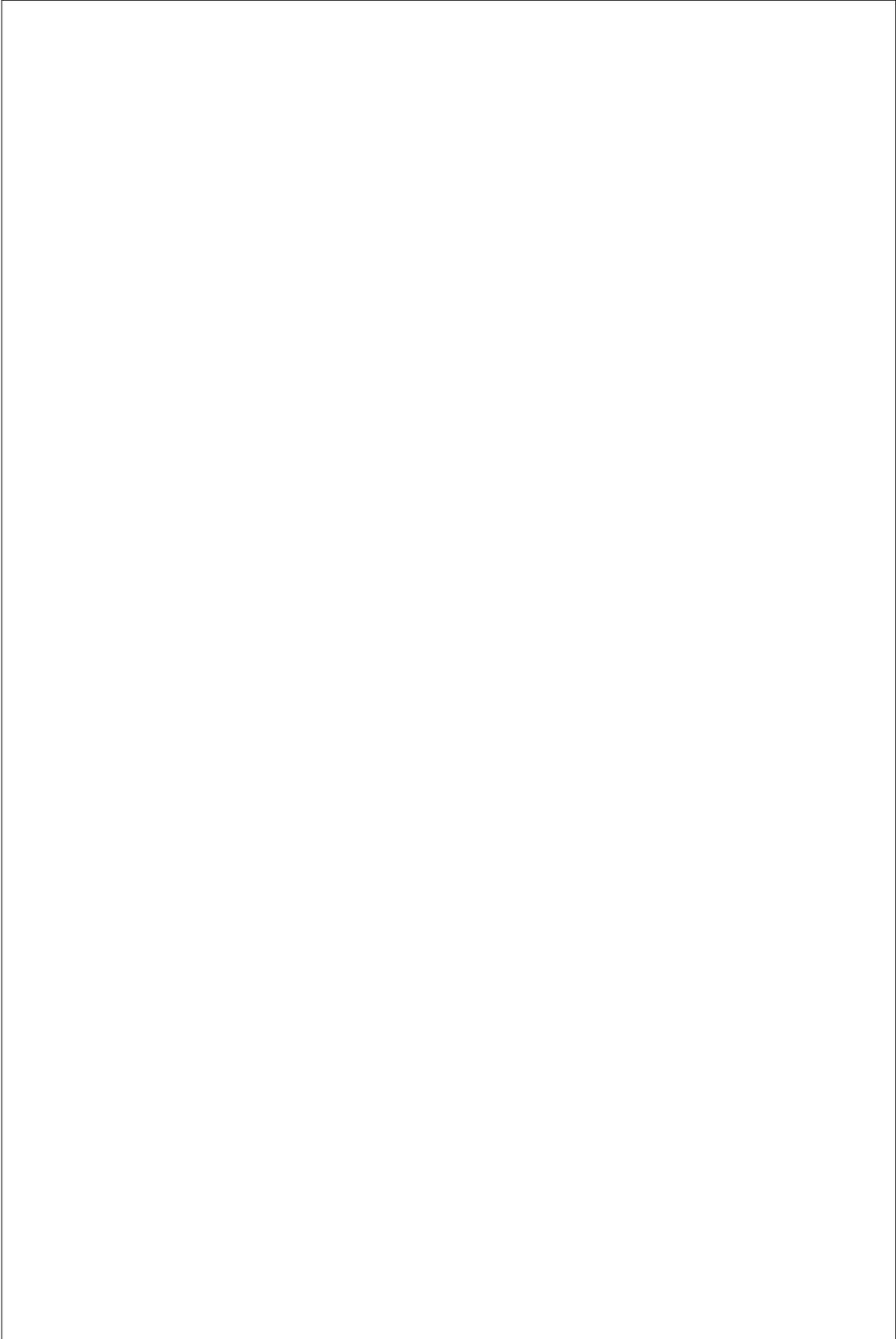


Good Intentions Gone Awry



JAN HARE AND JEAN BARMAN

Good Intentions Gone Awry

Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission
on the Northwest Coast



UBC Press · Vancouver · Toronto

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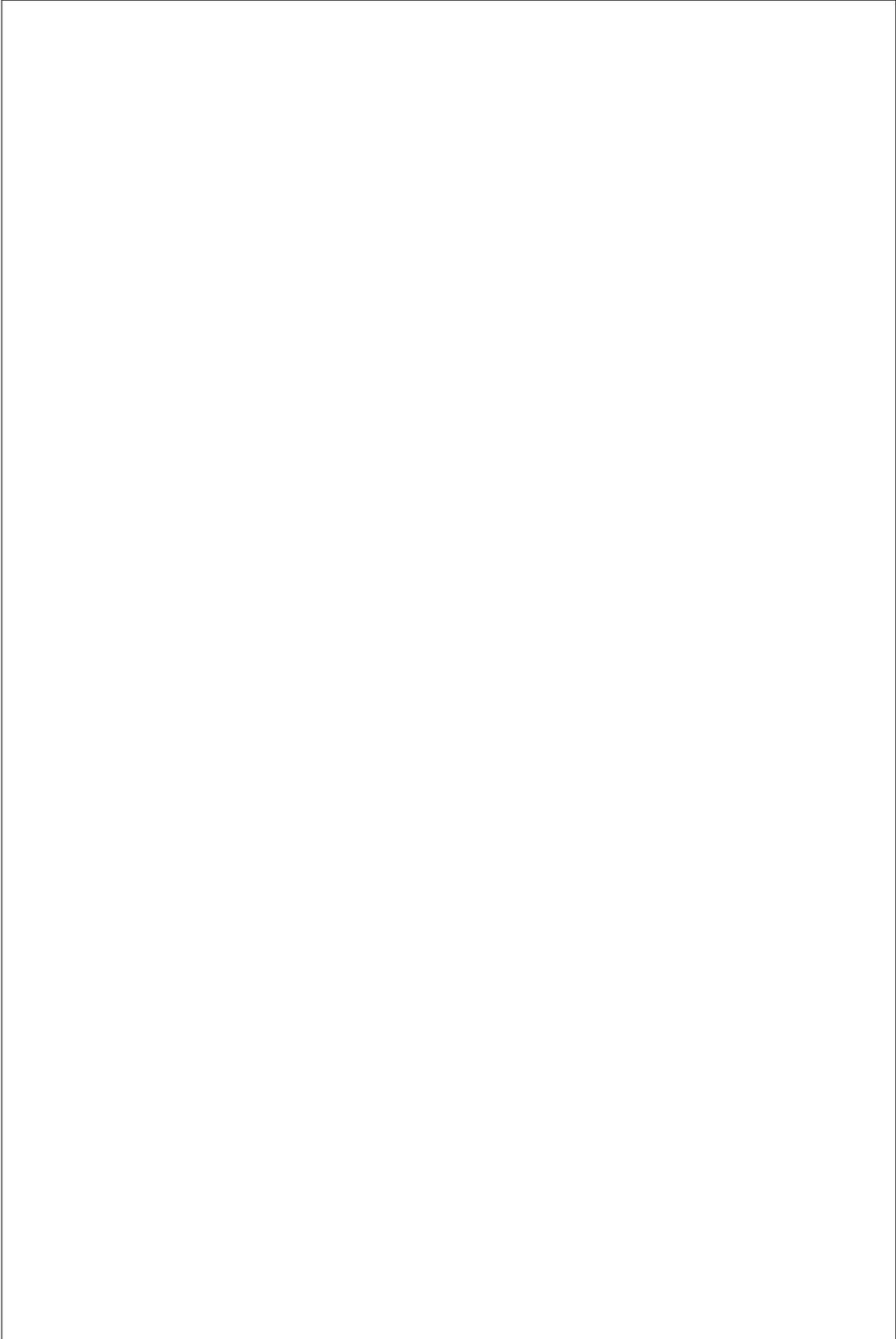
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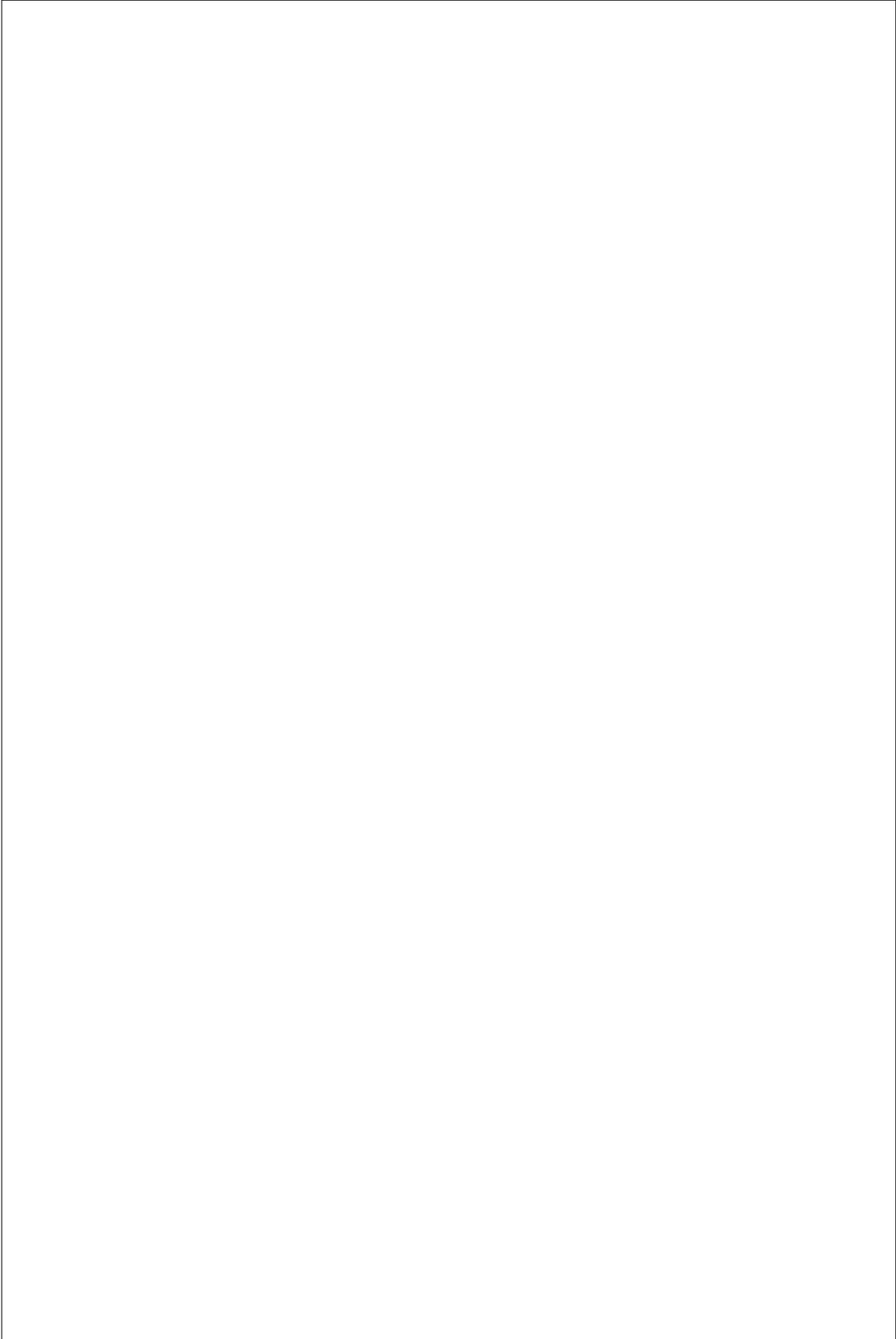
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*In memory of Helen Hager,
for her appreciation of women's lives past, present, and future*



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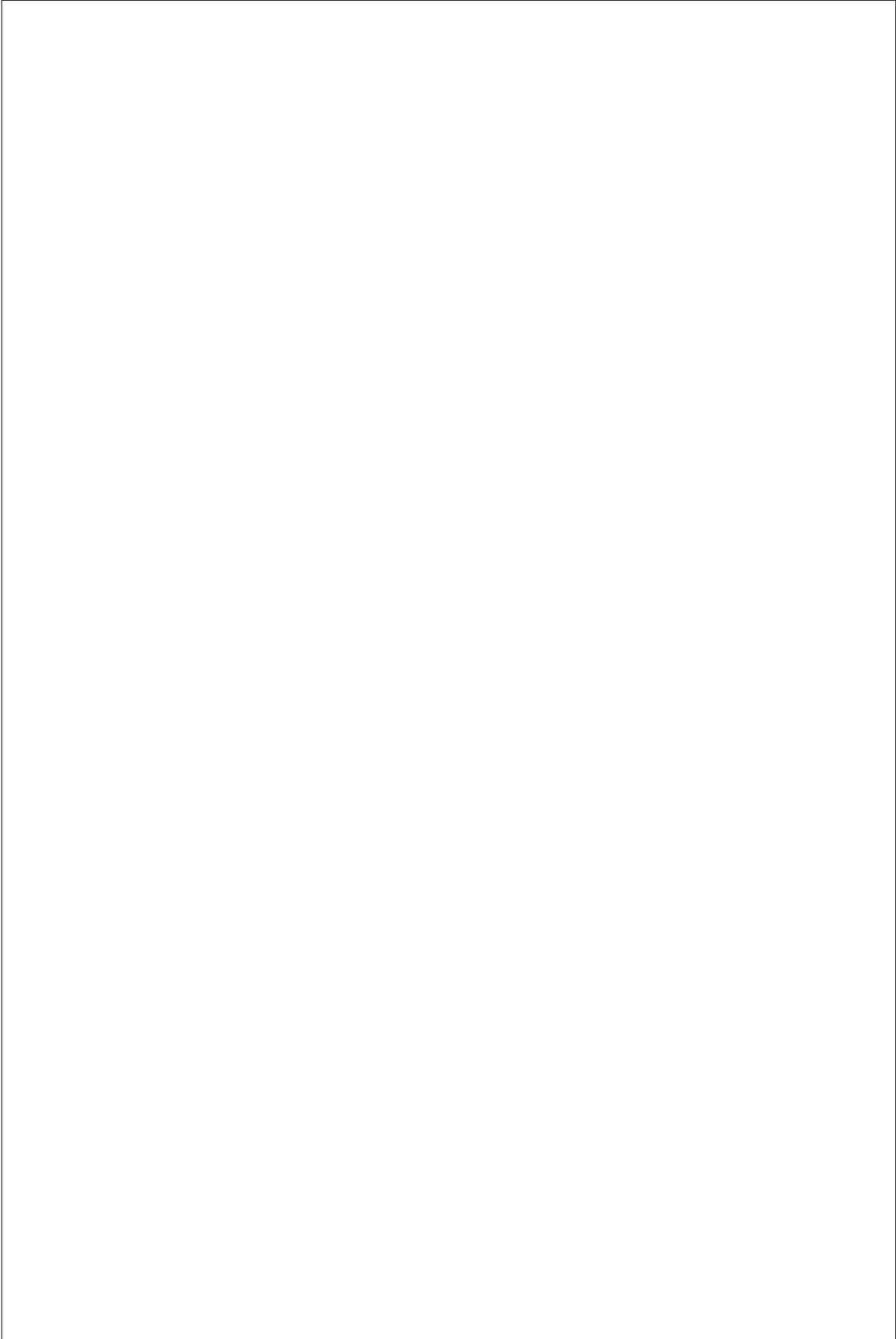
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We are grateful to the Tsimshian of the Fort Simpson area, where the Crosbys had their mission, for keeping their history alive and making it accessible to outsiders like ourselves in various forms. Caroline Dudoward has been an invaluable support to us.

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Crosby Family Chronology

	BORN	DIED
THOMAS CROSBY	July 12, 1840 Pickering, Yorkshire, England	January 13, 1914 Vancouver, BC
EMMA JANE DOUSE CROSBY	April 17, 1849 Coburg, Ontario	August 11, 1926 Sidney, BC
JESSIE ASH-SHE-GEMK CROSBY HARRIS	December 23, 1874 Fort Simpson, BC	November 2, 1946 Vancouver, BC
GRACE ELIZA CROSBY	September 10, 1876 Fort Simpson, BC	June 21, 1970 Vancouver, BC
IDA MARY "POLLY" CROSBY	May 21, 1878 Fort Simpson, BC	November 20, 1879 Fort Simpson, BC
GERTRUDE LOUISE CROSBY	May 12, 1880 Fort Simpson, BC	August 23, 1901 Vancouver, BC
ANNIE WINIFRED CROSBY	March 29, 1882 Ontario	June 15, 1885 Fort Simpson, BC
MABEL CAROLINE "WINNIE" CROSBY	February 17, 1884 Port Simpson, BC	June 8, 1885 Fort Simpson, BC
EMMA JANE CROSBY	November 8, 1886 Port Simpson, BC	December 8, 1886 Fort Simpson, BC
THOMAS HAROLD CROSBY	March 7, 1888 Port Simpson	July 16, 1965 Vancouver, BC

Fort Simpson's Early Women Teachers and Missionaries

CAROLINE KNOTT

Born c. 1843, England

October 1876–October 1879: teacher at Fort Simpson day school

October 1879: married Charles Tate (born 1852, England),
who was ordained in 1879, missionary Fraser Valley

SUSANNA LAWRENCE

From Toronto

March 1880–November 1882: teacher at Fort Simpson day school

November 1882: became a missionary to Kitimaat in her own right

KATE HENDRY

Born c. 1841, Brantford, Ontario

Earliest acknowledged woman missionary

July 1882–September 1885: matron at Fort Simpson

September 1885: married Edward Nicholas (born c. 1847, England),
who was a teacher and missionary in Bella Coola

MARY ANN GREEN

Born c. 1863, England; sister to Alfred E. Green

?–August 1886: Teacher at Greenville, Nass

August 1886: married George Hopkins (born 1862, Chicago),
who was a missionary in the Queen Charlottes

AGNES KNIGHT

Born c. 1857, Ontario

September 1885–March 1890: matron at Fort Simpson

March 1890: married Robert Walker (born c. 1865, Ontario),
who was a teacher

SARA HART

Born c. 1868, New Brunswick

March 1888–August 1894: assistant matron/matron at Fort Simpson

August 1894: married John C. Spencer (born 1859, Ontario),
who was ordained in 1893 and was a missionary in Kispiox

MARGARET HARGRAVE

Born c. 1872, England

September 1889–August 1890: teacher at Fort Simpson day school

August 1890: married William Henry Pierce (born 1856, Fort Rupert), who
was ordained in 1886 and was a missionary in the Fort Simpson area

KATE ROSS

Born in Toronto

July 1890–September 1891: assistant matron at Fort Simpson



British Columbia in the late 1800s

Introduction

Emma Crosby's letters to her mother, so lovingly kept across the generations, are at the heart of this volume. Emma's correspondence begins just prior to her meeting the missionary suitor who would become her husband. The exchange of letters between mother and daughter continued from Emma's departure from Ontario in the spring of 1874 for the British Columbia north coast until 1881, when her mother died. The deaths of her mother and then of her father five years later slowed Emma's letters to her family to a trickle. To fill in her later years as a missionary wife on the north coast, we have added some of the public letters Emma wrote to Methodist missionary groups.¹

Born in Ontario, the daughter of a Methodist minister, Emma Douse was early on immersed in her father's faith. Her training at Hamilton's Wesleyan Female College, an institution offering higher learning for women in literature and the classics, broadened Emma's social and intellectual horizons. She became a teacher, a craft that would see her through a lifetime. It is little wonder that Emma would find a place in the missionary realm. In her husband Thomas Crosby's words, "through the years that followed [her marriage in 1874, she] bore as important a part in the work in the far north as the missionary himself."²

A dutiful daughter, Emma maintained a close relationship with her family. She kept ties through written correspondence with her mother, sharing day-to-day events together with her hopes and aspirations. In one of the earliest letters that survives, dated February 18, 1874, she solicited her mother: "Would it grieve you very much – would you be willing to let me go to British Columbia, not exactly as a missionary on my own responsibility, but to be a help and a comfort, if possible, to a noble man who has been there working for years by himself."³ While her mother expressed ambivalence, Emma embraced the marriage

proposal. Two months later this young Ontarian teacher wed Thomas Crosby, already a dozen years in British Columbia, and headed west to spend the next quarter century as a missionary wife on the north coast.

Gender attitudes at the time prevented a woman from being a full-fledged missionary in her own right. She could assist, either as a wife or a single woman in some helping capacity, but she was not considered capable of preaching the word of God or offering the rites of baptism and marriage that marked stages in the life cycle. Missionary work was men's work, most often examined from their perspective, which doubly denied the nature and extent of women's involvement. Emma assumed the "feminine" work of the mission, which involved teaching at the school, caring for young Aboriginal girls, and creating and participating in social activities aimed at improving the missionary spirit.

Historian Dana Robert makes the important point that people expected more of missionary wives than they did of their husbands: "The missionary men were supposed to devote themselves single-mindedly to disseminating the Gospel in preached or written form. The missionary women were expected both to assist their husbands in the primary mission responsibility of spreading the Gospel and to evangelize the women, teaching them of Christ, enlightening their minds, raising their characters, and challenging their social customs."⁴ Emma not only complemented her husband's work but also, out of necessity, transcended the gender divisions, ensuring that duties otherwise carried out by her husband were kept up in his many absences. Her varying degrees of participation in the mission demonstrate how the functions of a missionary wife went well beyond those of a "companion in the wilderness."⁵

Yet, it is Thomas Crosby who remains at the forefront in accounts of the missionary work he and Emma carried out on the Northwest Coast. He quickly acquired and maintained a reputation as a leader in the missionary enterprise among the Aboriginal peoples of British Columbia and Alaska. His long career spanned the time period when, as summed up by religious historian David Marshall, "the 'evangelization of the world in this generation' was thought to be within reach," and "mission work was regarded as the ultimate act of dedication to the cause of Christianity."⁶ The two books in which Thomas dramatized his missionary adventures bolstered his reputation. His death in 1914 brought an outpouring of emotion. His was "a noble life, who like his Master, so loved God's Indian children that he gave his all for their upliftment."⁷ Subsequent writers with religious interests and affiliations have followed suit in lauding Thomas Crosby. In conjunction with the anniversary of Confederation, the British Columbia Centennial Committee initiated verbal portraits of "Founders of B.C." and included Thomas among them. The culminating lines described how "his service, far from civilized comforts or medical aid, cost the lives of three of his children – but it won the hearts of the native people to his religion."⁸ Clarence

Bolt's biography describes Thomas Crosby as "the most famous Methodist missionary in British Columbia, if not all of Canada."⁹

But Thomas Crosby's story, told either by him or by others, provides only a partial view of the missionary enterprise and its impact on Aboriginal groups on the Northwest Coast. A larger picture emerges when we account for women like Emma, who shaped the gendered practices of conversion attempts, and also for the Aboriginal people who as much guided this process as they were co-opted by it.

Following their marriage in 1874 Thomas and Emma Crosby headed to Fort Simpson near present-day Prince Rupert, where they lived among the Tsimshian people, whose territory stretches between the Nass (formerly spelled Naas) and Skeena Rivers. Intending to preach the Gospel and to teach the arts of civilization, the Crosbys were seemingly unaware that their invitation to go there rested on an extremely complex set of circumstances operating among the Tsimshian and the already established competing presence of Anglican missionary William Duncan. Aboriginal-missionary alliances served a range of purposes for groups in the area, where status, wealth, territories, and trade relationships marked their living traditions. Prominent local families, like the Dudowards, sought missionaries' practical skills and newcomer knowledge as a means of helping their people to accommodate to the dramatic changes occurring all around them. Missionaries relied on particular Aboriginal persons, often those of mixed-race ancestry born of fur traders' unions with local Aboriginal women, to ease the transition into the area and to gain the confidence of the local people. Alignment with high-ranking families of Tsimshian descent served to validate the Crosbys' presence. The reciprocal relationship that developed between the Tsimshian and the Crosbys was significant to the success of the mission and, though not always stated explicitly, coloured Emma's correspondence with her family through her years at Fort Simpson.

Emma was deeply invested in this relationship, which was maintained through written text, and she reminded her mother, "You must try and not give up writing, for, you know, you are my most reliable correspondent." And, in another instance, "Thank you, dear Mother, for being so faithful a correspondent. It is a comfort to be sure at least of a letter from you."¹⁰ Her missives were a lifeline and provided one of the only means through which she could make known the motivations that informed her roles as mother and missionary wife.

Though these letters capture Emma's private thoughts and remain immediate to her experiences, she had at every point to make considered decisions about what to share with her mother and others. While her personal letters assured her parent of her safety in this far-off wilderness, she also took liberties to claim for herself a greater role in the enterprise than she would have done publicly. If always very aware of her role as missionary wife, Emma was also her own person.

Transforming the gender relations of the Tsimshian formed the core of her duties. Embedded in the text of her correspondence, as with that of other missionary wives and women, was the need to raise up Indian women from their supposed despair so as to make them good Christians capable of managing marriage and family based on Victorian models.

From the time of her arrival in Fort Simpson, later renamed Port Simpson, Emma extended her presence into the community, whether visiting in the homes of local families or teaching school and attending services at the home of the Dudowards while the newcomers' own home was being built. Her husband's conversion conquests resulted in increasing absences, positioning Emma as a maternal authority, which gives her reporting all the more credibility. While Thomas was away, often for extended periods of time, Emma organized mission activities, the only exceptions being rites of passage and Sunday service. It is clear that Emma found the loneliness difficult at times, but she accepted the responsibility to maintain the mission in stride, along with her duties to her children. It was to her mother that she revealed the true extent and nature of her work in Fort Simpson.

Giving birth to eight children, four of whom she buried on the Northwest Coast, Emma could not help but seek assistance from young Aboriginal girls. The challenges of keeping up the mission home and caring for her young children made these girls necessary. As a mother, she could model – in her home and in full view of the community – the expected roles for a Christian home. As Dana Robert explains, “the missionary contribution of the missionary wife was not merely to teach doctrine, but to model a particular lifestyle and piety.”¹¹ The Crosbys' home offered great opportunities to exert influence, enabling Emma to train Aboriginal girls to maintain a home and family life based on newcomer ways. Aboriginal girls came to the Crosby home either on their parents' request or simply because no other choices were available for their care. Recalling the arrival of a “young half-breed girl, the daughter of a man in charge of the H.B. Co.'s store,” Emma explained to her mother that the young girl's father wanted “her to have the advantages of better training than would be possible for her there.”¹² As her husband Thomas described, “they would come, one after another, and ask the Missionary's wife for her protection; and thus one and another and another were taken into the house.”¹³ Emma accepted without question the need to protect the Aboriginal girls who came to her home.

In public representations of mission life, Emma was less assuming about the extent of her involvement in the day-to-day operations of the mission but no less modest about her good intentions towards the Tsimshian people and, particularly, the young Aboriginal girls who came into her care. She had no choice but to take the offensive. Common among missions was the need for financial

support from “home” societies. Both Thomas and Emma penned Methodist missionary reports that juxtaposed their accomplishments with the vast amount of work that remained to be funded. Like most colonizers, they found it difficult to conceive that Aboriginal persons might eventually become good Christians in their own right, and this reinforced the need for a continued missionary presence.

In part because she was writing to comfort a mother about a daughter so far away, Emma’s letters only hint at the Aboriginal contribution to the mission. Women like Kate Dudoward and the others whom Emma and Thomas engaged come across principally as model converts: exemplars of what it was possible to achieve so long as support was forthcoming. Aboriginal women’s entrance into the mission fold was seen by missionaries more as a consequence of conversion than as a means by which these women negotiated changes in their own lives. Missionaries and their wives did not appreciate how, in the words of historian Susan Neylan, the “mission environment provided Native women with new opportunities to exercise power and influence, opportunities that were challenged or restricted in other social milieus” or how it fulfilled an “important social function for higher-ranking women, by providing a new venue in which they could receive public acknowledgement and sanction of rank and power.”¹⁴ By following up the glimpses in Emma’s letters, we can discern the critical role played by Aboriginal and Aboriginal mixed-race intermediaries. It was the women in the community, and those whom Emma cared for in her home, who made possible her expanded role in the mission, propping up the position of authority that she gained at Fort Simpson.

The young Aboriginal women incorporated into Emma’s daily round so that they would be able to understand what it was like to partake in a civilized home responded to her in ways Emma had not anticipated. Their companionship during Thomas’s numerous, and sometimes lengthy, absences; their maintenance of the home; and their oversight of the Crosby children resulted in a mutual exchange of protection that facilitated Emma’s greater role in the missionary enterprise – a role that without them may not have been possible. When Emma took notice of this escalating exchange, she set in motion events that would remove the girls from the Crosby home and place them within the formal institutionalized care that formed the core of the residential school system, which was then coming into existence for Aboriginal children across Canada. There were also pragmatic reasons to form the girls’ home. The number of girls coming under Emma’s care grew, increasing her sense of responsibility towards them. So after careful consideration she reported, “we decided to build an addition to the Mission-house which should serve as a ‘Home’ for the girls, and could be under our closer supervision, but entirely separate from our own family.”¹⁵ With these

new living arrangements Emma could reconcile her good intentions to care for these young women with her primary concern for her own family. As a well-educated woman, Emma could convince those with whom she corresponded that her decisions were consistent with missionary aims informed by a colonial agenda that, in all aspects of life, set Aboriginals apart from newcomers.

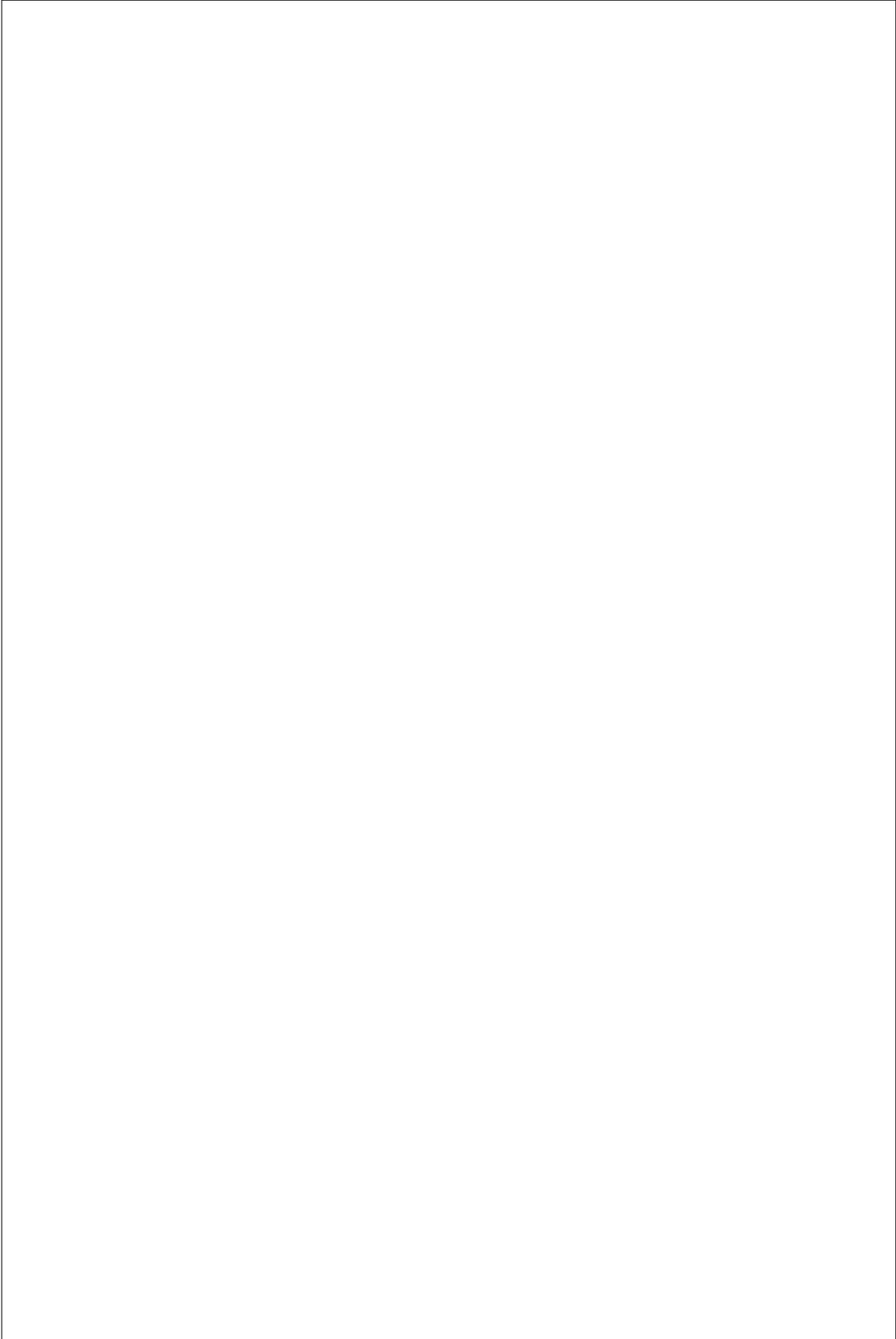
The necessary funds for the girls' home were raised in Ontario, where Emma could depend on her family and friends, prominent in Methodist circles, to support her efforts. A native of Hamilton, where the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS) originated, Emma was successful in representing the mission and the much-needed work that remained to be done on the Northwest Coast. Fund-raising gathered momentum, and the girls' home was built in 1880. The next year the WMS made a formal commitment of support, allocating a salary for a matron. The Crosby Girls' Home was intent on instilling Christian values and behaviour, which these girls might then replicate in their own homes, thereby reproducing the Victorian order. Still at close range, Emma could continue to act upon her good intentions by keeping the WMS apprised of the home's needs and accomplishments.

About Emma's good intentions, there can be no doubt. It is also the case that by the time she left the Northwest Coast of British Columbia with her husband in 1897, her good intentions had gone dreadfully awry. The girls' home, a mainstay of the Crosby mission, grew in its capacity to take in girls and to transform the mission order within gendered spheres. While spiritual and moral direction remained the home's goal, the means of achieving that end changed dramatically. The protection afforded to the girls transformed into confinement, with rules and structures dominating the operations of the home. Girls came under surveillance and were admonished to adhere to strict obedience so as to save them from what they might become should they return to their families and communities without a suitable marriage partner. Confinement was intended to prepare them, through example, to be subservient to the men who would become their husbands. Women might no longer be sold, as missionaries were convinced occurred up until the time of their arrival on the Northwest Coast, but they were still treated as commodities. In his memoir Emma's husband gloried over the Aboriginal women "who married into Indian homes in the different villages and, by their industry and cleanly habits in caring for their homes and children, showed the marvelous civilizing influence such work as ours may exert on whole communities."¹⁶ Another shift in the school came when, in 1891, its administration was turned over to the Woman's Missionary Society, which purchased two acres at Port Simpson for a new building. The girls' confinement turned to incarceration.

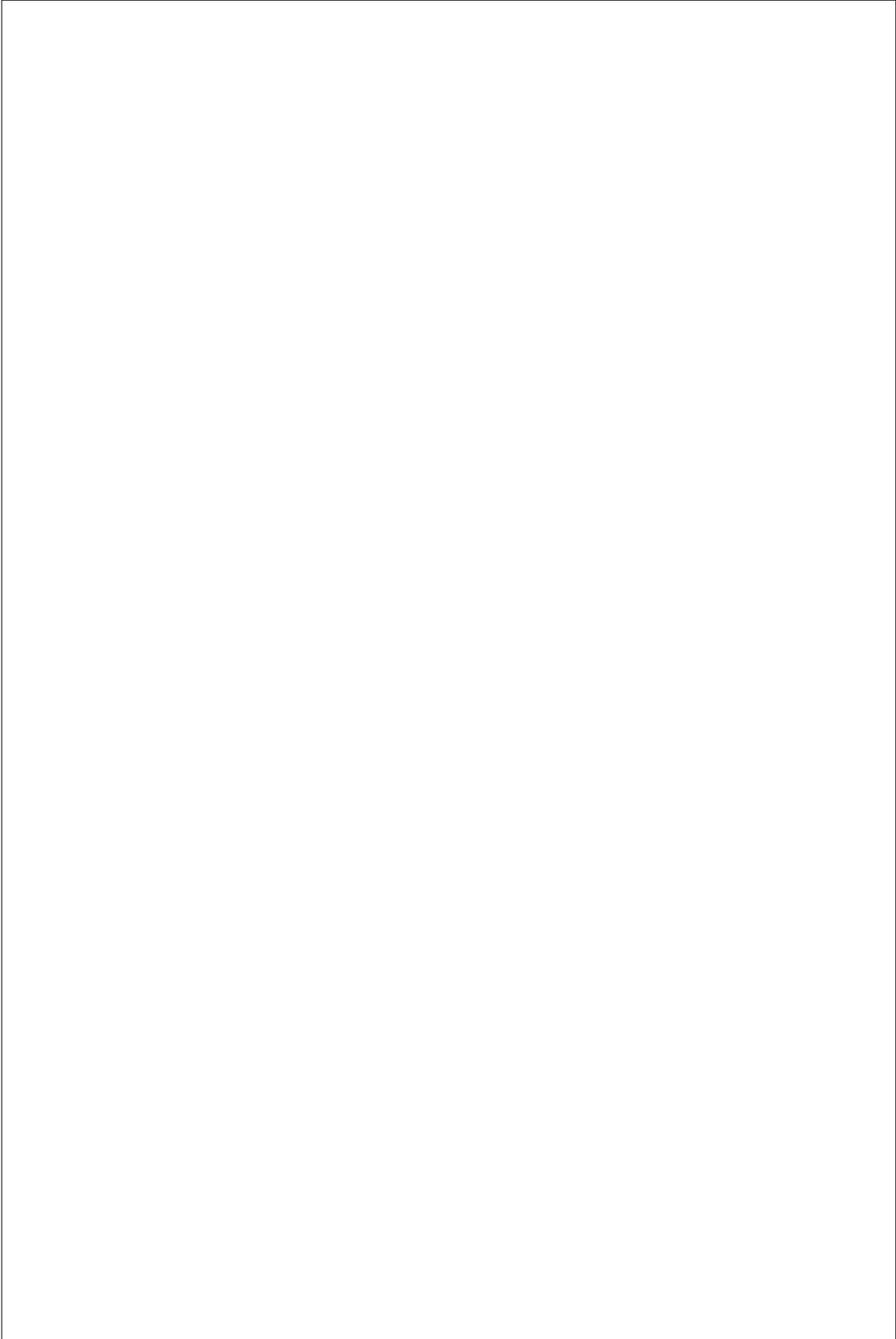
We have tended to focus on the missionaries themselves as being responsible for the subordination of Aboriginal people. Emma's good intentions cannot be

disentangled from those of her husband. Emma's letters reveal that the gender assumptions of the time determined that Thomas's actions and Aboriginal peoples' responses to them would have an enormous impact on what she was able to do or not do. At the same time, as a number of scholars, almost all of them female, have recently shown, women were no less complicit than were men in this colonial attempt to subordinate indigenous peoples around the world to the political, economic, religious, and cultural goals of newcomers. Most of the critical attention paid to missionary wives relates to the first half of the nineteenth century and to New England women.¹⁷ Dana Robert explains how, during the second half of the century, another option opened up: "A phalanx of unmarried women built upon the efforts of the missionary wives and carried out works of education, medicine, and evangelism."¹⁸ It is this shift, and its meaning, that has principally interested scholars.¹⁹ It is almost as if missionary wives were worth examining only until something better, something closer to the male model of missionization, came along.

Emma Crosby's letters bear witness to the contribution of missionary wives. They help us to understand mission work as something more complex than simple tales of conversion on the part of men and women invested in Christianity. Multiple participants shaped the missionary enterprise, each of them acting on their own motivations, with consequences that no one would have anticipated.



Good Intentions Gone Awry



I

Courtship and Marriage

From her earliest years, Emma Jane Douse was aware of the missionary enterprise. She came out of a strong Methodist tradition, one nurtured in Ontario and in industrializing Hamilton. Her father had every opportunity to impress upon his daughter the Methodist doctrines that formed his faith and that lay the foundation for hers. Higher education gave Emma the training and skills that defined women's roles in the mission, making her a credible missionary companion. The connections she acquired from her family's social position and those she fostered on her own supported her transition to missionary wife. Though excited by missionary ideals, she was, at the same time, unprepared for the isolated north coast of a faraway province – a province that was almost wholly a frontier, much of it still largely occupied by Aboriginal peoples.

By the time Emma was born on April 17, 1849, in the Ontario town of Coburg, about thirty-five miles east of Toronto on Lake Ontario, her father was well established as a Methodist minister. His career paralleled, and reflected, the growth of Wesleyan Methodism in Canada. The denomination emphasized subjective personal experience over adherence to dogma. As summed up in one interpretation, "the supreme challenge was an experience positive, conscious, and thrilling, of the joy of Salvation and victory over Sin ... of the conscious living experiences of salvation from sin, [as] not only a right and a privilege, but a necessity." Once a "note of certainty" was obtained within oneself through an individual act of conversion, a second obligation kicked in, and that was to witness, to give "testimony before others of what God has done for my soul."¹ Such witnessing found its expression in evangelical campaigns, or camp meetings, intended to convert in quantity, and in the obligation to go wherever potential converts were to be had on what were termed circuits.

The missionary impulse at the heart of Methodism was responsible for John Douse's emigration to Canada. Born in humble circumstances in the northern English town of Hull in 1802, Douse was converted at the age of eighteen and five years later began witnessing and preaching as far afield as Leeds and Sheffield. In his early thirties he was taken "on trial" as one of a "band of English missionaries sent out to assist the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada."² He was posted near Brantford to, as he wrote at the time, "the six nations of Indians on this [Grand] River, the chief of which is the Mohawk, a very shrewd and haughty people, looking with contempt on the other Indians."³

The descriptions Douse sent back to England were also very likely the stories with which he regaled the young Emma. "Religion has done great things for them ... while most of the unconverted are miserably wretched, and lost in drunkenness and poverty." Douse became ever more convinced of the necessity of Aboriginal conversion.

Methodism has affected a great change in the morals and habits of several among this degraded people ... I am forcibly struck with the differences ... The pagans are so degraded, by immorality, drunkenness and vice, they make no improvements comparatively, but live chiefly by hunting and fishing ... Christianity has done great things for them in relation to this, as well as, another life. You may soon find out the Xn [Christian] Indians. They are cleaner in their persons and dress; have better houses, and far more cleared land.⁴

John Douse's origins in no way hampered his rise within the Church; indeed, his modest beginnings typified Methodism's ethos and appeal. The "brusque manners" and "rough exterior" that others associated with him gave him a greater affinity with ordinary people – both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – than had he been born a gentleman.⁵ Douse did so well as a missionary that he was ordained after just a year in Canada. Three years later, in 1838, he was received fully in the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Canada, which gave him the freedom to marry. The same year he wed Eliza Milner, a dozen years his junior and very likely a sweetheart from home who had waited for him to make good.⁶ Rev. Douse took up the first of a number of positions that, over the next three decades, took him across much of southern Ontario.⁷ He was clearly an ambitious man, and perhaps for that reason so fully sloughed off his origins that, when he visited Yorkshire later in life, he discovered that one brother "had been dead nearly ten years" and that another had recently died. He was told his deceased brother "often expressed his wonder at not hearing from me" or knowing where he had gone. In a long letter written to his wife Eliza in Canada, he reflected: "I never expected to see England again. There is something oppressive & melancholy in

the thought & feeling under such circumstances, yet I long for home & shall be content to live & die in Canada - should the Lord restore me to you."⁸

Emma Douse's earliest memories were of the village of Barrie on Lake Simcoe, whence her father rode a circuit in the early to mid-1850s and, as was the practice for Methodist ministers, served as local school superintendent.⁹ Emmie, as she was known within the family, accepted from a young age the notion that a preacher, first her father and later her husband, would travel to his parishioners rather than expecting them to come to him.¹⁰ Chapels were locally maintained in anticipation of a preacher's periodic visits. Methodists "went to meeting," both to Sunday services, where they were exhorted, and to smaller ones during the week, where they were encouraged to give public witness to their religious experience. From time to time they might also attend outdoor camp meetings that were intended to revive religious fervor. A teacher living at the edge of Barrie wrote in his diary on a September Sunday in 1854:

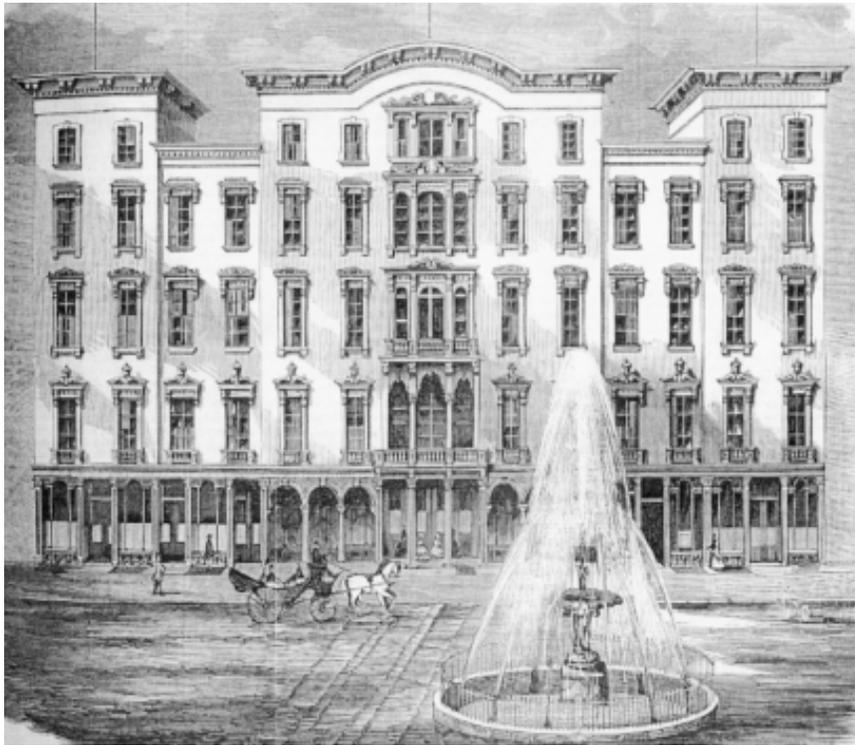
We went to meeting this forenoon. Mr. Douse preached a most excellent sermon. I think it was the best that has ever been preached in our (Victoria) chapel. Text Amos 4th chapter, 12th verse. We had a lovefeast and sacrament was administered after public preaching. A good number told their religious experience in lovefeast. I spoke; it was hard work but blessed be God, he enabled me to do it.¹¹

Emma, together with her sisters Eliza, Annie, and Susie and her brother George, grew up in a family that took its religious faith very seriously.¹² Their father was not just any father; he was the Rev. John Douse, author in 1853 of the first register of Wesleyan Methodist ministers across Canada.¹³ During Emma's childhood, respect for him grew across Methodist Ontario.¹⁴ As his obituary later put it, "he occupied prominent positions, such as Toronto, Hamilton, Belleville, Kingston, London, and Guelph, and was for a number of years Chairman of the Districts in which he resided."¹⁵ His reputation assured Emma a place in prominent social circles associated with Methodism and afforded her the opportunity for higher education.

No Ontarian community had a more formative effect on Emma than did the bustling commercial city of Hamilton. In 1863-64 her sixteen-year-old sister Annie spent a year at Wesleyan Female College, and Emma followed three years later at about the same age. Incorporated in 1861 through the efforts of Methodist ministers and Hamilton businessmen, Wesleyan Female College was intended to offer women advanced learning. While not universities, such collegiate institutions went beyond the secondary level. At Wesleyan Female College it was possible to earn a Mistress of English Literature (MEL) or Mistress of Liberal Arts (MLA) degree, the former by far the more popular, the latter emphasizing the

classics.¹⁶ The college's name harked back to 1854, when various Methodist groups in Canada united to form the Wesleyans; this group lasted until 1874, at which time yet another union created the Methodist Church of Canada.

Hamilton took special pride in Wesleyan Female College, which opened when the city was vying with Toronto for commercial supremacy on the northwestern shore of Lake Ontario. Hamilton's population, mostly British-born, climbed to 25,000 by 1871. Historian Michael Katz describes how the same entrepreneurship that backed the Wesleyan Female College was responsible for impressive civic buildings and fine private residences, a city hospital, planked sidewalks and macadamized streets, gas lighting, public waterworks, and a rail line.¹⁷ Hamilton was becoming industrialized, with over 80 percent of its 1871 workforce employed in establishments consisting of ten or more people. Hamilton sported several foundries, three sewing machine factories, and a variety of clothing manufacturers. A business elite, among which could be found the college's backers, set itself apart from ordinary Hamiltonians, who earned from one dollar a day as



Wesleyan Female College, which Emma attended during the late 1860s

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unskilled labourers to \$2.50 a day as skilled labourers. Organized sports and recreation proliferated, as did voluntary associations. Historian John Weaver describes how crime and punishment in Hamilton became professionalized, as befitted a city on the cusp of modernity.¹⁸

Wesleyan Female College both reflected and facilitated these larger changes. Housed in an elegant 150-room former downtown hotel, the college attracted girls not just from Hamilton but also from across small-town Ontario and the northeastern United States. At the time Emma Douse arrived in 1866, it enrolled some two hundred day girls and boarders and sported a faculty of fourteen, who offered the entire range of intellectual pursuits considered suitable for young women. As well as taking classes 9-12 and 2-4, all students were instructed in penmanship, composition, vocal music, exercise, and could, if they wished, also draw, paint, and learn to wax fruit and flowers. Whatever the activity, they were taught “self-control, obedience to *principles*, and a conscientious regard for the right.” The principles at the heart of Wesleyan Female College were, despite the name, not explicitly Methodist but general for the time. “Truthfulness in opposition to pretence in anything, patriotism, love of home, devotion to parents, simplicity, inartificiality, avoidance of *heartlessness* and *display*.” For most students, this was enough. As did Emma’s older sister Annie, they pursued a general course of studies and left with a certificate attesting to their attendance.

Not Emma Douse. She went where few students had gone before, and that was to pursue a demanding MLA degree. In her first year Emma studied Virgil in the original Latin as well as Latin prose composition, Racine in French together with French composition, English classical literature, logic, trigonometry, astronomy, and chemistry. The next year she followed up with Horace’s odes and satires in Latin, advanced French reading and composition, more English classics and composition, mental and moral philosophy, and geology. Emma likely also participated in the Library Society, a select group of advanced students who composed papers that were read “at stated periods before the students.” In the spring of 1868 Emma Douse was awarded an MLA, joining fourteen others who gained less rigorous MEL degrees. Emma then got a job as a school teacher. A nephew half a dozen years her junior recalled Emma “as a most beloved young aunt, full of fun, [but] when you were a teacher at that school & when you looked very much down upon little boys – I didn’t like you quite so well then.”¹⁹

Emma honed her skills and two years later, in the fall of 1870, returned to Wesleyan Female College as a faculty member. Its enrolment was approaching 250 students, and Emma was hired into the “academic” stream, intended for girls who “do not propose to graduate through the College.” She was one of three instructors of a range of courses encompassing geography, grammar and orthography, composition and penmanship, arithmetic and algebra, natural history and

philosophy, and bookkeeping. For the next three and a half years, Emma's life revolved around the college, its alumnae association (she served a year as its secretary), and the social life to be found with her five male and sixteen female fellow faculty. All but one of the latter was, like her, seemingly settled into a single life.

It was the urbanity of Hamilton and the rarified atmosphere of the Wesleyan Female College that the twenty-five-year-old Emma Douse exchanged for a mission life. Women and men of strong religious conviction did not question, at this point in time, that the missionary enterprise was the highest calling. For a generation and more, men and women caught up in the colonializing enterprise had rushed to convert indigenous peoples. The heroic tales that came back to missionary societies, and that were necessary to secure funds to continue the cause, heightened the appeal of missions. Written accounts from faraway lands made their way into mission records, gave nuance to church sermons, and were the talk of mission social circles that gave generously towards such work. Women who either took interest or became caught up in the cause through their voluntary work had more limited options for participation than did their male counterparts. A woman could marry and become a missionary's helpmate, or, as was only just becoming possible, single women might be accepted for the mission field so long as they did not interfere with the "real" work of missions but restricted themselves to women and children.

Fundamental differences separated missionary wives from women missionaries. Women missionaries gave up one life for another and received a salary for doing so, whereas missionary wives layered one life on another. Conversely, women missionaries retained the option to return to their previous lives, whereas missionary wives were in for the long term. They were expected to maintain the way of life identified with wives – indeed, they were to become its exemplars for the indigenous peoples in whose midst they succored husband and children. At the same time, by virtue of their gender they became caught up in the missionary activities viewed as women's work; namely, the care and conversion of indigenous children and women. This difference helps to explain "the relative 'invisibility' of missionary wives," to borrow historian Deborah Kirkwood's phrase.²⁰ Their contributions, and its printed record, have for the most part been subsumed within those of their husbands.

Most women imbued with missionary zeal saw marriage to a male missionary as the most practical means of realizing their vocation. They were assisted in their goal by the conviction within the enterprise that, for male missionaries to do their job most effectively, they needed to be married. Wives were considered essential to modelling appropriate behaviour to their indigenous counterparts and, at the same time, to ensuring that men did not, for any reason, become

emotionally involved with their female converts. Emma Douse's upbringing, her access to Methodist social circles, and her advanced education made her a "suitable companion of the wilderness," to use Hilary Carey's phrase.²¹

The series of events that caused Jane Douse and Thomas Crosby to light on each other in January 1874 began to unfold a dozen years earlier. By the time they met, he had already demonstrated his passion for the mission enterprise that would enfold Emma in its embrace. Born in Yorkshire, England, in 1840, Thomas, he later recalled, "went to work at ten years old, so had little chance for school." Fourth of fourteen children, he emigrated with his family at the age of sixteen to Woodstock, about thirty miles west of Hamilton. He described how, "while working as a tanner during the day, he spent a good part of his nights in study" and was, as one account put it, "practically self-educated."²² At the age of twenty-one Thomas underwent religious conversion after attending a camp meeting. He later described the process in classic Methodist terms: "Two weeks of terrible struggle followed this awakening. At last, one evening, while on my knees, the answer came, and I was enabled to believe that God, for Christ's sake, had pardoned all my sins ... My happiness was so great I felt constrained to give it out to others."²³

A year later, in 1862, Thomas's new-found religious zeal took him to British Columbia at the height of the gold rush which had erupted there four years earlier. Previous to the discovery of gold, the future Canadian province was under the loose oversight of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose interest in furs ensured that it would pay little attention to colonization. Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries tended to the traders and to their children, born mainly to local Aboriginal women. It was the gold rush that caused the first Methodist missionaries to be dispatched from Ontario, arriving in British Columbia in early 1859. Thomas headed off in response to an appeal in the Methodist *Christian Guardian* "urging the importance of Christian young men coming out to the West to labor for the salvation of souls." As he explained, "I felt it was my duty to go, and further that I feared if I disobeyed the voice of God I would lose my soul."²⁴

For young men of modest circumstances caught in the tedium of everyday, such as Thomas Crosby, mission work offered status and respect not otherwise attainable. Perhaps his religious motivations were further sparked by the freedom of action and adventure that religious belief made possible. Lent the money for the trip, he spent his first eleven months doing whatever work he could find – rough carpentry, bush clearing, road work – to repay the loan. While still doing this, Thomas began to make his mark. At the first Sunday prayer meeting he attended in Victoria he shouted "Amen" and "Hallelujah" so enthusiastically that older members cocked their eyebrows at "that young fellow in homespun, who has the audacity to come in here and make such a noise."²⁵

Taken under the wing of one of the early missionaries, young Thomas was invited to teach school in the Vancouver Island coal mining community of Nanaimo, whose population was made up of newcomers and Aboriginal people in roughly equal numbers. Teaching himself the local language, Thomas, in the Methodist tradition that holds that ordination is not necessary to spreading the word of God, also preached and held prayer meetings. Assisted by Aboriginal people he built among them a little church and mission house in the hope of encouraging a model village mimicking newcomer ways of life. A colleague recalled Thomas's self-discipline, how he would rise at four o'clock in the morning so as to spend two hours in prayer and devotions before breakfast. During the day he would stop wherever he found two or three people, attracting attention by breaking into a gospel song tending towards the simple and rhythmic, followed by some preaching. He was never satisfied to stay in one place for any length of time and later recalled making "trips from Nanaimo to Yale in a dug-out, a distance of three hundred and forty miles."²⁶

By 1868 Thomas had determined on a missionary life. He became a probationer for the ministry with responsibility for "Indian tribes." His preaching, sometimes outdoors in the long-standing Methodist tradition of camp meetings, gave the basis for religious revivals that enhanced his reputation. He travelled extensively, claiming "an average of two thousand miles annually in all kinds of weather, risking life and limb in order to bring to the Indian enlightenment and Christianity."²⁷ In 1869 Thomas was transferred to the Fraser Valley on the nearby mainland and, two years later, ordained in Victoria by the visiting president of the Canadian Conference headquartered in Toronto in what was the first such event held in British Columbia. His record of service was considered a sufficient qualification in lieu of systematic instruction in theology. Very significantly, ordination gave the right to marry.

The newly ordained preacher was granted leave to visit Ontario, a trip that made it possible for him both to raise funds and to get his private life in order. Thomas needed a wife as a role model for the indigenous persons whose conversion he sought, as a helpmate to assist with the tedium of everyday life, and as a protection against rumours of his being in too close proximity to female parishioners. The last was particularly important, given the stories dogging his Anglican missionary counterpart, Englishman William Duncan, on the British Columbia north coast. A single man, Duncan kept in his mission house at Metlakatla a number of adolescent Aboriginal girls to whom he was bringing the Christian message. When one of them, Elizabeth Ryan, married his missionary assistant, Irishman Robert Cunningham, Duncan turfed the pair out in an action that may have been revealing of his own desires. The captain of a Royal Navy gunboat that visited Metlakatla at the time of Cunningham's marriage

in 1864 was aware of the rumours swirling around Duncan. “No white man or Indian has dared to breathe a taint on his name” for having “young women living alone with him in his house ... at the most critical ages,” but it was, all the same, “a task that few young men would care to undertake” and one “not the best appreciated by the public.”²⁸ The moral was that missionaries were better safely wed.

The need to return with a wife became critical once Thomas learned he was to go into direct combat with the irascible William Duncan. As scholar Terrence Craig discovered in reading through Canadian missionary biographies and autobiographies, “hasty, institutionally-arranged marriages” were commonplace. “Callow young men were fitted out with brides selected for their suitability to the missionary life, much as the rest of their kit was provided for them. Divine guidance was invoked for these matches, and who would be so presumptuous as to resist once the sponsoring bodies made their decision?”²⁹

Emma Douse represented in her person as well as her firmly Methodist upbringing the ideal attributes of a missionary wife. Her granddaughter recollected her as “a small person, a gentle, kind type of person.”³⁰ Emma was, friends from Wesleyan Female College later recalled, “a lady of cultured mind and retiring disposition.”³¹ Among her single friends there were Carrie Robertson in the Preparatory Department, French instructor Marie Séguin, and Marietta Stinson in the Academic Department. Emma may have been particularly close to Marietta Stinson, who obtained her MEL degree the same year Emma got her MLA. Also in the Academic Department with Emma was (Mrs.) Mary Wright, who, like the others, had been there as long as she had. Robert Steele Ambrose had been music director since the time Emma was a student, and his daughter Eleanor had been his assistant from the time Emma was hired. Also enmeshed in college social life were Methodist minister Rev. William Stephenson and his wife. At the helm of Wesleyan Female College since 1868 was Samuel Dwight Rice, a medical doctor and Methodist minister who had been the main force behind its foundation.

Emma’s friendships at the college existed alongside a strong commitment to her family, which was scattered across Ontario. Rev. Douse retired in 1872. He and his wife Eliza and son George, five years Emma’s junior, were undecided as to where to settle down. Emma’s three sisters were married and so were subsumed within their husband’s identities. Susie had become “Mrs. George P. McKay” and lived at Lefroy, north of Toronto on the south shore of Lake Simcoe not far from Barrie, where the Douse daughters spent part of their childhood. Annie was now “Mrs. Henry Hough” of Coburg; and Eliza was “Mrs. George Brown,” living in Castleton just north of Coburg, where her husband was the local Methodist minister.

In a tradition of correspondence that Emma developed and sustained over time, we get our first glimpse of her in the fall of 1873. She was beginning her fourth year teaching at Wesleyan Female College.

W.F. College
Hamilton, Sept. 24th 1873

My dear Mother,

You will think it strange or Susie may perhaps that I have not written you promptly on this interesting occasion [of the birth of Susie's child] but there were so many things I wanted to say when I did write – so it appeared to me that I thought it best to wait till I had time to say them all. I do not know that there is anything very particular either but I did not want to write in a hurry and forget anything. I have not very much time now, after all, but I will postpone no further. I promised Miss Robertson to go to the John H. service this evening and it is not very far from the time. Well to begin, I wish Susie very much joy with her daughter – and trust she – the baby – may do honor to the illustrious family to which she is so favored as to belong – and especially I hope Susie is getting on well. Let me know as soon as possible, please, how she is, and things are generally. I want to hear from you soon, too, for another reason – of course I did not allow myself to be deceived by George's hint at twins – but Miss Ambrose firmly maintains that it must be there were two arrivals and as an oyster supper depends on it I am anxious to know the truth as soon as I can. Miss A. *says* she requires a certificate signed by the nurse and doctor, but perhaps your word of honor would be enough. I want some oysters very much only if I should have to give them I would be in no hurry. I suppose Papa is back by this time so I need say nothing of his visit to Hamilton. Annie and Harry H. came up by boat on Monday, and spent the afternoon and night here – leaving the next morning for London. Annie took dinner with me and they both were in college for tea and then we went to hear Newman Hall in the evening. It rained very heavily but the lecture rewarded us for braving it. Annie and Harry were well and in good spirits. They return tomorrow, spend tomorrow night in Hamilton, and take the boat for Cobourg Friday morning.

I was to have spent tomorrow evening at Mrs. Stephenson's but I cannot now. I called there the other day. Miss Baldwin of Ottawa is visiting them. It was to see her chiefly I went. I heard from Eliza lately – they were well.

My valise turned up all right so I am no longer in destitution. Papa was saying that Auntie had offered to take you to board. Would you like that? I suppose you could not go anywhere else now in Barrie if you wished to do so, and I dare say you would be very comfortable. I am sure you must wish your-

self settled somewhere, and Papa even more. Could you not arrange things there and then go back to Lefroy if necessary? It would be very nice for Susie to have you so near and I am certain Auntie would glory in having you with her. You have plenty to occupy you now – I doubt not. The children will depend chiefly upon you, I suppose. How do they take to the little stranger? I would write to Susie tonight but I really have not time. Give her my best love and the same to all. Write just as soon as you can, dear Mother, to,

Your affectionate daughter,
Emma

The first, fateful encounter between Emma Douse and Thomas Crosby grew out of his other task while in Ontario, apart from finding a wife, which was to raise money for the missionary cause. With the blessing of the Toronto Conference, which had authority over western Canada, including British Columbia, he and fellow missionary Egerton Ryerson Young travelled together to solicit support. The two turned up at Wesleyan Female College to plead their cause in late January 1874.

Hamilton Feb. 9th, 1874

My dear Mother,

It seems so long since I wrote to you that I will not let tonight pass without a letter to you however short it may be. It is late and I am very tired, so it will not likely amount to much. I got your letter in due time, and heard from Susie that you and Auntie were going down to Lefroy. Susie must have had a hard time with only a little girl [to help her]. I have heard from Annie and Eliza too lately. Eliza was to be in Cobourg tonight for the Miss[ionary]. meeting & to stay a few days. Annie was not very well when she wrote. It seems too bad that Eliza's best friends should be leaving Castleton – they will miss them so much. Our Miss. meetings were two weeks ago – both the returned missionaries were here & the meetings were really very interesting & quite enthusiastic. You have not heard either of them have you? They were in the college one afternoon & addressed the school. I spent an evening at Mr. [William Eli] Sanford's lately very pleasantly – the last few weeks have been so busy I have not known what to do. We have a good deal of sewing on hand in a Dorcas Society we have in the college and that does not leave some of us much time – my incentive has been more useful within the last few weeks than ever before. We have good sleighing now – I have had several good drives but not since the last snow came. I am glad to hear of your cloak – I should think it would be quite pretty.

A new term begins this week and quite a number of new students are coming in so the school promises to be very full. I wish I could write more but must not. Let me know when you go to Susie's. Do write soon. Love to Auntie & Sallie & with much for yourself & my father.

Believe me, dear Mother,
Yours affectionately
Emma

At the time Emma and Thomas first caught sight of each other, she was in her mid-twenties, he almost a decade older. Thomas personified everything a missionary was meant to be, as Emma would have been aware from her involvement with missionary activities at the college. A man who met Thomas about the same time recalled, forty years later, how "I was much impressed by his manliness, his strength, his unselfishness, and his devotion to his work."³² Thomas Crosby was a missionary's missionary.

Emma Douse's way of life at the Wesleyan Female College and in urbane Hamilton was, at the same time, not of Thomas's experience. He was "lacking in the culture that colleges give," recalled the preacher who first befriended him in Victoria. "No matter where he was the decorum of any gathering was liable to be gloriously punctuated by irrepressible 'Amens' and 'Hallelujahs.'" A longtime acquaintance described him as "honest, bluff, breezy, big-hearted." He was, one view has it, "possessed of a remarkable voice and a commanding and magnetic personality."³³ Thomas Crosby knew what he wanted, and it was now Emma Jane Douse.

The courtship between the two was helped along by intermediaries. William Eli Sanford, at whose home Emma spent a pleasant evening, was a prominent Hamilton manufacturer. He was president of the Wesleyan Female College's board of directors and very interested in mission work in British Columbia. An earlier visit to Victoria had impelled him to contribute \$500 a year towards missionary work in its "China Town."³⁴ Sanford was likely not troubled by the couple's differences in background. The missionary rhetoric associated with Thomas gave him a status overshadowing his lack of personal attributes. His humble origins and brash exterior were not so very different from those of Emma's father, a similarity she likely also observed. Both men were driven, as was Sanford, to save what they perceived to be "heathen" souls – a goal in which Emma shared.

Not only that, but also, as Thomas later put it, "the Macedonian cry, 'Come over and help us,' comes from Fort Simpson, where I am recommended by the District Meeting to go and start a new Mission."³⁵ The notice of his new posting on the British Columbia north coast hurried events along, so Thomas recalled in his memoir. "When we learned that instead of returning to my loved field

among the Ankonenums [in the Fraser Valley] we were appointed to the remote work at Fort Simpson, on the borders of Alaska, six hundred miles away from civilization, she offered no objections, but, like a true, devoted follower of Christ, said she was ready to go.”³⁶

Emma had every encouragement to acquiesce to Thomas’s needs and desires. The letter she wrote her mother in mid-February, a little over a week after describing her first encounter with Thomas, indicates that she had already made up her mind.

Hamilton Feb. 18th 1874

My dear Mother,

You will not be expecting a letter from me again so soon, but I have something particular to write about today and I do not think I ought to postpone doing so any longer. I put off writing the last thinking I might be prepared to say what I am going to say now – but I did not feel as though I could mention it then. I fancy I hear you say just here – “O! My! What a girl she is – in some trouble again I suppose.” I do not think it is going to be my trouble – I hope not but really, Mother dear, I do feel badly to have to say anything to you about it – but you must know – and the sooner, perhaps, the better. Now, dear Mother, it is just this I want to ask you & my father – would it grieve you very much – would you be willing to let me go to British Columbia, not exactly as a missionary on my own responsibility, but to be a help and a comfort, if possible, to a noble man who has been there working for years by himself. You know who it is I mean – I wish you had seen him yourself and heard him speak – but you remember what Eliza said about him, and I believe your confidence in him would be as strong as mine if you did know him. I know it would be a very serious undertaking to go there – a great deal both for ourselves and others, might – would depend upon it, and yet the conviction grows upon me that I might be both happy & useful – perhaps more so there than anywhere else. Only one view of it troubles me and that is in reference to yourself & my father. If you were to be less happy for the want of what I might give if I were with you – then I do not think I could feel sure it would be right for me to go. I have not given my promise yet and shall not do so until I hear from you. Let me know, Mother dear, just how you feel about it as soon as you can. Of course there would not be much time for preparation, perhaps not longer than till May and it would be, likely, a good many years before I could come back even for a visit. You will think, perhaps, Mamma that I have been very hasty – I saw Mr. Crosby for the first time four weeks ago next Monday but things are no less safe, although hasty, when they rest, as I firmly believe this does, with

higher wisdom than our own. We have met a number of times, last evening we spent together in the college here, and have talked about it as fully as could be. Do not think either that I am carried away by the romance of the thing – I would not go one step if I believed that to be what influenced me. I have thought calmly about it, and while my own feelings prompt me to go, I do not trust to them alone, and whether I go or stay I shall take all to be well. I wish I could talk to you about it – but I think you will understand the matter. Let this be, at least for the present, between ourselves alone. I have not said a word on the subject to the girls so, please, do not mention it to them or anyone else. I expect Mr. C. here next Thursday. If I could have some word from you before then I should be very glad, but take your own time about answering.

I believe we should love each other and you know that would make up for so many wants in other ways. Now, Mother dear, forgive me if I give you trouble and anxiety, and with much love to yourself and my father,

Believe me
Your affectionate daughter
Emma

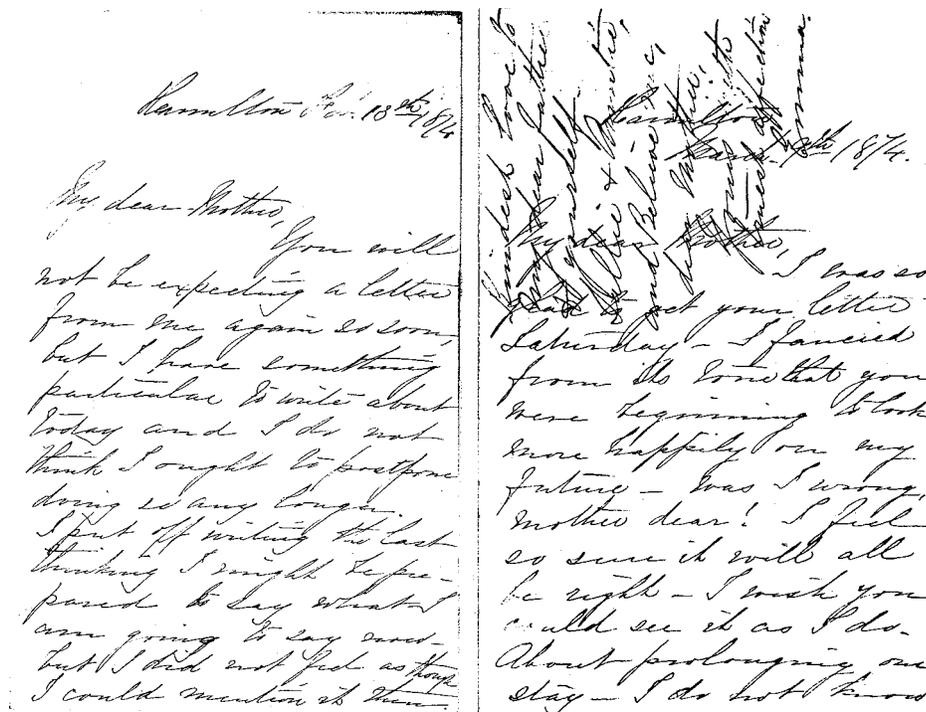
Emma needed her mother's approval in order to go ahead. Eliza Douse's letters to her daughter do not survive, but the tone of Emma's next letter suggests a certain degree of reticence on her mother's part. At the same time, the Douses had no alternative but to permit their daughter to follow what they must have believed was God's will for her.

Hamilton Feb. 27th 1874

My dear Mother,

I cannot tell you how glad I was to get your letter Wednesday evening – thank you very, very much for writing so promptly. I know it is hard for you and there seems to be so little time to think about it and get used to the idea. I could wish that this were different – but I feel sure that all will be right, however it may seem now – I believe firmly that a blessing will rest upon my life, and I do hope you and my father will feel that there is nothing to fear. I shall be taken care of wherever I am.

Then I think, dear Mamma, that you have an exaggerated idea of the privations to be undergone, if so you like to call them. I shall likely have a comfortable enough home and all that is necessary to my happiness. Mr. Crosby was here last night and, dear Mamma, we settled it then – it was not wrong, was it? You know the time is so short and it was not right for either of us to leave it



Two samples of Emma's letters, dated February 18, 1874 (left), and March 9, 1874 (right)

undecided. Till the early part of May will likely be the longest we can stay, though it is just possible we may remain till after [the Methodist Church's annual] Conference. I told Dr. Rice about it today. He spoke very kindly indeed, without discouraging it at all and promises to relieve me as soon as it is possible to do so. I shall need all the time I can get for preparation. I should like to be with you in two or three weeks if I could.

Tell Auntie about it if you think best. I do not want it talked about any more than is necessary but I do not suppose it would be possible to keep it a secret. Mr. Crosby sends kind regards & will see you as soon as he can. Write again soon. With truest love to yourself and my father.

Believe me, dear Mother,
Ever your affectionate daughter
Emma

The public announcement of Emma Jane Douse's engagement was made at Centenary Church in Hamilton at a meeting where Thomas Crosby made his usual pitch for financial support. The announcement was itself part of the

missionary phenomenon. While the collection was being taken following Thomas's appeal, fervent missionary supporter William Eli Sanford told the assembled throng that, as soon as a thousand dollars was subscribed towards Fort Simpson, he would reveal an important secret. Having secured the goal, he announced that "a young lady in that corner is going out with the missionary."³⁷ An observer recalled his words: "Miss Douse, one of the teachers in the Ladies College, who is down at the corner with the college girls, is my secret. She is going to marry Mr. Crosby and go with him to his far-off field in Northern British Columbia."³⁸ The excitement was so great, the story goes, the money just kept pouring in.

Hamilton
March 9th 1874

My dear Mother,

I was so glad to get your letter Saturday. I fancied from its tone that you were beginning to look more happily on my future – was I wrong, mother dear! I feel so sure it will all be right. I wish you could see it as I do. About prolonging our stay – I do not know that it would be best even could it be done, which is doubtful. I would not urge it myself. I will explain why when I see you. There is a lady here already who is to take my work – and tomorrow will be my last day in the school.

It will be well for me, I think to remain ten days longer in the college. I want time to say good-bye to everyone – and to give out some dress-making – that grey silk might as well be made up, I suppose and I want to get a black one. I can get it at wholesale price and both had better be made here. I shall keep myself supplied with work as long as I am here. I scarcely see how everything is to be got ready but mean to manage it somehow or other. I wrote to Susie to know if George could meet me in Toronto so that I could get there pretty much all I want. Will you let me know Mamma, what you think I will want most, and what resources I may expect to have to draw upon, if I get knives & forks or anything of that kind. I might get them in Toronto – better than elsewhere. Thank Auntie & Sallie for their kind offer of help. I think I shall make most of my preparations in Barrie. Will you write immediately, Mamma, please, and let me know what you think about all these things.

Kindest love to my dear father & yourself, Sallie & Auntie, and Believe me, dear Mother,

Yours with truest affection
Emma

Events now proceeded at a breakneck pace. A very efficient Emma took charge. Her family became her helpmates rather than the other way around, as it had been previously.

Hamilton
March 11th 1874

My dear Mother,

I am troubling you again – I write on business this morning. The time promises now to be very short before we leave for the west. Mr. C. was here last night – and it is almost certain the 1st May will be the latest – no time must be lost. I want to get dress-making done here – and my time is altogether my own now so that I can sew all day. So I think it will be best to stay here till the end of next week. I shall take that grey silk today to be made & also a black lustre – as to the black silk I hope I shall be able to get it. It would be so useful for years perhaps – but I shall wait till I know how much I shall have to draw upon – then I shall need a travelling dress & some dark prints & perhaps winceys.³⁹ These last can be made in Barrie.

I wish very much, Mamma if it will not give you too much trouble you would begin at once to get house-linen ready for me. Get some woman to do this sewing for you. You know, Mamma, I should like to take as many things with me as possible. Everything will be so expensive there as well as difficult to get where we shall likely be. Sheets, pillow cases &c. – the more the better. I should like them too, Mamma, quite as nice as though I were going to live in Ontario, all the comfort & refinement of my life, I suppose, I mean that kind of comfort will be in my own home, & I do not mean to be careless or slipshod in my own house. And, Mamma, I am a great beggar – but could you send me twenty or thirty dollars this week to keep me going. I have not been paid up yet. Write, please the day you get this, and with much love,

Believe me, dear Mother
Yours affectionately
Emma

Having given their consent, the Douses did all they could to make the marriage happen in the fashion desired by their only still unwed daughter. In turn, Emma continued to cajole them into providing the whole-hearted acceptance she so much wanted them to give.

Hamilton
 March 13th 1874

My dear Mother,

I was so glad to get your letter this morning. Many thanks for all the trouble you are taking and to my father for the money – it was more than I expected or shall need before I get home. Dear Mamma, I do wish quite as much as you that I was with you. But, besides the dress making I have to have some dentistry finished next week which will keep me over Tuesday and if I wait till Saturday Miss [Marie] Séguin & Miss [Marietta] Stinson will come to Toronto with me – so I think I will fix that as the day of my leaving. Mr. C may come up with me. I am not sure – if not then very soon after. I dare say it is not worth while for [brother-in-law] George McKay to meet me in T. I think I will stop at Lefroy on my way up, if you can be there. I want to see you and my father as soon as ever I can. We can talk things over then at length – it will be a good deal of expense to take much with us – but for all but large heavy things less than the difference of the price, here & there. It is very kind of Papa to place so much at my disposal as he has – it will be ample for all I want. I do not like to think of taking your things Mamma for fear you should want them again. I think this is all I need say about these things now – I don't feel like writing business today.

Dear Mamma, I do hope you and my father are feeling quite reconciled and happy about my future. I am so sure it will all be right, and can trust for all I shall need. You can trust for me too – can you not, Mother dear? I wish you would write to Georgie about it. This morning I had a letter from him. He feels very bitterly about it and speaks of my grieving you & my father. Surely you do not feel that my going is wrong – only that I think would really grieve you.

Love to Auntie & Sally. With dearest affection for yourself and my dear father,

dear Mother, I am,

Yours as ever,

Emma

Miss [Carrie] Robertson sends love

The enthusiasm Emma hoped would come her way from her family may have been tempered even among her friends. A third of a century later, Maria Orme Allen, a classmate who taught literary criticism when Emma was on staff, recalled how a mutual acquaintance, whose husband was on the college's board

of directors, “said with great chagrin – ‘Emma Douse is buried! How could her friends consent!’” She remembered Emma as being, at the time, “a lovely girl consecrated to Christ and His Cause.”⁴⁰

Emma took any criticism, implied or overt, in stride. A nephew who knew Emma well over the years recalled her outlook as she was “about to leave ... for Port Simpson.” According to her sister Eliza’s son Henry: “You weren’t a tiny bit afraid. None of John Douse’s offspring have ever had any fear. There must have been something in the blood of us, Aunt, that we derived from the great old man, my grandfather.”⁴¹

Emma Douse married Thomas Crosby in the home of her sister Annie and brother-in-law Henry Hough in Coburg on April 30, 1874. Thomas gave his address on the marriage registry as Fort Simpson; Emma, harking back to her childhood, gave hers as the “Town of Barrie,” in Simcoe County, Ontario.⁴² Her father assisted at the ceremony, which was witnessed by her brother-in-law Henry Hough and sister Eliza Brown.

The next phase in Emma’s life began with her journey west. The Canadian Pacific Railway linking Ontario to British Columbia would not be completed for another dozen years. The newlyweds travelled by train across the central United States.

Waukegan [Illinois] May 9th 1874

My dear Mother,

It is rather late but I write a few lines. You and father will be looking for some word from us and then I want to write for my own satisfaction also. I do trust you are feeling happy and cheerful as many, many times I have thought of you both and hoped and prayed that you might be kept in peace. Our way hitherto has been prosperous. We have much – very much – to be thankful for. Mrs. Sanford met us at the station in H[amilton]. and we went with her for dinner. Mr. S. was away then down to the college. Every one was so kind and very cheery that it was not at all so trying as we had thought. Ever so many of them came to the depot with us. Mrs. S. gave me a doz. silver tea spoons, the last of my many gifts. We came on to Ingersoll [where Thomas Crosby’s parents lived] Thursday evening – it was late when we reached our destination and the next day was a busy one. I was sorry we could not have more time there. Then we took the train for Chicago – and came through, reaching Waukegan this morning about eleven. Uncle & aunt came to meet us – they are very kind. We had a row on the pond this evening. Mr. C. preaches tomorrow morning. The minister met us at this station with uncle. Do not feel anxious Mother dear about me. I have been kept in such quiet trust that the excitement & fatigue

have not affected me much & I feel really quite well. Love to Auntie & Sallie and believe me dear Mother of the fondest affection of,

Your daughter.
Emma

We leave Monday morning likely between seven and eight to catch the western train in Chicago. My thoughts are with you both. Love to my dear father. E.

Sunday night

May 10th

My Dear Mrs. Douse, Emma says I may write a word on the back of her letter. We have so far had a very happy and prosperous journey. And my dear Emma has been so happy and well amidst it all that I feel God has truly been with us to sustain us. We had a very happy day today. Uncle and all have made it so pleasant for us. I preached twice today and God was with us. We leave for the West tomorrow morning (D.V.), and will write you again soon. Love to Father and Aunt & Sally & all.

Yours affectionately
T. Crosby

Through her letters, Emma did what she could to reconcile her family to the lengthening distance between them. They also gave her an opportunity to name Thomas on paper as "my husband." She sometimes termed him "Mr. C.," which, in the style of the day, would become, increasingly, "Mr. Crosby."

Union Pacific Railroad
Nebraska May 12th 1874

My dear Mother,

I am going to send you a few lines today though they can only be written with a pencil. Our way still has been pleasant and prosperous. I was really sorry we could not remain longer at Waukegan. Uncle and Belle & Louise came to the train with us yesterday morning. Uncle expressed his good will by giving his niece twenty dollars. The girls talk seriously about coming out to Fort S[impson]. The weather has been all that could be desired – it rained enough last night to lay the dust. The country we have passed through is pleasant,

mostly prairie. Several fine towns and numerous villages. We spent about an hour and a half in Omaha this morning – such crowds of travelers, quantities of luggage, the time was all occupied in getting them arranged. We brought quite a reinforcement of provisions from Waukegan. My husband tells me I am to say that I stand the journey better than he does. I do bravely according to his opinion. It is very easy when I have nothing to do but be made comfortable & have some one to think of everything for me. I have slept splendidly, better than he has done. He took a cold & has had a slight sore throat since yesterday. I have seen since leaving Omaha a new sight to me – prairie grass on fire – no very extensive burning however. The train by which we meant to send this has just passed so I will have to keep it till tomorrow.

Pine Bluffs (75 miles from Omaha) – Wednesday near noon. Since I wrote yesterday we have passed over boundless plains & this morning have been in a hilly region but still no trees but a few stunted pines. Mr. C.'s throat still troubles him some. I am well. The further I get away from you all at home the more my heart goes out towards you – but there is one Lord over all. If you have not written before you receive this – and if you have – please do write immediately again. We shall likely reach Victoria by the twenty-fifth. Love to all from us both, especially to my father & yourself

dear Mother,
Emma

The first stage of Emma's trip west concluded with her arrival in San Francisco. The break in the journey gave her the opportunity to describe recent events as well as the train trip west in as much descriptive detail as she could muster. While her husband got a reduced fare by virtue of being a minister, Emma had to pay the full price. Her concern to make her mother comfortable with her marriage is evident in her long, newsy letter.

San Francisco
May 18th 1874

My dear, dear Mother,

The first thing this Monday morning after breakfast, of course, and a few other necessary things, must be a good long letter to yourself & my father. There is nothing to tell so far, I am thankful to say. That's good news. All along our journey we have been taken care of and blessed. Scarcely a cause of annoyance ever has there been – the wrong trunk was taken to Waukegan but that was

only a trifle and we were delayed some on Saturday morning so that it was ten o'clock at night before we reached San Francisco, but that I could not grieve over as it brought us by daylight through some of the finest scenery I suppose there is on earth. We have indeed every reason for gratitude and to feel that the hand of the Lord has been upon us for good. To be sure the long days on the train were sometimes rather trying – especially when the route afforded nothing very interesting – and a few times, I confess, I fell to thinking more about you all at home and what I had left than was good for me – but my good husband was always ready and had a word in season that suited exactly, so I would soon get back to the light again. I shall need a great deal of help every day, I know – help from on high and help from my husband but neither, I believe, will ever be wanting so long as I look for what I need. Do not feel anxious about me Mother dear. My God will supply all my needs, and I trust that the future may bring cause of rejoicing to all of us. It would be as well, perhaps, for me to begin the history of our journey with what occurred just after we left you, as the letters I have sent were so short, and then there will be less likelihood of my omitting anything I want to tell you. Our parting was so hurried that morning – and yet perhaps it was as well for us both that it should be so. I know, I think, Mother dear, all you would feel, and you, I believe, know my heart towards you and my father – always you must be first among those I love in my thoughts and prayers. But to begin – we reached Toronto in good time. Mr. C. had some business to attend to and I thought I would rather go with him to some places than remain alone. So I went up to Mr. Brown's – there I was left a few minutes and had a little talk with Mr. Hunter (S.J.) who happened to be there. We had then just time to take a lunch at the depot before leaving for Hamilton. On our way there we had the company of Mr. Lewis of St. Catharines. Mrs. Sanford I think I told you met us at the station – Mr. S. was away – and with her we went for dinner. Miss Robertson had come up to meet us. Mrs. S. was very kind indeed. After dinner T.C. had to go to the depot to see after the freight there and Miss R. & I proceeded to the college. My husband joined us after a while. There the teachers were all gathered in Mrs. Wright's room and all were so cheerful and so cordial, it was not trying at all as I had thought, and it seemed so good to have Marie [Séguin] sitting at my feet again and Mollie [Stinson] & Ellie [Ambrose] and all the rest about me. We four got away for just a few minutes talk together, but the time was not long and I wanted to see all as much as possible. Dr. Rice was there. There was no opportunity of seeing the students – nor, perhaps, would it have been best to have met them all again. Ever so many of the teachers came to the depot to see us off and I shall not soon forget how they stood there on the platform so cheery and kind, till the train moved off and the last good-bye was said. Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson were on the train on their way home. We had a little talk

with them and a kind farewell. At Woodstock twenty or thirty friends of Mr. C.'s had come to say good-bye. Ten minutes of hand-shaking and we were off again. Mary C. and her father were at Ingersoll to meet us, and we drove at once to their home. I was tired then – and the next morning there were letters to write and so much to be done. I could not really become acquainted with the family as I should have liked to have done. Mary is really a fine, good girl. She was so busy all that morning. Nothing seemed too much for her to do – and then in the afternoon she and her father and two younger sisters drove to Ingersoll with us. There I found two sisters of Miss Robertson's and one of our old students wanting to see me at Mr. C.'s sister's house. We had tea and took the train. Then for the first time I really felt that we had parted with all whom we had most cared for. Passing London three friends of Mr. C.'s were at the train – among them one of the Abbots.

Our trunks were not even opened at Detroit. I told you, I think, a good deal about our visit to Waukegan. We went round the pond. I took a turn at rowing to prepare me for future canoe paddling and we walked through the woods and inspected the stock &c. Uncle and all were just as kind as they could be. We have their sympathy I know, and prayers, I believe, will go up from Waukegan for us through our being there and my husband's preaching on the Sabbath.

Mr. Muir [?] of the G.W.R. kindly left a pass in Toronto for us both from Detroit to Chicago and from Chicago to Omaha. Mr. C. got half fare for himself – that was all the reduction allowed us on any part of the route. Leaving Chicago there was nothing of particular interest, only as we went westward through Iowa the orchards we found in full bloom and vegetation more advanced than eastward. We reached Omaha Tuesday morning. There was an hour's bustle and hurry, such numbers of passengers and immigrant families with their huge provision baskets and bags – and yet the arrangements for checking and securing tickets and berths and so on on these American railways is so perfect that really travelling is made as safe and comfortable as it seems possible to make it. I should have mentioned perhaps the prairie fires we saw east of Omaha. They were a novelty to me and one at night was a fine sight – though none of them were on a very large scale. A day's journey from Omaha through a monotonous country, over vast plains – a village here and there and large herds of cattle on the prairies. Wednesday morning found us on high ground – crossing a broad plateau skirted with a line of hills on all sides and snow capped peaks in the distance – grass and stunted bushes about the only vegetation, huge piles of rocks rising abruptly from the plateau. Wednesday we passed Sherman station the highest point on the road. The air was cool and bracing with a strong wind. In some places snow still remained on the ground. We passed through several snow sheds also.

Thursday afternoon the really grand scenery began, passing Castle Rock [Colorado] through what are called Echo and Weber canyons. There the rocks in all kinds of grotesque forms of towers and columns and all imaginable shapes tower away above us, sometimes rising perpendicularly with the track just at their base – here and there a deep awful looking gorge and perhaps just the other side of the track a series of rolling hills – their tall sloping sides covered with grass. The Devil's gate was one particular point of interest – a stream of water rushing along at the foot of an immense pile of rocks. Then we came to Ogden, Utah where there was another change of car. I had spent nearly all the afternoon on the platform of the car where it was rather windy and cold so I found myself quite tired by tea time, at which time we found ourselves at Ogden [Utah]. There we had tea and then on we went past Salt Lake, a pretty lake as we saw it in the evening sun, bordered on the opposite shore by a long line of hills.

Friday we traversed a barren desert like country with scarcely any vegetation but sage brush with hills of course still to bound the view. By evening however we reached Humboldt, an eating station – where by means of irrigation and cultivation there has been produced a fertile – a very fertile spot in a desert. The greenest of grass, fine little trees and well cultivated fields with a fountain before the station house are refreshing and pleasant after such a dusty, monotonous route. As to dust however we had much less of it than I expected – even in that famous alkali region we suffered very little.

So Friday passed on then Saturday – and what it brought us to I do not know how to describe. Such grand scenery I had scarcely pictured to myself. We crossed the Sierra Nevada, mountains winding round their sides or piercing them on tunnels after a most wonderful fashion. At one place the road wound round from one mountain side to another opposite – till the two lines were almost parallel and we were turned nearly round. One scene was very beautiful, Donner Lake [in the Sierra Nevada Mountains] – a clear sparkling depth of water lying down between high sloping mountains covered with snow that glistened in the sunshine, tall pine and spruce trees growing up their sides to the very summit. Just beyond that was a valley where the morning mist had gathered giving such a softness to the view as it was intensely delightful to look at. I wish I could describe all this as it should be described. Here the snow was even then six or eight feet in depth in some places – and we entered a long line of snow sheds and tunnels, between twenty and thirty miles in length. This hid from us much fine scenery of course, but here and there when there would be an opening in the side of the shed we would catch just a glimpse of some deep sloping valley with the shadows of the dark pines thrown across the sparkling snow. We stopped for breakfast right here among the mountains where the snow lay, I suppose, eight feet in depth. Here as you may suppose it was

quite wintry and a warm shawl was a comfort. But we were on our way to a much warmer climate and on we sped till the snow disappeared except as we saw it on distant summits, as it could be seen from pretty much every point of our route through California. But now the air grew mild and we came to lovely hill sides and valleys beautifully green. Here was Cape Horn. I do wish I could give you an idea of the view we had. Fancy a tall almost perpendicular mountain – some fifty feet from the summit is a shelf encircling it round which the train sweeps. Down below us, almost straight down, rolls a view. Way before us stretches a long valley on either side of which rises a line of high hills, their sides clothed with the richest verdure. The guide book says that at this point – rounding Cape Horn – “Timid ladies shouldn’t” &c., but I enjoyed it too much to feel any fear whatever. Very soon now we found the wild flowers in profusion all along the way – and passed the scenes of mining operations – tracing the water courses caused along the sides of the mountains and from one mountain side to another in flumes – and a most beautiful country these miners have to live in. Beautiful bouquets of roses & all kinds of flowers were brought to the stations now as we passed and strawberries and oranges in abundance. The course lay through what seemed to me one lovely garden. Most beautiful effects – nature & landscape gardening – clumps of trees of various kinds and most charming little works and grassy glens where the flowers bloomed in endless number & variety. It was very warm by this time – by noon – so different from the morning among the snows. We reached Sacramento City about three. The hay and grain were being harvested here in the valley and the pears were formed on the trees and the flowers were lovely. We passed some beautiful gardens. It grew cool again towards evening – about ten when we reached San Francisco. The railroad does not run into the city. We crossed the bay on a ferry boat – but as soon as could be expected we found ourselves safe at the Russ house.

I have said nothing about any people we met on the train. Well there are no particular celebrities to be detailed upon – those we had most to say to were a lady & gentleman of San Francisco who came through from Chicago – fair samples of Americans with more money than they were born to. He, by his own story had been a California miner and now, I believe has a music store. He gave us his address & requested us to call at his store, having learned of our destination, and estimated that he would be happy to give me some songs for my use in our distant home. The lady was on her way home from a European tour bringing a few foreign airs with her – but was very kind and invited me to call upon her. However that could not be very well. Americans certainly are very friendly with each other and really seem to enjoy themselves anywhere. One young girl who came from Omaha to within a few miles of San Francisco kissed me good-bye though I had not even learned her name. I did not go out yesterday morning – but my dear Thomas went to one of the

M[ethodist].E[piscopal]. churches, and speaking to the minister after the service was pressed into work for the evening in a church whose minister was absent somewhere. The people showed quite a little sympathy with us – a number came to be introduced to me – and more took pains to speak to Mr. Crosby – one gentleman slipping a half eagle into his hand for his wife.

Today has been spent quietly. I have not been out except for a walk this afternoon. Tomorrow we intend going about the city more. The boat leaves Wednesday morning so we shall probably reach Victoria by Tuesday some time. So you see, Mother dear, by all this that a kind Providence has been with us so far and we have reason to thank God and take courage. I do hope that we may be always faithful to our work and successful in it. There will be a good deal for me to overcome, I know. My own feelings and prejudices may have to be sacrificed – but I believe the power I trust in is stronger than my own nature which has to be overcome. Pray for us – I know you will, both of you – that we may be useful and happy. May the Lord take care of you and us, and bless us abundantly. I have written to you, Mother at greater length than I shall be able to do to the girls. If you think it worth while you might send this letter to them to read – and to Georgie. Perhaps I have said more than I need have done but I wanted you to know what our journey had been like. I trust I shall find a letter from you in Victoria if not when we arrive there, soon after. I shall look so anxiously for letters and to know that everything is going on happily and well with you will be such a comfort to me. Remember, dear Mother, I am in the hands of God. He has given me a good kind husband in whom I know I may trust for all any human friend can give. I might not say this so plainly if you were to have the opportunity of seeing it for yourself, as you would if we were to be with you. And I believe so long as I am true to myself and my husband and to God and the work he has given me, my life must have a sufficient blessing resting upon it. My dear Thomas has written to you too – so you will have his view of things as well as mine. I sent a postal card to Georgie and one to each of the girls on Friday and shall try to write to them all again before we leave on Wednesday. Give my kindest love to Auntie and Sallie and Mr. H. also – and let me assure both you, dear Mother, and my father, that you both have the fondest love of

Your affectionate daughter,
Emma Crosby

Thomas Crosby had promised his in-laws he would write them about their departing daughter's welfare and, while in San Francisco awaiting the boat that would take them north to Victoria, penned his first separate letter to Eliza Douse.

It would be one of the few he wrote, in part certainly because he never really got to know her or his father-in-law as individuals.

San Francisco Cal.
May 18th 1874

My Dear Mrs. Douse

According to promise I take the first opportunity of writing a few lines to you.

We have had a most happy & prosperous journey so far and nothing to in any way to make us feel that darkness was in the way, indeed it has been all light. Of course we shall never forget the parting. I would not wish to forget those hours at Castleton, Coburg & most of all at Lefroy and yet how God sustained us amidst it all. And the kind counsel of dear Father the night he left the station did me so much good. And the very great kindness of dear Mr. & Mrs. [George] McKay to the last, was a great blessing indeed. All seem to cause thankfulness to the giver of all good for such friends at such a time and then at Hamilton the dear friends were so kind. And of course I felt it very trying to part with my dear Father and Mother but with them also the Good by passed off more happily than I expected indeed our Heavenly Father seemed to be ordering every step of our journey. And although it is hard to part yet we have done it all for Christ sake, and in it I believe we shall all be blessed and in leaving Ingersoll Frid. evening the time was mostly spent in thought & prayer and many a God bless them went up to heaven for our friends while doubtless they were praying for us. At Waukegan we had such a pleasant time all were so kind and it was such a pleasant place to stay over and rest before starting on such a journey. I need not tell you much about the journey (for Emma has promised to write it all) suffice to say upon the whole it was pleasant a little dusty and as I had a cold, my dear wife stood it better than I did for I never saw any body could sleep better and as a general thing she eat well for her and as you know she does not tell all she feels yet I think for the most part she has been happy. And I think she always will be. I have so much confidence in her judgment that I am sure she will be a great blessing to me. And this I can rejoice in that blessing the Wise Man speaks of as from the Lord. A good wife. We leave on Wed. for Vict. and I must close for perhaps I have said enough in this strain for the present. Will write you and if there is a dark side you shall have it. Love to Father & Aunty and all accept the same from

Your Affectionate
Son T. Crosby.

By the time Emma described her trip north from San Francisco to British Columbia to her younger brother Georgie, she was already looking ahead. She no sooner arrived than she was enveloped by the province's Methodist hierarchy. In 1867 the Toronto Conference, which had charge of the then British colony, dispatched west a longtime Ontario minister, Rev. Amos Russ, to take charge of the Pandora Street Church in Victoria. There was also, it should be noted, a second Amos Russ, a young Haida who had turned to Methodism in Victoria several years earlier, had been given the Methodist minister's name and taken under his wing. The Russes whom the newlyweds encountered near San Francisco were likely Rev. Russ's relatives.

When Rev. Russ was transferred to New Westminster in 1871, the Toronto Conference appointed William Pollard as his successor. Already a senior minister, Rev. Pollard had charge of the Pandora Street church for three years, whereupon he would move to its New Westminster counterpart for two more. Rev. Pollard had a personal interest in Fort Simpson, which grew out of his visit there in February 1874 at the invitation of local Tsimshian converts. It was this trip that led to the Methodist Church's decision to open a mission there under Thomas Crosby. Two of Rev. Pollard's children met the Crosbys on their arrival in Victoria. His unmarried daughter Annie taught Sunday school and held classes in English for Aboriginal and Chinese people in Victoria. The Pollards' daughter Jessie was about to give birth at the time of the Crosbys' arrival. Her husband, Rev. Joseph Hall, had come west from Coburg as a student minister in 1871. He first served in Barkerville and had just been posted to Nanaimo. Thomas Trounce, whom the Crosbys also met in Victoria, was a local architect celebrated for his "material service to the Church in this Province."⁴³

Chilliwhack May 29th 1874⁴⁴

My dear Georgie,

However it may appear to you all at home, to me it seems that the difficulty of finding time and opportunity to write is quite a trial. I have wanted so much to write to you all but so much going about have we had and so much visiting that it has been impossible to get as many letters off as I wished. Then another difficulty is that when I do sit down to write there is so much to be told that even one letter takes quite a time. I have thought so much about you all and hope and pray so earnestly that every blessing may be yours – I feel that we have been kept from so much possible evil that I cannot but be glad & thankful – our way has been so bright and happy all through. The long effusion I sent our mother may perhaps find its way to you – I have trusted to that for you all and written the girls scarcely a word of anything that occurred before we reached

San Fran. I cannot do better perhaps than begin there and give you a sketch of our experience since. There are not many wonderful things to be seen in San Fr. excepting what was there before the city was dreamed of – the bay bordered by hills – the sea beyond and the situation of [the] city which is built upon steep, steep hills are all very fine – we had a good view of it one morning and sat down in a quiet place on the top of an eminence (is that a correct expression?) and feasted upon the view and the fresh sea air. The gardens were radiant with the loveliest flowers – roses – fuchsias Egyptian lilies – ivy &c – all growing in the open air & in full bloom. We were nearly four days coming from San Fr. to Victoria – we had smooth weather mostly but were not either of us spared the delights of sea-sickness, nevertheless – for the first day we neither of us could sit up much but after a while we recovered and enjoyed the rest of the way very much – some of our fellow-passengers were very agreeable people – one gentleman – a young man from Brantford who was coming to Victoria to enter a bank we had a good deal of talk with. Sunday morning brought us to Victoria – which is really a beautifully situated place – we are in about seven – Miss [Annie] Pollard & her brother met us and soon we were established in the parsonage. I went to church twice and all attended the Indian school in the afternoon. These poor people not only in Victoria but all through where we have been seem so delighted to see their old friend the missionary back – it really does one good – and they take my hand & talk away in their own language – or in English if they can to give me also a welcome. We had only two days in Victoria but were out for tea both evenings & saw a good many people – Tuesday morning we left to come up the Fraser – it is really a beautiful river, with the low-lying fertile lands along its shores – and the mountains barren, wooded – snow capped – in endless variety rising beyond – then in some places the river lies just at the foot of great ranges of hills – it really is a grand country, this – the scenery is a delight to me – but then the society is rough, of course. Still there are some nice people and I think I could be happy if my home was here. We reached Sumas [in the Fraser Valley] Wednesday noon – having spent Tuesday night in New Westminster – and remained till yesterday at the Chilliwhack parsonage about a mile from the landing – We are now staying where Mr Crosby used to board – now while I write he is busy packing his books and other things to take with us. You will likely see Annie's letter so I need tell you none of my fresh attempts at riding. I came over here – two or three miles – by the same mode of travelling yesterday on such a slow old horse – my good husband won't trust me with a very spirited one – and under an umbrella – it was raining heavily. I should soon, I believe, be very fond of riding. We mean to leave again for Victoria Monday – unless, indeed, arrangements can be made to stay over a camp meeting that begins next week – everyone is crying out against our leaving before that – and for the sake of

the Indians who will be much disappointed I am really sorry we cannot remain. Now Georgie, as Annie will likely give you her letter to read – perhaps I need write no more. I feel rather tired this evening, though quite well. Thomas sends his kindest love to you. Let us hear from you soon dear. May your life be bright & useful.

With fondest affection, Believe me,
As ever yours,
Emma

By the time Emma got around to writing her mother from British Columbia, she had already had her first encounter with Aboriginal people.

Chilliwhack, June 8th 1874

My dear dear Mother,

Our wanderings have brought us to a camp meeting – it is to close this afternoon. I seize a few minutes now – writing on the bed at that as breakfast is going on – so as to send this by the boat this afternoon. We have been here since Wednesday tenting with Mrs. Evans a widow with whom Mr. Crosby used to board & we spent two or three days since we came up here. There has been a good deal of rain but the tent has been dry and comfortable and the meetings have been very good indeed. You know my good husband is a great camp meeting man. We did not mean to remain for it when we came but everyone was so urgent that we should stay & the Indians seemed so much in need of their old friend that Mr. Crosby felt he could not leave them without the opportunity which the camp meeting gave him of seeing a large number of them together. It does me good to see how fond these poor people all are of him and how much good he can do them, and to me they give a very warm welcome. I have been at their meetings mostly and go through their tents sometimes with Mr. Crosby. I do not attempt much Indian of course. How do you do?, and good-night are about all my stock – the latter is very difficult to say. They always laugh when Mr. C. will have me try it. When I want to speak to them in the meetings or anywhere else Thomas interprets for me. I have to shake hands with them all generally two or three times a day and when I come across a baby that looks a little cleaner than the rest I kiss it sometimes. There were four marriages among them yesterday. Four children were baptized Sunday before last and some more are to be today.

We were to have left for Fort Simpson last week only for our staying here. I hope, Mother dear, you have seen the letter I sent Susie as I cannot write as much

now as I did then. I have been trying to write to you for ever so long, but we have been scarcely two days together in the same place and it has been very difficult to write at all. We reached Victoria the 24th May. Stayed there two days then Tuesday morning left to come up the Fraser. Spent the first night in New Westminster then the next morning came on to Sumas & Chilliwack neighbouring settlements. I wish I could tell you all I want to about the last three weeks. Everyone has been extremely kind. All are so glad to see Thomas back and for his sake welcome me. I have really enjoyed myself very much. We have been going about from one place to another, of course, so I visit as many as possible. There are no carriages, you know, and only one buggy in the neighbourhood – no roads for them – so canoeing and riding on horseback are our only modes of conveyance. Canoeing I delight in, that is if the canoe is nice and clean and there is a good Indian mat made of rushes to sit on. My good husband always has a nice place fixed for me and it is just grand to be paddled down – or up – a stream with the rose bushes in full bloom all along the edge dipping in the water or the trees hanging over, for the water is everywhere very high. Some parts of the country are overflowed. Then the mountains – but O I must not begin about them. As to riding – my husband says I will soon be quite a jockey. I will write again & tell you more about these things. We mean to go to New Westminster Friday – likely shall spend Sunday there – then on to Victoria. I scarcely know when we go to Fort S., likely in a couple of weeks. I suppose my father is at conference now. Do write soon. Love to Auntie & Sallie. Much for yourself dear Mother and my father from,

Your affectionate
Emma

The length of time between Emma's letters home was irregular. It was another two and a half weeks before she again wrote home. By then she had gotten to know the Methodist hierarchy in Victoria and was anticipating her new home on the north coast.

Victoria, B.C.
June 25th 1874

My dear Mother,

It may be a good while before I have another chance of sending you a letter so I had better write today. Tomorrow morning, five A.M. the "Otter" is announced to leave for the North to have, all being well, the Fort S. missionary and his wife on board her. If she leaves so early we shall likely sleep on board ship. Then we

begin in earnest – but we are both hopeful and happy. I shall be the only lady passenger of course – it is chiefly miners on their way to the gold fields on the Stickeen river who go on this route – however, the Captain, I believe, is very agreeable – he is a H[udson's]. B[ay]. officer and we will likely be very comfortable.

We remained a few days after the camp meeting at Chilliwhack. We received so much kindness there, as indeed we have wherever we have been, that I really felt quite attached to both the place and the people. Over sixty dollars was collected and presented to Mr. Crosby before we left the camp meeting. Then there is a farmer there who says he promised that whenever Thomas married he would give Mrs. C. a cow, and declares his readiness now to send it to Fort S. any time or if we cannot keep one there to send butter instead. I got to be quite in love with riding. Did I tell you about a little horse Thomas has there, a fine spirited horse but quite gentle? I had one splendid ride on him. If there was any use for a horse and any way of keeping on[e] at Fort S. we would have this but I scarcely think there will be enough use for him to make it worth while. Thomas wants to take him up for me to ride if he can but I don't suppose I should have much time for that.

We spent a week at New Westminster on our way down the Fraser, making our home at the Parsonage with Mr. and Mrs. Russ. They were so very kind. Mrs. R. was as affectionate with me as a sister could be. Offered even to take care of us in case of illness if I would go to her and I know she would do it in a kind Christian spirit. We remained longer than we had intended there. Thomas was completely tired out and it was a good place to rest. I think I know pretty nearly all the Methodists of the place now – besides some others. One lady there had a large box of bottled fruit put up for us before we left.

We reached Victoria again Saturday afternoon last. As a little Hall had been added to the family at the Parsonage a week before, we could not stay there of course, so we are guests of a Mr. Trounce. The house is a very handsome one with a beautiful garden. The family are somewhat peculiar. There are no children – just four elderly people, two sisters and their husbands. They are painfully particular in their house keeping. Mrs. T. makes it a point to see that no soiled boots enter. Did you clean your boots? is an inquiry frequently addressed to visitors. She always says just what she thinks regardless alike of politeness and other people's feelings. "Get off that chair, no one is allowed to sit there but me" were almost the first words she addressed to Thomas after we came. Fortunately she does not mind one's laughing – it has been impossible for me to keep my gravity sometimes. Temperance is a hobby with her. Her husband I like very much indeed, they are all as kind as they can be to us. A lot of fruit – preserved – is being put up for us to take to our new home. So you see I shall have quite a lot of fruit to begin with. They say too that wild fruit is very plentiful there so I hope we shall get on nicely.

Miss Pollard and Mrs. Hall, too, the other day gave me for a wedding present, I suppose, a silver gravy ladle, a couple of knife rests and two napkin rings – all very pretty. We have been very busy this week, Thomas especially, arranging plans for the future, and buying furniture &c. It is mostly through now, though. We have all we need to make us comfortable and make the house pleasant except one or two things we may have to send down for again – wait till we get settled then I will, all being well, give you a full description. The freight we had such a time packing arrived last week, apparently in excellent condition, and will go on with us. I do not know yet how long it may be before we are in our own house. It may be we shall use one of the Company's till spring next if we can be comfortable – and the church be built first. Or if the house is put up first as I hope it will be, we shall likely stay in the meantime in a couple of rooms in the [Hudson's Bay] Fort. For a few days it is likely we will stay with the family of the H.B. officer in charge. We are taking up a few groceries with us – baking powder &c. Indeed as a grocer here wishes to present us with ten dollars we may take it all out in groceries. Almost everything, they say, we can get at the Fort.

So you see, Mother dear, that thus far our way has been blessed, and we have every reason to feel encouraged. I did not get your letters till Saturday. They had some of them been waiting some time. There was one from Annie too. It seemed so good to hear from you. I hope we shall have more today. There will likely be a mail in and perhaps we shall have no other for a month. Our address will be Fort Simpson. The mail is sent on from the office here. I suppose Papa is back from the Conference by this time. I am anxious to hear some news from it – and more anxious to know what your plans are for the coming year.

Love to Auntie and Sallie, I will write to both of them as soon as I can. And now, Mother, do not feel uneasy about me. I am taken good care of and have been well. It is wonderful to me how quiet and trustful I have been kept. "Not unto us" be the praise. Thomas would write again now but he really has so much to do it is impossible. He joins me in truest love to yourself and my father. Write often, dear Mother, and pray for,

Your affectionate daughter,
Emma

Through her letters Emma sought to assure her family that her decision to join the missionary ranks as a dutiful wife was more than just a romantic inclination. Her decision was pragmatic and part of a larger agenda: the civilizing and conversion of Aboriginal people. Thomas followed suit, echoing the sentiments of his wife to her parents and validating the important role she was playing in accompanying him west. The journey acquainted Emma with the

supporters of her husband's efforts, who adorned her with gifts that would help make a comfortable life for the couple. Given that Emma's first child was born two months premature, just before Christmas, she must have been pregnant by the time she arrived in British Columbia. While Emma would continue to report on her new acquaintances, a more dynamic set of relationships soon took precedence.