

Annie Armstrong – Daughter of Destiny

By Mrs. Ivyloy Bishop

(A play based on the life of Annie Walker Armstrong, from material gathered by Una Roberts Lawrence.)

CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

Mrs. Armstrong – *Mother of Annie*

Alice Armstrong – *Older sister of Annie*

Annie Armstrong

Thomas Bailey – *A 10-year-old orphan*

Stephen Garrett – *Missionary to China, in love with Annie Armstrong*

Miss Kelly – *Clerk in WMU office*

Mrs. Rex Myers – *Visitor in the office*

Mrs. Anna Schimp – *Friend of Miss Annie's who accompanied her to Oklahoma*

Narrator – *The names Thomas Bailey, Stephen Garrett, Miss Kelly, and Mrs. Rex Myers are fictitious.*

NOTES ON PRODUCTION

STAGE

The stage requirements are simple, the first two scenes representing a family sitting room, the last two an office. Furnishings are suggested but substitutions may be made as necessary.

If a regular stage with curtain is not available, use one section of any large room as a playing area. Use lights instead of curtain – turn out all lights at the end of each scene. If possible, use platforms to elevate “stage” portion. Folding screens may be used on either side of the “stage” and furniture and properties kept behind these.

LIGHTING

If a stage is available, use general lighting except for the end of Scene IV, when a spotlight only is used. (Use steel blue gelatin with spotlight).

If a stage is not available and a large room is used instead, use the lighting provided by the room, together with directed floodlights on the playing area. (Gallon cans with the ends removed will help direct the floodlights.)

If neither spotlight nor directed floodlight is available when a spotlight is called for, use a gooseneck lamp.

COSTUMES

Costumes are of the period ranging from 1870 to 1904. Consult public library for pictures and details.

If costumes cannot be made, rented, or borrowed, women may wear long black skirts and long-sleeved white blouses with high collars; the man may wear a dark suit (preferably with tightly fitted trousers) and a high collar; the boy may wear trousers cut off at the knee and a much-used white shirt.

MAKE-UP

Max Factor's Pancake make-up will be sufficient as a base – it is not necessary to use grease paint. Use rouge, lipstick, eyebrow pencil, etc., sparingly.

To age Miss Annie and Miss Alice Armstrong, powder may be applied to the temples. (Silver is preferable, although white may be used.)

NARRATOR

Use a man with a deep voice as narrator.

If a stage is used to present the play, the narrator should be backstage, and speak over a microphone.

If a stage is not used, the narrator should be behind one of the folding screens on either side of the playing area.

The narrator should not be seen in either case.

MUSIC

Use organ or piano background music at beginning and end and between scenes. Background music may be used also to heighten dramatic moments and to set moods.

NOTES TO DIRECTOR

At the top of your list for the first rehearsal, arrange for a brief reading of a missionary passage of the Bible, and individual prayers. Help each person participating – on stage and off stage – to visualize his part as a contribution to missions.

Please emphasize these points with your characters:

- 1) *SPEAK LOUDLY* – This is one of the greatest difficulties with church productions. (If you look at and speak to a person on the back row, your voice will reach to him. Someone on the back row to check sound is always a good idea.)
- 2) *LEARN YOUR LINES EARLY*, and then practice delivering them with *thought*. Do not rush through them “parrot fashion”. Certain portions of the script have a series of dots (. . .) to indicate brief pauses. As each

character learns and *thinks through* his lines, he will feel what is the best way to “pace them.”

SCENE I

The sitting room of the moderately well-to-do Armstrong home in Baltimore, Md., in 1870. On stage left is a writing table with magazine rack beside it, and an upright chair behind it. On stage right are grouped two occasional chairs and a footstool. A side table with a large gilt mirror over it is on the stage right wall, next to a doorway leading to the library. On the stage left wall is a tapestry, adjacent to a doorway to the vestibule.

Additional furnishings across the back of the room might include tapestries, vases, bookcases, etc.

As the scene opens, Mrs. Armstrong is seated at the writing table, writing a letter. She is a middle-aged lady, tall, dignified, wearing dark clothes in the fashion of 1870. After a few moments, Alice Armstrong enters from stage right, a young lady in her early 20's, attractive and fashionable. In one hand she carries a small bunch of artificial flowers. She pauses before the mirror on the stage right wall, and holds the flowers first to one shoulder, then to the other. Then she turns to her mother.

Alice: *(Still toying with flowers)* Mother . . .

Mrs. Armstrong: *(Busily writing)* Yes, Alice . . .

Alice: Do you like these flowers best here *(placing on one shoulder)* or here? *(placing on other)*

Mrs. Armstrong: *(Still writing)* Hmmmmmm . . .

Alice: Mother . . . please!

Mrs. Armstrong: *(Looking up)* Yes dear . . . I just need to finish this letter before post time. Now hold up the flowers again.

Alice: *(Holding up flowers first to one shoulder, then the other)* Here . . . or here . . .?

Mrs. Armstrong: *(Reflects a moment)* I think, Alice, that the dress is lovely enough without the flowers. Simplicity is always best . . . Save the flowers for some other day. *(Goes back to her letter)*

Alice: (*Sighing*) Very well . . . (*sits down wearily in chair near side table . . . watches mother writing for a moment*) From the way you're writing, Mrs. Graves must have called another prayer meeting.

Mrs. Armstrong: (*Smiles*) That's right . . . Two weeks from Tuesday.

Alice: (*Toying with flowers and thinking*) Those meetings . . . praying for missions . . . they mean a lot to you, don't they?

Mrs. Armstrong: (*Looking up*) Indeed they do. (*Pauses*) As I have grown older, I have come to see more clearly what has real meaning in life. And prayer does. The Master told us to pray without ceasing . . . and to pray that new laborers would be called into the field. (*Pauses again*) He will do his part if we will do ours.

Alice: (*Meditates briefly*) Yes . . . I suppose so. (*Pauses*) Where is Annie?

Mrs. Armstrong: (*Finishing letter and placing it in envelope*) In her room . . . reading.

Alice: She seems kind of different these days.

Mrs. Armstrong: What do you mean by "different"?

Alice: (*Thinks for a moment*) Remember she used to say "I could be a Presbyterian or perhaps an Episcopalian, but never a Baptist." I don't think she feels that way anymore. Brother Fuller's preaching seems to be changing her.

Mrs. Armstrong: Yes, I think it is . . . I don't know when the change will come – but that is in the Lord's hands.

Annie's voice is heard off stage: "Mother!"

Mrs. Armstrong: Yes, Annie . . . We're in here.

Annie Armstrong enters, a nice-looking young lady in her late teens, rather tall, with dark hair and eyes. She is simply but fashionably dressed, and carries a Bible, turning the pages slowly.

Annie: (*Crosses to empty chair between Alice and Mrs. Armstrong, standing behind it*) Where is that part in the Bible that Brother Fuller preached on yesterday morning . . . That part about "So send I you."?

Mrs. Armstrong: Look in the Gospel of John . . . The twentieth chapter . . . about the 21st verse.

Annie: (*Turns to verse*) “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, so send I you.” . . . Yes, that’s the one. (*Puts bible on back of chair – gazes up thoughtfully*) When you read it out loud that way, it makes it so personal . . . “So send I you.” . . . Mother, do you think that God has a plan for every life?

Mrs. Armstrong: I certainly do, dear.

Annie: Well, it seems to me that the first thing to do is accept him as Savior, and then follow him . . . But he didn’t expect all of us to be missionaries, did he?

Mrs. Armstrong: I believe he did, Annie.

Alice: (*Surprised*) You mean we ought everyone to go to Africa or China or somewhere?

Mrs. Armstrong: Not at all – those places are important, but missions begins right were we are. America must belong to the King – if we are to have a base broad enough to bring the whole world of Christ.

Annie: (*Comes around chair and sits down, speaking almost to herself*) America must belong to the King . . . if we are to have a base broad enough to bring the world to Christ. (*Turns to her mother*) Mother, I don’t exactly understand it, but it seems that something has been going on in my heart . . . When Brother Fuller preaches of God in his majesty . . . of holiness . . . love . . . redemption . . . missions . . . lately it seems like he is talking right to me . . . I think about the things that need to be done for the Master . . . I wonder what I might do . . . and Alice (*turns to her sister*), I think about you, and your talent for writing, and what you could do for Him.

Alice: You mean – be a missionary?

Annie: I mean do whatever He wants you to do – whether it’s here or some place else. (*Pauses*) But there are so many questions in my mind – maybe I’m getting the cart before the horse. First, I need to come to the place where I can give myself to him completely . . . and then he will give me my marching orders . . . (*Looks into the distance*) Somehow I feel that he has a special work that he wants me to do.

CURTAIN

SCENE II

Setting is the same as SCENE I, with slight variations. Time is eight years later.

As the scene opens, Alice Armstrong enters stage left, carrying a sheaf of papers. She sits down at the writing table and begins to arrange them. Mrs. Armstrong enters from stage right and looks around.

Mrs. Armstrong: Still at work, I see . . . (*Continues to look around*) Did I leave my new recipe book in here?

Miss Alice: I haven't seen it, Mother . . . but don't worry – Annie has enough recipes here to last all of us for some time!

Mrs. Armstrong: Recipes?

Miss Alice: (*Holding one up*) Indeed, yes! They're to go in the notebooks she keeps for the Mother's Clubs . . . Have you noticed her desk lately? She's made notebooks on recipes, domestic science, devotionals, Juvenile talks, poems, and even medical missions! Every group she works with – the orphans – the old folks – the Willing Workers – each one has a notebook.

Mrs. Armstrong: What sort of thing does she put in her notebooks for the Mother's Clubs?

Miss Alice: Almost everything. Health . . . Temperance . . . First Aid . . . 1,000 uses for adhesive plaster tape . . . (*Hold up piece of paper*). This is mixed in with her recipes: "Cultivate efficiency – remember your head can save your heels." . . . And here's another, "Not money – but gumption – wins – in housekeeping."

Mrs. Armstrong: And from that point she probably talks about gumption in religion – and the plan of salvation.

Miss Alice: (*Smiles*) I know she does (*stops and thinks*) . . . Can you realize what a change these years have brought? Remember the day we were sitting in this very room, and Annie said she felt God had a special task for her?

Mrs. Armstrong: (*Reminiscing*) I do, indeed . . . And I remember also the next Sunday when Annie gave her heart to the Lord, and her hand to Brother Fuller. (*Pauses*) Very good indeed.

Miss Alice: (*Hesitates – then speaks*) Mother . . . (*Hesitates again*) Isn't this the day Stephen Garrett is supposed to call on Annie again?

Mrs. Armstrong: I believe so. (*Thinks a moment*) He has been very faithful these last few months, hasn't he?

Miss Alice: That's what I've been noticing. Do you think Annie cares for him?

Mrs. Armstrong: Cares for him? . . . yes . . . a great deal, I would say. But as to whether or not she will marry him – I do not know. He is going back to China, and she seems to feel that her task is here.

Miss Alice: He certainly is attractive.

Mrs. Armstrong: Indeed he is. (*Peers toward doorway on stage right*) Is Annie back from the market yet?

Miss Alice: She should be here any minute.

Mrs. Armstrong: Which one of the orphan boys did she take with her today?

Miss Alice: (*Smiling*) Whoever won the weekly contest! His reward is to get to go shopping with "Miss Annie." He carries her basket – and after she does her shopping, they buy candy for the Saturday afternoon treat at the home. (*Listens a moment*) I think they're coming now.

"Mrs. Annie" and 10-year-old boy (clean, but poorly clad) enter from stage left . . . the boy carries a basket well stocked with groceries . . . general greetings . . . they cross behind Miss Alice to stand in center stage, between Miss Alice and Mrs. Armstrong.

Mrs. Armstrong: Now, let's see, young man – your name is . . . ?

Miss Annie: This is Thomas Bailey, Mother . . . Thomas, this is my mother, Mrs. Armstrong – and my sister, Miss Armstrong.

Thomas: (*Running his words together*) How-do-you-do!

Mrs. Armstrong: Fine, thank you! (*Looks at basket he is carrying*) What all did you buy, Thomas?

Thomas: Candy!

Mrs. Armstrong: Candy! Is that all?

Thomas: Oh, no ma'am . . . but that's the important part!

Laughter

Mrs. Armstrong: Come on with me into the kitchen . . . We might even find an extra piece of chocolate cake somewhere.

Thomas: (*Eagerly*) Yes, ma'am!

Mrs. Armstrong *and* Thomas *exeunt stage right*.

Miss Annie *sinks wearily into the chair on stage right*.

Miss Annie: Oh my, I'm tired! And this is Saturday, too!

Miss Alice: (*Looks at her – then speaks*) You are remembering that Mr. Garrett will be here in a few moment?

Miss Annie: (*Rests her head in her hands, then looks up*) Yes – I'm remembering. (*Pauses*) Alice, what would you do if . . . (*voice trails off*)

Miss Alice: If what?

Miss Annie: If – oh, I don't know . . . (*Gets up and begins to move around*) Each person must solve his own problems. . . Its is not that I'm trying to evade my responsibility . . . It is just that sometimes it is so hard to know what is best for the Master's work.

Knock is heard in the distance.

Miss Alice: That must be Mr. Garrett now . . . Do you want to see him in here?

Miss Annie *nods*.

Miss Alice: I'll show him in then. (*Reaches out, and pats Annie's arm, then exeunt stage left*)

In a few moments, Mr. Garrett appears in the doorway. He is a tall, attractive man of about 35, well dressed in the fashion of the day.

Mr. Garrett: (*Speaking from doorway*) Miss Alice told me I might find you here.

Miss Annie: Come in, Stephen! It is nice to see you today. Do be seated. (*Motions to chair*)

Mr. Garrett: Thank you. (*Both are seated*)

Miss Annie: These are busy days for you, aren't they?

Mr. Garrett: (*Smiles wearily*) Far too busy, Annie . . . Too much for one man to do and yet I feel I cannot do less. The people seem to be so interested in our work in China – and there is no one else in this part of the country to talk about it just now. I find myself wishing I could go twice as many places!

Miss Annie: I think I know how you feel, Stephen . . . One of my strongest convictions is that our people will respond if the need is presented . . . And no one can paint the needs of China like someone who has been there. But then you have a while yet before your furlough is up. Do not work yourself too hard.

Mr. Garrett: (*Smiles*) I should give you the Chinese version of that proverb about “practice what you preach.” (*Turns serious*) But I needed to see you, Annie, as soon as I could. I do not have as long in America as you think. I have to go back sooner than we expected.

Miss Annie: How soon, Stephen?

Mr. Garrett: Too soon . . . Much too soon. (*Pauses*) this will be my last visit to Baltimore.

Miss Annie gets up and walks slightly downstage right. He watches her for a moment, then stands up also.

Mr. Garrett: Annie . . . Annie . . .

Miss Annie: Yes, Stephen, I know . . . And so I must make my decision. I can't put it off any longer.

Mr. Garrett: Is it that hard, Annie? When you know how much I care for you?

They look at each other

Mr. Garrett: Perhaps I should not have said that . . . I've always told you that it must be your decision . . . Yet it is hard not to say what I feel.

Miss. Annie: Stephen – who called you to the mission field?

Mr. Garrett: Why, the Lord, of course.

Miss Annie: And your background – your abilities – these have all worked together to make your service significant, have they not?

Mr. Garrett: (*Hesitates*) Yes . . . but I don't see . . .

Miss Annie: I just want you to understand Stephen, what I feel led to say . . . (*Takes his hand*) My dear . . . you will try, will you not?

Mr. Garrett: (*Hesitates*) Yes.

Miss Annie: (*Speaks very gently*) I have thought about us, and more important – I have prayed many, many times . . . I have asked the Lord to show me . . . in

one way or another . . . where I can serve him best. And this is the feeling that has come: you know of my difficulty with Chinese dialects . . . somehow I cannot grasp the necessary tones – and the tones are basic. I could never be an adequate missionary in China – let alone a good one – and what I cannot do well for the Lord, I should not do.

Mr. Garrett: Is this your decision, then?

Miss Annie: Not mine, Stephen. I feel it is the Lord's. It is here he has placed me. All this work of mine – with the orphans, the aged, the mothers' clubs – is a part of a plan . . . I believe it will lead into one great movement – a missionary organization for the homeland – and I shall have a part in it. God has given me a mission here, even as he has given you one over there. For each of us the aim is service . . . and it seems the law is sacrifice.

Mr. Garrett: *(Raises her hand to his lips, kisses it, then speaks quietly)* There is much I could say Annie, but I told you I would not . . . The aim is service . . . the law is sacrifice . . . and the strength shall be fellowship with God. *(Pauses)* I shall pray for you . . . and I know that you will for me . . . Goodbye my dear . . .

Miss Annie: *(Softly)* God bless you, Stephen.

(He turns and walks quickly away, exiting stage left. For a moment Miss Annie looks after him, then sinks into the chair near center stage . . . she holds her head in her hands, then slips to the floor on her knees, and begins to pray silently.)

CURTIAN

SCENE III

Woman's Missionary Union office in Baltimore in 1890. On stage right is a desk with a chair behind it, and a chair beside it. Behind it, on the back wall, hangs a map of the United States in 1890. Next to the map, almost up in the upstage right corner, is a file. On stage left – slightly upstage – is a table with printed material on it and a chair beside it. Behind the table, against the back wall, is a bookcase. Left downstage is an entrance into the hall, with a hat rack beside the door.

As the scene opens, Miss Kelly, the office clerk, is seated at the desk, working with some papers and letters. She is an attractive young woman, simply dressed, quiet but friendly in manner. After a few moments a knock is heard in the doorway, and Miss Kelly looks up to see a visitor – Mrs. Rex Myers.

Miss Kelly: *(Rising)* Good morning! Won't you come in?

Mrs. Myers: Thank you so much. (*Enters room rather hesitantly*)

Miss Kelly: Have a seat, please. (*Motions to chair beside desk*) My name is Miss Kelly. I'm the office clerk for Woman's Missionary Union.

Mrs. Myers: I'm Mrs. Rex Myers from South Carolina – Columbia to be exact. My husband is here on business, and I wanted very much to visit the office. (*Hesitates*) I do hope I am not intruding.

Miss Kelly: (*Quickly*) Not at all! We're glad you came. Are you familiar with the work of Woman's Missionary Union?

Mrs. Myers: Oh, yes! Or I should say, I've been hearing about it, and I am anxious to learn more. The Union hasn't been organized very long, has it?

Miss Kelly: Jus about two years, on a Southwide basis. Our Corresponding Secretary is Miss Annie Armstrong. Do you know her?

Mrs. Myers: Only by name. I remember reading that she was a leader in helping with the organization. It must have been a wonderful meeting.

Miss Kelly: (*Rising and walking around*) They say it was. There were about 32 delegates there – and ten states voting. It was in Richmond, you know. They didn't know just what to do, and Miss Armstrong started talking. She told them to leave off fear, and to act!

Mrs. Myers: Weren't there some who wanted to wait a while?

Miss Kelly: (*Smiling*) There always are. But Miss Armstrong emphasized how putting the decision off for another day would leave too little time for the work which must be done. She had quite a bit to say – and her words carried the day.

Mrs. Myers: (*Sighing*) How wonderful to be used of the Lord in such a manner! (*Thinks a moment, then looks around the office*) Just think of all the plans that come out of this office . . . Doesn't Miss Alice Armstrong work here too?

Miss Kelly: Yes, ma'am, she often comes down with an article she has written and she helps in many ways.

Mrs. Myers: (*Looks down at desk*) Hmm . . . Isn't that a stamp from China? It looks like the one in our collection.

Miss Kelly: It surely is. (*Picks up the letter*) It's a letter from Miss Lottie Moon.

Mrs. Myers: (*Excitedly*) Oh, it must be about the Christmas offering! I read that it was over \$3,300! Think how much that must have meant to China!

Miss Kelly: (*Nods*) And to Miss Moon personally. You know it was she who wrote and suggested a Christmas offering for foreign missions – and Miss Armstrong promoted it – just like she’s been promoting the mission work here in America. Indians . . . Immigrants . . . She has plans for all of them.

Mrs. Myers: (*Motions to map on wall*) This is a big country of ours and there is so much to be done.

Miss Kelly: If Miss Armstrong were here, she could tell you what is being done already – and what the dreams are for the future. (*Pauses*) She should be back any moment. She just stepped out a bit ago. (*Pauses*) I have been here only a few weeks, but I know her plans on some things. (*Motions to map*) See that Indian Territory over there? That’s where one of our greatest need is.

Miss Annie has returned, and stands unobserved in the doorway, listening to the last sentence.

Miss Annie: (*Entering*) You sound like a missionary already, Miss Kelly.

Miss Kelly: (*Jumps to her feet*) Oh, Miss Armstrong! I didn’t see you come in! This is Mrs. Myers from South Carolina – she’s visiting here in the city. (*Mrs. Myers stands*) Mrs. Myers, Miss Armstrong.

Both acknowledge introduction.

Miss Annie: Do keep your seat, Mrs. Myers. It was good of you to come and see us. (*All three sit down, Miss Annie pulling up chair from stage left table.*) I presume Miss Kelly has told you of our work?

Mrs. Myers: I’ve been very interested. And very impressed too, I might add. (*Admiringly*) Miss Armstrong, you seem to have an unusual grasp of the mission opportunities we have here at home.

Miss Annie: As I see it, home missions has four strategic areas. First, the cities – the national heart, so to speak. Then our foreign population – thousands of new people are coming to our shores these days. Why, we have one Norwegian for every three in Norway – one Swede for every five in Sweden; on Dane for every eight in Denmark – and so forth. (*Pauses*) Then, third, there is the frontier of our country - some of it almost like a foreign land . . . and last, our outposts. Why, in Puerto Rico alone, more than a million people await the gospel!

Mrs. Myers: Oh, my! I had no idea Home Missions was as big as all that!

Miss Annie: (*Smiles*) Neither did I . . . at one time. But the Lord led me a step at a time . . . one picture at a time . . . until I came to see the whole panorama of America and her needs. Not that we are blind to foreign missions – but America

must belong to the Master first, if we are to have a broad enough base to bring the whole world to Christ.

Mrs. Myers: (*Nodding*) And “Go you therefore” began in Jerusalem, didn’t it? I heard a missionary say that several years ago – his name was Garrett – Stephen Garrett. He talked about how mission work began at home, and the spread to the uttermost parts of the earth. I believe his field was China – but he seemed to have a strong feeling for the work here also . . . Did you ever happen to meet Brother Garrett?

Miss Annie: (*Quietly*) Yes – I have met him.

Mrs. Myers: Well, that’s nice. (*Pauses . . . Picks up purse in her lap*) This has been a nice occasion, too, but I must be going.

They all stand.

Mrs. Myers: You don’t know how much it has meant to me to visit our headquarters here . . . and to meet you personally, Miss Armstrong. (*Turns to Miss Kelly*) Thank you also for giving me so much of your time. You have been very gracious.

Miss Annie: You must come again when you are in Baltimore. Here – let Miss Kelly give you some of our literature.

Miss Kelly crosses and picks some up from the table on stage left, and hands to Mrs. Myers. General good-bys. Mrs. Myers exeunt stage left. Miss Annie goes over to desk and begins absentmindedly to look through the letters. Miss Kelly starts to rearrange printed material on small table . . . after a moment she looks at Miss Armstrong and notices her preoccupation.

Miss Kelly: (*Anxiously*) Is everything all right, Miss Armstrong?

Miss Annie: (*Looking out into distance . . . speaks slowly*) All right? Yes . . . it is all . . . all right. I was thinking of *our* Jerusalem . . . the homeland . . . and then of the uttermost part of the earth – China, perhaps . . . and how these two are really . . . only a prayer apart . . . And will be – in all the years to come.

CURTAIN

SCENE IV

WMU office in Baltimore in 1904. The furniture now includes desk downstage center, with papers and a baby picture on it, and a chair behind it; small working tables are off to each side. The file is still in upstage right, and the bookcase upstage left. The 1890 map of the United States has been taken down from the back wall, and in its place is a small colorful Indian rug. The hat rack still stands beside the doorway.

On the working table on stage right is draped an Indian costume. As the scene opens, Miss Annie is working at the desk, and Miss Alice come in stage left, and begins to take off her hat and gloves, standing beside the hat rack.

Miss Alice: I knew I would find you down here . . . even on a holiday! Have you eaten?

Miss Annie: I brought a sandwich. (*Pauses*) Did you bring the new leaflet?

Miss Alice: (*Nods*) Ready for the printer. (*Sees costume on table and motions to it*) You've had company, I see.

Miss Annie: Oh, yes – forgot it was there. Mrs. Schimp came by and brought me one of her costumes. I thought we might use it for the missionary program on the Indians.

Miss Alice: (*Crossing behind Miss Annie to examine costume*) Is this one she brought back from the trip?

Miss Annie: (*Nodding*) I asked her to bring it by today. She will be back to see whether or not we want to use it.

Miss Alice: It will do nicely. (*Shakes her head wonderingly*) The Indian Territory is quite a place, isn't it?

Miss Annie: I'll never forget it – This vast, limitless spaces . . . the rocky roads . . . the jolting wagons . . . Hours sitting in meetings in Indian camps . . . Dark-skinned faces . . . Inscrutable eyes . . . (*Pauses*) And the Indian man who told me he could understand the Jesus Way – if I would just tell it to him.

Miss Alice: You haven't been the same since you made those trips. Mrs. Schimp hasn't, either.

Miss Annie: No one could see what we saw – and remain untouched.

Miss Alice: Mexico made an impression on you, too, didn't it?

Miss Annie: Yes, but in a different way . . . So beautiful – so empty . . . And some of the Americans who live there! (*Shakes her head.*) But let's not get into that! (*Holds up picture on desk*) Have you seen my new picture of little Willis Green?

Miss Alice comes over to examine picture.

Miss Annie: I do love these children! I think our Babies Branch is one of my favorite projects. Children are . . . so refreshing.

Mrs. Schimp has come in the door – a middle-aged lady dressed in quiet good taste. She overhears the last remark.

Mrs. Schimp: Refreshing? That depends on whose children!

General laughter

Miss Annie: Come in, come in! I was just remarking to Alice that you were coming by.

Mrs. Schimp: (*Coming into the room*) I wish I had time to! (*Sees costume on table*) Have you looked at the costume?

Miss Annie: Yes, and it is just what we need for the program, thank you.

Mrs. Schimp: Do you want the file I made on the Indian games – the fox and rabbit, and all those?

Miss Annie: I have those in my notebook. (*Smiles*) Perhaps you would care to come demonstrate them?

Mrs. Schimp: (*Laughing*) Thank you – some other time! I must get to my shopping. Come to see me whenever you can spare the time.

Miss Annie and Miss Alice: Thank you.

General good-bys

Mrs. Schimp exeunt stage left.

Miss Alice: She is an amazing lady!

Miss Annie: Did you know she wants to invest \$3,500 of her savings in some type of religious work? I am thinking of suggesting she give it to the Home Mission Board as a Loan Fund for building churches . . . There are 100 churches in the Indian territory with buildings . . . but there are 200 without! And of course

that is only one area. There is also the mountain work, and then the immigrants, to mention only two others.

Miss Alice: Won't some of these be helped by the Offering of Self-Denial?

Miss Annie: (*Gets up and begins to move around*) Yes, they will. The Home Mission Board has done very well . . . I did not realize when I suggested the offering that it would come to be an annual offering for Home Missions, as the Christmas Offering has been used for Foreign Missions – but I am well pleased with the way the Lord has worked it out. (*Pauses*) By the way – speaking of how the Lord works things out (*Picks up letter from desk*), look at this letter that shows how God can use boxes for the frontier. (*Sits down*)

Miss Alice: (*Takes letter and reads*) “Dear Miss Armstrong: “I feel that I can write freely to you, because you have been instrumental in relieving our necessities and lightening the burdens of one of God’s ministers, thereby enabling him to go forth and carry the glad tidings of salvation. My husband has been a minister 32 years. His whole desire is to go to the entirely destitute, to those places where the Gospel has never been preached. When I received my first box, four years ago, I could hardly realize the contents were for us – clothing, table linen I had been deprived of for years, a nice suit for my husband, a suit for my little boy – he had never had one – dresses for my two girls, and a woolen dress for myself. My sister in Christ, you are as surely preaching the Gospel of Christ as those poor ministers whom you help, for your aid enables them to go. I know your reward will be great, and although we may never meet on earth, yet I know we shall meet in heaven. Pray for us. Your sister in Christ.” (*After reading letter, repeats*) . . . “Your are surely preaching the Gospel” . . . That’s the essence of missions, isn’t it?

Miss Annie: The very heart of it. (*Gets up again – moves about*) Just think of the work Marie Buhlmaier is doing at the port here in Baltimore. They come – people – without any knowledge whatever of our language, and many of them are led astray. But our missionary is right there at the landing. She talks to them, and in their own language. She hands them a copy of the New Testament in their mother tongue, and tells them where Baptist churches are located . . . (*Holds out her hands*) Oh, Alice! How privileged we are to have a part in God’s great enterprise – missions! Jesus said “Come” . . . and he also said “Go” . . . and it is the task of all to obey his command! I feel that you and I have had a part in something that will one day loom very large in the Master’s world plan – missions in America.

Miss Alice: (*Gently*) “They fail – and they alone – who have not striven.” And so we know we have not failed. (*Stands up and goes to get her hat.*) I have one stop to make downtown. Will you be home shortly?

Miss Annie: In a little while . . . Now I want to dream a moment of days yet to dawn, and pathways that lead to the stars. I want to think about the day when America will belong to Christ . . . and lead other nations to the Word and the Way.

Miss Alice: (*As she leaves*) You always were a dreamer, Annie . . . A dreamer in action.

Exeunt stage left.

Miss Annie sits at desk, raises her head, and looks off into the distance.

Music: (Organ or piano) Begins very softly "I Gave My Life"

Spotlight on Miss Annie seated at desk . . . then take out all other lights.

After one stanza of hymn, music fades under Narrator and continues softly.

Narrator: Anne Walker Armstrong . . . first corresponding secretary of Woman's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to Southern Baptist Convention . . . She brought to culmination plans to organize the Union in 1888. A woman of moderate means, she gave 18 years of unsalaried service to this work she loved . . . She was the author of much leaflet literature for our Home and Foreign Mission Boards as well as for Woman's Missionary Union . . . She began mission work among migrants . . . Led out in support of mountain mission schools . . . Secured gifts for the erecting of church buildings in frontier areas. She introduced the offering for Foreign Missions . . . Home Missions . . . and in 1934, her name was given to the Home Mission Offering. Year after tireless year, she brought to the Union her stirring messages of triumph and challenge . . .

Miss Annie: (*Stands behind desk in spotlight*) Go forward! After these years of thought-sowing, God has permitted us to behold lovely budding plants . . . But these are only prophecies of what shall be! Let us not be weary in well doing, but rather let us accept each new day as a new opportunity!

Spotlight dims briefly to denote passing of time . . . then up. (Music continues).

Miss Annie: Woman's Missionary Union has sought to put into practice those same great principles which characterized Nehemiah's work – division of labor, co-operation, and concentration . . . Let us go forward – "for God – for home – for every land!"

Spotlight dims briefly to denote passing of time . . . then up. (Music continues)

Miss Annie: I have found, friends, that if we will advance in faith, the stone will be rolled away . . . And that which we accomplish for the glory of God shall be as steadfast as the stars. Let us then – go forward!

Miss Annie continues to stand in spotlight. Music continues (under narration)

Narrator: “Go ye therefore,” the Master said. “Through faith, she followed . . . Through vision, she saw the victory . . . Through consecration, she conquered” . . .
 . “Annie Walker Armstrong – Daughter of Destiny.

CURTAIN