

"Moment by Moment"

The Story of Its Composer, May Whittle Moody

By G. P. GARDINER

"WRITE some music for this poem. I think it will be a good hymn," said Major D. W. Whittle to his daughter, May, as he handed her the words for the now famous song, "Moment by Moment."

For May, now a young woman of twenty-three, this was a challenge, and a challenge was something she could never refuse. For twenty years her beloved father had been engaged in evangelistic work throughout the United States and the British Isles. As his song leaders, he had been most fortunate to have P. P. Bliss, for the first three and a half years, and then James McGranahan and George C. Stebbins — all of them excellent composers. For years, Major Whittle had written gospel songs, the music for which had been composed mostly by McGranahan, with an occasional tune by Ira D. Sankey or some other musician. This time, however, the evangelist turned to his beloved daughter. After all, she had received a year's training in music at Oberlin College (1888-89), followed by a year's study at the Royal Academy of Music in London (1890-91). Since then, she had been assisting both in the services for her father's great friend, D. L. Moody, and in his own campaigns in Great Britain. Consequently, it was natural that he should now turn to his gifted daughter for the music for his latest poem.



First of all, May committed the hymn to memory, the first verse of which is:

*Dying with Jesus, by death
reckoned mine;*

*Living with Jesus, a new life
divine;*

*Looking to Jesus till glory doth
shine,*

*Moment by moment. O Lord, I am
thine.*

Then she repeated it over and over. As she quoted the excellent second verse, now never printed, it could have suggested to her, at least subconsciously, her father's heroic service in the Union forces during the Civil War:

*Never a battle with wrong for the
right;
Never a contest that He doth not
fight;
Lifting above us His banner so
white,
Moment by moment, I'm kept in
His sight.*

"As you repeat the thing over and over, you come to some rhythm," commented the composer, "and the melody comes that way. And when you emphasize certain words of the hymn, you want a note that will correspond in emphasis." As the melody came to her, she tried it out on the parlor Estey organ. After a week or two, the composition was completed, and it was ready to go out into the world.

It was the first hymn which May wrote. Later, she was to write the music for twenty-five more. Some of these tunes, accomplished musicians have felt, were better compositions from a musical standpoint, but, as she said, the music for "Moment by Moment" has been "used the most," and it is upon this that her claim to world-wide fame and blessing primarily rests.

Ira D. Sankey, Moody's song leader and the editor of numerous hymnals, lived directly across the street from the Whittles. ("Sankey would get a melody and would try to put the harmony to it," but "he hadn't studied harmony" and knew his neighbor [May] had, so he would sometimes ask her "to harmonize for him.") When "Moment by

Moment" was completed, the Major offered to give Sankey the copyright to it in return for "500 copies on fine paper." Recognizing its worth — both as to message and music, Sankey quickly accepted the offer and had it copyrighted on the same day in both the United States and England (1893). Sankey printed it first in *The Christian Choir* (subsequently incorporated in his great compilation, *Sacred Songs and Solos*, still in print and used in England).

Immediately, "Moment by Moment" became popular. Andrew Murray, of South Africa, prolific author and great conference speaker, heard it on a visit to England early in 1895. He felt it was the perfect statement, complete and concise, of his belief and message. In nearly every meeting, he had his wife sing it — meetings attended by not less than four hundred ministers, among these the great spiritual leaders of England. Then Andrew Murray crossed the Atlantic, at D. L. Moody's request, and ministered at his Northfield Conference and at other conventions in Chicago, Boston, and Toronto. "During these Conventions," states Andrew Murray's biographer, William Douglas. "Mr. Murray was never weary of calling for the hymn beginning: 'Dying with Jesus by death reckoned mine.'"

With such aids and impetus, it is no wonder that "Moment by Moment" speedily winged its way the world over.

Ere long, Hudson Taylor, of China Inland Mission fame, "found" this song. He was in Sweden holding some meetings attended by an officer of the King "who was struggling against the bonds of a terrible temper. He had not accepted Christ, declaring his temper to be ungovernable, and that he would dishonor any profession he made.

"Mr. Taylor," he said, 'will you answer my questions after this meeting?'

"Mr. Taylor consented to the interview. During the meeting, copies of 'Moment by Moment' were distributed among the people and

sung entire, and the gentleman was seen to be studying it intently. After the closing prayer, he told Mr. Taylor that all his questions were answered and his doubts settled, and he knew that he should be kept 'moment by moment.'

Mary (or May, as she was called in early life) Whittle Moody was born in Chicago, Illinois, March 20, 1870, the second child of Major D. W. and Abbie Hanson Whittle. Mother Whittle was an independent, determined, rather spunky woman of Norwegian descent, while Father Whittle was a charming New England gentleman of commanding presence. These qualities were blended in balanced proportions in their daughter.

The year before May's birth, Major Whittle had accepted a position with the Elgin National Watch Co., and by his industry was quickly rising to the top. Not long after May's birth, the family was able to move from their home on Chicago's west side to a lovely house, which her father built, in Buena Park, then a fine residential suburb on Chicago's fashionable north side. Although an active and prosperous businessman, Major Whittle devoted all his spare time to Christian service, much of it connected with what he called "that bundle of electricity, steam, and dynamite combined — D. L. Moody."

Whittle and Moody had become fast friends at their first meeting when the former was on furlough in 1863 "with a wound received at Vicksburg." From then on, Moody "followed" Whittle very closely. In fact, so close was the association that May testified "she could not recall any time in her life when she did not know D. L. Moody."

"When I was a child, my mother took me to one of his big meetings. When it was over, I slipped through the crowds and reached him where he stood on the platform. I must have been very young for I threw my arms around his knees; I took for granted he would be glad to see me, and I can remember to this day the warmth of the expression on his

face as he looked down on me."

Just six days after May's fourth birthday, an event took place in her father's life which was to influence the course of her own life profoundly. D. W. Whittle decided to leave his prosperous business career and enter full-time evangelistic work. For some time, Moody had been urging him to take this step, and then, as the result of the marked success of his first three-day campaign, he knew he must "preach the gospel." When he announced his plans to the Elgin Company, he was offered a salary double to that he was receiving if only he would remain with them. Instead, they had to be content with giving him a gold watch as the token of their esteem.

This decision held certain unpleasant aspects for the family, as it included a greatly curtailed income and prolonged periods of separation. Already, however, there was a very strong bond of affection between warm, affectionate father and his loving daughter, and this grew stronger with each passing year, in spite of his long absences from home. Perhaps these times even served to strengthen their ties, for little May's thoughts were continually directed towards him, and eagerly she looked for his letters and his return to the hearth. Certain it was that she loved her father with unusual devotion and that he reciprocated in like manner.

When May was nine years old (1879), still another event occurred which was to affect her whole after-life deeply. "I heard Mr. Moody telling my father all about the girls' school that he had just started at Northfield," she later recalled, "and I said to myself, 'I shall go to that school, a thousand miles away.'" But she would have to wait six long years before she could go, since the school did not accept girls before they were fifteen. Never once, however, did she waver in her determination to go to Northfield. Of course, her father was greatly pleased with her desire.

Meanwhile, other important events were to take place in her young life. As yet, she was unconverted, though the soil of her heart was prepared for that event. "The greatest thing my parents did for me was to remind me constantly that Jesus loved me, and that I could please Him by doing right, and I could hurt Him by doing wrong. Little children can be taught so they really can make a decision when they are very young."

That time came for May when she was eleven. Then it was that "she gave her heart to Jesus," and, from that day forward, she maintained that she never had a single doubt about her experience or about the literal interpretation of the Bible.

"What do you mean, you never had a doubt?" years later her daughters asked her as they grew older, for to them it seemed unbelievable for her not to have ever had even a single doubt. But the only answer which they received was a firm, "No."

May believed the Bible literally and had no intention of discussing, much less arguing, about this fact, though some of those she loved and respected the most held widely different views. "Don't argue with your mother," was her beloved husband's wise counsel to their daughters. "It doesn't do any good."

When May was about fifteen, she attended one of D. L. Moody's meetings in Chicago. At the close of the service, he invited

those desiring conversion to go to the Inquiry Room. "I wondered what he did there, until I followed along and landed in at the door," she said. "He was talking to a girl away up in the front. He saw me and beckoned to me and said, 'Come, May, I want you to help me. This girl wants to be a Christian, and you are a Christian. Sit down and tell her how to become a Christian.'"

Reflecting on this experience in her latter years, May commented, "That's the way he helped thousands of professing Christians who had never done any active work for Christ. From that time on, I was a different person. I knew I had to study my Bible to know how to help a person become a Christian. So I always felt deeply grateful to him for that start."

At last, May's dream was realized, and, in the fall of 1885, she went to the Girls' School at Northfield. The school at that time "opened with a week of preaching from someone Mr. Moody trusted to lead the new students to Christ if they hadn't made their decision. So, we had a wonderful week every year," May recalled. Now she put to use her study in soul-winning and "loved working" in the inquiry meeting — "a second meeting after the preaching. If you believe in the Holy Spirit and if He is leading in the meeting, it's so easy and so different. There's such power there when the Word is preached. It's not too hard to bring people to decisions."

Very soon after May's arrival at Northfield, Moody called on her to sing a hymn at a funeral which he was having for a little girl. Already, it was recognized that she "possessed a voice of rare sweetness and richness of quality." May, of course, responded and "was so impressed the way he conducted that funeral for a little girl." After that, throughout her Northfield years, she was "taken away from school to sing at different things."

Throughout this time, she took the opportunity to observe the great

evangelist at very close range. She wanted to know if he was really sincere, and so she "watched him very closely . . . everything he did and said. I wanted to prove it was sincere." And D. L. Moody more than stood the test!

At the same time, unbeknown to her, D. W. Moody's oldest son, William R., exactly a year older than she, was observing her! The two families, as indicated, had been very close in Chicago years before, but now the Moodys were making their home in Northfield. During his extensive campaigns in the British Isles, the evangelist had taken his family with him and had placed Will in English boarding schools. Consequently, May and Will had seen little of each other in the intervening years. Then, two years after May came to Northfield, Will left for four years at Yale, and their paths again diverged for several years. However, it was evident that May was in his heart, but reserved as he was, he gave no expression to his thoughts as yet.

After finishing her three years at Northfield, it was at this time that May went to Oberlin College. After that year, so gifted and promising was May that her parents felt she should pursue her musical education, and therefore, in 1890, she accompanied her father to England on one of his evangelistic trips, where for the following year she studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Later, her mother was to join them for a time.

May stayed on with her father and attended many of Moody's large meetings in England, Scotland, and Ireland. From time to time, she rendered "special selections." After Moody returned to America, Major Whittle continued to hold evangelistic meetings throughout Ireland, accompanied by his daughter. Of her participation in these, George C. Stebbins, her father's song leader, wrote in his memoirs that she "contributed greatly to the blessing in the meetings by her singing and her work among the women in the towns visited."

Although D. L. Moody had held a conference for Christian workers at Northfield in 1880, it was not until 1885 that this became an annual gathering. The following year (1886), the first Students' Conference designed for the edification of those affiliated with the college department of the YMCA was held and continued yearly with increasing attendance and blessing. As May Whittle observed its beneficial results, she felt the girls of boarding school age ought to be able to share in a similar opportunity and benefit. So she went to Mr. Moody and said, "I think there should be a conference for girls."

"Go ahead and start one," was Mr. Moody's reply — so very typical of the man and his methods.

And she did. The first one was held in August of 1893 with an enrollment of some three hundred girls, and the organizer secured none other than Mrs. A. J. Gordon, wife of Boston's famous pastor, to preside over the sessions. So popular was this Girls' Conference that not only did it become an annual affair, but it had to be run in two two-week sessions and came to be considered the most successful of all the Northfield Conferences. As earlier indicated, this was one of the outstanding achievements of May's life. Many future leaders found Christ and received their inspiration for service in these conferences.

During this same year, indeed a memorable one for May Whittle, William R. Moody, then twenty-four, proposed to her. Without hesitation, she refused him because he had not as yet joined the church, thus giving concrete, public expression to the fact that he had been converted. Under no circumstances would she marry a man who was not converted and had not also publicly confessed Christ. That was her first consideration, and there could be no consideration of any young man, no matter how fine, how educated, or even if he was the son of the world's greatest evangelist, until this was settled.

Will Moody was a young man



William R. Moody

Oldest son of D.L. Moody and husband of May Whittle.

of sterling character. As "D. L.'s" son, the eyes of Christians the world over were upon him, and much was expected of him in every way. An exemplary young man and one who loved and respected his parents highly, he, nevertheless, had his own inner conflicts concerning spiritual matters. "D. L." wisely left him to the Lord — and his mother. She repeatedly dealt with him and prayed for him. But Will Moody was not going to take any stand that wasn't his own. He was self-conscious about being "D. L.'s" son and was not going to let people assume that, simply because he was his father's son, he was going to be converted.

At last, while at Yale, "D. L." received word that Will had "taken a good stand for Christ." And once W. R. Moody took a stand about anything, after careful deliberation, he never deviated from it. (For example, he became convinced it was wrong to travel on Sunday or to take a Sunday newspaper, and never did either thereafter. He lived by his principles.) But although he took a "stand for Christ," he did not join the church.

Rebuffed by the one girl he loved and wanted above all as his own,

Will Moody retired to think this matter over. Again, he would not join the church to gain May, but at length after some months, he became convinced that he should do so. Then May accepted his proposal, and on August 29, 1894, they were married.

According to the unanimous testimony of their children, the marriage of May and Will Moody was "a love affair all their lives. Father absolutely adored her. He was proud of her." He might not always agree with her, but on only one occasion was the family aware that there was "a real standout" between them, and that was over a conference speaker whom Mrs. Moody wished. Then she submitted to her husband's judgment. Otherwise, he was not known to cross her on anything, so highly did he respect her.

As for her father-in-law, D. L. Moody, he was very happy over the marriage, for he had always been exceedingly fond of May. And, now that she was actually in the family, she maintained the same uninhibited attitude towards "D. L." which she had expressed as a little girl. She respected him, of course, but she didn't stand in awe of him. But "D. L." seemed to enjoy her, for she was fun, and he had a lot of fun in him.

In preparation for their marriage, "D. L." had built a large house for May and Will at Mount Hermon, just across the Connecticut River, where he had located his school for boys, corresponding to the Northfield School for Girls. It was too large for them, and so the young couple took some of the students into their home. There they lived for five years.

Just a year after their marriage, on August 20, 1895, their first child, Irene, was born. She was the first grandchild of both her grandparents, Major Whittle and D. L. Moody, and how she captivated these men and occupied their attention! In fact, there was pleasant rivalry between them as evidenced in a letter from Major Whittle to the family, "We are glad to see that

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Mr. Moody is home for a rest and will see his little granddaughter . . . I saw Irene first. He saw her last."

Two years later a son was born, named for his grandfather, "D. L.," but from birth he suffered with spinal meningocele and a little over a year later died from spinal meningitis. Under the circumstances, his death was really a blessing, but this did not mitigate one whit the suffering of the family, especially the mother's grief.

This death, however, was simply the beginning of sorrows for the parents. Irene already was sick with tuberculosis. Hoping that a change of climate might help, "D. L." took Irene and her mother to California. Later, her mother took her to the Adirondacks. Nothing availed to restore her, and she went on to her heavenly home on August 22, 1899. It was a terrible blow to "D. L." as well as to the parents, and while they were confident she was with Christ, her death was something her mother, in particular, could never forget.

May and Will Moody were very fond of children and were exceedingly happy when three months later their third child, Mary Whittle, was born. This joy, however, was, in one sense, a burst of sunshine between dark thunderstorms, for less than six weeks later, D. L. Moody himself entered the presence of the King. At the close of his funeral the Mount Hermon Quartet sang a song which had been written by Major Whittle with the music by May Whittle Moody, *The Hope of the Coming of the Lord*.

At this time, May's own father was suffering with the illness that would result in his death on March 4, 1901. The intervening months were filled with the oversight of care for his comfort. To do this, May and her family vacated their own home and moved in for a time with Mrs. D. L. Moody.

In accordance with his father's express wishes, Will assumed the



The Homestead

Originally the home of D. L. Moody, this became the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Moody. "D. L." died in the far right room on the second floor. (This became one of the two "best guest rooms" of the story.) The room at the far left of same floor was the bedroom of Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Moody.

leadership of the Northfield School and Conferences as well as Mount Hermon after his death. With this change, came greater responsibilities both for him and for his beloved wife.

The Northfield and Mount Hermon schools were begun to afford poor girls and boys an opportunity for a good education. Most of the students in the early years had to have financial assistance to enable them to attend. May Moody took the keenest, personal interest in this host which swarmed around her and kept an eagle eye on the lookout for those who merited or needed special help.

Probably nobody knows how many boys at Mount Hermon and girls at Northfield were financed through the efforts of Mrs. Moody. When she saw some worthy student that should be there, she would just sit down and write to one of her various well-to-do friends, "I need five hundred dollars for a needy boy," or "I need one thousand dollars. This girl deserves it."

"And she'd get it," remarked one of her daughters. "I never knew her to be turned down. She had a gift for getting money out of people." Of course, this was always in the interest of charitable causes, never for herself. No wonder she was remembered with thankfulness by a

host of students.

In 1911, some years after Mrs. D. L. Moody's death, May and Will Moody moved into The Homestead where they were to live the rest of their lives. There, especially, it was that "May Moody created a home that was not only warm and friendly but was also a haven where the great and the lowly were equally welcome and equally rewarded. Through the years, the guest list at The Homestead included people from every environment — millionaires and paupers, prominent clergymen and sinners, young and old, the fortunate and the unfortunate — and all went away better for the experience.

Throughout the years, four other daughters were born to May and Will Moody — Constance, Emma who was called Peggy, Beatrix or Betty, and finally, Virginia who lived only five years. It was a happy family, brimful of vitality, with understanding love pervading the entire household.

One memory all the daughters especially cherish is that of Christmas morning. In their parents' bedroom was a fireplace on which the four little girls hung their stockings. Usually, they would waken about four o'clock Christmas morning and could not wait to see what was in their stockings. Excitedly, the quar-

tette went down the hall to their parents' room and sang outside the door, "Away in a Manger." As the first notes of this song fell on his ears, their father would jump out of bed, shut the window, and light the fire in the fireplace to get the room warmed up. "They never rebuffed us for coming at that unearthly hour, and we all crept in bed with them and opened our stockings," recalls one of these girls. Then followed a joyous family celebration.

All this does not mean that the parents did not discipline their loved daughters. To assist her in this, Mother Moody used a hair-brush with roses engraved on it. Those left their impression on the naughty girl for some time after the punishment was inflicted.

As for Father Moody, he had a sense of justice which would result in some stern word or measure. When the girls felt he was too strict, they would resort to their mother and say, "You've got to do something about Father. He's really impossible."

Mother Moody would make no response to their entreaties. But there was a little dressing room next to their parents' bedroom, and often one or more of the girls would steal in there and listen to their bed-time conversation. "Will," May would quietly say, "I think you were much too hard on Mary today."

The next day at the right moment, Father Moody would look Mary up and humbly say, "If I was hard on you yesterday, I'm sorry. I want to apologize," or, "I'm awfully sorry that I spoke to you the way I did."

No wonder Mary says today, "We never could stay angry with Father," and has nothing but the greatest admiration for him — as do all his daughters.

"None of you girls ever heard your father and me disagree in front of you." Mother Moody said to them.

"Oh, no, but we heard you at night!" But they add for the record, "Never, never in front of us did they ever disagree."

Of course, the blessing was asked

at each meal, and then *before* breakfast, there were family prayers. Father Moody read something from the Bible, and then everybody got up from his seat and knelt at his chair.

As the girls grew older and invited their friends home for a weekend, Mother Moody made it her business to witness to all these weekend guests. She would catch them somewhere around the house and ask them in good, direct language about the spiritual condition of their souls. They usually weren't used to such questioning, but Mother Moody was determined they should be confronted with the gospel. She made opportunities for this if they did not normally arise.

Mother Moody's interest in her visitors included not only their spiritual welfare but also their "social graces." One of the Mount Hermon boys came one day to visit one of the Moody girls. Mrs. Moody came into the room where they were talking. The young fellow greeted her with a polite, "How do you do?" but did not stand up. Later, Mrs. Moody got hold of him and said, "When a lady comes into a room, especially an older lady, you stand up!" Many years later, this "boy" returned to Northfield for a visit and made a point of calling on Mrs. Moody. In the course of their conversation, he said, "You know, Mrs. Moody, that was one of the nicest things you ever did for me. Nobody had ever told me that I should stand up when a lady comes into a room."

Mrs. Moody's attitude was, "A friend is a friend. Somebody has to do it, and if no one else does, I will." Invariably, those she instructed expressed their gratitude for someone who cared enough for their welfare to do as she did.

Mrs. Moody's personal interest in people extended beyond her daughters, their friends, the students at Mount Hermon and Northfield, the Conference dignitaries, and the constant stream of visitors in The Homestead. It included everyone, from the town idiot and ordinary

workmen to those who lived in New York City's lower East Side. Wherever a needy person was brought to her attention, she felt impelled to do what she could to help that person and do it herself. Consequently, single-handedly she ran her own personal social service and rehabilitation center right in The Homestead.

For many years, there were a crib and a play pen in the kitchen of The Homestead — evidence of the fact that Mrs. Moody had taken in some unfortunate unwed mother along with her child.

Perhaps, the most outstanding case was that of their English cook. One day, she just took off in a huff, which was unlike her. Why? Where had she gone? What was the reason?

Two days later, Mrs. Moody did a thing she rarely, if ever, had done before. She was "led" to put the dog in the barn for the night. When she did so, she heard a strange noise. Following the sound, she came to the family car where she found a little, newborn baby wrapped up in an old blanket. She brought the baby in the house and then sent it to the hospital in nearby Greenfield. But she was determined to find out where this baby had come from.

So she went on a chase. The trail led to the home of friends in a little town not too far away where their cook had gone. Quickly she went there and found the woman.

"Mrs. Moody, How's my baby?" was the first question she asked.

"You come right straight back to Northfield. What do you mean by taking off like that just because you had this baby? You come back to our house and take care of your own baby."

So Mrs. Moody took her back to The Homestead and brought her baby, Tommy, to live there. Later, during the tragic flu epidemic, the mother was stricken and died. Before she died, she committed her child to the care of the family. Mrs. Moody took Tommy into her own room, and all the daughters had

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their duties in caring for him. So loved was he that the oldest daughter wanted to quit school to devote all her time to him! Wisely, Mother Moody would not allow this, but secured his adoption by a doctor and his wife in a town not too far away.

"Mother was always trying to restore somebody," recalls one of her daughters. "She would go to bat for anyone she believed in. There was the town idiot, for example, who lived at our home for a long, long time. He had been in a mental institution, but Mother didn't believe he belonged there. So she got him out, somehow or other, and brought him to live in our home.

"He'd give you the creeps because he would appear suddenly, looking like just what he was. But he had a mechanical flare and sent to Sears Roebuck to get an inexpensive tape recorder when they first came out. You never knew when he was under the sofa or behind a chair recording whatever was going on.

"Mother had a theory which she told me about once when I had come home to have a refreshing weekend. (This usually meant spending most of the time following Mother around!) She brought me down to the local jail to visit a Mount Hermon boy who was there for some really bad crime. With her she had one rose.

"I have a theory," Mother said, "that it's the love of God that brings people to repentance. If a person knows that somebody loves him and brings him a beautiful rose, it will be a channel where he can get through to him on what God can do for him." That was the theory she operated on. So she would take a gift, put herself out, and go down to see the prisoner. That was her opening way.

"She would visit prisoners in other jails, find out when they were getting out on parole, and go to bat for them with the parole board. Once a prisoner was released, she

would invite him to The Homestead. Then she would meet him at the railroad station with a car, bring him home, and put him in one of the two best guest rooms (one of which had been 'D. L.'s' own, overlooking the beautiful Connecticut River Valley), and treat him like the most honored guest in the house. He would get the best sheets, the best towels, the best bureau scarf. This was done to help them get on their feet and back into a civilized world so that they could go out and cope with the world after having been in jail.

"Many of these were 'rice Christians.' They would talk pious and Mother would think she had made a convert. But they would go back to jail again and again, but she would say, 'If only one goes straight, it's worth all the others.'"

If Mrs. Moody was almost faith and patience and hope personified, there was a limit. If she found intentional deception, she could be firm in dismissing a "customer." But how her great heart yearned to help the fallen.

"She didn't particularly enjoy 'pious' people and 'petty' people," continuing her daughters' observations. "She knew multitudes of them, but she loved the 'bad' people. I remember her saying one day, 'Bad women are so much more lovable than good women because they're so generous. It's because they're too generous that they are bad.' She had an understanding and an affection for a so-called 'bad woman.' And she liked a fertile field in which to work. If it had already been tilled by somebody else, she didn't care for it.

As the Northfield Conferences and Schools had increased in numbers, it seemed desirable to have a *Northfield Hymnal*. The first was edited by Mr. Stebbins in 1904, followed by a second in 1916, also edited under his supervision. Two years later, the third appeared under the joint editorship of Mrs. Moody and Charles M. Alexander who was the Beverley Shea and Cliff Barrows of his time combined in one.

For many years, Alexander led the music at the Northfield General Conferences. Later, he travelled around the world on evangelistic trips with R. A. Torrey and J. Wilbur Chapman. Of him Will Moody said, "He was perhaps the greatest leader in the sphere of Gospel singing that America has ever known." A book produced by these two could not fail to be influential and contain "the best" for its purpose. Nine years later (1927), a fourth *Northfield Hymnal* was prepared, this time under the sole editorship of May Whittle Moody. So she maintained throughout life one of her first loves — gospel music.

One day about 1920, when Mrs. Moody was fifty, she received a telephone call from her daughter, Connie, who with Mary had gone to New York. There they had become active in the work of the New York Herald Tribune Fresh Air Fund. Part of their work was to "de-louse the kids" and get them ready to go to the country for their two-weeks' vacation. At this time, something had happened to the plans for the vacation for a group of about twenty-five girls that Connie was working with. They had fallen through, which meant the children would be disappointed and deprived of a vacation.

"Send them up here," was Mother Moody's immediate response, giving little thought to all it involved. But she would assume the complete responsibility. It was another challenge she could not resist. At once, she requisitioned the small school dormitory which was empty for the summer, filled it with cots for twenty-five, corralled her daughters, Peggy and Betty, as counsellors. With lightning speed, she prepared to greet this rough group of crying girls, homesick for the asphalt jungle of the city. "We knew nothing about what you did for kids like that," recalls Betty. "We learned more from them than they ever learned from us."

This was the beginning of the Virginia Fresh Air Camp — named

Virginia after the youngest daughter of the Moodys. For a number of years, Mrs. Moody was to sponsor this camp virtually single-handed. To direct it, she secured the services of Connie, but she raised the money. At least four groups of twenty-five came for two weeks every summer.

"On the last day that each group was at camp," recalls Mary, "it was Mother's custom to invite them all to come down to her home, have games and supper. Then she had them come in and sit on the floor of the drawing room while she told them the story of Jesus, which she did extremely well.

"As they were only eight and nine years old, they became restless after a while. Finally, when one little child noticed the whisperings that were going on, she piped up, 'Shut up, you little . . .! The lady's talking about Jesus!' Mother never skipped a sentence. She went right on. The interruption never penetrated."

In 1925, Will Moody resigned as head of the schools. The following eight years were difficult ones, for he became increasingly weak. For all of her desire to help people, one thing Mrs. Moody did not have was a nursing instinct, but Connie returned home to help during this trying time. His death (October 12, 1933) was difficult for the devoted wife, but her faith in God enabled her to clear that "high hurdle."

Thirty years remained to May Whittle Moody's life. As she grew older, she said to Betty several times, "What is the matter with me? All my family died in their sixties, and here I am in my eighties." Then she would add, "God must have some reason for letting me live so long." Then she would try to find that purpose — some cause to champion, some wrong to right, and go at it with all her might.

One invaluable thing which she did when she was eighty-eight was to give reminiscences of her father, her father-in-law, and herself to an interviewer from Moody Bible Institute. By this, she enriched our

knowledge of a period in evangelical history which no other living person could have done. During the course of this, she gave her own testimony:

"There's nothing greater in your life than realizing the love Jesus has for us. That's been a stabilizing factor and force all through the years. It's a great comfort today.

"It's a wonderful thing in this life to know Him as a personal Saviour, in a personal way among all the uncertainties of life in this day and age, especially to know that we are bound for heaven, our eternal home, through the Lord Jesus Christ and through His merits.

"And to know that He's alive! To know that the Spirit of Jesus is alive here with us today, that's a great thing!"

Then she added something very characteristic of her:

"We should live in the future, not in the past, yes. The future is glorious — all these hundreds that have been lost and missed, we're

going to soon have them back. And we've got the whole Bible to lean on, which is our authority. The trouble in the world now is they think too much about theology and talk a great deal about religion, but so many in the churches have never had a personal experience."

Five months after her ninety-third birthday, all four daughters happened to be at The Homestead. This seldom occurred, and Mother Moody was "riding high" in the joy of it all. Suddenly, she was taken ill. In a few hours, she had left this earthly scene.

"Heaven to her was just the upstairs of her house," says her oldest daughter. "It was a literal place. She was going to see the other three children. They were just as she remembered them. She thought it was going to be great to be with so many friends up there, who were waiting for her. She couldn't wait to get there!"

And she did, August 20, 1963!