



Dormitory, Pine Oak Cottage, and the School Building

North Fork, California
January 17, 1923.

Dear Pollyanna Girls:

I have thought of you so many, many times since I left home and especially these last two days when I have been enjoying a visit to the mission school for Indian girls of the Mono tribe at North Fork. Of course I had read of it in the magazines and Year Book of Prayer but it was just a name until I came to Fresno this fall. Then I visited several missionary societies in Fresno and vicinity. It was just before Christmas, and one society was planning to send a Christmas dinner to North Fork, another was sending some cakes, another hair ribbons; all were doing something. But beyond the fact that the school was up in the mountains over a very bad road I did not learn much about its location.

Monday was a beautiful day and we were tempted to take a trip, so I said, "I should like to see North Fork mission before I go South," and Mr. McCartney said, "Let's go today." It is about fifty miles from Fresno, but we learned that, although the roads were bad, the stage was running, so we decided to attempt it. It seemed strange to me that the stage should take four hours to go fifty miles, but I understand now. We made numerous inquiries and in every case had the same answer, "The roads are very bad but you can get up as it hasn't rained lately." We thought we knew mountain roads and that probably all these city people meant by bad roads was simply that they weren't paved; we surely could go twenty-five miles in less than three hours.

Well, we were glad to go five miles an hour much of the way and we learned that "bad roads" in California are the same as "bad roads" in Washington or anywhere else, only worse. Steep grades and ruts! And once a truck stuck in the mud ahead of us. But it was a beautiful drive up from almost sea level to three thousand feet. And such a sunset! In all my life I have seen few to equal it. The glow was a blaze of glory in front, behind and all around us—all colors from the palest lavender to the deepest crimson. At one turn the glow from behind made such a light in front of us that it looked like sunrise.

It was dark when we reached North Fork at a quarter to six, and found that the mission was two miles farther on. We could not reach it by telephone and thought we would stay at the hotel all night, but when we found that the rooms were not heated and that the hotel at South Fork was better, we decided to go on there. An Indian in the store hearing Mr. McCartney's inquiry said, "I am going that way. I will drive ahead and show you the way." So we went on with his car as guide. When we came to the road where he turned off, he said, "The Mission is just around the bend." He had not understood that we were going to the South Fork hotel so he directed us to the mission. It was too dark to find our way back so we went in. They were just finishing supper and the girls were on their way to the kitchen with their dishes when Mr. McCartney knocked. He was met not only by the teacher, Miss Murphy, but by the entire bevy of girls. They all rushed out to open the gate and we were given a royal welcome. These Indian girls are the most interesting combination of friendliness, affectionate cordiality, and shyness, that I have ever seen. They will hover around my chair, stroke my hair, chatter among themselves or to me and laugh like any other school girls, but ask any one of them a question or direct an individual remark to her and shyness strikes her dumb. Soon after we arrived I went out to get some things from the car. "We will go with you," they said and out they went, eager to carry things in, curious to see; one shyly said, "We like you very much."

We had happened on a fortunate moment to arrive. There was a birthday celebration in the air. A cake had been made and the girls' sitting-room decorated in honor of Mamie, a fourteen year old girl. It was to be a surprise. One mischievous little girl

had said during the day, "I'm going to tell Mamie." Miss Murphy said, "If you do, you will have to go to bed and not come to the party." At the time of the party Miss McCullough was surprised to find Lena, nick-named "Merry Sunshine," in bed. She had "told Mamie" and knowing the penalty had imposed it on herself. Well, the party was a great success. Mamie was brought in to blow out the candles. Mrs. Morrow, formerly Miss Sargent, a teacher, and her husband, who is in the Forest Service, Bureau of Entomology, were also here. The girls simply adore Mrs. Morrow and have never quite forgiven her husband for taking her away.

At the prayer hour I told them a few things about the Nez Perces and after they went to bed the rest of us, Miss McCullough, Miss Murphy, Mr. Greig, and the Morrrows, had a nice visit around the fire in the teachers' sitting-room. I want you to remember Miss McCullough and Miss Murphy especially when you come to their names in the Year Book of Prayer. You will not find Mr. Greig's name in the same place as he is not under the Board, but under the San Joaquin presbytery, as pastor of the Indian Church. He manages the finances—no small item when one dollar has to do what ten would ordinarily do—but I never saw people who could manage as well as these three here. It would take a whole letter to tell of the things Mr. Greig does. He lives

a little below here but has his meals here and is busy about the place all the time. He did much of the work on these buildings.

Yesterday morning was beautiful. I went up to where two Indians were sawing logs and took a picture of them with Mr. McCartney and Mr. Greig. One of the Indians, a very old man by the name of Jack Mouse, told some interesting tales of primitive times, such as burning the hair off with branches of mistletoe before they had scissors or knives for cutting it. Then we went for a long walk five hundred feet up the trail to a place called Cascadell, where the rocks and waterfalls of Whiskey Creek make it very beautiful. It was very hot, like a July day at Wenatchee Lake. As we went, we saw the leaves coming out, getting ready for the flowers of spring. Mr. Greig pointed out his favorite slope of harebells, quoting Browning:

"God told him it was June; and he knew well,
Without such telling, harebells grew in June."

Only here the harebells come in May and the mariposa lilies in June. It is strange that the favorite haunt of the harebell is under the poison oak.



Some of the North Fork Girls



May Sherman and Her Two Babies

In the afternoon I went over to the school where I saw the younger girls under Miss Murphy learning of the baptism of Jesus. The older girls, under Miss McCullough, were having verse-finding contests and learning to write and recite the names of the books of the Bible. They all had recited I Corinthians 13. They were doing well in their Bible work though they were almost too shy to recite while I was there.

After school yesterday Miss McCullough and I went with the two little five-year-olds a mile across the field to visit the home of one of the former pupils, May Sherman, the wife of the Indian who guided us the other night. I wish you could see her in her neat home with two babies, as beautiful children as we ever saw. The home was clean and neat and the jelly roll just out of the oven. I think that home is the strongest testimony of what the North Fork mission does for girls that can be found. If all Indian girls can be trained to make homes and to be mothers like that one, they will be a credit to our land. On the way home we stopped to see the church. Mr. McCartney and some of the girls joined us. In the church we sang songs. I told them Mr. McCartney would play for them at the mission and that created great excitement—"Man going to play." Upon our return in a short time all who were not getting supper gathered around him at the piano and sang until supper. They sing very sweetly and know the gospel hymns better than many of our own girls.

We had not intended to spend last night here, but it was so beautiful, we couldn't leave. This afternoon, in spite of the rain during the night, we shall try to start home. I have written a long letter but I haven't begun to tell you many interesting things about the school and the girls. There are nineteen of them from the two who are five up to those who are fifteen. I should never have thought they could be so lovable and really attractive, but I think it must be because the teachers love them that they respond so well. They are all different. One is quite a problem for she will not talk nor enter into the games. Yesterday when I was sitting on the porch writing she stood behind me for a long time but did not say a word. She fairly looks through one and will smile but not talk. It is almost uncanny. I think this habit of silence came on after the death of her father. She has short hair and it is of interest to note that bobbed hair denotes sorrow

in the family. After a death they come back to school with bobbed hair.

The home influences are hard to overcome after vacation as the girls so easily slip back into the old habits. They are not allowed to talk Indian. If they do they have to go on bread and water for supper that day. One bright little thing was so pleased last night because she had her regular supper for the first time in a week. But it is nice to see how cheerfully they accept discipline and how obedient they are. The whole atmosphere is that of a loving family rather than of an institution. You can imagine what tact and perseverance, to say nothing of unlimited patience, it takes on the part of the teachers to bring about these results.

Mr. Greig was telling us last night that there is no word for "thank you" in their language and that gratitude is not a dominant characteristic. One of the Indians was charging or trying to charge an exorbitant price for wood-cutting. Mr. Greig told him he could get others to do it for less. "Yes," said this Indian, "but you should pay me more than you would pay them for I have a girl in your school and they haven't." This same man has a beautiful collection of baskets that he has bought from other Indians. He leaves them here for safe-keeping and last night we saw them. They are worth several hundred dollars. They are not for sale, but the girl who marries this man's son will get the baskets—quite a new form of inducement!

The girls all have their duties, dining room, kitchen, laundry, beds, etc. It is no small task to keep this place in order, but it is neatly done. The kitchen girls get up at five-thirty, make the fire, get breakfast and call the others. Breakfast is at seven. I have seen some of you girls in camp and I know you couldn't get breakfast for twenty-five people any more easily than they do.

The teachers are young, attractive and congenial. If you girls (and I hope some of you will be looking forward to real service) are looking for a full-time job, I commend you to the home mission field. A school of nineteen isn't a big task, is it? No, but in addition to teaching that nineteen—who are all ages and have racial traits hard to overcome—there is the task of home-making in every detail, of religious instruction, of being not only teacher but mother, nurse, and everything else that helps in directing the lives of these girls. There are no Saturdays and Sundays

off. The girls are always on hand. The only hours off duty for the teachers are the hours between the eight-thirty bed-time and the morning, and those hours may be disturbed by sickness or something else. But the work is real service, girls, and delightful because it is so well worth while for both the present and future of these Mono girls.

I must stop, but I hope this will be of interest to you as first-hand knowledge of one of the schools you have read about and are helping to support.

With love and best wishes to you always,

MABEL McCARTNEY.

WOMAN'S BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS
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Best File

A CONTRIBUTOR LOOKS AT THE WORK

A Visit to North Fork