

House of Happiness  
A STORY



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***The House Of Happiness Story***

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## Preface

This is the story of a mission of the Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Alabama, a mission maintained for thirty years in the mountains of north Alabama, by a handful of people who felt that God wanted them there.

For the first seven years, the work was led by an indomitable woman who stamped the work with her ideas of how it should be done. After that, for three years, it was carried on by a gentler spirit; then, for twenty years, it was led by men of the Church Army. Through them all, in greater or lesser degree, the love of God came into Sauta Bottom and joined His love already there, to do His work.

Like leaven, like salt, love worked. Slowly, gradually, one person, then another, was given a chance they would not have had if the school had not been taught, if clothing had not been available, if health measures had not been pursued, if lives had not been adjusted, if God's love had not had these channels through which to flow.

Some years before she died Miss Martin encouraged me to write this story. I have tried to bring it alive by putting some of the reports and my memories of months spent in this mountain cabin and down the hill in Happy Hollow School into imagined words and actions. It comes, not only from my memories but from those of others who were at one time a part of the work, from copies of the Alabama Churchman, from old letters and old reports. Three names have been changed.

I should like to thank everyone who has helped and ask that they read of my gratitude on the last page of this book.

Long's Acre  
Marion, Alabama  
1973

## Chapter 1

As a white cloud drifting behind trees shows where the leaves are thin, or a hand going down into a worn sock finds the thin spot, so Augusta Martin's coming to live in Sauta Bottom showed the many spots where love was thin, where education was nonexistent, where the bare necessities of life were lacking.

She was a channel of the Holy Spirit sent by the Diocese of Alabama into the valley between July and Gunters mountains in the northeastern corner of the state. Part of her work, as she conceived it, was to bring the needs of the people shut in by the mountains to those in other parts of the diocese to get their help.

On a warm spring day in 1926, she was in the large entrance hall of the main dormitory at Alabama College in Montevallo, waiting to make a talk at a meeting of the YWCA. The broad steps in the hall were packed with girls, all the way to the second floor, ready to hear her. When she was introduced and stood, few of them noticed that the short skirt of her blue suit showed one leg somewhat bowed, but all of them were aware of the young face and vivid blue eyes in contrast to the white hair of the stocky woman.

Gathering their attention by looking at them silently for a moment, she asked, "Have any of you ever thought of lost people, living isolated lives, back in the Alabama mountains?" Her voice deepened as she went on, "When our blessed Lord sent out the disciples, he said, Go ye first to the lost sheep. . ."

"Behind, and folded within our mountains there are hundreds of lost people, 'Untamed Americans,' writes Percy MacKay, 'in a world of virgin forests and unsullied creeks, rare, unclassified species of the genus homo, strange wildflowers of the human spirit, wayward, fantastic, beautiful . . .' You'll think he described them accurately after I have told you about a few of the people in our mountains.

"Christian social service for the underprivileged highlanders of Alabama had long been a dream of many clergymen and of our bishops, but nothing constructive was done until Bishop Coadjutor McDowell took definite steps to organize the work.

"Three years ago, the Episcopal Church in Alabama decided to try to reach out to these people and sent me to live in Scottsboro to learn if there were people in that section who needed our help. For three months, I lived in a rented room there, wondering how to find the ones who might need us. Finally, word came to me of a family in want in Coon Hollow.

"Accompanied by the rural mail carrier and the woman who had reported the need, I started off to find them. We went as far as our hired Ford would go, then walked along a mountain path until we came to a precipice with a view somewhat like the one from Lookout Mountain. Below us was Coon Hollow; to get down seemed impossible. However, as we followed the path, we came to a split in the rock that showed it had been used as the entrance to the world below us. The sides of the rock had been worn slick by the hands of those going in and out, and a mulch of dead leaves had been packed into the bottom of the crevasse." There was laughter in her voice as she went on, "The opening was such a narrow one it was hard for me to get through. My companions were tall and thin so they had no trouble.

"The trail going down was so steep, and the sides of the mountain so straight, that several trees had literally fallen off. By holding to saplings and vines whose roots still clung to the rocks we managed to get down. The barking of a dog drew us along a dim path toward a hut at the head of the hollow.

"Going along the path, we found the vegetation luxuriant, almost tropical. A fig tree growing near the hut made me homesick. The interior of the empty log cabin made me heartsick. Going around the dwelling and a short distance beyond it, we found a woman seated on a log with a group of children dressed in filthy rags around her. The smallest child was crying. The rest looked at us with stony faces, their fear evidenced by the way they were grouped tightly around the mother.

"Because the mother knew the woman who had brought us, she finally told us, in reluctant, broken sentences that they had been living on green roasting ears and a few fish, and before we left she persuaded her fourteen year old son to show us his badly infected foot.

"The next day, I returned, bringing food and clothing, and medicine for the boy's foot. In

subsequent visits to them and to people who knew them, I learned their story. The grandfather of all but one of the children, father-in-law of the woman, had some years ago, driven his son away and appropriated his young wife. All the children were starved. The youngest, who was so thin that her shoulder blades could be seen, was the child of this old man.

"On each visit, the mother was urged to come out of the hollow to a home on the ridge that had been secured for her so that the children could go to school and she would have a better chance, but she refused. I learned later that the old man had threatened to kill them if they left.

"Finally, I made a petition to the Juvenile Court and an officer was sent to bring them up to a house on the ridge that had been furnished through the generosity of the people in the community. The mother was to care for her children under the supervision of the worker and the Juvenile Court."

She did not tell them of the many hours she had spent visiting the people on the ridge, talking about the plight of the woman and children, enlisting their sympathy and help. She did not think of it, but it was her enthusiasm and love for this helpless family that aroused sympathy and help for them.

"They are still under my care," she went on. "All are in better physical condition except the mother who seems to grow thinner. The children are making wonderful progress in school considering how little chance they've had."

All the girls on the steps were interested in her story but it was when she told about Rosa that she won four enthusiastic volunteers.

"Our work has been done from several different places," she said. "The first place was a rented room. Then, the Church rented a large house in Scottsboro because others came to help me. During the year we lived there, we had a hospital room, a kindergarten and a day-care center. It was while we lived there that a waif we took in gave the work its name.

"Her name was Rosa. She was a small, partially paralyzed child whose mother was dead and who, consequently, had been passed around among relatives who could not care well for their own families much less for another and helpless child. She was in an unspeakably filthy condition, her body covered with festering sores, when she came to us. We had to cut short her dreadfully tangled hair before we washed it. Then, we put her down into a tub of good warm water and began removing layers of dirt and old food. The child relaxed and with her little face so newly clean smiling into mine, she said, 'This is shore a happy house!' That's what we want it to be, for anyone who comes to us, so our name is The House of Happiness, no matter where we live

"At the moment, the House of Happiness is in a shack on one hundred and sixty acres of land the Church has bought in Sauta Bottom, about nine miles from Scottsboro, where I am now living and teaching school. Miss Nettie Cox Barnwell and I have just finished our first five-and-a-half month session there, teaching the McCutcheon School. In spite of the prejudice of one of the trustees, I have contracted to teach it again.

"The building is twenty-seven by thirty-six feet. On rainy days many grown people come. Imagine seventy-nine pupils in this building with two teachers.

"The county pays the salary for one teacher for this school. Out of what they pay, I pay Miss Barnwell's salary and board. The Church pays my salary as a mountain missionary. At this time there is nothing better that the Church can do for our mountain people, cut off by bad roads and no transportation, than give their children a chance for an education.

"We didn't begin school until after their crops had been gathered, and we let out before spring planting time. All the people in Sauta Bottom farm and the children are needed to help."

Again a note of laughter seemed to thread her words, "From the names they call me, I think I'm rising in the estimation of the community. First they called me 'that woman', then 'the farewell lady' but lately, it's been 'mammy Martin'."

"In the middle of the summer, during the period when the crops are laid-by, meaning they don't need to be worked, we will have another six weeks of school. At the same time, I want to have a school for adults and I hope that several of you girls who are planning to be teachers will come and help us teach these adult classes. Some of the men and women in our part of the world have never had a chance to go to school. We have an eighty-two year old neighbor who wants to learn to read so that she can read her Bible.

"And another thing we need in Sauta Bottom is a chance to play, for young and old. We want to have supervised recreation this summer and you could help with that. . ."

When the service was over, many of the girls clustered around the speaker. Four friends stood back, talking excitedly to each other. After the others left, they came to tell her that they wanted to come and help during the summer.

"Before I put your names down," she said, "come out on the porch with me where we can sit down. I want each of you to tell me why you want to come." She led the way and the four girls followed. All were college seniors and would graduate in a few weeks.

There were rocking chairs all across the wide veranda. Miss Martin sat down with a girl on each side of her. The other two sat in front of them, on the edge of the porch with their feet hanging over.

Helen Townsend spoke first, "I can tell you why I want to come. I'm a physical education major and I'd like to help with the supervised play."

"You're exactly one of the people we need. I'll put your name down and your address." She wrote, "Helen Townsend, Russelville, Alabama," then turned to Florence Smith on the other side.

"When you told about Rosa, I decided I wanted to come. If you have any more Rosas, I'd like to love them for awhile."

"We need you, certainly." She wrote, "Florence Smith, Demopolis, Alabama," then looked at Hattie.

"I doubt if you can use me," Hattie said. "I'm a home economics major, just supposed to cook and sew."

"We'll just work you down to a nub," said Miss Martin and wrote, "Hattie Lyman, Montevallo, Alabama," then looked at Lilian.

"The work you told about sounds like the kind of work I want to do. I'm getting a teaching certificate when I graduate," was the response.

Miss Martin wrote, "Lilian Prout, Demopolis, Alabama," closed her notebook and looked at them, one after the other, seriously. "On the way here, and for some weeks now, I have asked God to help me find people for the work this summer. I believe he opened your hearts to our needs. As I go home, I'll thank Him for each one of you."

They talked awhile, as to when they should come and the kind of clothes they should bring. Suddenly, with a characteristic gesture, the woman threw her head back and with a crow of laughter said, "Hoooo! Before the summer's over, they'll be calling you farewell ladies!" With another characteristic gesture, she pushed a strand of straight, white hair under the invisible net she always wore over it.

## Chapter 2

The next day, as she rode the train from Birmingham to Scottsboro, Augusta Martin took a yellow pad from her worn brief-case to begin an article for the Alabama Churchman. There was rarely an issue without something from the House of Happiness. The pencil copy of one of the last ones she had written was still attached to the pad. She let her eyes skim it:

"To the Bishops and Clergy and Congregations committed to their charge: The family here ebbs and flows. At this writing we have five children in the house. Our latest addition is Dolly who is a typical mountain girl. . . One of her favorite expressions is, 'We-uns don't know what you-uns are talking about!' She is bright and anxious to learn.

"The range, gift of Mr. Otto Agricola of Gadsden, has added much to our comfort. Everything dates from before or since the range! Miss Marcia Boykin of Camden has conducted a kindergarten for us since October, a very important part of our work. Another great donation given us was made by Miss Maggie Lee Alison of Carlowville who offered her services as a Lenten offering. Her coming made it possible for me to help the County Superintendent of Education by teaching a country school from which the teacher had left abruptly. . .

"The deeds to the property for our permanent work are ready to be recorded. . . the original grant was to John H. Birdsong in 1820."

"How fast time goes," she thought. "In this one, I've got to introduce Miss Nettie. I should have done it sooner. . ." She began writing, "In the summer of 1925, I met Miss Nettie Cox Barnwell in

Sewanee, Tennessee. A graduate of Sophie Newcomb, an artist by nature and education, she was especially fitted for work at the House of Happiness. I told her something of our work and asked if she would like to help with it. Even after Bishop McDowell told her how hard it was, especially since our move to the country, she thought she would like to try it. So, late last October, she arrived at dusky dark on the daycoach from Memphis. Uncle Daisy Clemens and I met her in the flivver and by the time we reached the shack we live in, it was pitch dark and pouring rain.

"A few days later, when our two teenagers, Dolly and Martha, (who live with us because they come from broken homes) moved out from town, we soon realized that the shack wasn't large enough to hold us. Our nearest neighbor, Mrs. Cotton, rented us a large bedroom where Miss Nettie and the two girls slept every night. They would get up before day, walk to the shack for breakfast, then all of us would walk to the McCutcheon schoolhouse, often through rain, more often through mud. Of course our three boys who sleep in a tent attached to the shack were with us.

"On rainy days, when the young married people of the valley couldn't do farm work, they would come to school, bringing books they had used when they were in school, and ask to have lessons assigned. Friends from Birmingham, Memphis and Mississippi have sent us books so you can imagine our variety.

"Our schoolhouse stove takes blocks of wood three feet long. It and our straightback, rough benches are our only equipment. I taught the first three grades and Miss Nettie from the fourth up. By Christmas nearly ninety pupils had enrolled. We decided to have a Christmas play, based on the accounts of the shepherds and the wise men. Costumes were being made when one little boy asked, "How are you goin' to make 'em look like dogs?" Shepherd dogs were the only shepherds he knew.

"On the night of the program you could see lanterns coming from all parts of the valley and soon the schoolhouse was full. The gifts sent by our Church friends were joyfully received. Each little girl was given a doll. Some had never had one before.

"School ran until time to plant the crops. After school was out, Miss Nettie went home to spend the summer with her family. I am happy to report that she will return to us in the fall.

"We are planning an Opportunity School for adults in the middle of the summer, when the crops are laid-by. Four young women from Alabama College are coming to help with this school."

She ended her article by saying, "You will be happy to learn that we are becoming so well-known that mail comes to us no matter how addressed. We have had letters addressed 'Mrs. Martin at Home' and one addressed 'Dear Mrs. Martin' and the house is called 'The Happy Home for Children', 'Orphunts Home', 'House for Homeless Children', 'House Beautiful', and even 'House of Representatives'! Do write to us!"

Smiling to herself, she put the pad back into the brief-case, leaned back and closed her eyes. Suddenly, the feeling of exhilaration she had experienced from getting four helpers for the summer was replaced by depression as she thought, "If old man Coot shoots me as he threatens to do. . . the work would be abandoned. There's not another soul . . . yet . . . who would stay with it." Just as suddenly, her heaviness lifted as she thought of her helper and spoke to Him, "If you want me to do this work, please keep me from getting shot." She thought of the child the old man had been mistreating and she spoke silently again, "You know I'm apt to make some more of these mountain men mad if I see them harming children." She slept and did not awaken until the conductor came to tell her that they were drawing in to Scottsboro.

### Chapter 3

In late June, the same afternoon train that had carried Augusta Martin some weeks before pulled into the station of Scottsboro with two hot college students who climbed down from the day coach. Hattie and Lilian, in spite of the soot that had blown in on them through the window they had opened, looked good to Augusta Martin as she sat waiting behind the wheel of the Model T. Returning her smile, they came toward her, carrying their suit cases.

On the road to the House of Happiness, nine miles out of Scottsboro, while the open car did its accustomed twenty miles an hour, catching its own dust Miss Martin told them something of what they would find when they reached 'home.'

"Tonight, you'll sleep in the shack, but in a few days you can help us move up the hill."

"Tell us about the shack," said Hattie.

"The diocese bought this land in Sauta Bottom because it seemed an area where the work of the church was really needed. On the hundred and sixty acres belonging to the church there is a



wonderful, ever-flowing spring, a barn, a board house, and the shack. There were renters living in the board house who needed time to find a place to live, so we scraped the manure out, laid planks to make a floor, and moved into the shack. And it's one of the best things we could have done."

"Why?" Lillian wanted to know.

Miss Martin's eyes twinkled as she glanced at Hattie, beside her. "Our neighbors said, "We-uns shore didn't think you-uns would live in anything but a board house." The shack was as bad or worse than anything our neighbors had ever lived in, and as crowded. Moving into it showed that we weren't too proud to live like the people of the valley." She gave her "Hooo" of laughter. "We showed even that place could be cleaned up!"

"We hired two of our neighbors to help us. All the time we were working, I was talking about how to clean it, and why it was important. I showed them how to build shelves around the room to hold lots of the things we didn't have room for on the floor. Every time we do anything, I try to use material they can get, so they can do these same things at their homes. We got two different men to help us break up the land for a garden. Our boys go and help them in exchange for their time. We gave them seed like we were planting, so they would try something new, but I'm not sure they planted them."

After a silent mile or two, she went on, "The men of Sauta Bottom are building our permanent House of Happiness out of logs that they cut during the winter, right on the land the church bought. The boards were made from our own logs, and the shingles, hand-split, were rived right here on the place. On the first floor there are two large rooms separated by a dog-run. . ."

"A what?" from Hattie.

"Don't you know there has to be a wide hall, open at both ends, so the dogs can run through?"

"How many dogs do we have?"

"Two collies right now. But to get back to the house, there are also two large rooms on the second floor with a wide hall between. I really had a time persuading the men that halfway up the mountain was the place to put the house. Uncle Dave Hancock, one of our helpers, said, "I can just think of pullin' up this mountain, every time I'd want to git home, and it bothers me, how tired I'd be." They weren't so opposed after I told them that we would make a road to run behind the board house to the back door of the House of Happiness. We're going to turn the board house into the school house, now that the renters have moved. When we offered to lend it to the county, they accepted immediately. It's so much better than the one they had been using."

She slammed on the brakes and almost threw Lillian and Hattie out. "Just a minute," she said. "We have to pick up Dolly. She's an orphan from the mountain who lives with us." And she got out and went into the small house standing near the road.

Dolly, a plump teenager, came out with her and was introduced as she got into the back with Lillian. "Dolly's my big girl," said Miss Martin. "Just two more miles and we'll be home."

The next time they stopped, there was a barn on their left and the shack, only eight or ten feet from the road, on their right.

"Take your suit cases out, girls, and I'll drive the car to the barn. We keep it under the shed down there."

As they obediently took their suit cases out, Hattie asked, "What about these groceries?"

"Dolly can take a sack. Put the other one on the side of the road. I'll be with you in a minute." Dolly took a sack and went in.

As the two girls stood in the road beside their suit cases and the groceries, they smiled at each other and Hattie raised expressive eyebrows after looking at the shack.

"Like a ragged beggar, sunning. . ." murmured Lillian, an English major. It had a broken roofline; the window on one side had a broken shutter, hanging crookedly from one hinge; the other window had no shutter. Two boards nailed across it shaped a rough cross. The doorstep was of two rocks, one higher than the other. The doorframe was anything but square.

Their glances went up the mountain. Cedars grew thickly over the hillside, with the exception of a rockstrewn open space below the half-finished log house from which came the sounds of nailing, sawing and dropped lumber.

Miss Martin carefully shut the barnyard gate, picked up the bag of groceries, and said, "Come on in." Inside, she indicated a double bed, "Put your suitcases on the bed until you're ready to get in. Then, you can stand them right beside it."

They could see what she meant. There was just space enough to move between the three beds and many other objects packed into that end of the shack.

Going out to get a drink of water from a bucket on a shelf attached to the outside back wall, they saw the tent fastened to it at one end. "The boys sleep out here," Miss Martin explained. "The two Alves boys from Guntersville are spending the summer with us. Hodge, the oldest, is studying for the ministry at Sewanee and working here is part of his training. We have three valley boys living with us, too, Scott Clemens, Billy Hancock and Howard Thurmond. Scott's from a big family and his parents are lending him to us. Billy's mother is dead, and his tonsils are bad, so Uncle Dave is letting him stay with us for awhile, and Howard is visiting, too.

She looked up the hill as she, too, took a drink from the bucket Dolly had filled at the spring as soon as they had arrived. "Scott's daddy, Uncle Daisy as everyone calls him, is in charge of building our house. He's teaching the men how to tongue-and-groove the logs at the corners after they are peeled, how to rive the shingles, and all the other things that go into the making of a log house. There aren't many who know all this. We're lucky to have Uncle Daisy." Then, abruptly, "Can you girls cook cornbread?"

"I can't" said Lilian, looking startled.

"I think I can manage that. How much?" asked Hattie.

"Let's see." She began to count. "You two and Dolly and me, Hodge, Jimmie, Scott, Howard and Billy. Just nine for supper. Lilian, you can peel the potatoes. Hattie, you show her how. Don't let her cut all the potatoe off with the skin." They went in and she continued to give directions as she took off her town clothes and put on work clothes, as Dolly did the same. "Dolly's going up the hill with me. There might be something we can do up there. Cut the potatoes up and put them on to boil. Hattie, can you make a fire in the stove?"

"I think so," she said, looking in the woodbox.

"When you get it going, you can pull that pot of greens on the back of the stove to the front, after you put in this piece of ham 'Miss' Helen Snodgrass gave me. With your corn bread, and syrup and buttermilk, they will be our supper. Be sure you have enough," she said. "These will be hungry boys when they come down the mountain."

"There are some hungry girls here,too," said Lilian, grinning at Hattie. "Make plenty of corn bread."

In the small hours of that night, the two girls were awakened by hearing Miss Martin call, "What are you all doing, going home so late?" She was leaning out of the front window.

"Whoa! Whoa!" said a man's voice and the creak of wagon wheels ceased. "We-uns have been to the doctor to get Granny some chill medicine. One of our wheels come off after we got hit and started home. Come go home with us," he added hospitably.

"I can't tonight. But, I'll be over to see Granny soon."

As the creaking wheel began to sing its steady song again, the three women went back to sleep. Dolly had not awakened.

#### Chapter 4

The day came for the move from the shack to the half-finished house up the hill. Miss Martin had the move planned, down to the last detail, as to what should be moved first and where each piece of furniture should be placed in the new house. They were just ready to start when an emergency call came for her from one of the families up the cove.

As she took the riding skirt down from its peg in the shack and began to pull it on over the skirt of her dress (it contained ten yards of material and would go on over anything) she continued to give directions. "Hodge, you're in charge. Anything you don't know, ask Scott. Move everything, just as I've told you. I'll be back, as soon as I can."

"Dolly, you get the turnip greens from the garden and wash them down here at the spring. As soon as the boys get the chimney on the stove you can make your fire and start cooking. You're our chief cook today. Dinner's in your hands, all but the corn bread. Hattie had no business making such good corn bread. We want some more, to celebrate our move!"

This last, she said from the back of the horse, looking down on the group of young people who had come to the road to watch her off. After Billy attached a sack of supplies to the pommel of the saddle,

she moved off, turning to wave just before the road curved.

The move uphill began. On the large pieces of furniture, Hodge, Jimmie and Scott each held a corner while Billy and Howard carried the fourth corner. The cookstove had been moved by wagon the day before, on a trail that ran back of the board house, a trail that Miss Martin planned to make into a road. The cooking utensils and dishes had to be carried up so Hattie and Lilian began taking these while the boys brought up Miss Martin's lovely old mahogany bureau. Halfway up, they set it down to wipe the sweat from their eyes. They had started early, but the July sun was hot.

Gradually, everything from the shack went up the hill. When one of the spool beds was going up, with the two girls carrying an end and a side-piece and the boys bringing the springs and the unwieldy double-bed mattress, they stopped mid-way and sent the two younger boys to the spring for a bucket of water.

While Jimmie and Hattie were drinking from the two dippers, Scott said, "I wouldn't mind having some of that poured over my head," as he wiped sweat from his face by rubbing his arm over it. Jimmie immediately poured what was left in his dipper onto Scott's head and Hattie did the same for Lilian. This started a water fight that was going on with much noise and laughter when Miss Martin arrived back at the shack.

In spite of the noise on the hillside, her "Whoeee! What's going on up there?" was heard, and quiet descended.

"Scott, come put the horse up for me," she called. When he reached her, she asked, "What's the trouble?"

"No trouble," said Scott with a grin. "We were just cooling each other off with a little spring water."

"Well, put the horse in and come on up. Dinner should be about ready." She climbed the hill behind the spool bed and the subdued workers. In the dog-run, she let the riding skirt drop to the floor, then picked it up and hung it on the peg placed between the logs especially for it. Smoothing her dress skirt, she came to sit on the cane bottom, ladder-back chair to look down over the acres of corn and cotton raying out across the field behind the barn. She could hear the sound of talk and muffled giggles of the young people as they set up the bed in the room above. When they came down the steps that were against the side wall of the dog-run, she said, "All of you come sit on the floor by me and rest. We won't move anything else until after dinner."

When they were settled around her, she looked into their faces seriously. "I'm sorry there was so much noise on the House of Happiness hillside," she said. "We are a quiet people, here in this valley. When there's a lot of noise, there's nearly always something bad going on, drunkenness or fighting. Our neighbors don't know us very well yet. A good many haven't made up their minds about us and we won't be able to help them if they don't trust us. I'll have to ask you to help me win their trust. We'll have to make less noise, behave in an approved way."

Her face eased into laugh wrinkles. "Go wash your faces! Hoo! You look like mud-turtles!"

After dinner and an hour of rest, Hattie was delegated to answer letters, the boys to move the rest of the furniture, and Dolly and Lilian sent to the barn loft to sort out the contents of boxes of clothing sent from church groups all over the diocese.

The church women of the diocese of Alabama were deeply interested in what was being done in this mountain valley and on its hillsides. Miss Martin had asked them to send her usable clothing. Even though the work was just in its third year, many boxes of clothing had been sent and because of no other space, they had been put in the barn loft. As clothing was needed, different people went to get it, tumbling the contents of the boxes until something was found, leaving them in a disordered mess.

Lilian and Dolly climbed the ladder against the wall of the barn hallway, and pulled themselves through the square opening onto the rough boards of the floor of the loft. They found that an attempt at organization had been started in that all the shoes were in two large boxes, men's clothing of all kinds and sizes in several more, and the women's and children's in others.

Dust and cobwebs gave the loft a desolate air. Rays of sun came down through holes in the roof. In the streams of light motes of golden dust spun and circled. The only other light came from the window at the back where the solid, wooden shutter hung open. The two girls picked the area in front of it for their work space. They dumped the contents of the boxes in a circle near it, then stood the empty boxes behind this, ready to receive the sorted-out clothing.

Lilian, who had an over-active sense of humor, couldn't resist putting a very large corset over her clothes and strutting up and down for Dolly's benefit. But Dolly, who had never had much chance to see the amusing side of life, only looked at her in a puzzled way, so they settled down and got to work.

It wasn't too hard to sort the clothing into different sizes, although, once in awhile, they had to stop and sneeze as they sorted and folded. But when they came to the large pile of shoes in which the pairs had not been kept together, they really had a hard job. The heat grew worse; dust and the smell of mouldy leather was thick in their nostrils.

"Don't you think we might stop and finish tomorrow?" asked Lilian.

Dolly said flatly, "Miss Martin wants us to finish today."

They struggled on until all the shoes that could possibly be worn were in the boxes, sorted according to size and sex, each one firmly tied to its mate. The extremely pointed-toed, high-heeled evening pumps were with the very worn corsets and other unusable items in a box that Dolly said Miss Martin wanted brought to her. They dragged it to the opening and let it fall to the ground, then climbed down after it.

Weary and dirty, they carried the box between them across the road. When they reached the spring, Lilian suggested, "Let's stop and wash our faces."

Kneeling beside the stream that fell from the square rock basin, they caught the water in their hands. After they had washed they used a clean but torn man's undershirt from the box as a towel, and then sat resting for a few minutes. The sun had gone behind July Mountain and the evening breeze coming up the valley made a coolness on their damp skin. While they were sitting there, the bucket from the house above came down its wire and landed with a splash in the boxed-in water of the spring. It slowly sank as it filled, then went back up the wire as someone cranked the windlass on the side porch of the house above them. They were too tired to turn and see who was doing the cranking.

As they climbed the hill with the box between them, Lilian remembered what Uncle Dave Hancock had said about having to climb to the house at the end of the day and she knew exactly what he meant. But when they reached the house and sat on the edge of the porch with their legs hanging over, felt the cool breeze drawn up the hill against their faces, and could see across the fields the distant mountains that shut the valley in on the other side with the sunset glow in the clouds above them, she also knew why Miss Martin had wanted the house on the hillside.

After supper, when all of them gathered on the porch, Lilian asked the question that puzzled her about the use of the unusable items from the barn loft which she and Dolly had lugged up the hill.

Miss Martin's now familiar, "Hoooo!" of laughter came before she said, "That's a secret. I'm going to tell you, but you mustn't mention it to anybody outside the family. There's a bad wash on our mountain, down the path beyond the chicken house. We are going to fill it up with things we can't use. The first things we put in were a black satin evening dress, badly worn, and a pair of black satin shoes that would have crippled anyone who tried to wear them, so we call it the black-satin-fill! In the morning, we'll take anything out of your box that can be used for scrub rags, then Billy and Howard can put the rest in the black satin fill."

"Why on earth," wondered Hattie, "would anyone send a worn out corset or a pair of high heeled, pointed-toed evening shoes to a mountain mission?"

"Nobody knows the answer," said Miss Martin.

## Chapter 5

Augusta Martin reached eagerly for every kind of help that she could find, for the people she was trying to serve. Alma Bentley, a state home demonstration worker who held cooking schools in rural areas, was one of the people she reached for. Alma came to the House of Happiness in late July and all the family gathered in the living room after supper of the night she came.

"Alma, your job starts tomorrow, up on Sand Mountain," said Miss Martin. "Hodge will drive you. Lilian and Hattie, you will go along. People from all over this area will be there for the Singing School," she continued. "They all bring lunch and have dinner on the ground. There will be more food than can possibly be eaten and everyone will invite you to eat with them. You needn't take a

thing. Hattie, you and Lilian can go to the Singing School while Alma has her Cooking School. Hodge, you can visit around and get to know the people."

The four young people found the early morning air cool and fragrant. There was heavy dew and the car didn't stir much dust. As they drove through town, the shops were beginning to open. Just beyond the town, they crossed the river and Hodge shifted into low as they began the climb to the top of Sand Mountain which rose abruptly on the other side of the river.

On top, they followed a level, sandy road which ran along the ridge of the mountain. "I wonder how long before we see a sign of all those people," said Hattie, just as they rounded a bend and saw a small country store. Hodge stopped and Lilian went in to ask the location of the Singing School. After being assured that they were on the right road and hadn't much further to go, they traveled on.

The sand in the road grew deeper as they approached what was undoubtedly the place. Three cars, plus a number of wagons and buggies were scattered in the grove around a rectangular building and singing could be heard in the end nearest them. A group of women waited at the other end and Hodge helped Alma take her equipment there while Hattie and Lilian hesitantly approached the door to the Singing School. A tall man standing near it saw their reluctance and said, "Just go on in." When they still hesitated, he reached and swung the door open in front of them.

Immediate silence descended on the room full of people. A large man standing at the front said, "Come in ladies. Will you sit with the basses?" He indicated a group of seemingly larger-than-life-size men sitting to one side.

Hattie said feebly, "I don't think we'd better."

"Well, come around and go in with the tribles," he said, this time gesturing toward a group of young women. So the two girls went around to sit on the end of a rough bench, and were handed two Sacred Harp Hymnals.

"Now," said the leader, "we was just gittin' started on singin' the notes to number 42. Let's start over."

He used the thin pipe hanging around his neck to give them the pitch. The deafening response made Lilian and Hattie jump. They tried to join in and for a moment congratulated themselves on their knowledge of public school music which had taught them the names of notes as they appeared on the scale. Fortunately, their voices were not strong for they soon realized that they were not calling the notes what everyone else was calling them. They had been taught that the place on the scale named the note, but that wasn't working here. They were such close friends that each usually knew what the other was thinking, both always finding the same things funny; they exchanged a quick glance that held mirth but managed not to laugh. When the leader said they could now sing the words, they joined in and did the best they could.

As the morning passed the room became stiflingly hot. Someone back of the girls got up and opened the solid wooden shutter to one of the windows and a blessed stream of fresh air came in. Immediately, the leader raised his hand for silence.

"I'm sorry," he said. "You'll have to shut that window. It's hot but you don't want to ruin any of these voices by lettin' fresh air blow on the singer."

The bench Hattie and Lilian were sitting on began to shake.

The window was closed. The singing commenced again.

After what seemed hours longer, the school bell rang and the leader again raised his hand. "We will now stop for dinner," he said.

Hattie and Lilian went out with everyone else, and moved out of the stream of people to stand in the shade of an oak tree. As everyone left by car or buggy, Hodge and Alma came to join them. None of them had been asked to go to dinner with anyone and there was no picnic. It had been a long, active time since their six o'clock breakfast.

"What do we do now? Alma, have you cooked anything that we can eat?" asked Hattie.

"Everybody had a taste of what I cooked. It's all gone."

"What about that little store?" asked Lilian.

"Let's try it," said Hodge, going to the car, followed by the others.

The store had a very limited stock and the four had only limited means. They got a box of crackers, a can of peaches, a jar of jelly and each of them a bottled drink. Hodge drove back the way

they had come until they reached a logging road that branched off into the woods. He turned off and drove until they were well away from the public road.

As they climbed out with their purchases, Hattie's remark, "Oh, yes! They'll all bring lunch and there'll be more than you can eat!" uncorked their pent laughter.

The place they had come to had recently been cut over; only a few small trees that gave scant shade remained.

"It's hot in here," said Hodge, apologetically, "but nobody can see us or hear us."

"Thank goodness for that," said Lilian. "If I can't laugh, I think I'll choke." She looked accusingly at Hattie. "When you started shaking and that girl sitting next to you looked so scared. . . O, my . . ."

"What were you shaking for?" asked Alma as she used Hodge's knife to open the peaches, adding "Darn!" as the blade broke.

"When she wants to laugh and can't, she shakes," said Lilian.

"That poor girl must have thought I was going to have a fit." Hattie reached for the knife and used the broken blade to prize the top from the jelly.

"May I have my poor knife?" Hodge used it to fish a peach-half from the can, balanced it on a cracker, filled the upturned half with jelly, and handed it to Alma.

"Thanks. Now how am I going to eat this?" She leaned forward, balancing the peach half with two forefingers and took a bite as some of the juice and jelly fell to the ground.

"Perfect etiquette," said Lilian, doing the same.

When they had eaten, since Alma had finished her cooking school, the decision to go back to the House of Happiness was unanimous.

That night, as they told Miss Martin of their experience on Sand Mountain, Hattie said, "I still can't figure out why we didn't call the notes by the same names as everyone else."

"Hoooo!" laughed Miss Martin, "don't you know that the notes in the Sacred Harp Hymnal are named by their shape, not by their place on the scale? There are just four shapes and just four names."

"I knew there was something odd about them. . ." said Hattie.

"Or us," added Lilian.

"And another thing I can't figure out is why that man asked us to sit with the basses."

"That," said Miss Martin, "is one thing I can't explain."

Later, when Dolly and Alma and Miss Martin were breathing as if they were asleep, Lilian in the double spool bed with Hattie, said softly, "Sand Mountain is even different from Sauta Bottom, it's a different world."

Hattie didn't respond but her side of the bed shook.

## Chapter 6

Miss Martin had somehow gotten it into her head that Florence and Helen were coming on Monday. It was on Saturday she realized that they would arrive the next day. When she did, she asked Hattie and Lilian to make a trip to town for groceries. Word had come to her by the grape-vine that Rube Coot \* had been seen in Scottsboro and she did not want to cross his path.

Lilian and Hattie came out of the grocery store with their arms full. As they were putting packages in the car they became aware of an old man coming toward them.

"H'ain't this the House of Happiness car?" he asked. The scent of whiskey and stale sweat enveloped the two girls.

"Yes, it is," said Hattie.

"Well, how about givin' a pore man a lift out thata way?"

"We have to call the house to see if there's anything else we need to do," said Lilian. "If you'll wait a minute, we'll tell you."

"O hell!" he said as he turned and went weaving across the street and into a small store.

When Hattie called the house, they were given one more errand. Then, she described the old man and asked if they should give him a lift.

"Had he been drinking?" asked Miss Martin.

\* Fictitious Name

"He smelled like whiskey, and several other things."

"Hoooo! that's an apt description. You'd better not bring him. Tell him you can't bring him today, but if he wants to come out and talk to me when he's not drinking, I'll be glad to see him."

"Yes'm," said Hattie. But to Lilian she said, "I couldn't tell that old man what Miss Martin said. If I did, he'd probably hit me over the head with his shot gun."

"Well, let's go, before he comes back."

They came out of the store and saw no one on the street, so they left quickly.

Back at the house, Scott was in the kitchen when they were putting up the groceries and telling Miss Martin more about their encounter.

"Sounds like old Rube Coot to me," he said. "You ought to have him put in jail, Miss Martin."

"I can't do that," she said slowly, "but I am praying for him."

Helen Townsend and Florence Smith arrived on the evening train the next day. Supper was served soon after they reached the house, by Miss Martin and Dolly, standing on either side of the kitchen stove. To Helen and Florence who were served first, she said, "Take your plates out and find a place to sit on the hillside. That's where we usually have supper when God gives us such a day." As they went out, she said, "Each of you say your own blessing." Soon all eleven of them were served and scattered up and down the hillside, sitting on rocks or the few spots of grass.

Sunset glow hung in the sky above the range of hills standing beyond the wide, flat fields that stretched in front of them. For awhile there was quiet, then the sleepy sound of birds going to bed in the trees up the hill behind them and the far lowing of a cow could be heard. By the time supper was over, a few pale stars had appeared.

"All of you except Bill and Dolly can stay out awhile longer," said Miss Martin when she got up to go in. "As soon as they finish washing the dishes, all of you come in the living room for family prayer."

When Miss Martin closed the Prayer Book, Billy stretched and yawned widely. "Mercy!" she said. "You're liable to sprain your jaw! You and Dolly and Howard go on to bed, if you want to."

"We do," they said, and left.

The rayovac lamp cast light across Miss Martin's shoulder and seemed to put frost on her white hair as she selected several papers from a box in her lap. Handing them to Hodge, she looked around at the group and said, "These are copies of reports I've made to the Diocese since I've been working up here. Hodge can read them to you and you can learn a little more about the work while I go to bed. I must make an early start tomorrow. So, if you'll listen to Hodge. . ."

"We'll keep each other awake," offered Lilian.

Hattie said, "I'm a good pincher."

Hodge pushed his black framed glasses more firmly onto his nose. "This is part of a 1924 report," He began reading;

"During my first summer in Scottsboro, I learned that in a valley called Sauta Bottom, there were a number of children who had not been to school. By the kindness of a man who owned a farm in that section, I was enabled to visit there. Going from house to house on horseback, I found twenty children who said they would like to come to school, so I agreed to teach them for four weeks.

"At the appointed time, I returned to the delapidated cabin we had procured. It was in such shape that when it rained, we opened umbrellas in the house. Straight benches, made by men in the community, were our only equipment and they were so tall the feet of the smaller children could not touch the floor.

"Even so, fifty-six children between the ages of five and twenty-one, attended. In the afternoon, their fathers and mothers came. What we lacked in equipment we made up in enthusiasm. I have never seen children so hungry and thirsty for information. Some of them could read but not intelligently. Many had never been to school before. Only two knew the Lord's Prayer. Forty-eight had never said a prayer of any kind, nor heard the story of Christ, nor had they seen an American flag. Many had no knowledge of God, except to take His name in vain.

"I began to teach them through nature, the flowers, the trees, the mountains. It was beautiful to see the response, how they seemed to hold their breath for fear they would miss something. Large boys, almost grown, came to school with bunches of flowers without stems, clasped tightly in their fists, to learn their names and uses, and they were delighted to find that many of the herbs from

which medicine is made grew on their mountain.

"During my four weeks with them, they learned the Lord's Prayer, most of the Commandments, and lessons in sanitation, health, and homemaking. Many of them expressed a desire to have 'a little black book' as they called the Prayer Book. I left the only one I had brought with the oldest girl in the house where I boarded as she had expressed a desire to be confirmed.

"When school closed, there were tears in many eyes, and I promised to return. The children had a new outlook on life and I thanked God that He had suffered me to come unto them."

The report ended with the story of Rosa who had given the House of Happiness its name, the story Miss Martin had told at Alabama College.

"All of you get up and stretch before I start the next report," said Hodge, setting an example.

Jimmie started for the kitchen saying, "I'm going to pull up a bucket of water. Anybody want a drink?"

Florence and Helen, who were fascinated by the arrangement for pulling a bucket of water from the spring two hundred yards below were close behind him. Hodge, Hattie, Lilian and Scott followed.

As they all stood on the uncovered side porch enjoying the peace of the moonlit night, the cry of a whip-poor-will came in plaintive waves over the ridge of July Mountain above them. Helen and Florence took turns cranking the windlass that brought the dripping bucket of spring water up the heavy wire that went from the side of the house down into the spring below.

When each had a drink, they followed Hodge back into the living room.

"This report for 1925 is a long one," said Hodge. "You may have noticed that I edited the other one in several spots. I'm going to do the same for this one. Remember, Miss Martin was still living in Scottsboro." He began reading again:

"The first six months of last year were fairly normal ones. Wee Mary, our baby, was christened from the font given us by my own St. John's, Montgomery, from which all of our children have been christened. She was placed with the State Welfare Department and is now in a splendid home.

"Many other children have passed through the House of Happiness, receiving needed medical attention (usually from our good friend, Dr. Boyd) and other necessities (including soap, soup, and hopefully salvation) and returned to their homes. One family of eight, in twos and fours, were frequently cared for during the cold of last winter. Food, clothing and medicine were furnished the entire family for months, part of the time from our stores and the rest from friendly donations. This family is a migratory one, having tramped back and forth from Alabama to Arkansas three times. We hope they are settled but can never be sure. Once before, when everything seemed going well the oldest boy took some money from a local business concern. He was placed in jail and the jailor called me to come as soon as possible. His release was obtained and he was brought to the House of Happiness. When asked why he had taken the money, he replied, 'I was hungry.' "

"Can we blame this eleven year old child for taking money to buy food? He had carried home milk for twin babies and bread for the others.

"The family was moved to a farm twelve miles above town. On one of the hottest days in August, about noon, the mother with twin babies and the boy appeared at the Scottsboro House of Happiness. She said the babies were sick and they were all hungry and she knew where to come to be fed.

"We kept them for two weeks and cared for the babies while the mother and son picked cotton. The Judge had agreed for the boy to stay at home if the mother kept him with her to work on the farm.

"Thank God that we are here to answer the call of the hungry and those in prison.

"In February, when I returned from a Council meeting, I was met at the station by the County Superintendent of Education with the request that I help him out of a trying situation. He said that one of his rural teachers had left his school on Friday, very unceremoniously. The school was in a state of disorder and confusion because a group of the larger boys had caused the untimely departure of the pedagogue. This had always been considered a hard community to teach in, as there was a group of large boys who were hard to handle.

"The next morning, I went out with the Superintendent to take charge of the school. Whenever the boys began to get restless, they were filed out on the school ground and given a regular infantry



drill, with large sticks of wood as rifles. When the drill was over they were too tired to misbehave."

"How in the world does Miss Martin know how to drill infantry?" interrupted Lilian.

"She has the most amazing ability to use all kinds of knowledge," said Hodge. "I'll bet she got those boys interested in knowing how infantry drilled, then challenged them to stand up to it before she drilled them. When she traveled in this part of the state for the Welfare Department, she used to stay at our house in Gunter'sville. She would tell us some tale and before we knew it we were doing something to help around the house because we wanted to. Somehow, she made us want to."

"That's the truth," drawled Scott. In a loving tone of voice he continued, "She's sneaky. Makes you like to work!"

"If she can do that to you . . ." Jimmie gave Scott a poke in the ribs and got such a hard one in return he had to roll over before he had the breath to finish. ". . . she's a wonder!"

"Quiet down! We'll never get through." Hodge waited a minute, then read on,

"Many good gifts have come to the House of Happiness. My call for helpers when I made by last report to the Diocesan Council, was answered by Miss Maggie Alison of Carlowville, who gave her services to us for a Lenten offering, a service of four months. Without Miss Maggie to manage the household in Scottsboro, I would not have been free to go out to Sauta Bottom and teach. And Miss Marcia Boykin of Camden, came to help by teaching kindergarten there.

"The deeds to the property in Sauta Bottom, where we have now moved were obtained in March of 1925. Part of the land is on both sides of July Mountain and part of it is farmland in the valley. On the land was a three room farm house, a barn, and a tumble-down shack that had been used by the tenant as a corn-crib and cow shed. The tenant had rented the place for a year and we did not think it would be right to ask him to give up the house in the middle of the year, so the only available shelter for the Happy Family of five children and two workers was the shack, twelve feet by twenty-five. It took several weeks to move wagon loads of corn cobs and other objectionable material out, put down a rough floor and build a shed on the back.

"The month of April was a nightmare to all of us for it was moving month. Without a moment's notice, a wagon from Sauta Bottom would roll up to the door and the driver would call out, 'I was in town and h'ain't got a load, I thought I'd come by and haul out a few things for you-uns.'

"There would follow a mad rush to get together clothing and furniture that we could do without. Frequently, we sent the very things that our next request for clothing demanded, and always, when any article was misplaced, the children were glad to say, 'It was in the box we sent out to the house.' This kept up for weeks. And of course, whenever I made a trip out in the Happy Flivver, it was loaded to the top.

"The night of moving day, May 1st, was indescribable. We were crowded in the cabin but every soul was tired enough to sleep. The proverbial sardine had nothing on us. Even so, there was great satisfaction for we were on the Church's property and felt that we were at home.

"There was not enough room in the shack to put the last load of furniture so it was set down in the yard. The next morning, rain set in but just at the moment it did three men were passing so we hailed them and asked their help. Soon, everything that the rain would have ruined was safely stored in the barn. God takes care of us and just so nearly every emergency is met.

"The next day was Sunday. We had two guests for dinner and at least a dozen callers in the afternoon. They said, 'We-uns just come over to see how you-uns was fixed.' Really it was worth seeing."

A loud yawn broke into the reading. Hodge stopped and looked at Scott, the guilty party.

"Let's stop and go to bed," said Scott promptly. "Can't we finish tomorrow night?"

Hodge looked around inquiringly at the others.

"I'm so sleepy, I can't take in what you're reading," said Lilian.

All the others agreed.

"This is a long report," he told them. "There are four more pages. We'll go to bed and finish tomorrow." He put the papers back into their box and all of them went quickly off to bed.

## Chapter 7

The alarm clock at the House of Happiness was never called the Happy Alarm Clock. At four A.M. when it always went off, it was called many things, but nothing complimentary.

On the first day of the summer school session, the young people went about the different tasks Miss Martin had set them, in order to be ready when the pupils arrived. She was to make a visit to a sick neighbor up the cove so that she could come back and report to Dr. Boyd by telephone before she began teaching. The time set for the opening of school was nine o'clock, but as predicted, the pupils began arriving by seven-thirty. Lilian had been given the job of getting the books in the library in order on shelves that had finally been built around the walls of one room of the schoolhouse.

"Be down there by seven," Miss Martin had said, "then you can look after the pupils as they come. Get them to help you." She had given Florence and Helen the job of leading everyone in singing from eight o'clock until she could get there. "Let everyone read the words aloud, together, in those old hymnals. That's one way to teach reading."

Scott, and Jimmie had farm chores to do, Hodge had letters to write for Miss Martin; Billy, Howard and Dolly were to attend school after they did their housework. Hattie was to type the letters Hodge composed and she was in charge of dinner. Miss Martin had given her special instructions, "There'll be some women coming to the adult school. I'm counting on you to begin teaching them to read in these cook books I got free from a baking powder company. Here they are, in the pantry. Let them help you get dinner ready. Use one of the recipes in the cook book."

"Goodness! Miss Martin, I'll never be able to do all that!"

"Well, do the best you can. That's all God expects," she said, as she started down the hill, carrying the riding skirt over her arm.

Evening prayer was said by a tired group that night. The reading of the rest of the report was put off again. "Wait until the end of the week. Maybe we can slow down on Saturday and won't be so tired," Miss Martin suggested.

Saturday did turn out to be a less strenuous day, so that night Hodge said, "We ought to get that report finished. When Evening Prayer was over and Miss Martin and the younger members of the household had gone to bed, Hodge went to the box and got the four sheets he hadn't read. Pulling the lamp closer, he said, "You remember we stopped just as the happy family had moved into the shack. I'm going to skip Miss Martin's enumeration of the numerous items packed into the shack. All of us except Helen and Florence saw it, and you can read it for yourself later. Here goes," and he began to read,

"Back of the shack, we found an almost perfect altar, a large rock rising behind some level ones. We call it our sanctuary.

"We are reasonably comfortable, and if we are true disciples of our Lord who was born in a manger, can we not for a few short months live in a stable? The work is hard of course and everything is crude and inconvenient. Our days are full of toil with few hours of ease. . ."

"Yea . . ." broke in Jimmie.

"Amen!" said Scott.

Hodge ignored them and went on reading.

"But much good has come out of our humble surroundings. The people among whom we labor feel that we are not proud because we are willing to endure the hardships that they endure, for many of their homes are no better than our shack.

"Just a short time ago, the daintiest, prettiest little woman was found in a mere shack, sleeping on sacks stuffed with straw and lying on planks across an old bedstead. Not a sheet, and only three thin quilts for winter covering. She was expecting a little one in a few weeks.

"A job was found for her husband for two dollars a day, and at the end of the week the worker went with him to get his pay and to suggest the best way to spend it. A mattress and springs were the first articles purchased, that is, the first payment was made on them. The mattress was put on the back seat of the flivver and the springs tied securely on the side, and together with the husband, were safely delivered.

"We have much to be thankful for. We make trips in the community on our good Methodist horse, Dixie. All summer, while others were hauling water for miles, our ever-flowing Birdsong spring was a great comfort not only to us but to all the community. Our limestone 'blowing cave' registers 59 degrees, no matter how hot it is on the outside. Here, in an old icebox (with the door open) we keep our Episcopalian-milk and butter given by our good Presbyterian cow. Fresh meat will keep there for several days. We would have been cooler in the hot weather if we had had time to linger near the openings between the rocks near the cave. Cool air from the subterranean passages under our mountain flows steadily from these openings.

"The work moves slowly . . ."

"What!" - "Slowly, did you say?" came from his disrespectful audience.

"Pipe down!" Hodge looked at them, pushed his glasses up and read on,

"We have much prejudice to overcome and many adverse reports to live down. Many believe that the worker gets a thousand dollars for every child who passes through the House of Happiness, that our income is unlimited, and many other things quite as unreasonable. Little by little we are overcoming the effects of these reports, by actual service.

"In one case, an entire family of eight had typhoid fever. I went to the home daily, sometimes twice, often spending the night. The floor had to be scrubbed and bedding and clothing had to be furnished, as well as food, for weeks. A mosquito bar was lent them, to keep flies and mosquitoes from the father and seventeen year old son who were the sickest.

"After the illness was over, the father was asked by a neighbor who had not even been to see them while they were ill, if he knew that the worker was a Catholic. At that time the people of the valley were superstitiously afraid of the Roman Catholic Church.

"'Catholic or no Catholic', was the reply. 'She's the only one that helped us, but I happen to know she h'ain't no Catholic!'"

"This family had a large connection, and through this opportunity for service, the Church has earned the friendship of them all. Many similar services keep your worker busy every day and often far into the night.

"Another most distressing case was that of a family of five who wandered into Sauta Bottom from the mountains of Tennessee. One of their twin babies was taken ill as they first came into this area and they stopped at the home of one of our neighbors up the valley whose family numbered eight.

"I was called to the phone in the shack and a female voice at highest pitch said, "There's a woman at my house with her husband and three children and one of the babies is sick. I want you to come and get them!"

"She was told that it would be impossible as there was no place for them to sleep in the shack. 'Well, you come here quick,' she screamed, 'or I'll just die! I can't stand it!'"

"I told her I would come at once, although I had just come in and hadn't had time to take off my hat. It was about seven P.M. With my supper in one hand and my doctor bag (as the children call it) in the other, I got back in the fliver and hastened to prevent the untimely death of the mother of six and to minister to the sick baby.

"The scene I found is indelibly impressed on my memory. It was in a small shack with its walls dark from the smoke of torches that had in times past been stuck in its cracks. A mother, with her emaciated, dying baby held close to her breast was rocking back and forth in a straight chair and sobbing aloud. On two filthy beds and on quilts on the floor, eleven human beings were lying, making thirteen in the small room. The only light came from a small old lamp with a hole in one side and without a chimney. The odor in the room was suffocating as both door and the only window were closed. I immediately opened these and sent for Dr. Boyd although the baby looked beyond human help.

"It lingered until three the next morning. All night long, I sat moistening the parched lips of the baby which had been placed on a dirty pillow (covered by a clean sheet I had brought) in a chair. When the end came, the mother was so exhausted she fell asleep in a few minutes after I persuaded her to lie down by her husband on one of the unspeakable beds.

"Then I prepared the baby for burial and sat, the only one awake, in this room with twelve people and the little corpse, until daylight.

"The child was buried that afternoon, after one of the worker's Hard Shell Baptist friends had

read the burial service from the Prayer Book. When it was over, he turned and said to me, "Those are the most beautiful prayers I've ever heard. I'm glad you asked me to read them."

"A place on a farm over the river was found for the wandering family and at last resort, they were all well. It remains to be seen how long they will stay."

Hodge said, through a yawn, "The last page of this report seems to be missing."

"That's good!" was Scott's prompt response. "It's time we went to bed."

Nobody disagreed. They went quietly out into the dog-run where a full moon had laid a white carpet on the rough boards. By its light, they found their way up the steps.

## Chapter 8

On one of the last days of the summer, Miss Martin sent Lilian and Billy up the valley to visit a young man with tuberculosis. Lilian rode Dixie, the House of Happiness horse; Miss Martin had borrowed a horse for Billy. They carried two watermelons in a sack attached to the pommel of Lilian's saddle and peas and potatoes in gunny sacks across the neck of Billy's horse.

Even though it was early afternoon and the sun was hot there was a slight breeze across the flat valley fields and the movement of their horses stirred the air against their faces. On the dirt of the trails across the fields the horses made no sound.

"It's a good thing you came, too, Billy. I'd never have figured out which of these trails to take."

Billy grinned and said, "We'd better go a little faster, if we want to have time to visit awhile and get home before dark."

When they urged their horses to go faster, they broke into a trot and it wasn't long before the sack of watermelons slipped from the string holding it and hit the ground with a squashy sound.

Billy jumped down. Opening the sack and looking in, he said, "One of them is broke but we might be able to eat it. The other's all right." He tied the sack to the saddle again and they walked their horses the rest of the way.

The young couple and their baby were glad to have company, and the broken watermelon was eaten at once. Lilian was careful to handle the melon that she and Billy ate. Everyone ate with his fingers.

The young man's lung trouble was so advanced that he could not lie down. Day and night he spent in an old rocking chair stuffed with pillows and an old quilt where the slats were out. He held his six month's old baby in his lap and let her chew on his knife.

On the road home, Lilian and Billy let their horses run. The two carried them in a smooth and rapid single-foot.

The incredibly full days of the summer had passed very swiftly they all felt as they gathered around Miss Martin on their last night in Sauta Bottom. The lamp on the bookshelf lighted the faces of the young people, all turned toward the woman who sat, as usual, in one of the over-stuffed chairs.

She said, "I just can't believe it's time for you to leave. What will we do without you?" She looked at Billy and Howard and Scott and asked, "What will you boys do without Jimmy? I don't know what I'll do without all of you, and especially Hodge." She looked at him seriously. "You've helped me to carry some of my heaviest burdens this summer."

"Where?" asked Scott, the irrepressible.

"It's been a good summer." Hodge polished his glasses, looking down at them.

"Our summer school was good because you girls helped with so many things. With Florence leading the music and Helen the recreation, Lilian in the library and Hattie writing my letters and supervising the cooking. . . O, how I hate the thought of writing my letters again. . . I hope Miss Nettie will be coming soon. She's a wonderful letter writer, too."

"We'll just have to stop the play nights until next summer. Cotton's beginning to open and everybody'll be too tired to play."

"Aw!," said Billy, Dolly and Howard.

Hodge said, "The adult school was good."

"I'll never forget our eighty-two year old scholar learning to read her Bible," Florence added. "That seemed like a miracle."

"Her face, when she said she'd been waiting eighty-two years . . . that's worth any work I did," Helen said.

"What else will you remember from this summer?" Miss Martin wanted to know.

Lilian's brown eyes were shining as she remembered children that she had taught whenever Miss Martin was called away, which had been often, "I'll never forget the children," she said softly.

"Exploring the cave is something I won't forget," said Jimmie.

"That was a real adventure," Hattie added, "sliding down that hole, walking around in those big rooms down under the mountain then getting on our knees to crawl in water-into another big room. We were in there a long time and never did get to the end of it. How long was it before that dye we put in the water came out in the spring?"

"Two hours," Scott answered.

"I thought I'd never push myself back up that shaft. It was so narrow I had to push myself up with my elbows," Lilian looked at one elbow which showed a faint scar.

Helen, with a characteristic boyish gesture, ran her hand through her short hair. "That stream must really twist and turn to take that long to travel what on top of the ground wouldn't be two hundred yards. I wish I'd been here when you explored the cave." She looked at Miss Martin with admiration. "You're the only person your . . . well, you age . . . who'd have organized that kind of thing. . . at least the only one I know. My mother wouldn't!"

"Dad wrote that I must have bats in my belfry when I wrote him about it," laughed Lilian, "but I wouldn't have missed it, even if I did think I was stuck for life coming out."

Miss Martin put her feet on the corner of the ottoman nearest her, the one occupied by Hattie, as she said, "My father was a wonderful person. He encouraged me to try new things and I always have."

The last thought made her sit erect, her chin thrust forward and slightly to one side, showing one of her chief characteristics, determination. Patience? Yes. Willingness to do more than her share? Yes. But when a task was laid out there was no mistaking her steady drive, with humor and love and understanding, but with determination to see it completed in the best possible way and using every scrap of material available.

They all had clearly in their memories one of her favorite sayings, "Gather up the remnants, that nothing be lost." She meant people, too. She believed that from the tiniest, weakest child to the dirtiest, most sinful, unrepentant old man, all should be gathered up and helped. Her heart was open to every sort of need.

When she closed the Prayer Book and sent them to bed, they left her reluctantly.

After they had gone, she sat with her head back for a moment, letting her tiredness show since there was no one to see it. She would miss the energy and enthusiasm that had surrounded her all summer, but she looked forward to a lessening of responsibility, and to the sharing of it with Miss Nettie, who had shared it last winter and was returning soon to share it again.

## Chapter 9

Before all the red and yellow leaves fell from the maples that grew among the cedars on July Mountain, Miss Nettie returned. She found that the summer helpers had done much to turn 'the board house' into Happy Hollow School.

During her first week back, Miss Martin, after supper one night, handed her some papers saying, "I wish you'd look over my notes for our next article in the Alabama Churchman, and see if we need to add anything."

Miss Nettie sat down and began to read:

"The work now includes all types of social service; visiting and caring for the sick, strengthening the weak, mending the broken, supplying food and clothing for the needy.

"The cottage, or board house, has been converted into a combined community and school house where the public school is now taught and public gatherings held. . . The worker, for two years, has given her services to the school without remuneration as it was only a one teacher school and increased enrollment demanded the services of two teachers. We hope to persuade the Board of Education to make ours a two teacher school. Education is being stressed as it is the channel through which the work will progress.

"Through the cooperation of Auburn, and the State Division of Exceptional Education it has been possible for two summers to conduct Home Economic and Opportunity Schools.

"An important phase of education is recreation. When our work was established on the Church property, one of the first things organized was supervised play. Everyone seemed hungry for the simple games and singing.

"In good weather, when crops aren't being planted or harvested, a weekly play night is held at the school. Drop-the-handkerchief is a great favorite even though the circle of people is often large and the ground upon which they stand is very uneven.

"Miss Nettie and I have learned the words and the way of singing games that are known to the people of the valley. These are played with great joy." This was all Miss Martin had written.

At this point, Miss Nettie thought, "We ought to put the words of a ballad or a singing game in one of our reports." She relaxed and remembered the first time she had played 'Goin' Down the River.' Someone had suggested it and she had said, "Well, tell us how."

"Start with a couple in the middle and all of us hold hands and move around in a circle, singing," said Bill Jack.

"You choose a partner and get in the middle," she said.

"I choose Nora," he said and everyone began moving around them singing, that is, everyone except herself.

"Goin' down the river,  
Goin' down below,  
We're going down the river  
To old Shiloh,  
Where green coffee grows  
On a whiteoak tree  
And the river flows  
With brandy-o.  
Come choose you one  
To roam with you,  
And feed her on  
Sweet candy-o."

The circle stopped and the couple chose another couple to stand in the center with them. Then the circle moved again and sang,

"We have four prisoners here in jail,  
We have four prisoners here in jail,  
We have four prisoners here in jail,  
Turn about ladies, turn."

Everyone dropped hands, the circle turned and moved in the other direction as everyone sang the first three lines over, ending with, "Go on and get out of the ring." The first couple got out and the game started over. When they went around the next time, she had been singing with them.

And it was on another play night, she remembered that she had begun to learn their favorite ballad, 'On Top of Old Smoky.' She had a good memory and let the words sing themselves to her as she continued to relax in the overstuffed chair.

"On top of old Smoky,  
All kivered with snow,  
I lost my true lover  
By courtin' too slow.  
For courtin' is pleasure  
And partin' is grief,  
But a false hearted lover  
Is worse than a thief.  
A thief he will rob you  
And take all you have  
But a false hearted lover  
Will bring you to your grave.  
The grave will decay you  
And bring you to dust.  
There's not a boy in ten thousand

A poor girl can trust.  
They'll tell you they love you  
And give you heart's ease,  
But when your back's turned  
They'll court who they please.  
It's a-rainin' and hailin'  
And the moon gives no light,  
Your horses can't travel  
This long, lonesome night.  
Go put up your horses  
and feed them some hay,  
And come and sit by me  
As long as you stay.  
My horse's not hungry  
And won't eat your hay,  
I'll drive them on further  
And feed on the way.  
I'm goin' back to Old Smoky  
And write you my mind.  
My mind is to marry  
And leave you behind.  
Pure as the dew drops  
Up on the Great Horn,  
Last night you were with me,  
Tonight, I'm alone."

The night before she left for her summer at home, they had sung it with a large crowd of neighbors at the school house. She remembered asking Miss Martin if the same words were used for the ballad all through the mountains, and Miss Martin didn't know.

Tonight, she'd felt as if she hadn't been away when Miss Martin's familiar words, "Are you too tired to let me finish the report for the Alabama Churchman?" came as they got up from supper. And Tom's call for Miss Martin to come to the barn, soon after she began dictating, because Dixie had stepped on a nail, was also a familiar part of the pattern of their life at the House of Happiness. Now, the voices of Miss Martin, Tom and Billy could be heard as they climbed the mountain. When they reached the house, the woman was the only one who came into the living room. She sank into an overstuffed chair and said, "Excuse me," as she slipped off her shoes and put her feet on an ottoman.

"Can we finish?" she asked. "If you can get it down, you may be able to type it tomorrow while I'm gone. I must be away all day."

"I think I can stay awake long enough to get it down," Miss Nettie said, picking up her pencil.

Without further words, dictation continued. "A typical social service case we have tried to help is a family of four, a mother and three children, all ill with typhoid fever. When the worker arrived, it was found that the family did not possess a teaspoon, nor a glass, or a lamp, nor even a wash pan. The only thing from which medicine could be given was the bottom of a bottle, the neck of which had been cut off by tying a kerosene string around it, burning that, and then breaking the neck off.

"The mother and children were on two old bedsteads with planks across them and sacks of straw for mattresses. The mother was delirious. They did not know what sheets were.

"As many of the necessary things as possible were taken to them from the House of Happiness. The mattress and springs from one of our children's beds was taken to them. As we were taking the things out, I heard one of our boys say, "Keep your shirt on, or she'll give it away!" The bedding was supplied from stock given by Women's Auxiliary groups over the diocese, to be loaned in cases of sickness. The House of Happiness also furnished provisions for the family for two months.

"It was impossible to get anyone to help with this family so the worker moved her cot and stayed almost constantly, day and night, coming home once a day to get a bath and food. A friend of the worker made this possible by staying at the House of Happiness during this time.

"All four patients recovered and often come on Saturdays to help with the work. They feel that a day at the House of Happiness is the next thing to going to Heaven."

"Well," added Miss Martin, stretching and yawning, "that ought to finish it. You might add that ninety-two children have passed through the House of Happiness, thirteen baptized and three confirmed. Let's go to bed!"

"Where you get the strength to nurse these typhoid cases, and keep the work going, I don't see," said Miss Nettie as they climbed the stairs.

Miss Martin hesitated, then said "God gives it to me. I couldn't keep going if He didn't."

## Chapter 10

Just before the household left for school one morning, the House of Happiness signal came on the phone. Billy answered and, holding the receiver toward Miss Martin, said, "It's for you."

After listening for some time, she said, "All right, I'll be there at ten o'clock." Turning toward Miss Nettie she said, "I'll have to go to Juvenile Court this morning and I may be bringing some children home with me, one girl and three boys. Do you think we can get them in?"

"We'll take care of the boys," said Scott.

"We can use the cot for the girl," said Miss Nettie. "It certainly is a useful thing."

"I'll go to school and get my classes started before I go. Will you let two of your big girls take over about nine o'clock?"

"We'll work it out," said Miss Nettie as she shut the back door and followed Miss Martin down the path to the school.

It was several nights later before Miss Martin had time to tell Miss Nettie about the four children, now living with them. After the children had gone to bed and they were in the living room, she said, "The oldest of our new quartet 'stole' a mule and was trying to get to some relatives. The mother and father died within three weeks of each other, of pneumonia, and the four children wandered for days without food, except walnuts, which they picked up in the woods. A mountain neighbor took them in but couldn't keep them, because her own family crowded her cabin.

"To get to her cabin, I rode fifteen miles in a buggy, then walked three. The children were dressed in the rags you saw them in. Before this neighbor took them in they had slept in barns or cowsheds."

After the four had been with them a month, Miss Martin admitted to Miss Nettie that her favorite prescription of 'soap, soup and salvation' had only partially administered to their ills; that the salvation was going to take a long time. It was on a Sunday night that she asked Miss Nettie to make application for the two older boys at the Boy's Industrial School, and for the two younger children at The Episcopal Church Home in Mobile.

Then, she told Miss Nettie what had happened in Sunday School that afternoon, in Scottsboro. "While I was playing the organ, Scott saw the oldest boy take all the money out of my purse. We got it all back, after Sunday School, but that, added to Bill's discovery of the things the other children have missed, in the second boy's bed, makes me know that they need more help than we can give them here."

Two weeks later, Miss Nettie drove to town to meet Miss Martin who was returning from Birmingham where she had taken the two older boys.

Driving home, she told Miss Nettie, "On the way to the school, at the junction where we changed trains, we went into a lunch room to have a hurried lunch. The older boy asked if he might say the blessing, and I told him he might. All the other stools at the counter were filled with rough railroad men who bowed their heads as that unfortunate boy invoked God's blessing on the food, and prayed that the needs of others might be provided. Those men had tears in their eyes, Miss Nettie!"

Miss Nettie's round face broke into a smile. "That's amazing. You never know what to expect from these children."

"You certainly don't. He probably did God's work, right at that lunch counter."

"By the way," said Miss Nettie, "we had a note from Wilmer Hall saying the two younger ones were settling in. I'm glad your friend could take them at the time you took the boys."

"So am I. I'm so thankful to get all of them settled, I'm going to put an offering in my blue box tonight."

When she could, Miss Martin made brief notes of things that happened, in a dog-eared notebook. When she had to make talks, or write reports, she had plenty of material. Several nights after her return, she had it beside her as she began an article for the Alabama Churchman. After she had written of the four children who so recently passed through the House of Happiness, she said, "Here



are a few people the House of Happiness has served lately," and then more or less copied her list,  
"A mother walked twenty miles to bring twin babies to us to be nursed and doctored.  
"A wife came asking to have her husband who had deserted her brought back.  
"A mother brought her thirteen year old daughter who had married.  
"A husband came to ask that his wife and baby who had left him be brought back.  
"A man came running for the worker when two men were about to kill each other with picks in a nearby gravel pit.

"The weatherman in Montgomery wrote that there had been a sub-station at Scottsboro for forty years, but if the worker didn't get someone to take the work, it would be discontinued." Her blue eyes laughed as she wrote the next sentence, "Daniel Boone may have killed more bears than we have, but he had bears and we don't." At this point, Miss Nettie came in with an armful of school work and sat down on the other side of the table.

"I've been trying to think to ask you," she said, "what became of the old man who threatened to shoot you?"

"I had to ask the Judge to put him under a peace bond and he seems to have left this part of the state." She went back to her writing but soon looked up and asked, "Did you know we planned to have a large building that would have been community house as well as our home, when we first came out here?"

"Why didn't you?"

"Some of the thinking in the community came to us by the grape-vine and it began to seem unwise. I suddenly realized what a contrast such a big house would be to all the houses in the valley. When we planned this double-pen log house with a dog-run everybody approved."

"The way you built it with the help of so many in the community made it seem more like their own," responded Miss Nettie slowly. "Also, building it of material from the place makes it a more natural part of the valley. There's something very satisfying about it."

Miss Nettie went back to grading papers and Miss Martin reluctantly went back to her article.

"The work moves slowly," she wrote. "With two teachers, we hope to get an eight month's school instead of the seven months now allotted us. When the county superintendent asked me to come out here the school was only allotted four months. Even that was cut short when the teacher was urged out of the community at the point of a shotgun. We can see some progress at times but at others the way seems long and hard, times when our understanding is darkened and our vision fails. When that happens, we slip away to our Sanctuary and ask God to grant us the wisdom that deepens, the faith that enlarges, the trust that will keep us going when the way isn't clear. We come away with quiet confidence that followers of Christ can always have enough power and resource to do their needful tasks . . . if they ask for it."

"It's the last part that is so hard," she thought as she gathered her material together.

## Chapter 11

Deep in the year, Miss Nettie was giving six weeks tests to her upper grades. They were writing their answers to the questions written on the small blackboard, when she went to the corner of the room for the fourth grade Geography lesson. The six children were all sitting on the same bench.

"What country do we live in?" she asked them.

They looked at her in silence and perplexity. Finally, Maggie Bell said timidly, "Jackson?"

Miss Nettie accepted that by saying, "Jackson is the county we live in. I want to know what our whole big country is?" Then she asked, "Are we Germans?"

"No," they all said.

"Are we Englishmen?"

Again a unanimous, "No."

"Are we Frenchmen?"

"No."

"Well, what are we?"

"Americans!" they shouted, so that all those taking tests stopped and looked at them.

"Get back to work," Miss Nettie turned and said, "we'll try to be quieter." Then, turning back to the geography class, she said, "All of you get your tablets. We're going to write the words to a song and tomorrow we'll start learning to sing it." She slowly gave them the words to 'America, the Beautiful.' "I don't want you to ever forget that you are Americans and live in America."

When she told Miss Martin about the geography lesson as they walked to the house together after

school, she said, "Do you suppose the county office might have a United States map we could borrow?"

"We can ask," said Miss Martin, "and while we're about it, we might ask for an American flag."

"If they don't have them to lend, could we put an appeal in the Alabama Churchman?"

"I don't see why not. It's hard to believe that children can get to the fourth grade and not know what country they live in."

Her eyes began to shine as she remembered a box of books that had come to them last summer. "It seems to me where were some copies of National Geographic in that box in the corner of the 'library.' Let your class unpack it for their next geography lesson. There may be some maps in them."

"I might be able to teach all my grades Geography from them at the same time. We will certainly unpack that box tomorrow."

Miss Martin said, "I have to make a talk to the Woman's Auxiliary next month, in Birmingham, and I will make a note to ask them for some school needs."

The school must have gotten what it needed because the June 1927 Alabama Churchman carried only the following from the House of Happiness:

"Our most urgent need now is for girls dresses of gingham (sizes 8 to 16), and low-heeled, broad-toed slippers for girls. We have nothing left in either of these lines and every day we have calls for them. We have supplied twenty-five children with clothing all winter. Otherwise, they could not have attended school. They bring us eggs and chickens, or work for us on Saturdays, as they wish to feel that they are paying something for what they receive. Their spirit of self-respect and helpfulness is beautiful to see.

"I appreciate your prayers and interest in the work here and only wish that I could express my thanks to all of you in person.

"Augusta Martin."

When the school was out, Miss Nettie was packing to join her family, who had moved from Memphis to Yazoo City, Mississippi. She looked across at Miss Martin as she folded a candlewick bedspread that she was taking her mother. "I'm going to see if I can get some orders for Mrs. Black. When the people at home see this spread, I believe they'll want one."

"Spinning thread for it, then making it, is a real art," said Miss Martin, "and just having to give her a sheet for yours and one for hers was a real bargain."

"I think so, too", said Miss Nettie. "Did you hear what she said to me when she brought my spread?"

"No, I didn't."

"She said, 'You looked so pore when you first come, I were afeered you wouldn't last out the winter, but now you look real stout!'" Miss Nettie chuckled and Miss Martin let out her 'hoo' of laughter.

## Chapter 12

Another year slipped through the dog-run at the House of Happiness and went over the mountain into history. Augusta Martin had trouble admitting it as she sat down to write another annual report. "I do nothing but write reports," she grumbled. For once, she had the whole house to herself. This was so unusual, she was so in the habit of shutting her mind to outside distractions, that the very quiet made it hard for her to begin.

She got up and slightly turned the big log in the fireplace so that fresh flames climbed over it, front and back. Then, standing the heavy iron poker to one side, she swept the hearth. After pushing an ottoman in front of her chair, she sat down again.

"Can't think of another thing to do to put off writing," she said, and put her face in her hands to ask for help. The crackle of the fire was the only sound in the house. After a time, she pushed herself back, put her feet up, and began to write.

"For the benefit of those who may not know about our work . . ." she began, as she did many of her reports, with a brief description of how the work had started, then she sat for a time looking into the fire. She decided to describe the inside of the house and looked lovingly around at the doe-colored,

peeled-pine logs of the walls chinked with cement, briefly through the large double windows in front into the clear sky of the fall afternoon, back to the comfortable furniture, the large sofa upholstered in the small print cotton brocade as were the two over stuffed chairs, her own two heirloom hassocks, the chest of drawers, the ladder-back, mountain-made chairs, the apple-green, pie crust, tilt-top table she'd gotten for a song in a second-hand store in Scottsboro; even the grey stoneware churn sitting at the end of the hearth where the heat would help the milk turn, blended with everything else.

"Providence must have been shaping me for this work, ever since I was born," she mused. "Because I was a frail child and the doctor told mother and father to let me lead an out-door existence and they let me ride anything . . . and climb anything . . . and get by with just about anything, if I argued long enough. Since I was the youngest of many, they must have been tired of arguing with children by that time." She sighed and went back to her writing,

"The shack was used as the House of Happiness for a year, while construction of our permanent home was begun. The worker felt that the building needed direct supervision and also that the neighborhood would be more interested in future work done at the house, if each had contributed something to the construction. The men worked in groups, with picnic dinner served on work days to those who helped in riving boards for the roof and covering the house. On the day the house was covered, there were eighteen men working.

"Our house is a typical log house with dog-run, or open hall, between two large rooms downstairs, and a half story above of two rooms the same size with a hall between. The huge stone chimney is built of native sandstone, with a mantel-piece or 'fireboard' made of a hewn log.

"After the farmhouse, called locally the board house, was vacated, it was remodeled by special gifts, to be used as the schoolhouse. In this building, which eventually will be the community house, is a nice library furnished by the Church Periodical Club and many friends. This has been a great inspiration to the children of the school as well as to the adults in the community. For the adults who have not gone beyond the fourth grade, we have an Opportunity School in the summer. We encourage everyone who will to borrow books from our library.

"In this school and community house, Sunday School meets every Sunday afternoon. When it is over, we have community singing, which is thoroughly enjoyed, especially by the men. Here, on Friday nights, we often have recreation when all ages join in games and singing.

"Being cared for in the House of Happiness at present are seven children, the youngest a baby of three months. We are not an institution but care for children temporarily, until their lives can be adjusted. Sometimes, they need to be built up physically, sometimes we have children who have been deserted or neglected by their parents. Others are mentally deficient and must be placed in state institutions. In cooperation with the State Child Welfare Department and various orphans homes and state institutions we place these children where they may develop into good Christian citizens.

"Since the work began, about one hundred and twenty-five children have passed through, or been in, the House of Happiness for varying lengths of time. We hear from many of them regularly, and all refer to the House of Happiness as home, and ask when they can come back home . . . .

"While the work grows slowly, we feel that it is truly the Master's work, for we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, take in strangers, and visit the sick and those in prison. His blessing is upon it. We have been able to have confirmation classes for the Bishop every year and many of the children have been baptized. It is our hope to build up the underprivileged of these Appalachian Highlands into well-rounded Christian citizens, in the fourfold development of wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men."

The woman put her head back with a sigh, thankful to be finished. Thoughts shaped themselves in the words of the Te Deum, "We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship thee . . . ."\*

The ring of the phone awakened her. She let it ring again, to be sure that it was the House of Happiness signal, then went to answer. When she picked up the receiver and heard the singing of the wires, the crowing of a rooster, and several distinct clicks, she knew that practically everyone on the rural telephone line between Sauta Bottom and Scottsboro had their receiver down and was listening in, weakening the connection. This nearly always happened when the House of Happiness was called, for their calls usually proved interesting. This time, the voice at the other end of the line was so faint she could barely hear it.

\*Prayer Book, page 10

The ring of the phone awakened her. She let it ring again, to be sure that it was the House of Happiness signaling, then went to answer. When she picked up the receiver and heard the singing of the wires, the crowing of a rooster, and several distinct clicks, she knew that practically everyone on the line had their receivers replaced. The crowing rooster could still be heard. She waited and heard one or two receivers replaced. The crowing rooster could still be heard. The conversation had to be carried on by shouting.

"Just a minute!" she shouted into the mouthpiece. Then in a more normal voice, she said, "If all of you will hang up, so that I can hear, I'll call back and tell you the news."

### Chapter 13

Later that month, in the fall of 1927, Lilian Prout came back to spend the winter and help teach the school. Miss Martin met her joyfully, and on the way out to Sauta Bottom gave her news of the children she had known. Dolly was living with Miss Maggie Alison and going to school in Carlsville; Scott was living with one of her friends in Gadsden and going to high school there; Howard had gone to live with a member of his family; Billy was still at the house, with three new children, Tom, Katherine and Teddy Reed, brothers and sisters of Martha who was away in boarding school. Their mother was ill and their father could not care for them.

"When does school start?" Lilian wanted to know.

"Not until the middle of October. I wish you had a friend who could come up here and help us. I think we're going to have a large enrollment," she said as the car passed the schoolhouse.

"That's a nice big room you've added to the school. Having that should be a help in teaching." She turned to face Miss Martin, "I was talking to a friend in Selma, just before I left, about the work up here. She said she wished she could come with me, but I'm not sure she meant it."

"Who is she? Can she teach school?"

"She's Margaret Morrison and she's had one year of college."

"Write and ask her if she'll come spend the winter. We can use any help she can give us." She stopped the car in front of the barn, and Lilian opened the gate so that she could drive the car down under the shed.

As they climbed the hill together, Lilian said, "I'll write her tonight, and get it off in the morning."

Lilian had been there three weeks, when Miss Martin got the message of a death in her family. After hurriedly packing, she was driven to the station in Scottsboro. During the drive in, she tried to think of all the things needing care.

"The old sow is sick, but Bill and Tom can take care of her."

"When the milk in the churn turns, churn it."

"How can you tell?" Lilian asked.

"Tilt the churn and if it looks solid, like clabber, it's ready. Get Katherine to look at it. And let the children help churn." Then she turned and looked at the small boy beside her. "Teddy," she said, putting her arm around his small shoulders, "is a right spoiled six year old. If he won't mind you, you may have to tingle his legs with a switch. Tom and Katherine can usually get him to mind. They'll help you with him."

They drove in silence for a few miles, then she said, "Mrs. Lindsay's baby is due soon and I promised her I'd come. I'll be back as soon as I can," she said at the station.

With sinking heart, Lilian saw the train leave. Brought up in a small town in the Black Belt, in a family that always employed a cook, one who wanted children kept out of the kitchen, she knew nothing about cooking and less about farming. With a college degree and one year of teaching experience, she could face the teaching, but managing four strange young people, and knowing that calls for help would come from the community, she realized acutely how incapable she was. However, she was the only person available and would have to do the best she could. Six years before, Lilian had turned to God for help when she was in deep distress and full of bitterness and anger, and help and a sure sense of God's love had come. But she hadn't learned to turn to him for guidance and strength in the common, every-day problems of life. Augusta Martin was to help her learn this, but now she wasn't there.

She and the children went back to the car and got out the list of things they needed to do before they drove back to the country.

That night, after supper, when the heavy churn was tilted and contents examined, Lillian thought the milk looked like clabber. The children were consulted, with the exception of Billy and Tom who were at the barn, and they thought churning should begin.

"Miss Martin makes us scald the dasher," said Katherine, so scalding water was poured over it, and the steady ker-thump, ker-thump of the dasher began.

Lilian enjoyed it, until the muscles of her arms began to feel dead. "Will you take it awhile?" she asked Katherine.

Thirteen year old, black-eyed, brown-haired Katherine took over and the rhythm was smoother. After awhile she said to Tom who had come in, "Will you do it? My arms have wore out."

"Worn," said Lillian, automatically, and went on with the letter she was writing.

Tom's kep-thumps were as steady as Katherine's but more vigorous and it was while he had it that milk began pushing under the lid and running down the side of the churn.

"What's wrong?" asked Lillian.

"It must be too full," said Katherine, "Let's dip some out."

A boiler full was dipped out and Tom churned again. In a few minutes, the same thing happened again, and another boiler full was dipped out.

When the milk began running down the sides of the churn again, Billy spoke for the first time. "That milk ain't ready to churn. You'd best let it set awhile longer. You're just whippin' it up."

The milk from the boilers was poured back into the churn, the churn washed off, and the floor mopped. Then everyone went into the dog-run and up the stairs to bed.

In the middle of the next morning, Billy and Tom came up from their work at the barn with very sober faces. They sat down on the side steps and waited until Lillian had cranked a bucket of water up, before they said anything.

Then Tom said, "The old sow died last night, Miss Lillian," and Billy reached for the bucket and said, "I'll take it in."

Katherine was sweeping the kitchen. They told her.

"What should we do?" asked Lillian.

"Can't do nothin' but bury her," said Billy.

"Can you boys managed that?"

"Yes'm," they said, and went back down the hill.

Lilian was getting expert at opening cans. For dinner, she opened two and heated the contents on the wood burning stove. With light bread and jelly, that was dinner.

"This ain't very good," said Teddy as he ate.

After several days of such eating, Katherine asked, "Couldn't we have some turnip greens?" but when they went to the garden, the greens had dried up. Katherine stayed to work the garden, and Lillian went back up the hill, opened two cans of turnip greens, put them in a saucepan on the range, in which the fire was burning briskly. Then she went back down to help Katherine in the garden.

When the two went back to the house, after working for an hour, they were greeted with a very bad smell as they approached the kitchen door. . . burned turnip greens.

"Did you put some water in with them?" asked Katherine, sadly.

"No," said Lillian. "There was liquid in the can. I thought that was enough."

That afternoon a call came for Miss Martin from the Lindsay home. Mrs. Lindsay's baby was on the way and they wanted Miss Martin to come. Lillian explained that Miss Martin was gone and why.

The caller said, "Well, you come," and hung up.

While Lillian put on the voluminous riding skirt, the boys saddled the horse. She was so afraid of what she was facing that her hands trembled and she had trouble buttoning the skirt down the side.

"Dear God, help me. Help me not to harm them," she prayed silently, then thought, "She's had so many children, maybe she can tell me what to do. But, can I do it?" After she put on her heavy sweater, she put a roll of absorbant cotton in one pocket and a tube of vaseline in the other. Nothing else in the medicine chest seemed suitable and she could see the boys with the saddled horse waiting in the road below. She tied a scarf over her head as she went down the hill.

"Thank heaven, I can ride. Dixie is easier to manage than the last one I had at home," she thought.

As she pulled herself up and flung one fully skirted leg over the saddle, she asked, "Just follow

this road about two miles to a big house on the right? All of you take care of things. I'll be back as soon as I can." In her anxiety about the mother and baby she thought depending on her, she hadn't told the children anything to do. "They know more about what needs doing, than I do," she thought as she urged the horse into a canter.

The sky was blue, the air was brisk. Spotted along the mountain on her right, yellow, red and orange trees flamed among the evergreens. Her heart should have sung within her, as the horse carried her smoothly along, but it didn't.

One or two cabins were passed, fairly rapidly. Beside one, she saw a woman chopping wood stop to watch her pass. Lilian raised her hand in greeting but the woman just stared and made no move.

After a seemingly long time, but also too soon, a house appeared on her right which was large compared to all the others in Sauta Bottom. It was a 'board house', one with gracious lines. Broad steps led to a porch and a double door with a fan light over it. The doors led to a wide hall, an amazing house to stand at the head of this valley. But more amazing was the fact that in front of it was the car of the doctor who served all the people in this area, Dr. Hugh Boyd.

And when Lilian hitched the horse and entered the house, she found that Dr. Boyd had his nurse with him. She felt such relief it made her light-headed. When she went up to the bed, Mrs. Lindsay told her she wanted someone from the House of Happiness, even if she couldn't have Miss Martin, to 'hold my hand' she said. That, Lilian knew she could do, and did, until the new born baby was taken by the nurse to the tub in front of the blazing fire.

"I want Miss Martin to name it," said Mrs. Lindsay, as Lilian put on her sweater and scarf.

#### Chapter 14

Miss Martin called that night, telling Lilian to meet her at the station the next afternoon.

"Miss Martin's coming none too soon," Lilian said to Tom, the next morning when he came up from the barn to say that the chickens were behaving peculiarly. "If she stayed away another week, we might not have any animals left."

The entire household went to the station. Before they finished depositing Miss Martin's suitcase and bundles in the Ford, the boys told her about the chickens.

"How do they look?" she asked.

"They go around with their heads hanging down around their feet," said Tom.

"And they won't even eat corn," added Bill.

"They've got the limber-neck," Miss Martin announced. "Drive us by the drug store, Lilian, and I'll get some blue-stone."

On the road home, they told her about the death of the sow and she immediately said, "You didn't bury her deep enough. Those chickens have dug down to the maggots and gotten them in their craw. You boys have a real job ahead of you." Her laughter came through her words as she turned to Lilian and said, "I'll teach you to be a real farmer," and looking down at Teddy, "Do you think you can help us catch chickens?"

"Yes, mam!" was the answer from the solemn little boy.

Augusta Martin was warmed by this answer. She had struggled for months to get Teddy to reply in this way, not with 'yeah' or OK. His answer momentarily gave her the feeling of love's fruition. She gave the thin shoulders pressing against her a hug.

At the house, everyone took off town clothes and put on work clothes. Lilian and Katherine were left at the house to get supper while Miss Martin and the boys went down to the barn.

"I'll be down, as soon as I get these potatoes peeled, to learn how to treat chickens with the limber-neck," said Lilian.

Soon, down she went, in her hurry, slipping and sliding over the rocky path from the house to the barn below.

Miss Martin and Tom were sitting on wooden boxes in the hallway of the barn. Bill caught chickens and brought them to have blue-stone forced down their limber necks into their craw. Then Teddy put the treated chicken into one of the stalls.

"Think you could do this?" Miss Martin asked Lilian, her eyes dancing.

"No, mam! My farming fingers are all thumbs. I'd be sure to choke them."

"How many more are there, Bill?"

"About a dozen."

"Well, bring them on." Augusta Martin looked around at them all with love. Slanting rays of the sun just before it went down behind July Mountain came into the barn hall, and emphasized the lines of humor and affection in her face. As the dust motes spun and circled around the group, she suddenly gave her crow of laughter, "Hoooo! I'm glad to be back, even if the chickens do have the limber-neck."

That night, when the rest of the family had gone to bed, she and Lilian remained in the living room.

Miss Martin had her head back and her feet on the ottoman. "It was good to be with so many of my family again, but it saddened me to see how neglected our old home is. No one lives in it." She looked down at the box with all the mail that had come since she left, and asked, "Have we had any contributions?"

"No, no contributions."

"Our bank account is mighty low," she said soberly. "But God takes care of us. He always has, so we won't worry. Have you heard from Margaret Morrison?"

"I've been hoping we would, every day, but so far we haven't."

"Let's go to bed. I'm just a mite tired," she admitted.

When their good friend, the postman, stopped the next morning, Tom brought the mail to the house. In it was a letter from Margaret saying she wanted to come for the winter and could be there the first of November.

Miss Martin dictated replies to all of her letters including a joyous acceptance of Margaret's offer. Then she left Lilian at the typewriter as she went for the riding skirt and off to name the Lindsay's baby.

Lilian watched through the open window until Miss Martin was out of sight then she turned to the unpaid bills in a box at her side, for food, and for gasoline. Beginning to think like Miss Martin, she said silently, "Dear Lord, we do need help."

## Chapter 15

Two weeks later, when Lilian had finished typing all the letters Miss Martin had dictated, she ran fresh paper into the machine and wrote to her three aunts in Demopolis:

"October 30, 1927"

"Margaret arrives Thursday!

"School keeps me pretty busy, especially these first weeks, classifying the children, getting the schedule to work . . . trying to squeeze a reading lesson for two pupils into five minutes to give a larger class longer, etc. We have only benches for the children and they have nowhere to write except in their laps. I let the little ones kneel on the floor and write on the seat of the bench. Teaching a country school is much better than one in the city, for here I have to use my imagination, inventive powers and decorative ability . . . if any.

"There has been a fair in Scottsboro the last four days. Yesterday afternoon, I took the kids in to let them ride on the various contrivances and while they did, I went to a football game and enjoyed it thoroughly.

"Several days ago, Miss Martin went to Guntersville in the car and on her way home picked up a little waif who said he lived near Tuscaloosa and was going to see his grandmother in Chattanooga, walking! She brought him home and has been trying ever since to get in touch with some of his people. So far, she's had no success. He's just as bright as he can be and seems satisfied to stay with us. He had never been to a street fair until yesterday and at one time I looked at the merry-go-round to see Paul, the only one on it, riding around in state! He was really thrilled over it all.

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"Think you could do this?" Miss Martin asked Lilian, her eyes dancing.



"Last night we had playnight at the schoolhouse, our usual Friday night program. I wish you could be here for one of them, and hope you can in the spring, for then the mountain laurel will be in bloom. They say it's perfectly wonderful. At present, it's the trees that are gorgeous; the sumac, the maples and the sweet-gums set the mountains on fire with their color. Some of the sweet-gums are red on one side and yellow on the other. Imagine! The goldenrod is gone but many of the mountain homes have clusters of wild purple asters blooming in their yards that are lovely.

"I have two geraniums growing in cans that I'm going to take to the school, and a box of ferns that were dug up in the woods that are growing splendidly. The soil that we get off of the mountain will make anything grow.

"There is a box on our front porch with beautiful red geraniums and lantana growing in it. The other day, I heard a peculiar noise on the porch and went around to investigate and lo and behold our two billy goats were having a feast on the red geraniums. I fully expect to find them upstairs, eating the sheets, next."

"She ended her letter by saying, "We have a cricket on our hearth!"

A week later, she wrote her father:

"What joy it is to have Margaret up here. She is teaching the first three grades along with Miss Martin. I've been collecting the words of some of the jingles that the young people up here say, also the words of a ballad for you. They know a good many. Here's one:

Seven long years I've been married,  
Wishing to live an old maid.  
My husband is drinking and gambling,  
I'd ruther be in my grave.

Chorus

Beautiful, beautiful brown eyes,  
Beautiful, beautiful brown eyes,  
Beautiful, beautiful brown eyes,  
I'll never love blue ones again.

Get up early in the morning  
Working and toiling all day,  
Supper to cook in the evening  
And dishes to clear away,

Chorus

Off to the bar room he goes staggering  
Bring him back if you can,  
A girl never knows her troubles  
Until she marries a man.

Chorus

"These jingles," she wrote, "sound very much like the Mother Goose ones we used to read; this is how they say them up here and I'm sure there aren't any Mother Goose books:

"When I was a little boy  
A 'livin' by myself  
I kept my cheese and crackers  
A 'layin' on the shelf.

The rats and the mice  
Led me such a life  
I had to go to London  
To get me a wife.

The roads were muddy  
The streets were narrow  
Had to bring her back  
On an old wheelbarrow.

Wheelbarrow broke  
And she caught a fall  
Down went wheelbarrow  
Wife and all."

Her letter continued, "In your last letter you sent us a dollar bill, saying, 'Money talks!' Miss Martin asked me to tell you that our money talks, too, but that all it has ever learned to say is, 'Goodbye'.

"I have come across a peculiar superstition up here. Our neighbors will not kill or eat doves. They think it would be a sin because the dove was sent from the ark to find land. They say if you shoot a dove, you will find blood on your gun barrel.

"Yesterday, one of our neighbors asked me if I was married, and if not, why not. Then she told me about her courting experiences, saying, 'I had many a swain, but as soon as I had ridden out with one of them twice, my mama thought it enough.'

"Strange, that English Mother Goose jingle and that word swain, kept all these years by these highlanders.

"Now to answer your questions. Billy gets up and makes fires and cooks breakfast. Miss Martin cooks dinner. We have milk, bread, butter, tomatoes, etc. for supper. Anywhere from twenty to nine sit at the table. Our regular family is eight at present but we nearly always have an extra. In residence now, Teddy - six, Katherine - thirteen, Tom - sixteen, Bill - fourteen, Jessie - eighteen, Margaret - twenty-three, me - twenty-three, and Miss Martin about forty. Jessie is just visiting us for a short time. Scott, our oldest boy, is at school in Gadsden.

"We get up at four A.M. By seven, we have finished our chores at the house and go on down to the schoolhouse because the children begin arriving about seven-thirty. Some of them walk four miles to come. A few new ones enter every day. Nearly all of them are intelligent, attractive children with the greatest hunger for learning I've ever known. I keep asking myself how I can help them, there are so many and each of them has so many needs.

"I'm enclosing some of our pure mountain air!"

## Chapter 16

Supper was over. Lilian and Margaret were in the living room, sitting near the fire, waiting for Miss Martin. They could hear her voice in the kitchen as she talked with Bill and Tom about something that needed doing before they went to bed.

"Wherever Miss Martin is, she does God's housekeeping. I read a description of her somewhere, 'She's a thin place in the world where the love of God shines through,'" Lilian said the last almost to herself as she looked into the flames climbing over the backlog.

"I read something that describes her, too," said Margaret. "'She's an unprofessional missionary, of the kind advocated in the New Testament.'" She went on, "I'll never hear 'Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost,' that I won't think of her."

At this point, Miss Martin came in and shut the door behind her. "Why don't you poke up that fire? It's getting colder all the time."

Before they could get up, Miss Martin had the heavy, iron poker, turning the backlog. Both Lilian and Margaret did get smaller pieces of wood and push them under the big log. She had been teaching them how to keep a log fire going, ever since cold weather came. So far, neither of them quite suited her in the way she poked it or fed it, but they were learning. One constant rule was that you always ended by sweeping the hearth. Now, Lilian reached for the long-needed pine straw broom that hung at the end of the mantel and swept it clean as soon as the last stick was put on. Then they all sat down near it, Miss Martin in her favorite big chair.

"Whew! I'm glad to sit down!" she said. "How about you?" then, without giving them a chance to reply, and causing both girls to get up, she went on, "Lilian, how about putting our bricks on the hearth to warm? We'll want them good and hot when we take them up to bed." Turning to Margaret, she said, "How about putting some bread and cheese on the hearth to toast? We can have a snack before we go up."

As Margaret brought the buttered bread with cheese on it, to sit on top of the warming bricks, Miss Martin asked, "Is Happy Hollow School having anything special for Thanksgiving?"

"Yes," they both said, and Lilian went on, "We're having to play about the first Thanksgiving."

"My children are so excited it's hard to settle them down a reading and arithmetic," Margaret added. "I made up arithmetic problems with Pilgrims and Indians in them, after we found a story in the reader about them. They went right to work."

"I've just had an idea!" In spite of fatigue, Miss Martin sat erect. "We ought to work in our local Indian legends."

"What legends?" Lilian wanted to know.

"There are two about Birdsong Spring."

"Our spring?" asked Margaret.

"Yes. This property was an original grant to John H. Birdsong in 1820. One legend says that Andrew Jackson signed a peace treaty with the Cherokees at the spring, and another that Sequoyah gave the alphabet to the Cherokee Nation at the spring. I've been told that there was once an even larger oak tree shading the spring than the one we have. In hot weather it must have been a good place to meet."

"Hmmm. . . Maybe we could have two scenes," mused Lilian. "If your children could do the Pilgrims and Indians, Margaret, the older boys and girls could do Andrew Jackson and Sequoyah and the Cherokees. Maybe do the first inside, and march to the spring and have the next two scenes?"

"Good idea," approved Miss Martin, then qualified it by adding, "if it doesn't rain."

Margaret reached for the almanac, and soon said, "Fair weather predicted."

"Tell us more about the legends," persisted Lilian.

"My friend, Peter Brannon, says, in 1819, Sequoyah, the crippled Cherokee silversmith, showed the council of his nation gathered here at the Birdsong spring, the written characters formulated by him to enable them to communicate with each other in writing. Before that the Cherokees had no alphabet."

"Sauta sounds like an Indian word," said Margaret. "What does it mean?"

"We'll have to ask Peter Brannon. It was the name of the Cherokee town hereabouts. There is also a Sauta Creek and a Sauta Cave which is a salt petre cave where the Confederate Army got salt during the Civil War."

"When we study the Civil War, could my students make a trip to the cave?" asked Lilian.

"We'll have to pick a good day, but you certainly can. It would make them feel a part of history."

The day for the school celebration of Thanksgiving came over Gunter Mountain with splendor. The air was cold, clear and crisp. The valley was arched by a sky singing in its blueness, its floor covered with a heavy white frost when the sun crested the mountain.

Just prior to dusky dark, on the evening before, Billy had called the family out to the front steps to see a V of wild geese flying south. Their eerie honkings up and down the two lines forming a V in the sky, had drawn Billy's glance upward, and this was followed by his shout to Miss Martin and the others.

All of them had stood watching as the movements of the wings of the large birds made the two lines flicker in the dusk, lines that drew together or spread out, as the geese followed their leader, calmly, steadily southward over Sauta Bottom. There had been something awe inspiring about their passing which Miss Martin put into slow, earnest words. "They bear God's mark. His plans are carried out by His wild creatures. Someday, we, His most unruly creatures, will learn how good it is to live inside His plan of love."

As they went thoughtfully back to their various tasks, each felt God had been close to them.

After the flight of the geese, foretelling cold weather, Miss Martin, attuned as she was to everything in nature, got ready for it. Extra cover was put on the beds and Billy and Tom took extra firewood to the schoolhouse.

Shortly after daylight, when Billy and Tom went down to feed the schoolhouse fires, every blade of grass stood stiff with frost, and when the sun topped Gunter, every blade sparkled. The usually silent Billy said, "Gosh!" and Tom said, "It's pretty, ain't it?"

Soon white smoke rose straight into the cold air above the rock chimney, and from the brick chimney in the new room.

Lilian and Margaret reached school at seven o'clock and found the backlog in the large rock fireplace burning well, but the heater in Margaret's room needed fuel, which she quickly added. Two children were there when they arrived and by eight o'clock all of the pupils plus a number of smaller brothers and sisters and parents were there. Everyone had been invited.

Until the coming of Miss Martin and her helpers into Sauta Bottom, the people had mostly gathered for church services or funerals. The play-nights, and sings, held at the House of Happiness were new and the plays at Christmas were the first many had known. This was the first Thanksgiving play. The new room could barely hold the children and adults who came. It was a good thing that the last two scenes were enacted out of doors, at the spring, because more people had arrived; it took the hillside to hold them comfortably.

Andrew Jackson could be recognized by the three-cornered hat he wore, mashed into that shape from a hat supplied by the clothing room. The Indians could be known because each wore a feather sticking up from a ribbon around his head. A Thanksgiving turkey sent by a church to the House of Happiness had dressed all the Indians. Sequoyah was honored by having more feathers. Nobody forgot the few words he had to say and all of the children acted their parts with dignity.

When the play was over, Miss Martin dismissed the group as she did any gathering, with prayer. But before she had the prayer, she quoted one of her favorite poems:

"Where there is love, there is faith,

Where there is faith, there is God.

Where there is God, there is no need."

Then she said, "Let us pray," and when all heads were bowed, "The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace, both now and evermore." Amen. \*

That night, Miss Martin opened Scott's last letter, to read it again as she'd only had time to glance at it when it arrived. She was happy to know that his grades at the school in Gadsden were improving, sorry that he had no way to get home for Thanksgiving. She looked up at the two young women who were reading near her. "Did I ever tell you how Scott gets out of work, sometimes?"

"Tell us," said Margaret.

"Last summer, I looked at Scott and said, 'Honey, will you go pull up a bucket of fresh water?'"

"He turned to Bill and said, 'That's you. I'm Darling.'"

"All summer, I kept trying to think of different names to call him, to see if he could think up a substitute, and he did it every time."

"Scott has a good sense of humor," said Lilian.

"One of the best I've ever known," said Miss Martin.

## Chapter 17

At supper, one night soon after Thanksgiving, Miss Martin announced, "Butch hurt his arm last week and it's gotten infected. He's coming up here every night for awhile, to get it dressed."

"Bet he hurt it in a fight," said Tom promptly.

"Maybe we can get it well. Do you girls know how to play checkers?" She looked at Lilian and Margaret.

The two admitted that they had played but said they didn't know much about the game.

"We might play checkers or dominoes. Butch is a leader. He's sure to bring some boys with him."

Butch and two other boys soon arrived. Miss Martin dressed his arm, then challenged him to a game of checkers and almost beat him. Tom and Billy as well as the other boys watched the game intently and in silence.

Getting up, after the game was over, Miss Martin said, "Every night someone will have to play the winner, until we see who the checker champion is. Tomorrow night, after your arm is dressed, we'll see if you can beat Margaret."

"Me? Anybody can beat me!"

"We'll see. Will you boys stay for family prayers?"

The startled boys were helpless under her laughing blue eyes. They twisted their caps and their feet but said nothing, and stayed.

"Let's all stand and say the Lord's Prayer."

\* Prayer Book, page 63.

The House of Happiness young people knew it and said it. Not a sound came from the visitors. The same thing happened when Miss Martin said, "Now, let's say the Mizpah benediction." Then, "Goodnight, boys. We'll be looking for you tomorrow."

Thus started the tale of the sparking of Margaret or Lilian, by Butch. When he and his friends continued to come to the house, it was said in the valley that he was sparking one of them but nobody knew which one. Checker and dominoes games went on. The two girls were always beaten. Once in awhile, Miss Martin won a game. As Christmas approached, the visitors joined in the prayers more and more. Interest in the neighborhood, as to which young woman was being courted by Butch, was keen, for Butch was a leader but not a beneficial one.

In truth, he was sparking neither. He didn't know it, and he and his friends would have laughed at the idea if they had been able to take it in, but Butch was sparking the Holy Spirit. Never had he been in an atmosphere like that he found at the House of Happiness where there was simple beauty in the surroundings, comfort of body and spirit, teasing, laughter, good-natured give-and-take, all undergirded by love.

Evening was the best time of day to find all of this in the double-pen log house on the side of July Mountain. In the early morning, when everyone was trying to do the necessary things before school began, love was there, but on the surface there were irritations, and sometimes a fuss between the young people. At night, when Butch and his friends arrived, the day's duties had been done and the people on the hill were relaxed and the loved showed more clearly.

As the number of boys increased to six or seven, Miss Martin, knowing the love of the mountain people for music, added a hymn to the family prayers. She always wondered if the fact that she discovered the loss of corn from the corn crib and began locking it and the fact that Butch and his friends stopped coming had any connection.

"Even if it did," she told herself, "I believe we gave them something they wanted, something they can keep." She thought of the night she and Margaret and Lilian stood in the cold dog-run and listened to the boys as they walked along the road below, singing the hymn they had just sung at the house. 'Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus.' "That's some progress," she had told them. "They used to sing 'The Roving Gambler.' "

And because she liked to think about Scott who was a member of the House of Happiness family even though the members of his own family were some of the closest neighbors and best friends she had, she had told herself, "If Scott wasn't at school in Gadsden, I believe they would have kept on coming." In her mind she began writing a letter to him.

## Chapter 18

Two weeks before Christmas holidays were to begin, measles appeared in the valley. Miss Martin hung the riding skirt on its peg and came into the living room where Margaret, Lilian and Katherine were shelling dried cornfield peas in front of a fire which they constantly fed. They had Miss Martin's chair pulled as near it as possible and she dropped into it gratefully.

"I hope we're having some of those peas for supper."

"We are, and I put a good hunk of fat meat in them," said Katherine.

"How long before they'll be done? I'm starved."

"I'll bet you didn't have any dinner," accused Lilian.

"Those folks I went to see were so ill, I didn't have a minute to think about food, and besides, they didn't have enough in the house to feed themselves. I call Dr. Boyd from a neighbor's. One of the boys has pneumonia and the mother has a bad case of measles. Two of the children who were thickly broken out were sitting up in front of the fire, but Dr. Boyd made them get back in bed."

"Two of my children in school today didn't feel well and they looked kind of splotched," said Margaret. "Do you suppose they had measles?"

"Hoo! Splotched is a perfect diagnosis!" Growing serious, "Measles is a dangerous disease in Sauta Bottom because it has such grave after-effects if you aren't careful, and so few of our people can be careful. They only have enough food, bedclothes and strength to get by on when everyone is well. We will have to cook extra food so that I can take some with me when I go back."

"Maybe some of these peas," said Katherine. "We can start them on the stove, then leave them down here on the hearth tonight."

"Good idea, daughter," said Miss Martin, reaching to tumble Katherine's hair. Then, turning to Lillian and Margaret, she said, "You two announce in school tomorrow that no one who has the measles can come to school!"

"This is really bad, coming just before Christmas," moaned Margaret. "My children are so excited about the Christmas play."

Lillian said, "Miss Martin, you should see the gifts the Church of the Advent and Christ Church sent us! We don't have to worry anymore." She got up to shake pea hulls into the fire.

"He does take care of us . . . I've been praying we could. . ." her voice trailed off as she dozed.

They didn't awaken her until supper was ready, and afterwards it took little persuasion to get her to go to bed.

Katherine, Tom and Billy volunteered to see that enough peas, potatoes and bread were cooked for the sick family, while Lillian and Margaret worked on wrapping the school Christmas gifts. The wind, howling around the house, found cracks in the chinking between the logs and each girl worked in her heavy sweater.

"If we could decorate one end of your room with cedar branches," said Lillian, "that would make a good background for the nativity play."

"I'm worried that the people on the back benches won't be able to see it," said Margaret. "It's going to be lovely and I want everyone to see it."

"Hold your finger here a minute. This string keeps slipping. Now!" Lillian put the finished package aside after she had written the child's name on it. "If we moved two of those benches from my room, and put the heavy boards Miss Martin has for the new steps, across them, wouldn't that do for a stage?"

"Big enough for Mary and the baby Jesus and crib, maybe for Joseph. The shepherds and wise men could stand on each side of the stage." Margaret stopped frowning but still looked worried. "I did to want all the parents to come. Now, measles may keep them home."

The Christmas program had been planned for the Friday afternoon before the holidays, and, for two days before, all the children had helped get ready. A small but sturdy stage had been made from the boards and benches. Billy and Tom made a rough crib under Miss Martin's supervision and Lillian sent for a large baby doll of hers which, when wrapped in one of the baby blankets from a church box, looked very much like a baby. Several of the children had brought straw for the crib, and others had helped to get the cedar boughs for the room.

All the school children, from the youngest to the eldest, had been learning the words of the Christmas story from Matthew and Luke. In the upper grades, a contest had decided which two pupils would read the story for the play. Two of the younger boys were the readers, Aubrey Clemens and Woodrow Steeley.

In spite of a sparkling, sunny day, when school opened many children were absent. The child who was to take the part of Mary wasn't there, nor the little girl they had thought of as a substitute. The boy who was to read the section from Matthew hadn't come.

When work was underway, Lillian went to the door of Margaret's room and looked in. When she did, Margaret came to meet her.

"Do you suppose some may come later?" Margaret asked. "Our madonna must be sick, for I've never known a child to look forward to anything like she did this play."

"We'll just have to do the best we can," said Lillian. "I don't think we'd better make any substitutions until after the noon recess."

At twelve o'clock, some of the absent ones began to arrive, with baby brothers and sisters and parents. By two o'clock, when the program scheduled for 1:30 got under way, the large room was packed, with some of the audience undoubtedly looking splotched.

As the program went forward, every small face, even every splotched one, was happy. When the Christmas story had been told, every school child received a gift with his or her name on it, and all the smaller children were given gifts from a large box of them.

Miss Martin stood to dismiss them with a look they were beginning to know, one combined of sternness and laughter and love. "Before we have our prayers," she said, "I want to ask how many of you think your children might have measles?"

Several parents raised sheepish hands an inch or two.

"Didn't Miss Margaret and Miss Lilian tell the children they shouldn't come to school if they were sick?"

"But this ain't school," spoke up one of the fathers. They didn't say nothing' about not comin' to the Christmas play. We didn't let 'em come this mornin'."

"Hoooo! You didn't and that's a fact. Well, please take the ones who are sick straight home and make them stay in until they're well, so they don't have penumonia. School won't start again until the middle of January."

She bowed her head as she said, "Let us pray:

"O God, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thine only Son Jesus Christ; Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our Judge, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen." \*

### Chapter 19

Miss Martin had given the children a long Christmas holiday hoping that the measles would have spent itself before school opened. Margaret returned before the middle of January, but a letter from Lilian said she would come as soon as she had gotten over flu. Miss Martin taught in Lilian's place; when she was called away, Margaret had the entire school on her hands. And not only that. She helped by making some of the home visits after school.

One afternoon, she rode Dixie to a cabin on the side of the mountain, to take special food to a neighbor with pneumonia. When she arrived she could hardly get in the room there were so many others visiting the sick man.

Telling Miss Martin that night she said, "There were at least a dozen, maybe fifteen people in there with him. I was so shocked, I blessed them out. I said, 'Don't you know he needs all the air he can get? All of you ought to go out so he can breathe!'"

"I wish I'd been there to see their faces. It must have been a sight to see."

"On the way up there, I passed a house with the prettiest wood pile I've ever seen," Margaret said wistfully.

"Just wait. Some day we're going to have one too," Miss Martin promised.

It was the night after Lilian's return that Miss Martin admitted that she wasn't feeling well.

"Your face looks swollen on one side," said Margaret.

"Have you been around anyone with mumps?" Lilian asked.

"I saw a case soon after you left," she admitted, and added, "I don't think I've had the mumps." Changing the subject she asked, "Lilian, did you know Teddy had the measles soon after you all went home?"

"I noticed he wasn't as lively as usual. Miss Martin, don't you think you ought to go to bed?"

"I'll eat some corn bread and buttermilk, if the bread's ready. Then I'll go. You can call Dr. Boyd and ask him to stop here the first time he comes this way. There's so much fresh air in our bedroom I don't think I can give you girls mumps, if I have it." She turned to the pale and unnaturally quiet little boy sitting on the overstuffed stool beside her. "Teddy, you must stay up here and take care of me when the others go to school tomorrow. Will you do that?"

"O.K." was the listless response, as the House of Happiness signal came on the telephone.

Lilian answered it, made a few notes on the pad hanging beside it, then said, "Miss Martin is sick but one of us will try to come tomorrow after school." She hung up, then told Miss Martin, "That was the people you've just been to see. They hope we can spare them some linement."

"Billy or Tom can take the linement after school. We have plenty. And they'd better take a jug of buttermilk and a sack of meal. They were low on everything."

Katherine came in from the kitchen bringing Miss Martin a tall glass of fresh buttermilk and a wedge of hot buttered cornbread. Sensitive to Miss Martin's love of beauty, she had put them on a flowered plate and brought Miss Martin's favorite silver teaspoon.

"Thank you daughter," said the tired woman. She broke the bread into the milk and began to eat it, as the rest of the household went into the kitchen for their supper.

\* Prayer Book, page 98

They finished and came back to the living room before Miss Martin finished. Lillian offered to wash the dishes, so all of the children went up to bed when Miss Martin did. Just before she left the living room she said, "Margaret, tell Lillian about Mr. Reed and the alarm clock."

Lillian finished and came to sit on one foot, in one of the overstuffed chairs. As soon as she was settled, she said, "Now, tell me about Mr. Reed."

Margaret chuckled but said immediately, "It wasn't funny then! We'd had a hard day and it seemed to me I'd just gotten to sleep when I heard somebody yelling. It was Mr. Reed, who was visiting us for a week, down in the dog-run, yelling, "Ain't y'all gonna git up? The clock done rung a half hour ago."

"Miss Martin heard him and said, 'Everybody up! We'll really be late if the clock went off a half hour ago.'

"We managed to get dressed and went dragging down. Mr. Reed had made the fire in the stove and had the coffee perking and breakfast started. While we were eating, Katherine looked at the clock she had brought down and put on the kitchen shelf."

"Look!" she screamed. "Look, Miss Martin, what Pa has made us do!" "

"We all looked and the clock said one A.M.!"

"Miss Martin said, 'Mr. Reed, what made you think the clock had gone off?' "

" 'I shore heard somethin' ring and I knowd how you-uns wanted everybody up at four o'clock.' "

"Billy said, 'I'll bet the phone rang and he thought it was the clock.' "

"I said, 'Well, whatever it was, I'm going back to bed,' and everybody else went too. That was a crazy day. We had had our breakfast at one A.M. and didn't eat any later, so we nearly starved before lunch time."

"That must have been really painful," said Lillian. "It seems like the middle of the night to me, when the clock goes off at four A.M. "What else happened while I was at home?"

"You certainly picked a good time to be sick. We had the coldest weather anybody up here can remember. My breath froze at night and stuck the cover to my face!"

"Mercy! And I thought it was cold that time it snowed and the snow sifted through the shingles onto our faces!"

"That was a warm spell compared to our zero week. The eggs all froze and burst, and the canned goods in the pantry broke open. Miss Martin says the first warm spell we have, we're all going to stop everything and chink the pantry."

"Why not do it this week-end?"

"You can't put cement between logs if there's danger of freezing. It would ruin the cement."

"How did you learn that?"

Margaret grinned. "Miss Martin told me when I suggested the same thing you did."

The buttered lightbread with cheese on it which had been in a pan on the hearth, close to the fire, was now ready to be eaten. They ate it with relish, then each of them wrapped a brick, which had been on the hearth getting hot, in a heavy towel, and took it up to put in their bed.

## Chapter 20

The next morning early, Billy and Tom went to the schoolhouse to get the fires going, then came back to do their chores at the barn. Katherine was to stay at home, to look after Miss Martin and Teddy, and would do her lessons when she could. She was to write down the names of anyone who called, and tell them they would be called back after school was out.

Dr. Boyd said he would be out some time that morning; Miss Martin was not to get out of bed. The bedroom, which Miss Martin and the three girls shared, was straightened and a basket of oak chips and small chunks of wood placed near the heater so that a steady fire could be kept going. Tom and Billy filled the woodbox in the kitchen where Teddy and Katherine had their school books spread on the table.

As Lillian and Margaret were starting for school they stopped at the kitchen door. Margaret said, "Katherine, if you need us, let Teddy come for us."

"Yes 'mam," said the sturdy teenager. "I'll have a good supper cooked for you when you get home."

Margaret patted the package she carried and said, "I'm already looking forward to my watermelon-rind-preserve sandwiches. I'll certainly be sorry when we've eaten it all up."



"When I see Dr. Boyd's car pass, I'm going out and stop him on his way back," said Lilian to Margaret as they walked down the hill together. "If he tells us how to take care of Miss Martin, maybe we can get her to do it."

"There's still so much sickness, we may not have many at school," Margaret said.

This was one of the few mornings that several of their pupils did not get to school before they did. Usually, they found six or seven clustered around the fire when they came in. However, some of them soon came and were in time to help with the dusting which was always done as soon as Lilian and Margaret arrived. They swept the building before they left in the afternoon (with two of the older pupils to help them.) Today, they turned the dust cloths over to the children while they worked on the fires. Only a small space near the heater in Margaret's big room was at all warm and the benches immediately in front of the found-stone fireplace and chimney in Lilian's room was the only spot that had any heat.

When the hallway to the school was entered by the front door, the library was on your right. It was unheated. Lilian's room, where the grades from the fourth through the ninth were taught, was on your left. Through a door at the back of the hall you entered the large room where gatherings of all kinds were held and where the first three grades were taught by Margaret.

In Lilian's room there were homemade benches with very straight backs for the pupils, a small table plus a chair for the teacher in one corner, and a three by six foot blackboard hanging on a wall. She had done what she could to make the room attractive by keeping flowers or leaves in a vase on one end of the mantel with some of her favorite books between bookends at the other but on the brightest days the room was somewhat dark. The two large windows on the front were shaded by the roof to a deep porch. The only other light came from a small window in a corner near the chimney, and from the burning logs.

The benches faced the fireplace. The children on the front row were often too warm while those on the back ones were cold. On rainy days, at the end of every half hour, the children on the front benches moved to the back and each benchful moved one bench closer to the fire. Thus their wet clothing was at least partly dried.

Each child who could brought some kind of lunch. On sunny days during recess they played out of doors. Their favorite game, all during the school year, was an imitation of the way Lilian and Margaret marched them into school by clapping their hands for rhythm as they said, "Left, right, left." You could hear small groups doing it all over the hilly playground. On rainy days, all the pupils gathered in Margaret's big room, to sing, or be read to.

Both teachers were thankful that this day was a clear, sunny one, although there was a biting cold wind. In spite of it, at recess, the children chased each other up and down the hillside, or marched. Tom went up the hill to see how Miss Martin was and came back to say that she had slept most of the morning.

Soon after recess, Lilian saw Dr. Boyd's car go past and stop at the shack. By standing near the window, she could see him begin the climb up to the house, so she taught the next class from this spot. When she saw him coming back down the hill, she said, "It's time for spelling. I must speak to Dr. Boyd. Pearl, will you give out the words?" The pupil who had the best spelling grade the day before always had this honor.

Getting her coat from a peg in the hall, she went out and ran down the hill to the road. Dr. Boyd saw her coming and stopped his car at the gate to the school yard.

"Will you tell us how to take care of Miss Martin?" she asked breathlessly.

"She's more worn out than anything else," he said. "I'm not sure that she has mumps, but until we're sure, she's to stay in bed. She can have anything she wants to eat. I've told her she's to stay in bed until I see her again."

"Thank goodness. You're the only one who can get her to take care of herself. We'll do the best we can."

"Call me if you need me," said the doctor as he put his car in gear.

Lilian walked slowly back in the cold wind. When she had hung up her coat and opened the schoolroom door, she immediately sensed an unnatural stillness and then she saw the cause. Lying on the floor below the mantel were the smashed fragments of one of the bookends, small statuettes of The Thinker. She now saw that the bookends she treasured as carved from wood had been skillfully made of plaster-of-paris, so it was a double blow, disillusionment and loss. She just said, "O dear!" and

picked up the pieces. She didn't ask and no one told her what had happened but as an eraser lay beside the pieces, she felt pretty sure that the eraser had been thrown with such force at someone who dodged that the bookend had been knocked from the mantel.

## Chapter 21

Attendance at school built up gradually as sickness in the valley died down and the weather got better. In Alabama, all through the winter, there are soft days which usually follow a pattern, three cold days followed by three warmer days, the cold ones nearly always clear, the soft ones rainy.

It was on a misty, springlike Saturday, several weeks after Miss Martin's illness which had turned out not to be mumps, that she sent Lilian with fruit and other things for one of the older pupils who had pneumonia. Since her time in bed, she had let Lilian and Margaret do many of the things she had always done, for Dr. Boyd had told her she could not ride the horse for awhile.

Dixie, who was getting on in years, went like a young horse as the sun came through the mist to put a sparkle on the leaves and blades of grass. Cardinals, locally called red birds, flew back and forth across the wooded trail; she heard their mating call each time before she saw the flash of red leave the woods on one side and enter on the other.

Wild plum trees in bloom made a ghostly smoke behind the snake-rail log fence of a clearing. She stopped the horse to breathe in the smell of spring, wet earth and decaying leaves mixed with the fragrance of the plum blossoms, now so close she could hear the hum of the bees visiting them. In one corner of the clearing a peach tree was in bloom, the pink of its blossoms accented by the evergreen trees outside the fence.

Gratitude for the beauty surrounding her rose in her like sap in the trees as she urged Dixie on down the trail to the cabin at the end. Peach trees bloomed against it logs silvered by time. As she stopped the horse near the open door of the cabin three large mongrel dogs came from under the house, barking violently. Lilian sat on the horse until the grandmother of her pupil came to the door and spoke to the dogs, making them go back underneath. Then she made the visitor welcome to the one large room where the patient layed on a bed in one corner. Granny and Lilian talked quietly by the briskly burning fire until Willie said something from the bed.

Lilian went over to speak to him, then left. Granny had told her that twelve neighbors had come to sit with Willie the night before. She knew that they would have to get their rest in the day time.

Riding home, she thought of something Miss Martin had said in the fall. On a cold evening she had come into the living room, carefully closing the door behind her before she said, "Someday, I'm going to write a book called THE OPEN DOOR. The house I've just come from had a roaring fire and the outside door wide open. I've seen it, time after time."

Margaret had smiled at her and said, "I'll bet they had a good woodpile. Lilian and I do covet our neighbors woodpiles." And going up to bed that night, she had continued, "If I lived in one of these cabins, with such small windows and so little light and had as much wood around, I'd keep my door open, too!"

Lilian's trip to see Willie had to be reported on that night. After she had finished, and they had discussed what they needed to do the next day, Miss Martin sent them all to bed. She wanted to go, too, but this was the first chance to be alone that she had had in some time and she needed to think.

As she heard the young people going up the steps, she put her head back and closed her eyes. Her prayer was more or less formless, just resting for a moment on the Strength she depended on, day after day. It was lonely to be at the head of a pioneer work for the church of God in its Episcopal branch, here in Sauta Bottom. The need for love and understanding was so great, even greater than for the material help she had tried to give, that she sometimes felt drained.

She was to meet soon with the Bishop and a group of churchmen to tell them about the work here in the hills of Alabama with a people whose lives were so different from theirs. She wanted to plan carefully so that when she stood before them she could make the people of the valley and their needs come alive. "The Bishop must often ask himself if the money the diocese spends here could be more useful, do more good, somewhere else," she said to herself and sat brooding, asking herself the same question.

The answer came clearly and strongly to her mind, "The good every penny does up here just can't be measured. Money spent here buys better health . . . sometimes life, for whole families. I believe the school is going to help every child who comes. I don't believe a single one of them will fail to get

something to carry with them, for all the years of their lives."

She thought of the fun they all had at their Arbor Day celebration. At the end, each of them had planted one of the big acorns she had brought from south Alabama. She thought of Clay Paradise snaggle-toothed and the champion spitter of the school, and Hubert Owens with his red hair and freckles, waving a flag, after all had been planted. "I'll surely tell about Arbor Day. . ." She dozed a minute, then made a brief outline. That was all that she could do that night.

## Chapter 22

Scott, one of the favorite sons of the House of Happiness, wrote that he was coming home from Gadsden where he was in high school, to spend the long AEA weekend, if Miss Martin could meet him at a store on top of Sand Mountain. He had a ride that far. She was overjoyed, and wrote that she would be there.

On the morning he was expected, she left as early as possible. Soon after lunch, Lilian, Margaret and the children began to expect their return. Darkness had covered the mountain for more than an hour when they heard a car stop at the bottom of the hill, and footsteps but no laughter coming up the path.

Miss Martin came in alone. Everyone said, "Where's Scott?"

"I don't know. I waited for hours. Mr. Smith wanted to close his store, so I came on home. He hasn't called?"

"No," they said.

"Can you give me some supper? I'm starved."

Two plates of supper had been put in the warmer, so they quickly brought hers with a glass of buttermilk. She ate with her hat still on while everyone speculated as to what had happened. When she finished, she straightened her hat and said, "I'm going back."

"Oh, no!" said Lilian and Margaret.

"Yes, I am. If Scott said he'd come, he will." No argument could stop her or even slow her down. Billy and Tom went to the bottom of the hill with her, carrying the lantern. After the car turned and headed back to Sand Mountain, they came up the hill to bed.

As usual, Miss Martin was right. About midnight, they were vaguely aware that she and Scott had come in.

They learned the next day that a late start and a flat tire had caused Scott's late arrival. The pleasure of having her 'big boy' at home made up to Miss Martin for the weariness she felt. Her crow of laughter was deeper than the others when Scott said, "Well, goodness, you don't expect to get a fella like me for just one trip!"

The day Scott left, Miss Martin had a call from Dr. Boyd telling her of a family that needed help. (It had been during the past winter that Miss Martin had begun calling pneumonia the scourge of Sauta Bottom.) Dr. Boyd said there was a case of pneumonia in a family that had nothing, not even enough cover for the patient.

"It's a good thing you're going, Scott," Miss Martin said. "Fold up the quilts on your bed and bring them along. We'll leave them on the way."

As she and Scott went downhill to the car, she said, "I'm going to try to start a quilting bee this summer. This whole valley needs quilts."

"Amen," said Scott.

"If the Bishop calls and says he's coming," she went on, "I'll say, 'If you don't mind, bring some cover.'"

"Speaking of the Bishop, how's Sunday School since you began having it out here?"

"Most Sunday afternoons we have a crowd, and we end up with a sing. How these men do like to sing!"

"We have such good voices" said Scott modestly.

"Hoooo! So you do. Do you know who drove us to Sunday School in Scottsboro for awhile?" She named the local bootlegger.

"No," said Scott. "It's hard to believe."

"We decided to have Sunday School out here when we learned that he was using us as a cloak and shield for his business. We heard that his car has a false bottom and that every time he took us he had a load of moonshine. He would leave us at the church and come back for us in about an hour.

Evidently, an hour was long enough to transact his business."

"Who told you?" Scott wanted to know.

"I wouldn't dare tell you," she said. "It's a real discouragement. I'd learned to like him. My informant said he got a kick out of using us and laughed about it all the time. He doesn't know that I know, so I imagine he's still laughing."

To change the subject, she told Scott what Margaret had said about her first taste of stacked pies. She had come back from a visit where she had been given a slice and told Miss Martin she'd had a piece of layer cake. "But I didn't much like it," she'd said. "The layers were so thin and hard and there were so many of them."

"Don't you know stacked pies?" I asked her.

"What are stacked pies?"

"When a number of people bring pies, they stack them one on top of the other. When they cut you a slice, you get a taste of everybody's pie." She turned to Scott and said, "I wish you could have seen Margaret's face when she said, 'I learn something new every day.'"

The woman and the boy got into the car laughing.

### Chapter 23

Their use by the bootlegger wasn't the only discouragement that year. About dusky dark one evening, Miss Martin appeared at the house with a young man whom she introduced as Clem.

"He knows how to do over furniture, she said. "We'll give him bed and board while he works on some of ours." Turning to Tom and Billy, she said, "Put my cot in your room in the corner by the window and give Clem that shelf for his things." Looking at Clem, "You can make more shelves if you need them."

Clem's long straight hair was oily and his skin was oily and full of blackheads. When Miss Martin introduced him, he didn't say anything but gave the person introduced a swift glance, then looked over their shoulder. When supper was served, he ate the peas, greens, cornbread and buttermilk as if hungry, but he still said nothing. When they all went up to bed, he hadn't said a word.

As the women undressed, Lilian asked quietly, "Miss Martin, aren't you a little afraid of Clem?"

Miss Martin's clear blue eyes looked seriously into Lilian's brown ones as she said, "Yes. I am, a little. But he seems like a lost soul. When I thought about how much of God's love we have out here, I hoped some of it might rub off on him."

Lilian saw laughter enter Miss Martin's eyes before she gave her "Hoooo! . . . and I want to give him some soap, too."

Beginning the next day, and for nearly a month, Clem did work on various pieces of furniture and seemed to know his business. His distrust of everyone grew a little less, but he did not become friendly with anyone, not even Miss Martin who used all her arts of friendship on him. She did get him to use the soap so that he became a cleaner member of the household.

It was just before he left that they realized what physical strength he had. On a Sunday, Miss Martin sent all the children and Clem up July Mountain to bring down any wood they could find. Clem, Tom and Billy were to roll down two of the large back logs that had been cut sometime before. Billy and Tom were working on one, getting it started down, when Clem, who was shorter than either of them, picked up the other one and carried it down.

When the family got up the next morning, Clem and his possessions were gone.

Miss Martin said at family prayer that night, "Maybe Clem, some day, will let God's love into his life. He must have had a dreadful time growing up to make him the kind of person he is."

"Where did you find him?" asked Margaret.

"He was in jail for petty thievery. They put him on probation to me. Now, I'll have to report that he's gone. We can keep him in our prayers; even if we don't know where he is, God does."

### Chapter 24

Margaret was telling Miss Martin about one of her pupils who seemed to need a new dress. "I asked her if the one she had on was the best she had, and she said it was. It got torn when she was playing at recess, and when I tried to mend it, I could see that it was worn out. She seemed to have two other dresses underneath, but they were more worn than the one on top."

Go down and get something out of the store room, if you think you can fit her. I'm sure she had on all the clothing she has."

"I'll find something to fit her," said Margaret from the door, on her way to the shack, which had been turned into the clothing room.

The next morning, Susie and Johnny, two beautiful blond children who walked four miles to school, were late as usual. Margaret had put the dress she had selected for Susie in a paper sack. At recess when the others had gone out, she gave it to her and said, "Can you wear it tomorrow?"

"Yes'm," said Susie with a smile that made her more beautiful. It wasn't often that her classic features showed happiness.

Margaret looked forward to the next day with impatience. Susie seemed so hungry for love as well as learning, so starved for many things. This new dress was the first material thing she'd been able to give Susie and it 'pleasured her' to imagine how nice she would look.

Susie walked in the next day, in the middle of the spelling lesson with a shy, proud smile curving her lips. Her blue eyes, which usually looked down, were searching Margaret's face for approval.

Margaret forced approval into her look although she groaned inwardly. The dress was too large and hung almost to the child's ankles.

After school, she persuaded Susie to stay and let her put a deep hem in the dress, promising to take her home on the horse. Susie had said, "They'll beat me if I'm late," when Margaret asked her to stay.

When they arrived at Susie's home, a little ahead of Johnny, Margaret went in and tried to talk to the mother and father. Only the father responded. The mother sat silent, looking at Margaret through a wild tangle of hair. Finally, Margaret said, "You ought to take you wife to Scottsboro," and she didn't know why but she added, "and let her see a movie."

"Naw," he replied. "She don't need such as that."

Nothing she said brought forth the response she expected. She felt as if they were speaking a different language. When she said she must go, they didn't ask her to come back nor respond to her goodbye. But Susie and Johnny continued to come to school, often late, but rarely missing a day.

As the end of the school session approached, the two teachers made final plans for the party they had promised the children. For several months, the entire school had been divided into the Blues and The Reds. Each morning, health questions were asked each child who received a plus or minus, according to their answers. Did you wash your face and hands? Did you comb your hair? Did you help clean up your house? and so on. The side answering yes the most was to be entertained by the other side.

Lilian and Margaret made arrangements for the drug store in Scottsboro to send a large freezer of ice cream and one hundred cones to the Happy Hollow School on the last school day. The mailman was to bring them.

When the last day came, and the postman stopped in front of the schoolhouse, Lilian sent Willie, Tom, Woodrow and Aubrey out to meet him. They brought the heavy freezer and a large cardboard box and put them on the porch. Then the entire school gathered in the big room for recitations and songs. Before Miss Martin led the Mizpah benediction she said, "I have an announcement to make after we say the benediction together." All heads were bowed as nearly every child joined in the old words. "May the Lord watch between me and thee, while we are absent, one from another." The children looked expectantly at Miss Martin.

"I want all of you to remind your folks that we will have Sunday School as usual, next Sunday afternoon.

"Miss Lilian and Miss Margaret want me to tell you that The Blues won the health contest, so right after your lunch period The Reds will give the Blues an ice cream party. When you hear the big bell, line up in front of the school, with The Blues in front. Guests at a party are always served first. Now, you are excused for your lunch period."

As the children went out, Lilian and Margaret and Miss Martin went to the front porch to open the freezer and the box of cones.

When the box of what they expected to be cones was opened, there was a shocked silence. There were no cones. In the box were two pictures Lilian had ordered.

"What can we do?" came from Margaret and Lillian.

Miss Martin had a shining look. Her spirit had an extra glow when she faced an emergency. "I'll take Billy and Tom to the house and send you all of of the saucers and spoons we have, in the dishpan. And they can bring a bucket of water. You'll have to feed in relays. Feed, wash up and feed the next ones."

"What a mess!" moaned Margaret.

"Hooo! This isn't the worst mess you'll get in, if you become farewell ladies!"

Billy and Tom took the package of pictures to the house when they went up with Miss Martin, and soon returned with twenty spoons and as many saucers. The children had already lined up so Lillian explained what had happened, then turned to help Margaret dip ice cream into the twenty saucers. So the Reds entertained the Blues, then in their turn were fed. Some of the children had never had ice cream before. Susie and Johnny only took a bite, then handed their saucers back, saying, "It's too cold."

When it was over and the children had left for their homes, the schoolhouse was closed without sweeping or straightening. That could be done the next day. The two young teachers climbed wearily to the house and sank into rocking chairs on the front porch. For a time they sat silent, looking out across the fields to the distant, hazy mountains on the other side of the valley. Finally Margaret said, "I hope never to do such strenuous entertaining again."

"Amen," said Lillian. "I'm really looking forward to some days when nothing just has to be done, some good old empty, lazy days."

Both of them subconsciously realized that there never would be any such days around Miss Martin, especially in Sauta Bottom.

Before the next week was over, Margaret had a call saying that her mother was ill and she was needed at home. Lillian and Katherine took her to catch the next train.

After Margaret left there were some days that did not seem as full. Most of the work that Lillian did was letter writing for Miss Martin. They had just about cleared her basket of letters that needed answering before a call came for Lillian too to come home.

She had known all year that her father was very ill, with lung trouble, and growing worse. The message came that he was dying so she packed and left immediately.

## Chapter 25

Early in the summer, Miss Martin sat alone on the front porch, reading for the second time a letter from Deaconess Whitford who was in charge of the Episcopal Church Home in Mobile. She let her thoughts go back to the summer of 1923 when she had been asked by the Bishop to direct the course of study for Mrs. Whitford.

It was when she knew that Mrs. Whitford was coming to live with her that she realized the work in Scottsboro needed a house, and in November when her furniture came from Montgomery she and Mrs. Whitford had moved in.

"Hoooo! What a year that was! Mrs. Whitford was such a good house-mother for us, I know she's been just right for the Church Home for orphans. She really managed that room we set aside for the hospital. With Dr. Boyd to tell us how, and Mrs. Whitford in charge, we got some mighty sick people well."

She rocked slowly, with a gentle look on her face, as she remembered the two eight year olds. Elizabeth who weighed twenty pounds and Evelyn who weighed twenty-four, who had been brought back to health in 'St. Luke's.' Then she thought of Odessa, delicate twelve year old, undernourished and overworked, who had lived with them until she was brought to good health. Their motto was, 'Water, internally, externally and eternally,'; that and enough food, given with love, brought them around. She thought sadly of a few they had not been able to bring around, the mother of the Coon Hollow family who died of cancer eight months after they moved up out of the hollow, and the mother of Wee Mary who had died five months after her birth in spite of all they did.

Her head went back against the chair and her eyes closed, but not for sleep. She could talk to her Master best when she could shut out the world. Her love and gratitude welled up, almost wordlessly. Most of the time, she lived with complete faith that whatever God wanted her to do, He

would help her to do. Always, when faced with a situation where she did not see the next step clearly, she immediately and consciously asked for help, then went ahead, sometimes taking the wrong path, she admitted.

When the work slowed down as it had now done, she had to struggle harder for guidance than when life rushed her along as if in front of a gale. When she was being rushed along, she just leaned against the spiritual strength she needed, occasionally sending, 'Thank You,' to the Source of her strength, or a 'Dear Lord, what now?' in a tight corner.

One continuing thread in the warp and woof of her work, was to draw people with something to give to this isolated valley where people lived such impoverished lives. People thus drawn to Sauta Bottom not only served while at the House of Happiness, but went home to tell others of the needs they had found. This kept help coming, clothing, money and volunteers.

"Where shall I turn, now, Lord?" she asked silently. "Miss Nettie is coming next fall but what should we attempt this summer?"

When the mail came, her question was answered and her work for the summer laid out for her. Mrs. Charles Henderson of Troy wrote that she wanted to make the contribution she had discussed with Miss Martin so that a sun porch could be added to the house.

Sometime before, Miss Martin had climbed over the church's part of July Mountain and selected and marked the trees that could be cut when they could afford to do their next building. At the next 'sing' she announced that she could use three men to cut trees and three men with mules to snake them down the mountain. Ten men offered themselves for the work so she decided to use all of them.

Two of them she had build the foundations for the sun porch, of flat rocks that had been found and gathered from the hillside for the purpose.

The day the walls were to go up, wives of the workers were invited to come and spend the day and six of them did. They prepared the dinner, using the cook books Miss Martin had gotten. She used the time with them to help them increase their reading skill as well as giving lessons in hygiene and in cooking.

A number of small children came with their mothers, so Katherine and another larger girl who had come took them to the school house where they cared for them. When dinner time came, two of the mothers took their dinner down to them.

After dinner, when dishes and pots and pans were washed and put away, Miss Martin gathered the women in the Bishop's room as it was farthest away from the noise of the carpentry going on, and got them to help her shell peas as they talked. When the peas were all shelled, they went to the clothing room where their work time was traded for clothing, priced at 10c and 25c. When she left for home, each woman had a bundle of things that would make her family more comfortable.

Before the summer was over, several such days saw the sunporch with its many windows completed.

## Chapter 26

When fall and Miss Nettie came, and Miss Martin told her about the summer just past, it seemed to have been filled with much the same activities that other summers had held.

"You have certainly done a lot of work," said Miss Nettie. "All the logs chinked, even finishing the Henderson sun-parlor and pantry. I'm especially glad about the pantry."

"Hoooo! So am I! You should have seen the mess when it got so cold in there last winter that the cans burst and food went all over the shelves. I could have wept over all that good food lost when there were so many who needed it."

"Did you have enough clothes in the clothing room?"

"We got mighty low, several times. Do you know what the day we open the clothing store is called?"

"What?"

"Rag-shakin' day!"

Miss Nettie laughed. "I love the sense of humor of our neighbors up here."

"That's one thing that keeps me going," said Miss Martin. "Margaret and Lilian talked so much about beautiful wood-piles during our cold spells, I think we'll just have to build one. . . but there's so much else to do."

"How would it do to have a bargain day in the clothing room for anybody who brings stove wood?"

"A good idea. You work it up."

"Are we having play nights at the school?"

"Not since cotton picking started, but we have singing on Sunday afternoons."

Miss Nettie asked something very close to her heart. "Do you think we can begin teaching handicrafts this year?"

"I believe we can, anytime you think we're ready. We'll announce it at the Sunday sing. It would be good to get it going before school starts. Did you know we had a piano in the school house?"

"Where did we get it?"

"Lilian's sister, Rufie, was a musician. After she died, her aunt, Miss Laura Prout, sent it to us. And she also sent us ten dollars to help the young man up the hollow who had TB. You remember, he had to sit up all the time in order to breathe so we bought a comfortable rocking chair for him. He died about six months ago."

"Is his baby still alive?"

"No. She died before he did, poor little thing. Tuberculosis is a reaper in this valley."

Miss Nettie felt as if she hadn't been away, when Miss Martin said, "Could I dictate one letter before we go to bed? It has to be in the mail tomorrow. I should have gotten it off today. . . but I forgot it." As soon as Miss Nettie picked up her notebook, she began dictating:

"Dr. Hugh Boyd

Scottsboro, Ala.

Dear Dr. Boyd:

I have returned from Birmingham where you sent Mrs. Raney. Dr. Earl Dunn performed the operation without charge. I witnessed it and while I have seen many operations, I never saw anything so beautifully or wonderfully performed. He spoke very highly of you and your work.

He left one stitch for you to remove as part of her trip home was by car. I will send her in on Wednesday between ten and eleven o'clock so that you can remove the last stitch. If you will not be in your office at that time, please call me.

If you will be there tomorrow afternoon, I'll come in with Hampton, as you suggested, to see about having his tonsils removed.

I want to thank you for your interest in Mrs. Raney and in all my clients.

With very best wishes,

Sincerely,

Augusta B. Martin"

As they got up to go to bed, Miss Nettie said, "I don't know what we'd do in Sauta Bottom if Dr. Boyd wasn't so good to us."

## Chapter 27

On a sunny Saturday, when Miss Martin and Miss Nettie and all the children were working somewhere about the place, an unusual visitor appeared.

Miss Martin was planting iris given her the day before. She had had her eye on a pocket of good soil caught by a line of rocks near the 'Bishop's room' for some time. That was where she was working when she heard footsteps coming up the rocky slope to the house. She stood and brushed her hands together, then walked toward the front steps where she saw a spry old man with a large white mustache coming toward her.

"Good morning," she said to him. Miss Nettie, going through the dog-run, heard her and came to stand at the top of the steps.

"Mornin' " said the man. "I'm a orphan. Is this the happy home for orphans?"

"Hooóó! We don't take orphans your age, but we do take people who can work. What can you do?"

"I'm a good one with the dinnermite (dynamite) and I heerd tell you was agoin' to make a road on this here mount'in."

"Yes, we are. Let me show you some of the big rocks and see if you think you can get them out for us."



So, Uncle Johnny moved into the room with the boys and became one of the family.

One night, when all the family were around the fire in the living room, Miss Nettie said, "Uncle Johnny, I heard that you used to be a preacher."

Uncle Johnny tilted his straight chair back, looked into the fire and started talking slowly, "I had done been stiffly with the rheumatiz for forty days and forty nights and all at once I heard somebody callin' me, 'Johnny, Johnny!' I didn't see nobody and I waited awhile and I heard it again, so I says to myself, 'It ain't nobody around so that must be the Lord a 'callin' and so I says, 'Lord, is that you a 'callin'?' and He says to me, 'Yes Johnny, and I want you to go to preachin'.'

"All at once my sould left this here body and I looked down and it were as black as that there Derby hat Miss Martin done give me." (A derby hat had come in one of the clothing boxes. Uncle Johnny had asked for and been given it.)

After a pause, he went on, "I walked through the pearly gates and I walked the street and it were lined with silver dollars. And the Lord, He said to me, 'Johnny, I want you to go back down on earth and preach.' After that my sould come back to my body and I been preachin' up and down this here earth fer five thousand miles and no tellin' how many miles to heaven."

Some weeks later, after all the large rocks had been blown out of the roadway, there wasn't much for Uncle Johnny to do and he was restless. The boys were getting wood from the side of July Mountain but Uncle Johnny wasn't interested in helping them, nor in gardening. He said once or twice, he'd 'orta git back to preachin', especially after Miss Martin had given him a 'preaching suit' from one of the boxes. With that and the derby hat he felt himself well equipped as a preacher and wanted to start again on those five thousand miles of earth. Miss Martin had promised to take him back to the place he had come from, as soon as she could get away for a day, but other needs kept her from it.

It was Katherine who helped her find the time. Miss Nettie taught her to make sweet potatoe pie and she made two for supper one night. A half of one of them was left and put into the safe. Uncle Johnny liked it so well, he slipped down when everyone else was asleep and ate it. Shortly afterwards, he became sick and Miss Martin and Miss Nettie were up the rest of the night.

Miss Martin decided the next day that she had time to take Uncle Johnny home. After they had driven off, Miss Nettie said to Katherine, "Do you remember the vision Uncle Johnny had when the Lord said, 'Touch not, handle not.?'"

"Yes," giggled Katherine. "He should have thought of that when he came down to get the pie."

"I'll never forget his expression last night, when Miss Martin asked him to say the blessing," Miss Nettie said. "He was so pleased, we should have thought to ask him before. And I won't forget his blessing, 'Lord, make us thankful for these here vittles and the hands that prepared them.'"

Katherine took her hands out of the dishwater and looked at them thoughtfully for a moment.

## Chapter 28

One duty Miss Martin put off as long as possible was the answering of letters that called for a thoughtful and well organized reply. Life just didn't give her the time to work on things of this kind. As soon as she gathered her notes and began work, a call would come for help that she felt must be answered. She would put up her material and it would be days before she could get back to it.

In November of 1928, she received a letter that she and Miss Nettie spent much time in answering. It was from the Rev. H.W. Foreman, Secretary for Rural Work for the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church. In part it said:

"The Division of Rural Work is hoping to prepare a stereopticon lecture on Rural Work throughout the United States and in this lecture I should like very much to include something of the House of Happiness.

"I am wondering if you could send me some pictures. . . and an account of your work. . .

"This sounds like a very large order, but you and the House of Happiness are doing such a splendid work that I would very much like to include them. . ."

The report that Miss Martin, with Miss Nettie's help, made of that year's work must have included much that she sent Mr. Foreman. The report said,

"The past year has been very successful in many respects. We feel that something has been

accomplished in many phases of the work.

We have cared for more people here at the house, with a family average of eleven and an age range from three months to seventy-two years. Our baby, Mozelle, was early adrift on the river of life for when she was three weeks old her mother wrote the worker to come and get her, she didn't want her. The mother's family refused to keep them so they were brought to the House of Happiness which was already full. Somehow we made room for them until we found a place with a family where the mother could work and keep her baby. The mother is giving reasonable satisfaction and Mozelle is growing rapidly.

"The oldest member of our family is a feeble minded old man. He enjoys the children and the good warm clothes we give him.

"Our community Sunday School has increased in membership and interest. The evening song service has been an inspiration, with the piano we were given a great attraction. Where once we heard only The Rovin' Gambler sung as our young men passed up and down the road at night, we now hear various hymns, the latest being, "Jesus Calls Us."

"The public school has increased in attendance. Two hundred books were recently added to the library. About fifty books a week are borrowed.

"The hungry have been fed. In addition to the family we have served six hundred and thirty extra meals.

"The naked have been clothed. Although our clothing supply has been limited, we have met the most distressing needs. On one occasion the worker took off her only heavy wool dress to give to a tubercular neighbor. She came one cold, rainy afternoon bringing a load of wood to exchange. When asked what she wanted, she said, "A can of tomatoes, and my little boy wants a ball."

"The sick have been visited and administered to. In many cases bedding, food and medicine have been furnished by the House of Happiness. One Sunday morning in the summer, as we were going down hill on our way to Sunday School in Scottsboro, a man called from the road that there was a very sick child on the mountain and they wanted the worker to come.

"A mattress, bedding, gowns, ice, lemons and other things were hastily gotten together and the long tedious journey started. When we arrived, it was seen that the house where the child lay was made entirely of tin roofing and was in an open field with no tree near it. You can imagine the heat.

"The little patient was lying on an immense featherbed, delirious and with temperature of 103½. The featherbed was removed and a comfortable mattress with fresh laundered sheets put in its place. The worker stayed twelve hours, giving the child a sponge bath every two hours. Before she left he was conscious and took a little lemonade.

"Each morning we have God's minute and in the evening, when the shadows begin to fall on the house from the top of the mountain, we have our family prayer, often on the porch. The children love to sing, 'Now the Day Is Over.' Thus we end each day's program of work, love, play and prayer."

In February 1929, Bishop McDowell passed on to Miss Martin another request for information about her work, this one from the Rev. A. Rufus Morgan, Executive Secretary and General Missionary of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina. Mr. Morgan asked for information and kodak pictures of the work in north Alabama, for an article on mountain work for the magazine, "The Spirit of Missions."

As she and Miss Nettie worked on their reply to him, Miss Martin said, "Miss Nettie, I don't know what I will do without you when you have to leave. I'm not going to give you up, until all of the Faith Fund is used. I guess the members of the Women's Auxiliary are as hard up as we are, because it's been coming in less and less, lately."

"If the schools could only pay," said Miss Nettie, "we could make out. And if my family didn't need me in the gift shop they're trying to develop, I could stay. But, as it is, I guess I'll have to go when the fund gives out."

They turned back to the work they were doing for Mr. Morgan and next day, sent it off to him. On May 11, 1929, he wrote them,

"The fear had grown within me that the chance to get some account from the House of Happiness had been lost. Having had experience in the field, I know how many things press for the doing, and how difficult it is to find time, space and composure to write.

"All the more am I grateful for the splendid picture you have given us of the work. I thank you and Miss Barnwell most cordially.

"With every best wish for the work in and around the House of Happiness (and may it be the promise of much more, of like devotion, for our mountain people.)

"Cordially, A. Rufus Morgan"

At the end of the summer, a busy one, Miss Martin reluctantly took Miss Nettie to the train. She was leaving for her home, to help in Ye Fireside Gift Shoppe, in Yazoo City, Mississippi.

In her report, written later in 1929, Miss Martin said, "While our efforts have been restricted (from lack of finances) in many ways, we have managed to carry on every phase of the work. Due to the fact that we have received no money from the public schools we had to give up our capable assistant, Miss Nettie Barnwell. The Woman's Auxiliary made an effort to supplement the Faith Fund, a fund which was set aside especially for the assistant's salary, and this enabled us to keep Miss Barnwell until September. While our faith never wavered, our fund expired. . .

"Recently, we have had a capable, volunteer assistant, Miss Mary Winn Pentecost, from Gadsden. She has a good Episcopalian name but is a staunch Presbyterian."

Miss Pentecost must not have stayed long because in the spring of 1930 Miss Martin said in one of her reports that she had been without an assistant for six months.

Lilian Prout had written Miss Martin about one of her friends, Minnie Barnes, a teacher in the Birmingham schools who had expressed an interest in coming to the House of Happiness as a volunteer worker in the summer. Miss Martin wrote hopefully, inviting her to come. She had also written Miss Nettie, asking her if she couldn't come up for a visit during the summer. Miss Nettie replied that she could and would come, about the middle of June.

## Chapter 29

Miss Martin and Katherine reed were shelling peas. They were on the porch, right in the middle of the dog-run so that they could catch any breeze that might come up the slope of July Mountain. Miss Martin turned to the fifteen year old girl who still had a Dutch haircut and said, "I had a letter yesterday from Minnie Barnes, who is coming to help us this summer. She's one of Lilian's friends."

"Miss Lilian wrote me about her," said Katherine. "She said she taught school in Birmingham. . . and she thought we'd like her."

"I hope she likes us, enough to spend the summer. If she can stay with Miss Nettie, I can get off to go to that social work conference in Wisconsin." Miss Martin looked down across the valley, then back at the work in her hands, and peas began falling into her pan again. "I need to go and hear what other social workers are doing once in awhile."

"When is she coming?"

"Her letter said June 15th."

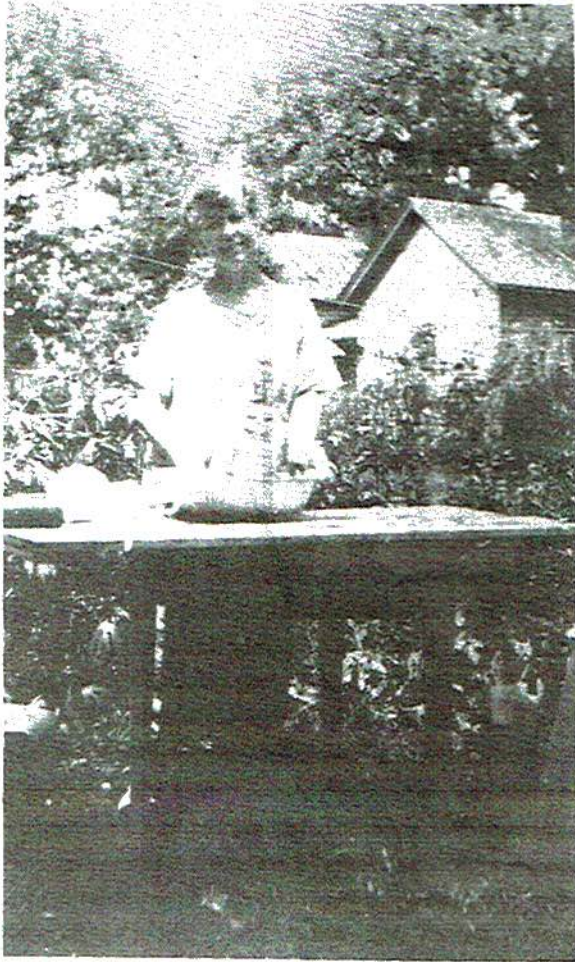
Minnie arrived on the 15th, and on July 5th, 1930, she wrote her mother,

"Your letter today was balm to my soul. I had a deadly hunch that you had been sick. . . As for me, I look better and feel better than I have in months. I've been eating 'em out of house and home. Speck when Miss Martin returns she'll die at our expenses. . . we've been eating more than just butt-y-milk!

"You should have seen us celebrating the fourth day. In our best bib and tucker, we set out for town at nine-thirty. The streets were crowded with people in bonnets and big sun hats. The band was blowing its united head off (their faces crimson from the heat), the melody carried bravely by one wobbly horn.

"To begin with there were races; a sack race, a fat man's race and a watermelon race. Then there was a hog calling contest. . . I wish you and Dad could have heard it.

"We stood in the sun until we were woozy. The boys each had a quarter to spend, and spend it they did. 'Ere lunch, they had eaten milky ways, pop corn, ice cream and babe yuths. For lunch we went to Katherine's sister's house where we had left some supplies-bread, jelly, sandwich spread and cheese.



**Miss Martin Bathes Wee Mary**

**At The Scottsboro  
House Of Happiness**



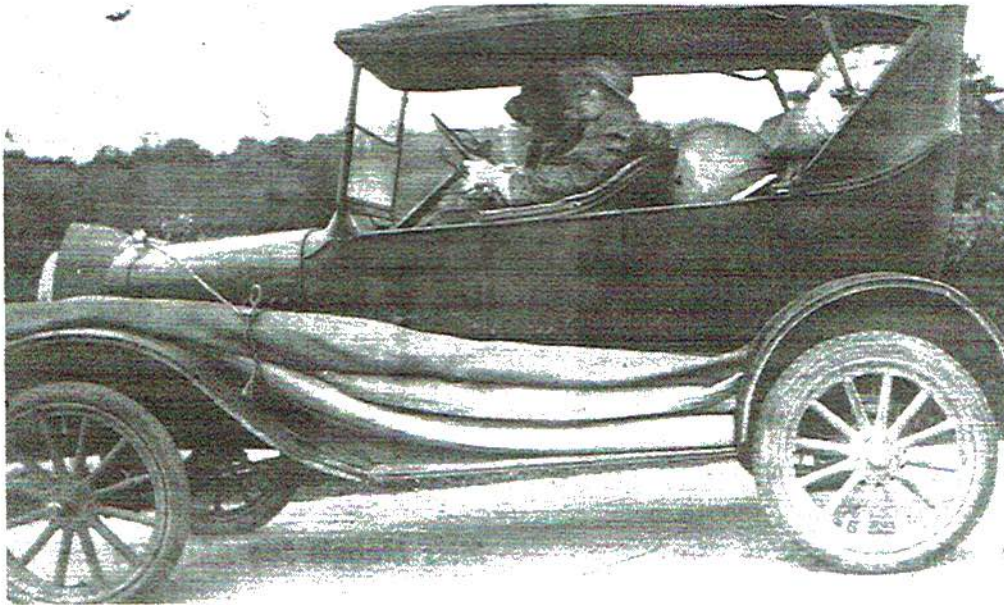
**Miss Maggie Lee Alison In The Swing**



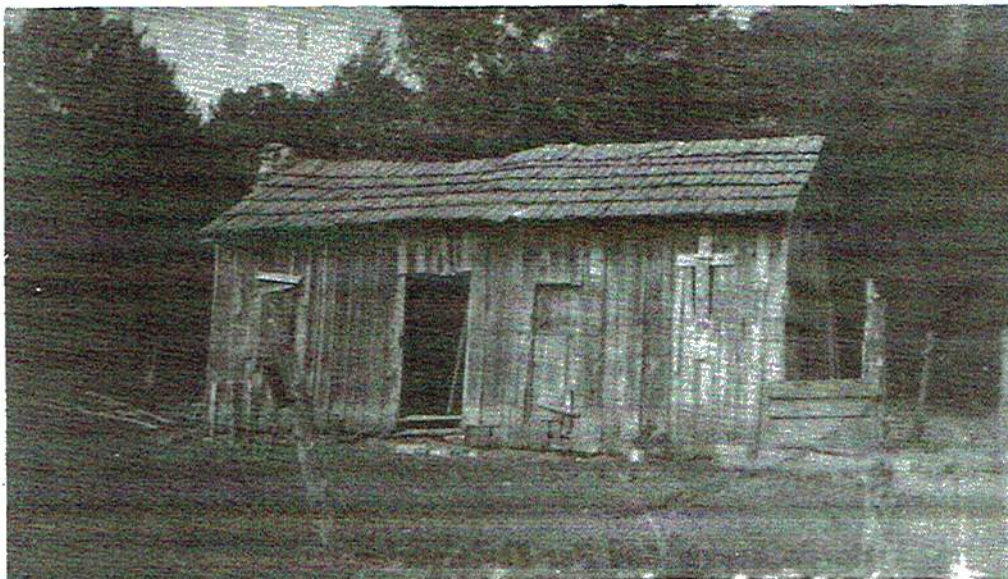
**Marcia Boykin And Her Kindergarten**



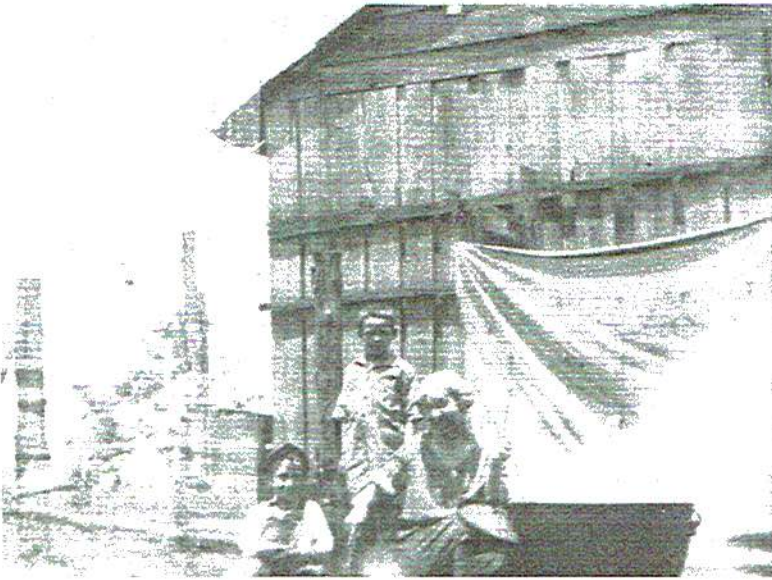
**Rosa Who Named The  
House Of Happiness**



**Miss Martin And Dolly Move To Sauta Bottom**



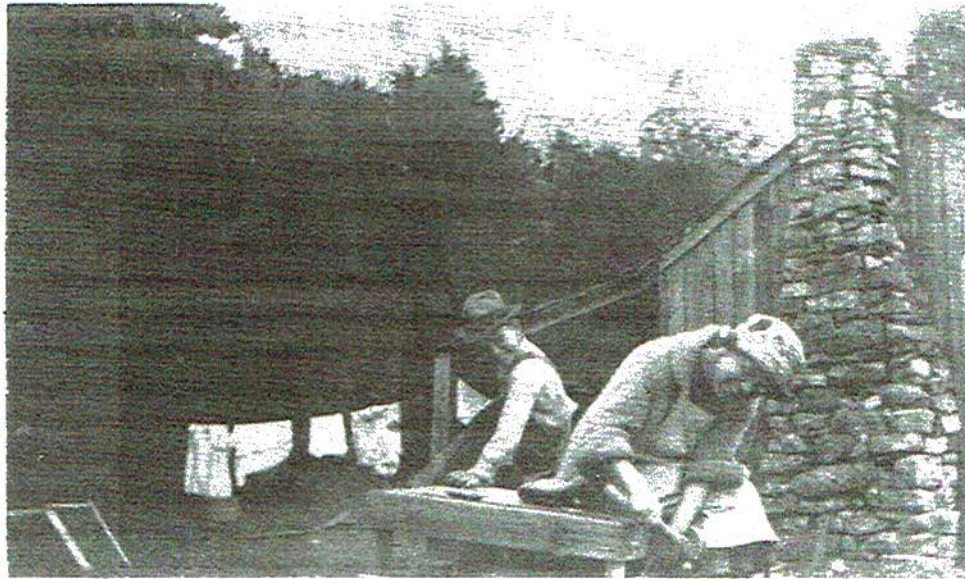
**The Shack**



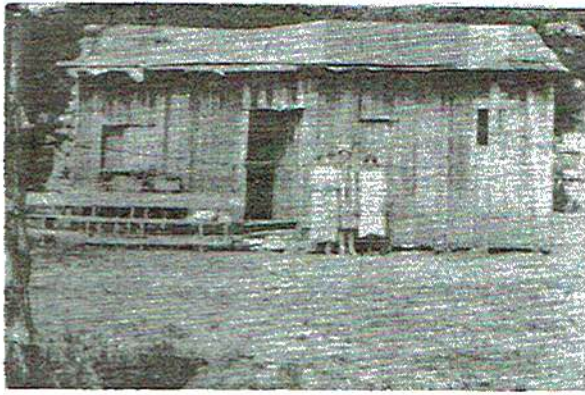
**Miss Martin, Billy Hancock And Friend Cook**



**Miss Martin Cleans Barn Yard**



**Miss Martin And Friend Build Chicken Coop**



**Hattie, Dolly, Miss Fogleman At Shack**



**Eating On Hillside**



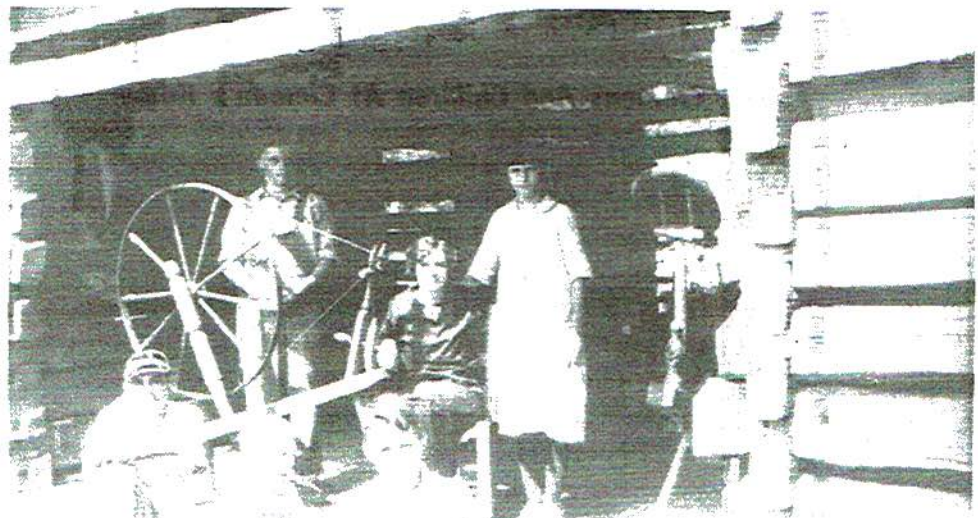
**Hattie Lyman And Boys  
On Top Of July Mountain**



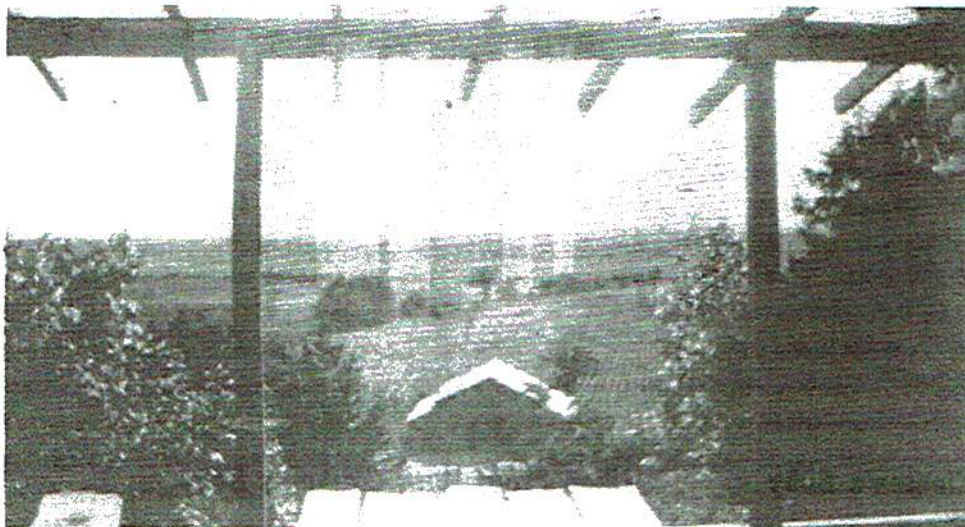
**On Front Steps Of House Of Happiness**



**Jimmie Alves, Scott Clemens And Hodge Alves In Dog Run**

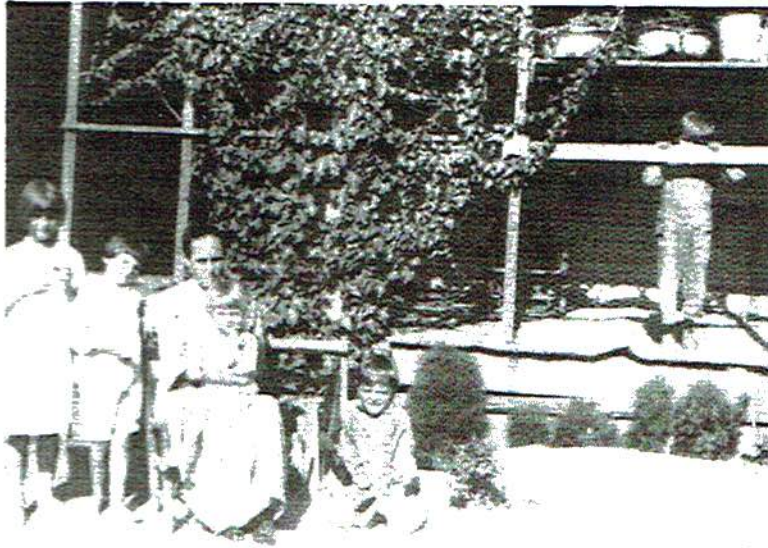


**Scott, Florence Smith, Dolly, Jimmie, Billy, Howard**



**View Of Barn And Farm From Front Porch**





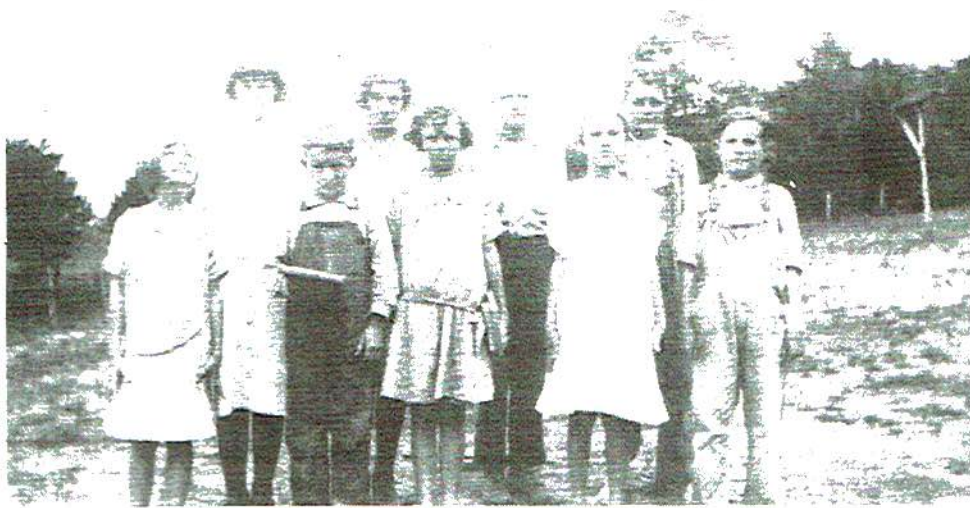
**Mrs. Clemens And Children At Clemen's Home**



**Helen Townsend With Clemen's Baby**

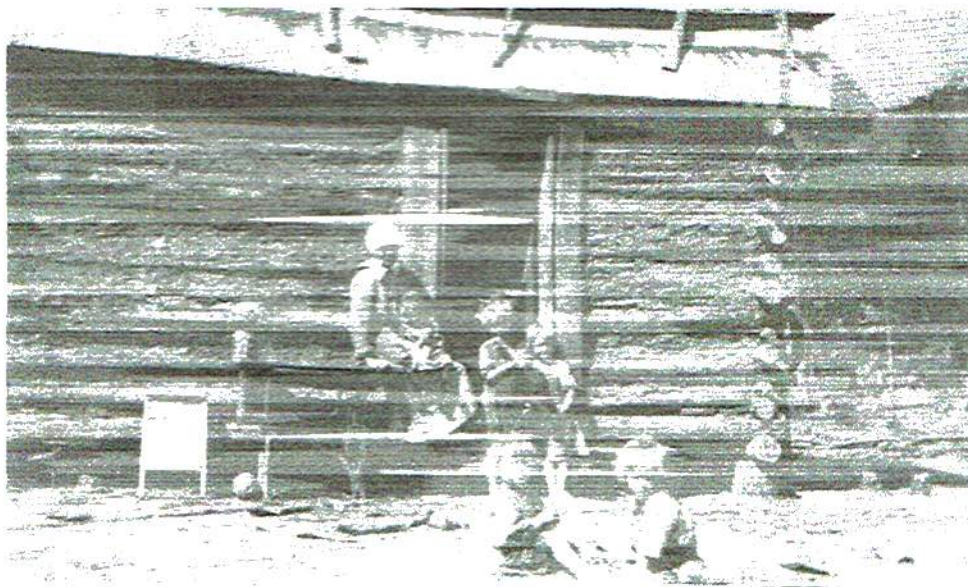
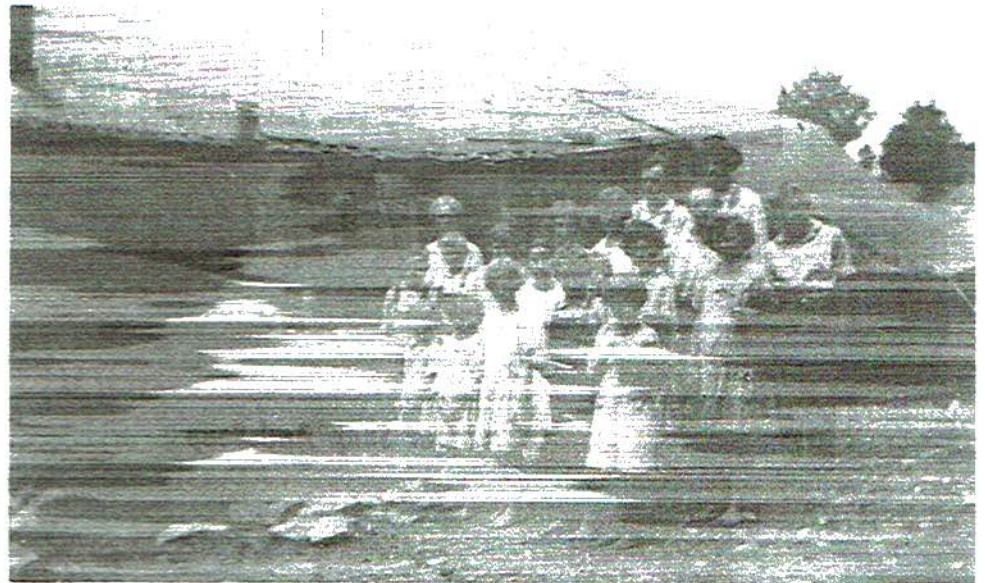


**Lilian Prout With Clemen's Baby**



School children are; backrow, Dolly Phillips, Nora Clemens, Gordon Steeley and Howard. Front row, Pearl Clemens, Aubrey Clemens, Mamie Smith, Beatric Smith [who bought the Hofh in 1954] and Woodrow Steeley.

Neighbors and school children are; back row, Virgil Steeley and Uncle Dave Hancock. Next row, Mrs. Coffee, Efie Steeley, Nora Clemens, Dolly Phillips, Gordon Steeley and Mount. 2nd row, Woodrow Steeley, Bill Hancock, Beatrice Smith, Pearl Clemens, Vesta Paradise, Mamie Smith. 1st row, Augusta Clemens, Alma Clemens, Veta Paradise, Aubrey Clemens and Margaret Lindsay.



*A Neighbor Family*



**Before Soap-Soup-Salvation**



**MISS NETTIE BARNWELL**

Who is assisting Miss Martin in the work in Jackson County, at "The House of Happiness."



**After Soap And Soup**



Water supply of the House of Happiness is obtained from the...



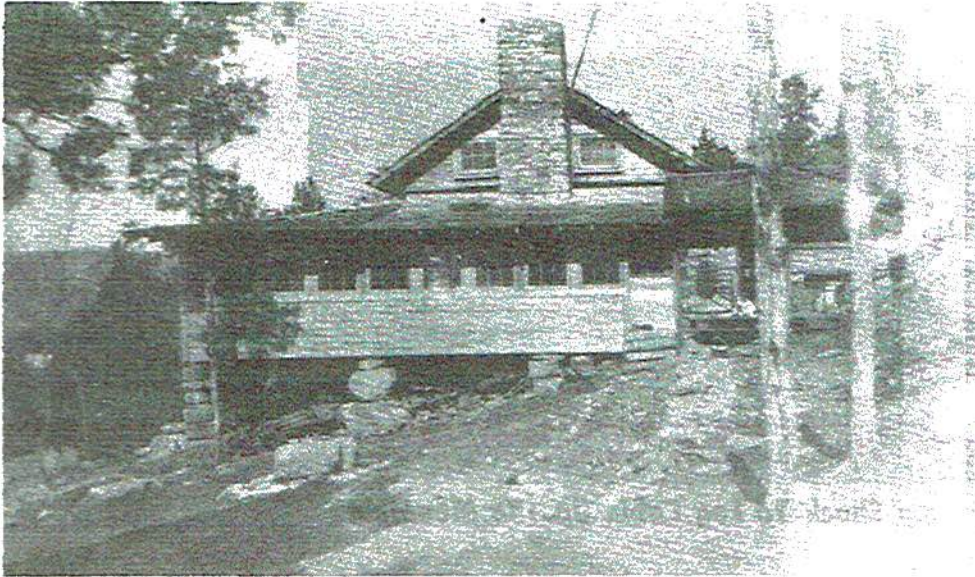
***From Shack To Log Cabin Up The Mountain***



***The Way The Cabin Looked When We Moved In***



***After The Chimney Was Added***



***After The Henderson Sun-Porch Was Added***



***After The Worker's Room Was Added***

**SEQUOYA,**  
***Inventor Of The Cherokee Alphabet.***



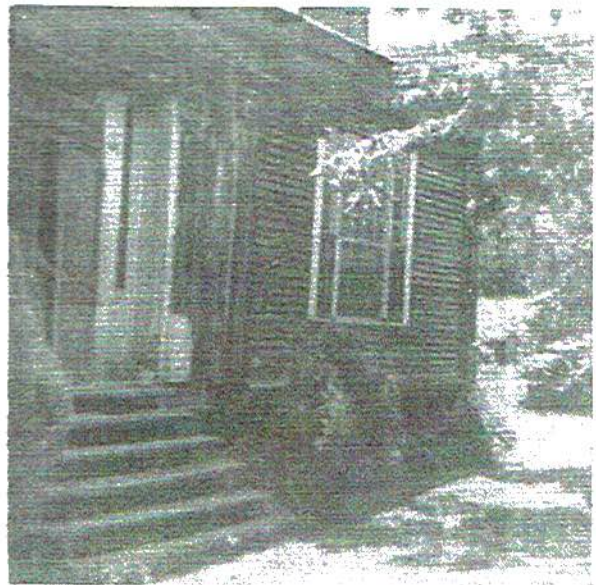


**Happy Hollow School And July Mountain**

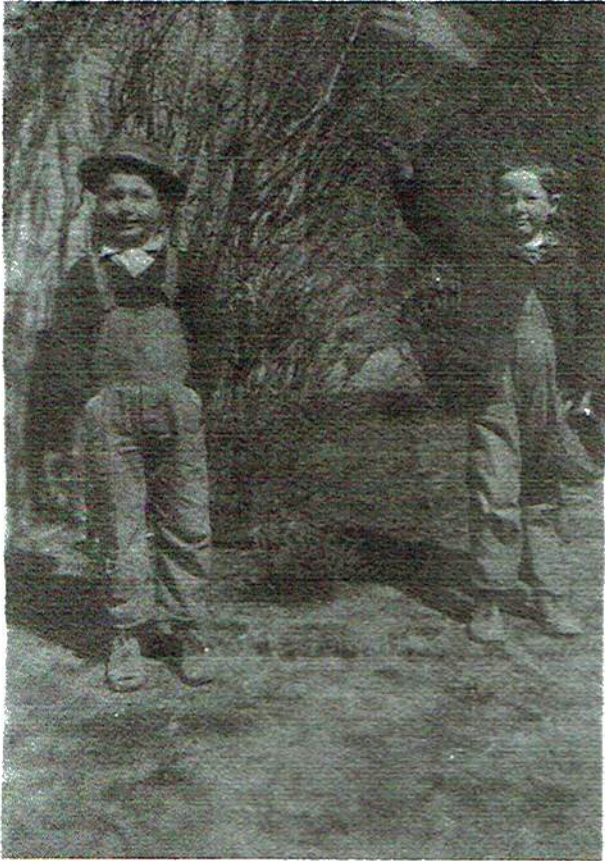


**Margaret Morrison**

*Mountain madonna  
in Christmas play.*



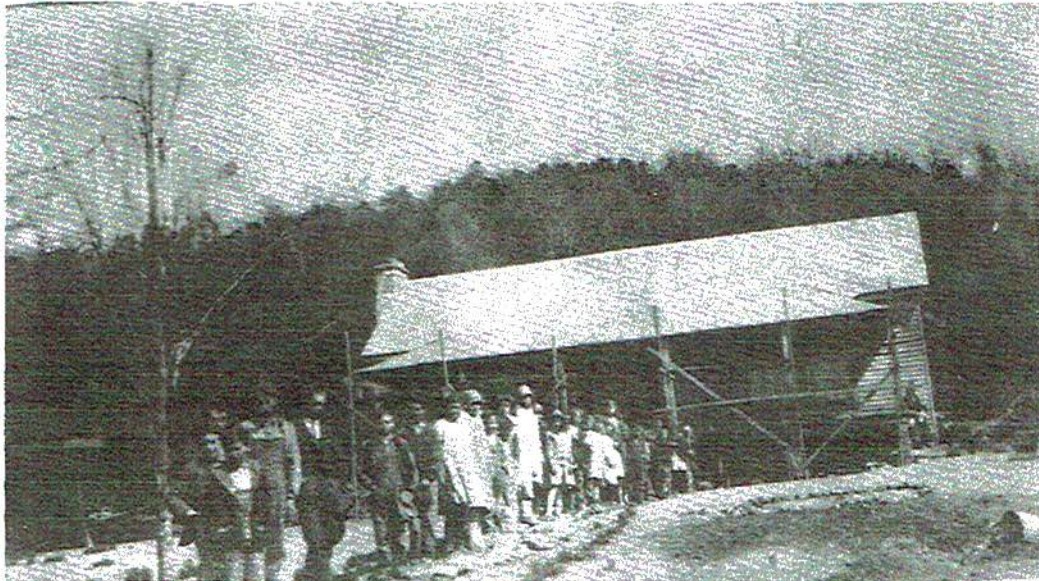
**Lindsay Home 1968**



**Clay Paradise And Herbert Owens  
On Arbor Day**



**Dr. Hugh Boyd Who Meant So Much  
To The People Of Sauta Bottom**



**Students Of Happy Hollow School**



**Uncle Johnny In His Preaching Clothes**



**Susie And Johnny Who Walked  
Four Miles To School**



**Eating In The Sun, Miss Martin, Lilian, Tom, Clem,  
Teddy, Katherine, Two Visitors**



**Miss Nettie Barnwell**





**Billy, Hodge, Miss Martin, Virginia Pruitt, Dwain Bowie**



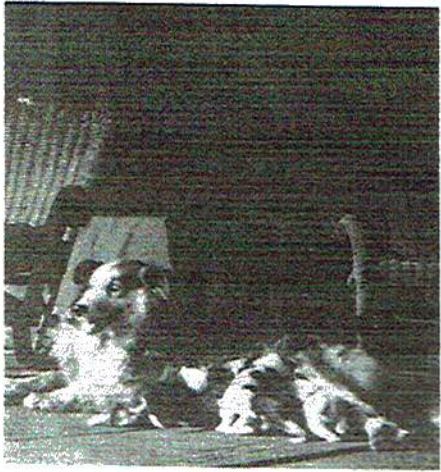
**Pupils And Back Door To Happy Hollow School**



**Miss Nettie In Her Aunt Babe Costume**



**Minnie Barnes**



**Lassie And Her Puppies On Porch**

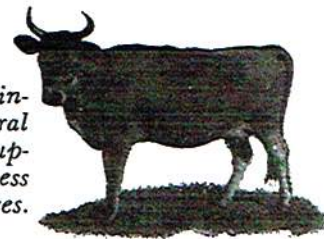


**The Found Stone Chimney**

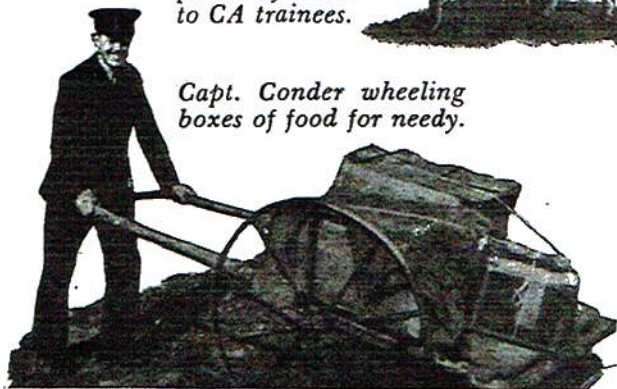


**Captain And Mrs. Charles Leslie Conder**

*Milk and training in rural work are supplied by Bess to CA trainees.*

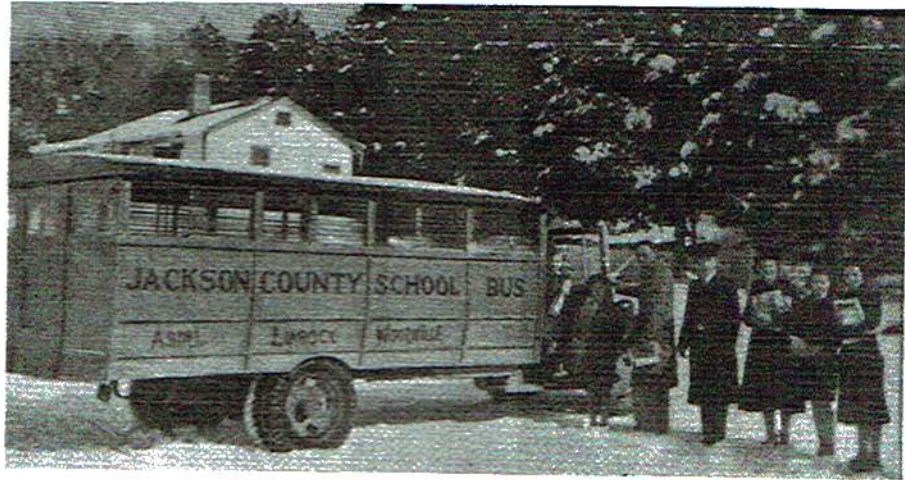


*Capt. Conder wheeling boxes of food for needy.*





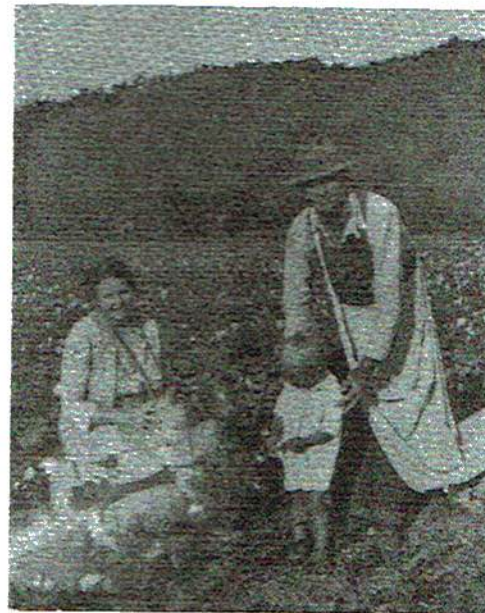
**Captain Wheat**



*A school bus rented by the House of Happiness brings together over 100 scattered Church people for church school and services.*



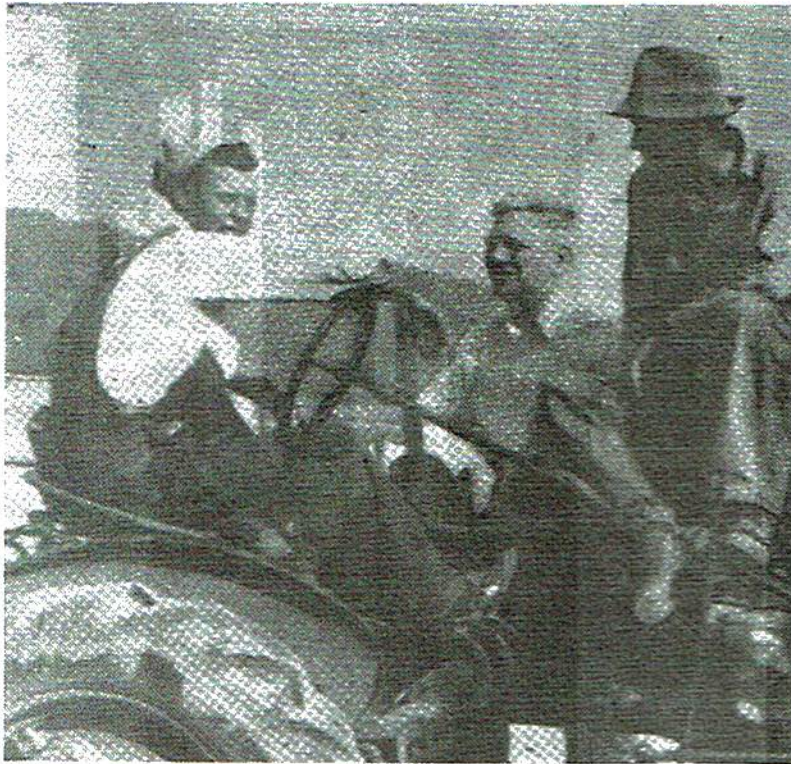
*Church Army worker taking wood to bedridden woman.*



**Superintendent of the Sunday school picking cotton on the mission farm with his family.**

*A group of Church Army students are introduced to the mission wash day.*

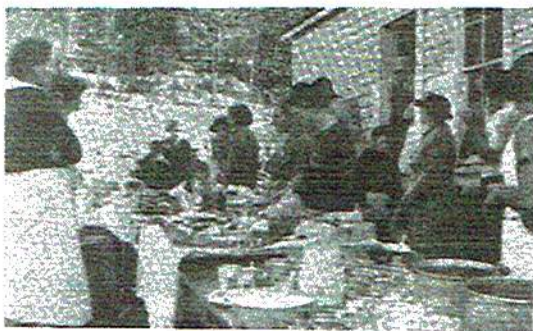
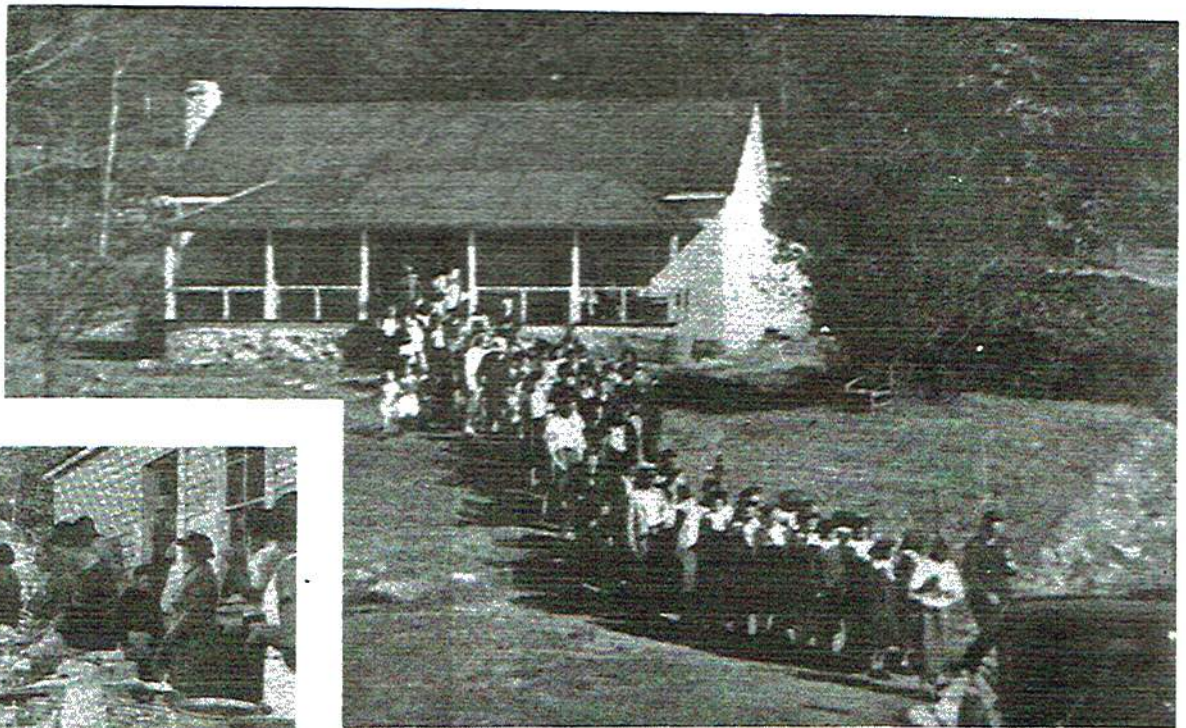




*Baptism by immersion is a Biblical custom often followed at the mission.*

## BISHOP AT THE HOUSE OF HAPPINESS

*A procession to the cemetery is part of the mission's annual homecoming festival.*



*A picnic, at which the women serve products of their own cooking, is a feature of annual homecoming day.*



**Miss Nettie Barnwell And Her Ancestor  
An Anglican Priest**



**Miss Martin And Friend**



**Scott Clemens, Foundation And Chimney  
Of House Of Happiness 1968**



**Gunter's Mountain From Foundations  
Of The House Of Happiness 1968**

"Dorothy went to the baseball game with Scott. Leola went to visit the Presleys, with whom she had worked. I was put in charge of the boys and we went to the picture show.

"The theater is a Wow! You enter to find the audience facing you. You bump around groping up a crooked aisle, stumble into the raised platform of the stove, hit the stove, then grope into a maize of seats. . . It was worth it all when others came in, put their fates in the balance and started seeking a seat! The light streamed in so around the screen that you could hardly distinguish the actors.

"Scott started taking the census today. Don't think he goes further than Shakerag east, or Jumpoff west. Miss Nettie went with him.

"We held our sing last night. You should hear us sing, 'When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder.'

"Our only casualty so far has been the breaking of Ted's arm, and that happened in town where he is staying with his married sister. Another sister, Martha, a trained nurse, is also here. She is one of the House of Happiness family."

One morning, after Minnie had been at the House of Happiness for several days, she got up from the breakfast table and said, "I have an announcement to make. From now on, Katherine, you can go and do something else and I'll be the breakfast dish washer."

It was the day before Miss Martin left. She immediately responded to Minnie, "Well, it's the law of the Medes and the Persians that you can't wash any other dishes during the day. All of you remember that while I'm gone. Don't let her."

"We'll keep an eye on her," said Miss Nettie. "School starts soon. After it does, I doubt if she will have time to do the breakfast dishes." She smiled at Minnie and continued, "We leave the house every morning at seven."

Miss Nettie wasn't teaching, but walked to school with Minnie the day school started; the walk down the hill together in the early morning, was a joy to both of them. Although Miss Nettie was nearly forty and Minnie twenty four, they had many things in common and were most congenial. Both of them had an artist's eye for beauty and both had a good sense of humor, both had love and compassion for people, both were teachers.

One night after the children had gone to bed, Minnie and Miss Nettie were in the living room, Minnie doing school work and Miss Nettie going through the day's mail. She came to the Alabama Churchman and looked through it to see if there was House of Happiness news. As usual, there was. "Listen to this," she said. "Here's an article written by Mrs. Albert F. Wilson who visited here this spring. She's written an article called 'A Day At the House of Happiness.' I'll read you some of it."

"Read it all," said Minnie, pushing her papers aside and putting her feet on a nearby stool. "Well, if you insist." She pulled the lamp closer to her elbow and began,

### **A Day At The House Of Happiness**

"Yes, it is time for the visitor to arise and begin the day's work. The sun is coming up. The clock says four-thirty. What is that sound? It is someone sweeping and a sweet voice yodeling in true mountain style. Soon there are other sounds; someone is building a fire, water is being poured and all the world is astir with activity. The voices of four young boys blend in alternate singing, whistling and in joyous banter, until breakfast is announced. After scurrying for the table there comes comparative quiet while the Happiness family is gathered for the morning meal.

After breakfast, each child has his own task and does his part in a cheerful, cooperative spirit. A whistle blows, and in the lovely, glassed-in Henderson sun porch, the whole family gathers for God's minute when the much prized book, given by Mrs. Melton, is used for family prayer.

Soon afterwards, Miss Hunli has the whistle blown and with fourteen small children in train disappears down the mountain side to the schoolhouse where they remain in class until twelve o'clock.

At noon, chapel is held in the schoolhouse, with hymns, Bible stories and noonday prayers. One feature would delight our Church school teachers all over the Diocese - to hear the boys and girls from the House of Happiness repeat their Duty towards God and their Duty towards their neighbor without leaving off a syllable. They also read the Bible aloud and offered the prayers with ease and intelligence. In the meanwhile, up at the House of Happiness, there is a call for Miss Martin; some more bolts are needed for the new plows. A few minutes quiet, then a little voice following a tap on

the door, says, "It's May. I want some tippers, Miss Martin, for Sunday." Then another call, and still another - for buttermilk, medicine, for a sick mother, a baby ill, and another family needing help - and so the day wears on. A call for clothing brings a visit to the supply room.

In the upper room of this log cabin the clothes sent by the Woman's Auxiliary and other friends hang in orderly array of coats and dresses. Boxes and trunks are packed with layettes and baby supplies, also underwear, shoes and bedding. Here also is kept the quilting of the mountain women and the rag rugs in the making. Some of the clothing is in such condition when it arrives. . . that it can only be used to strip into pieces for rag rugs, but it all has its value unless we except the very high heeled shoes and worn bedroom slippers.

A trip over the mountainous site. . . reveals the unique water system of a bucket and trolley let down by means of a windless to the natural spring of cool water two hundred feet down the mountain. All over the rocky mountainside the violets, phlox, honeysuckle, buckeye, dogwood and garden flowers vie with one another in filling the air with perfume and color. At last, the busy day is over. Many letters have been written, work on the farm attended, many wants relieved.

Miss Martin, for months, had no assistant, but the strain and stress has been relieved by efficient helpers, Miss Hunli as teacher and Mrs. Harlow as housekeeper."

Miss Nettie stopped reading and looked up, "Neither of these good helpers stayed long, I'm sorry to say." She began reading again, but said first, "Mrs. Jones was impressed by the yodeling."

"When supper was over the yodeling is again heard; the small boys are calling one and all to come out on the moonlit porch. Here the evening hymn is sung and prayers are said and soon all is quiet for the night.

No, not for the night. A cry of alarm is heard - the mountain timber belonging to the House of Happiness is on fire! Everyone in the vicinity is soon assembled and Miss Martin, leading the fire fighters, gets it under control only in the wee small hours. Yet, when another day dawns, she is again about her work in the service of God and her neighbor."

"That was a full day," said Minnie, "almost as full as the fourth of July. I felt older at the end of that day."

"That's typical of our days up here. Sometimes you do feel more mature at the end of them! Since tomorrow starts at four A.M., we'd beter go on up."

There was no argument on Minnie's part. They went up the rough steps together.

The next day, Woodrow Steeley, a neighbor who was Bill's age, came to the house to tell Bill that he had seen his father in town the night before.

"Had he been drinking?" asked Bill.

"Well, yes, he had," said Woodrow, "but he stopped me to ask how you were. Then he asked me who was at the house." Woodrow turned to smile at Miss Nettie. "When I told him you were here, Miss Nettie, he said, 'O yes, Miz Nettie. Her's a good old soul!'"

Billy looked embarassed but Miss Nettie said, "Thank you, Woodrow, for telling me. I take that as a real compliment, coming from Uncle Dave, especially when he was under the influence. If he hadn't liked me, he would have said that, too."

Bill's mother was dead. It was because of Uncle Dave's drinking that he had spent most of his life at the House of Happiness.

### Chapter 31

Miss Martin and Scott were sitting in front of the log fire in the living room, on a cold night in January, 1931. She looked across at the young man beside a table covered with school books. It was hard to realize that the eleven year old boy who had come to live at the House of Happiness, thin and ill with malaria, mis-liking school and books, was the same person as the broad, well-developed young man sitting in front of her, preparing to teach the church school which she started when the public school closed from lack of funds. Scott was unable to return to the University of Virginia so she asked him to teach the children of the community and he agreed. Every night, it gave her pleasure to see him sitting there doing his school work for the next day. She knew, when he went back, college would mean more because he had tried to share knowledge with others.

She pulled her pad toward her and began working on her report of work during the past year. It would bear the imprint of the depression from which the whole country was suffering, but that couldn't be helped. She wrote:

"The year just closed has been one of the most difficult since the beginning of the work and yet we have been wonderfully blessed and feel that it has been one of the most successful. A spirit of cooperation has developed which has proven most helpful, far and near.

"We have farmed together, under the direction of the County farm agent.

"We have gardened together, because the Business and Professional Women of St. Paul's Selma gave us the seed.

"We have worked together: Operating a wood yard, we asked the men who could furnish wood to bring it in poles, in order that others might cut it up, thus making two jobs out of one. When a man could furnish neither wood nor team, he was given the privilege of cutting wood from the Church mountain and using the Church team and wagon to haul it. By this method we have given employment to many and the House of Happiness has an abundant supply of wood."

After she had written this, she stopped and said to Scott, "I believe even Margaret and Lillian would be satisfied with our woodpile this year."

"They'd be hard to please, if they weren't," he said.

Augusta Martin picked up her pencil reluctantly and turned back to the report. In a way, she liked thinking back over the year just past. There had been many an emergency which called for creative handling, and at those times she felt more alive but there was something she knew and would not admit-many of those times had used her physical strength to the limit and beyond. She remembered vividly a feeling just that day, at dusky dark, when she was alone and looked out of the window for a moment. There had been a lonesome light on the land that seemed to say, "I'll show you everything clearly before I withdraw. Look while you can." She stood by the window, looking, until one of the children came in and broke her reverie. Now, she shook off the memory and again began using her pencil.

"We have eaten together: Our market man gives us soup bones. With our home-canned vegetables and those given us by the Church School of Nativity, Huntsville, we have served lunch to approximately twenty, nearly every day, for three months. This includes men who are working, children who could not bring lunch to school, and several women, who come to help with the housework. Some of our work for women is making quilts, and making over clothing. One woman will make two quilt tops and keep one; another will quilt two and keep one. Others, who have enough bedding, prefer to exchange work for clothing.

"Since Miss Barnwell is not with us our arts and crafts department is practically closed, even though our women come on Tuesdays and Saturdays to do work of various kinds. The clothes exchange is very helpful to us and to the community. Wood is the chief article of barter since we feel that the people need their farm products to supply their own needs. However, we did fit one family out completely for a gallon of syrup and a bushel of meal.

"We knew that we were looking forward to a winter with limited means so we planted every available acre but one in foodstuff. This one was planted in cotton. We have made more peanuts, corn and potatoes than ever before. We have our own meat and even though we received the discouraging report that there would be no Maintenance Fund for December (as the bank in which the fund was kept had closed its doors), we did not suffer. Our boys immediately hitched up the church mules to the church wagon and began to haul gravel for the county to pay for our flour and coffee.

"Our work is entirely cooperative, with all our clients, far and near. Some of them come for more than twenty miles with their products and even the smallest children understand the spirit of exchange. One very small boy, not yet three, said, 'Work, Mammy Mart, britches!' I understood but wondered what manner of work I could find for so small a boy. A friendly shower came along to make the ground soft so we pulled weeds and he raced to get the largest pile.

"Our work is also educational. Many times women and children help with the housework while the men help with the farm. Every meal prepared is a lesson in cooking, and every nail driven a lesson in building. One man said, 'Weuns have made lots of mistakes in our house (meaning the House of Happiness) but if weuns can ever build one for ourselves, weuns ought to know how.' Our clothing exchange has worked wonders in the appearance of those who have used it. One family told me they were sewed up in all the clothing they had, for the winter. The clothing room made it possible for them to change.



"Last summer we were fortunate in having a very efficient volunteer worker. Miss Minnie Barnes, a Birmingham teacher, not only taught in the summer school but assisted in the housework and with the Sunday School. She was one of the most capable workers we have ever had. Miss Ruth Johnson was another efficient worker who was with us for two months in the fall. Our other volunteer worker in the summer turned out to be mentally ill. She tried to burn up the house by sticking paper between the logs and setting it on fire. Fortunately, it was discovered before any damage was done.

"We regret that there is no salary for an assistant. That is our greatest need."

Miss Martin pushed a stool closer and put her feet up, then put her head back and relaxed. What a relief to have another report made. "I'll bet we have to make more reports of the work up here than any other phase of church work in the diocese," she thought. Without saying a word, she held up one hand and began counting on her fingers. When she did, Scott looked across at her, but seeing that she was deep in thought, he just grinned and went back to his work.

"Because the diocese owns the land and pays my salary, and the Woman's Auxiliary built the house and sends me a maintenance fund, hopefully, of a hundred dollars a month, I report to both of them, annually, but not at the same time," she thought. "The one to the diocese goes in January, the one to the Women in October, then there are the quarterly reports." She let her hand fall and sighed. Then she reached for a small notebook on the table beside her. She liked, when possible, to end her reports with the verse of a hymn or a poem so through the year she jotted such things down in her notebook. Most of the time, she failed to record the source. The one she selected to put at the end of this report was one of those. Taking the last sheet of the report, she wrote:

"God is our Father,  
Man is our brother,  
Life is a mission and not a career;  
Dominion is service,  
Its scepter is gladness  
The least is the greatest,  
Saving is dying,  
Giving is living,  
Life is eternal and love is its crown."

### Chapter 31

On July Mountain and in Sauta Bottom, during January and February, the weather was most severe; everything was covered with sleet and snow a number of times. Conditions grew more distressing as the people, who lived on the ragged edge of poverty all the time, felt the depression more and more. They had come to know and trust the help given by the House of Happiness, so as their needs increased, their requests increased.

Miss Martin, in her years with them, had come to love them and to know their needs at first hand. It was heartbreaking to her that there were so many needs she could not meet. When she could help her spirit soared, but most of this winter her spirit was anchored down in the mud and ice and desperate need in Sauta Bottom. She began to feel that if she were to keep on serving she must get away for awhile.

On a day in April, she sat on the porch. Dogwood was opening and the scent of honeysuckle on the mountain above her came drifting through the dogrun. Bill came up the mountain with her mail, and in it she found a circular telling of a Rural Work Conference at the University of Wisconsin in June, which would last two weeks. She had attended one the summer before and gotten much help.

"That's just what I need," she said to herself. "I'm going to ask Miss Nettie to come so that I can go. Maybe someone else can run her gift shop."

Miss Martin felt some of her desperate tiredness lift, as soon as Miss Nettie came in with Scott and Bill who had gone to meet her.

That night they went back to their habit of staying in the living room to talk after the young people went to bed. Miss Martin told of their greatest problems and was further rested by Miss Nettie's understanding and sympathy. She ended by saying, "One thing I wish you'd do while you're

here is get the quilting started. We can't seem to get enough cover in Sauta Bottom."

"I'll do what I can to get the handicrafts going again," said Miss Nettie. "We can announce it Sunday and begin meeting Tuesday. Is there any material in the clothing room?"

"A little . . . Hooo! You don't know how good it is to have you back. Half my worries have gone since you walked in the door."

"I'm glad. Did you see the box Bill put in the dogrun? It's full of scraps for quilts. I've had all my friends in Yazoo saving them."

"I thank God for you, Miss Nettie," said Augusta Martin. "I'll really be able to relax when you all put me on the train next week."

Life in it's usual variety went on after she left. One day Miss Nettie opened a letter from the Diocesan Department of Missions which said they had voted three hundred and fifty dollars toward the purchase of another car for the House of Happiness since Miss Martin had told them how worn the old one was. She immediately wrote Miss Martin the joyful news.

A week before they were expecting Miss Martin home, the phone rang, a call from Miss Martin to Miss Nettie. For once the connection was good. She could hear Miss Martin clearly but couldn't believe what she heard when Miss Martin said, "I want Scott and Bill to drive our car out here for me."

"Scott and Bill drive to Madison, Wisconsin?" said Miss Nettie.

"I think our old car will make it. I've found a wonderful trade for it, plus the money the church voted."

"But, do you think Scott and Bill can find their way out there?"

"Of course they can. Tell them to find the police department in Madison and they'll help them find me. I'll call the police about it."

"When do you want them to start?"

"Tomorrow. Tell them to get a road map from the garage and you help them figure out how to come. Give them some blankets; they'd better sleep in the car. And let them bring some groceries because they'll need most of the money for gas."

"What money?" asked Miss Nettie.

"There's fifty dollars in the maintenance fund. Ask the bank to put it in five dollar traveler's checks and tell Scott to squeeze it out because we'll have to get home on some of it."

"We'll do our best," said Miss Nettie breathlessly as she hung up and sat down. Sometimes, Miss Martin was like a hurricane.

When the two boys came in, she told them what Miss Martin had said. Neither had the slightest doubt that they could travel across the nation and find Miss Martin.

Miss Nettie got them ready according to instruction but watched them leave next day with a sinking heart, two country boys who had never driven out of Alabama and who had never been responsible for finding their way anywhere by car.

But Miss Martin had been right. They reached Madison and found her in five day's time. The next day they started back and arrived in Sauta Bottom ten days after they left the valley.

On the night they got back, the family gathered in the living room and laughed until they ached at Bill's and Scott's description of their adventures.

Scott said, "Miss Nettie, I know you told us not to go into Chicago, but we wanted to see it."

Bill interrupted with, "We just thought we'd drive down the main street."

"Well," Scott took over, "the worst time on the whole trip was in Chicago. We had to stop because the light turned red, and when it turned green I was in such a hurry to get off I choked the car. All these horns started blowing and when I stuck my head out, it looked like about a million cars back there. I wanted to run like a jack rabbit."

"He almost did," said Bill. "When he got it started, we kind of jumped up the street and then went so fast I didn't think we could stop when the light went red again."

"That trip is a modern miracle," said Miss Nettie.

"It was," said Miss Martin seriously. "They were in my prayers the whole time. I kept thanking God for taking care of them."

The next day, she got Miss Nettie to write the following letter:

Mr. Walker  
Black Hawk Motor Co.  
University Avenue  
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Walker:

We made the trip in the Dodge you so kindly recommended, a trip of eight hundred and fifty five miles without a bobble. Thank you for your interest in selecting it for me. I have thought of you and Mrs. Walker and remembered you in my prayers Sunday, as you told me you would be baptized on that day.

With best wishes and great appreciation,  
Augusta B. Martin"

While in Wisconsin, Miss Martin had lived with a family named Hall. As she did so many times, she drew them to the House of Happiness. They did not come with her when she returned, however, but went to Birmingham where they lived for two years.

### Chapter 32

A number of women and a few men were coming twice a week to work on handicrafts with Miss Nettie, who told Miss Martin she could stay the rest of the summer. They worked on tufted bedspreads, quilts, rag rugs, brooms from broom corn after it turned red, purses and billfolds of leather, pillow tops. Unless it rained they met on the porch and in the dogrun and there was much pleasure in being able to come and work together. The women brought what they could to cook and two of them prepared dinner each time with what the House of Happiness could add. They brought their smallest children who were cared for by the older girls on the Henderson porch. Each family had so many needs that they wanted to sell the things they made and asked Miss Nettie if she would sell them.

That night, she asked Miss Martin, "Do you think we might take some of our handcrafted things somewhere and sell them?"

Miss Martin was opening her mail. There was a letter in it from Sewanee telling of an Adult Conference and her answer was, "I know just the place! Sewanee!" She finished reading it then said, "It's next week they're having an adult conference. That would be a good time, but how will we get them there?"

Just as she asked the question, Dwain Bowie, a young man of the valley who was staying at the house to help with the lay-by school came into the room.

"Maybe Dwain can help us," said Miss Martin and told him what they were discussing.

"I could borrow a pickup truck and drive you," he said.

"Could we fix it up like a covered wagon?" asked Miss Nettie. "That would attract attention."

"Hooo! That would be a sensation!"

"That's the idea," said Miss Nettie. "Everyone's so hard up it will take a sensation to sell anything."

"Would we put a sign on the wagon?" asked Dwain.

"No," said Miss Nettie, "I believe I'll dress up like Aunt Babe and make a talk in the dining hall. I'll ask Aunt Babe to lend me her sunbonnet."

The next week, a queer looking vehicle left Sauta Bottom for Sewanee. In the front, it was a pickup truck; in the rear, it was a somewhat one-sided covered wagon; from the sides it was part one and part the other. The cab just could accomodate Miss Martin, Miss Nettie and Dwain. They were all well-fleshed-out.

In the dining hall at Sewanee that night, Miss Martin got permission from the Conference Leader for Miss Nettie to speak, then introduced her as Aunt Babe, from Sauta Bottom. The real Aunt Babe nearly always talked with a lip full of snuff, so Miss Nettie filled her lower lip with sugar and cocoa before she began to talk. In spite of this difficulty, she made herself heard as she told about the House of Happiness and the things they had brought to sell, speaking from the viewpoint of a mountain woman.

After dinner, the 'covered wagon' was surrounded by interested people and nearly all of their small objects sold, plus a few of their larger ones.

Even though they were taking the bedspreads back with them the next day, they felt that their trip had been a success. Many more people now knew about the House of Happiness and they had a few orders.

"Miss Nettie, you were more like Aunt Babe than her twin sister," said Dwain.

On August 26, 1931, Miss Nettie wrote the following letter to Minnie Barnes,

All summer long I have been saying, 'I will write Minnie as soon as I finish these letters,' then you know what happened. Here would come another batch before I finished those I had started, Miss Martin would have to go away, there would be dinner to get for our crowd and sometimes the twelve tribes of Israel, it seemed to me. I have barely been able to keep my nose above water on the letters. We have spoken of you and wished for you, many, many times.

"Sister Ruth (Miss Martin's sister) is here now. She came back with Miss Martin on Sunday night. Isn't she a joy? She is taking the responsibility for the housekeeping and doing most of the cooking of dinner. Mankind! What a relief! Miss Martin is teaching the lay-by school with Dwain Bowie, the brother of Mae who taught in the winter, as her assistant. I am trying to work up the industrial arts, as our plan was the very first time I came up here. Besides, of course, I am writing the letters and keeping the books and other odd jobs, like playing for the singing, coaching pageants, etc.

"Miss Martin, Dwain and I drove up to Sewanee during the Adult Conference and carried a load of tufted counterpanes, hooked rugs, quilted pillow tops and other articles to display and sell. I advertised them by appearing in the dining room in my Aunt Babe costume with slat sunbonnet, dip-stick and all, and telling 'what that woman waw doin' on yon side of Sauty Creek, introducing Dwain (who is over six feet) as my least 'un that I was trying to get educated,' and finally telling them where the things were on display and asking them to buy. We sold a good many of the small things, but folks did not have much money, and the larger articles did not go. However, we were able to interest them in the work and that was the main purpose of the visit. You should have been along to help me out. Miss Martin and Dwain wouldn't play. Lots of people thought I was the genuine article until the Director of the Conference told them who I was, when I had finished.

"Can't you, Miss Martin says, come up and pay us a little visit before your school opens? We would love so much to have you. We have only Fred, Bill and Dwain with us right now, but Scott is coming back from his Mother's tomorrow."

A spring Alabama Churchman that year had said, "The Rev. J.W. Fulford has just completed a successful preaching mission at the House of Happiness. He writes, 'Miss Martin has a truly wonderful program of service in Sauta Bottom. The people come every week for real work in the house, yard and fields. Every Friday night is play night, when the young people come for games and socials. Daily, the school is making its way into the lives of the children. On Sundays, Miss Martin gathers up two cars full of children and takes them to Scottsboro to church, then comes back for an afternoon service at the House of Happiness."

The June, 1931 Alabama Churchman had said, "Miss Nettie Barnwell is back at the House of Happiness. She is sorely needed and has a big work to do." In spite of this, she went home in the fall.

### Chapter 33

Before the County Board of Education began, in 1930, offering buss transportation to the pupils above the sixth grade in Sauta Bottom, Miss Martin and her helpers had tried to teach any who came, sometimes teaching through the ninth grade. In spite of the fact that only six grades were being taught, the Happy Hollow School reached its peak enrollment in the 1931-32 school year when

Miss Martin and Mae Bowie were the teachers. The dedicated teaching there drew children from other school districts and in that year they enrolled one hundred and twenty seven.

Miss Martin reported to the Huntsville Convocation, on the work of that year, when they met in April, 1932, saying:

"The regular work of the House of Happiness is somewhat the same, year in, year out although no two days in the calendar year are the same. Nearly every hour of the twenty-four brings unexpected duties. It is not uncommon to be called at two o'clock in the morning by a passer-by asking to borrow a gallon of gasoline, or a client asking us to go on a social service call, or someone who needs to use the telephone.

"The summer work consisted of the usual lay-by school for which the worker contracted in order to supplement the income of the House of Happiness. However, as the state salaries have not been paid we have not found the supplement very profitable. Dwain Bowie was our helper in the school. One of the most delightful surprises of the summer was a visit to the House of Happiness by a delegation from Decatur under the chaperonage of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis.

"While of course, this past year, we have felt the depression physically, we have not felt it spiritually. We feel that the work has grown and broadened. There have been more baptisms and confirmations, and the young people are willing to take the leadership in service more readily. The boys who stay at the House of Happiness are willing to lead in Family Prayers, and even those who come only occasionally will say the blessing at meals.

"Again, in anticipation of a hard winter, we planted a large crop of peas. We made more corn than we have had in five years, also peanuts, popcorn, potatoes and pumpkins. With our own meat which we have raised, and sugar donated by a friend, we have managed to live within our very reduced income. Just now we are the proud possessors of fifteen new pigs, and as we saw in The Witness that 281-Fourth Avenue would be glad to have pigs to auction for the benefit of the deficiency fund, we have written Mr. Franklin offering to tithe with them in pigs. We have had to exercise the strictest economy to stay within our limited income and our activities have necessarily been restricted.

"There have been many deaths in our valley. In the past two years most of our oldest citizens have passed to their reward. The oldest one used to tell us of the times when he attended court at the first county seat of Jackson County which stood on the spot that is now the vegetable garden of the House of Happiness.

"Our people are becoming more seriously interested in the Sunday School. A number of the smaller children are now regular in attendance; we feel that they are our most impressionable material. At recess at day school, one little girl was asked why she didn't come to Sunday School. "Pappy won't let me," she replied.

"What kind of pappy do you have who won't let you come to Sunday School?"

"Not much of any at all," the child replied.

"We found that she told the truth. Her pappy was about as near 'not much of any at all' as any of our clients.

"While there are many amusing incidents, there are more that are sad or sordid. Last Sunday morning a woman, ragged and soiled, came rushing into our house. She had a long gash in her head, her arm was black and her hand bruised where her husband had beaten her with an iron poker. No sooner had the worker heard the details than she called the Sheriff, who came immediately. A warrant was made out and the man taken into custody.

"Although we have helped out in many such cases, only once have we been threatened with indictment. A young boy who had run away from home returned, late at night, tired and hungry, to the House of Happiness. We fed him and allowed him to spend the night but sent him home the next morning. Before he had time to get home, his younger sister ran breathlessly in to tell us, "Pappy says if Bud ain't home by ten o'clock, he'll dict the law ag'in ye. This is a warnin' to ye." The Law, however, never arrived.

"In spite of hard times, we had a most abundant supply of toys and candy for the Christmas tree, due largely to the Woman's Auxiliary of the diocese. Some special gifts were from Mrs. Swords of New York city, who sent about twenty-five pounds of candy put up in attractive small boxes, checks from the Primary Department of the Church of Nativity, Huntsville and the Church School of Toulminville, a box from Christ Church, Mobile and a box of useful gifts from Gadsden for men,

women and girls. For most of the recipients, these were the only Christmas gifts they had.

"When we first came to Sauta Bottom, it was hard to get the children in school. Now they come to stay with relatives and friends in order to attend the Happy Hollow School. Four children walked six miles each day to attend here, rather than attend in their district.

"Although we teach diligently and continuously, trying to eliminate ignorance and superstition, it is a long, tedious job. Not only do our neighbors still plant their beans and kill their hogs by the moon, they even wash by the signs of the moon. Last Saturday, we were washing feed sacks from which to make little boys jackets. A neighbor who was helping me, said, "It's no use trying to wash the letters out of these feed sacks, unless its on the light of the moon." Another, helping to cook dinner, said, "You must have killed your meat on the light of the moon. It won't lie flat in the pan."

"The interest of the women in their Club has lagged, because there have been so few sales of their handcrafted articles. The quality of their work has improved greatly and we hope when times improve we shall be able to establish a profitable industry for them.

"The Young People's Service League has increased in membership and usefulness. Five members had the pleasure of attending the meeting in this district at Decatur. This was the first time any of the members had had the opportunity of meeting with ther Leaguers and they gained much inspiration from the visit.

"Since our last Convocation, clubs for men, boys and girls have been organized. They have given much pleasure as well as useful instruction to the members. Under the auspices of the Men's Club the County Health Unit with the cooperation of doctors and dentists of Scottsboro gave us an evening of motion pictures, showing good methods of sanitation and the importance of inoculation against diptheria, typhoid and smallpox. As a result, several families which could not before be persuaded to take such treatment, are now having the family inoculated.

"After the disastrous storm in our county, the Church did her part in relief work. The worker and the big boy went out in the car to carry clothing from our supply room to the sufferers.

"Our special needs now are clothing for boys, large and small. The worker's work shoes have been loaned to pupils to wear to day school and to Sunday School for several weeks. Many boys who would like to go with us to Scottsboro for services are unable to do so because they lack suitable clothes."

As usual, she ended with a prayer.

'O God, Merciful and compassionate, who art ever ready to hear the prayers of those who put their trust in thee; Graciously hearken to us who call upon thee, and grant us thy help in this our need; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." \*

#### Chapter 34

On a cold night the next winter, when Miss Nettie stood by her phone in Yazoo City and a long distance connection was made, she did not recognize the voice speaking to her. It was so hoarse that she couldn't tell whether a man or woman was speaking.

"Is that you Miss Nettie?"

"Yes, this is Nettie Barnwell."

"Could you come and stay with us awhile, until I get over pneumonia?"

"Is this Miss Martin?"

"Of course. Who did you think it was?"

"I didn't know." She paused only a moment before she said, "Yes, I can come. Could Bill meet the train tomorrow evening?"

"He'll be there," the hoarse voice said, then, "Goodbye."

Miss Nettie arrived on schedule and was met by Bill. He put her suitcase in the car as she got in. As soon as they started for the country, he said, "I'm sure glad you're here, Miss Nettie. Maybe Miss Martin will stay in the bed and do like Dr. Boyd wants her to."

"Is she in bed upstairs?"

"Yes'm."

\* Prayer Book, page 41

"I'll try to persuade her to come down in 'the Bishop's room'. It'll be better for her and easier to take care of her if she will."

"I sure hope you can."

"Who's teaching the school?" Miss Nettie wanted to know.

"Mae Bowie, and Marion Moody is coming out from town every day."

Miss Nettie sat in the Bishop's room shelling the never failing peas, a week after her arrival. An improved but very weak Miss Martin lay in the beautiful old mahogany sleigh bed that she had brought to the House of Happiness.

"Where is all the cover?" asked Miss Nettie. "We used to have enough for the household. Now, I don't think we have."

"This winter and last have been so bitter. . . and we've always furnished bedding for the sick," Miss Martin said defensively.

"Of course," said Miss Nettie, sorry she had asked.

"We had to keep lending bedding," Miss Martin went on, "and when it was returned there'd always be some missing. . . 'the cow chewed it or somebody took it off the fence.' "

Again Miss Nettie said, "Of course. Don't worry about it. I'm going to write home for some, and I'm going to see if Miss Helen Snodgrass can lend us a peice or two until it comes."

Miss Nettie stood and said "I'm going to get these peas cooking. Try to take a nap while I do."

The fact that she turned over obediently and shut her eyes told Miss Nettie more about how she felt than anything Miss Martin could have said.

The following report, made by Miss Martin, has no title and no date. It seems to express the deep concern and depression she suffered at this time, so it is given here:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

"These are the Social Service commandments given us by our blessed Lord and Master, who was Himself a social service worker. All our social efforts spring from and center in God. God comes first, man and things afterwards.

"Christ gave us the example. 'He went about doing good.' All His services are summed up in these words. He gave us the Social Service Prayer, 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' A goal of social perfection. He gave us the rule, 'Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.' "

"Are we not the servants of God? It is our duty to apply the teachings of Christ to the solution of social problems of every day life.

"We might also say that Christian Social Service is the demonstration of Christian love for humanity, usually expressed in some form of service to our fellow man, whether it be digging a ditch for sanitation, or rehabilitating a broken family, or reclaiming a lost soul.

"It is difficult to create a social service spirit among average, conservative church members. There is a certain lack of appeal which makes it distasteful. We have the same poverty, dirt and disease in our towns and communities as they have in other countries. In both cases the conditions arise from the same causes and can be cured by the same remedies.

"We feel responsible for the heathen in his blindness and send missionaries. We ourselves must feel responsible for our neighbor in his blindness and send ourselves to him.

"Social Service originated with the church. The purpose of the church and the meaning of love are summed up in the two-fold commandment to love God and neighbor. Life, like love, is twofold; fellowship with God and fellowship, in God, with one another.

"There was a time when the church thought that the true Christian, to be perfect, would have to retire from the world of men and progress. That condition has passed.

"Today, if the church is to fulfill its mission it must go out into the world of progress. Its special mission is a social one, to give vitality, aid and inspiration to those who are trying to bind up the wounds of the suffering, to bring comfort to the distressed, to bring aid in the normal development of the underprivileged and disadvantaged and to lead them out of darkness, cruelty, shame and lust into peace and honor, truth and righteousness.

"To do this, we need not only love of God and love of humanity, but FAITH. By faith, I do not mean our own personal religious faith, by which our own lives find satisfaction, but the faith of God which puts into our hands an instrument for use in all the tasks we undertake in serving man and changing the conditions of life. For the task of human service is the most difficult, the most complex, and most exhausting of human tasks.

"Men may make the machinery to distribute food and clothing and the task is done with the doing of it. It makes no demands on the spiritual energy or the imagination, nor is it exhausting to the soul. But when one serves his fellow men and seeks to meet the needs of human nature with its strange complexities of desire and will, he finds himself growing weary, exhausted with an exhaustion that no other service entails upon man. And it takes faith in the order of life as it is, as well as in that which is to be, to meet that exhaustion.

"We believe that it is worth while to serve our fellowmen, and to strive to bring God's kingdom on earth. To do this demands enduring enthusiasm that does not fail with middle age nor grow cold with the coming of white hairs; and to face all this tremendous strain upon our souls with courage, we need a source of rejuvenation and continued inspiration to keep us going forward. This source is faith in God."

During the second week of Miss Nettie's stay, Miss Martin began to get up and sit in the chair by the fire for a short time each morning. This was with Dr. Boyd's permission. She was trying to carry out his orders exactly, something she had never done before.

Billy was the mainstay at the house. Scott had gotten a job in Gadsden and was working there. The Reed children, Tom, Katherine, and Ted were staying with their sisters; Dolly had been living with Miss Maggie Alison in Carlowville for several years, making a good record in her school work and in the home. Miss Nettie wanted news of all of the young people she had known. She gradually thought to ask Billy about them.

He also told her of some of the things that had helped to bring Miss Martin to her present state of exhaustion. "Since she was schoolteachin' in the day time, she had to do a lot of her visitin' at night. And somebody had to cook so the children who didn't have nothin' to eat at home could git somethin' at recess. I helped all I could. We'd cook up enough peas, or enough soup to give twenty or thirty some of it the next day. One day everybody had a cold sweet potatoe. We had to do it all the night before."

"I don't see how either one of you kept going," said Miss Nettie.

"Miss Martin has told a woman who 'se a widow that I'll come live with her and farm for her, come spring plantin' time."

"How in the world can she get along without you?"

"Clyde, one of Scott's brother's, is comin' up here to stay and to help with the work. I don't think she plans to plant our farmin' acres. I believe she aims to rent them to Thurman Richie."

"I'm glad to hear it," said Miss Nettie. Miss Martin was making a slow recovery. The last few days, she hadn't even gotten up to sit by the fire. Dr. Boyd had advised that she do what she felt like doing, since her fever was gone and her chest had cleared up. She seemed to grow worse when Miss Nettie mentioned going home, so Miss Nettie wrote her family that she would probably be at the House of Happiness indefinitely, after they wrote her they could handle the work of the gift shop.

### Chapter 35

When the warmth of spring came to July Mountain, Miss Martin began staying up longer each day, and, when the weather permitted, spent most of her time on the porch. Miss Nettie, as far as possible, kept Miss Martin from knowing anything that might worry her. Only by being there to answer the phone, or receive callers who came for help, could she spare Miss Martin the knowledge of the many needs they could not fill, so she rarely left the house.

After Miss Martin began sitting on the porch and coming into the living room, friends and neighbors considered her well and began bringing her their problems as before. Fortunately, as spring advanced, everyone was busy planting, the weather was better and there was less illness, so fewer problems were brought her.



Miss Nettie could see after each visit from someone who had a problem, Miss Martin grew more depressed, but there was nothing she could do about it. If she tried to get the visitor to tell her his needs, instead of Miss Martin, Miss Martin became upset.

One day in June, the mail was unusually heavy. There were several requests from church groups, and one from a college, for Miss Martin to come and tell them of the work she was doing. Just as she finished reading the letters, a mother arrived with a very sick child. As Miss Nettie called the doctor, to see if the child could be brought to his office, the mother was telling Miss Martin of other desperate needs.

When the mother and child were on their way to town in the church car driven by Clyde, Miss Nettie went to find Miss Martin. She found her in bed, sobbing. In broken sentences she asked, "If I can't help her. . . can't do God's work . . . what good am I?"

Nothing Miss Nettie said, or did, helped her stop crying, so she called Dr. Boyd. He came at once, having just seen the woman and baby brought by Clyde.

After giving Miss Martin a sedative and staying with her until she was quiet, he came into the living room to talk to Miss Nettie.

"As soon as possible, Miss Martin must get away from our valley where she feels responsible for every soul. But she has some congestion in her chest again and will have to stay in bed here until she's stronger physically. She's so depressed it's going to be hard for her to get physically well. It'll take careful nursing."

"Can you suggest anything that might help?" asked Miss Nettie.

"I believe if her sister, Ruth, and Martha Reed could come, that would be the greatest help. And she said something about a letter from a Mr. and Mrs. Hall. She seems to want them to come."

"I've seen their letter. We wrote and asked them if they could come up for the summer. I'll get in touch with them, and I'll call Sister Ruth and Martha."

"There's something else," Dr. Boyd went on. "Could she be cared for on the sunporch?"

"We can put her bed out there."

In the fall, the Alabama Churchman carried the following letter from Miss Martin, telling of her illness:

"The Bird's Nest  
Seale, Alabama

"Through the generosity of a Presbyterian friend, Martha Reed, affectionately called Martha-by-the-Day, oldest daughter of the House of Happiness, now a graduate nurse, came to nurse me during my serious illness last June. . . I feel that having her was instrumental in restoring my health.

"God has been merciful in sparing my life. I felt the force of the prayers of the church and of my personal friends strengthening me in my struggle for life. Three times the doctors thought I could not possibly recover. However, not once was I unconscious but was able to direct the work which was efficiently carried on by volunteer workers. The sympathetic spirit of my people was beautiful. They all came to see me but when told that I could not have anyone in the room except the doctor and nurse, they said, "Well, let me look through the window at her," and many would hold up their babies to see me in the sunporch. When I was able to take chicken broth they brought me chickens and garden produce.

"The Huntsville Convocation, several Branches of the Auxiliary and many individual members sent gifts to be used by me personally during my illness but due to the depleted treasury of the House of Happiness I felt that more would receive benefit if these were placed to the credit of the Maintenance and Faith funds. One of the most generous gifts was made by our own Mrs. Charles Henderson with a beautiful tribute to our work.

"The most comforting experience of my illness was the period when, like St. Paul, I was 'between heaven and earth.' I heard distant music of heavenly strains, and saw as it were, a beautiful mountain gorge with the rays of the setting sun reflecting the loveliest purple glow against its rocky sides. Through this gorge, on my right, approached a vested choir, an innumerable company, led by an imposing figure who kept his face turned away. On my left, holding my hand, was Lena, one of our clients who had been ill in the Laura Henderson sunporch all fall and was expecting an addition to her family. She was begging me not to leave her. Behind Lena were all the little children of the

Valley singing "There's A Friend For Little Children.' I could even distinguish individual voices in the chorus. As the procession came nearer, the leading figure turned His face to me. It was the Christ! He took my right hand in His and said, 'Come up higher.'

I looked at Lena, and then back to Him, and said, "You don't want me to leave Lena? She needs me so much.'

He smiled and released my hand. As the procession receded, the Master, who was the last, turned His face to me and smiled again.

Truly, this is the Master's work."

Miss Martin's letter had been written from the Martin family home in central Alabama. She and Scott and Sister Ruth had gone there as soon as she was well enough to leave the House of Happiness.

Miss Nettie had a letter in the same Alabama Churchman, written from the House of Happiness.

"We are all happy to know that Miss Martin's health is improving and that she is really resting. She writes that she loves to hear from her friends, but cannot write often as it tires her almost more than anything. . .

"For myself, I ask your prayers that I may have the strength and wisdom a person trying to fill even a corner of Miss Martin's place here needs. For the people of this section, I beg your continued interest and gifts that the seed which Miss Martin has planted and tended with so much self-sacrifice may continue its growth and bear its abundant fruit in the Christian citizenship of her beloved people.

"The value of your gifts was brought home to me in a very touching way only a few days ago. . . Our neighbor's little grandson was stricken with a severe hemorrhage of the lungs. The doctor was unable to leave another desperately ill patient that night but gave me directions over the phone as to the medicine and medical supplies needed. Since there is no drug store nearer than eight miles, Miss Martin always used a part of the Maintenance Fund to keep on hand a medicine chest of simple remedies. From this and our linen closet I was able to carry the necessary articles to the child.

"In the delapidated two room shack with lean-to kitchen to which I went, twelve persons live. There was one small window with a wooden shutter to the room where the patient lay and the flies had to be continually brushed away with a small branch.

"Most of the night, I stayed there, carrying out the doctors directions, until the child's fever was down and he was reasonably comfortable.

"When the doctor saw him, he said the boy had tuberculosis. We sent him one of the House of Happiness cots, so he wouldn't have to sleep with the others. Since then, no day has passed without our carrying or sending nourishment, medicine, or something to make him more comfortable. He is gradually improving. The grandmother says, 'The doctor will have to have pay for his visit when I sell my crop, but if Miss Nettie hadn't brought the medicine and things the boy needed, he wouldn't be alive.' The credit really belong to you members of the Woman's Auxiliary, for your gifts made it possible for me to help him.

"This is only one of the many cases of sickness in which you have been the instrument of healing. Sickly babies have orange juice, sweet milk and oatmeal given them for weeks at a time to build up a resistance to disease. Canned salmon and yeast have been given others to ward off pellagra or help cure it.

"As I write, fifteen children are helping with various pieces of work to earn clothing to wear to school. There is very little to give them. We had hoped the RFC money the men are earning would go for clothes, but some have had to pay doctors, one family had to replace their cow that died from eating butterbean vines, etc. Good school clothing for children is needed. School opens Monday. The county is furnishing two teachers for the elementary grades.

"With Mr. and Mrs. Hall, (who assumed the responsibility of housekeeping, gardening and carpentering,) our big boy, Clyde Clemens, and the worker our household consists of four. Saturdays and Sundays there are from fifteen to twenty for dinner and we often have visitors overnight.

"I plan to give much attention to the Church School and Young People's Service League. The CPC has just sent a gift for Mission Hymnals and I hope there will be other gifts for the same purpose for the young people enjoy singing from hymn books with notes.

"The Christmas tree this year will be for pupils of the Church School only, because of these hard times. We will plan to have a pageant, however, to which everyone will be invited."

### Chapter 36

The Alabama Churchman for December, 1933 said, "During the leave to absence given Miss Augusta Martin at the House of Happiness, Miss Nettie Barnwell is in charge. Miss Barnwell is no stranger to the work as she has for years been assisting Miss Martin as occasion permitted. The farm and housekeeping are in charge of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hall. These capable people relieve Miss Barnwell of much responsibility and make it possible for her to give more time and energy to the social service and other phases of the work.

"The county school in the community house has 106 pupils enrolled with two county teachers furnished. Miss Barnwell teaches a volunteer class of older boys and girls who cannot afford the two dollars a month bus fare in order to go to the high school in Scottsboro."

In the summer of 1934, Miss Nettie asked the Bishop to send someone to help her in Sauta Bottom, someone who could make a vigorous spiritual appeal to the people.

In response, he sent a Church Army worker, Captain Charles Leslie Conder who helped Miss Nettie with the Opportunity School, and preached all around the neighborhood. At the end of the summer, he stayed on, in charge of religious work. Mr. and Mrs. Hall were also still helping at the house of Happiness.

Until December 31, 1934, Miss Nettie was called the Assistant Director of the House of Happiness. After that she was named the Director.

The Alabama Churchman said at this time, "After eleven years as Director of the House of Happiness, Miss Augusta Martin has tendered her resignation, due to continued ill health. For about two years she has been on leave of absence, and her work has been carried on by Miss Nettie Barnwell. Miss Martin feels that as there will be an indefinite period before she is able to do full time work, the head of the House of Happiness should be recognized as such.

"The Executive Council accepted the resignation as of December 31, but stipulated that it only referred to the position of Director. Miss Martin remains officially a diocesan worker and will continue to serve the Church as her health permits."

The next summer, the Bishop made his regular visit to the House of Happiness. On Sunday morning, for the service of Holy Communion, the chapel of Happy Hollow School was well filled. The knowledge that Miss Martin was on the mountain for a visit had drawn many of the people.

Miss Nettie was thankful for the good attendance, especially for Miss Martin's sake. She silently expressed her gratitude as she knelt for this evidence of the fruit of the work, evidence Miss Martin could see. As the service drew to an end, she was startled to have the Bishop beckon her to come up and help him dispose of the elements. Miss Martin had always done this.

Augusta Martin hadn't consciously thought of being asked to come up to empty the chalice, but seeing someone else do it caused her to try to draw a deep breath and find she couldn't. There was a fullness, a weight, on her chest that made her feel as if she were suffocating. The rough back of the bench in front of her was all she had for support as she knelt and she clung to the crosspiece, conscious of the people around her, some kneeling and some not, the Lindsays, the Paradises, the Clemens, the Cottens, the Coffees, the others. Knowledge had been building in her for weeks, but more strongly the past two days, knowledge that she would never have the strength to come back and do the work here. The full meaning of this she now accepted and the pain was almost more than she could handle. Tears she could not hold back ran under her glasses and dropped onto her blue voile dress.

Before Miss Nettie came back to her place and the Bishop announced the last hymn, she slipped her handkerchief from her sleeve and wiped her eyes by lifting her glasses. Then, as others were finding the hymn, she took off her glasses and polished them. If she hadn't reached for the Strength she always leaned on, she would have broken down. But mountain people did not shed many tears.

By the time the hymn was over, God gave her the strength to smile and speak to all who came to shake her hand as she sat on a bench near the door.

Later, when they were having dinner at the House of Happiness, Miss Martin said, "Bishop, I'd like to ride as far as Birmingham with you."

"Certainly. I'll be happy to have you."

Miss Nettie said with consternation, "I thought you were going to make us a long visit. You've only been here two days."

"Not this time," said Miss Martin. "I'm not as well as I thought I was."

When they left the table, Miss Nettie went with Miss Martin to get her suitcase, and said to her, "I wish you felt like staying longer. So many people want to see you."

Miss Martin sat down on her bed and looked up at Miss Nettie. "I just realized today that I'm not going to have the strength this work requires. It hurts . . . to have to admit it."

Miss Nettie sat down on the other end of the bed, and said earnestly, "Many times up here, I stop and ask myself what you would do. I've just been trying to keep things going until you come back. I don't have the drive a director needs. The work needs you, or someone like you."

As Miss Martin closed her suitcase, she said with finality, "Miss Nettie, I'm sure I'm not going to be able to come back."

On the drive to Birmingham, she told the Bishop, "I'll never have the strength to work in the mountains again. During the service today, I admitted it to myself for the first time."

"Nobody can take your place. Miss Nettie and Captain Conder are doing a good job but I think Miss Nettie was looking forward to your return. Does she know?"

"I told her what I've just told you."

The Bishop was not surprised to receive a letter from Miss Nettie saying that she had accepted an offer to do mountain work in North Carolina, her resignation to take affect the first of the year. She ended by saying, "If Miss Martin can't come back, I believe Captain Conder would make a good director."

Through the years, Miss Nettie and Miss Martin had labored together on several general reports of the work and the people they worked among. A composit report was made from four of these and sent Miss Martin with a Christmas greeting, a card Miss Nettie designed and painted herself. On the card she said, "I have made the following report from four that you and I made during our years of work here. It seems to me this compilation gives the gist of the four, and I wanted you to have a copy."

This compilation is our next chapter.

## Chapter 37

### A GENERAL HISTORY OF THE HOUSE OF HAPPINESS Mountain Work of the Protestant Episcopal Church In Alabama

Among the foothills of northeast Alabama, where the Cumberland plateau touches Sand Mountain (both part of the Appalachian chain of mountains), nestles the House of Happiness, the only mountain mission of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Alabama.

On an overhanging cliff up the side of July Mountain, the double-pen log cabin, like a veritable bird's nest, almost hidden from view by the native growth of cedars, is the center from which radiate the activities of Christian social service of the Church among underprivileged highlanders.

The purpose of this work is to bring all the people whose lives we touch under the influence of the Christian religion. We hope by helping to improve the homes and methods of living, to begin to

eradicate existing conditions of poverty, disease, ignorance, superstition and unemployment.

The highlanders of north Alabama, whom we are trying to serve, are a people of the purest Anglo-Saxon heritage, upon whose cabin walls still hang the rifles of their ancestors who helped turn the tide at King's Mountain. Ask these highlanders of their ancestry and they usually answer that their great-grandparents came from North Carolina or Virginia.

Most of them descend from English or Scotch-Irish forebears, a few from Hessian. Many of the old English names, such as Hastings, Evans, Chandler, Alexander, Westmoreland and Allison are to be found. Common among the Scotch names are Campbell, McLemore, and MacDonald. The spelling of most of the Hessian names has been changed.

Proof that these people are descendants of the original settlers is shown by the fact that families living in the same general section bear the names of those to whom the early land grants were made. Another strong argument that the predominant culture is Anglo-Saxon is based on the traditional songs, dances and singing games with the habits, manners and language of the people. The pronoun 'ye' is often heard. Shakespearean expressions are common, such as 'don't contrary him'. A timid child is said 'to make strange.'

The Highlander is a southerner in sentiment, but he is first of all a highlander. Anyone from without his favored land is a 'furriner' and any commodity not familiar is said to be 'fotched on'. His dominant characteristic is independence. Heredity and environment have conspired to make him an individualist. He is proud and clannish, a born fighter and trader. His faculty at trading seems little short of genius. Doubtless the scarcity of cash has contributed to his proficiency. John C. Campbell once said, "I hope to live to see a highlander trading with a Connecticut yankee." He believed that the odds would not be with the northern competitor. The custom of trading horses and other things still widely obtains in some localities, usually on the first Monday. Scottsboro, our county seat, is well known for its first Monday trading day.

One's first impression of the mountain woman is that she is grave, sullen and retiring. This is largely true. She has been a beast of burden, 'packing' water and wood, often for more than half a mile. She works in the field, even plowing, and not infrequently she pulls one end of a crosscut saw in cutting timber. She has no social life; many have not been ten miles from home.

"How many children do you have?" I asked one mother.

"I had three once, two twice, and one many times. Seems like anybody ought to have about a dozen," she replied.

Another, when asked, replied, "I have fifteen. Two are dead."

Is it any wonder that when you first know her, she seems grave and sullen? In many cases, though, suffering has softened and refined the mountain woman and given her a sympathy not to be expected from the narrowness of her environment.

Mountain people have little appreciation of the beautiful. The sun sets and changes their work. The trees are wood and the rocks mere stones. However, most of them have a keen sense of humor. Once, when I asked how the crop was planted on the almost perpendicular side of a mountain, the highlander said, "I stand over to yan mountain and shoot my seed inter the ground over here."

Marriage is the goal of the mountain girl. There is little comfort for the spinster. One of our neighbors once asked me,

"Is your husband dead?"

"I've been too busy to get married," I replied.

My questioner stood up, put her hands on her hips and said, "Good God Almighty, woman! Can't you get you a man?" And in tones of pity, "Then you ain't never been married?" Finally, in tones of unbelief, "And you don't look like you mind it, neither."

Our Master's work has done much to change the lives of the women in our section of the mountains. When we first came into the valley, every woman had to drag wood from the mountain to cut into stove and fire wood. Now, almost all of the men haul the wood down, and as we pass their homes we see it neatly piled near their houses for winter. They usually do it in lay-by season.

Some of the men will now milk the cows, which has always been the woman's job.

And the Church has done much to teach that the mother must have a doctor, especially when little Highlanders discover America.

The steep hills and bad roads (sometimes no road, just a trail) have isolated these people, and made their lives different. When the brown earth is warm and soft underfoot after the winter freezes, and the air is mellow, the women and children come tumbling from their dark little cabins (like children let loose from school) to play at work on the hillsides and by the water courses. The time for planting is when the oak leaves are as big as a squirrel's paw. They follow this, and when it is time to hoe, that is done by the entire family. It is no unusual sight to see six or eight members of a family chopping, each taking one of the rows curving around the steep hillside. The fastest hand leads while the baby lies on a quilt under some convenient bush and the other small children play around. Little wonder that much of the work is not well done and the yield so disappointing.

Their small acreage of tillable land and lack of transportation, have limited their production resources. Moonshining is one result. Corn is the principle crop. It is much easier to convert corn into liquid and transport it in jugs tied to a rope and thrown across a mule than to haul this same amount of corn to market by wagon and team, if they had a wagon and team and a road to drive them on. The price of the condensed product is from five to six times the amount they would get for it in bulk. The practice of moonshining was not unknown to the ancestors of our highland people, even before they came to this country. The moonshiner has inherited the feeling that he has a right to distill his corn and sell it. He has little regard for laws that affect his personal rights.

It is only by education and persuasion that he will be induced to give up the making of it. Three of our neighbors have come of their own accord to say that they had quit; that they never expected to make another 'drap.'

Like the ballad, moonshining has survived in the mountains because conditions have been suitable for survival.

Due to limited acquaintance with sanitation, infectious and contagious diseases are prevalent among mountain people. Typhoid fever and tuberculosis are the principle ones in Sauta Bottom. The use of the common drinking cup, and the custom of 'setting up' with the sick have contributed largely to the spread of disease. Then, too, the cabins have no windows, only solid wooden shutters. Lack of ventilation and limited sleeping space have caused whole families to contract a disease.

Limited sleeping space and lack of sufficient clothing and bedding necessitates crowding together in order to keep warm by the close contact of bodies. This condition is most unwholesome and it is often the cause of immoral, or unmoral, relations between brother and sister, or father and daughter. Mental retardation is due to the intermarriage of close relatives, or their interrelations.

This house that the Church has built on July Mountain, in the midst of these mountain people, like a bird's nest, is a temporary home for many. Here, neglected, delinquent, undernourished and underprivileged children are sheltered and cared for as their needs demand. It is here that many of them are brought under the influence of Christian home life for the first time; many have never said a prayer and know God's name only to take it in vain. Each child is taught to say his prayers and take part in morning and evening worship as long as they are in the House of Happiness.

We are not an institution, but care for the children temporarily, until their lives can be adjusted. Sometimes they need to be built up physically before they go back to their homes. Sometimes they have been neglected or deserted by their parents and need to have a home found for them. Some are mentally deficient and need the care of an institution. We work in cooperation with the Child Welfare Department and various orphan's homes to place these children where they may develop into good Christian citizens. Approximately one hundred and thirty children have passed through the House of Happiness.

We had hoped, in this location, to be able to conform to the original plan of using the House of Happiness solely as a center for social service. But we have found it necessary to continue as a temporary institution for the care of children, and some adults whose needs are desperate, until we can make plans for them elsewhere.

Down and around the slope of the mountain from our doublepen log dwelling is the 'board house'. At the worker's suggestion the County Board of Education borrowed it for the Happy Hollow School. After a large room was added, it became also a recreational hall on Friday nights and an Episcopal chapel on Sundays. In it, every Sunday afternoon, is held Sunday School, followed by a meeting of the Young People's Service League, which, in turn, is followed by a Sing. It is here that our people of Sauta Bottom come when one of our clergymen, or our Bishop comes to us. It is here

that most of the baptisms have taken place and a number of the confirmations. It is here that we have our Christmas trees and our school plays. And it is across the road from here that a small plot of land has been set aside as a cemetery.

We are beginning to see changes in Sauta Bottom.

Homes are changing. The typical wide-roofed log cabin is gradually giving way. 'No other dwelling ever fit so well into the wooded coves and hills of our mountain country. There is a charm about the cabin that few other homes possess, someone has said. And it is true. When spring plants daffodils beside its grey walls, and peach blooms hide the dark hued cedars, there is a charm about it that few homes in any region have. They fit into their hillsides so well that often your eye is drawn to them only by the smoke from a broad chimney, or by a line of gaily colored quilts spread out to air and sun on the palings of the fence. The spinning wheel is usually on the porch where suspended from the rafters are pepper 'burney' beans and ears of seed corn and the saddle hangs from a peg on the wall. Through the open door you can see the beds with their bright colored quilts and the large fireplace where a fire smolders, even in summer. The little straight-back chairs with their woven hickory bottoms give the home a quaint and old-time atmosphere, as charming as it is simple. But portable saw-mills are being carried into the most inaccessible coves, and board houses are taking the place of the cabin.

Schools are changing. The one room shack, poorly lighted, inadequately heated, with little or no equipment, is being replaced by well-built, well-equipped buildings. The school term is being lengthened and the inexperienced, untrained teacher is being replaced by one who is trained. In Sauta Bottom, instead of a short term, one-teacher school we have a seven month, two-teacher school in a three-room, more adequate building.

Transportation is changing. Roads are being built where there were only trails. Bad roads are being improved.

County services are improving for the workers can now drive to remote areas. There is a men's club in our valley which meets weekly. Usually, there is a speaker, a doctor, lawyer, or the County Farm Agent. Four H Clubs for boys and girls have proved most helpful. In cooperation with the State Division of Exceptional Education and Auburn we have conducted Adult School during the summer and instruction in domestic arts and home economics has been given.

Many boys and girls from Sauta Bottom are attending trade and vocational schools, as well as church schools. One of our daughters finished a church school and has now finished nurses training. One of our boys who could barely read and write eight years ago, has finished a church preparatory school and has a scholarship to a state university.

A County Health Unit is conducting clinics in our valley. Communicable diseases are being controlled and eradicated. A County Child Welfare Unit is being established to help eliminate dependency and illiteracy.

For all these forward steps the highlander must pay with some of his individualism. The education which sufficed him in the past will not suffice for the future. Conditions are changing and he must prepare to make the necessary adjustment, which will be difficult and slow. Change from isolation and introspection, with its attendant stagnation, cannot be wrought quickly. But many in the mountains are hungry for the help the Church can give. Let us not fail them.

### Chapter 38

Captain Conder accepted the work as Director of the House of Happiness on January 1, 1936. In April of that year, he married Mary Ann Alves of Gunter'sville, sister of the Reverend Hodge Alves, and the Reverend James Alves, two of the early volunteer workers at the House of Happiness.

In the YPSL mimeographed publication for May, 1937, "Alabama Spirit," Captain Conder told of the work being done at the House of Happiness. He said in part:

"Within its walls may be found cleanliness, friendliness and Godliness...Many have gone from there to seek a new life in various places of opportunity secured for them by the untiring efforts of Miss Martin...there is a splendid record of worthwhile young people whose first contact with the uplifting power of Christ was through the House of Happiness.

"...With me in the work here, from time to time, are other Church Army workers, trainees and candidates.

"The regular program of the House includes Worship, Religious instruction, pastoral visitation, education, recreation, evangelism and social service in many forms. There are sixty baptized and thirty confirmed members of the Church in Sauta Bottom where ten years ago the Church was unknown. More than half of these have come in during the past two years, evidence that the Church is better understood and that Miss Martin's and Miss Barnwell's patient work with the young has borne fruit.

"The week's program begins with Sunday School in the Community House with a Junior vested choir singing. In the afternoon, another Sunday School is held at the other end of the community in a private home. It is called St. Luke's-in-the-Cotton, and in the summer meets outdoors under shady trees at the edge of a cotton field, with an attendance of up to fifty in good weather. At night, evening service takes place in the Community House--sometimes we have the Prayer Book service, sometimes an informal song service, sometimes a stereoptican service.

"In school season, Monday finds up to a hundred children gathered in the Community House for school. The school principal is a member of the House of Happiness family and a valued worker. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, one of the Church Army workers conducts chapel exercises for the school and gives Christian teaching.

"At certain seasons, the Men's Club meets on Tuesday nights to sit and smoke around a log fire, or play ping pong or indoor horseshoes. From time to time special classes are held, such as first aid training for boys and girls, Girl's Club, adult education, etc. These are not held regularly but according to the seasonal work in the fields, at times when the people can better get together.

"Wednesday nights are given up to Evangelism in the form of meetings in the homes, or in summer under the trees. Most parts of the community are reached in this way and everyone in the district hears the Gospel sometime during the year. In the daytime, preparatory visiting for these meetings affords many a chance for heart-to-heart talks about our Lord and what He can do when hearts are open to Him.

"Thursdays have no definite engagements but are often occupied in social service investigation and other work in the county.

"Friday night is always a happy night. Between fifty and a hundred and fifty young people usually gather then to enjoy a social evening. Games are played, the string music of local musicians provides lively tunes for the folk dances as young and old Chase the Squirrel, Wave the Corn and Shoot the Buffalo.

"Saturday finds from ten to sixty people from the community, men, women and children engaged in a work program at the House. They stack wood, chop wood, haul logs, wash windows, sweep floors, pull weeds, build walls, repair fences, and do lots of other jobs. They receive pay in the form of clothing tickets and once a month a clothing sale is held. The contents of the boxes sent us, of new and used clothing, from Woman's Auxiliary branches, Laymen's Leagues, YPSL's and others, is spread out on tables in the Community House and the people pick their choice and pay with the tickets they have earned during the month. This system of practical self-help is very popular in the community and assists many a hardworking family to have the things they would otherwise miss."

The Alabama Churchman for January and February 1936, said, "Work at the House of Happiness seems going nicely. Captain Charles Leslie Conder is in charge of religious work, Mr. Fred Hall is in charge of the farm, Mrs. Hall is in charge of social service, and Miss Mae Bowie (sister of Hampton and Dwain Bowie) is in charge of Church educational work."

The Alabama Churchman for May and June, 1936, said, "The large library at the House of Happiness has been made available to a wider circle through a traveling library, serving CCC Camp, a Convict Camp, Cumberland Mountain Farms and several schools."

In one of the last reports signed jointly by Miss Augusta Martin and Miss Nettie Barnwell, they said.

"We hope the time is not far distant when the Church will have established a chain of mission stations throughout the mountainous sections...it is truly a much needed work."

In Captain Conder's report in 1937, it seemed as if their hope might be coming true, for he said, "The work at the House of Happiness has proved so worthwhile that another nearby community at Skyline Farms has donated forty acres of land to the Church for a similar institution. A Church



Army worker, Sister Ada Clarke, a young and capable person, has been at work there for over a year and is laying the foundation...There are numbers of other places in the Tennessee Valley where rural missionaries can be of great service. The Church is badly needed and little known."

Captain Conder, in his 1938 report describes Sauta Bottom and the conditions there:

"The immediate community includes eighty farm families, of which eighteen own their own farms, thirty-one are tenant farmers with their own stock and implements, and thirty-one are day laborers renting cottages on large farms whose owners live elsewhere. Sixty-nine of these families have young children and most of them are large families. Our people, in the main, are hardworking, a few are comfortably placed, some manage to 'get by', and some are very poor indeed.

"In this community of eighty families, there are only seven automobiles, five radios and two telephones.

"In Sauta Bottom, fifteen years ago, there was not a single Episcopalian and most of the populace was unbaptised. The social service work of the early years, followed by an increasingly effective evangelism, has resulted in the present enrollment of eighty-five baptised and forty-eight confirmed persons. This has been achieved through pastoral visitation, cottage meetings, preaching missions, Vacation Church Schools, personal work by the people themselves and the prayers of many supporters. There are still many unbaptised and yet to be reached. The future holds a challenge...

"The flooding of parts of the area on Sauta Creek caused by backwater from the TVA dam at Guntersville, will not greatly lessen the need for the House of Happiness. Careful survey has been made and it seems that less than 20% will have to move elsewhere as the dam fills during the next two years...Those affected are not those most using the facilities of the House of Happiness...

"During the past twelve months, twenty-eight adults and children have been baptised and eighteen confirmed...the largest number in one year in the history of the work.

'A large amount of social work has been carried on by Mrs. Conder. She received and acknowledged one hundred and thirty-two boxes of clothing...These are distributed on the first Saturdays on the principle of work-aid and self-help, the people paying with credit tickets issued for work about the place, firewood, handicrafts, etc...The principle of our credit tickets continues to prove sound. Our people prefer to preserve their self-respect by earning clothing instead of having direct relief. We find that the tickets provide an additional form of currency in the community...Some people trade with one another for milk, butter, eggs and even a bicycle and a radio, using our tickets in the place of money. The self-help principle also reduces the running expenses of the House, providing labor for keeping our buildings and grounds clean, bringing in an abundance of fuel, and in proper season, garden produce.

"Recently, our people have been more active with handicrafts. A large number of rustic garden seats has been secured for our outdoor events by means of our work-tickets, also beadsreads and cushions for the House. Certain handicrafts are for sale and the money used to provide material for layettes.

The cooperation of the County Health Department was secured for typhoid and tuberculosis test clinics, and nursing assistance given in necessary cases. We have rendered the usual amount of first-aid and dispensed simple drugs for minor emergencies.

"It has been necessary to provide food for an orphan child and her aged grandmother after the murder of the mother and suicide of the father. The guardianship of the child was assumed and insurance money used to build the pair a simple dwelling on a corner of our property. When the grandmother receives her old-age pension it will not be necessary for us to support her but at present we must provide for them.

"Another emergency situation is being cared for at the present moment. A man who had been confirmed in the Church destitute and incurably sick, was taken from an abandoned factory where he was starving, and brought to the House where he is being cared for until we can place him in the proper institution.

"Various other emergencies have been met during the year. The Maintenance Fund is a vital necessity in these cases.

"Much emphasis is placed on our Youth Program. Two Sunday Schools are carried on every Sunday, one on either side of the creek which divides the community, with an enrollment of eighty. Such children as we do not reach in the Sunday Schools are reached twice a week in the public school, which is still held in the Community Building. The school principal, Miss Mae Bowie, boards

with us and cooperates in all our program. Eighteen children have graduated from the sixth grade in the past two years, and a large group of children now go to High School—a striking contrast to former days when none went, and many never passed the third grade.

Our school now has very few retarded pupils. The Clothing Bureau has a good deal to do with this, by providing clothes to enable the children to endure the wintry weather.

"The recreational side of the life of youth is considered very important. For the Junior boys and girls we have clubs where they meet for games, reading and character building programs. Once a week, for the older young people, a social evening is held with games and square, or folk, dancing. The fact that these programs are attended by young people from surrounding communities, so that sometimes there is an attendance of two hundred, shows the need of rural recreational programs under proper guidance. No other church, to our knowledge, sponsors such a program, and the high standard of conduct at these gatherings is evidence of the appreciation of the young people.

"One very hopeful sign this year has been the willingness of some of our young people to undertake Sunday School teaching. To further develop local leadership, we are going to send several of them to Camp Cobbs and Camp McDowell this summer...

"Our thanks are due to the Branches for their splendid support in sending boxes of clothing. . . The new roof they donated last year has been a great comfort. . . We have been honored by visits from many Auxiliary members and are expecting a pilgrimage soon of one whole branch of the YPSL in Birmingham. We extend you an invitation to come and visit us. This is YOUR enterprise. The workers in the field are thankful for your support and urge you to continue that the work here may be yet more effective in establishing the Kingdom of God in Sauta Bottom."

Signed: Captain and Mrs. C.L. Conder (workers)

### Chapter 39

Cora Jean Thetford, from St. Mark's, Boligee, Alabama was a volunteer worker at the House of Happiness under Captain and Mrs. Conder. These are some of her memories:

"The main activity during my six week's stay at the House of Happiness, during June and July of 1938, was the Daily Vacation Bible School. In the week or so prior to its beginning, we visited in the valley to tell everyone about it and ask them to come. Captain Conder explained that as I was a Church Worker, the people whom I visited would expect me to have prayer with them. Leading prayer in this manner was new to me; how I did depend on my Prayer Book!

"My Bible School responsibility was a class of teenage girls. There must have been ten or twelve of them, all cooperative and eager to learn. After the worship service, led by Captain Conder, each class went to its respective room for the lesson and handicraft work. We collected wild flowers to press and identify. John Miller made two crosses of cedar about five inches tall and gave one to me. We used it in our classroom and it is yet one of my treasured possessions. . .

"Bible School must have lasted two weeks. A few days before the end of the second week, Bishop Carpenter came for baptism and confirmation services for three adults and two young people. They desired to be immersed and the service made a deep and lasting impression on me. We gathered toward the end of the day at 'a hole in the creek.' Bishop Carpenter, Captain Conder and the men to be baptised wore white shirts and trousers, and the women and girls white dresses. The Bishop looked as churchly as in his usual robes. At sunset, the simplicity and the beauty of the service were in accord with nature and God's plan for His children. There was confirmation and a sermon by the Bishop at the service that night. It was a festival occasion.

"An old tenant house (sometimes known as 'the board house', or Happy Hollow School) was used for services and community activities. Seats were arranged in the large room for Sunday School and preaching, then put back against the walls for Friday evening recreation. Square dances are called 'play night' so as to avoid seeming to condone an activity which some in the community felt improper for Church people.

"On one of our play-nights, Captain Conder asked John Miller, a fine looking young man of twenty, to lead me through the Ocean Wave. Another dance was Chasing the Squirrel. John knew them well and did them with grace while keeping me going in the right direction.

"Captain Conder was in charge of everything. Mrs. Conder took care of the housekeeping and we took turns helping in the kitchen. There were Mr. Green from Rhode Island, and a young man from Michigan, who were considering entering the Church Army: Miss Maude Van Arsdale was around forty and drove a little grey roadster. It was the only car, so she was called on for a lot of chauffeur duty. She met me when I reached Scottsboro by bus, went in for groceries, took people to the doctor, etc. Our going in the valley was done on foot.

"Sister Phelps and I shared a room over the porch-dining room, off the kitchen. She was very conscientious and sincere. I've wondered if she did marry her Church Army Captain.

"The eighth member of our household was a man who had come wandering in, last spring. He needed shelter, so he was taken in and did the old jobs around the place. He left just as he came.

"Word came on Saturday afternoon that an elderly lady was sick and the family needed someone to sit up with her during the night. Mrs. Conder, Sister Phelps, one of the boys and I went after supper. When we got there, Mrs. Conder felt that only one of us was needed for the night. I stayed, to give the medication on schedule, and to have someone there in case she passed away. My relief was great that she didn't that night.

"The early Sunday morning was beautiful as I walked back to the House of Happiness.

"One week while I was there, a Holy Roller meeting was going on in the valley. The young men, Sister Phelps and I went one night to pay our respects. I, frankly, was curious. The service was in an old one-room log hut, with benches around the walls. There was a feeling of mysticism in the air, but no one shouted or rolled.

"The mountain people were friendly and most pleasant. I was not struck with backwardness or poverty but I'm sure there was little money around."

A yellowed, mimeographed paper by an unknown writer, entitled 'The House of Happiness' says in part:

"The House of Happiness was founded by Miss Augusta B. Martin (now a member of St. John's, Montgomery) in 1923. Miss Martin was, I believe, Jackson County's first welfare worker. Her headquarters was in Scottsboro. In her case work she found many children who were either orphans or neglected in some way. . .

"Soon Miss Martin moved the House of Happiness activities to Sauta Bottom, where the present house is, reputedly because it was 'the most heathenest place in these parts' and the most in need of the Gospel as well as educational and social work. With local labor she built a story-and-a-half log house a short way up July Mountain, near the spring where Sequoyah is said to have invented the Cherokee alphabet, and where Jackson County's first court was held.

"An existing dwelling was turned into a school house and was also used for Sunday School and church services. Miss Martin carried on her welfare, religious and educational work in this place until her retirement. Miss Nettie Barnwell, her assistant, continued it a short time longer.

"In 1936, Captain C.L. Conder of the Church Army, together with several assistants, took over the work. They continued considerable social work and aided in education, but chiefly emphasized the evangelistic aspect of the work. Over one hundred persons were baptized between 1935 and 1941, a tribute, both to the wonderful good will Miss Martin had created for the Church and the Church Army's efforts in reaping the harvest where she had sown. The House served as the Church Army's chief rural training center in those days.

"In 1941, bad days, and years began. The school was closed, and a series of unfortunate events kept any of Captain Conder's successors from staying very long. Four captains came and went from 1941 to 1946. For a few months the place was actually closed and without services.

"It must not be supposed, however, that the good work of Miss Martin, Captain Conder and their associates was nullified. It lived on and still lives on in the lives of many individuals, most of whom moved away during this period, contributing to the decline of the House of Happiness and its community, but becoming good church people and good citizens elsewhere."

Captain and Mrs. Conder were at the House of Happiness from 1936 until 1941 when he left to become an Episcopal priest. Five Church Army Captains, three of them with their wives, followed.

Captain Thomas Moss  
Captain and Mrs. Eric Kast  
Captain and Mrs. John Thomas  
Captain Milton Austin

Captain and Mrs. Thomas Wheat, who came in 1946 and stayed until 1953. Captain Wheat, in his report for 1947 says that the work was being carried on by evangelism, teaching, worship, clubs, material help, and Christian living. And he notes, "Upon the foundation of the small residue of faithful members, a congregation with an active spiritual life has been restored. At present the status of the House of Happiness is that of a Mission Station. . . It is preeminently a church but social work of various kinds continues. . ." \*

#### Chapter 40

In one of her reports, Miss Martin said, "Although the work of the church is not so perceptible from the standpoint of baptisms and confirmations. . ."

From the records in Carpenter House, diocesan headquarters in Alabama, covering the thirty years the House of Happiness existed, we find the following:

Baptisms - 129

- 10 by immersion in Sauta Creek backwater
- 2 while kneeling in House of Happiness Spring
- 18 christened in St. Luke's, Scottsboro
- 10 christened in their own homes
- 89 christened in Happy Hollow School chapel

The Alabama Churchman, in the fall of 1938, said: "When our new bishop (Bishop C.C. J. Carpenter) visited Jackson County in July, he made an unforgettable impression on the hearts of the congregation of the House of Happiness. We shall never forget the especially lovely baptismal service at sunset in a creek under the shadow of Gunter's Mountain. He baptised three people by immersion before a goodly congregation gathered, prayer books in hand, on the creek bank in the corner of a cotton field. Later, he baptised an adult at the evening service in the church and confirmed five candidates. There was a large attendance at Holy Communion next morning."

From the records in Carpenter House it is interesting to note that Miss Martin was a godparent for twenty-two, five of them with Martin family names, Miss Nettie for sixteen, Deaconess Whitford for one, the Rev. Hodge Alves for two, Scott Clemens for two.

The ministers who performed the baptisms were:

The Rev. J.J.D. Hall

Carey Gamble  
Oliver C. Coe  
Peter M. Dennis  
C.J. Alleyne  
Luke M. White  
V. Lowery  
Randolph Claiborne  
J. Hodge Alves  
R. Marlowe  
E.M. Parkman  
A.T. Sykes

The Rt. Rev. W.G. McDowell

" " " C.C.J. Carpenter

Confirmations - 104

Bishops confirming were:

The Rt. Rev. W.G. McDowell  
C.C.J. Carpenter  
Randolph Claiborne

\* From Miss Lucharle Wilson's mimeographed history of The House of Happiness.

## Chapter 41

Conditions in Sauta Bottom changed greatly in the years between 1923 and 1953. Water, backing up from the Guntersville Dam, pushed itself into many of the coves of July and Gunters mountains. Once arid, red clay hillocks became islands and one time cotton fields became small lakes. A highway was built down the middle of the valley called Sauta Bottom making it possible to send the children by bus to larger schools at Limrock, Woodville and Scottsboro.

Since Miss Martin had come into a shut-in, inaccessible valley to teach, replacing the young man run off by his big-boy pupils, her pupils from Happy Hollow School had gone out to the Berry Schools in Georgia, to Alabama trade and industrial schools, to Alabama teacher's colleges, to Sophie Newcomb in Louisiana, to the University of Alabama, to the University of Virginia, to Auburn, the Alabama School for the Deaf, to orphanages, to Partlow School for the Mentally-retarded.

As the needs in Sauta Bottom were changing so were the needs in the Diocese of Alabama. The Executive Council decided to buy land in Winston County for the diocesan camp, and funds were needed.

Thurman Richie, neighbor of the House of Happiness, had bought the tenant house and forty of the Church's one hundred and sixty acres, in 1951. In 1953, he offered to buy the remainder of the House of Happiness property, for fifteen hundred dollars, and it was sold to him.

In a letter from Bishop Murray to Bishop Carpenter, dated December 4, 1953, he said, "Ted Sykes (The Rev. A.T. Sykes, then rector at Guntersville) sent me the enclosed check for \$411.55 to close the House of Happiness account." All the money from the House of Happiness went into the fund for Camp McDowell.

Shortly after his purchase of the House of Happiness property, Thurman Richie sold it to Beatrice Smith Abercrombie. Beatrice was one of the first pupils taught by Miss Martin, a pupil who continued her education and became a teacher in the Birmingham schools. After she purchased the House of happiness, she did not come there to live, but rented the house. Two years later it burned to the ground.

Now, only the two 'found stone' chimneys mark the spot where the double-pen log house stood. Down below, where the sandy country road had wandered up the valley between the shack and barn, runs a well-built, hard-surface highway.

**Epilogue**  
1971

Miss Martin's health did not permit her to take another job. She lived for twelve years in her old home, The Bird's Nest, near Seale, Alabama, then decided to sell it and come back to Montgomery to live.

There, at 400 Finley Avenue, she bought a two story house of 1900 vintage. She lived on the first floor, rented the second as an apartment, and it was through the apartment she got to know her dear friend, Maitoka Pouncey. During WWII, Mrs. Pouncey came to Montgomery to be near her husband at Maxwell Field, and rented Miss Martin's apartment.

During the nearly twenty years that Augusta Martin lived at 400 Finley, she knew the people on the block, visited the shut-ins when she could, and, as always, drew the children to her. Until she had to go into a nursing home, the children of the neighborhood, who had only tiny yards hemmed in by heavy traffic to play in, were gathered every afternoon for a story hour at her home.

Miss Martin died in the fall of 1964.

\* \* \* \* \*

Miss Nettie Barnwell went from the House of Happiness to Rosborough House, in Penland, North Carolina, to continue doing mountain work. There she became greatly interested in learning and teaching weaving.

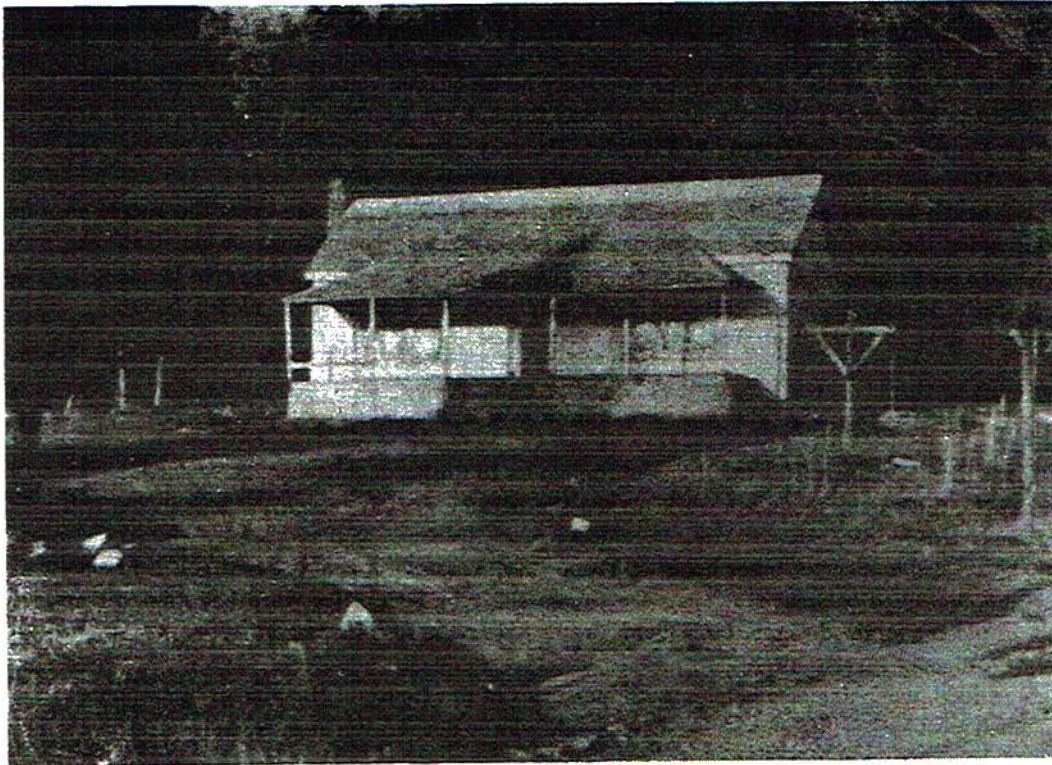
When she retired and came to her home in Yazoo City, Mississippi, she brought several looms with her and continued to weave. Among the things she took orders for were beautiful woven coverlids in old mountain designs, table linen, bureau scarves, towels, and many other things.

Miss Nettie died in March, 1971.

She wrote in 1968, when she was helping with memories of the House of Happiness, "I remember that it seemed most satisfying to be able to help people who so desperately needed and wanted both 'book-learning' and spiritual training."

In another letter, she quoted this prayer:

"I pray that yet we shall meet at one place,  
And at one day,  
A day that no night will determine,  
The day of Glorious Resurrection."



## OLD EPISCOPAL CHURCH BUILDING Building In Sauta Bottom

By CHRISTINE SUMNER

This old building once housed the Episcopal Church congregation in Sauta bottom. It is located near Birdsong Spring and is near the location where the old House of Happiness once stood.

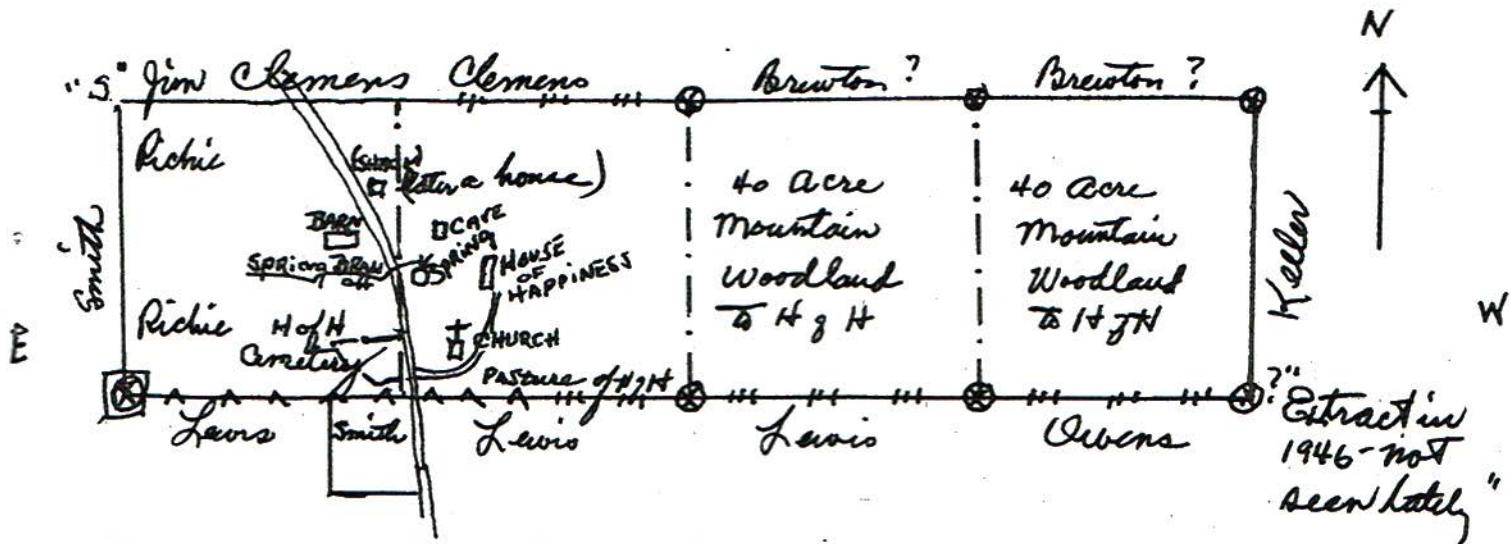
For many years it enjoyed a large congregation but with the building of better roads and as time passed it finally closed its doors.

Many people still remember Captain Conder and his wife, Mary, who labored at the little church for many years. He served the people faithfully, holding regular services on Sundays and visiting in the homes during the weekdays. When the Conders left the community they were succeeded by Captains Moss, Cass and Wheat, respectively. Each Easter served as a sort of homecoming to the people who had lived in the community. There was always an egg hunt for the children after church service.

Some of the people who belonged to this congregation were Mrs. C.G. Lindsay, Thurman, John, Dick Richie, Ode Sherrill, Jonce Paradise and other members of the Paradise family.

The building ceased to be a Church house long ago but the memories of days gone by still linger.

May - 1971  
The Daily Sentinel  
Scottsboro, Alabama



This is a map made by Captain Thomas Wheat but reduced in size by Campbell Long.

"Legend- old corners established by survey under Miss A.B.Martin by a Mr.Caldwell, still extant and accepted as present corners - ⊙

- same as above only original marker lost. Now marked by memory and agreed to by all parties concerned-an iron pipe- ⊕
- boundary marked by landmarks or trees.Caldwell survey still accepted |||||
- boundary established by Caldwell,relocated by line of sight between accepted points and agreed to by all parties AAAAA
- boundary established by Wheat and Richie and described on deed .-.-.-.-.-
- approximate lines marking 40 acre squares(not marked) .\_.\_.\_.
- note-the lines not marked AAA between Smith and Clemens and Ritchie and House of Happiness have not been relocated but are not in dispute.
- corner "S" is accepted by Ritchie and Smith.Clemens has not raised any question and stated willingness to agree on boundary approximating as nearly as possible Caldwell survey.

Note- Richie land is nearer 40 acres than appears here. Sketch not too accurate.

Note- No conversations with Brewton or Keller but no reason to suppose any 'disagreement' (word guessed at as it is cut off of paper)

(signed) Captain Tom Wheat, CA  
March 25, 1953



# "A Sunday School Lesson About Miss Martin"

## ADVENTUROUS CITIZENS

SECOND QUARTER, FIRST JUNIOR COURSE--CHRISTIAN LIVING SERIES

By Lala C. Palmer and Leon C. Palmer

Lesson 12

Dorcas, the Faithful Worker



DORCAS, THE FAITHFUL HELPER

## DORCAS, THE FAITHFUL WORKER



FEW YEARS ago a woman in Alabama named Augusta Martin decided that she would give her whole time to helping the Church bring in the Kingdom of God. She had spent many years getting a good education and had had much experience in teaching and working with children; and she wanted to use this training to help others. When she told the Bishop of her desire to help, he said:

"There is much work to be done and we need many leaders, but there is no one to explain to you the special kind of work I wish you to take over. I would like to have you go up into Jackson county and find out how you can best help the people in that mountain country of North Alabama; but I must leave it largely to you as to just what to do and how to do it."

Fortunately, Miss Martin had many ideas of her own, and she was sure that God would help her and show her what needed to be done. So she went up into the mountain country of North Alabama, and, far out in the country, at the foot of a mountain, she found an old abandoned farm with a little tenant house on it which was about to fall down for lack of repairs. Then she went out among the Church people nearby and asked them to help her buy this old farm and the little old house on it. After they did this she went to work to make the place as pleasant and attractive, and as much like Heaven as she could.

Now God had done His part by making this section of the country very beautiful; the land was rich, the woods were filled with bright flowers, the air was cool and refreshing, there was a cold, sparkling spring on the farm, and, still more unusual, there was a blowing cave under the mountain where milk and butter could be kept as in a refrigerator. First Miss Martin repaired the old tenant house so that it could be used as a school building, for the children had no school. Then she built a house which she called the "House of Happiness," and in this house she took to live with her many children who did not have any fathers or mothers. She made a happy home for them, took care of them when they were sick, mended their clothes and made other clothes for them, and was a friend to all. Each week she would invite the children from all the surrounding country to come to the House of Happiness for games and play with the children.

Miss Martin worked for years at the House of Happiness, and people throughout the South have heard about it. She is no longer there, but if you go to Jackson county now and ask about her, people will say: "Oh, we remember Miss Martin. She came up here and did what she could to help everybody." A man will tell you, "I was an orphan boy, and Miss Martin took me into the House of Happiness and saw to it that I got an education." A mother will tell you, "When my children were little we did not have enough clothes for them to wear, so Miss Martin had us come up to the House of Happiness and gave us clothes." A Churchwoman will tell you, "We had a 'Dorcas Society' in our Church and we sewed for the children who needed clothes at the House of Happiness."

And when we hear the name "Dorcas" society, it reminds us of another woman, very much like Miss Martin in many ways, who lived nineteen hundred years ago and is told about in the Bible. In the Book of Acts there is related the story of Dorcas, the woman who, like Miss Martin, did what she could to make others happy.

Dorcas lived at Joppa, a seashore town, and she was always going about doing good, working, and giving money to help others.

And it came to pass that she fell sick and died, and they laid her body in an upper room. And the disciples sent for St. Peter at Lydda which was not far away, and asked him to come down to Joppa.

And Peter came to Joppa as they requested, and when he had come they brought him into the upper room and showed him the coats and other garments that Dorcas had made while she was with them. The widows and children and others she had helped were standing by weeping.

But St. Peter put them all outside and kneeled down and prayed; and then, turning to the body of Dorcas, he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she arose and opened her eyes, and when she saw St. Peter she sat up. He gave her his hand and he raised her up and presented her alive to her friends and relatives; and it became known throughout all Joppa how St. Peter, the follower of our Lord, had raised Dorcas from the dead.

Today in many places all over the Church, we have Dorcas societies, made up of persons who give or make clothing to give to the poor.

I thank:

My daughter, Mary Ann Kelber, and my friend, Mary T. Brown, who have read this manuscript and given many valuable suggestions. My friend, Carrie Sechriest, who worked with me in copying information at Carpenter House while I was a guest in her home. Bishops Carpenter and Murray and their staff who helped me gather material in Carpenter House. Maitoka Pouncey, who inherited all of Miss Martin's papers and pictures and lent them to me. Miss Nettie Barnwell, who had me come to visit her and who came to visit me, who helped me with chronology of events and who wrote some of her memories. Margaret Morrison, Minnie Barnes, Cora Jean Thetford Barrett who shared their memories. The Rev. Hodge Alves who shared his memories and lent his pictures. Mr. and Mrs. Scott Clemens who had me in their home in Scottsboro and went back with me to the site of the House of Happiness in the summer of 1968. My friend, Louise Miller, who spent a long, hot day going with me to gather information. Mr. Aubrey Clemens, County Cuperintendent of Education in Jackson County, one of Miss Martin's first pupils, who helped me gather information. Mrs. Clyde Clemens and Mrs. George Blackwell of Scottsboro who lent me many pictures and an old, mimeographed account of work at the House of Happiness up to 1946. Mrs. Hugh Boyd, niece-in-law of Dr. Hugh Boyd, for lending me his picture. Mrs. Bruce Owen of Carlowville for lending me a picture of her aunt, Miss Maggie Alison, plus other pictures and information. Mr. Milo Howard for use of material on the Martin family in the Department of Archives and History, for the gift of the picture of Sequoyah with permission to use it. The Montgomery Advertiser for permission to quote. Mrs. Ellen B. Jones of Camden for the picture of her sister, Marcia Boykin and her class. Bishop Furman Stough for trying to help me find a publisher, and for his interest.

I am grateful,



Gratitude from the whole diocese should go to the women who served as treasurers for the House of Happiness maintenance fund. Without it the work could not have been done. I know the names of only three of them: Miss Bessie Bouchelle of Boligee, Mrs. Carl Lay of Gadsden, and Mrs. George Meriwether of Birmingham.

Chief Sources of Information were:

Memory of two periods of working at the House of Happiness. Material left by Miss Martin and loaned by Mrs. Pouncey which included: Five general reports, undated; twenty-four quarterly or annual reports, mostly undated; several outlines for talks and fragments of reports plus an old notebook; a dozen old newspaper clippings, some cut out so that you could not tell date or paper. Those with dates and names were - 2 from Montgomery Advertiser, 3 from Birmingham News, 3 from Jackson County Sentinel. Material in Carpenter House was: Copies of the Alabama Churchman from 1923 to 1953. Parish records from the House of Happiness and St. Lukes, Scottsboro, and old letters. Old letters saved by Minnie Barnes, Nettie Barnwell and Lilian Prout. Talks with Miss Nettie Barnwell, Maitoka Pouncey, Minnie Barnes, Hattie Lyman Carroll, Margaret Morrison. A seven page mimeographed history of the House of Happiness by Lucharlle Wilson.