

I don't expect to ever forget the day I sat on the big cement block beside the steps leading into the New York City library feeding peanuts which I had purchased at a nearby Woolworths to a rapidly growing flock of pigeons. As the afternoon crowds surged passed on Fifth Avenue I wondered a bit if anyone would consider me queer but consoled myself with the thought that I should at least look normal in my newest suit and black accessories.

The day was hot; I later learned a record-breaker for so late in September. Although accustomed to a tropical climate, I was a trifle uncomfortable in the female impedimenta which constitutes civilized apparel and had sought a shady spot during the heat of the day. However, I was more contented by a warm glow within than concerned by the heat without because of the experience of peace and joy which had come that day in proving the Lord's promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee". Completely alone, a stranger in New York city on a day anticipated with apprehension for several months, instead of being lonely I was basking in a sense of oneness with the whole world.

I would have liked to have shared my feelings with some passer-by but the pigeons seemed more responsive to my mood and I found delight in the insignificant little creatures created and cared for by my Heavenly Father. Their bright eyes and animated coos welcome me a friend and reminded me of our flock of chickens which had provided real "hen parties" as a substitute for feminine companionship on our mission station now thousands of miles away.

While the pigeons pecked peanuts from my palm and waited for more I reflected on the events of the morning. At 11 am. the voice over

the loud speaker aboard the S.S. United States had declared that all visitors must go ashore. The time had come to leave my husband who ^{as} ~~was~~ ^{was} a passenger bound for Southhampton en route to Edinburgh ~~for~~ and a year of graduate study. We didn't know if our separation would last for six months or longer and ^{which made} saying good-bye and walking down the gang plank alone ~~was~~ a bit difficult.

Once ashore I ^{found standing among the crowds} took my ~~space~~ on the dock. Looking up to Chet on the deck I feared that the blasts from the giant funnels would break my heart or at least ~~my~~ attempted brave front. Fighting back tears ~~and~~ I thought of the day alone in the city waiting for the train back to Grand Rapids to get my two little boys, the long coach trip with them to Portland, Oregon to visit my mother, and ~~the~~ winter months with the boys in a climate strange to them, and the discipline and possible sickness without daddy's supporting hand.

As sailing time approached and ~~the~~ blasts seemed more insistent the urge was even greater to break down and weep like so many around were doing. Perhaps it was pride, but I didn't want to cry. There was no place to hide and people just don't go walking down the streets of big cities sobbing to themselves. The others had friends and probably cars waiting to take them and swallow them up in the stream of traffic while I would have to ask a police man which bus to take back to town.

Then as so often in ~~the~~ times of what might be considered petty ~~person~~ personal perplexity, I thought of ~~the~~ One who had promised never to leave me alone. Simply I cried unto the Lord and He heard me. Never has an answer to my prayers come so quickly. Immediately a calmness filled me, the tears didn't flow and the loneliness fled away. In ~~their~~ st

stead, I felt not only peaceful but truly happy.

From then on the day was ~~nothing but~~ ^{sheer} fun. As the ship sailed Chet's going was just the thing I most wanted at the moment. Here was a wonderful opportunity for him beyond our forgotten hope for any further education for him. The Lord had made the way and had given faith and strength to walk in it. How could I do anything but rejoice and be glad?

Getting around the city I had visited only briefly before proved a pleasant adventure. While eating alone, shopping and window shopping more, I was conscious of my unseen Companion and found the fellowship with Him sweeter perhaps because of the special need.

After my meditations with the pigeons there was time for a leisurely supper of favorite sea foods, and ~~even the~~ checking of my suitcase and finding the right elevator in Grand Central Station to take me to the right track for my train brought a sense of satisfaction. A nicely dressed lady took the seat next to me on the train and conversation revealed that she was a member of a church whose denomination we represent as missionaries. As she left the train about midnight in upstate New York she hurriedly pressed something into my hand. I found ^{soon saw} it was a ten dollar bill. I wasn't in any ^{How always really wasn't} great need ^{Real} but that ~~ten~~ ^{breathed} dollars meant a great deal at the moment. It ~~seemed~~ ^{seemed} a benediction to a blessed day and a further proof of His guiding presence.

I like to recall that particular September day. It was ^{for} to me ~~just~~ one more practical demonstration of what it means to be a Christian. We in Christian service ask people to accept Christ, His forgiveness,

His redemption, and ^{above} ~~and~~ Himself. The greatest blessing of the Christian life is not the knowledge of having escaped judgment, gained Heaven, nor become righteous but that we "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge and be filled with the fulness of God."