the first place then, her father was I believe, brought up in Halifax. Just what his antecedents were I cannot say, but I always understood that he came of good blood. His bearing and manners were those of a gentleman, and he had an air of authority which caused obedience and also a spirit which would brook no innovations on his rights. The coast was being surveyed by Her Majesty's ship. The officers came on shore, and proceeded to erect the scientific apparatus on Mr. Norris' land—a hilltop not far from his home. He immediately ordered the officers off his land, informing them that they had no right there without his permission. They reported this to the captain, who knew enough of English law to tell them that Mr. Norris was right, and sent a request to be permitted to place a surveying instruments on the hilltop. Then, of course, Mr. Norris granted their request, and was on the best of terms with the officers.



I am unable to say more than that Mr. Norris came to Canso when a young man—that he was a firm Roman Catholic, though one of the most liberal minded in that communion. He married, contrary to the wish of her parents, Hannah, daughter of Abraham Whitman, who had settled there as a merchant and trader in 1812.

The Whitmans were devout Christians, of the Congregational order, who had settled at Round Hill, Annapolis, when the lands vacated by the French, were offered to the Colonists of New England. This was about 1763. They were a sturdy stock, noted for their common sense, and made a strong family among the many who settled the marshlands of the Province at that time. They battled with the wilderness, the climate, and the Indians, and finally came to be a well-known, thriving people. Mrs. Armstrong's grandmother was a Miss Webber, of Chester, another well-known family on our Southern shore. Grandfather Whitman was a pious man, and always kept the gospel lamp lighted in his house. On Sundays his doors were opened to the neighbors, and to the fishermen and sailors from the vessels in the harbor, who were free to enter and worship with the family. Mr. Whitman read the Scripture, prayed, and probably exhorted. Anyway there was the service of God, in the absence of a regular clergyman. There was no church edifice for many years, but at length a meeting house of the Congregational order was erected, and used by the ministers of that Denomination. It was sold and removed during my pastorate, as the congregation had been absorbed by the Baptists and Methodists. When the Baptists, who travelled far and wide, appeared, the good man could not conscientiously greet them.

This was the stem on which our flower grew. Antecedents means a great deal. We shall see what fruitage came from them.

Mr. Norris did not interfere with his family in religious matters, and when the writer was supplying the Canso

Baptist pulpit in 1861, the three children, Maria, Sarah, and Lucy, were Protestants, inclined naturally to the Congregationalists, but worshipping with the other bodies, when there was no clergyman of their own.

They were a reading family Mr. Norris had a library, some of it saved from a wrecked ship, which was carrying books to H. R. H. the Duke of Kent. Like many of our families, the Whitmans had a fair knowledge of some of the best books, and Mr. and Mrs. Norris were well-informed people. Mrs. Norris presented me with a volume of Massillon's sermons, a specimen of the best French preachers, from which I derived much help.

## 2. Environment.

It is of importance to know where and under what circumstances one is born and brought up. Our geniuses of all kinds, as well as our poets, have always been influenced by their surroundings. The mountains, and the farstretching dales, the onrush of the ocean, as well as the stiller influences so frequently insisted upon by the older writers, all combine to form the peculiar nature needed for special work.

Canso is the eastern extremity of Nova Scotia proper. The vast rollers of the Atlantic which come clear across from Ireland, break in blinding spray upon the granite Loulders which form the breakwater of our shores. You look out upon the sea, and watch the sun rising red from the ocean. It seems as if Canso is wide awake before the other parts of the world are astir. I was surprised by the early breakfasts in the Whitman home. As you gaze upon the vast expanse, you are struck by the ever varying view,—not the solitary tree or grove of the farmlands, but the ever changing panorama, with ship of all rigs and sizes, from the tiny fishing schooner to the giant steamer.

Historically, too Canso is notable. There the first fishermen, who were attracted in the early part of the century after the discovery of America, by the rich fishing field, built their rude huts. From the beginnings of European Settlement, the ocean outside has been fished, and unlike the farms of the land, the harvest has yielded ever increasing returns.

The harbor is an important one, and was early fortified. The old gun emplacements on Durrell's Island, were distinctly visible from the Norris house. It was almost made the seat of government, a hundred and twenty-five years before Halifax was founded. Governor Armstrong, writing from there September 5th, 1725, says, in a letter to the authorities in England: "It being very demonstrable, from the great concourse of English subjects here, that this is the principal seat of government. The inhabitants at Annapolis, except one or two families, are all French.....This applies to all parts of the Province, *Except Canso* (italics mine) "I shall be glad," the governor continues, "of directions, and for constituting an assembly, and other courts of judicature here." (Murdock Hist. 1 pp 425, 6.)

It is befitting that the young people call this to mind, when their thoughts are resting upon Annapolis, Beausejour, or weeping over the woes of Evangeline, and the loss of the beautiful dykelands of Grand Pre. Canso was at that time the only settlement on the coast (Ib. p. 427) of Nova Scotia.

It was at this, the oldest settlement on the Southern coast of Acadia, fifty miles from the remains of the grand fortress of Louisbourg, eleven miles from Arichat, where she could see the spires of the large Catholic churches dominating the Cape Breton coast, and with the magnificent Chedabucto Bay spreading out before her young eyes, that Maria grew up. There were stalwart fishermen and their families on every side, there was a Collector of Duties, and a Post Office, which was kept by her father. He was also a Justice

of the Peace, and his opinion always had weight, for he was a man of commanding influence.

Mr. Norris was the only person who cultivated a farm, and kept a stock of cattle in the district. His old Irish servant, Martin, attended them as long as the forces of life would allow, and then died in his Master's home, and was buried beside him. This is old fashioned, but that was the way in these days. I was there and knew it all, and saw it all, and so must be excused or praised according to the mood of the reader. It is all so fresh and sweet to me that I will not bridle in my steed for any fashion. I am aware that I am wandering somewhat from the missionary lines, but we need a little humanity in all our missionary details. Let us have a whiff of salt air.

Mr. Norris died just at the time when I entered on the pastorate at Canso. His last official act was to sign my marriage license, and I have his signature still, clear, strong and characteristic

### • 3. The Moulding Hand

The Almighty one fashions his own instruments, and in His own way makes them fit His service, We must remember that the whole process through which we pass is, when all is said, directed by that superintending hand which fashions us all. The Lord Himself had chosen Miss Norris for His service, and had endowed her with gifts which fitted her for a special work. Her aptitudes, her charm of manner, her force of character, was given to her from above. God makes missionaries, or they are never made.

Is it not an extraordinary consideration, that an unknown girl, should have been selected by her Master, to make a grand attack upon the venerable Deities of the East? We hear of no voices, or visions, such as Joan of Arc believed she obeyed, but there was the inward call, such as she tells ~~below in~~ her quiet way. The Rock of heathenism seems im-

pregnable, but plain men and women must proceed with the mallet and chisel of the Master to drill holes in the granite, place the charge there, put the match to it, and then to await the explosion. Our forces seem inadequate, but we are commissioned to go into all the world, and tell the story of the Saviour's work to everybody, being assured by His own tongue that He will stand by us.

By a little pamphlet of Miss Mary Cramp's, entitled "Retrospects," published in 1891, we are permitted to see part of the process which led Miss Norris to believe that she was to engage in this gigantic undertaking. Cold reason declares it a wild scheme. Business men shrink from underwriting it. Even experienced Christians shook their heads. But who knows? It is not always the big gun that does the execution. The young woman who was impelled to carry Doctor Rand's MicMac Gospels to the aborigines in camp near the village, is only beginning her work. Her mind was in a fermenting state, and the great loaf was soon to be leavened.

From her own pen we have a statement which will help us. She does not seem to have confided in anybody. But she says ("Retrospect p. 5-7") I was teaching in the Seminary in Wolfville till near the close of 1869. It was during that year that the thought came to me that I was needed in Burmah. It was a still small voice that made itself heard when I prayed alone, and that rose up to disquiet me amid present activities. Not that I wanted a change. I dearly loved the work I had, but I was ready to go wherever the Master pleased. I thought it was merely a fancy at first. But I could not shake it off, and when I found this I began seriously to consider all the improbabilities that it was anything but a temptation to lure me from what I already had to do. As the unrest continued, I thought one evening I would go and talk with Mr. and Mrs. A. R. R. Crawley, who were then in Wolfville, (on furlough from Burmah), and who probably would convince me of the undesirability of single ladies going to Burmah. Mrs.

Crawley encouraged me to go—I then wrote to Dr. Tupper, asking him if there was any probability of the Board sending me. His answer was that they had barely enough funds for the work already undertaken—absolutely nothing for a new enterprise. It was the answer I had expected. Still the pillar of cloud pointed me to Burmah. So I again laid the matter before the Master. I was not willing that anything should disturb my peace with him. I was ready to go wherever He pleased to send me, but there was no money to pay my passage to Burmah. If He provided that then I could go. I then and now firmly believe the Lord was able to provide for His own anywhere. Indeed I much preferred working alone with Him, and independently of any Society.”

Here is the Divine call distinctly set forth. Miss Norris was a practical soul, however, and so, in the way of faith united with works we must follow her, in her own way, of proceeding:

“Now, when we pray that we may do God’s will we may be sure that the answer is placed within our reach, it only remains to stretch forth the hand and take it. So I rose from my knees, *wondering where the money was*, and acting upon the first thought I said to myself, “I will go to Mr——and ask him if he will advance all the money necessary for my passage, provided some friends known to us both, will give him promissory notes, to refund it in two or three years. It was incredible that he would do this, unless the Lord impelled Him to do it. I put on my hat, and went at once to his office. On my way, a friend, a relation of mine, overtook me, in his sleigh, and offered to drive me. When I told him what my errand was, I yet remember distinctly how his laugh rang out loud and clear on the frosty air, as he said, “Well, if you are foolish enough to propose such a thing, it is a comfort to think, he is too wise to do it.”

“I reached the office, and made my request. He sat silent for a few moments, and then said, Yes, he would. It

was an overwhelming proof to me that the Lord was indeed calling me to go. I sent in my resignation, with my reason for doing so, and went home to prepare for my journey."

"Another scene indelibly impressed on my memory, is that in which I told my mother how I had been led, and what I proposed to do. She sat silent—Her only answer was "Well, my child, if the Lord has called you, we must all do what we can to get you ready." Many years after she wrote me that when I left her, and she saw me passing out of her sight, she had such an overpowering assurance that the Lord went with me and had given His angels charge over me to keep me in all my ways, that she never dared to feel anxious or repine."

This is the stuff of which these people were made, and this is a specimen of faith that I cannot withhold from my friends. But this is not all of this story of faith that crosses the seas. Listen again:

"The friends at Canso whom I had thought as probably willing to refund the money, gave their notes without hesitation, and in a few weeks I was ready. When I presented them to the friend in Wolfville, he said he had changed his mind, that he feared he would be blamed for helping me forward in a wild adventure. I had no means of subsistence after arriving there; so, I thanked him, and came away. I felt sure that the Lord had used him to get me all ready to go, and He wished to provide the means in some other way. I think the result proved that this gentleman was Divinely guided in *both instances*."

It was quite Divine. John that morning was a little cautious, although a generous giver. But there is a foolishness of faith, as well as of preaching, that is beyond all human wisdom, and Maria always had that. The Unseen dominated her, and so she moved confidently, even when rebuffed. She knew that all was ordered, and that somehow all would work for good. She had the faith of the eleventh of Hebrews, and such people are not daunted because somebody says

"No." There is a "Yes" to meet that. That is the history of the Kingdom.

Though she had not leisure to pursue the study to any high degree, she nevertheless was able, I should judge, to gain some insight into the original language of the New Testament.

So when she came to the Association held in Amherst in 1870, I was able to present her as a "born missionary," for from experience I knew that she was. But I did not then understand that she was to be the main spring of a far reaching movement. She was a plain woman, not striking in appearance, with a well shaped head, her dark hair growing low over her forehead, but I knew the brain behind it. At this time, in the ordinary routine of the Association no one could foresee the wave which was about to break upon the Baptists of these Provinces. But it was a propitious hour. The W. M. S. had just been started in the United States. In a moment, our little dark eyed sister saw the opportunity, and seizing it, at once began to form the Societies which were to be so impelling an influence in our foreign work. The first was formed at her home church in Canso, the second in Amherst a few weeks afterward.

#### 4. The Rise of an Independent Mission.

The refusal of our Board, and her failure to secure funds by the loan described both turned out for good, as Miss Norris had anticipated. All was for the best. If the prayer was not answered in her way, it would be in some other.

"I hear and to myself I smile,  
For Christ talks with me all the while."

exactly describes her state of mind at this time. It was really

(Note \*The writer begs permission to use the personal pronoun "I", as there seems no other way in which he can relate the facts exactly as they occurred.)



the occasion of the revolution in our Foreign work. It was the wedge which split the gnarled log.

For many years, indeed since Judson's time, the Baptists of the Provinces had been interested in Foreign missionary operations. They had forwarded monies to the American Board for the help of that good work. The Rev. Richard Burpee, and after his early death, Rev. A. R. R. Crawley had gone to Burmah from our Baptists, and Rev. Wm. George and wife, and Miss Dewolfe had more recently been appointed our representatives, but under the auspices of the American Board. Latterly, we had, with some regularity, been contributing by churches, and individuals, to the support of native preachers among the Karens, and aboriginal tribes of Burmah. As I have intimated, we had no mission of our own. All monies were sent through our American brethren, and disbursed by Rev. Arthur R. R. Crawley, whose judgment we relied on, and who was then stationed in Henthada. These monies were taken in a desultory way, by collectors sent round just before the Association met. I remember the feeling that Amherst had done pretty well, in enclosing about seventy dollars in the yearly letter to the Eastern Association, where I sat as delegate. But when Miss Norris presented herself as a candidate, the Board looked on helplessly. All the funds must be sent through the usual channel, and for the special objects above named. Dr. T. H. Rand told me these facts, which are corroborated by her own words. Our friend, in desperation, and with that energy which was part of her nature, gathered up her little store of Nova Scotia bank notes, and bought a ticket for Boston, en route for the old country, hoping that Providence would open up the way to the East. Her faith was "magnificent, but it was not war," as a deputation of the ministers and others felt. They besought her to wait awhile. It so happened, if such things can be said to happen, that Dr. T. H. Rand, Superintendent of Education, Stephen Selden, Editor of the *Christian Messenger*, and other

friends, heard of this hazardous proceeding, and endeavored to persuade her that if she would withdraw from the attempt, they would try by all means to influence the Board to provide the means by which she might attain her object. She was not accustomed to yield to persuasion, but the Lord gave her the right turn of mind, and she went back to the city, feeling that she ought not to disregard the counsels of these men. The result was that "she went again to the Foreign Mission Board, and was accepted as their delegate to go out among the churches and ask my sisters to send me." (Miss Cramp's Retrospects, p. 8.)

After due formalities, the Board gave its imprimatur "with a view to engage in an independent mission, in the event of such missions being established by this Body, and that we will send her out as our missionary, subject to the concurrence of the Convention."

It is historically important that the facts as stated by Miss Norris in the 'Retrospects' of 1891, be here noted. Miss Norris writes: "Mr Rand (T. H.) and I, at his home, formed a constitution for Missionary Circles similar to that followed by the Woman's Missionary Society of New York.—The first circle was formed in my own church in Canso on the 18th June, 1870, Mrs. Spinney Whitman President, and Mrs. T. C. Cook, Secretary and Treasurer." The second was formed at Amherst July 5, Mrs. D. A. Steele, President, Mrs. C. H. Bent Secretary Treasurer, I may be permitted to point out the curious circumstance that the Presidents of the two first Societies were mother and daughter, in whose library the Life of Adoniram Judson, elsewhere mentioned, was one of the well read books.

During Miss Norris, absence "June 23rd to August 29, 1870, she met forty-one appointments,—organized thirty-two societies". The dates of the formation of the other 29 societies, and their names are given in Miss Norris' memorandum, but it is hardly necessary for me to transcribe them.

On this tour, she attended the Eastern Association, in Amherst. I was then pastor of that Church, and had the pleasure of introducing her, as stated above. The way was opening before her. Her prayer had not been in vain. From the beginning of her supplications, as in Daniel's case, she had been heard, and now, as of old, *Dux Femina Facti*, a woman was leader of the enterprise.

In that same year, 1870, other forces came into action. These other forces, as in a battle, deployed into line, while the originator of the movement looked on wondering. The Convention, was that year held in Fredericton, and when it turned its attention to the second of its subjects—Acadia College and Foreign Missions being the two objects for which it was originally formed in 1846—there seemed an air of apprehension, of expectancy, mingled with a shrinking from launching forth into deep waters. The subject of our Missionary policy was evidently on the minds of our denominational leaders, anxiety shewed itself in their utterances. But there was no horizon before us. Long and eloquent speeches were made, which pointed nowhere. The Secretary of the American Board was present. We were given distinctly to understand that "we were not to squat in any of their fields." The world was large, the heathen were myriads, but we saw no opening for us. Then one of those sudden gleams of relief appeared in an unexpected quarter. The audacity of youth pointed out a path which we could tread, for the present. Laying aside modesty, so that the facts may be laid before you for the first time, I will present the circumstance as it occurred.

Rev. S. B. Kempton, pastor of the First Cornwallis Church, and myself, hearing that our beloved teacher, Rev. J. M. Cramp, D. D., was confined to his room at Dr. Spurdens, called to enquire after his health, and inevitably the all-engrossing matter was enquired after by the good old man. The venerable saint rose on his elbow in bed, and said "Brethren, you yourselves must take this matter in hand; set the

ball rolling, it will grow." He suggested that we move a resolution, of inquiry into this matter. Mr. Kempton insisted that I should move the resolution, and said that he would second it. I shrank from the task, being one of the younger members of the Convention, but went to my lodging-place, and wrought out what I believed the Doctor had suggested. In the afternoon session, the writer rose, with burning head, and trembling nerves, and made some remarks, introducing a resolution, to the effect, that a Committee be appointed to make all enquiries necessary, and to gain all information possible in regard to the feasibility of an Independent Mission. The resolution disturbed the atmosphere, but was backed up by my friends Kempton, Rev. W. S. McKenzie, pastor of Leinster St., St. John, and others. Strong dissent was soon manifested. It was pointed out, that the movers in this all important business were young, that with age was wisdom, and that we must proceed cautiously in such a great undertaking. Wise men shook their reverend heads, some who held prominent positions said nothing. Dr. Rand, and E. M. Saunders were in England, and we missed their aid. However the debate waxed warm, as it should have done. Things were said which needed toning down. Dr. Tupper felt badly thinking that we were drawing away the centre from Aylesford, which was certainly our aim. But finally the resolution passed, and a committee was appointed, consisting of Revs. Dr. Cramp, I. E. Bill, the writer, and others whose names I cannot remember. Dr. Cramp was really the Committee. He was a leader both in Education, and in Missions—an English minister of the best type, perfectly acquainted with the work of Carey and the English Board. During the coming year, he wrote to everybody in the East who could give him any light on the question, and presented a full and able report at the next Convention.

I have not lost sight of my little Canso lady. I can see her sitting there, in the corner of a pew, intent, submerged and happy. I was asked by Rev. Isaiah Wallace, in his pe-

culiar bland way, it I would present her to the Convention. Hon. Dr. Parker was in the chair, and granted me permission to do this. For the second time I had the satisfaction of testifying to her ability and piety

“Faith mighty faith, the promise sees,  
Relies on that alone,  
Laugh at impossibilities,  
And cries it shall be done.”

The women had raised the unwonted sum of thirteen hundred dollars, and Miss Norris was enabled soon after, properly warded and endorsed as our missionary, to proceed to India, to labor among the Karens

### 5. The Stamping of the Coin.

In the following year, 1871, at the Convention in Old Zion, Yarmouth, another young pastor, Rev. W. H. Porter, rose beside me, and said, “Mr. President, I move, sir, that we do now proceed to the inauguration of an Independent Mission.” With the meekness of a Moses, the venerable chairman of the Board, Rev. Charles Tupper, seconded the resolution. By this time his vision had become clarified, and so the young and the old were already seeing eye to eye. The guiding Hand of the Master was there, although there were still some who shook their heads, and declared in my hearing, that it never could be worked. After the usual free discussion of Baptist Assemblies, this Resolution passed.

In the following year, the change foreshadowed took place, and the Foreign Board was removed to St. John. Rev. W. S. MacKenzie was appointed Home Secretary, and Dr. Cramp, who though waxing old, was vigorous in mind, and ripe in knowledge on the missionary situation, was made Corresponding Secretary. He did a service which told materially on our new organization. The Board itself was reconstituted. The young members though inexperienced,

were full of zeal, and all were drinking draughts of the real spirit which makes a mission efficient. They came regularly to Board meetings from long distances, paid their own expenses, and the question with each one was "What ought I to do?" "Is it my duty to join up with the others?" Rev. W. B. Boggs, pastor of the Portland St. Church (now Main St.) resigned, and after serving as Secretary for some months, left all, parents, child, and position, and joined up with Sanford, Armstrong, and the Churchills.

### 6. How we Decided.

It would take us too far afield to trace all the doings of the Denomination which led to the establishment of our Mission in India, with which the Armstrongs were so closely connected. ] But I have preserved a document in printed form which gives the impressions of our brethren, Sanford, Armstrong, Churchill, and Boggs, dated Rahaing, Siam, February 13th, 1875, which sheds light upon the situation at the time. These brethren had been sent, two from Burmah, and two from Bangkok, to locate a field of operation among the Karen tribes which were supposed to be somewhere in Siam. The two parties met at Rahaing, as above stated, and after comparing notes, came to the conclusion that there were no tribes of Karens in Siam where a mission could be placed.

There was perplexity at home, and so great was the anxiety to settle the question of a location, that the Hon. Judge McCully, the President of the Convention, took the unheard of step of summoning a special Convention. This Convention, composed of our leading men and women, was held in Amherst, in 1875, I think in May. The pressure must have been heavy, not to be able to wait until the annual meeting in August. A cry was ringing through the churches, "Siam for Christ." Others thought that we had better labor somewhere in Burmah. Most of us did not know, why one heathen country should have stronger demands than another.

We were in session for two days. Rev. J. M. Campbell, Secretary of the F. M. Board of Ontario and Quebec came to discuss matters with us. He told us of the immensity of the Telugu field, on which their missionaries were laboring, and said that they would gladly have our cooperation. After some good addresses on the other side from Doctors Cramp and Spurden, and others, it was finally decided by a large majority that we leave Siam, Burmah, and the Karens, and labor in that portion of the Telugu field. in the Madras Presidency, where our Ontario brethren were located. We were told to take our choice of places among eighteen million of people speaking that tongue. There was plenty of room, for us, without being an obstruction to our American or Canadian friends. So we there and then entered into an informal union with the Ontario Baptists in Foreign work. <sup>^</sup>

The Union, however, was not really consummated, until of late years, when the Maritime Board was merged in that of the Upper Provinces.

### **7. A Change.**

I can only give a few lines to an event which was a source of much trouble to us all, and which resulted in the resignation of the Armstrongs, and their union with the American Board. This occurred in 1881. Dissatisfaction will always arise in families, and in Boards, and in churches. I must say, that I never quite understood what was the trouble, although a member of the Board and spending time and much labor over it. I naturally felt strongly, but tried to act judicially. I remember one all-night session, as chairman of a Committee of men of all shades of opinion. We heard explanations from Mr. Armstrong. We asked questions; but I for one, never got the explanations I wanted. The sun arose, and we adjourned. We all felt badly, but could do nothing. I was determined to smooth out the difficulty, but results were not forthcoming. The event was that Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong

felt that they would be happier under the American Board. They went to Burmah, and labored in Maulmain and afterward in Rangoon. There was a field for usefulness. Mrs. A. was an adept in Karen, Tamil, Burmese, and Telugu. The last time I saw her, she told me that she had a working acquaintance with Hindustani. Whether she kept up her Greek, commenced with me in Canso I cannot say, but would not be surprised if she could floor some of the graduates in New Testament Greek.

### **8. The Latter Years.**

At this juncture, I find it difficult to give, in proper order, the continuous efforts of Mrs. Armstrong, in advancing the work of her Master. I have no letters or dairy to consult. I have written to those who might be supposed to know particulars, but have received little or nothing in regard to her later work.

I do know, however, that her latest idea was worthy of her. Some ten or twelve years since, she came to me, and unfolded a plan for a School, in which people of different religions might assemble, and be taught the principles of our Revelation. She had in mind a set of buildings, similar to our church in Amherst, and asked me for the plans. I never could learn how far she succeeded in the erection of a building. She wrote me from time to time of the teaching work, but I regret to say the letters have vanished. Her husband and family, two sons and a daughter, I believe assisted her. She solicited subscriptions in Asia, Europe, and America, travelling as far as Lower California with this great object in view. But as far as I can learn, she conducted the Bible School for all religions of the East, in a building hired for the purpose. From a trustworthy source, I learn that no notice appears in any American report— that is, in the minutes of the American Baptist Union. I draw the conclusion that this great idea of hers was an independent thing, and not supported by the



Baptist Union Board under which she had previously labored. She continued to be ahead of her age, to the end.

I must therefore, ask you to content yourself for the present, with the bare items that indicate the closing scenes of the life of this remarkable personality.

Her husband, in his last years, became totally blind, but continued to dictate messages explaining the way of salvation, as he knew it, to people of all sorts and conditions. Some of these I have by me, but they do not need to be referred to here. The good man's death took place in Rangoon, Burmah, May 14th 1918. This seems to have eventuated in Mrs. Armstrong's decline. Her health gave out, and she and her daughter Katie came to Toronto in January 1919. I wrote to her there, and received a reply, breathing the spirit which had always actuated her,—kind, appreciative, and firm in faith. Her daughter determined to finish her course of B. A. at McMaster, and tried to attend the classes there, but our beloved one grew weaker, and Katie was, of course, her Mother's companion. She steadily failed, and the Master sent for his faithful servant on September 14, 1919.

The writer is perplexed, but cannot spin out of his own mind the necessary web; warp and woof are so far wanting. If as he hopes the necessary facts are passed on to him, he will be gladdened himself, and will esteem it a privilege to enlarge this imperfect sketch, by giving the details of her final undertaking.

It seems an unsatisfactory ending of a worthy life-work, but all is written somewhere, and we shall be able to peruse it, later on,—if not here, then there. Meantime, we unite in the grand assurance: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth, Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

### 9. Good Night.

As I slip out of the door, I would like to add a parting

word to my co-workers of the Women's Missionary Aid Societies of the Maritime Provinces. My wife and I were part and parcel of the movement, and we have followed it up. Now we must leave you our blessing.

As we say good bye, we would express the hope that those who follow the founders of the Circles which sent Mrs. Armstrong forth, will continue to break the Alabaster Box, that the house may continually be filled with the odor of the ointment.

Remember that you may help to save the women of India, and through them their children. Be pleased also to take our word for it that there is something more important than money. The women who pray will prevail.

"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

In your private devotions, and in your meetings, remember this, and act upon it, *always*.

We never can tell what will be the result of our labor; we know only that "our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord." I am sure that Mrs. Armstrong will join us all in singing Heber's splendid strain:

Waft, waft, ye winds, His story,  
And you, ye waters roll,  
Till, like a sea of glory,  
It spreads from pole to pole  
Till o'er our ransomed nature  
The Lamb for sinners slain,  
Redeemer, King Creator  
In bliss returns to reign.

### **The Last Phase.**

Since writing the foregoing "Impressions," I have received a booklet, which gives us the facts of Mrs. Armstrong's last years. Her mind was a far-reaching one—she looked beyond the ordinary work of the missionary. Like Dr. Carey and

Dr. Duff she grasped the idea of Education in Christian principle, and endeavored to establish the Bible School in Rangoon, of which I have spoken, and am now able to present the details.

1. The school to be conducted *in the English language*. "Everywhere in the East, higher education is carried on in English."

2. Such a school must be situated in a centre where the people of other faiths congregate. From the outline of her design, we learn that there are in Burmah a million of people who have made that country their home, who have come from India on the one side and China on the other. In this meeting place all the great religions, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism and Confucianism are found side by side. Mrs. Armstrong's school included all these and others, who were desirous of knowing what the English Bible teaches. Let it be kept in mind that the language used was English.

3. A School of this kind must be free from all denominational control. The believers of other faiths must be met on what I may call common Christian ground. There should be no domination of any Christian sect. This shews the wide, tolerant, statesmanlike view which Mrs. Armstrong arrived at, after a lifetime of thinking over the great problem. It is, after all, the position always held by the British raj, or rule—tolerance of all faiths, but with no hiding of our own. It is, I believe, the correct thing. An educated Hindoo said, "Why do Hindoos accept Christ, and not Christianity? Because your faith is not Christianity, but Churchianity." From this stand point, there is a good deal to be said. But behind all our dogmas and opinions, is the Bible, and we must place that before our sectarian views. We must meet them, if possible, without our Western preconceptions. The sole object should be to bring the mind of the Oriental "into contact with the untrammelled Word of God." (Mrs. A's words).

Such an institution must depend upon those who are broad enough in their outlook to supply the funds for its maintenance. Few such are to be found. They have been necessarily confined to their own denominations, where claims to carry on their own work are constantly before them. The response therefore to Mrs. Armstrong's project was quite limited. Many felt that her idea was a grand one, and if she could have lived another score of years, a good foundation might have been obtained, I mean a pecuniary basis. As it is however, the noble idea remains. Others will, in time, take up this advanced Missionary work, and the seekers after truth will find those who will be able to direct them to Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."