



Ribbons *for* Shoes

BY CORINE C. PUGH

(Based on a true story)

Send forth the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea (D&C 133:8).

Mary Jane took a deep breath and smiled as she hurried along the muddy path on the way home from school. It was spring-time in the year 1852, and a soft, cool breeze was blowing over the Irish Sea.

Mary Jane was remembering the night she and her family were baptized. They had waited until it was dark to be baptized because some of their neighbors didn't like "Mormons," and the family didn't want there to be any trouble. The ocean was very cold that night. But when she came out of the water and the missionaries laid their hands on her head, Mary Jane had a warm, wonderful feeling.

She was remembering that warm feeling when a gust of wind blew a strand of her long black hair across her face. Mary Jane pushed it back. "I wish I had a pretty blue ribbon to tie my hair back," she thought.

Just then, Mary Jane almost stepped in a puddle on the path. As she started to walk around it, she saw something bright in the water. She stopped and looked closely. It looked like a coin.

Finding a long stick, Mary Jane carefully raked out the coin. And it was a valuable one. "Lucky me!" she thought. "What should I buy with it?" Then the wind reminded her. "A long blue ribbon," she thought. "That is what I will buy." Slipping the coin into her pocket, she hurried home.

When she opened the front door, Mary Jane saw that the missionaries were visiting her family. The younger children were sitting quietly, and a reverent feeling filled the room. Mary Jane's family loved the missionaries, who had come all the way to Ireland to bring them the gospel. Father said the missionaries came without



purse or scrip. That meant they came without money and with only the clothes they were wearing. Today they had brought good news. Some other families in the village were going to join the Church!

Mary Jane's father invited the elders to stay for supper. As they gathered around the table, everyone was smiling. Mary Jane liked to hear the elders ask for a blessing on the food. It gave her a "Sunday feeling."

After dinner, Mama served dessert in the parlor. She had baked a cake and made candy frosting. As one of the elders sat down and stretched out his long legs with his shoes turned upward, Mary Jane and her father looked at each other in surprise. The soles of the elder's shoes were worn through with large holes.

Father went to the kitchen, and Mary Jane followed him. Father reached to the top shelf of the cupboard where they kept money. But as he looked at the coins in his hand, he had a sad face. It was not enough to buy a new pair of shoes for the elder.

Mary Jane reached her hand into her pocket and placed her coin in Father's hand. "Now is there enough?" she asked softly.

Father looked surprised. He was silent for a long moment. Then in a husky voice he answered, "Yes, dear. That is just right." Father put his arm around Mary Jane, and she had the same warm feeling she had felt at her baptism. ●

When Mary Jane McCleve was 15 years old, her family sailed to America so they could travel to the Salt Lake Valley. Her family arrived in the valley in September 1856. They belonged to the second handcart company, under the direction of Captain Daniel D. McArthur.