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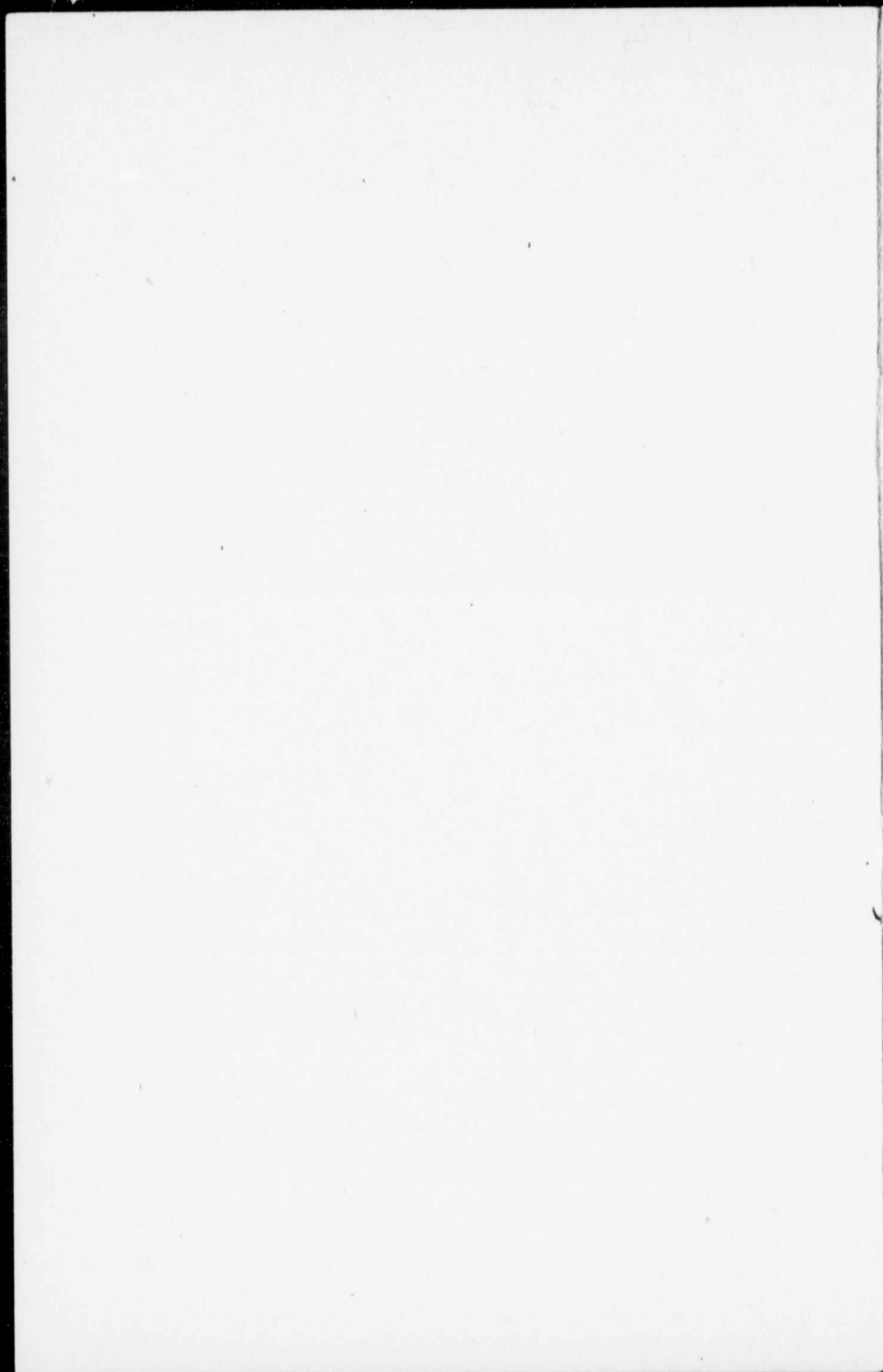
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# An Insistent Call

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NELLIE L. McCLUNG

Woman's Missionary Society  
Methodist Church, Canada.  
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## AN INSISTENT CALL

NELLIE L. MCCLUNG

**T**HERE have been changes wrought in our peaceful world in the last few years, as most of us have observed, and if we have not noticed it ourselves, we have doubtless heard it mentioned, casually and otherwise. Indeed, many of us have lived long enough to have seen with our own eyes, the changes that can be wrought in one short summer—when that summer happens to be the summer the Railroad came!

Up to that time, we dwelt happily and remote from the world of men and all their strivings. For many miles we could look out upon unbroken prairie, with its flower decked sod, its untracked meadows, its unruffled lakes, patrolled by unsophisticated wild ducks, serene and happy in the ignorance of the evil ways of men.

If it were a lonely life, it was also peaceful! The mail came in the Spring. Just as regularly as the Spring came, the mail came too. We answered our letters by return mail, and we always asked for that courtesy in return, feeling we did not ask too much.

Naturally, we did not know much about what was going on in the great world beyond, and naturally, it did not concern us. There might be a milk shortage in Winnipeg, but "we should worry!" "Rosie" and "Lady" were untouched by the economic troubles of the times. Street car strikes, shortage of news print, or the assassination of a Mexican President, were all alike to us!

But now all this is changed. There is no isolation any more except in the far North, and a few years will see the very ends of the earth joined together. Cables, telegraph, wireless, telephones, fast trains, aeroplanes, automobiles have annihilated distance. The world has become one neighborhood.

That is all very pleasant and progressive, and as it should be, but it has laid new responsibilities upon us. In a new sense, our neighbor has become our keeper. What he is thinking, is almost as vital to us as what we are thinking ourselves! A farmer who sits up nights to keep his own fields clear of weeds, and spends long hours summer-fallowing, uprooting and burning, may have his fields polluted, when the wind blows in from the West, where his careless neighbors live. No fence is high enough or close enough to keep out the tiny and sure-to-live weed seeds borne on a strong wind.

The careful housewife, who burns all her garbage, and keeps her back yard clean and tidy, may suffer more from the pollution of her neighbors' tainted premises, than the owner, according to the vagaries of the wind again.

The time has come when no spot on earth can be allowed to "go bad" with impunity. If one spot is bad—we all suffer. There is no safe place in the world now, unless it is all safe. Even the dullest, the fattest, the most self-complacent of us know now that wrong thinking in one country can hang crape on the doors of other countries, hundreds and thousands of miles away. We are all bound together, whether we like it or not, for good or evil.

All this gives to missionary work a significance it has not had, except to the few who have understood. To the unthinking, a missionary meeting conjures up a gathering in the afternoon of elderly and unattached females, sprinkled with mothers of neglected children, who have deserted their lawful task of scrubbing floors and darning, to sit and sew for hypothetical orphans,

while their own children go ragged and unkempt. While the ladies work, some one reads harrowing tales of early marriages, child widows and foot-binding, and the awful practices of the native tribes of Borrioboola-Gha, and under the spell of this, the members decide to hold a bazaar to support a Bible-woman there.

Then tea is served, and soon after, the meeting closes by singing "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," and the mothers of families go homeward and endeavor to gather up what is left of their scattered families.

But a change has come over the attitude of the world toward missionary work. Slowly it is being borne in upon us that we are either doing missionary work, or neglecting to do it, either helping to make the world safe, or we are neglecting to do so.

About this time, the superior people arise to remark that we should leave people alone—they are happier as they are—why do we disturb them and fuss them up! Is our Christian civilization such a boon that we should go out of our way to pass it on to other people?

I believe it is—and we should.

Take the treatment of women! Even the most rabid suffragist who ever scorned our man-made laws, will agree that women are treated with greater respect in Christian and Anglo-Saxon countries, than in any other,—that although the treatment of women in confinement, in our countries, is not always the very best, still, it is superior to the incantations of the witch doctors of India, who, when the evil spirits are very much in evidence, as shown by the patients' groans and screams, proceed to hang the patient by the shoulders with her feet barely touching the floor; this treatment being considered sure cure for spirits.

Child marriages, the burning of widows, the throwing out of girl babies, the abandoning of the old to die, are all, I believe, reasons for our efforts to extend Christianity and its humanities.

Coming home, we find additional reasons for missionary work.

The population of Canada is a mixed one. We have kept an open house, and with the prodigality of all new countries, have extended an unqualified invitation, and the result has been that we have some of almost every nationality there is. A mixed race is not, of necessity, a disadvantage to a country—but the reverse. But it means that specific and definite effort must be put forth to harmonize the various groups. In this work, the Missionary Societies have led the way. It has been the Missionary Societies who have put hospitals in foreign districts, where poor, tired, over-burdened women can come, and have skilled hands attend them in their hour of great need. It is easy for these women to believe that God is love, when they feel the soothing coolness of soft pillows and linen sheets, and know the comfort of having skilled attendance. Christianity begins to grow definite and colorful, when it finds expression in comfortable beds, white linen nurses and skilled physicians.

In other ways, too, the Missionary Societies interpret the love of God. In their boarding homes, the boys and girls of our new Canadians are gathered, and taught and trained. From the two-roomed shack, with its dirt floors, some of them come, and are quickly initiated into all the mysteries of toothbrushes, toilet soap and table manners. There is keen delight in the heart of the parents when they come to visit, and discover that their son or daughter can glibly speak the English tongue, and readily interpret what the teacher says.

In the Province of Alberta, the Woman's Missionary Society have two boarding homes in the country, one in Edmonton, and supports nurses in two hospitals. Every day, these institutions minister to the needs of the people and reach out kind hands of healing and guidance.

But the good work that is going on, emphasizes the need of more such work. Money invested in human life and happiness, brings such a wonderful return, not

in miserable little dollar bills which shrink and shrivel even while you are chasing them, but in peace, joy, and the glowing satisfaction of being able to do something.

The work of the Woman's Missionary Society is not new—it has been going on for thirty-eight years, quietly, effectively, increasing in power. Its policy is clear and definite and unchanging. It finds expression in one phrase—"Love your neighbours." Wherever a need is found, the W.M.S. proceeds to relieve it.

Two things have held them back, lack of funds, and lack of workers, particularly lack of funds. Their own members give to the limit, but many of the women of the church are not members, they are just well-wishers! They go to the W.M.S. concerts, or bazaars, and spend half a dollar there without regret, saying, "it's for a good cause."

The W.M.S. members—those who are close in—knowing just how good the cause is, put their whole hearts into it; and they do it joyously, so joyously that they do not mind doing without a new hat at Easter. They just put another coat of Colorite on the old one, and go blithely on their way. They simply cannot fail in raising the amount asked for. You see they know that it won't really make any difference in a hundred years, whether they had new hats or re-incarnated old ones. But, there is little Emma Hamochsky, who is now growing up without an education, and will, as sure as fate, be married at fourteen, and work like a pack-horse, raising children every year, knowing nothing but how to suffer, if this is allowed to go on. It may be worse, much worse in a hundred years than it is now, for ignorance and suffering and injustice are cumulative. Knowing all this, for the Woman's Missionary Society women have the long vision, and the far-look—the new hat does not look so important, and the fifteen dollars goes into the W.M.S. treasury, and a new boarding home will be opened next Fall at Radway Centre, Alberta, and little Emma, shy and wondering, but vastly pleased, will be brought in. She will learn to

read and write, to shampoo her pretty, ashy colored hair, and make its gold tints show against a blue ribbon. She will be taught to clean her pretty white teeth, and little Emma will feel the first vague stirrings of ambition and self-respect in her young heart. And she won't get married at fifteen, but she will learn many, many things about life and its responsibilities, and pleasures too, and when little Emma does get married, she will have board floors in her house, and a sewing-machine, and she won't feed her babies on strong coffee, neither will her man get drunk on squirrel whiskey, for little Emma knows all about what alcohol does to people. Oh no; little Emma's home will be established on a sure foundation, and it will be a centre of good influence for the whole neighborhood.

It is no small thing to be able to save a soul alive. It is a greater thing than being the best dressed woman at the party, or the one who had the most cut flowers at her reception. It is a different sort of thrill—and it lasts longer.

Indeed, it gives such joy, that the Woman's Missionary Society wants every woman in the church or out of it, to have it. The W.M.S., thinking of little Emma and Rosie and Mary, and wishing that they could give them all a chance to make good, and thinking of every woman who has not entered into the blessed experience of helping to give these little girls a chance—The Woman's Missionary Society invites every woman who hears these words, to come and share the joy of giving and working and helping to show the strangers within our gates, that Christ has risen indeed, and lives to-day in hearts that love and hands that are quick to serve.