



From Mission Lands



Kotzebue, Alaska

I have seen no letter in your columns from Alaska for a long time so I decided to show up with one. Only once before have I written you, that was several years ago when I was stationed at Elim, then a teacher in the government school. I have changed locality, moved closer to the North Pole, and also changed occupation. For two winters I have been traveling nurse in the northwestern district. I am still in government service, but one does not need to draw hard cut lines between government and Mission service in this country. By using a little tact and diplomacy one can often serve in both capacities.

This district is evangelized largely by the Quakers, termed "Friends" in this instance. They hold the district from Deering to Kivalina. North of that the Episcopalians have missions as far as Point Lay. The most northern points up to Barrow are in charge of the Presbyterians. Our Covenant stations are a long way from home, several hundred miles.

To me it has been a great interest to visit these mission stations in connection with my own nursing duties. The "Friends" are very thorough in their religious teachings, are very strict, so much so that they get accused of being "too narrow." There are points I differ with them in Bible interpretation but even so I find with them a good Church Home, not having my own to go to. They have welcomed me among them, often asked me to lead a Bible class, and this winter I was asked to speak at a Sunday morning service in one of their villages. Together with some of their white missionaries I have had some very blessed times. In a country like this and in a work like mine how hungry one does get for Christian companionship. This I have found among the Friends. There are also two teacher

families in the service in this district with whom I have found a Christian co-feeling, they are Adventists. Denominations loose their party lines in this country. One does not judge by their particular sect but by their attitude to Christ, their love to him. The latter have no missions in northern Alaska.

I have made the acquaintance of the Episcopal Missions at Kivalina and at Point Hope. The little village Kivalina, has one of each, Episcopal and Friends mission. Which of the two is accomplishing the most for the natives is hard to judge. I admire the Friends for the stand they take against the use of tobacco and out-ruling dancing and other practices on which the latter are lenient. But again they have abolished the Bible commandment of baptism and communion which the former maintain. I feel there are many genuine Christians in both denominations, both have their failing ones, as well.

There is one Catholic church, erected just a few years ago at Kotzebue. They seem to be drawing the half breeds mainly, also those of the natives that desire a religion plus all the freedom of their own pleasures, no limitations.

There is not any village that I know of that is not cared for by some mission except possibly Candle but that is not a native community, it has almost exclusively a white population. In this statement I am referring to this northern district only.

My work consists of visiting the many villages that have no medical care except that administered by the teachers. I make physical examinations of the natives, give treatments where I am able to do so, and advise hospitalization for surgical corrections. Teeth extraction is the most generally needed treatment. They count up in the hundreds. Health lectures prove worth while and meet with very good response.

How is traveling up in the Arctic? Not bad at all, at least not as bad as most of you imagine it to be. Rabbit skin socks, reindeer boots, fur trousers, two fur parkas (coats), fur cap, and then if it is stormy crawl inside a fur sleeping bag and you can travel as snug as in the best "pullman." The hotel accommodations are the best—what you make it—you take along whatever you need and may choose to have in the line of food and bedding. Shelter cabins are provided along the trails, wood to use, and the rest is up to you.

This part of Alaska is populated by Eskimos, half breeds (father is white and mother native) and by some whites. The majority of these white are old timers who came in the time of the gold rush. I have met many men who have not been to the States for twenty or thirty years. Just lately I met one who came to Alaska before the automobile was invented, he has never seen one. By the way, he is a Swede. He has a store which he never goes out of sight of. Five minutes walk around a high point of land, is a small native village. As I referred to the people over there he said, "It is ten years since I was over there, maybe I'll take a walk over there next summer." He is a very interesting and accommodating old soul just the same. This country has trapped a good many like that who came in search of gold. Some are still dreaming of the golden treasure, hope that with the next turn of the spade their fortune will be revealed. "Seeking, seeking, never finding." This is also the state of affairs in a spiritual sense.

Alma A. Carlson.

WITHIN QUOTATION MARKS

By Ed. W. Peterson.

"The soul would have no rainbow had the eyes no tears."

"Jesus was one above all others who never let his lips say what his mind and heart did not authorize."

"If I could always have the light of Christ's felt presence ever falling onward on my path, keeping the shadows of self behind and out of sight, what an easy climb it would be."

"Religion is not a very good thing to have much of, unless it has been lifted and refined by contact with Christ."

"All the doors that lead inward to the secret place of the Most High are doors outward,—out of self, out of smallness, out of wrong."

"Lord, take me, break me, and make me."

"How near the Lord is when we tell him everything."

"If you love God and believe in Christ, say so; and the result will be a blessing."

"Thank God for the resurrection thoughts which the spring months bring to us. We die to live again."

"God beholds thee individually whoever thou art, he calls thee by name."

New Britain, Conn.

GOD GUIDE OUR YOUTH

By W. Everett Henry

God guide our youth!
They are so full of life; strength cries
Aloud for worthwhile enterprise,
And courage rises high to meet
Each offered task, how'er replete
With danger; plastic to the hand
Of changing circumstance they stand
Dismayed by nothing but ennui.
Life floods within them; they must free
That energy without delay,
And, immature, select the way;
They need the wisdom brought by age,
And find it hard to heed the sage.
God guide our youth!

—The Baptist.