

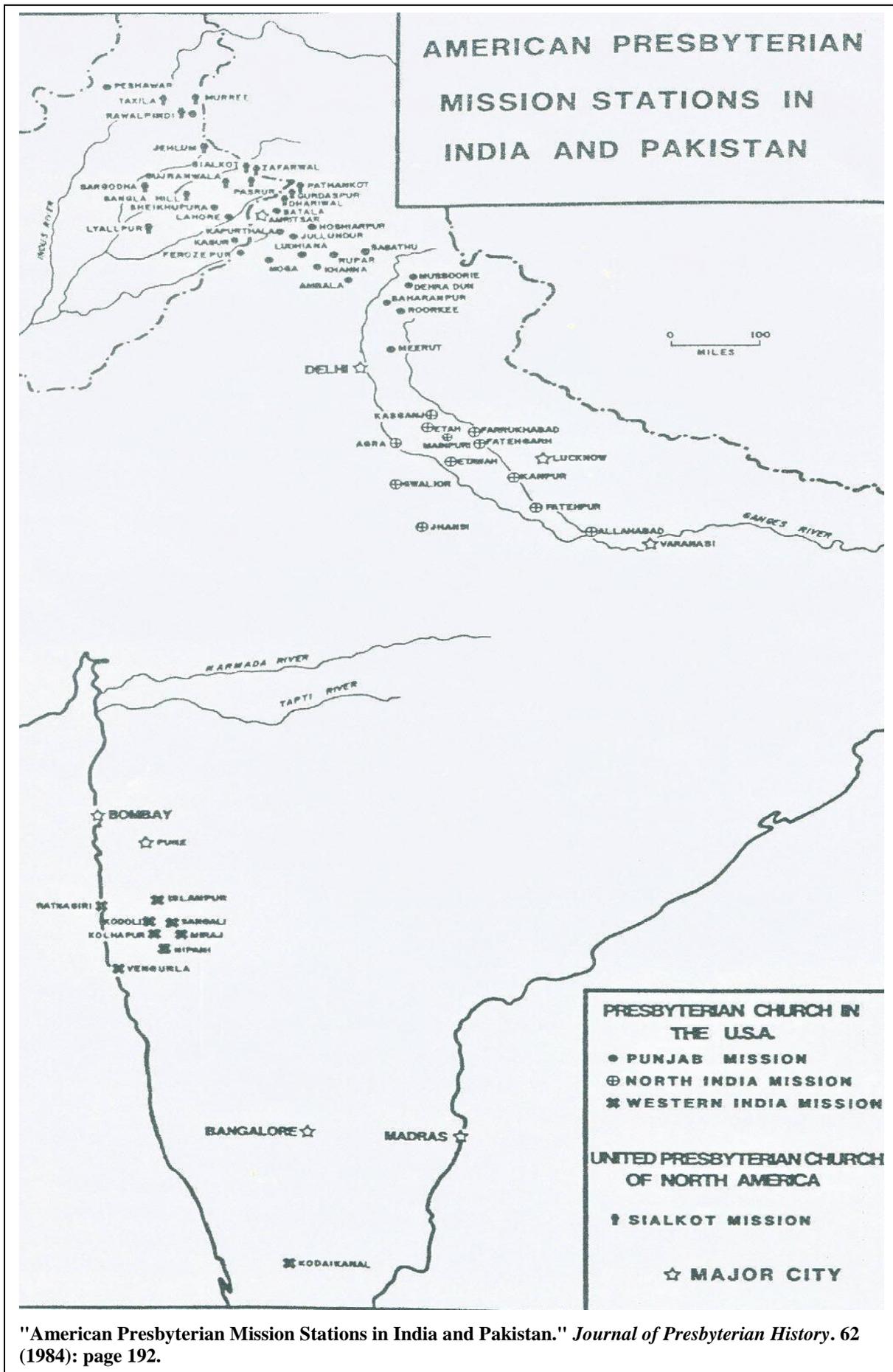
Part III

Elizabeth and DJ Fleming

1904-1910

Part III is divided into two chapters: before children, 1904-1906 (Chapter 9) and after children, 1908-1910 (Chapter 10). The titles for these chapters, "Isn't this Women's Work?" and "Do you suppose there will be more time in heaven?", are interrelated and interchangeable. Elizabeth's struggle to balance her missionary work with Lahore's demanding social life is an underlying theme in all of her letters from India; after 1906, taking care of children would take priority over all other commitments but leave Elizabeth feeling conflicted about her missionary duties. On March 31, 1910, she asks: "Tell me which should come first with the missionary wife—the *Missionary* or the *Wife*["?]" From the sidelines and often suffering with malarial fevers, Elizabeth watched as her mother's career with the home missions flourished and as DJ's pedagogy, which emphasized a reciprocal understanding of the Golden Rule and a collaborative approach to other religions, earned respect from both Indian Christians and missionary colleagues.

Central to the woman's missionary movement and to "Women's Work" was a global sense of sisterhood and shared belief that "women do come to their rights in exact proportion as Christian ideals become dominant in a nation" (Montgomery 74). In an interview with the *Chicago Daily Journal* Elizabeth declared, "Emancipation of the women of India is the solution of all the problems" ("Western Ideas"), while Julia wrote in her travelogue, "There is a big difference between the attitude of Christianity toward women and that of Mohammedanism. Daylight and Darkness! This is one of the blessings of that good man's life; that he came to bring Christianity to women and to all God's children" (46). And this belief is what gave missionary women hope.



"American Presbyterian Mission Stations in India and Pakistan." *Journal of Presbyterian History*. 62 (1984): page 192.

A Brief Introduction to the Foreign Missionary Movement

In August 1904, ninety-two years after the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent its first party of five missionaries to India (1812), and seventy years after the American Presbyterian church established their first mission station outside of the United States in Ludhiana, India (November 1834), Elizabeth and DJ Fleming sailed as foreign missionaries to Lahore, India in the Punjab Mission.¹ By 1904, the Punjab Mission included fourteen stations (Webster 14-15); the Lahore Station, founded in 1849, was the capital of the Punjab and also a key educational center, home to both the University of the Punjab and Forman Christian College, where DJ was returning to teach physics after a sabbatical (1901-1904). Rev. Daniel J Fleming received his Doctorate of Divinity at Union Theological Seminary (1902) and a MA degree in physics from the University of Chicago (1904), and "he was proud to be able to ask the one he loved to join in this student work in a capital city with Oriental charm."

The Flemings were not unusual in their dedication to the cause; the combined statistics of the foreign missionary movement at the turn of the century were staggering. In *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions*, William R. Hutchison summarizes Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) leader, Robert Speer's 1902 calculations of the missionary movement's scope:

[It] claimed a total of 558 missionary societies, 7,319 mission stations, 14,364 churches, ninety-four colleges and universities, 20,458 schools, 379 hospitals, 782 dispensaries, 152 publishing houses, 452 translations of the Bible, and "sixty-four ships belonging exclusively to Christ." The missionary movement, worldwide, then employed 18,682 missionaries

¹ In 1947, the Punjab became part of Pakistan; today, Lahore is located in the east-central region of Pakistan near the border of India. The Punjab, called "five waters" or "five rivers," consists of an alluvial plain formed by the southward-flowing Indus and its four tributaries and lies on the edge of the monsoon climate.

and 79,396 native workers and claimed an income of more than \$20 million dollars a year. (100)

In his *One Hundred Years: A History of the Foreign Missionary Work of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. With Some Account of Countries, Peoples and the Policies and Problems of Modern Mission* (1937), Arthur Judson Brown reported that between 1837 and 1937, 708 missionaries heard Christ's command and sailed to India (second only to China); overall, 4,783 missionaries went into the world at large to preach the Gospel (1134). The primary motive of Presbyterian missionaries, such as the newly-wed Flemings, was to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to the world, but as Arthur J. Brown cautioned in *The Foreign Missionary: An Incarnation of a World Movement* (1907), "Mere piety will not make a missionary, anymore than mere patriotism will make an ambassador" (71). Further, he declared, "The boards do not send the pale enthusiast or the romantic young lady to the foreign field, but the sturdy, practical, energetic man of affairs, the woman of poise and sense and character," a characterization of the missionary that Brown liked well enough to write in *The Foreign Missionary* (67) and to repeat, unchanged, thirty years later in his *One Hundred Years* (67).²

While the standard missionary of the first three quarters of the century had been a man of such humble background and education that he was probably overlooked for the home ministry, the typical late-nineteenth-century missionary "was neither a religious fanatic nor an otherworldly social misfit," Valentin Rabe claims in his essay, "Evangelical Logistics: Mission Support and Resources to 1920," he just had a "more imperative sense of religious duty" than his stay-at-home contemporaries (75). Virtually every new candidate had first spent several years as a home missionary, YMCA/YWCA

² Unless otherwise mentioned, all of Arthur J. Brown's citations throughout are to his *One Hundred Years*.

secretary, or denominational functionary (79), he was also a college graduate,³ usually from the Midwest (Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois), and was selected for his knowledge in a secular field such as accounting, fundraising, or public relations (*Home Base* 72). In short, DJ, a graduate of the College of Wooster in Ohio (1898) with a degree in science, was very close to Brown's ideal: "a sturdy, practical, energetic man of affairs."

After 1900, this new middle-class missionary was sixty percent more likely to be a woman. She too had a college degree, or was trained as a teacher, nurse or physician, or had specialized evangelical training such as from the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago or other mission-oriented school. Patricia Hill writes in *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* that although the temperance movement received "the lion's share of publicity in the 1870s," the foreign mission cause actually attracted more women (55).⁴ The early generations of college women already felt themselves a privileged band; their desire to do something useful and meaningful with their lives came at a time, however, when career opportunities for women were limited. As it turned out, most missionary women, unlike their professional counterparts, wanted to maintain their loose connection with the women's sphere anyway. Jane Hunter writes in *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* that missionary work

offered the independence, status, and opportunity for achievement associated with a profession, but it was not a profession. As a calling it was characterized by a rhetoric of self-denial rather than of personal

³ Rabe points out that ordained missionaries belonged to an educated elite at a time when white male college graduates in the United States did not approximate even one percent of the white male population who had passed college age, and when less than thirty percent of the Congressmen and only sixty percent of the Presidents had earned degrees (*Home Base* 75).

⁴ Hill provides these statistics for the various women's organizations of the day: The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) had 150,000 members and the Women's Clubs had 20,000 in 1892; the National American Woman's Suffrage Association (NAWSA) claimed 13,000 in 1893, while the total of fourteen nondenominational female missionary societies in 1896 was 500,000 members (195).

ambition. . . . Missionary women . . . shared many of the needs that led women into the professions; but they had one unique need—to clothe their ambition in a garb which did no violence to their sense of feminine Christian virtue. (38)

Missionary women indeed were a growing number. Of a sample of seventy-eight women missionary candidates, Frederick J. Heuser, Director of the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, reports in his essay, "Presbyterian Women and the Missionary Call, 1870-1923," that thirty-six percent were influenced by the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), thirty-one percent by the YWCA, and ten percent were both. Of these same files, forty-six percent stated family traditions (thirty-two percent of these married missionaries), while seventeen percent were daughters of missionaries (23-34). Jane Hunter offers other statistics: forty percent of the American Board's female volunteer had fathers and mothers who did church work; one-quarter were from home or foreign parentage and another eighteen percent came from ministers' families (32). Not surprisingly, Hunter states that over seventy percent of the American and Methodist board women had been teachers (36), reflecting the trends noted in part one, Chapter 6, "Shall I begin at the beginning?" Elizabeth was in almost all of these categories and would also have matched Arthur Brown's ideal: "the woman of poise and sense and character."

On the other hand, Barbara Welter argues in "She Hath Done What She Could" that women's successful entry into the missionary field might represent "less a victory than a strategic retreat by the opposition" (111), the "opposition" meaning men. Jane Hunter rephrases Welter's argument like this: "Missionary service for women was a decision for public activity but, for men, a form of dignified withdrawal. . . . [M]issionary marriages joined men and women from opposite ends of the spectrum of career options

for their respective sexes." Therefore, Hunters continues, the missionary movement became a "combination of practical, strong women and gentle, cerebral men." Examples of this dynamic, she points out, are illustrated in the marriage of Carie and Andrew Sydenstricker, Pearl S. Buck's parents, and portrayed in her biographies of their work in China: *The Exile* and *Fighting Angel* (283).⁵ Elizabeth Cole Fleming, a practical, strong woman, and DJ Fleming, a gentle, cerebral man, were similar in these ways to Carie and Andrew Sydenstricker, but the Flemings were theologically more progressive than the Sydenstrickers, as discussed part one of Chapter 9, "I had told God I was willing to go."

Unlike foreign missionaries in other parts of the world, in India the Flemings lived and worked under the British flag as guests of the *raj* and could remain in the country only if they refrained from any public criticism of it. Until 1947 when Indian independence was won, all American missionaries had to sign a statement promising to respect and obey the established government before being granted a visa to enter India (Alter 309). Although Brown called the British the "best colonizers in the world," giving India orderly government, justice in the courts, security of life and property, good roads, well-managed railways, irrigated lands, improved sanitation, control of epidemics (551), one of the fundamental principles underlying British rule was their belief in the superior status of the white man over the Indian. Elizabeth's struggle with this blatant racism is addressed in part two of Chapter 10, "No more Englishmen smelling of my scalloped potatoes."

⁵ Pearl Sydensticker Buck (1892-1973) was the daughter of Presbyterian missionaries stationed in China. Her second novel, *The Good Earth*, became the best selling book of both 1931 and 1932 and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1935. In 1938 Buck was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature, the first American woman to have been so honored (*New Columbia* 386).

Within the Indian society itself was another class division: the caste system. Caste was originally designed to preserve the supremacy and racial purity of the Aryans from the aborigines in 2,000 B.C., but the lines between them steadily multiplied and hardened into inflexible religious and social barriers; in 1937, Brown reported as many as 2,378 "gradations of prestige" (543). Intermarriage and social interaction, not to mention the sharing of meals, or cooking and drinking from shared dishes and utensils, between castes were strictly forbidden. Many of these restrictions also applied to interactions between the Hindus and the Muslims and it took creativity, sensitivity and forethought on the part of the missionaries when hosting social events. On June 3, 1905, Elizabeth writes of a lawn party the Flemings had for the students of Forman Christian College: "The lemonade bottles were cooled in my bath tub filled with ice water, and as the students got thirsty they came up to the refreshment corner and got their bottle. You know our lemonade is charged like lemon phosphate and comes one anna a bottle (2 cts). Hindus and Mohammedans and Christians could all drink from a bottle, and it saved fussing with glasses."

Turn-of-the-century missionaries were infused with the spirit of Rudyard Kipling's February 1899, poem in *McClure's Magazine*, "The White Man's Burden" (see attached), and most wholeheartedly embraced the SVM watchword, "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation." Whether providing alms to the less fortunate or disguising Christianity as a cultural invasion of weaker countries (producing the Christianity-versus-Culture matrix), joining the foreign missions was a personal sacrifice and a commitment of the highest order. Valentin Rabe writes, "The foreign missionary movement combined a confusing mixture of youthful enthusiasm and ecclesiastical

conservatism, traditionalism and free innovation. An otherworldly spiritualism coexisted with calculated pragmatism, as did parochialism with an idealistic vision of the brotherhood of man in a coming kingdom lacking internal boundaries" ("Logistics" 89). These idealistic, adventuresome college-grads were not unlike the Peace Corps or Vista volunteers fifty years later—they all shared a sense of global duty, destiny and, as Kipling wrote, "the judgment of your peers."

Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden,"

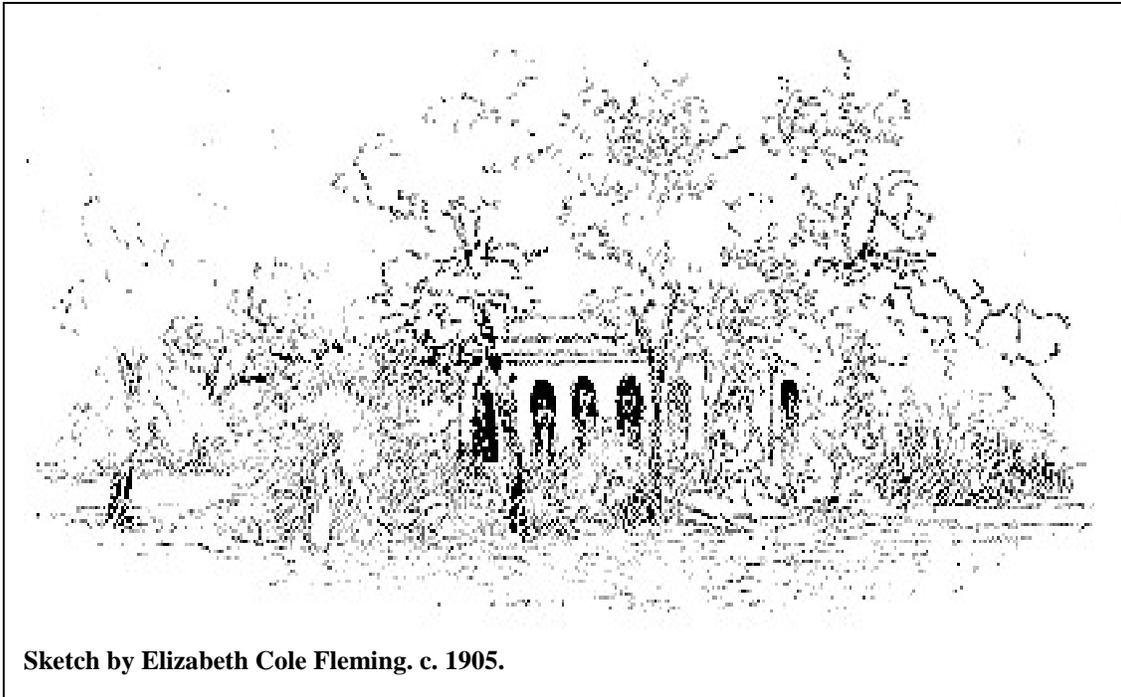
*McClure's Magazine, February 1899.*⁶

Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait, in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.
Take up the White Man's burden—
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit
And work another's gain.
Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine,
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
(The end for others sought)
Watch sloth and heathen folly
Bring all your hope to nought.
Take up the White Man's burden—
No iron rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper—
The tale of common things.

The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go, make them with your living
And mark them with your dead.
Take up the White Man's burden,
And reap his old reward—
The blame of those ye better
The hate of those ye guard—The cry of
hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
"Why brought ye us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?"
Take up the White Man's burden—
Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloak your weariness.
By all ye will or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent sullen peoples
Shall weigh your God and you.
Take up the White Man's burden!
Have done with childish days—
The lightly-proffered laurel,
The easy ungrudged praise:
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years,
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers.

⁶ Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was an Englishman born in Bombay. At the turn of the century he was the most popular writer in English in the world and he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907. His writing appealed to readers of all social classes and cultural groups (*New Columbia* 1482). "The White Man's Burden" was ambiguously written, seeming to caution the United States against imperialism during the Spanish American War (1898) while appearing to applaud some of the successes of the missionary movement.

Chapter 9:
Early Lahore—Newlyweds, 1904-1906
“‘Isn’t this Women’s Work?’” (November 2, 1905)



As mentioned in parts four, five and six of Chapter 4, missionary letters became a large part of the romance and allure of the movement. Early on the women of the movement realized the power of the personal letter to rally support for the cause, and by 1871, capitalized on this knowledge by making missionary letters a regular feature in the Presbyterian monthly journal, *Woman's Work for Woman*. "The majority of missionary correspondents," Jane Hunter explains in *The Gospel of Gentility*, "were at least semiprofessional writers in the investment of time, cultivation of imagination, and refinement of skills that their epistolary exertions entailed" (60).

Therefore, Elizabeth's first letters home as a foreign representative to India were considered "professional" letters to be shared with an audience beyond "My dear Mother." Although Elizabeth felt uncomfortable having her writing published (see letters

of March 15, 1910, and May 1st & May 5th, 1910), she had at least two articles published in *Woman's Work*. "First Year Impressions of Life in Lahore" was published in April 1905, seven months after she moved to India, and "Observed in the Punjab" was pieced together from letters to her mother and appeared in the April 1910 issue. (I believe Julia sent Elizabeth's letters to the *Woman's Work* staff for them to edit for this issue.) Elizabeth also wrote a yearly update on her conversion progress in Lahore for the *Woman's Presbyterian Board of Missions of the Northwest* (WPBMN) annual reports. (April was the month specifically dedicated to India).⁷

Part two of this chapter, "Come with me to the village I visited yesterday," introduces both the American Presbyterians in India and DJ's liberal, Union Theological Seminary theology. This letter was written to one of her benefactors, the Young People's Society of the Hyde Park Presbyterian Church (HPPC); together, the Sunday School and the Young People's Societies of the HPPC contributed about one-sixth of Elizabeth's salary (*Fiftieth Anniversary* 68).⁸ The members of these earnest groups wanted to hear directly from their own personal missionary, and Elizabeth obliged. I had already been fooled once by these first letters home from India during my History of English Prose Style class, thinking that because they were illustrated, they were somehow friendly and unsophisticated. But for my purposes back then—determining Elizabeth's prose style—I was at a loss. I was trying to crack the rhetorical code of a professional, evangelical missionary at a time when gospel-speak was at its height.

⁷ From the inside cover of the 1905 *Women's Work: A Foreign Missions Magazine*, Vol xx, No. 4: January: Open Door; February: China; March: Africa; April: India; May: Siam and Laos; June: So. America, Mexico, Guatemala; July: Haiman, and the Philippines; August: General Field Books of the Year; September: Japan; October: Persia; November: Korea; December: Syria.

⁸ In *The Foreign Missionary* (1907), Arthur Brown must have been referring to a man's salary when he wrote that the "the average salary is about \$550 for a single missionary and \$1,100 for a married one" (120); the birth of a child gave an additional \$100 allowance (119).

Patricia Hill writes, "Movement leaders relied from the beginning on the printed word to stir the emotions of women and forge the bonds of sympathy that drew masses of middle-class women to the mission cause" (5). In particular, she adds, "Women, it was believed, responded to graphic portrayals of concrete dilemmas more readily than to abstract argumentation," because graphic portrayals appealed to the heart as well as the head (66). Although nineteenth-century Romanticism valued the emotional and spiritual above reason and the intellect, Daniel W. Howe notes in "Victorian Culture in America," "Mere rational presentation was not powerful enough as an instrument of cultural transmission and social control. Out of Victorian interest in the arts of persuasion came the cultivation of emotional manipulation" (25).

In the world of missions, these graphic portrayals of emotional manipulation, propaganda really, were called "circulars." Copied by hand, mimeographed or transcribed by typewriter by women such as Myrtilla Alvord and Julia Cole, circulars were disseminated and published more widely. Because of improvements in postal delivery mentioned in Chapter 1, which included lowering postage costs and improving delivery times, Victorians became avid letter writers, a fact which became key to the success of the women's foreign missionary movement. The number of letters was tallied annually in various mission reports as a positive indication of the spread of Christianity throughout the world.⁹ In Elizabeth's first circular home from Bombay on September 21, 1904, she was able to adopt the mission jargon seamlessly: "Never in my life have I seen

⁹ Although the record keeping was not consistent, the following statistics show the importance of letter writing to the foreign missionary movement. From the *WPBMN Annual Reports*: 1905: over 17,000 letters (17); 1906: 1,304 letters sent out (18); 1907: 2,605 letters sent out (18); 1908: 4,969 letters and 685 post cards received, 1,884 letters and 1,279 post cards sent out (91); 1909: 7,752 letters and 1,156 postal cards received, 2,863 letters and 2,460 postal cards sent out (180); 1910: 6,587 letters and 1,078 cards received, 2,813 letters received, 2,813 letters and 2,559 cards sent out (81); 1911: 3,500 letters and 3,521 post cards sent out, plus "several hundreds of circular letters and 1,548 pages of circulars and missionary letters have been typewritten, 9,432 pages mimeographed and 5,760 letters and circulars have been distributed" (77).

so many square feet of naked flesh. Costumes of all colors. What would awaken them—except a new faith." On October 26, 1904, from Kasur, she writes:

From house to house we went, if you could call these mud walls such. In one, we climbed to the roof where the family were gathered on their *carpai*. A crippled mother, where a young man had been ill with fever for 22 days. A crowd quickly gathered, and Miss S. read and sang and talked to them, there on the roof under a straw awning. One little girl of fifteen years, had just been married. She was a pretty child, decked out in much jewelry. That is the sign that one is married. But she had a terrible ear, all festered by the rings in it. There were ten of them by actual count, set in all the rim of the ear. We told her the ear could not heal until those were taken out, but they laughed at us over such an absurd proposition. Jewelry is more to them than life itself!¹⁰

Elizabeth has adopted the didactic ideology of the missionary movement; she is catering to the educated Victorian woman at home and flattering her reader's intelligence with the double entendre regarding the "absurd proposition" of removing the child-bride's ten earrings.¹¹

When Elizabeth showed concern for the young bride, was she healing or evangelizing, or both? This Christianity-versus-Culture controversy would be debated early and often by missionary administrators. Rufus Anderson, one of the first corresponding secretaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) (1826-1866), did not approve of the "civilizing" work of missions because he felt this would confuse Christianity with Western culture. By the end of the century, Anderson's mission philosophies would be replaced by those who thought otherwise, but there would always be a lingering sensitivity about the subject. "Must one educate and

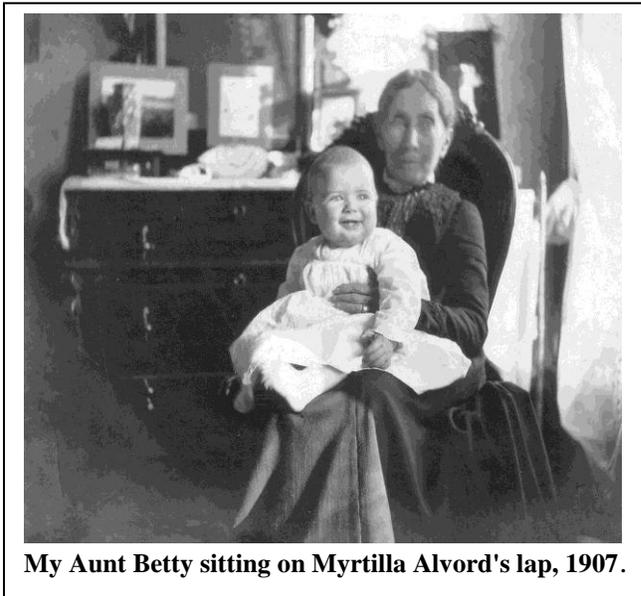
¹⁰ For an explanation of the significance of jewelry in Indian culture, see the October 26, 1904, letter in part one of Chapter 13.

¹¹ Another example of sharing a double entendre with her audience is her March 24, 1905, circular: "The horse which is kept for this purpose [the Mohammedan "Maharran"], year after year, is allowed to do no work the year round. Once a year in this procession he is led out and for eight hours is displayed to the worshiping city. I was glad to see the horse look naturally bored by the demonstration, and if he could have seen himself in his ridiculous draperies he would have bolted, I am sure."

civilize before evangelization can be effective?" William R. Hutchison will ask in *Errand to the World*, "Or should one concentrate upon evangelization, confident that civilization will follow?" (12). Further he wondered whether "the captive audiences of proud Moslems or Buddhists in a hospital ward were to be preached to and prayed over, or just healed" (13). The editors of the WPBMN took their stand on this in their *1908 Annual Report* and proudly announced: "Medicine for the soul as for the body was given in the small room for prayer and instruction in the hospital, and in texts added to prescriptions, and 'John 3:16' upon the bottle-labels" (12), and without any hesitation, Helen Montgomery stated, "The hospital is Christianity put in concrete terms that even the dullest can understand" (133).

Montgomery's language, written in 1910, is forthright and strong. Women had gained confidence since first joining the post-Civil War volunteer societies of Myrtilla Alvord and Julia Cole's generations, and they had passed their bravado onto their daughters, the 1890s New Women. At the turn of the century these college-educated New Women became more vocal than their mothers and grandmothers about gender inequalities and political rights, issues which were all lumped together under the term: "The Woman's Question." Although DJ and Elizabeth seemed to have had a marriage based on an egalitarian relationship, I am sure that the world at large did not change swiftly enough for her. Three of Elizabeth's letters written just after their first wedding anniversary—August 22, October 18, and November 2, 1905—mention something about "women's issues," and are addressed in parts three and four of this chapter. "Isn't this Women's Work?" she asks. It is interesting that she will never be quite as outspoken on these issues again, but maybe some of her more challenging letters were discarded or lost.

Part three, "Chicago is not the only place which has murders" (August 22, 1905), examines one of the fundamental Christianity-versus-Culture conflicts—polygamy. Elizabeth also discusses the lonely plight of single women missionaries and the cruel reality missionary women confronted when separating from their children. Part four, "A girl with all my constant blessings" (October 18, 1905), written from the Woodstock School, shows the conflict Elizabeth had trying to learn Urdu while being introduced to Lahore's lavish social life. Two women, Cousin Grace Williamson Gordon and Susie Sorabji, are introduced in this letter.



Part one of Chapter 9 is a personal letter to her parents in which she talks about her faith and of her decision to become a missionary to India. This letter is an excerpt from her last letter in part three of Chapter 13. My Aunt Betty was born on May 5, 1906, and because of malarial fevers, both mother and daughter

returned to the United States on a medical furlough (January 1907 through November 2, 1907). It was during this unscheduled visit that Aunt Betty was able to meet her great-grandmother Myrtila Alvord, who died about six weeks after the two Fleming ladies returned to India. Elizabeth's letters home will resume with her March 5, 1908, letter in part one of Chapter 14.

9.1 "I had told God I was willing to go"

April 14, 1906
Dehra Dun
My Dear Mother,

[Section omitted.]
Sunday, Easter [1906 Excerpt]
Dehra Dun

Good morning! I have been up reading the four accounts of the Resurrection morning and thinking what would be my sermon to day if I were a Pastor. I just believe we miss some thing by not preparing definitely each Sunday the message of the week. I have been impressed with this; the only message that Christ left after his resurrection was the missionary command. Why? Power had been given; all things were under his feet, victory assured. Therefore, Go! And your labours shall *not be in vain* in the Lord. The personal message to Peter was no less missionary, "Feed my lambs."

Mother dear, I've been thinking in the quiet of this room of what this day can mean to me. It is a real comfort when one reads that command, "Go" to realize it has been done. Excuses do not need to be offered longer for not going. Even the "He that loveth father or mother better than me—or his own life—is not worthy of me." This is not the stumbling block. I had told God I was willing to go where He wanted me to go, and He took me up on it! Oh, as I think of that last Sabbath at home and the parting I couldn't do it again. How did I do it? Still it was obeying, and I am conscious of this. My Easter lesson is this: "Have faith in God. He has power to change these Indian hearts. Your labor cannot be in vain. I need more Faith, Confidence, Hope, and Patience. There is a deadness of non-expectation, which comes to tempt me out here, subtly leaving you to satisfaction that you have come, now let God show Himself!

I feel sure that I am not the aggressive Christian I was at home and because I live within the walls of an Indian home with no demand from the outside, I do not seek or find those riches to feed souls that God is ready to give. Dear Johnson is so persistently hungry for soul food, I should be feeding for him. I never saw any one so continually grasping after Spiritual realities or so grateful for each book or friend who helps toward God. He never loses the Heavenly vision. Wasn't God good to let me know such a dear Christian man.

Dear Mrs. Kelso just called. Isn't she dear with that silvery hair and sweet motherly expression. She told me of her meeting you, and

shaking hands with Father at “48” [Room 48]. She was telling me of her son John’s approaching marriage with Edith Kellogg who is daughter of Dr. Kellogg who died at Landour (Kellogg Memorial). I went to the 6 o’clock service and heard Mr. Kelso preach on the importance of the Resurrection to Christian belief.

We have just finished dinner and as I sit in my room, I can hear the various C.E Societies¹² singing in different parts of this building. I have never heard so much singing in my life within two days as there is here. The girls seem to love it so.
[Section omitted.]

Special love to Grandma, Ed and Mary and world of tenderness for you and father,
Elizabeth

This excerpt of Elizabeth's April 14, 1906, letter is significant because she brings up two key subjects: First, she talks over what she would say if she were a pastor of a church, and second, she reiterates the missionary command itself—"Go!" Although Elizabeth spoke in front of coeducational groups of college students in her job with the General Assembly of the YWCA, her words about pretending to be a real pastor are shocking because of the traditional Presbyterian Scriptural doctrine, the Pauline doctrines, which forbade women from having a voice in church. Specifically, these are St. Paul's 1 Corinthians 14:34-35: "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak," and Timothy 2:11-12, which commanded women to learn in silence and forbade them "to teach and exhort, or to lead in prayer, in public and promiscuous assemblies" (Boyd and Brackenridge 94).

St. Paul's decree is mentioned all throughout Presbyterian women's history. As mentioned, women represented the majority of most congregations at the beginning of

¹² Christian Endeavor Societies were founded in 1881 by Dr. Francis E. Clark, a Congregational minister in Maine. Within six years there were more than 7,000 self-managed local societies with half a million members, and by 1900, Christian Endeavors had become a significant ecumenical force and had inspired emulation in almost every denomination (Ahlstrom 858).

the nineteenth century (and had influence over their men-folk, as is illustrated by Capt. John Cole's conversion), and by mid-century had gained even more leverage; during the Civil War, women like Julia Cole and Myrtilla Alvord raised and distributed money. To raise money Julia may have talked in front of mixed groups or at "promiscuous assemblies," but she most likely spoke only to the women's groups as she did at Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's church. "Consequently," in their chapter "Shall Women Speak? Questioning Women's Roles, 1789-1920," Boyd and Brackenridge explain that, "Presbyterians wavered between the practical persuasion to accept women's participation and the theological pressure to maintain traditional biblical teachings" (93).

The Pauline restrictions presented challenges to older pastors such as one anxious man who always attended women's prayer meetings because he said, "You could never tell what those women might take to praying for if left alone" (Montgomery 31). On the other hand, women could use this doctrine for their own advantage. Mrs. William Blair wrote about restricting men from their board meetings in *The Beginnings of the Woman's Presbyterian Board of Missions of the Northwest* (1911), which was read at the Fortieth Annual Meeting in Chicago:

A few words about the prejudices we had to overcome in the beginning. There was a strong contention that no man—minister or reporter—should be present at a woman's meeting. If such an intruder crept in, taking a back seat in a far corner, the President would suspend proceedings and stand and look at him. If this did not frighten the reporter out, she would request one of our number to go and inform the man that this was a woman's meeting and desire him to retire. We were not averse to being reported in the papers, but thought it safer to make our own reports. (12)

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, various Synods and Presbyteries requested the General Assembly to reinterpret the Pauline Scripture by redefining

“promiscuous assemblies.” Boyd and Brackenridge document efforts by the Synod of North Carolina in 1879, the Synod of Texas in 1880, the Presbytery of Eastern Texas in 1891, the West Lexington Presbytery in 1897, and the Synod of Virginia in 1899 who all asked the General Assembly to reexamine St. Paul's words and exclusionary doctrines. Finally, the 1916 Assembly reaffirmed their 1832 General Assembly's original decree, which prohibited women from “publicly expounding God’s Word” from the pulpit or to be ordained, but recommended that “other services of women be left to the discretion of the sessions and the enlightened consciences of our Christian women themselves” (109). In other words, each church could decide for itself how much of a speaking role women would have, and apparently, the Hyde Park Presbyterian Church was enlightened in that regard.

When Elizabeth moved to India, however, she was surprised to see that instead of more liturgical freedoms, she gained less under British domain. In her letter of November 27, 1904, she writes of her first YMCA/YWCA annual meeting in Lahore: “The point is different from home, i.e. the meetings when the YMCA and the YWCA combine, are always led by men, and during the world’s week of prayer there was a different professor or minister invited to speak at the YWCA every afternoon. This is quite the English way of doing things,” which also sounded like the anxious American pastor who was afraid of what women would pray for if left alone. Only seven months earlier, on May 10, 1904, Elizabeth had written:

The annual banquet of the YWCA in Los Angeles came off at 6.30. Over 200 sat down to a beautiful supper, after which the reports and short greetings from guests (I among them) then Miss Barnes in a wonderful address. She was powerful. Men were in tears all about me.

Women missionaries were rarely radical feminists such as the suffragettes or the prohibitionists, but they were idealistic and compassionate and they ultimately challenged the prevailing social norms in their host countries. However, "No one ever suggested that the differences between heathen women and the Christian ones might be in degrees of bondage" (117), Barbara Welter writes in "She Hath Done What She Could," and women missionaries encountered the same sexist American (and British) society abroad. Not without some shame R. Pierce Beaver points out, "As late as the 1930s one of the oldest American churches still denied women a voice before its General Assembly" (107), and Jane Hunter elaborates about the subservient status of missionary wives in the Chinese missions during the Presbyterian station meetings. "Women were not even allowed to speak in this conservative denomination into the 1920s," she writes, "but instead sat by their husbands knitting" (102). Pearl S. Buck mentioned this activity in her biography of her father, Andrew Sydenstricker, in *Fighting Angel* (1936):

They all knitted, those women, while their men gave reports and passed laws of the church and made prayers. Their strong fingers flew while they had to remain mute. Into those stitches went what curbed desires and stubborn wills and plans! They would have burst, I think, without that vent. (123)

Elizabeth may have been referring to this quiet activity when she writes at the end of her November 2, 1905, letter to her father, "I wish you could see our little group at Ludhiana. We have grown so proud and fond of each one, and when dear Miss Thiede dresses in her stiff black satin and white lace fichu, she is a precious sight. I have been finishing this letter in [the] meeting while Mr. Jones has been talking." On the other hand, Pearl Buck's life-long feminist anger came from watching women such as her mother, Carie

Sydenstricker, be silenced by the misogynistic Pauline Scriptures. In *The Exile* (1936), she wrote,

To Andrew she was only a woman. Since those days when I saw her nature dimmed I have hated Saint Paul with all my heart and so must all true women hate him, I think, because of what he has done in the past to women like Carie, proud free-born women, yet damned by their very womanhood. I rejoice for her sake that his power is gone in these new days. (195)

While Pearl Buck's parents were frozen in archaic Victorian gender spheres, John and Julia Cole were more progressive. They were not shocked that their daughter had taken premarital, unchaperoned trips with her fiancé and that she fantasized about speaking as a pastor in front of a congregation. The Coles and the Flemings probably subscribed to Helen Montgomery's 1910 interpretation of the Pauline Scripture in *Western Women in Eastern Lands* in which she wrote that St. Paul's words needed to be read in historical context: "Paul labors hard to assure us that he is speaking quite on his own responsibility and is not at all inspired, though he thinks he understands the mind of Christ, when he writes those directions to the Corinthian Church which have been a stumbling-block to so many" (72). Further she said:

But when it comes to principles, Paul, unencumbered by the need of practical adjustment that so bothers the best philosophers, lays down the Magna Charta of womanhood in a Christianity in which there is neither male nor female, bond nor free, but in which all are one in Christ Jesus. He sees clearly that the duty of subordination and service is laid on all alike in Christ's great democracy and only those who love most are most honored. (73)

Knowing of the hypersensitivity of gender roles at this time, I am proud that my great-grandfather, Rev. Webster E. Browning, and my grandfather, Rev. Daniel J. Fleming, were regarded favorably by the women's groups; both men were quoted liberally and at length in the WPBMN annual reports. See for example, Rev. W. E.

Browning's report about Santiago, Chile, from the *Instituto Ingles* in the *1905 Annual Report*, pages 85-86, and DJ's letter in the *1909 Annual Report*, pages 119-120. As missionary women were so exclusive about their personal reports, I consider it a compliment that both men were "woman" enough to be given a voice in these reports.

In this 1906 Easter letter, Elizabeth also refers to the missionary impulse itself: "Go!" Joan Jacobs Brumberg writes in *Mission For Life: The Story of the Family of Adoniram Judson*, "Evangelicals, regardless of denominational affiliation, shaped their personal and organizational lives according to Scripture, and specifically, Christ's final invocation at Mt. Olivet [after he had risen from the dead and was about to ascend into Heaven]: 'Go Ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature' (Mark 16:15)" (xi-xii). Christ's command stirred up the competition among people of all Christian faiths and was the enthusiastic trumpet call for the Student Volunteer Movement's watchword, "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation." "Propagation is a law of spiritual life," declared Arthur J. Brown in *The Foreign Missionary* (1907). "The genius of Christianity is expansive. Its inherent tendency is to propagate itself. A living organism must grow or die. The church that is not missionary will become atrophied" (13).

Tilting the historic lens slightly and with deliberate tongue-in-cheek, contemporary missionary historians have restated the fervor of nineteenth-century evangelists who believed that Christianity was predestined to be the world's religion. "Evangelicals argued that, were the heathen world not bad," Joan Jacobs Brumberg quips, "it would not require help and that God, through technological developments like the compass, had already opened up the globe for the gospel invasion" (*Mission* 40). And

William Hutchison writes, "God had wondrously kept the New World hidden from human knowledge until the Protestant movement had gained leverage against Antichrist and could assure settlement under the auspices of true religion" (8). Martin Marty adds to Hutchinson's retort, "When in doubt, these religious founders invoked the doctrine of Providence. A foreknowing God had seen to it that the better part of the western hemisphere would not be explored until the Protestant Reformation was well under way in Europe" (22).

It is in this Easter letter, quoted in Chapter 1, that Elizabeth uses a food metaphor to reinforce the urgency of their mission: "I feel sure that I am not the aggressive Christian I was at home. . . . I do not seek or find those riches to feed souls that God is ready to give. Dear Johnson is so persistently hungry for soul food, I should be feeding for him." Although Elizabeth was eight months pregnant and probably rethinking her personal priorities, I think she lost some of her assertive, evangelizing zeal when her liturgical freedoms were restricted. With children Elizabeth would be forced to take a more passive missionary role, discussed in part four of Chapter 10, "Mother, your Study Class doings just beat the Dutch!" But she concludes her discussion of DJ saying, "Wasn't God good to let me know such a dear Christian man." At this point, two and a half years into their marriage, it is gratifying to read of Elizabeth's love and respect for her husband and it is hard to remember that their marriage almost never happened!

At the end of this letter, when Elizabeth places her parents directly into her world with a sensory description—"We have just finished dinner and as I sit in my room, I can hear the various C.E [Christian Endeavor] Societies singing in different parts of this building. I have never heard so much singing in my life within two days as there is here.

The girls seem to love it so"—she doesn't sound too far removed from the young college girl who wrote:

October 6, 1895: Another beautiful, beautiful morning. The sunshine streams into our room through the window at my right. There is just a gentle little breeze which plays with the curtains, softly swaying the dainty white dotted muslin in and out! Everything is quiet now. A moment ago you could have heard the music of singing coming up from the different houses all over the campus.

November 24, 1895: Someone is playing "Lead Kindly Light" downstairs in the twilight, and oh how sweetly it sounds as it comes up through the open doors into my room! I do love to hear Hymns played on Sunday morning.

9.2 "Come with me to the village I visited yesterday"

March 27, 1905
Young People's Society,
Hyde Park Presbyterian Church
My dear friends,

The sun which has just disappeared from this horizon bringing our Sabbath to a close, has gone to awaken you to the same day. So now if we could put your day and our day together, pasting them side by side as it were, it would make a splendid Sabbath wouldn't it? By this arrangement too, each day has twenty four working hours, instead of only twelve.

Come with me to the village I visited yesterday, I want you to see the whole thing, it is worth while. We started at six-forty in the morning, a little delegation from the Woman's Home Missionary Society consisting of Mrs. Griswold and myself with four of our most interested members, bearing a large lunch basket for the days demands. By train four miles and then in two tum-tums, native fashion, the ten mile stretch over open country to the little village of Panghali, our destination. You can't see us, can you? as we jog along in those queer two wheeled springless, tippy cars behind a bony horse who was being continually lashed to make him go at all. I am perched on the front seat beside the disreputable looking driver with my feet on the lunch basket, not a bad feeling considering breakfast does not come till nine o'clock.

The morning air is fresh against ones cheek and the wheat fields are waving green. We pass the army cantonment just as the brilliant redcoats are having their setting up drill, and then we leave the road for

many miles across country where there is no beaten path. Hard dirt with stubby growth for the most part. I prefer to walk, and make a great record among these Indian women by persevering for eight or nine miles. Under the shade of a tree by the road side we ate hot curry and palan, the famous Indian dish prepared by our friends. It is rice and spices chiefly, some meat mixed in and lots of ghee. I wonder if you could eat it. The spices are biting hot. I like it.

But before we reach the village let me tell you why we are going. Two years ago, this village like hundreds of other in the Punjab had never seen a Christian. Then it so happened that a native man who had been taught under the United Presbyterian Mission in another place, moved into Panghali to live. As he settled among the people, he began to tell them about Christ and to teach them all the songs and verses he had learned. After six months of this daily witnessing, he sent to Lahore, for the Pastor to come out and baptize some of the men who had become Christians. Pastor Talib-ud-Din and Dr. Griswold went out to find the village alive with new converts. They, two of them spent the entire day baptizing the people and when night came on, there were still twenty more whom they had to leave for lack of time.

The work has grown steadily, and now our little Missionary Society is supporting this man and his wife, (sixteen years old, married at Christmas time,) for \$3 a mo. while they give all their time teaching the village about Jesus Christ, and the children to read and write. Their names are Charan Das [Saran Das]. I have taken their pictures quite alone that you may see them. He is tall and lame. She is very tiny and young, dressed still as you see in native costume. Since he has married her, she can read and write remarkably well, and in time will prove a valuable worker. Our society [is] also going to build a little church for them to worship in. The men of the village say they will do all the work themselves as soon as crops are in. But they need money for materials, and so we go to select the location for the first little church in Panghali, and to bring them Christian fellowship from a sister church.

We were still half a mile away when the villagers met us with delighted faces and warm salaams. We were escorted by a body guard of some twenty or thirty men and twice as many children prancing about in great excitement. The women with children in their arms came out of their mud huts and expressed such pleasure to see us. We gathered under a clump of trees, we sitting on a couple of charpais while they squatted on the ground at our feet; a very large company of women and children.¹³ Those who could speak to them in the Punjabi tongue did

¹³ As mentioned in the Methodology section, Chapter 2, I have not attempted to standardize Elizabeth's spellings of Indian words such as charpais-charpai (low chair), munchie-munchee (teacher) or darsie-darsee (tailor).

so, preaching well no doubt. Then we sang some Christian hymns to native airs, called "Chagans," [Bhajans] and had an orchestra of one drum and one cymbal which marked the time with weird effect. I did my best at using the kodak but the day was some what overcast. We had hard work getting away without eating the things they brought for us to eat. But blouses are great things for storing away food and mine was useful on this occasion.

A mud village is a curious place, on account of its extreme bareness and primitive structure. Not a thing is in these huts in the way of furniture. The mud floor and bare mud walls open on one side for the door and light. The court yard, fifteen or twenty feet square where the family cow and dogs and goats are kept, each man's boundary marked by a low wall of mud; the whole thing looks like a child's playhouse on the sea shore. I wish so much you could see a village. They are all alike, and they make one conscious of every contrast between East and West, between heathenism and Christianity. Doubtless Christ saw just such people and such villages when he said, "I am come that ye may have life and that ye may have it abundantly."

Out here we feel like the Shepard who left the ninety and nine to search for the lost sheep so far from the fold. All day the words to Peter, "Lovest thou me? Feed my sheep" have been in my ears. It matters not to the great Shepard whether these sheep have been to college or never seen an alphabet, whether they live in a palace or a mud hut if they are lost they must be brought in. The Divine values set upon a human soul are so different from man's.

Before I close I want to thank you all for responding so generously to my hungry cry for letters. I am looking forward to the promise of others. With warmest regards to all including Dr. and Mrs. Vance always,

I am earnestly yours,
Elizabeth Cole Fleming

Because of her mother's involvement with the Board of Foreign Missions, Elizabeth was well aware of the rhetorical style expected in circular letters before she wrote her first one on September 21, 1904. The letters Elizabeth wrote to Julia Cole while traveling across the United States for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church would have interested only immediate family members, but those written home

from faraway India would have drawn in a much wider audience. Although the standard format was, as mentioned before, didactic to an extreme, there is something innocent about circulars, and something refreshing about their unabashed motive—to goad ordinary church women into giving a little more money to the Foreign Missionary Society this month.¹⁴ Missionary letters made personal the foreign experience, as the *WPBMN 1911 Annual Report* boasted: “These letters have annihilated space and have brought the societies receiving them into actual vision of the fields already white to the harvest. By means of those messages from the front, those destined to stay at home have seen the mission work as though present” (65).

This March 1905 circular is one of my favorites because Elizabeth shows off her letter-writing skills by constructing a pseudodialogue to an amorphous “you.” In her pseudodialogues, Elizabeth asks rhetorical questions and used Richardson’s writing-to-the-moment prose style. For instance, she writes:

“Come with me to the village I visited yesterday, I want you to see the whole thing”;
“You can’t see us, can you?”;
“I wonder if you could eat it”;
“I wish so much you could see a village.”

Her interactive remarks provide “food for thought” for those destined to stay at home. Elizabeth was writing to the women at Room 48 who had watched her grow up, so she knew she could take the liberty of humoring them while tugging on their purse strings. Her description of

those queer two wheeled springless, tippy cars behind a bony horse who was being continually lashed to make him go at all [while being] perched

¹⁴ Elizabeth’s other circulars are dated: September 21, 1904, September 23, 1904, September 27, 1904, October 1-2, 1904, December 10, 1904, March 24, 1905, March 27, 1905, April 16, 1905, January 10, 1910.

on the front seat beside the disreputable looking driver with my feet on the lunch basket . . .

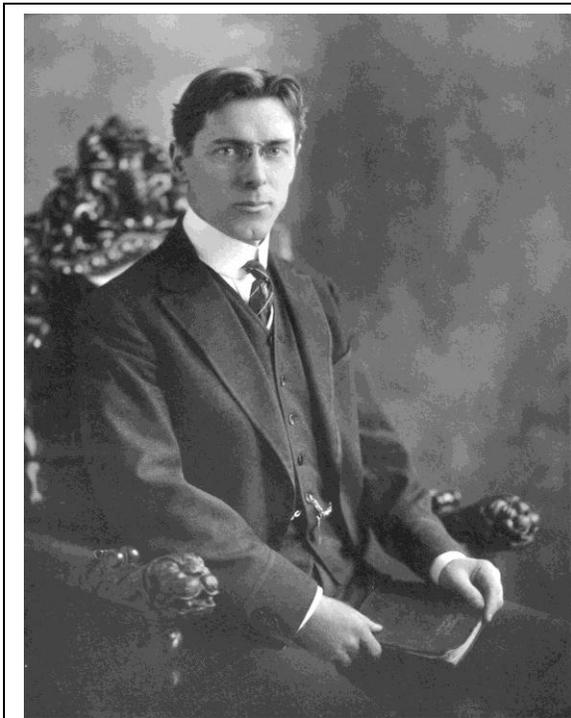
prepared the way for the real message to be delivered—to make "one conscious of every contrast between East and West, between heathenism and Christianity."

Whether or not a circular recipient knew Elizabeth personally, she could imagine a courageous and resourceful lady missionary preferring to walk the eight miles to the village, enjoying the biting hot spices, and hiding the native-cooked food in her blouse. This young American Presbyterian missionary could be her daughter, her niece or her pretty unmarried neighbor; at the turn of the century, women made up almost two-thirds of the ranks of the foreign missionaries. In "She Hath Done What She Could," Barbara Welter states that women made up forty-nine percent of the missionary force in 1830, but by 1893 their numbers had grown to sixty percent (119). As mentioned earlier, after the Civil War single women became Christian storm troopers in the foreign missionary field going behind purdah (screen, veil) where men were forbidden, a historic fact which Beaver calls, "The First Feminist Movement in North America," in the subtitle to his book, *American Protestant Women in World Mission*.

Elizabeth's circular also introduces Mrs. Griswold, the wife of Dr. Hervey D. Griswold, a graduate of Union Theological Seminary, who helped Elizabeth's idealistic husband, DJ Fleming, "face all modern questions" (DJF Notes 15). Under Dr. Griswold's influence, DJ would embrace the liberal theology of Union's "new intellectual conception of Christianity" and discard the old missionary dogma of Princeton Theological Seminary. John C. B. Webster explains in *The Christian Community and Change in Nineteenth Century North India* that Princeton's theology was a theology of Biblical authority, "with an eighteenth-century belief in the primacy of reason over all elements in

human psychology" (31). The early Princeton-schooled missionaries shipped out to India "as bearers of this truth had everything to teach and nothing of importance to learn" (34). Princeton theology allowed only one-way interaction, while Union Seminary followers of Dr. George Adam Smith and Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall believed in a more personal, interactive religion.¹⁵ After 1890, three of the five Union Theological Seminary graduates in the Punjab Mission were located at Forman Christian College in Lahore.¹⁶

DJ's professional influence on mission theory gained momentum in the 1920s; my grandfather wrote more books on mission theory and method than any other



DJ Fleming in the 1920s.

American of any period (Forman 100). In *Whither Bound in Missions* (1925), DJ wrote, "We have much more to learn from them than *mah jong*" (27), to which Hutchison adds, "And the willingness to receive, after all, involves a deeper form of giving, the giving of respect and love" (153). DJ's 1929 essay, "If Buddhists Came to Our Town," in *Christian Century*, elaborated on "the need for reciprocal thinking." Once again he held a mirror up

¹⁵ Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall, President of Union Seminary, New York City, is mentioned in DJ's "Courtship Essay" and in Elizabeth's October 7, 1904, January 18, 1906, and April 19, 1908, letters. Unfortunately, Dr. Hall died in 1908 at the peak of his career.

¹⁶ Dr. DJ Fleming, Dr. Hervey Griswold, and Dr. Edmund D. Lucas. A fourth Union graduate, Dr. Walter J. Clark, husband of Nettie Dunn, was also in Lahore from 1906 to 1914 (Webster 27). After their furlough in 1904, the Clarks were transferred from Ambala to Saharanpur, and then in 1905 to Lahore (reported in the WPBMN annual reports of the years mentioned). The missionaries were powerless against bureaucratic Missionary Board decisions and could expect to be transferred to new mission stations after furloughs, or whenever deemed necessary.

to the Golden Rule and implored over-zealous evangelists to re-examine their missionary attitudes (293-294). As Rick L. Nutt reports in *The Whole Gospel for the Whole World: Sherwood Eddy and the American Protestant Mission*, “In 1925 Daniel Johnson Fleming had argued that less verbal preaching and more proclamation by action was best calculated to bear fruit in the global church” (260).¹⁷

Another subject Elizabeth has introduced in this circular is mass conversions, also called mass movements. Once the sole domain of Methodists and the United Presbyterians, mass conversions put American Presbyterian missionaries under pressure from their home churches to keep up. As late as 1903 the American Presbyterians in the Punjab Mission such as the Flemings and the Griswolds, still believed that cities were the “strategic centers of operation” (Webster 107), while the United Presbyterians, such as DJ's cousin and her husband, Grace and Rev. David Gordon, concentrated their efforts on itinerant village evangelizing.¹⁸ Conversions (or lack of) were always a sensitive subject for all foreign missionary denominations, but once the United Presbyterian missionaries decided "to take the momentous step of minimizing the importance of their own judgments about a perspective Christian convert's motives," Jeffery Cox writes in *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1918-1940*, the problem of no Christian growth was solved (118).

¹⁷ Nutt elaborates on DJ's creed: “In short, Fleming reflected the growing feeling that paternalistic and imperialistic mission should be abandoned, and anticipated the celebrated Hocking Report on missions by seven years” (240). The Hocking Report, or the Layman's Report of 1932, was published in *Re-Thinking Missions* (1932) and advocated “world understanding on the spiritual level” (Hutchison 158-159).

¹⁸ The Gordons are introduced in part three of this chapter. These two branches of the Presbyterian Church, the United and the American, finally merged in 1983 but their histories reflect their socio-economic differences. Jeffery Cox differentiates the United Presbyterians from the American Presbyterians in Chapter Five, “Village Christians/Songs of Deliverance” in *Imperial Fault Lines*. Julia Cole calls the United Presbyterians “Scottish” Presbyterians in her 1908 travelogue.

This started a wave of low-caste sweeper, or "Chuhra," conversions in Punjab and United Provinces. Whole villages would be baptized, as Elizabeth has described.

Although many missionaries supported mass movements, the overall public response to untouchable conversions among the American Presbyterians in Punjab and Delhi "ranged from reluctant acceptance, to sheer confusion, to outright abhorrence" (Cox 120). DJ's boss, Dr. J. C. R. Ewing, a graduate of Princeton and long-time president of Forman Christian College, expressed his disapproval in an 1894 letter to the Board of Foreign Missions saying that mass conversions were "raking in rubbish into the church" (Webster 60).

Forty-three years later Brown would soften Ewing's harsh statements somewhat by saying, "the consensus of missionary opinion . . . is that baptism should be at the end of the catechumenate instead of at the beginning" (648). He also quoted Hervey Griswold as saying, "Of recent years a much more liberal policy has been pursued than formerly with reference to the admission of Outcaste converts. Much greater stress is laid upon instruction after baptism than upon the amount given before baptism" (650). Although theoretically not a mass-movement enthusiast, Dr. Griswold began to believe that a speedy baptism facilitated the evangelizing process:

The conditions laid down for baptism are not the same in all the Missions of the Punjab. Earnestness of purpose is required by all. Sometimes considerable numbers are baptized with no other qualification than an apparently sincere desire to become Christians. (qtd in Webster 61)

However, the United Presbyterians did seem to have the right knack when it came to conversions and their numbers were always higher than the American Presbyterians. "[A]ssumption that theological knowledge strengthens simple faith, and that church

attendance is more desirable than singing Christian hymns," Cox retorts, "reflects the kinds of dismissive institutional assumptions that produce unfair judgments on Chuhra Christianity" (147).

Cox's reference to singing hymns brings up another difference between the two Presbyterian sects. "Bhajans" (or as Elizabeth, grandmother or mother has written: "Chagans") are Psalms translated into metric Punjabi, which became instantly popular when they were set to indigenous tunes by the United Presbyterians, who, according to their Scottish heritage, were allowed to sing only the Psalms—not the hymns—in church (Cox 149). When accompanied by different combinations of instruments these Christian "folk tunes" sounded strange to Westerners, or as Elizabeth reported, the "orchestra of one drum and one cymbal . . . marked the time with weird effect." In her travelogue, Julia Cole also wrote of a native music sung "in poetical form with an accompaniment of drums and cymbals at times and full chorus of voices. A curious viol gives forth a humming sound and adds to the weirdness at all times" (31). Whether the same as bhajans or not, Julia called them "Katons." It would seem that music, not orthodoxy, was a universal language. Cox agrees: "It is in Punjabi hymnody, rather than in bureaucratic creations of the missions that one finds the fullest expression of indigenous Punjabi Christianity" (148).¹⁹

Without over-simplifying matters, whether by singing simple Christian folk tunes or by following strict orthodoxy, I argue that the crux of the mass conversion problem was one of methodology. As discussed in Chapter 1, the (usually written) self-examination and conscience-searching, which preceded *choosing* to convert to

¹⁹ Cox reports that in the 1930s itinerating Baptist women missionaries found scattered Chamar Christians (leather-workers) without a formal leader in sixty-three villages in Palwal/Baraut; they all sang bhajans religiously (148).

Protestantism, was swept away by these mass conversions. But numbers were numbers, and Victorians counted every last soul, even the female souls. Jane Hunter writes that the Chinese missionaries "seemed to advocate totting up souls as if they were scalps" (183). It should be noted that sprinkled throughout missionary history are credible logs and tables measuring numbers of converted Christians. All are different and they usually have some kind of qualifying statements reflecting stages of the conversion process.²⁰

For better or worse, I believe that mass conversions put an enormous strain on women missionaries who had joined the foreign missionary movement believing they would be making a personal difference in other women's lives. These idealistic women had envisioned their missionary service as a one-on-one evangelization such as through zenana (harem) visitation, teaching in Christian schools, staffing hospitals, providing veranda nursing services, and by showcasing their consecrated Christian homes in heathen lands. When hundreds and sometimes thousands of non-Christians were converted—Brown writes that "in 1908-1909 over 6,000 Outcastes forsook their idols" (588)—women missionaries felt it their particular responsibility to connect with each new Christian woman personally. This was an impossible task. Mrs. Mary E. Bandy of the Fatehgarh station in the North India Mission put it like this in the *1906 WPBMN Annual Report*:

In our mission we had over 1,500 baptisms in one year, and we must teach the new converts a little. We cannot hope to educate them without indoctrinating them. We want to teach them enough to make good church members of them, to give them a taste for more, then they will work and help educate the coming generation. (44)

²⁰ For examples of these statistics see: Cox: 1880s—10,165 Christians (116); Brown: 1894—2,286 Christians (641); Webster: 1914—48,171 Christians (with 151 missionaries) (227).

And Mrs. Lillian Wherry McCuskey of the Ambala station in the Punjab Mission wrote in the same *1906 Annual Report*:

I feel that my work has been a mere drop in the bucket. . . . We need women missionaries so badly. If we could convert the women of India we would not need to spend much time on the men. In spite of much that is said to the contrary the women have a great deal of influence in religious matters. It is the women who stick to the heathenish customs and make their husbands stick to them. (38)

As mentioned, Helen Barrett Montgomery argued that only in Christian countries were the rights of women valued; if you could get to the women, the country would follow. This was a huge responsibility for women missionaries, and one that was growing exponentially. Harlan P. Beach stated in *India and Christian Opportunity* (1908) that the number of Christians in India had gone up 92.6 percent from 1872 to 1901 (178). Over and over, the women missionaries wrote to their home missions asking for their prayers, requesting money, and pleading for more volunteers. For two years the Bandys asked for a two-wheeled itinerating cart (two horses and tonga carriage), but ordinary supplies were needed too. Mrs. Walter (Nettie Dunn) Clark of Lahore wrote in the *1908 Annual Report* that in the fifteen years she and her husband had been in India, there had been no increase in the number of missionaries in the field. "With this small force we can barely hold our own," she implored, "We can not advance" (33).

After the Flemings had returned to the United States in 1913, Elizabeth wrote a pamphlet, "As It Is Today In India," for the Women's Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church and she came to the same conclusion: "Unless substantially reinforced, the workers on the field cannot successfully cope with the multitude of low caste pressing into the Church, nor meet adequately the new situation where India's women, a hundred and forty-four million of them, may be ready for education" (10). On

March 9, 1914, *The Chicago Daily Journal* interviewed Elizabeth in an article called "Western Ideas Driving Out Old India, Declares Chicago Woman Missionary": "Mrs. Fleming leaned forward, her eyes alive with feeling and earnestness. 'It has become so that we no longer pray for converts,' she emphasized slowly. 'Instead, we pray for workers to enter these open doors with us.'"

Finally, it is interesting to remember that the year before Elizabeth moved to Lahore, she had written to her mother about her frustration doing personal work with the girls at Macalester College. In her (misdated) March 4, 1904 letter, she had written:

The worst of it is these girls are professing Christians and the most spiritual girls do not make their lives consistent. I talked very plainly about this in my meeting on Monday. Nineteen (19) pledged themselves to do personal work, and I was afraid they were making the movement too popular, so I said that no girl could join the circle who did not purpose to make her own life absolutely true in the halls.

When she moved to India I wonder if Elizabeth was just paying lip-service to these new and "approved" (male?) mission methods or had a change of heart along the way. Knowing that her work ethic was impeccable and her desire to serve Jesus Christ inexhaustible—maybe, in the long, run that is all that matters.²¹

9.3 "Chicago is not the only place which has murders."

August 22, 1905
Kotgarh, Simla District
Dearest Mother,

I couldn't tell you about the two days spent in Ani. They presented a state of affairs most pitiful. The case is complicated but I don't see how the Mission could ever take such a place [case?]. Chicago is not

²¹ Elizabeth refers to other mass movements in letters: November 20, 1904, January 10, 1906, and March 2, 1910. The Sailkot Annual Convention mentioned in Elizabeth's September 26, 1909 and September 27-28, 1910, letters was organized to address the demands of the mass movements. Promoting Indian autonomy and self-rule were discussed and encouraged at this convention.

the only place which has murders. A week or so ago a young woman was killed in the village near us. The case was over polyandry. Our water carrier's brother thought he would rather share the wife of his younger brother instead of his old one. But she strenuously objected. He then beat her so violently that the neighbors said he would kill her. Four days afterward she was found in the field dead. Her body was carried to Simla for investigation. Tonight we hear that Nagir has been summoned as a witness. This means he may at any time have to go to Simla and no knowing how long it will be. Nagir happened to be near by at the time, and saw the man beating this woman. Alas! We wish he hadn't.

This is the season for our mountain bears to prowl about the slopes after corn and fruit. The other day a man was attacked and badly torn by a partially wounded bear. We have not seen any but they are about at night. As we were walking on the road this evening we saw a little thatched tent and bonfire on the hillside and we asked the men what it meant. They said it was for driving off the bears at night. They were watchmen evidently. They said they had smelt the bears each night but had not caught any yet. We live in a wonderful country; this is India! I never dreamed of earthquakes and bears and murders up here. Mr. Caldwell killed a six foot snake on his way over from Mrs. Bates the other day. He carried it dangling from the end of his walking stick. Ugh! But in spite of all such little things we are very peaceful in the cottage.

Each morning now Dr. Ewing gives me a little lesson in Urdu and I am studying about two hours a day. It is a great pleasure to get at the language again. Just think I have only done three months good work on it the whole year. Today's mail brought me a feast of letters. I tried never to finish them but they would come to an end. Aren't my friends good to keep up the letters?

The other morning I had a good straight talk with Dr. Ewing about the hard position of unmarried ladies in the Mission. They lead a very lonely hard life. He said he and Mrs. Ewing had often said they would not be happy to have one of their daughters come back as a single missionary. Everyone is old out here, mature I mean, and there is too much of sad life for a young girl alone. Besides our problems largely deal with the social evils of a community and what can a girl do with that? Bess Prentiss insists that she had been exceptionally happy in her three years in Etah. Well, she is an exceptionally strong girl and has had her aunt from home with her all the time. This aunt had been her adopted mother and she had means so that she could live where she chose. But India did not agree with her and she had to return to America this spring. Bess now for the first time knows what it is to be

alone out here. I have asked Bess to come to us for the Christmas Holidays. Dr. Howard Agnew Johnston will be in Lahore at that time.

Little Rhea is as bright as a new button. Until a month ago he spoke only Hindustani, but now the English sentences are growing marvelously each day, and he is only 2 ½ years old. Nancy [Ewing] you know is 12 years. She has been doing considerable sketching and painting this summer. Tonight she brought a picture of this house which she had done while I was upstairs. It was so good I begged it for you. Don't you think my pupil will soon exceed her teacher? [See her illustration of the "Thandhak Cottage" at the end of the letter in Chapter 13, part 2.]

You have no idea how it rejoices me to know you and father are happy. I am just sure that in this way the world judges whether or not Christianity is true. I am emphasizing in my own life this year, the *Joy* note and *Hope*. Paget gave us such a new conception of the Christian virtue *Hope*. It is the confident expectation of success in spiritual fields.

I'll tell you a secret about my language study. You know I was always more interested in other subjects than language and with so many interruptions in Lahore it was hard to keep down to it. Well, I just made it a subject of prayer and asked God to make me keen for the study and that is just what He has done. It has been my real disappointment that I could not do my full work these months, but I am interested in every little new word and rule and idiom as I have never been before and it's a pleasure to study. I am glad to have Dr. Ewing's help each morning for he often tells me idiomatic phrases which an Indian would never think were new. I am only doing a little writing each day, trying to describe my friends and what we do; but it is excellent practice. I may be ready for the examination in January and if so, Dr. Ewing thinks they can give me a special one. Dr. Ewing, Dr. Griswold and Dr. Frank Newton are the examining committee.

You know this is a new rule this year that married ladies shall have to pass their first year examination in Urdu before having a vote in the Mission. I am the only one it has ever been required of and between you and me, I don't believe it will ever be allowed to stand. Many wives are not used to habits of study and would find it a humiliation to come before an examining Committee of Associates with their husbands. Besides I am sure their husbands would not like this comparison of intellectual ability by other men. Women after she is married is usually protected from any such test and think how very embarrassing for all concerned if they could not pass a wife conscientiously. Besides how can a wife, housekeeper and mother

count upon her time for studying an exceedingly intricate language. In most cases she would hardly be able to pass the 1st year examination inside of three years.

I like the standard to be high and personally I am delighted with the chance to do this much well. But remember I always did like examinations and I've had the best training back of me any girl could have for this. I'll not say anything against the rule until I have passed, but really I think it is questionable. However the proverbial reputation of a "Mem Sahib" is that she cannot get her tenses correctly and speaks shocking Urdu; the kind she picks up at home from the servants. This ought not to be I'll agree.

You would like to see them ploughing a field near by. From this little balcony I can watch the bullocks slowly dragging the furrow. It is only a rude stick. They stand on it and eventually the field gets its back scratched. Now while I am looking closely they have released the bullocks and shouldered the instrument and are off. I got a good look at the plough and find it is simply this way. [Illustration of plough.] At the end is a point of steel which digs in as they move along. I can't help liking these primitive customs, they are very picturesque. [See illustration of pine needles next to their Urdu names in Chapter 13, part 2.]

It is wonderful to see the great vultures devour a carcass. The other day a mule died on the road and was shoved overboard. Inside of five hours these great birds had spied it from their immense height and though previously not one was discernable by the naked eye, now there are a hundred or more circling down and picking those bones. One flew above my head with its tremendous wings spread and it is at least five feet from wing to wing. Grim scavengers they are, but very useful to the country. How they can see a little dead animal on the earth as they pass through the heavens so high we cannot see them? Their eyes must have wonderful lenses. Oh, this balmy, balmy air! It is delicious. Yes, a "rickshaw" would be the very thing for grandma. How I wish she might have one and you too.

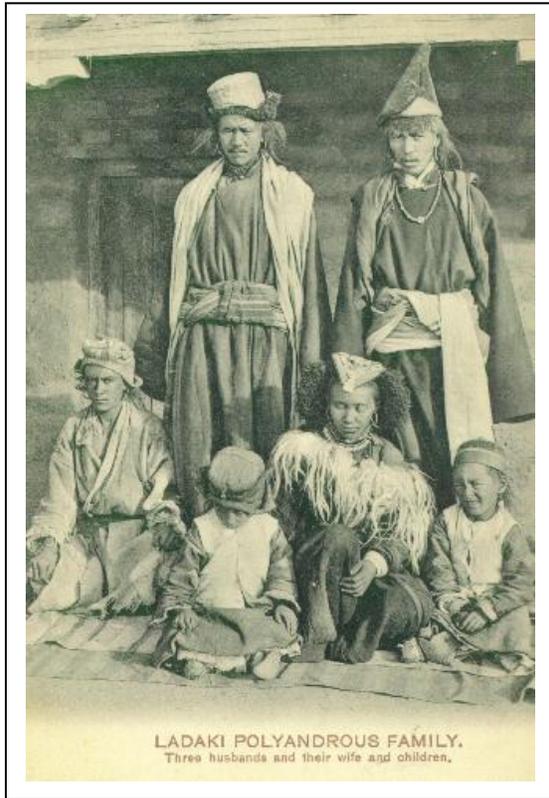
Love to every one, heaps of it.

Elizabeth

[Illustration by Nancy Ewing of "Thandhak Cottage"]

In this letter Elizabeth has illustrated different species of pine needles for her mother, and she has presented India as Westerners imagined it—mountain bears, earthquakes, six-foot snakes, bullocks pulling outdated farm implements, vultures, rickshaws—“We live in a wonderful country; this is India!” Although not the artist her mother was, Elizabeth illustrated several of her early circular letters (see letters dated: September 24th and 27th, October 1-2nd, and November 27, 1904) and, as highlighted in part three of Chapter 6, “One of the most beautiful girls I have ever seen,” her very first illustration in this collection was of her office chair. This August 1905 letter also wraps up a frustrating year of language study, concluding with, “Well, I just made it a subject of prayer and asked God to make me keen for the study and that is just what He has done.” A closer look at her difficulties at finding time to study because of Lahore’s frantic social life is discussed in part four of this chapter, “A girl with all my constant blessings.”

Elizabeth opens this August 1905 letter sensationally, with murder as the subject. When she reports that their water carrier, Nagir, had witnessed the murder of his older brother's wife, she writes, “Alas! We wish he hadn’t.” This reaction seems a little uncharitable for a Christian, but I am sure she was just wishing for anonymity in this highly charged drama. More importantly, what Elizabeth has revealed within the excitement of the investigation was one of the major Christianity-versus-Culture conflicts the missionaries would face—the issues of polygamy and polyandry. In this regard, the Christians had a hard time convincing the Hindus and Mohammedans to have but one wife; In India, polygamy, a husband having more than one wife was more typical than polyandry, a wife having more than one husband, such as Elizabeth describes and is illustrated on the postcard of the Ladaki Family:



Postcard:

Ladaki Polyandrous Family.
Three husbands and their wife
and children.

On the back, Elizabeth has
written: **“Don’t you envy this
wife her three husbands”** which
sounds as though she believed
that having one husband (and a
wonderful one at that!), was
plenty!

To the Hindu or Mohammedan, having more than one wife was a sign of prosperity and virility, but to the missionaries it was, as Montgomery put it in *Western Women in Eastern Lands*, "legalized lust," especially if the bride was a child (60). To her horrified readers, Helen Barrett Montgomery offered this "hideous" list collected from 460 villages of 618 bigamists and 520 polygamists:

180 have each 3 wives . . . 98 have each 4 wives . . .
26 have each 7 wives . . . 19 have each 10 wives . . .
4 have each 25 wives . . . 4 have each 30 wives . . .
and one or more have up to one hundred wives each. (63-64)

For the Indian Christians, though, it was a different matter. At the Synod of India they voted—by a considerable majority—in 1875 and again in 1897 in favor of allowing polygamous converts to keep all their wives after baptism. However, both times the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA rejected the votes of the Indian

Christians. Finally, in 1906, after gaining ecclesiastical autonomy from the American parent church, one of the first issues the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of India voted on was to allow polygamy, but “urged exercising discretion in this matter” (Webster 58).

Regarding discretion, Elizabeth was well aware that male missionaries tended to “replace” their deceased wives quickly, as discussed in Chapter 3, and she agonized over these hasty liaisons thinking it set a wrong example of Christian morals. See for example, Elizabeth’s letter of September 6, 1910, when she writes, “The latest in this line [of engagements] is Major Morton whose wife died 6 months ago and who is now walking after dark with one of the young CMS Missionaries just out from home! Scandalous! Everyone is afraid that an affection may spring up.” But an example of Elizabeth's missionary "blindness" was the case of Miss Moh'd Umar who married a Mohammed barrister discussed in her October 21, 1909, letter. The barrister had graduated from Forman Christian College several years before and was well thought of by Dr. Ewing.

However he had been married before & in order to give her first place, he put away his old wife who had borne him five children! She has to live alone by herself, poor thing & for no offense. Miss Moh'd Umar is very happy with him and lives just opposite to Mrs. Parkers good friend. Is this not disappointing? She will never become a Christian I am afraid.

The plight of single missionary women is another subject Elizabeth brought up in this August 1905 letter. She writes that she had "a good straight talk with Dr. Ewing about the hard position of unmarried ladies in the Mission. They lead a very lonely hard life. He said he and Mrs. Ewing had often said they would not be happy to have one of their daughters come back as a single missionary." Unlike the Walter Clarks whose three

daughters are mentioned in Brown's list of missionaries under their maiden names,²² the James C.R. Ewings would not have to worry about this problem—all of their children married into other missionary families.

The Walter Clarks were similar to the DJ Flemings. Not only was Mrs. Nettie Dunn Clark a former YWCA secretary, Dr. Walter Clark was a Union Theological Seminary graduate. As mentioned in Chapter 7, by 1886, the National Committee was formed in the Midwest when delegates were elected by their state organizations with the purpose of promoting YWCA work in both college and city communities. Miss Nettie Dunn, of Hillsdale, Michigan, wrote the first annual report of the National Committee and, shortly after that became the first General Secretary of the National Committee (Rice 42). In 1893 Miss Dunn married Mr. Walter Clark and joined the Woman's Presbyterian Board of Missions of the Northwest; the Clarks served in India from 1893-1932.

However, when Elizabeth first moved to Lahore, she told her parents that the long-time missionaries did not accept the YW secretaries right away. In her undated 1904 fall letter, Elizabeth wrote, “It seems too absurd for anything but it is a fact that these people here are scared of me. They have been so stiff and offish—because I am a Smith College girl, and a YWCA secretary. None of the wives in this mission are College women. . . . They are afraid of me.” In particular, Elizabeth has added, “Dr. Ewing was afraid also of YW Secretaries. They don't like Mrs. Clark (Nettie Dunn Clark), the only YW Secretary who ever came to India. Queer that she should be coming to Lahore this year & is a neighbor of ours.”

²² Anna R. (Ruth?) (1919-1925 W), Leila M. (1922-) and Estelle C. (1927-). See the photograph of the three girls with their mother, Nettie Dunn Clark, in Elizabeth's September 27 & 28, 1910 letter in Chapter 14. They were of “tree-climbing age” in this photograph and encouraged Betty to do likewise.

I think it a shame that, according to Brown's roll call of missionaries, not one of the three Clark daughters got married. As mentioned, though, the Ewings were blessed in this regard. When Nancy Ewing married Rev. Edmund Lucas in 1911, she became the second Ewing daughter to stay in India.²³ Born in India the son of Rev. Dr. and Mrs. James J. Lucas (Brown gives these dates of service: 1870-1922 R), Rev. Edmund Lucas had been part of Elizabeth's social world for quite some time. He had shown an interest in Mary Borden,²⁴ as is documented in her letter of May 30, 1908, ("In Palestine they met Ed Lucas whose attentions to Miss Borden became so personal she told him that she was to be married [to Mr. George D. Turner] & live in Lahore!"), and he had a failed engagement to a woman living in either Kentucky or Virginia:

July 30, 1909: Mr. Lucas is in Landour with his mother. He wrote a good letter to me recently which I should like to enclose if there is room. The men think Mr. Lucas has a girl in Kentucky and that "something" will be "doing" one of these days.

October 21, 1909: We are having Mr. Lucas over for dinner. The boys insist that his "girl's" name is Martha Dabney. They have put two & two together & say she lives in Richmond, Virginia. Mr. Donaldson has been teaching Betty to call him Uncle "Lazarus" and to ask them when Aunt "Martha" is coming! They are terrible teases.

Edmund thought of the Flemings as family and in 1955 wrote a condolence note to DJ when Elizabeth died saying, "She was like an older sister to me in my first few months in Lahore. . . . I had my first attack of malignant malaria in November 1908 and when my temperature plummeted from nearly 105 to 97 she got not only hot water bottles but vinegar bottles full of boiling water to stick around me and immediate cure. That was a fascinating Lahore in those days" (Thanks 35). But back in those fascinating

²³ Anna Ewing had married Dr. Robert Goheen; not only was Robert in the Fleming's wedding in Chicago, Elizabeth had thrown Anna's bridal shower, mentioned in her February 26, 1905, letter.

²⁴ Mary Borden's marriage to George Turner is the subject of part 3 of Chapter 10, "What a fairy story it all is!"

Lahore days, Elizabeth's letter of November 3, 1910, describes the Ewings announcement of the engagement of their daughter to Edmund:

Well indeed we are making history! Mr. Lucas has proposed to Nancy! Dr. & Mrs. Ewing are pleased as punch and Dr. E. is willing they should marry at once. Nancy was 18 on September 5th. . . . Mr. Lucas is ten years older than Nancy. His affair at home has not turned out successfully, so this has come on the rebound, & is, it seems to us, a very happy event for all concerned. What a burden it lifts from Dr. and Mrs. Ewing about Nancy's future! And Mr. Lucas needed a home.

I do not know whether Elizabeth was uncomfortable with the cultural implications of this liaison when she wrote, "The dear child did not seem old enough to be engaged, but if she is to stay in India, I see no reason why she should not be in her own home." Did Elizabeth condone Nancy's betrothal age but condemn early marriage for Indian girls? This dilemma brings up another Christianity-versus-Civilization conflict: the Christians were especially sensitive to the early betrothal of the Indian girls which they felt interrupted their educational choices and personal development.

In "Zenanas and Girlless Villages: The Ethnology of American Evangelical Women, 1870-1910," Joan Jacobs Brumberg argues, "The 'girlless village,' which at first hearing might seem to refer to the effects of infanticide, was actually a trope, signifying the perceived absence of female adolescence in non-Christian society" (365). Julia Cole mentions this absence in her travelogue on November 8, 1908, "There seem to be no children in this country. Children are dressed like miniature men and women if at all! Child wives have no liberty! Alas!! I watched a tiny child wife as she sat on the window seat. How serious she looked! Seeing the open window she had crawled over the sill to see what was going on, poor thing!" (31). But, regarding Nancy Ewing, Elizabeth continues, "She has nothing to do or wait for except *years*, and she can have no girlhood

in India, always with married people, and having their problems discussed, she might as well be part of it all. . . . Of course Nancy *is* young and without much education or very good health. She is somewhat deaf as you know but she is a *dear* child.”²⁵

Despite the odds, the marriage must have been a happy one and Edmund Lucas (like his father-in-law, Dr. Ewing, and his brother-in-law, Dr. Rhea Ewing) became the president of Forman Christian College (1923-1932). Arthur J. Brown wrote that Edmund Lucas’s “knowledge of the Indian mind and language gave him marked popularity with the students.” With the growing spirit of nationalism and desire for self-rule, Edmund Lucas was especially sensitive; he helped place Indian Christians in positions of leadership and stepped aside to offer the presidency of Forman Christian College to Dr. Surendra Kumar Datta (609).

Edmund and Nancy's marriage was hardly unusual in missionary circles; the Ewing's son Rhea and the McCuskey's daughter Margaret also got married. The latter marriage united two influential families in missions at the time—the Wherrys and the James C. R. Ewings. Margaret’s mother, Lillian Wherry McCuskey, was the daughter of Rev. Elwood Morris Wherry who, according to Webster, was the most outstanding scholar of Islam at the beginning of the 20th century (102). (See more complete biographical information about Dr. Elwood Wherry in Elizabeth's November 2, 1905, letter, in part two of Chapter 13.) Rhea and Margaret Ewing were added to Brown's roll call of missionaries in 1928. Their Indian colleagues in the Punjab must have been very pleased that the Ewings were able to arrange these marriages with both the Lucas and the

²⁵ Brumberg notes that during the 1890s, adolescent, middle-class American girls were delaying marriage until their mid-twenties (Elizabeth was 29), and that the median age of marriage for all classes in 1900 was 21.9. On the other hand, she adds that between 1890 and 1924, more than one-third of a million American girls were married under the age of 15 (“Zenanas” 366).

Wherry families—how very Indian! But, as it turns out, these intermarriages were not isolated events; combining bloodlines within missionary families was more normal than not. Webster points out that when Rev. Charles Forman married Margaret Newton in 1855, "he not only joined one large family dynasty but also began another one" (25). Elizabeth and DJ had left Lahore before Rhea and Margaret were married so I do not have her editorial comments about the wedding, but it is fun to read about the two when they were young:

August 22, 1905: [See reference to Rhea and Nancy Ewing in this letter.] Little Rhea is as bright as a new button. . . . Nancy you know is 12 years'

January 31, 1906: We have had a charming visit from Mr. and Mrs. McCuskey and their baby Margaret, with her Ayah. They came Friday and stayed until Tuesday and were a pleasure all the time. Wee little 2 ½ year old Margaret is just like a fairy doll, so dainty and winsome. Her mother keeps her dressed spotlessly and with the prettiest of pink or blue ribbons to tie back her brown curls and run through her little gowns. She brought her family of five dolls, one being almost as large as she herself; a lovely rag doll named Clara. It was such fun to see her playing with these before our big wood fire toward evening. Margaret seemed never to break or soil things and was Oh so obedient and sunny.

I gave the McCuskeys a badminton [party] the first afternoon, asking over about 20 of our Missionaries and Indian friends. Mrs. Ewing had us for tiffin Saturday. Mrs. Orbison gave a birthday party that same afternoon to all the children and we went too with Margaret. We were amused with Rhea boy, who would not play with the others in the garden but kept running in to see when the "Tea party" would be ready; and then when all the children were gathered about the dining room table with its candles, buns, candy and two round cakes, Rhea looked like business until his little stomach was full and then to wear out the rest of his energy pinching the little girls next to him.

April 14, 1906: Dear little Rhea boy was our delight with his sunny curls and bright face. He enjoyed everything out of the windows and ate bread and butter and milk most of the way.

July 27, 1908: Mrs. McCuskey's little girl "Margaret" just 5 years old, has had a fever of late. It was off for a week or two but now is 102 & 3 daily. We are all anxious about her for she is a delicate child, and this summer is just skin & bone.

Rev. Rhea Ewing, like his father, graduated from Princeton, and like his father and brother-in-law, Ed Lucas, became the president of Forman Christian College (1950-1968).

In Brown's list of missionaries to India there are three Wherrys, four Lucases, seven Ewings, eight Goheens, fourteen Newtons, and fifteen Formans (1115-1118). Although Brown's list ends in 1937, the list of intermarried missionary families has continued well into the late twentieth century. For instance, William R. Hutchison's first words in his book, *Errand to the World*, are: "My interest in the missionary movement undoubtedly is rooted in family history—my parents having spent several years as educational missionaries in Iran, my wife's parents having served for many years with the YMCA in Cairo" (xi).²⁶ His foreign missionary/YMCA family legacy seems a carbon copy of my parents' marriage via the Brownings and the Crews in South America and the Flemings in India. In an analogous way, my Uncle Kerry also joined two missionary families, the Eddys and the Flemings, by marrying G. Sherwood Eddy's daughter, Margaret, and then, after her death, my Aunt Betty.²⁷ I am sure that this intermarriage of missionary families was a fairly common occurrence.

²⁶ William Hutchison, like my father, was an American historian. He had sent the manuscript proofs of his Chapter 6, "Tradition under Fire," from *Errand to the World* to my father for his approval and comments regarding DJ. Hutchison devoted eight pages to my grandfather, including the photograph of DJ I have used in part two of this chapter.

²⁷ Margaret Eddy Smith and G. Kerry Smith were married in 1932 and welcomed a child, Arden Kerry Smith in 1932. In 1933, when Arden was just five months old, Margaret died of pneumonia, the same illness that had claimed her brother sixteen years before (Nutt 281).

9.4 "A girl with all my constant blessings"

Oct. 18, 1905
Woodstock School, Landour
My dear Mother,

I have been in the school now five days and it is a delightful place to be from every point of view. The day I arrived, Friday, they took me to the second story room, which had been specially selected for me because it was airy and quiet. But what do you suppose they had done. Hung the walls with Miss Mitchell's choicest pictures and covered the floor with a beautiful white and brown "Numda" rug. Hers also. Fresh white ruffled muslin curtains were at the three windows, pretty covers on the table and dresser and four great vases of white and yellow "Cosmos" which made one think he was in a fragrant bower. Well, they couldn't have been kinder if I were the Queen.

There is a little stove in the room and every evening at six o'clock a servant comes and builds a cozy wood fire for me, which lasts all the evening. One of the school ayahs brings me chotta hosari at seven o'clock each morning, and I do not try to be dressed before breakfast at 10:30. We eat at a teacher's table in the big dining room where the girls file in and out at the tap of a bell. The teachers have a special dinner prepared for them at night and I quite enjoy the meals. Tiffin is at 3 and dinner at 7:30.

Just this week I am preparing for an examination paper in Grammar and translation which will be sent here for me to take Friday. I was not studying at all from sheer laziness, until suddenly I heard these examination papers were coming out. So with four days left I am making an old time cram. The Grammar I had never looked at, but after two morning's work it is all neatly outlined and classified and part of it in my head. While writing this last sentence the floor shook perceptibly [*sic*] from another earthquake. I do not pretend to say how I shall pass the examination but this written part ought to go. I think the oral part may have to be postponed a month or two as I haven't finished the required reading.

Although I begrudge every moment for the study, I am happy to give my evenings to the girls who like Illinois girls, like to come in for informal chats. With some of them I have had good talks. One dear girl, Gladys Low, leaves the school tomorrow and has been asking me how she will keep up her Christian life at home. There are no helps there and no lines of work for her to enter. In most cases the parents are absolutely unwilling their daughters should have any relationships

with the Indians, even the children of their servants who might be taught. It is far too degrading.

So this is a real problem for the Woodstock School. What outlet is there for the girls after leaving school? I enjoy and admire Miss Mitchell very much. She is very capable in every way, and has the spiritual life of the girls deeply at heart. She does not however, nor does Miss Lark or Miss Wycoff come very near to the girls. Miss Wherry has more of this informal relation with them because her work is all in the studio with them. I am getting very fond of Miss Wherry; she is thoughtful and kind to me and ready to put a shoulder to the wheel in all school activities. Miss Mitchell says she is most helpful in practical ways. The other teachers, not American are some twelve in number.

This is the week all foreign mail is delayed in the Suez. One girl in Mussoorie was expecting her fiancé on this boat and now the wedding has to be put off till he arrives. I gave up my intention of going to Lahore before Annual meeting for several reasons, chief among them the desire to study for this examination. There would be no study in Lahore this week with Presbytery on; calling and settling the house. Johnson writes that our piano is in perfect condition, which is great relief of mind to me. Even Mrs. Griswold with her long experience found her piano badly moth eaten.

The home box stands ready to be opened but DJ says we must wait for that fun to be shared mutually. Cousin Grace Gordon and the Brandons have been breakfasted at our house today, on their way to Sialkot. They had three hours to wait in the Lahore station and it was Johnson's thoughtfulness to tell Latif to prepare a breakfast for six people though he himself has classes all the morning and Nagir was to meet them at the train with a gari. I do hope everything went off nicely. Of course they had to just make themselves at home in that empty house. I feel sure they must have appreciated the hot water and restful beds and good breakfast. Probably Latif prepared his own menu for breakfast, but I am sure he would do it well. Do you suppose Johnson got out the proper linen, silver, and dishes from their packed-away condition? He has been boarding with Griswolds since he went down.

Oh, you will be glad to know that I have not had a sign of fever for three days and I believe it is now quite a thing of the past. I am feeling splendidly. It is a common question to ask me if I am not pining for my husband. Two or three separated wives have wept their eyes out. But I say no, I am very happy always. He is well and just where he is needed most and I am where I should be this week. How could a girl with all my constant blessing go around with a long face?

If Miss [Susie] Sorabji is with you when this reaches you, please give her my warmest love. I envy every one who hears and meets her, that is, I would envy them if I hadn't had that delightful inspiring visit in Poona, which is better. It makes me feel happy all over to think of her in our home talking to you and dear father and Grandma. I hope she was able to go to the Illinois Convention. My message will not be ready, as I did not know the date in time.

Beth Johnson has just passed through a most serious and successful operation in the Miraj hospital. She thinks now she will be in better health than ever before. Poor girl, she has found the language very hard, just as has Miss Cuthbertson, a trained nurse in the lower Mission. If one has never studied Latin or any other language it would be almost too much to face India. Now for me the Grammar is nothing, just play.

I have enjoyed talking to Mrs. John Forman and Miss Emily Forman about Mrs. Olmsted with whom the daughter Florence has been living. They feel that she has been most kind. It seems that Mrs. Olmsted used to be Mrs. Forman's S.S. teacher once upon a time. I was not surprised to hear that Florence became lonesome in that household where there was no bright young company, so this year much to Mrs. Forman's disappointment Florence was sent to the Missionary Home in Wooster, O. Mrs. Freeman is staying up here all this month to try to get malaria out of her system.

Each Saturday I have been in Landour since DJ departed, we have had a picnic on some fine sightly point. These Woodstock teachers are adept at that sort of thing. Once we had hot creamed potatoes and coffee with the cold meat, salad, delicious rolls, gingerbread and apple sauce. But last time Miss Mitchell cooked hot creamed eggs over a little charcoal fire out there and we had hot baked potatoes with it. I never went to such tempting picnics in my life. We go at two o'clock and stay till the sunset rose glow falls upon the snow peaks yonder. Shall I ever forget them in this glory? I hear rumors that there will be a final picnic this coming Saturday, after my examination is over. We always take rugs, pillows and fancy work so that the afternoon is spent most cozily together.

My Friday examination will be six hours long and I shall write it here in my room. The Papers will be sent to Miss Mitchell for me. I feel the old enthusiasm of college days to try my mettle. So glad I enjoy, instead of dread, these tests, and yet I can't think that I am well prepared for it and you may hear of an ignominious failure. But never mind. It is now almost half past eleven. I was so afraid if I didn't write

tonight I might feel too crowded to do it on Wednesday and Thursday.
How I should hate to disappoint you even with a shorter letter than this.
There, the town clock is striking twelve. How dreadful! It is just a
little offering on love's altar to you. I never do sit up after ten o'clock;
so one night won't matter if only I don't get stupid tomorrow.

Goodnight, dear home people. A kiss for each of you,
Elizabeth

This October 1905 letter to her mother was the culmination of a year of language study, which ended in the written test in Urdu to be held at the Woodstock School.²⁸

Woodstock School and College (1847) were established by American and British missionaries and British military and civil officials for their children until they were old enough to be sent to school in England or the United States. In Elizabeth's December 4, 1904, letter, she says that Nancy Ewing and Anna Ewing Goheen (as a teacher), Laura Griswold, two of Mrs. Orbison's girls and two of Mrs. Clark's attended Woodstock. Situated in Landour and 7,500 feet up in the first range of the Himalayas, the location provided healthy relief for women and children during the hot season. In 1876 the Presbyterian Women's Foreign Missionary Society of Philadelphia bought the property, and after long discussion and negotiation, Anglo-Indians were eventually allowed to send their daughters to Woodstock (Brown 618).

Not knowing how else to describe the school, a special article in *Woman's Work*, "Woodstock at Landour, India" (1908), put it like this: "Wherever such a household is found, it is a center of power comparable to nothing in this country, unless it be the 'big

²⁸ Webster wrote that Urdu mastery was considered necessary for the cities; Hindi or Punjabi for the villages (41). A footnote in Kipling's *Kim* said this about Urdu: "Urdu is a language which evolved during the Moghul rule written in Arabic script but with grammar and vocabulary heavily influenced by Hindi-related languages. Urdu was adopted by British for the military use and has during the last century absorbed useful English and technical terms" (291). Dr. Shailja Sharma, of DePaul University writes: "As far as Urdu is concerned, it started as a camp language and was a mixture of Hindi and Persian. It later became adopted as a court, 'high culture' literary language. It's very beautiful and is still spoken in India though it is the national language of Pakistan."

house' of a Southern plantation in former days" (10). While the British believed in Anglo supremacy over their Indian hosts (discussed in part two of Chapter 10), class-conscious Americans had more compassion for the Indians, so describing the Indian people and countryside around Woodstock to former day "slave country" of the antebellum American South surprises me and could be another example of missionary blindness.

But, be that as it may, Elizabeth had safe haven to study and take her Urdu written test, she was able to renew her sense of sisterhood with the Woodstock teachers, and she could relax enough to lapse into the kind of pseudodialogue with her mother that she used to write from Smith College by asking rhetorical questions and using Richardson's writing-to-the-moment prose style:

"But what do you suppose they had done [?];"
"While writing this last sentence the floor shook perceptibly [*sic*] from another earthquake";
"Do you suppose Johnson got out the proper linen, silver, and dishes from their packed-away condition?";
"Oh, you will be glad to know that I have not had a sign of fever for three days and I believe it is now quite a thing of the past";
"It is now almost half past eleven";
"There, the town clock is striking twelve."

Elizabeth was born with an ability to feel comfortable in her own skin; she did not turn into half a person after she got married, and it is delightful to see her old sense of self return when she said, "I am feeling splendidly. It is a common question to ask me if I am not pining for my husband. . . . But I say no, I am very happy always. . . . How could a girl with all my constant blessings go around with a long face?" The reason Elizabeth was at Woodstock School and not by her husband's side was to hide away from the social demands of Lahore, particularly with the Presbytery convention going on. The social life of Lahore was much more than the Flemings had bargained for. When Julia Cole had

written to DJ's sister Lois Fleming the first year the Flemings were in Lahore, she said, "You ask about the social life. That is getting irksome to them both but I think it will adjust itself. This first winter they must be more in the public eye than ever again. The mystery to me is how they can work and study at all" (January 5, 1905) (letter was misdated 1904). "Irksome" would turn out to be an understatement.²⁹

Elizabeth mentions her frustration at not having time to study Urdu in almost every letter that first year. She starts optimistically on October 7, 1904, by saying, "At 6:15 a.m. I am putting four hours a day on this language and it carries me back to college days," and she still has her sense of humor on October 26, 1904, when she writes, "What we should do if either of us understood Hindustani is a mystery." But almost weekly after that she reports more discouraging progress to her parents: on November 13, 1904, "It is desperately hard to find time to study and take a lesson in the midst of the setting and housekeeping with new servants and new ways, yet I am making the attempt"; on November 20, 1904, "I'm getting on a bit each day but not so fast as if I had more time to study"; and on November 27, 1904, "The language is coming by slow stages. Munchie and I pull through an hour together each morning." Finally, on December 4, 1904, she simply says, "Johnson and I are displeased over the social demands of this place." In 1910 the Flemings take an extreme step to learn the language: DJ will hire someone to teach his classes at Forman Christian College and they will escape with their munchie and entire household—ayah, cook, sweeper and two children—into the jungle of Amar Sidhu to learn Urdu by absorption, away from the hoi polloi of Lahore.

²⁹ My father will write of the same problems in a letter on February 8, 1930: "Uninterrupted meditative leisure—the one native product of the Orient I thought could be counted on—is as rare as the notorious dodo. The American, English, and Indian communities conspire against one's opportunities for solitary idleness, and perpetrate a host of parties of all kinds: tea, tennis, dinner, music, theatre, bridge, golf" (EMF 1930).

The social life in Lahore is likewise mentioned in almost every letter: badminton, tennis, teas, formal visiting (the rules are spelled out in the November 20, 1904, letter), and attending Forman Christian College functions were woven around zenana visits, meetings of the YWCA, Church Missionary Society (British), Indian National Committee, the Annual Presbytery meetings and excursions into villages as in Elizabeth's March 27, 1905, circular, discussed in part two. Early on, though, other things conspired to intrude on Elizabeth's Urdu lessons. On December 15, 1904, mission authorities (a whole other subject in themselves!) made her dismiss the Mohammedan munchie and employ one of the native Christians nearby. This caused even more delays and adjustments. Also, Elizabeth began teaching at Miss Kaye's school shortly after arriving in Lahore only to stop so she could dedicate all her time to language study. "It breaks my heart to do it, but I find the morning is my only uninterrupted time for study and this class comes at 9:30. They couldn't put it at a later hour. This language work must come first. It is not easy, one must study. I am afraid I have been doing too many other things this year" (February 26, 1905).

Elizabeth commiserated with the wives and mothers who had limited time for language study and in this October 1905 letter regarded poor Beth Johnson and Miss Cuthbertson, a trained nurse in the Lower mission, with compassion, writing, "If one has never studied Latin or any other language it would be almost too much to face India." But by May 30, 1908, her tolerance for untrained missionaries had grown thin. Miss Sutherland, also a trained nurse, had a harder time acclimating and Elizabeth wasn't so gracious:

She was a splendid successful nurse at home, but never educated & has struggled over the language out here—so pitifully—that now there is a

complete breakdown. And sad—she seems to have gotten into a state of health like Hattie Gilchrist, only much worse. Epileptic fits. Isn't it awful! She will go home this fall. Oh do be careful not to send girls who never studied other languages!

The logistical problems mothers deal with—running a household and tending to small children—are considered basic components of "women's work," but in a foreign land these duties are multiplied. "Besides how can a wife, housekeeper and mother count upon her time for studying an exceedingly intricate language," Elizabeth writes on August 22, 1905, words that turn prophetic when Aunt Betty and my father are born in 1906 and 1909. In her letter of March 31, 1910, Elizabeth writes: "My mending piles up so high I must turn to and mend, else my inner consciousness of character will suffer badly. Tell me which should come first with the missionary wife—the *Missionary* or the *Wife*. I really do not feel clear. Doubtless a compromise of the two is wise. . . . I have much more sympathy with the wife who does not undertake definite miss'y work than before."

Although Elizabeth easily passed her two Urdu papers written at Woodstock, in the end, she won't have time to take the oral exam until March 16, 1909. After that experience she writes, "I have at last taken the rest of my Urdu's exam, oral & passed. I am greatly relieved & have it off my mind—for the precedent must be set by one of the Mem-sahibs.³⁰ But I hope no others will have such a dragging experience over the study as I have had." The precedent Elizabeth is referring to is that she was the first married woman required to pass the language proficiency test in order to be given full missionary

³⁰ Memsahibs were the wives of British officials, military officials, missionaries and merchants who were considered by people such as Rudyard Kipling to be aloof and pampered women with little interest in India.

status in the Mission. In her August 22, 1905, letter to her mother (used in part three), she writes:

You know this is a new rule this year that married ladies shall have to pass their first year examination in Urdu before having a vote in the Mission. I am the only one it has ever been required of and between you and me, I don't believe it will ever be allowed to stand. Many wives are not used to habits of study and would find it a humiliation to come before an examining Committee of Associates with their husbands.

Elizabeth brings up the question of woman's unequal status and voting in mission politics again in her November 2, 1905, letter to her father:

There are three or four very difficult problems before this Annual meeting. The first, and now on its third day of deliberation is concerning the women's status in the mission. Here-to-fore women have never been regarded as real members of the Mission. They have had no vote in general matters, only on questions pertaining to strictly "Women's Work." This condition has brought about much dissatisfaction, culminating last year. Some of the ladies feel very much dishonored and there are awkward positions continually growing out of the query, "Isn't this Women's Work? It certainly affects it."

Webster reports that women were granted full voting membership in the Punjab Mission in 1906 and the right to vote on all matters except those dealing with the character, conduct, continuation in service and location of men (including Indian men) by the North India Mission in 1905 (17), and Dr. J. C. R. Ewing wrote to the New York home office regarding the annual meeting of November 1906: "The Woman's Question was settled in a very quiet way. Women in the future are to vote on all subjects" (Letter #16 PHS). But first, all married women had to pass the language competency in order to vote at all, the standard set by my grandmother, Elizabeth Cole Fleming.

Finally, Elizabeth mentioned two other women in this October 1905 letter—DJ's Cousin Grace Gordon and Miss Susie Sorabji. Grace Williamson Gordon and DJ's mothers were (McClung) sisters from Xenia, Ohio. Grace was one of the six young

ladies who had secured a furnished room at the 1893 Columbian Exposition and she had returned to Chicago to attend the Moody Bible Institute.³¹ In 1895 she married Rev. David Reed Gordon, a graduate of Xenia (Ohio) Theological Seminary, an itinerate evangelist minister from Punjab, India. David was the son of United Presbyterian missionaries and was born in India.³² An undated newspaper announcement of the Gordon's wedding reported, "Mr. Gordon was born in India and speaks the language fluently. Jocosely some say part of the courtship has been in Mr. Gordon teaching the prospective bride the language" (Scrapbook). As DJ's parents had both died while he was still a young man (his mother in 1895 and his father in 1897), joining his cousin Grace and her husband David Gordon in India was probably considered more normal than exotic after graduating from the College of Wooster in 1898.

Elizabeth and Grace seemed to bond very quickly. In her May 14, 1905, letter, Elizabeth writes, "It is so nice to have a cousin in India. The Gordons are just as nice and good as gold," and on July 27, 1908, "Grace always has her cottage full of callers, any afternoon. I am sure there is no one better loved on this hill than Grace Gordon. She has a charming personality, and the merriest laugh. It does people good just to be with her." The depth of their friendship is revealed by Elizabeth's "errand of mercy," reported in Julia Cole's travelogue entry for December 22, 1908: "Long before daybreak this household was awakened by an urgent telegram again to Gudaspur. Mrs. Gordon is at death's door with a relapse, her babe is dead and the two boys may be soon motherless"

³¹ The Moody Bible Institute for Home and Foreign Missions was founded in Chicago in 1889 and was known for its practical orientation, requiring students to do field work in city missions which tested the validity of their call to foreign service (Hill 126).

³² I do not know if he was the son of Rev. Andrew Gordon who wrote *Our India Mission: A Thirty Years History of the India Mission of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, Together with Personal Reminiscences* (Philadelphia: 1886), but his dates would be right.

(82). This was tragic news, yet Elizabeth, four months pregnant herself, wasted no time leaving her family to tend to her new cousin. It amazes me, one hundred years later, to know that Elizabeth's errand of mercy was accomplished without hesitation. After all the anticipation of her parents' trip (mentioned in almost every letter Elizabeth wrote prior to their arrival), it was heartbreaking that Elizabeth had to spend so much time away from her family (and precious little daughter), especially on Christmas Day itself. However, all ended well and in her October 21, 1909, letter, Elizabeth writes, "I had just been to the station to see Grace Gordon and about 20 UPs [United Presbyterians] pass through to Sialkot. They looked fine! & the boys fat & rosy."

As mentioned earlier, the Gordons were members of the United Presbyterian Church, the denomination responsible for much of the mass conversions, (Rev. David Gordon's own parish comprised 250,000 low caste villagers (AW 74)), and Sialkot in the Punjab was one of the towns involved in those evangelizing efforts (Webster 228). Elizabeth writes on September 27 & 28, 1910, "The Sialkot Convention is larger than ever this year. They are going in for permanent equipment—i.e. tents, fireless cookers, &ce &ce. Mr. Gordon is a great worker there & in fact, the UPs are underneath it still." In her January 10, 1906, circular addressed to "My Dear Friends," Elizabeth described their visit with the Gordons in their revival tents at Christmas time: "The life of an Evangelistic itinerating missionary is very simple in its plan, but exceedingly busy."



Photograph of Elizabeth with Susie Sorabji, c. 1904.

The other woman Elizabeth mentioned in this October 1905 letter was Miss Susie Sorabji of Poona. Susie Sorabji (1868-1931) was the sister of the better-known Cornelia Sorabji (1864-1954), the first Indian woman Barrister and author of *India Recalled* (1936). Their parents had converted to Christianity, the father from Zoroastrianism and the mother from Hinduism.³³ Susie Sorabji visited the United States several times. She was involved in the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), and

although I am unable to find exact documentation, she was the only female representative from the Orient at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago during the 1893 World's Fair (Beach 262).³⁴ On September 23, 1904, Elizabeth writes of her introduction to Miss Susie Sorabji in Poona:

She told me of the wonderful visit to Smith College and of her experience at Northfield and Silver Bay [SVM] Conferences. She thought the woman's colleges were wonderful centers of stored up power. "Oh" she said, "If we could only turn half of those young women into India, it would transform my poor country."

³³ Harlan Beach writes that the Sorabjis were an unusual family. One of the daughters was a widow of an Englishman who lived in London and "has delighted the Queen by her exquisite rendering of Persian songs"; another was an artist whose paintings were exhibited in Paris and London; another, Miss Alice Sorabji, was a surgeon of distinction (262). Elizabeth wrote that Alice was the first to take the degree of B.Sc. from Bombay University ("Today in India" 9).

³⁴ According to Dirk Ficca of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, Chicago, the records for the 1893 World's Fair were destroyed in a fire. Kathyne DeGraff of the Special Collections, DePaul University Library has the most comprehensive collection of the 1893 Parliament extant.

Elizabeth's April 16, 1905, circular to the Young People's Society of Hyde Park Presbyterian Church told of Susie Sorabji's trip to the United States: "My Very Dear Friends, Miss Susie Sorabji who leaves for America this week, and whom you will meet shortly, wrote us to know if we were safe, and said, 'God speaks so loudly in India I wonder if the people will hear.'" Miss Sorabji was on her way to the United States after the massively destructive Kangra earthquake, one of the deadliest earthquakes in India's history, which killed almost twenty thousand people on April 4, 1905.³⁵ She was successful in her mission; three years later Julia Cole wrote that Susie's "last trip to America resulted in a special gift from Miss Helen Gould of seven thousand dollars for St. Helena's School" (AW 22), built in 1907-1908. In Poona, Susie Sorabji was the principal of St. Helena's school and she supervised two vernacular schools known as St. John's. She visited prisons, hospitals, and poorhouses all while serving on the committees of the Bombay Presidency Council of Women, the Temperance Union, and the All-India Educational Conference. After her death, Cornelia Sorabji wrote a book, *Susie Sorabji: Christian Parsee Educationist of Western India: A Memoir by Her Sister*, published by Oxford University Press in 1934 (deSouza 95).³⁶

Always when missionaries visited Susie Sorabji in Poona, they would also visit the compound of the famous social reformer, Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922). The Flemings visited both women in September 1904 and the Coles followed the same route in November 1908. Pandita Ramabai was a shining star in mission history and her

³⁵ See "Dharamsala Earthquake 1905" <<http://www.123himachal.com/dharamsala/links/1905.htm>> and "1905—Kangra (Himachal Pradesh), India, Mw 7.8" <<http://www.asc-india.org/gq/kangra.htm>>.

³⁶ I would like to thank Dr. Leslie Flemming, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Ohio University, for this reference. Flemming has written several essays on nineteenth-century Presbyterian women missionaries in the North India Mission and she edited *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1989). See also, Antoinette Burton's Chapter 3, "Tourism in the Archives: Colonial Modernity and the Zenana in Cornelia Sorabji's Memoirs" in *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home and History in Late Colonial India* (Oxford: UP Oxford, 2003).

conversion to Christianity a triumph. She was regarded with such respect that Helen Montgomery included her in her “Thumb-nail Sketches of Oriental Christians” in Chapter 5 of *Western Women in Eastern Lands* (224-226). Pandita Ramabai's village community comprised nearly twenty thousand famine waifs, child widows and rescued women, but her passion was as a translator. Montgomery said that her translation of the Bible was composed in "the simplest women's talk, a language that any man or boy would scorn to speak, that she may put the Gospel within reach of the stupidest and degraded of India's women" (225). Julia Cole wrote of Pandita Ramabai's energy and mission in her 1908 travelogue:

Her faith in this translation work is wonderful! Every nerve responds to action, she sleeps little, her watchful eye is over five great centers and the future of these Christian teachers she is sending out. The youngest pupil is three months old. She cares for the feeding of the infants herself. To look into her large expressive eyes, to see her vigorous frame all alert, you are impressed with her greatness of soul. (25)

There is much biographical literature on Pandita Ramabai including an essay her neighbor Susie Sorabji wrote of her: "Shrimati Ramabai Ranade" from *Women in Modern India* (1929) (deSouza 95-103), and many critiques of her personal writings. See for example *Pandita Ramabai through Her Own Words: Selected Works*, compiled and edited, with translations by Meera Kosambi.³⁷

Finally, in this October 1905 letter, Elizabeth mentions the heartbreak of separating from children, the sad plight of Mrs. John Forman who sent her children home to the United States to be educated. Separating from their children would become the

³⁷ Like other visitors to the United States, Pandita Ramabai wrote of America's voluntary principle in "Religious Denominations and Charities in the USA" (1889) (mentioned in Chapter 1), "The Condition of Women in the USA" (1889), and her very own, "The High-Caste Hindu Woman" (1887).

true personal tragedy for missionary women as Pearl S. Buck shows in her biography of her mother, *The Exile* (1936), which takes its title from this exact problem:

There was a deep sadness in Carie's heart when she came to say farewell to her son this time. Somehow if America held him, and she would have America hold her son, then she herself had lost him, although she scarcely knew how. Yet he was a man now and must choose his own life, and was she to blame him if he chose his own country when she had taught him from his birth to love his country well? But in choosing it meant that she, his mother, must now live in exile from her son. (165)

Elizabeth would be spared this hardship; DJ Fleming was the first missionary sent out by the Board of Foreign Missions for short-term service (eight and a half years) instead of service for life (Webster 40-41). The Flemings returned to the United States when their children were eight, five, and three years old respectively.³⁸ Mrs. Walter Clark faced this hardship on April 20, 1909 ("Mrs. Clark wrote to me today after parting with her two girls Ruth and Leila. She is quite used up over it—poor thing"), and Mrs. Charles Forman had an especially long and trying time separating from her seven children as reported in the 1905 through 1911 WPBMN's annual reports:

1904 AR: After four years of devoted service in India, Dr. and Mrs Forman are returning home on furlough where four of their children have preceded them. The re-uniting of their family in Scotland will be a happy time (41);

1905 AR: Dr. Forman cut short his furlough and sailed for India, returning to the work that needed him so badly. Mrs. Forman is at present in Wooster, Ohio, devoting herself to the education of her seven children (44);

1906 AR: Mrs. Forman is still in this country where the care of her family of seven children absorbs her mind and heart, more especially so on account of the absence of Dr. Forman in India (42);

1908 AR: The absence of Dr. C. W. Forman, at home on furlough, has been keenly felt. He is now returning, accompanied by his wife, who for several years has been in America devoting herself to the care of their children (35).

1909 AR: There was no report from Mrs. Forman.

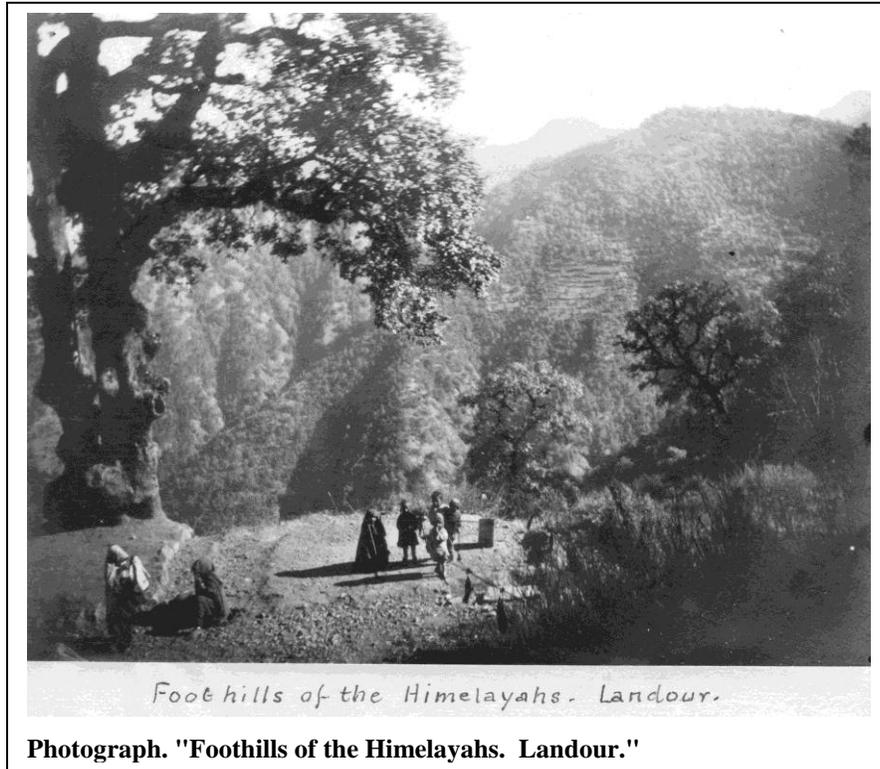
³⁸ My Aunt Helen was born in 1911, a year after this collection ends.

1910 and 1911 AR: [The annual reports were almost carbon duplicates of each other. It sounded as though Mrs. Forman's career was back on track because there was no mention of her seven children.] We have just returned from one of these [village] centers where we spent a week in tents. We had our living tent and a large preaching tent. . . . Four hundred and fifty have been baptized in six months. (*1910 AR 28; 1911 AR 28*)

It should not be a surprise, as mentioned in part two of this chapter that Mrs. Charles Forman had written: "More workers are needed to place among these communities of Christians" (*AR 1911: 28*). History has looked favorably on the Charles Formans, so their childbearing years must have become a cold, dark memory; Brown wrote in *One Hundred Years*:

When Dr. and Mrs. Forman left Kasur, they had the joy of knowing that 2,000 of the Outcastes in seventy-five villages had accepted baptism. They had given up the worship of idols and witch-haunted trees and shrubs, and stopped carrion-eating, stealing grain and money, selling women and murdering men at the bidding of the village chiefs. (593)

Chapter 10:
Late Lahore—With Children, 1908-1910
"Do you suppose there will be more time in heaven?"
(November 27, 1910)



Elizabeth and my Aunt Betty returned to Chicago early in the winter of 1907 to recover from malaria; they moved back to India in the fall, refreshed after a summer at Bay View. Although mother and daughter were both infected with malaria, cholera was another deadly disease and one that could wipe out a missionary station in a matter of weeks. Regarding Miss Dutta's death on May 23, 1905, Elizabeth writes, "It hurries people off so quickly." Cholera is an intestinal epidemic and the source of contamination is usually the feces of an infected person. I cannot imagine enduring the symptoms or treating someone else without plumbing and running water and perhaps that is why and how the disease could spread so quickly. Women were the caretakers for those who were

sick and the fact that they also had the highest mortality rate is no surprise. When poor old Mrs. Semple died, Elizabeth writes on June 8, 1908, “Margaret was the only woman in the house to wait on her.”³⁹ (Did that mean the men were not expected in the sick room if a woman were present?) Although spared cholera, Elizabeth was never entirely well in India and her letters almost always mentioned something about fevers and sleeplessness, particularly after the children were born.

Part one of this chapter, “xxx Another poke at my fire. xxx,” shows the transition in Elizabeth's rhetorical style toward a deepening use of the pseudodialogue as, living in a remote hill station, she became more removed from society. After fifteen-plus years of letter-writing, she had become the grand master of this epistolary technique. Part two, “No more Englishmen smelling of my scalloped potatoes,” discusses Elizabeth's positive and negative reactions to English colonialism, while part three, “What a fairy story it all is!”, introduces her relationship with Mary Borden Turner, who represented the new type of upper-class missionary. Chapter 10 ends where this collection of letters began—showcasing women's work at the core of the missionary movement. Part four, “Mother, your Study Class doings just beat the Dutch!”, contrasts Elizabeth's family-centered, housebound life to her mother's rapidly expanding professional life. In the letter that opens this chapter, Elizabeth was still anticipating her parents' visit (November 9, 1908, through January 19, 1909) and she offers them some advice about steamship travel.⁴⁰ As mentioned, when the Coles finally did arrive in Lahore, they brought with

³⁹ Graphic photographs of victims and survivors of cholera are included at the end of part one of Chapter 14.

⁴⁰ During the years 1907-1908, the following missionaries from the Punjab and Northern India were on furlough: Dr. and Mrs. Orbison, Dr. and Mrs. J. Lucas, Mrs. DJ Fleming and daughter Betty, Dr. and Mrs. Wherry, Miss Margaret Given, Miss Carrie Downs, Dr. and Mrs. C.W. Forman, Miss Margaret Morrow, Miss Donaldson, Dr. and Mrs. J.C. R. Ewing, and Dr. and Mrs. Arthur H. Ewing. Elizabeth was right—“Heaps of missionaries will be on every boat in October.”

them letters of introduction from Robert Speer and John Wanamaker. (Photocopies of these letters are included at the end of part one, Chapter 14.)

In the spring of 1910, DJ hired a professor to take his place at Forman Christian College and the Flemings tried a month of language immersion in the jungle. I do not think either of them achieved the fluency in Urdu they wanted, but not because they didn't try. During these years DJ became more involved with the National Committee of the YMCA and the Sialkot Convention, both of which advocated on behalf of the Indian Christian's growing autonomy and desire for self-rule. He also became publicly recognized when he started his writing career, contributing several articles to *The Interior* and *The Missionary Review* and having numerous study-guides published. DJ's energy and dedication to the missionary cause were formidable; once, because of last minute miscommunications on April 21, 1910, he rode a bicycle to a conference seventy-six miles away.

Woven throughout these 1908 to 1910 letters are Elizabeth's spontaneous comments about her young children. She had a knack for capturing their young personalities in brief vignettes such as, "Betty's saying Grace, Jesus Christ sake Amen" (September 27-28, 1910). My Aunt Betty's forceful personality was seen early in this funny little episode, while my father, born on May 29, 1909, was described as being "roguish," an "Epicure" and "just a lump of sweetness that's all."⁴¹ After tending to Lahore's social obligations, managing young children, directing servants, having

⁴¹ It seems fitting that Aunt Betty became a dance instructor in the fashionable Northwest area of Washington DC, and taught the Kennedy children in the White House during the early 1960s, while my father became an authority on American decorative arts at the Winterthur Museum in Wilmington, Delaware.

important house guests and presenting talks at the YWCA, Elizabeth asks on November 27, 1910, "Do you suppose there will be more time in heaven?"

10.1 "xxx Another poke at my fire. xxx"

September 27 & 28, 1910 [Excerpt]
Thandiani, India
Dearest Home People,

Would you believe that daughter was the tree-climbing age! I cannot realize it, but tonight she came in with one of her daintiest white frocks hopelessly rent. She plays with the Clark twins and they are eight years old, so that she learns many things she might have never thought of.

DJ has been to the Sialkot Convention and the home letters, this week directed to Lahore, will not reach me till tomorrow evening. I shall keep this over till Wednesday morning, so as to answer anything of interest you may say.

The Sialkot Convention is larger than ever this year. They are going in for permanent equipment—i.e. tents, fireless cookers, &ce &ce. Mr. Gordon is a great worker there & in fact, the UPs are underneath it still. They all look upon it as the Keswick of the Punjab. Mr. Hyde took one of the first meetings which everyone admitted to be *great*. Miss Brown, Joan McDonald and Miss Sutherland and Major Rice and others of our Thandiani circle are there. Mr. Turner is always one of the leading spirits, but the second day he was telegraphed for by Cindy, who had high malarial fever in Srinagar. Her temperature was 105.6 that day, but then came down to 102 the next. We are so sorry to hear of her being so weak still. She has had rather a hard pull up.

Tonight I sit alone by my fireside. Mrs. Johnson left Monday (yesterday) in an unusual downpour of rain. She has been such a good friend to us all, it has enlarged our circle. [...] Now that I am alone I do not have afternoon tea. We have enjoyed conforming to the English custom, and regularly all summer have had the tea table laid at 4:30 in the drawing room. Usually if friends were in we had hot scones made but ordinarily it was thin slices of bread & butter, or toast, and two kinds of cake, & current (small) cakes. Sometimes chocolate fudge, & TEA. It is a good custom. A social hour when all the family gathers in the drawing room to drink & chat. After tea is the conventional time for exercise, & everyone turns out.

I have been taking long walks since alone. Tonight Mrs. Clark sent for me to come and look over her old hats. We had a séance [?] over seven! I wished with all my heart, you were there. You know *hats* were never in my line. I have previously enjoyed telling her what to do for her wardrobe. xxx Excuse me. I just stopped to put on another stick & use the bellows on this fire. When alone it must blaze high!

The children are asleep. Betty has been saying the most original graces at meals. They are apt to be very long and often narrative, as for instance the time she ended up by saying "and Betty's saying Grace, Jesus Christ sake Amen." All the day long she lives in her little pretend world. I am entertained at meals with an account of all her children and bits of interest. At the appropriate places she demands I say "Oh!" & then she proceeds further. Her mind is so alert and bright all the time. I don't see how she could ever get fat.

xxx A cry from baby, and I had to run and put him off again. Well as he is his teeth give many a restless night. But he does not show them in any other way, even as Betty did. His appetite is tremendous. I can truthfully say that he is an Epicure—whose first principal concern is for his little stomach. You should hear him beg for bread at all hours of the day! You would think he was starved. Was Edward like that? He talks just as funny as Betty did and is always laughing and roguish. Seems to me he knows more than is common for his age. He astonishes as us every day by some new thing which shows his brain is very active & takes everything in. He is just a lump of sweetness that's all.

xxx Another poke at my fire. xxx. Did I tell you that I have been making some lace yokes & cuffs out of the Nagercoil lace, for blouses[?] I copied a little French blouse which Miss Brown had, and got the idea of faggotting the lace together in any pattern I wished. First I pasted all onto brown paper the exact pattern of blouse neck. Well it was so pretty ever so many have been copying mine. My handmade blouse took the first prize R/5 at the exhibition of Fine Needlework done in Thandiani! Strange to hear that I have won quite a reputation in that line. Grandma would be astonished!! Tomorrow Mrs. Bomford wants me to come to lunch and teach her how to do it. The blouse I made would bring at least \$20 at home. I could do it for a living when we get pinched.

[Missing pages.]

Elizabeth's first summer back in India after her 1907 furlough was again spent in the hill station of Landour in Mussoorie. As always, in Landour Elizabeth was able to decompress from the formal society life of Lahore. Her letter of October 18, 1905, part four of Chapter 9, "A girl with all my constant blessings" and her May 30, 1908 letter, part four of this chapter, "Mother, your Study Class doings just beat the Dutch!", were both written from Landour. In October 1905, Elizabeth had found the quiet she needed to study for her Urdu written exam; during the busy summer months, however, Landour was a popular missionary retreat and a reunion location for many women—Mrs. Wherry and her daughter, Lillian Wherry McCuskey, Mrs. Henry Forman, Miss Wherry and the other Woodstock teachers, her cousin Grace Gordon, the Fifes and Mrs. Borup—to name a few. So much was going on that Elizabeth informs her mother in her May 30, 1908, letter: "There are a lot of missionaries here, whom I shall want to know better. I'll tell you about them little by little so as not to confuse you."

In contrast, this part one September 1910 letter, written from Thandiani Hills, twenty-one miles away from Abbattabad (most of it in ascending or descending miles), was a rigorous four-day excursion from Lahore. Thandiani Hills was a remote and exclusive English enclave and as Elizabeth mentions on October 9, 1910, when making her arrangements to return to Lahore alone with the two children, "It takes longer than to go to New York [from Chicago], *much*, & is so complicated." However, the end of September was late in the summer season to still be up in the Thandiani Hills and, other than the Walter Clarks, Elizabeth was living alone; all of her house guests had left. Elizabeth always enjoyed her own company and when she writes, "Tonight I sit alone by my fireside. Mrs. Johnson left Monday (yesterday) in an unusual downpour of rain," and,

"I have been taking long walks since alone," she was not complaining but merely reporting facts.

Elizabeth was a resourceful woman and imaginative letter writer. This letter shows her usual pseudodialogue—asking rhetorical questions and using Richardson’s writing-to-the-moment prose style—but she has also developed a unique feature: Elizabeth has added three little xxxs to talk interactively with her reader. These little symbols indicate a change in narrative voice, a break in tempo, and seem to pop right off the page. Although she started using this convention as early as October 21, 1909,—“Excuse me just a minute while I get McClung's bottle ready. It is seven o'clock. xxx”—the remoteness of Thandiani brought it out in force. In this late September 1910, letter she writes:

xxx Excuse me. I just stopped to put on another stick & use the bellows on this fire. When alone it must blaze high!
xxx A cry from baby, and I had to run and put him off again. Well as he is his teeth give many a restless night.
xxx Another poke at my fire xxx. Did I tell you that I have been making some lace yokes & cuffs out of the Nagercoil lace, for blouses.

Using this literary device allowed Elizabeth to create a virtual conversation; she could almost lift the veil of separation and really *talk* to her parents. When she writes, "I wished with all my heart, you were there," it was obvious that the daughter was yearning for more than just her mother's fashion advice. Some other examples are:

July 21, 1910: xxx There! The rain is pelting down and we have just come in from a long walk. I took the children in their ‘doolie’ and Miss Brown and I walked before. We just managed to get round the hill and back again. Now it is hail! xxx
Sept. 28, 1910: xxx Excuse me. I just stopped to put on another stick & use the bellows on the fire. When alone it must blaze high! xxx A cry from baby and I had to run and put him off again. Well as he is, his teeth give many a restless night. xxx Another poke at my fire. xxx

Nov 17, 1910: xxx I have just tiptoed round the veranda to see if the babies were sleeping well. The moonlight is bewitching as it comes under the arches of the veranda and glorifies my palms and flowers. Yes, the little folks seem warm & quiet. It is quite cold outdoors at night, but we love it.

Elizabeth and DJ were separated for five months during that 1910 summer season. On March 31, 1910, before leaving Lahore she writes, "DJ dreads the 5-month separation. It is too far for him to come except for the long vacation. And it seems as if he was more and more dependent upon me for fellowship." She then adds, "It will be hard planning for every detail this summer, as there is no shop in Thandiani to buy a spool of thread, or to get a drop of medicine!" How fortunate that some of their letters to each other have survived. After six years of marriage, Elizabeth's love for her husband shines through on May 27, 1910 when she writes, "I prayed for you much yesterday. You seemed laid on my heart," and on June 6, 1910, "Your letters sound happy. Glad of all the joy & power and news. I pray for you at 7.30 each day—by the little window looking out upon the pines."

I am astonished at her courage and resilience during this summer. In her June 6, 1910, letter written from Thandiani Hills, she shows two sides of her character in the same letter, one vulnerable and one empowered: "I have felt all the more alone because of this [pretentious English] atmosphere and sometimes have had to fight a depression of spirits," followed by, "We had a very heavy storm the other evening which struck 22 trees and 3 were near us. There is a tremendous crash of thunder & lightning. Betty was nervous, but I would never allow myself to be. Fear is a luxury one can't indulge in when alone on a mountaintop, thousands of miles from home." Elizabeth's letters written home

from the mountain tops of India retain her sense of purpose and dedication to the missionary cause; they are also charmingly introspective.

10.2 "No more Englishmen smelling of my scalloped potatoes"

October 21, 1909 [Excerpts]
Lahore
Dearest Parents,

Your letter was so short last week, I want to begin early to make up for your disappointment. To tell the truth I got malarial fever before it was finished and was not able to write naturally. My temperature did not go much over 102 at any time but I had a bad head and was very uncomfortable. Dr. Datta gave me a stiff quinine mixture. Within four days I had taken 90 grains, and was deaf to the world. Then my hands & feet broke out with a quinine rash but the fever broke and I have been quite sub-normal since. Of course this taken a lot of strength and glee out of me, but I am so profoundly thankful to be well & about again I cannot complain. We do not think the low fever is in any way likely to follow this. In fact it may be more hopeful because high fever is more successfully treated and hurries it out of the system.

My home is still dirty and needs regulating in every corner. But the weather has changed decidedly & is *much* more delightful. I had decided never to come down from the hills before October 15 hereafter. This has cured me of wanting to try it again.

—Excuse me just a minute while I get McClung's bottle ready. It is seven o'clock. xxx

He takes 7 oz. of pure milk! Did you ever hear of such a thing? And when feeding time comes round he cries as if he were *starved*. He is getting heavy, and looks very happy and sweet. I wish you could see him.

We are having Mr. Lucas over for dinner. The boys insist that his "girl's" name is Martha Dabney. They have put two & two together & say she lives in Richmond, Virginia. Mr. Donaldson has been teaching Betty to call him Uncle "Lazarus" and to ask them when Aunt "Martha" is coming! They are terrible teases. I hope they won't spoil Betty. They are all so fond of her & show her such a lot of attention.

When the darsi [tailor] comes Nov. 1st, I shall get him to make short clothes for McClung at once. He is a big boy now & not yet five months.

Wednesday: I had just been to the station to see Grace Gordon and about 20 UPs [United Presbyterians] pass through to Sialkot. They looked fine! & the boys fat & rosy. Betty was very restless & for the first time begged me to come home! The boy was passed around and admired, & now we are home again. It is a little hot still in the middle of the day. I find I have no sort of strength since the fever. But I am taking a tonic 3 times a day & it will come back.

The Wigrams called yesterday to show off their new baby girl. Joy Frances Wigram. It is a sweet little baby and the first attractive child they have had (to other people attractive!) I think they are very much pleased [...]. The Wigrams have asked me to entertain CMS delegates during Annual Meeting. But I learned my lesson 5 years ago, and I certainly will not be "able" to do so. No more Englishmen smelling of my scalloped potatoes and asking "What may this be?" before touching a dish. I don't forget.

Miss [Agnes] Hill has been having a rather difficult time with the ladies of her Committee. They call her "American" & do not care to be pushed and glad [?] handed. I feel sorry for her really. The YWCA has moved & in temporary quarters which are pleasant. They talk of buying the property where the Victorian May School is now (Purdah.)

And what do you suppose? Dr. Garfield Williams when he was here started a sentiment *against* big YMCA buildings. What will the poor Turner's find when they come? The new sentiment seems to be to put up only a moderate building with an endowment fund for running it. He says he thinks all their mistakes in India have arisen from the folly of a big building which is a white elephant on their hands. I don't know how it will come out.

We are getting delicious kúlú apples this month, and little cycle pears & peaches. [Section omitted.]

So we are making all our plans to stay on until furlough in 1914. I cannot see any but a selfish reason for coming home, provided health permits. And neither of us could be happy if we were pleasing [just] ourselves in this matter. Still DJ would like to stay I think.

Now for my nap. Both babies are asleep, & this is my hay time.
Heaps of love,
Elizabeth

Fighting the pretentious English atmosphere would become a challenge for Elizabeth all during her life in India, and I loved her for saying on May 27-31, 1910, "Deliver me. All that is human in me longs for the freedom of America." Political neutrality was difficult for the missionaries especially during the division of Bengal (1905-1912) during which Lord Curzon was accused of pitting the Hindus and the Mohammedans (Muslims) against each other. In her July 27, 1908, letter, Elizabeth writes: "Do you see any account of the stir Lord Curzon is making in Parliament over his India views? Lord Morley seems to have squelched him pretty effectively. I wonder why Curzon is 'queering' himself so, these days," and then a year later on April 4, 1909, she writes that some thought the Viceroy "intended to continue England's policy of pitting the Mohammedans against the Hindus, & keeping up jealousy. It hardly seems right to think of so low a policy, but the speech of the Viceroy was startling to us all. We watch for tomorrow's paper with eagerness!"⁴²

But politics was not foremost in the missionaries' priorities. More to the point was dealing with the class distinctions inherent in English society, specifically the British belief in white supremacy over the native Indians. Elizabeth mentions this blatant racism in her October 18, 1905 letter (used in part three of Chapter 9), regarding one of the Woodstock students. Gladys Low didn't have an "outlet" after graduation from Woodstock and Elizabeth had written, "There are no helps there and no lines of work for her to enter. In most cases the parents are absolutely unwilling their daughters should

⁴² Mary Leiter Curzon (1870-1906), Lord Curzon's first wife, was the daughter of a wealthy American entrepreneur who, among other things, was an early partner of Marshall Fields in Chicago. She was a celebrated beauty around the world. When Mary Leiter married Lord Curzon in 1895 and moved to India three years later, she long held the highest political rank attained by an American women. <<http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/wharton/curz1.htm>>, <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=9125447>>. She died during the Fleming's second year in India.

have any relationships with the Indians, even the children of their servants who might be taught. It is far too degrading." This discrimination horrified and disarmed the Flemings and was hard to ignore the summer Elizabeth spent in the Thandiani Hills. In one of her first letters to her parents on June 6, 1910, she reports, "I am getting experience this summer which opens my eyes but often makes my heart ache." The Plymouth Brethren⁴³ of the colony were strongly anti-Indian and she writes:

They will not have a *word* of Urdu spoken in the house. All their servants speak English & the children are exclusively cared for by an English nurse. . . . They are always having children's parties and do not want my ayah around, because they feel it is degrading. And alas, Betty often unconsciously breaks out into Urdu expressions, they come so naturally. And to their refined minds they are so perverting and lowering! [And, of course, Julia wrote that Urdu was the only language little Betty spoke (36).]

By the end of the summer Elizabeth was able to adjust somewhat and writes that she "enjoyed conforming to the English custom, and . . . have had the tea table laid at 4:30 in the drawing room" (September 27 & 28, 1910). But she was "thoroughly tired and disgusted with having to toady [toady] to English conventionalities," and not having the proper number of servants to "take the visitors' cards and give them the proper salaams in the drawing room," was what provoked her May 27-31, 1910, outburst about missing America's freedoms.

Only the summer before, however, Elizabeth had shown missionary blindness regarding a young, recently widowed, Indian-Christian woman, Mary Paul, who became Elizabeth's ayah during the Cole's Christmas visit to Lahore. When the Flemings headed off to the hill country of Kasauli that summer, they planned to take Mary Paul, but they

⁴³ Plymouth Brethren, group of Christian believers formed c.1828 in Dublin and c.1830 at Plymouth, England, whence the popular name Plymouth Brethren. Brethren hold differing opinions concerning baptism and expect the personal premillennial second coming of Christ (New Columbia 2171).

did not want to take Mary Paul's young daughter Margaret with them. Elizabeth had covered the expenses of making new clothes for both Mary Paul and Margaret and they arranged to drop the little girl off at the Jagraon School on route. In Elizabeth's April 13, 1909, letter, she writes, "We quite definitely stated that we could not have the child all summer with us. In one place we wanted her undivided attention & to sleep inside at night—& another thing was, we did not want Betty to play with Margaret all these months. The child has run wild with all the servants children and knows every sort of thing she should not know, besides, she [Betty?] is thoroughly spoiled and willful." One hundred years later, it is easy to judge Elizabeth as being the "spoiled and willful" one. When she writes, "After all of our planning she [Mary Paul] went back & even tried to force us to take the child," I wonder if Elizabeth thought Mary Paul's separation from her daughter was somehow different from Mrs. Charles Forman's long drawn-out separation from her children, or Mrs. Walter Clark's separation from her daughters (reported in her very next letter on April 20, 1909), and discussed in part four of Chapter 9, "A girl with all my constant blessings."

On the other hand, the British knew how to show respect for their royal family and when King Edward VII died on May 6, 1910, two days later Elizabeth writes, "I am greatly impressed with the personal mourning for the King. It is literally a fact that the Entire British Empire feels itself one family. We have nothing like it in the spirit of America." Specifically, she reports, "Every sort of life has been effected by the King's death. The entertainment and all social life has stopped. . . . The band did not play in the gardens, and no one was using the tennis courts. We have all donned white and black,

retrimming our hats, or even getting new ones, and the black belt & neck tie is universal" (May 8, 1910).

On a public level, the Americans were simultaneously drawn to, but repulsed by, the extravagant British pageantry. English pomp and circumstance was cause for amusement, such as Elizabeth's description of the Annual Convocation of the University of the Punjab on December 22-24, 1904:

But to see his Excellency ride off in his barouche with coachman in a livery of gold cloth and out-riders of glittering splendor, then the mounted guard of some twelve horsemen in flaming red uniforms and spirited steeds was a sight of royalty to make ones heart beat faster. Lord and Lady *Somebody* went next and others of rank moved off with great pomp. Then poor little "we" got on our wheels [bicycles] and came home.

Viceroy and Lady Minto's visit to Lahore in April 4, 1909 provided another "ghastly" display for the humble Americans. Although Elizabeth was seven months pregnant and therefore in confinement, she writes from DJ's accounting of it:

The affair of the Viceroy on Thurs[day] night was very formal. Each individual was presented *alone* to His Excellency & Lady Minto, who received on a raised dais in the middle of one side of the huge hall. The women curtseyed & the men bowed low. It was a ghastly performance for an American. Mrs. Ewing & Margaret backed out altogether at the last minute. The Reception Hall was named the "Chamber of Horrors," but afterwards one could mingle informally on the lawn under Japanese lanterns. Johnson said it was beautiful.

On a personal level, though, the British often humiliated the insecure, class-conscious Americans. Elizabeth writes of a misunderstanding on the night of May 9, 1908, when the Flemings showed up at a social event grossly underdressed: "Poor DJ had on a negligee shirt, blue tie and tennis shoes!! I wore a plain white muslin blouse and skirt." Elizabeth, still reeling from the experience, adds: "This was really terrible—and

you know the English are stiff as a ramrod. They consider all points about dress and manners as fixed and important as one's religious belief. Isn't it shockingly awful!" Even though she concludes by saying—"Do you suppose they will ever forget this? Or forgive!"—Elizabeth had her own moments of uncharitable behavior in her responses to perceived slights by the straight laced British. When the Wigrams (the owners of the Thandiani house) asked if she could entertain some CMS delegates during their Annual Meeting on October 21, 1909, Elizabeth told Mrs. Wigram that she was too busy; to her mother she writes, "But I learned my lesson 5 years ago, and I certainly will not be 'able' to do so. No more Englishmen smelling of my scalloped potatoes and asking 'What may this be?' before touching a dish. I don't forget."

Americans who were born in India or who married into English families usually assimilated to the latter lifestyle. Others, such as Dr. and Mrs. James C. R. Ewing who had lived in India most of their lives (Brown's dates: 1879-1923), did the same. For his contribution to the Kangra Earthquake Relief Committee in 1905, Dr. Ewing was decorated by the British government with the Kaiser-i-Hind Companion of the Indian Empire, one of the few missionaries to be so honored.⁴⁴ After twenty-seven years in India, the Ewings were more British than American in temperament, a fact Elizabeth comments on regarding his reaction to the seventeen-year old Mary Johnston who was visiting Lahore with her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Howard Agnew Johnston: "Dr. Ewing thought her a typical American girl because she took so large a part in the conversation at meals and in company." Elizabeth clarified by saying, "The English custom is for all

⁴⁴ Dr. Ewing was also the guest of honor at King Edward's Durbar in 1912, and on January 1, 1923, King George raised him to the rank of Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire (Brown 608-609).

young girls to be seen and not heard and never to take leading parts in company" (January 18, 1906).

Chicago heiress, Mary Borden Turner, was an example of one who crossed the Atlantic with her national allegiances when she married Mr. George Turner, an Englishman with the YMCA in Lahore. More cosmopolitan than Midwestern, Mary Borden soon represented the British view on missionary and YWCA concerns. In her book, *Emissaries: The Overseas Work of the American YWCA 1895-1970*, Nancy Boyd quotes from a letter Mary Borden wrote about Agnes Hill, the Indian (YWCA) Association Secretary.⁴⁵ The letter, sent to Emily Hunter, Miss Hill's YWCA successor, said that Agnes Hill had antagonized the British High Church element in Lahore and had "wrecked" the YWCA hostel, which had been "a happy, quiet home for office girls." What frightened this British High Church element the most, however, was the rumor that Agnes Hill had joined the Pentecostal Movement and that she "spoke in tongues" (50-51).

On either side of the Atlantic, Boyd writes, "enthusiasm" in prayer meetings was considered a lower-class movement; the English and the American Presbyterians, who valued reason over emotion, were embarrassed by these enthusiastic Pentecostals (52).⁴⁶ In this October 1910 letter Elizabeth writes that she felt sorry for the YWCA secretary: "Miss [Agnes] Hill has been having a rather difficult time with the ladies of her Committee. They call her 'American' & do not care to be pushed and glad [?] handed. I feel sorry for her really." However, it should be remembered that it was Chicago-born,

⁴⁵ As mentioned in part three of Chapter 7, Miss Ethel Dobbins wrote to Elizabeth on September 27, 1902, to tell her that the University of Illinois chapter of the YWCA was able to raise \$100 for Miss Agnes Hill.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth flip-flopped on this judgment and was able to justify religious "enthusiasms" in her November 2, 1905, letter by saying, "The people have had visions and trances and have danced before the Lord, in very Biblical fashion. It has made me feel that God gives to Oriental people such manifestations of Himself as would most impress them. They have been very greatly helped by these things."

Vassar educated, Mary Borden Turner who stood behind the accusations of Agnes Hill being called “American.”⁴⁷ Although of similar faiths, American missionaries never quite understood the class-conscious English; Elizabeth sometimes writes of these situations with sarcastic humor, yet other times with hurt pride.⁴⁸

10.3 “What a fairy story it all is!”

April 19, 1908 [Excerpts.]
Easter Sunday
The Abbey, Lahore
My dear Father & Mother,

We are back again in our own nest and have decided that there is no place like home. We came suddenly Saturday morning, because we had a very poor night previous owing to the other occupants of our "charpai," and to Betty's restlessness. It was a hot ride back to Lahore and took the whole day. Can you imagine our joy to find our carriage at the station to meet us and to see Devi's bright welcome at the house. Things look awfully smooth here, & it does not seem so hot as at Madhapur. We are glad we went however, the great canal system from the Ravi River starts there, and it was a great sight to see the dam and all the works. 100,000 rupees are spent every year to keep the canal in good condition. There is great force there, enough to send electric cars all the way up the mountains to Dalhousie or Darusala. It makes one ache to see the unused power of India.

First thing I did after getting back was to read my mail from our travelers. A good letter from Mrs. Boucher and one from Miss Borden, who is nicknamed "Cinderella." I nearly went out of my head for joy to read that she had decided for Mr. Turner and was very happy in the thought of really living in Lahore with us all! What a fairy story it all is! Our dear simple consecrated Mr. Turner, winning after only 12 days, Mary Borden aged 21 years, graduate of Vassar College, of independent fortune and elite of Chicago society!! We are all very much pleased, for we all love her, and she loved us. Their words of friendship exceed all bounds. It is really a life friendship for us all.

⁴⁷ See the October 21, 1909, letter in part two of Chapter 14 for more background information on Agnes Hill and her conflict with the conservative Western community.

⁴⁸ Elizabeth mentions the English in her letters dated: December 22-24, 1904, January 18, 1906, May 9, 1908, July 27, 1908, April 4, 1909, October 21, 1909, May 27-31, 1910, June 6 1910, and September 27, 1910.

What the "Turners" will *not* do with that money, is not going to be worth mentioning. Isn't it beautiful to dream about.

I have been much amused to see how Mr. Turner has exalted his offer of marriage to her. He frankly says & feels that he has offered her the greatest life possible to any girl. And he thinks he's quite worthy of her for is he not a "King's Son?" The money does not seem to be any attraction or objection. I like the big way he has of looking at things. Of course this draws us very close together, for he owes everything—humanly speaking—to us. Suppose I had refused to take them into my home!!

Another package of lovely blouses & a grey voile [?] dress was sent back to me. Just so as to lighten the trunk a bit. I am really "rolling" in silk dresses. I told you did I not that they gave us Rupees 100 and several lovely things to wear before they left!

They will not be in Chicago before October as they meet Mrs. Borden in Switzerland & spend the summer together on the Continent. I presume Mr. Turner will go to meet Mrs. Borden in Lucerne for two weeks. So much for romance in my home!

The second thing I did yesterday, after getting home was to "chop" Betty's hair. It was too hot on her neck and if we stay down in the heat this will be a great help. I hated to cut off those fine little curls, you can imagine. But perhaps my pride was not becoming to a Missionary. Anyhow we have a little Dutch girl living with us now. She looks very cunning this way, and it becomes her well. Her cheeks look all the fatter and she is a veritable witch. I wish you could see her. She is saying every word now & stringing them together with her own gibberish in a ridiculous way. She uses her hands for gesturing continually just like a little Punjabi. It is very sweet. All the little children get it out here. You would like to hear her say "water-baby," "butter baby"—meaning "water *for* baby!" The mixture of English in Hindustani is interesting. She still makes us drink imaginary cups of tea—*with sugar & milk* in it! And she sits on her little stool all through morning worship without stirring. Often the little arms are folded just the way Devi sits. Her admiration for him is all controlling. I am without an ayah again. But she has been good as an angel child all day playing by herself around the house. So much for our little girl who climbs up on her father's back for ride every chance she gets!

[Section omitted.]

I am encouraged somewhat by your thinking a little more about the trip. You must come next fall—next October I mean! We have a big house, & a horse & the Ewings will be back, & oh I hope you will come.

Then too it will be great to have you here to help me entertain David & Anna [Barrows] if they come. You can go with them to see a lot of things, short trips, & if I get a good trustworthy ayah, I can go with you (so DJ says!).

Your bathroom in white must be very sweet and clean. You are always improving something. Your enthusiasm for studying makes me crazy to join you. Do come, & inspire me!

Betty has just begun to enjoy using a pencil & paper. I have her in socks & your slippers I wish you could send out some *sandals*, the same size as the last, 3 1/2 or 4. Would they get lost I wonder. The little caps have never turned up!

Your letter yesterday was perfectly delightful mother. So was father's! It made me feel good for the whole day, & week. You better look out or the Exec[utive] Com[mittee] will find you out! They are pretty blind if they don't. Oh how happy I am to have you on the Board with such useful inspiring broadening influence! I'm glad to hear that the Pitometer Company is getting new jobs, and that Ed is so well.

Soon I shall hear of Dr. Ewing's visit. I wish instead of preaching he would give an address on India. That is much finer from him. The Orbisons are the people for you to come with! [...]

News of Chas Cuthbert Hall's death has startled us all. Do write us what the nature of his illness was. Was it truly contracted in India? I must write Mrs. Hall. Poor woman. Life was so bright for her.

[Section omitted.]

Did you see DJ's item in the Interior of March 26th.⁴⁹ They wrote that for his thoughtfulness in sending the item they would put his name on the free subscription list for another year. (Joke!) I get it from the Board, he doesn't.

Thursday. Today I got a very pleasant ayah whom Betty likes. Oh this is everything! Well dear people goodbye for another week. Plan to come next October.

We are all well.
Elizabeth

⁴⁹ DJ's article in *The Interior* was called "Three Attitudes Toward Christ."

In the spring of 1908, twenty-one-year-old Mary Borden, heiress to the Borden Milk Company of Chicago, took the Lahore social scene by storm. She swept the plain, homely George D. Turner off his feet and she turned other heads, such as Ed Lucas's, in the process.⁵⁰ In this April 1908 letter Elizabeth gossips about the sensational affair, but, right from the start, she knew of Mary Borden's "two natures": one of the world and the flesh, and the other filled with God's spirituality. In her letter of July 9, 1908, Elizabeth mentions that Mary Borden had run into a friend while touring in Florence and she wondered whether Miss Borden would back out of the marriage after all. "She has been so happy in the thought of India, until this classmate turned up," Elizabeth writes. "Mr. Turner feels now that if she does not marry him in Switzerland this summer, she will never marry him. Poor man! I just pray she will not forsake him. But it is a big fight she has on."

Mr. George Douglas Turner had been a member of Elizabeth's social world for several years. Early on, Elizabeth mentioned his work in the bazaars, his Bible class in the college and she was particularly interested when he said he was going to take a home in the native city.⁵¹ In her November 20, 1904, letter, Elizabeth says, "He will not be allowed to eat there because he is in a Hindoo centre and one of the conditions, by which they let him have the room, is that he shall not eat there. He can prepare his own tea. Mr. Turner is a wonderful fellow. I admire him greatly." A couple of weeks later,

⁵⁰ Ed Lucas has at least one broken engagement before marrying Nancy Ewing in 1911, as was discussed in part three of Chapter 9, "Chicago is not the only place which has murders."

⁵¹ This would have been an extraordinary step for an American Presbyterian. James P. Alter writes in "America Presbyterians in North India," "Nearly all Presbyterian missionaries kept themselves distinct and somewhat aloof from the Indians. A missionary family usually occupied a large bungalow that stood out in marked contrast to the much smaller and less pretentious homes of their Indian assistants" (306). In the winter of 1889, John Forman refused his salary and lived in the city. Webster writes that the result of his experiment was misunderstood by the Indians who "regarded [him] simply as an unsuccessful government agent" (42).

Elizabeth writes, "Mr. Turner was also invited to the [British Church Missionary Society Ladies Home] dinner party and I must say that I could give him some advice if he would ask me!" (December 4, 1904), regarding the charming twenty-four year old, Miss Wright. It sounds as though Elizabeth had been match-making on George Turner's behalf for at least four years before Mary Borden showed up.

Mr. George Turner and Miss Mary Borden met in the Flemings' parlor and, when she accepted his marriage proposal after only twelve days, Elizabeth "nearly went out of [her] head for joy." Saying that Mary Borden's money was neither an attraction nor an objection, Elizabeth writes that Mr. Turner "frankly says & feels that he has offered her the greatest life possible to any girl. And he thinks he's quite worthy of her for is he not a 'King's Son?'" Even in the romantic days of foreign missions, his optimism and ego seem a little over the top, and two years later while visiting Mary, whom she started calling "Cindy" (Cinderella), Elizabeth paints quite a different side of Mr. Turner. Mary had been ill and Elizabeth writes:

And [Cindy] said "The worst of it is G.D. [Mr. Turner] does not know *how* a woman *can* be weak & nervous. He is so well himself and says "now we must have someone into every meal, and we must entertain the Orphan Girls School, and the church people and go calling three nights of every week!" &tc. &tc. Poor little Cindy, she cannot bear to disappoint him, and if she admits that she does not feel up to these things she knows he will send her home for the year. Is it not a situation. I felt like saying that all husbands were not so blind. (November 3, 1910)

Right from the beginning of their courtship George shared Mary's letters with Elizabeth. On May 9, 1908, Elizabeth writes, "Our travelers send back word every mail. Mary Borden writes the most beautiful letters I have ever read. She is gifted with her pen & I hope will write a great deal about India," and on June 8, 1908: "Mr. Turner is a duck to let me read all her letters. He sends them to me each week, and I tell you they are very

remarkable. She is sort of a second Mrs. Browning—writes verses, and paints, and sings—and everything!"

By March 1910, Mary Borden Turner had published a short story in the *Atlantic Monthly*, "Mr. John's Miss Best," about a Miss Helen Best from Pennsylvania. The "Heaven-born Sahib," Miss Helen Best, was living in Southern India, writing a book on the Universal Religion, all the while living under the careful eye of Mr. John who guarded her privacy "as only an Indian can reverence the mute inactivity of an ascetic" (397). This strange little story captured the essence of India in a few brushstrokes: "We were three weary, bewildered tourists struggling against that indefinable sense of an atmosphere, somehow vindictive and oppressive, that drags at the vitality of aliens in India" (397). The Colonel, Aunt Nora and their niece, the writer, were speechless after their dinner and audience with Miss Best:

We went back through the bare bedroom, silently. There was something noble in the concentrated singleness of her mind, small and unbalanced though it was, that touched and humbled us all. She was too slight and meager a person, perhaps, to be called a "passionate pilgrim"; but her fervent simplicity lifted her for the moment away, above and beyond our world. (402)

In a July letter, Elizabeth writes that Mrs. Turner had handwritten her first novel by working on it for five or six hours everyday even though she was eight months pregnant. Mary was expecting her second child at the end of August 1910, her first daughter was born a few months after my father during the summer of 1909. In her September 27 & 28, 1910, letter (used in part one of this chapter), Elizabeth notes that Cindy had a malarial fever in Srinagar with her temperature fluctuating from 105.6 one day then down to 102 the next. Finishing her first novel just before going into labor had left Mrs. Turner depleted and dangerously susceptible to malaria. Finally on November

3, 1910, the two busy women could finally visit each other in Lahore after returning from their respective summer hill stations. In this letter, Elizabeth had said that George didn't understand "*how* a woman *can* be weak & nervous," and she found Cindy in bed, exhausted, and in tears. "Poor dear, she just let go and cried, & I knew she was just nervously weak & unstrung. She felt it too much to be always on the go." Of George's darker side, Elizabeth continues by saying that if she weren't well enough, he would send her back to England for the year. His words seem particularly harsh and unfeeling, especially for a "King's Son," and speak to an unchristian nature which worked against him when the couple moved back to England just before World War I.

However, during this November 1910 visit Cindy offered to let Elizabeth read her manuscript. "She says I will recognize most of the characters and part of it is her own experience of course," Elizabeth writes. "She feels a bit nervous about having it made known. Of course that is awkward, but one cannot write *real* things unless part of the tale be *real*." Elizabeth does not name the novel by title and, because her letters end two months later, I do not know more of Mary Borden Turner's writing while in India. However, this was just the beginning of Mary Borden's professional literary career.

The Flemings returned to the United States in the spring of 1913; the Turners also left India and returned to England just before the outbreak of World War I. Mary Borden did not sit still long and volunteered—as did four hundred Vassar students (Solomon 126)—for the French Red Cross in 1914. When she arrived at the frontline, she quickly saw the need for an efficiently run hospital, so contributed her own money to build a 100-bed surgical unit under French military command. She was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French government and remained with the unit until 1918. During the war she met

Edward Spears, the head of the British Military Mission in France. The couple was married in March 1918, and Spears later became a member of the House of Commons.⁵²

I do not know what happened to the egocentric George Turner after their divorce or to their two young daughters when their mother went to war.

By the end of the 1920s, Mary Borden began to write about her experiences with military medicine and the horror of modern warfare. She published her memories,



"Portrait of Mary Borden/Lady Spears."
<<http://www.npg.org.uk/live/search/portrait.asp?LinkID=mp06704&rNo=1&role=sit>>

stories, and poems in 1929 as *The Forbidden Zone*, the French word for the area immediately behind the front, and then *Sarah Gay* (1931), a novel about a nurse on the Western Front. Mary Borden is associated with a group of British women novelists, 1910 to 1960, who are called the "Middle Brows," and she wrote under the *nom-de-plume* of Bridget Maclagan.⁵³ This generation of women "earned for themselves the term 'woman novelist,' or simply novelist, as distinct

⁵² For more information about Mary Borden's life after India, see "British Women Novelists, 1910's–1960's: the 'middle-brows,'" <<http://homepages.primex.co.uk/~lesleyah/wmwrtrs.htm>>, "The barons Silsoe," <<http://cybrary.uwinnipeg.ca/people/Dobson/genealogy/famous/Silsoe.html>>; and "Mary Borden," <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Wborden.htm>>.

⁵³ Other books by Mary Borden are: *Catspaw*, *Flamingo (or the American Tower)*, *The Forbidden Zone*, *The Hungry Leopard*, *Jehovah's Day*, *Jericho Sands*, *King of the Jews*, *Margin of Error*, *Mary of Nazareth*, *You, the Jury*, *Action for Slander*, *The Black Virgin*, *For the Record*, *Four O'clock*, *Jane—Our Stranger*, *Journey Down a Blind Alley*, *No. 2 Shovel Street*, *Passport for a Girl*, *The Romantic Woman*, *The Strange Weekend*, *The Technique of Marriage*, *Three Pilgrims and a Tinker*, *The Tortoise*, *A Woman With White Eyes* <<http://www.bookfinder.com/search/?author=mary+borden&st=x1&ac=qr>>.

from 'lady-novelist' or 'authoress.' . . . They were modern in the 1920s and 1930s, very much belonging to the literary world of Maugham, Walpole, Wells and Bennett. . . . They were not a 'school' in any sense and had no more in common than a belief in the novel."⁵⁴

I do not know whether Elizabeth and Mary Borden kept in touch after they both left India. Elizabeth and DJ moved on to the Union Theological Seminary in New York City and furthered their mission service, while in England Mary Borden moved away from George Turner and his YMCA ecumenical teachings. Perhaps one of the reasons Mary became disenchanted with missionary work was the death of her brother, twenty-six-year old William Whiting Borden, who died suddenly of spinal meningitis in Egypt after committing himself to the China missions in 1913. A year younger than his sister, Howard Culbertson writes in "No Reserves. No Retreats. No Regrets," that William W. Borden had graduated from Yale in 1909 and the Princeton Theological Seminary in 1912.⁵⁵

Losing her brother and moving back to civilized England with a patriarchal husband could have contributed to Mary's disillusionment. But, as I see it, the intersection of Mary Borden's two natures—loving the world and the flesh, and her noble spirituality and fellowship with God—all find a humanitarian solution in health care. Compassion for the dying mixed with tender care for the wounded are the duties of a military nurse. Mary Borden served with dignity and was able to write about it. Here is an excerpt from *The Forbidden Zone* (1929):

⁵⁴ Quoted from Rupert Croft-Cooke, *The Sound of Revelry* (1969). Mary Renault was an example of this school. <<http://homepages.primex.co.uk/~lesleyah/wmwrtrs.htm>>.

⁵⁵ Howard Culbertson, <<http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert.fs/regret.htm>>. See also: Mrs. Howard Taylor's *Borden of Yale '09: "The Life That Counts."* (Philadelphia, 1951).

There were six operating rooms on either side of my hut. Medical students in white coats hurried back and forth along the covered corridors between us. It was my business to know which of the wounded could wait and which could not. I had to decide for myself. There was no one to tell me. If I made any mistakes, some would die on their stretchers on the floor under my eyes who need not have died. I didn't worry. I didn't think. I was too busy, too absorbed in what I was doing. I had to judge from what was written on their tickets and from the way they looked and the way they felt to my hand. My hand could tell of itself one kind of cold from another. My hands could instantly tell the difference between the cold of the harsh bitter night and the stealthy cold of death.

That her hands knew "the difference between the cold of the harsh bitter night and the stealthy cold of death" is both horrifyingly realistic and emotionally moving.

Although her argument in *The Technique of Marriage* (1933), one of her last books, addresses contemporary society and mores, it seems to me to be an apology for outgrowing her former life. Mary opens by saying, "I approach the subject of marriage from a special angle and with definite purpose," and moves through sensitive subjects such as sex—in marriage and out (extramarital affairs)—his and her money, the right to divorce, and even a chapter on how the children fit in. I am sure *The Technique of Marriage* shocked her older middleclass readership, while younger college students, such as my father, probably cheered its arrival. The following is an excerpt from Chapter 3, "Her Wedding Day":

There are certain things about the [wedding] party I like so little that I would do a good deal to see them changed. I don't like the mixture of pagan ritual and puritan modesty. I don't like the sly innuendoes, the cheap camouflage, the secretive insistence on the sacrificial drama, and I don't like the way the girl is got ready for the sacrifice. The heathen are more honest and more dignified. Our delicacy is just slightly tinged with sadism. It is very pleasant to us to feel that the bride doesn't know what is going to be done to her. Her helpless innocence is her charm.

She ought to know exactly. It should all have been explained to her long ago in cold, accurate, scientific language that carried no suggestion of

mystery or ugliness. That part of her education should have been begun when she began arithmetic and should have been taught in the same manner. (46-47)

When it came to the "sacrificial drama" of a bride losing her virginity, Mary's comment about the heathen being "more honest and more dignified" betrays a little bitterness and suggests to me that her life in Lahore and marriage to George Turner had not been a happy time for her.

10.4 "Mother, your Study Class doings just beat the Dutch!"

May 30, 1908
Lal Liba Cottage
Landour, Mussoorie
My dear Mother & Father,

I am out under the trees in front of the cottage. There is a little plateau, or level place where we can sit and have picnics and where Betty can play. The view is lovely always. Since my coming up there has been no view of the Snows because of the haze. But the near ranges are so friendly and protecting I do not always care for the perspective [?].

We got up here Thursday morning about 10:30 after a start from Dehra a few minutes before six. Everything went nicely and I kept the baby with me in my dandy all the way from Rajpur. The change from the Plains is great and I got a slight attack of tonsillitis which is over now. I am so glad it was I and not Betty.

Miss Helen from Jagraon and Miss Jones of Dehra were with me two days & now Miss Morris is here from Mrs. Jones place. Miss Helen has been in the hills a long time. We did not know what the real cause of her illness was but Dr. Warden examined her & said it was chronic appendicitis & and she'd have to have in operation. Dr. Warden and his new wife (Mrs. Havens) have been up here. She is still in Landour while he takes a run into Kashmir. There are a lot of missionaries here, whom I shall want to know better. I'll tell you about them little by little so as not to confuse you.

Two very sad bits of news about our "Miss Sahibs." Miss Kerr of Jagraon has developed consumption and is ordered to leave at once. We fear she will not get over it easily, still there is Grace Puran

experience. [See January 18, 1906 letter.] The other is Miss Sutherland, a trained nurse who should never have been allowed to come. She was a splendid successful nurse at home, but never educated & has struggled over the language out here—so pitifully—that now there is a complete breakdown. And sad—she seems to have gotten into a state of health like Hattie Gilchrist, only much worse. Epileptic fits. Isn't it awful! She will go home this fall. Oh to be careful not to send girls who never studied other languages!

Wednesday. Here I am again, out in my nook for the early morning quiet read, prayer and letter-writing. I love this rocky ledge. It looks off toward the slopes. And I can see Kellogg Memorial just below with the people going in to attend the 8 o'clock Bible Study on "The Sermon on the Mount." They have just been singing, "My face looks up to Thee." What a joy if you are sitting by my side here! You would be wild over the grand rugged slopes. You have never seen anything so grand!

Do you see how continually my thoughts go to the time you will be with us. *Everything* centers there. Father, no one can say whether it should be this year or next. Of course to go home with you would be ideal. But why not stay till furlough anyway? If you can leave Edward & the business this year, you would better come. For the present only is ours. Of course do not come, unless you see your way clear and free that it is best. I do not want you in any case to come 2nd-class, or on any Italian line. If the Orbisons do so—cut loose from them. That boat Miss Forrester took, "The City of Karachi," was said to be very fine. Do try the "American Transfer Line" to South Hampton. Everyone says it is *most delightful*. They have lovely new ships now.

As for your needing company, of course you will make friends on any line, & there are two of you. Heaps of missionaries will be on every boat in October. If you come, you must come in October. November is too stormy. December might do, but you would be less likely to have company. Cook's agent can meet you in Bombay, take you safely thro' customs & put you on the "Punjab Mail" train, with no change to Lahore. We promised to meet you at the station with "Jullundur" and give you such a welcome as you never have had in all your life. Or I could meet you in Agra & and show you Agra & Delhi on the way up. You would better sail from New York the last week of September. Hurrah!

It all seems very wonderful what you write about Geo H. Stuart having giving these houses. Dr. Ewing's visit was a great joy. We have been so excited over every word you tell us. *What* did you put into his sealed envelope? And what wedding present did you send Eleanor?

We never heard Dr. Ewing give a "grand speech," so how could we tell. Missionaries do not speechify out on the field, they just grovel! But this makes it all the nicer when they can electrify home audiences. I am glad, mother, that you spoke out boldly about Assoc[iation] work. He ought to be asked to a summer YWCA conference!

It is all true that Mary Borden has accepted Mr. Turner & will come to Lahore within a year. In Palestine they met Ed Lucas whose attentions to Miss Borden became so personal she told them that she was to be married & live in Lahore! So she has committed herself and he will spread the news in India no doubt. He arrives in August. Poor Mr. Lucas! She would have been lovely for him too—oh dear. It all seems too wonderful for words. Mr. Turner is so plain and homely and good. How did the miracle ever take place[?]. She truly truly loves him!

Say, why don't you two people go to Switzerland this summer & make the acquaintance of this party on your way out here. They are going to be all together in the some quiet place until September. Instead of going to Bay View, go across the water. It will be so nice to revisit some of the old places, & right on your way. Mrs. Borden & Mary, Mr. and Mrs. Bousher would *dearly love to see you!* They are such simple real Christian people. And our lives will be all mixed up together from this time on.

Dear Mrs. Wherry called yesterday. She is so sweet and homey looking. They occupy Woodstock Cottage, near the school. It is a long climb from here, I always take a "dandy." Went down yesterday to make my first calls. I left 8 cards at the school, for Mrs. Andrew & each of the teachers. Then went to the Wherry's & saw Mrs. McCuskey's two new babies, one a year & five months the other three weeks old—they are beauties, and she is very sweet and pretty. Lillian Wherry McCuskey. Miss Mitchell & Miss Wherry were in the drawing room over there. Then half way up the hill, I stopped at "Upper Woodstock" & left cards for Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Henry Forman & Mrs. McGraw—all were out! Today I hope to make more calls. I feel so interested in meeting all the missionaries after my one year out of India. And this is our only chance to know those of our Lower Mission.

I gave the little tea on Monday afternoon. Kaneyah made one of his delicious coconut cakes (layer) and I made cucumber sandwiches & chocolate walnut fudge. We had only a little circle of the Fifes, Mrs. Gordon, Miss Thompson (Canadian Mission), Miss James, and our four selves—Mrs. Borup, Miss Morris & Miss Helen. The Fife girls have put up a badminton court at the "Retreat," so we can get daily exercise.

Tomorrow, I am going to go with Miss Weston to her Gospel meeting held in the Soldiers Hospital. Perhaps I can help her. It comes every Thursday at 5 P.m. There is much to do, if one has an abundance of health. Betty had rather a restless night with sore throat & coughing. Her upper teeth are pushing through too. How slow she has been!

Mother, your Study Class doings just beat the Dutch! I think you were the cutest smartest little lady teacher I ever saw or heard of. It must have been great fun & perfectly splendid [in] every way. I sort of hate to have you give up your activities at home. You have such power and influence. Still, think of the missionary addresses you will be making when you get home. Another Mrs. Rhea! I shall be in the shade—absolutely.

DJ writes me little scraps to tell of all the Hindustani people they are having into meals and of his various activities. It makes me feel like a pinhead—so small & useless! What ever is he made of!

There goes the gong for 9 o'clock at the Soldiers Barracks! The people will be pouring out of church presently. I must close and write my "daily" to Johnson, then go into breakfast.

Goodbye, dear loved ones, mine!
Elizabeth

PS So glad you sent the little slippers. They sh'd be here soon. I need them so much too. Betty needs a new outfit complete. All her dresses are tight. Could you send some more little shirts. And a pure [?] white sweater? ECF

This long letter covers some subjects already addressed—the activities of the missionary women summering in Landour and Mary Borden's acceptance of Mr. Turner's marriage proposal—of her parents' impending visit to Lahore, and some interesting particulars about steamboat traveling. This last section of Chapter 10 returns to the women at the center of the missionary movement. As Carol Smith-Rosenberg has argued in her influential essay, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in the Nineteenth Century" in *Disorderly Conduct*, the mother-daughter relationship was at the heart of the Victorian women's network (64). In the Cole family,

Julia was also the imprint for her daughter's professional aspirations, as discussed in parts four, five and six of Chapter 4. For three or four years after Elizabeth graduated from Smith, the two women worked side-by-side for the newly formed YWCA in Chicago. Julia acted as treasurer for the Illinois State Committee and Elizabeth became the state secretary. The headquarters' address was 271 East 53rd Street in Hyde Park, the Cole's home, until enough funds could be secured for an office downtown. (See the YWCA letterhead, Attachment B, at the end of Chapter 7.)

By 1904, Julia Cole had been invited to substitute for Mrs. John M. Coulter's work as correspondent for China for the Women's Presbyterian Board of the Northwest; a year or two later she became the chief foreign corresponding secretary to the missionaries in Siam and Laos, a position she held for twenty years. Starting in 1907, Mrs. John A. Cole was listed with nine other Secretaries in the Woman's Presbyterian Board of Missions of the Northwest annual reports.⁵⁶ As mentioned, this job required her to write letters to her twenty missionaries four times a year (LB 134), in addition to her increasing speaking and writing duties. Julia's world was expanding quickly. Shortly after she started giving talks in Room 48, a larger forum than her Hyde Park Presbyterian Church (HPPC) missionary society, she wrote a booklet about her assigned mission territory. Her article, "Call to Siam and Laos," was published in the spring of 1908 (subscribers could order copies through *Woman's Work*), and her Mission Study Class was publicly recognized in the February 27, 1908, issue of *The Interior*:

Wherever she had found the secret of it—perhaps in the experience of packing missionary boxes—this reposeful leader certainly knew how to make room for much in one hour, for with more singing and prayer than

⁵⁶ The Corresponding Secretaries were responsible for India, Japan, Eastern China and the Philippines, China, Korea, Persia, Siam and Laos (Julia Cole), South America, Africa and Syria, and the last category was, "With Men Missionaries supported by Young People's and Christian Endeavor Societies."

usual there was still time for many letters; and with these the secretaries came well supplied. (272)

In 1894 Julia's research had taken over the dining room table and by March 31, 1910, Elizabeth exclaims: "And father, you turned cook! I never expected to hear such doings." Apparently, the Coles were able to adapt to Julia's burgeoning volunteer career.

Elizabeth could hardly contain her pride (or later her envy). In this May 1908 letter, she addresses her mother as "the cutest smartest little lady teacher I ever saw or heard of. . . . Another Mrs. Rhea!⁵⁷ I shall be in the shade—absolutely." On April 19, 1908, she writes, "You better look out or the Exec[utive] Com[mittee] will find you out! They are pretty blind if they don't. Oh how happy I am to have you on the Board with such useful inspiring broadening influence!"; and May 23, 1908, "Your Mission study course is finishing in grand style. I am so glad Dr. Ewing can see how it is done and be with you that final day. . . . Mother, do bring out some of your study books, for you could conduct a Mission Study class in Lahore and also in Woodstock School. I have often wished someone would work one up, and you are all prepared! This would be capital!"

On and on Elizabeth gushed. On June 8, 1908: "Dearest Mother, I just finished reading with great interest your 'Call to Siam & Laos.' It is good! How much you do know, to write such a thing, little Mother mine! I am sure this will do good, for it is a real contribution to our information about these countries and their work. No wonder father is proud of you! I am too." And finally, June 17, 1908: "Your account of the talk about Betty to the Primary tots was very clever. It amused me very much. I think you

⁵⁷ Mrs. Rhea was one of the first Home Field Secretaries and is mentioned in all of the early histories of the Woman's Presbyterian Board of Missions of the Northwest. Mrs William Blair had recalled, "Our gifted Mrs. Rhea, our Field Secretary for some time, when visiting me, had a long afternoon call from a clergyman, a cousin of hers, who plead with her 'never to speak before a mixed audience'" ("Beginnings" 13).

have a genius for seizing upon the tellable things. . . . I think your talk to the Y.P. Society was a *big thing*. You are the dearest Mother to be proud of a girl ever had."

After the Coles visited the Flemings in Lahore during the winter of 1908-1909, Julia could speak of foreign missions with more authority.⁵⁸ Even though Elizabeth wished it didn't exhaust her mother to speak in public, Julia was becoming quite a sensation, and on July 13, 1909, she writes, "The last letter was so exciting, all about the two addresses before the Miss'y Societies, and the way Aunt Helen & Aunt Mary both describe your success, I can see they were very proud of you. Helen French also said lovely things. You are a perfect dear in every way, and I love to hear that others are admiring and appreciating you."

However, things were not so rosy for Elizabeth. As mentioned, in part four of Chapter 9, "A girl with all my constant blessings," trying to learn Urdu and run a household while maintaining Lahore's social obligations conflicted with her strong work ethic and kept her from the personal evangelizing work she loved. After two months in India she must have felt overwhelmed when she wrote on November 27, 1904, "I am afraid you will think me a very *mundane* missionary. The truth is, I did more religious work at home than I can do here. But little things here will count I know. And the home center can have the true spirit in it." Two weeks later her mood had passed and she was back on track. On December 4, 1904, she had written, "The difference between here and there is simply this. One is reaping and the other sowing. In God's sight both have equal importance and reward. 'For neither is he that soweth anything nor he that reapeth, but

⁵⁸ The Coles went through Europe on their way to India and returned home by way of Japan. It surprises me that, although Julia could write authoritatively about her territory, she chose not to stop in Siam or Laos on the way home, not even to visit with her beloved Sarah Wirt Peoples, her "pet" missionary in Laos. They did, however, visit with Elizabeth's former YWCA colleague, Mrs. Floy Coleman, while they were in Tokyo, Japan.

God giveth the increase.' The progression from easy to hard is just like mine—from YWCA to real missionary work. And I am glad—for when one is in school one wants to be promoted to the hard grades.”

However, this push and pull of conscience would begin to repeat more frequently and when Elizabeth returned to India after her medical furlough, the growing professionalism of her mother's world would contrast with her own shrinking world. On June 17-18, 1908, after complimenting her mother on her talks about Betty to the Primary tots and to the YP [Young People's] Society of the HPPC, she writes, “This better than any letter from me, but still I would be glad to do that only they have never evidenced the slightest desire to have letters. I do not know what to do. Of course all my old friends have dropped out now, and I am practically just anybody to them.” In *The World Their Household*, Patricia Hill notes that at the turn of the century missionary correspondence had become a controversial subject: "The tendency of the ladies at home to think of the 'dear missionaries' with the warmest approbation, but never quite to get around to writing them, was a sore point with many missionaries" (104). And an unnamed missionary agreed with Elizabeth's sentiments in an article called "Missionary Correspondence" in the November 1910 issue of *Woman's Work*: "We often feel keenly the failure of our societies to write or even acknowledge letters and reports by so much as a postal. . . . I'm left in doubt as to whether my letter was received or if the contents were uninteresting" (259).

But communication on both the foreign and home missionary sides had become strained during the first decade of the twentieth century, maybe, because the role of the home corresponding secretaries, such as Julia Cole, had gained in importance, and in

retrospect it is interesting to note that Elizabeth's circulars stop after 1906, as does her bound book of letters. "Auxiliaries were chastised for demanding information about the work directly from missionaries rather than relying on information available in published form," Hill explains. "The operation had grown too large for a missionary to respond personally to all the groups that might expect news about the particular aspect of their work that they supported" (106). Along those same lines, in 1910, a Miss Francine Porter from Kanazawa, Japan, wrote in *Woman's Work*, "In response to the request, 'Write to me,' she said, 'Go to the Missionary meetings and you'll hear from me'" (46), meaning that her letters would be read aloud rather than sent individually. The message in the *WPBMN 1908 Annual Report* reinforced this liaison with the corresponding secretary: "It would be far more satisfactory to our many generous societies if they would write the [corresponding] secretary from time to time whenever they feel the need of more frequent communications from the field, rather than to remain silent and lose their interest in this great work" (85).

Several weeks before my father was born, Elizabeth voiced her dismay about losing her professional accountability. On May 16, 1909, she writes, "Mother will you find out for me whether the YP Soc. would like me to write them letters. I never hear from them direct and thought perhaps they did not really care. If you move to New York I presume they will soon drop my salary," and then two days before E. McClung Fleming was born, Elizabeth writes, "Do you know, when you talk about your Siam Missionaries I feel homesick. No secretary ever writes to me, nor asks for letters, and I do not feel that I belong to anybody (except you!) who takes an interest. Tell me what to do. The YP Sec.

never writes nor seems to care for letters. I think they like best the plan of your talking to them periodically. Do they not?" (May 27, 1909).

Of course, Mrs. Robinson and later Miss M. P. Halsey, the Foreign Corresponding Secretaries for India, could have assumed that Julia was covering Elizabeth's "professional" correspondence, this didn't help Elizabeth's sagging morale and she started making disparaging remarks about herself. Perhaps she was suffering from postpartum depression when she said in her first letter home after my father was born, "When we all live together I will do anything you like but, of course, I shall have to learn how to do things in America. Perhaps I'll be a failure there!" (June 1909), and then on June 23, 1909, she writes, "Mother, you have your hands full, I can see. I like to hear what you talk about at those meetings. I am sure I could never think of half these things to say. I don't see how I can ever come home. I never could compete with you!"

I do not think that Elizabeth was truly competing with her mother, but as her world became family-centered and house-bound, Julia's world expanded outward. These letters written when my father and his sister were infants talk about sleepless nights, restless malarial fevers, and the endless teething that runs in my family. In her June 1909, letter, Elizabeth closed saying, "What a long letter I have written you! And still there is not much news. I am able to write of little else but about ourselves." A month later on July 1, 1909, she writes, "I am having a time getting Betty's digestion right. She was given too much sugar & jams while I was in bed. She looks quite pale for her, & has a most capricious appetite. I have moved her bed into my room. Now this is all about myself & the babies! How you will disapprove. But the letter got delayed & now it is mail time, & I must go lie down for the noon nap." This was quite against the advice

Elizabeth Myers gave in *The Social Letter* (1918) about bringing the personal into the beginning of one's letters, mentioned in the part one of Chapter 6, "Shall I begin at the beginning?" and Elizabeth knew her mother did not approve of it either.

Elizabeth, usually so confident about her abilities never really felt consistently well in India, and without viable or visible work, her self-esteem slowly deteriorated. In this May 1908, letter she writes, "DJ writes me little scraps to tell of all the Hindustani people they are having into meals and of his various activities. It makes me feel like a pinhead—so small & useless! What ever is he made of!" And a sad PS to her February 23-24, 1910, letter:

I have fever nearly every afternoon as of yore, but feel more vigorous and it does not make me so limp this year. But it does depress my spirits. I feel as if I were only big enough to do for my home and my babies. Other duties *feel* so foreign. I am not the proper Missionary at all. You always predicted I was not cut out to make a good one, and I have lived to see the truth of your prediction.

Even knowing that Julia was an exacting, critical woman and mother, I think this statement should not be taken out of context. Elizabeth was singing the blues and in this same letter had compared herself to Mary Borden, "Dear little Cindy does so much all the time. It puts me to shame. I really feel that I do *nothing*, but every moment is taken a thousand things undone." A month later, still not feeling up to speed she said, "Mrs. Ewing is a wonderful woman. She keeps doing such a lot of things all the time. I feel like a perfect fraud when I look at her. Someway I cannot find energy for any of these things" (March 31, 1910). However, with DJ's growing prestige and her parents' accumulating successes, including John Cole's honor of writing and delivering the "Historical Address" for the Hyde Park Presbyterian Church's Golden Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration in May 1910, Elizabeth was probably overwhelmed. She writes

on June 28, 1910, "I do feel guilty not to have amounted to more, & I hate to disappoint you. But I am conscious of been only a very ordinary mother of two *extraordinary* children."

This epistolary collection ends just as we see Elizabeth beginning to come back into the public eye. I like the sound of her voice in her November 3, 1910, letter, (also quoted in Chapter 1):

Yesterday nearly all of our Station left for Annual Meeting on the 2 p.m. train. Dr. & Mrs. Ewing, Mrs. Whittock and myself are the only ones left. . . . This is my *one* chance to clean up DJ's dafter, my *annual chance*! He is scared out of his life at what I will do. I have never seen anything like it! I tell him he does not trust me, and that if I am not intelligent enough to arrange his books, I consider the thousands of dollars spent on my education, vain. Is it not good reasoning, Father?

Now this was beginning to sound again like the strong, confident Elizabeth of yore, with a little sassiness thrown in.

On November 6, 1910, Elizabeth went to her first annual meeting in Ludhiana in four years—"not since the children came," she writes. "People have been so kind to me. When I arrived it was dinner time, & as I entered the dining room they all clapped me heartily. Wasn't it nice of them." And finally in December she was back leading YWCA meetings. On December 15, 1910, she writes, "For my next YW meeting I wish to take the subject '*Life*' and the meeting after Christmas, '*Love*' which will be largely treated as '*Peace on Earth, Goodwill to men*,'" and on December 21, 1910, she writes "Yesterday I gave the second of my monthly series at the YWCA, on '*Life*.' There was a good large audience and they listened thoughtfully, but I feel as if I had sort of lost the art of leading meetings."

Of course, Elizabeth had not lost the art of leading meetings and when she returned to the United States she was a speaker in great demand. The photograph below became part of the press packet used to advertise her successful speaking tours on behalf of Indian women. The *Chicago Daily Journal* on March 9, 1914, described Elizabeth as "a slender young woman in the early thirties. To look at her serene face with her gentle, hazel eyes, her smiling mouth and quiet manner, one would not dream of the depths of forceful determination that are so decidedly a part of her. She is feminine—emphatically

and irresistibly so. She is a woman doing a woman's unselfish work for women in a strange land."

The three things Elizabeth stated that *must* change in India before emancipation and enlightenment of women could take place were: the early marriage, the child widow and the third, caste. "It [caste] is so generally understood," Elizabeth was quoted as saying, "that I need not describe it. I only need to say that it is impossible for anyone who has not seen it and felt it to realize its benumbing force. It strangles



Elizabeth with children (c. 1914): Aunt Betty is standing on the left and my father is on the right. Aunt Helen is sitting on her mother's lap.

every reform and binds the reformers in a vicious manner. It is a power the more terrible because it is so subtle." In conclusion, Elizabeth said, "To sum up these three pinnacles

of reform. Emancipation of the women of India is the solution of all the problems. India's creed teaches that woman is vile, and lower than the lowest man of no caste at all. To quote from the Sanscrit, 'It is better to put a knife in the hands of a monkey than education in the mind of a woman.'"

The Flemings returned to Chicago in 1913 when DJ chose to get his PhD from the University of Chicago. After graduation DJ accepted a job as the Director of Foreign Missions, at the Union Theological Society in New York City (1915-1944), a position he held for almost thirty years. Meanwhile, Elizabeth remained faithful to her woman-centered activities; she was a member of the New York Women's Board of Foreign Missions (1915-1920), the United Women's Board (1920-1923) and charter member of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions (1923-1944). She was also a member of the World's Day of Prayer Committee and a trustee of the Isabelle Thoburn College in India. (Thanks 1). During 1918 and 1919, Elizabeth enjoyed a successful speaking career because she was able to promote the missionary cause with authority and passion.

And her letters to her parents continued. Wrapped in small bundles, bound carefully with ribbon and enclosed in the same metal box I found them, Elizabeth's letters to her parents dating from 1914 to 1928 are now stored under my kitchen table next to her father's letters home from the Civil War. Elizabeth, the dutiful and loving daughter, continued to write to her parents until a few years before they both died, John Cole in 1932 and Julia in 1934.

Some thoughts on closure

Several factors are attributed with bringing about the end of the mission era: Disillusionment with reform activities and political isolationism set in after the First World War, and college-educated women left the movement when business and professional opportunities became open to them. I believe the growing influence of the home corresponding secretaries, such as Julia Cole, ended up undermining the grass-roots appeal of the foreign missionary movement. The more responsibility the home secretaries absorbed, the less was expected from the local organizations resulting in a more formal and less personal connection with the individual missionaries. Losing touch with the women-centered nature of the movement proved to be the fatal blow.

When the denominational societies were forced to merge with each other because of dwindling interest in the 1920s, the women lost their sense of autonomy and their shared sense of purpose. Patricia Hill argues that a redefinition of the woman's role in missions at the turn of the century separated professionals from amateurs and distanced the movement's new leadership from its older broad-based constituency. "The shift in tone and policy to a more professional mode occurred gradually," Hill explains, "although the pace accelerated after 1890 as death thinned the ranks of the original organizers of the movement and their places were filled by college-educated professionals" (94), such as Elizabeth.

Finally, a new kind of marital relationship, which Sheila Rothman calls the "wife-companion" in *Women's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present*, was another reason for the declining loyalty to women's causes such as the missionary movement. "Female fellowship," she writes, "was a victim of romantic

marriage" (187). The Flemings were an example of this new wife-as-companion marriage as Elizabeth reveals in her March 31, 1910, letter: "DJ dreads the 5-month separation [in the remote hill station of Thandiani Hills]. It is too far for him to come except for the long vacation. And it seems as if he was more and more dependent upon me for fellowship." The Coles, too, must have had a more equalitarian relationship than most late Victorians; Julia wrote in her travelogue on Tuesday, December 8, 1908, "It is quite evident that there is no social life between men and women except the attitude of Masters to their slaves. . . . Companionship seems to be unknown. The equality of the sexes is not recognized and they are not educated or instructed on this account" (68-69).

If Elizabeth were alive today, she would be proud to know that their work amounted to something in the Punjab. Jeffery Cox writes, "The exodus of almost all Hindus and Sikhs from the Pakistani Punjab in 1947 resulted in the unexpected circumstance of Christianity being the second largest religion in independent Pakistan" (116). And how pleased she would be to know that twenty years after independence, India elected its first woman prime minister. Indira Gandhi (1917-1984) served as Prime Minister of India from 1966 to 1977 and was reelected in 1980-1984. Unfortunately and tragically, Gandhi was assassinated in office in 1984.⁵⁹

I had no idea when I started opening and reading Elizabeth's letters that I had been given such a generous gift. I think daughters expect to find their female heritage somewhere in their maternal family tree. What a pleasant surprise to find such a long and vibrant legacy of women hiding in my father's!! Thank you, Myrtila Mead Alvord, Julia Alvord Cole, Elizabeth Cole Fleming, and also Nan Riley Browning, Alice Browning Crew, and especially my mother, Patricia Crew Fleming, who all helped make me, me.

⁵⁹ "Indira Gandhi." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indira_Gandhi>

In Conclusion,

**As I searched for the women in my family,
I found them; they were hiding behind my father!**



I am held by two Presbyterian missionaries, Nan Browning and Elizabeth Cole Fleming. Summer, 1950.

