

Sight to the Blind eBook

Sight to the Blind

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Introduction

A more illuminating interpretation of the settlement idea than Miss Furman's stories "Sight to the Blind" and "Mothering on Perilous" does not exist. Spreading what one has learned of cheerful, courageous, lawful living among those that need it has always been recognized as part of a man's work in the world. It is an obligation which has generally been discharged with more zeal than humanity. To convert at the point of a sword is hateful business. To convert by promises of rewards, present or future, is hardly less hateful. And yet much of the altruistic work of the world has been done by one or a union of these methods.

That to which we have converted men has not always been more satisfactory than our way of going at it. It has often failed to make radical changes in thought or conduct. Our reliance has been on doctrines, conventions, the three R's. They are easily sterile—almost sure to be if the teacher's spirit is one of cock-sure pride in the superiority of his religion and his cultivation.

The settlement in part at least is the outgrowth of a desire to find a place in which certain new notions of enlightening men and women could be freely tested and applied. The heart of the idea lies in its name. The modern bearers of good tidings instead of handing down principles and instructions at intervals from pulpit or desk *settle* among those who need them. They keep open house the year around for all, and to all who will, give whatever they have learned of the art of life. They are neighbors and comrades, learners as well as teachers.

It would be hard to find on the globe a group of people who need more this sort of democratic hand-to-hand contact than those Miss Furman describes, or a group with whom it is a greater satisfaction to establish it. Tucked away on the tops and slopes of the mountains of Eastern Kentucky and Tennessee are thousands of families, many of them descendants of the best of English stock. Centuries of direful poverty combined with almost complete isolation from the life of the world has not been able to take from them their look of race, or corrupt their brave, loyal, proud hearts. Encircled as they are by the richest and most highly cultivated parts of this country, near as they are to us in blood, we have done less for their enlightenment than for that of the Orient, vastly less than we do for every new-come immigrant. On the religious side all that they have had is the occasional itinerant preacher, thundering at them of the wrath of God; and on the cultural what Aunt Dalmanutha calls the "pindling" district school. In the teachings of both is an over-weight of sternness and superstition, little "plain human kindness," almost nothing that points the way to decent, happy, healthy living.

The results are both grotesque and pitiful. Is it strange that the feud should flourish in a land ruled by a "God of wrath?" Is anything but sickness and death to be expected where both are looked on as visitations of an angry God?



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Among these victims of our neglect and our blundering methods of teaching the settlement school has gone. It goes to stay. Not three months, but twelve months its teaching goes on; not one Sabbath in the month, but three hundred and sixty-five days in the year it preaches. Literally it is a new world which the settlement opens to the mountaineers, one ruled by cleanliness, thrift, knowledge and good-will. The beauty of it is that living day after day under this order they come to know that its principles are practical truths; that they work out. To be told that the baby is dying not because the Lord is angry with the family but because the milk is impure may seem little better than impiety at first, but save the baby by proper care and you have gone a long way to proving that pure milk is God's law and that all the prayers in the world will not change His ruling.

For distorted imaginings of the way the world is run the settlement is giving to the mountaineers something of the harmony and beauty of science.

New notions of heroism and honor are filtering into the country along with the notions of sanitation and health. That injuries can be honorably forgiven and forgotten is a hard doctrine to swallow in Eastern Kentucky, but when you see it practiced by those from the great world of which you have only dreamed it comes easier.

The contrast between the two ways of living—that in the settlement and that in their mountain homes—is not long in doing its work. Decent living even in great poverty is possible if you know how, and the settlement shows what can be done with what you have. The relation of their poverty and ill-health to their lack of knowledge and their perpetual lawless warfare is quickly enough grasped by the young, and means a new generation with vastly improved morals, health, self-control.

What more fruitful and appealing world for work, particularly for women, do these United States offer? If there is an idle or lonely woman anywhere revolting against the dullness of life, wanting work with the flavor and virility of pioneering in it, let her look to these mountains. She 'll find it. And what material to work with will come under her hands! "I often ask myself," says the heroine of "Mothering on Perilous," one of Miss Furman stories of the settlement school, "What other boys have such gifts to bring to their nation? Proud, self-reliant, the sons of heroes, bred in brave traditions, knowing nothing of the debasing greed for money, strengthened by a hand-to-hand struggle with nature from their very infancy (I have not known of one who did not begin at five or six to shoulder family responsibilities such as hoeing corn, tending stock, clearing new ground, grubbing, hunting, gathering the crops) they should bring to their country primal energy of body and spirit, unquenchable valor, and minds untainted by the lust of wealth."

IDA M. TARBELL



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Sight to the Blind

One morning in early September, Miss Shippen, the trained nurse at the Settlement School on Perilous, set off for a day of district-visiting over on Clinch, accompanied by Miss Loring, another of the workers. After riding up Perilous Creek a short distance, they crossed Tudor Mountain, and then followed the headwaters of Clinch down to Skain's Fork, where in a forlorn little district-school-house the trained nurse gave a talk on the causes and prevention of tuberculosis, the spitting of tobacco-juice over the floor by teacher and pupils abating somewhat as she proceeded. Two miles farther on she stopped at the Chilton home for a talk to half a dozen assembled mothers on the nursing and prevention of typhoid, of which there had been a severe epidemic along Clinch during the summer.

Afterward the school-women were invited to dinner by one of the visiting mothers. Mrs. Chilton at first objected to their going, but finally said:

"That 's right; take 'em along with you, Marthy. I allow it 'll pyeerten Aunt Dalmanuthy up to hear some new thing. She were powerful' low in her sperrits the last I seed."

"Pore maw!" sighed Marthy, her soft voice vibrant with sympathy. "It looks like things is harder for her all the time. Something new to ruminate on seems to lift her up a spell and make her forgit her blindness. She has heared tell of you school-women and your quare doings, and is sort of curious."

"She is blind?" inquired the nurse.

"Blind as a bat these twelve year'," replied Mrs. Chilton; "it fell on her as a judgment for rebelling when Evy, her onliest little gal, was took. She died of the breast-complaint; some calls it the galloping consumpt'."

"I allus allowed if Uncle Joshuay and them other preachers had a-helt off and let maw alone a while in her grief," broke in Marthy's gentle voice, "she never would have gone so far. But Uncle Joshuay in especial were possessed to pester her, and inquire were she yet riconciled to the will of God, and warn her of judgment if she refused."

"Doubtless Uncle Joshuay's high talk did agg her on," said Mrs. Chilton, impartially, "but she need n't to have blasphemed like she done at Evy's funeral occasion."

Marthy covered her face with her hands.

"Oh, that day!" she exclaimed, shuddering. "Will I ever forgit it? John and me had got married just a month before Evy died in October, and gone to live up the hollow a small piece from maw, and even then she were complaining of a leetle scum over her eyes. Losing Evy, and rebelling like she done atterward, and Uncle Joshuay's talk, holp it along fast, and it were plain to all before winter were over that he had prophesied right,



and her sight were a-going. I would come down the branch of a morning and beg her to let me milk the cow and feed the property and red up the house and the like, but she would refuse in anger, and stumble round over chairs and table and bean-pot and wash-kittle, and maintain all spring and summer her sight were as good as ever. Never till that day of the funeral occasion, one year after Evy died, did she ever give in.”

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Here Marthy again covered her face with her hands, and Mrs. Chilton took up the tale:

“I can see her now, up thar on the hill-shoulder, betwixt you and John on the front log, by Evy’s grave-house, and Uncle Joshuay a-hollering and weeping and denouncing like he does, and her setting through it like a rock. Then finally Uncle Joshuay he thundered at her the third time, ‘Hain’t it the truth, Sister Dalmanuthy, that the judgment and the curse of God has fell on you for your rebelliousness, like I prophesied, and that you hain’t able to see John thar or Marthy thar or the hand thar before your face thar?’ when Aunt Dalmanuthy riz up sudden, and clinched her hands, and says slow and fierce: ‘Man, it *is* the truth you speak. The curse *has* fell; and I hain’t able to see John here or Marthy here or the hand here before my face here. But listen what I got to say about it. I’m able to hate and to curse as good as God. And I do! I hate and curse the Hand that, after taking all else I loved, snatched from my bosom the one little yoe lamb I treasured thar; I hate and curse Him that expected me to set down tame and quiet under such cruelty and onjustice; I hate and curse and defy the Power that hated and spited me enough, atter darkening the light of my life, to put out the sight of my eyes! Now,’ she says, ‘you lay claim to being mighty familiar with the Lord; take that message to Him!’ she says.

“Women, that whole funeral meeting kotch its breath at them awful words, and sot there rooted and grounded; and she turnt and looked around defiant-like with them sightless eyes, and strode off down the hill, John and Marthy follering.”

[Illustration: “Aunt Dalmanuthy riz up sudden, and clinched her hands”]

After a somewhat protracted silence, Marthy’s gentle voice resumed:

“And from that day to this John and me hain’t left her sence. We shet up our house and moved down to hern; and she tuck to setting by the fire or out on the porch, allus a-knitting, and seldom speaking a word in all them years about Evy or her sorrow or her curse. When my first little gal come along, I named it Evy, thinking to give her some easement or pleasure; but small notice has she ever showed. ‘Pears like my young uns don’t do much but bother her, her hearing and scent being so powerful’ keen. I have allus allowed if she could git her feelings turnt loose one time, and bile over good and strong, it might benefit her; but thar she sets, day in, day out, proud and restless, a-bottling it all up inside.”

“She biles over a right smart on you, Marthy, I should say,” remarked the hostess.

“No, now, Susan, she don’t, neither, considering her provocations. She were the smartest, most managing woman in these parts, and I never did have no faculty, and don’t run her house like I ought; and John is a puny man and not able to do all her bidding; and the young uns they gits terrible noisy and feisty at times, all but Evy.”



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“The women” rode with Marthy a mile farther, stopping before a lonely log-house, with corn-fields climbing to meet the timber half-way up the mountain in the rear. Marthy ushered her guests into the porch with the words, “Here ’s the fotch-on women, Maw.”

The tall, gaunt, forbidding-looking old woman sitting there turned sightless eyes toward them, putting forth a strong hand.

“Howdy, women,” she said grimly. “Git cheers for ’em, Evy.”

They seated themselves, and Aunt Dalmanutha resumed her knitting, swiftly and fiercely, all the pent-up force of a strong nature thrown into the simple act. Instead of the repose that characterizes the faces of the blind, her eaglelike countenance bore the marks of fretful, sullen, caged, almost savage energy.

“Go quick and take a look that ’ere pot of beans, Marthy,” she ordered. “Evy declar’s they hain’t scorching, but my nose informs me different’. Take the women’s bonnets, Evy, and lay ’em on my ’stead; and round up all the young uns back in the corn-crib, so ’s I can git the benefit of the talk. Now, women,” she continued peremptorily, “I been hearing a whole passel about your doings and goings and comings these four or five year’ gone, and I ’m right smart curious to know what it ’s all about. What air you in these parts for, anyhow, and how come you to come?”

“We are here,” began Miss Shippen, quietly, “first and foremost because we want to educate the children who have never had the chance they deserve—”

“That ’s so; they hain’t, more shame to the State,” interrupted Aunt Dalmanutha. “Take me, now; I were raised forty-five mile’ from a school-house or church-house, and never had no chance to l’arn ‘a’ from ‘izard.’ And these few pindling present-day district-schools scattered here and yan they only spiles the young uns for work, and hain’t no improvement on nothing.”

“Next,” proceeded the trained nurse, “we want to be friendly and helpful to the grown-up people who need it, especially to the sick and suffering.”

“I heared of the nursing you done in these parts in the typhoid last summer,” said Aunt Dalmanutha, “and certainly it sounded good. But, women, one more question I crave to put to you. Do you mix in religion and preachifying as you go along?”

“We do not preach at all,” replied Miss Shippen; “we let our deeds speak for us.”

Aunt Dalmanutha extended a swift hand. “I am proud to make your acquaintance then,” she said. “I have had my ’nough of religion and preachifying, but of plain human friendliness not, because there is little of it on the ramble.”



“My special work,” continued the trained nurse, “is of course with the sick, nursing and teaching how to nurse, and how to prevent as well as to cure illness, and sending cases I cannot help down to the level country for proper treatment. I see, Aunt Dalmanutha, that you are blind. Have you any objection to letting me take a close look at your eyes?”



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“Look all you want,” was the grim reply; “I am used to being a’ object and a spectacle.”

The nurse took from her satchel a glass with which she carefully examined the dulled and lifeless eyes, sitting down afterward without a word.

“And not only a’ object and a spectacle,” continued Aunt Dalmanutha, bitterly, “but a laughing-stock and a byword for the preachers in especial to mock and flout at. Yes, I that were once the workingest and most capablest woman up and down Clinch; I that not only could weave my fourteen yard’, or hoe my acre of corn, or clear my man’s stint of new ground, a day, but likewise had such faculty in my head-piece that I were able to manage and contrive and bring to pass; I that rejoiced in the work of my hands and the pyeertness of my mind and the fruits of my industry, and when my man died were able to run the farm and take keer of the children as good as before—I am sot down here in the midst of rack and ruin, with the roof a-leaking over me, the chimbly sagging out, the fence rotten and the hogs in the corn, the property eatin’ their heads off, and the young uns lacking warm coats and kivers, John and Marthy being so mortal doless; I am sot here bound hand and foot, my strength brought to naught, my ambition squenched, my faculty onusable, a living monument to the hate and revenge and onjestice of God!” She spoke with growing passion, but checked herself, and began more calmly.

“And if it were just, Dalmanuthy Holt would be the last to speak ag’in’ it. I allus prided myself on being a reasoning woman. But just it is not, and never were, and never will be. I have seed a sight of trouble in my day, women, and bore up under it patient and courageous. Besides the man of my love, and the payrents that begot me, seven sons of my body have I laid in the grave, three in infancy of summer-complaint, two with the choking-disease, two with typhoid; and in all this I never once lifted up my voice ag’in’ God, but bore it still and patient, even when I were reduced down to just John, my sorriest son, and little Evy, my onliest daughter and the child of my prayer. But, women,”—and again strong passion thrilled in her voice,—“when I seed that one little tender yoe lamb that I cherished with deathless love begin for to pale and cough and pine, then and thar the sword entered my soul, my heart turnt over in my breast, and I cried out wild and desperate: ‘Not this! not this! Take all else I got, but not her! It is cruel, it is onjust. I rebel ag’in’ it, I will never endure it.’ And I kep’ a-crying it as I seed her fade and thin; I cried it when the last breath flickered from her pore little body; I cried it when I laid her in the cold ground; I cried it when the preachers come to see me atterward, threatening judgment; I cried it when I felt the curse a-falling and the sight of my-eyes a-going; I cried it loud and fierce at her funeral occasion; and cry it I will to the end of my darkened days! It were cruel, it were onjust, it were horrible, it were wicked, of God to treat me that way, and never will I say it wa’ n’t!”

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Miss Shippen waited a full minute before answering quietly and slowly: "It was cruel, it was unjust, it was horrible, it was wicked, that you should have been made to suffer so; above all, Aunt Dalmanutha, it was unnecessary. With a little knowledge, and proper food and fresh air, your daughter's life could have been saved; with knowledge and proper treatment your sons need not have died of dysentery or typhoid or even diphtheria; with knowledge your blindness itself, which is no curse, but would as surely have come upon you had you never lost Evy and never rebelled in your heart, need have lasted only a few months. For these are cataracts that you have on your eyes, and nothing would have been simpler and easier than their removal."

Amazement, incredulity, almost horror were written upon Aunt Dalmanutha's countenance as she heard these quiet words.

"Where do you get your authority over preachers, woman?" she demanded, leaning fiercely forward,

"I get my authority," replied the trained nurse, firmly, "from my knowledge of modern medicine and surgery; I get my authority from things seen with my eyes and heard with my ears during days and nights of duty on the battle-line between life and death; I get my authority," she continued more solemnly, "from Him whose spirit of freedom and tolerance has made possible the advances in modern science; who is the source of the rising tide of helpfulness manifest in human hearts everywhere; who, when he was on earth, went about doing good, and proclaiming not the hate, the vengeance, the cruelty of God, but His mercy, His kindness, His pity, His fatherly love."

The blind woman sat as though turned to stone, except that the veins in her neck and temples throbbed violently.

"Do you mean to tell me God never wanted to take my loved ones from me?" she asked at length from a dry throat.

"I do. I mean that their deaths, so far from being the will of God, were the fruit alone of ignorance and of evil conditions."

"You mean to say that the hand of vengeance wa' n't never lifted ag'in' me, and I hain't never sot under no curse?"

"I do."

"And that the preachers has lied to me?" she said through clenched jaws.

"They were simply mistaken; they knew no better."

Aunt Dalmanutha lifted a shaking arm. "Woe to them if ever they cross my path ag'in!" she cried hoarsely.



“Don’t think about them,” said the nurse; “the thing for you to do at once is to go down to Lexington, in the Blue Grass country, to a doctor I know there who does great things for eyes, and who, if it is not too late, will remove those cataracts and restore you to sight and usefulness and strength, as God intends. I will write at once to the hospital, and make the arrangements; you should start within a week. The trip,” she added, “need cost you nothing, if you are unable to pay your way.”

Aunt Dalmanutha drew herself up proudly.

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"I hain't a' object of charity," she said. "If I go, I 'll pay my way. I got something laid by still from my weaving days. But it has come on me too sudden'; I feel all lost; I will have to study a heap before, I can make up my mind." She moved her hands about before her in a dazed, helpless way.

During the rest of the visit she was silent and distraught. Twice at dinner her shaking hands knocked over her coffee-cup, and once the sorghum-pitcher, little fair-haired Evy cleaning up quietly after her granny, and placing things to her hand so deftly and furtively that she did not know it was done at all, while on her other side sat Marthy, ever kind, solicitous, and patient, and at the far end of the table John vied with her in unobtrusive but loving attentions to "maw." Never had "the women" seen an elderly or afflicted person more tenderly and devotedly cared for. But the object of it all sat rigid, self-absorbed, frowning, as oblivious to the light and warmth of love as to the light of day, her sole remarks being contemptuous apologies for Marthy's cooking, and complaints of the hardship of having to "gum it," or eat without teeth.

One week later there was a call from the road in front of the school hospital, and Miss Shippen was pleased and relieved to see Aunt Dalmanutha mounted on a nag behind John. In her black calico sunbonnet and dress, and long, drab apron, with her hand tightly clutched to John's arm, and dark apprehension written upon her blind face, she was indeed a pitiable sight.

"I have pondered your words," she said to Miss Shippen, "and have made up my mind to foller them. With naught but them to swing out on, I am setting forth into the unknown. I that hain't never so much as rid in a wagon, am about to dare the perils of the railroad; that hain't been twenty mile' from home in all my days, am journeying into a far and absent country, from which the liabilities are I won't never return. Far'well, if far'well it be!"

On the last day of October, Miss Shippen had just dismissed her seventh-grade class in home-nursing, and was standing in the hospital porch drinking in the unspeakable autumnal glory of the mountains, when a wagon, rumbling and groaning along the road and filled with people, stopped with a lurch at the gate. Advancing, the nurse was at first puzzled as to the identity of the people; then she recognized the faces of John and Marthy Holt and of little Evy. But for several seconds she gazed without recognition at the striking figure on the front seat beside John. This figure wore a remarkable hat, bristling with red, yellow, and green flowers, and a plaid silk waist in which every color of the rainbow fought with every other. Her bright and piercing dark eyes traveled hungrily and searchingly over the countenance of the trained nurse; her lips opened gradually over teeth of dazzling whiteness and newness. Then, leaning swiftly from the wagon, she gathered the nurse into a powerful, bear-like hug, exclaiming, with solemn joy:



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“You air the woman! I know you by your favorance to your talk. I allowed you would look that fair and tender. Here air the woman, John and Marthy, that restored unto me my sight, and brung me up out of the Valley of the Shadow. She tolt me what to do, and I follered it, and, lo! the meracle was performed; wonderful things was done unto me!” Here Aunt Dalmanutha—for it was she—supplemented the embrace with kisses rained upon the head and brow of the trained nurse.

Extricating herself at last from the strong arms in which she was lifted from the ground and rocked powerfully back and forth, Miss Shippen was able to look once more into the face she had failed to recognize, and from which at least a score of years were now erased.

“Yes, John and Marthy and Evy and t’ other seven young uns, take the look of your life at that ’ere angel messenger that brung me the good tidings of great joy; that lifted me up out of the pit of darkness on to the mountain-tops whar I now sojourn. Yes, look, for in heaven you ’ll never see no better sight.”

Embarrassed by the open-mouthed family gaze, and by the additional presence of several teachers, who stopped to see and listen, Miss Shippen said:

“Tell me all about your trip, Aunt Dalmanutha.”

“Tell about it? Tell that which ten thousand tongues could scarce relate? God knows my stumbling speech hain’t equal to the occasion; but I ’ll do my best. You last seed me a-taking my fearsome way to the railroad; and what were the sinking of my heart when John left me thar on the cyar, words will never do justice to; seemed like I were turnt a-loose in space, rushing I knowed not whither. The first ground I toch was when I heard the voice of that ’ere doctor you writ to inquiring for me at the far eend. He said he allowed I would be skeered and lonesome, so he come hisself to fetch me to the hospital. Woman, it were the deed of a saint, and help me up wonderful’. Then I were put to bed a spell, and soft-footed women waited on me. Then one morning he tolt me he were aiming to peel them ’ere ingun-skins off my eyes, and for me to have no fears, but trust in him; that he believed them eye-nerves, shet back thar in the dark, was still alive and able to do business. And though my heart shuck like a ager, I laid down on that table same as a soldier. When I got up, I were blind as ever, with rags tied thick around my eyes. And I sot there patient day after day, and the doctor he ’d drap in and cheer me up. ‘Aunt Dally,’ he would say—he claimed he never had no time to git out the Dalmanuthy—‘in just a leetle while you ’ll be a-trotting around the Blue Grass here worse ’n a race-hoss; but you got to git your training gradual.’ Then he ’d thin the bandages more and more, till a sort of gray twilight come a-sifting through. ‘And don’t think,’ he would say, ‘that I am aiming to let you lope back to them mountains till I git you plumb made over. Fust



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thing is a new set of teeth,—you done gummed yourself into dyspepsy and ginerall cantankerousness,—and then I 'm sot on taking you to my house to visit a month and eat good victuals and git your stummick opened up whar it done growed together, and your mind unj'inted, and your sperrits limbered similar.' And straightway he sont for a tooth-dentist, that tuck a pictur' of my gums in wax then and thar. Then come the great day when I looked my fust on a human countenance ag'in. I axed that it be the doctor's, and I seed him only through black glasses darkly; but, O God! what a sight it were none but the blind can ever tell! Then for quite a spell I looked out through them dark glasses at the comings and goings and people there in the hospital. Then one day the doctor he run in and says, 'Time for you to look on the sunlight, Aunt Dally. Keep on them glasses, and wrop a shawl round you, and come with me. I 'm aiming to show you the prettiest country God ever made.' Then he holp me into a chariot that run purely by the might of its own manoeuvres, and I seed tall houses and chimbllys whiz by dimlike, and then atter a while he retch over and lifted my glasses.

"Women, the tongue of Seraphim hain't competent to tell what I seed then! That country hain't rugged and on-eend like this here, but is spread out smooth and soft and keerful, with nary ragged corner nowhar', and just enough roll to tole the eye along. Thar I, beheld the wide, green pastures I had heard tell of in Scriptur', thar I seed still waters, clear as crystal, dotted here and yan, and on them pastures and by them waters thousands of sleek nags and cattle a-feeding and drinking, peaceful and satisfied; thar, bowered back amongst lofty trees, was the beautiful many mansions and homes of the blest; thar was the big road, smooth and white as glass, down which pretty boys and gals too fair for this world, come on prancing nags; thar, best of all, hovering and brooding tender over everything, was the warm, blue sky and the golden sunlight. Them alone would have been enough for me. Yes, it were indeed a heavenly vision. I set, scarcely knowing if I were in or out of the body. 'Am I translated,' I axed the doctor, 'and is this here the New Jerusalem, and them pretty creeturs the angels of heaven?' 'Far from it, Aunt Dally,' he says, sighing. 'Them air the fortunate Blue-Grass folk, that be so used to blessings they don't even know they got 'em, let alone makin' a' effort to share 'em with the needy. If they was as onselfish within as they air fair and prosperous without, we would n't need no millennium.'

"I can't say I had any rale, realizing sense of sight that day. It were all too wonderful and visionary. And them weeks that follered at the doctor's house, too, they seem like a love-lie dream—the delicate victuals that fairly melted down my throat before these here fine store teeth could clutch 'em, the kindness of him and his woman, and of his little gal, that teached



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me my a-b-c's. For she said, 'With your head-piece, Aunt Dally, it hain't too late for you to die a scholar yet; you got to git l'arning.' And, women, I got it. I knowed all my letters and were quite a piece in the primer before I left, and Evy here she aims to finish my education and have me reading Scriptur' come summer. Yes, it all seemed too good and fair to be true, and I lived in a daze. I come to myself sufficient', though, to have the little gal write John to hire a wagon and bring Marthy and all the young uns to the railroad for to meet me, and see the world and the cyars; and also, realizing I were going to git back my faculty and workingness, and not being able to make the doctor take ary cent for his doings,—he said it were the least the Blue Grass could do for the mountains,—I tuck what money I had left and bought me some fine store clothes for to match my teeth and my innard feelings. 'Peared like I could n't noway feel at home in them sorry gyarments I had wore in sorry days.

"But it were not till I sot in the railroad cyars ag'in, and the level country had crinkled up into hills, and the hills had riz up into mountains, all a-blazin' out majestical' in the joy of yaller and scarlet and green and crimson, that I raley got my sight and knowed I had it. Yes, the Blue Grass is fine and pretty and smooth and heavenly fair; but the mountains is my nateral and everlastin' element. They gethered round me at my birth; they bowed down their proud heads to listen at my first weak cry; they cradled me on their broad knees; they suckled me at their hard but ginerous breasts. Whether snow-kivered, or brown, or green, or many-colored, they never failed to speak great, silent words to me whensoever I lifted up my eyes to 'em; they still holds in their friendly embrace all that is dear to me, living or dead; and, women, if I don't see 'em in heaven, I 'll be lonesome and homesick thar.

"Yes, when I laid eyes on them well-beloved forms, I knowed for sure I had my sight. And the folks in the cyar they knowed it, too. I am in gineral one to keep things locked and pinned down inside me; but for once I let go all holts and turnt a-loose. Then and thar I bu'sted out into shouts of joy and songs of praise; I magnified the Lord and all His works; I testified of my salvation from blindness of body and sperrit; I hollered till natur' went plumb back on me and I could n't fetch nary 'nother breath.

"Then when I stepped off the train, thar was the living human faces of my own blood, John and Marthy, and the eight young uns whose countenances I had never beheld. And as I gazed, women, more scales drapped from my long-blind eyes. In the face of John here, the boy I had allus abused for no-git-up and shiftless, I beheld loving-kindness and onselfishness writ large and fair; looking on little Evy, I seed love divine in her tender eyes, and light raying out from her yaller hair and from the other seven smaller



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head' bunched around her like cherubim'. And Marthy! Right here, women, I ax your pardon if I stop a spell, for of a truth words fails me and tears squenches me. What did I see in that kind, gentle, patient face of hern? Women, it were the very living sperrit of Christ hisself I seed thar—the sperrit that returned love for hate, mercy for revilement, joy and life for curses and death. Yes, when them eyes of hers was turnt on me so full of love, right thar my heart broke. I had bemeaned and berated and faulted her so continual', and belt her up as a pore, doless creetur', without no backbone or ambition; and now I knowed that if thar ever were a tender, ginuwine, angel daughter on this here earth, it were her to me. Women, when she tuck me to her bosom, I just slid right down thar on 'my unworthy knees thar on the ground at her feet thar, and with bitter tears beseeched of her to forgive and forgit my hard-heartedness and stone-blindness and dog-meanness, which of course, being Marthy, she had already done allus-ago.

“Then, friends, my cup were running over; and as we journeyed up creeks and down mountains nigh these three days, we was the nunitested and joyfulest family that ever follered a trail; and all the way I laid my plans for to set the farm on its feet ag'in, and clear new ground, and maul rails for the fence, and rive boards for the roof, and quairy out rock for a new chimbly, and bring up the yield of corn, and weed out the eatingest of the cattle, and git my loom sot up and running so 's to have a-plenty of kivers and linsey for sale come cold weather; and we all rejoiced amazing, knowing prosperity wa' n't no further from us than yan side the mountain.

“And now, fellow-sisters, you see before you a ree-surrected woman. I hain't only got the sight of my eyes; I got mind-sight, heart-sight, soul-sight. I hain't only got these fine store-teeth and a tamed and biddable stummick; but the innard power to chaw and digest speritual truth. I hain't only wearing these gayly, boughten clothes, I 'm a-fla'nting the robes of joy and the gyarments of praise. I know the Lord don't hate me and never did; I know I am free, restored, and saved; I know my Redeemer liveth, and has fotch me up out of the blackness of darkness on to the top-most peaks of joy and peace and thanksgiving.

“And don't think, women,—don't never, never think I hain't aiming to let my light shine! I aim to use my faculty not for worldly betterment alone, but to turn it loose likewise in the line of religion and preachifying. Yes, every night this enduring winter will see me a-s'arching the Scriptur'; and what I can't read I can ricollect; and come August, when the craps is laid by and the funeral occasions sets in, I will be ready for 'em. There won't be one in twenty mile' that won't see me a-coming, and a-taking my stand by the grave-houses in these reesurrection gyarments, for to norate the wonders of my experience, and to shame and confound and drownd out Uncle Joshuay and t'other blind leaders of the blind whatever they dare raise their gray heads and hoary lies, and gin'rally to publish abroad, world-without-eend, the ons'archable riches and glory and power of the love of God.”



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Afterword

In the heart of the Kentucky mountains, that romantic and little-known region popularly regarded as the “home of feuds and moonshine,” a rural social settlement, the first in the world, was begun fifteen years ago under the auspices of the State Federation of Women’s Clubs of Kentucky.

Half a dozen young women from the prosperous Blue-Grass section, headed by Miss Katherine Pettit and Miss May Stone, went up into the mountains, several days’ journey from a railroad, and, pitching their tents, spent three successive summers holding singing, sewing, cooking and kindergarten classes, giving entertainments, visiting homes, and generally establishing friendly relations with the men, women, and children of three counties.

One of the many surprises was to find the mountains so thickly populated,—the regulation family boasting a dozen children,—and the most inadequate provision made by the State for the education of these young sons and daughters of heroes. For it is well known that much of this section was settled originally by men who received land-grants for their services in the Revolution, and who, with their families, disappeared into these fastnesses to emerge later only at their country’s call,—the War of 1812, the Mexican, the Civil, and the Spanish Wars bringing them out in full force, to display astonishing valor always.

Aware of this ancestry, the visiting women were not surprised to find much personal dignity, native intelligence, and gentleness of manner, even among men who conceived it their duty to “kill off” family enemies, and women who had never had the first chance at “book-l’arning.”

One of the three summers was spent on Troublesome Creek, at the small village of Hindman, the seat of Knott County. Here the “citizens” so appreciated the “quare, foreign women” as to be unwilling to let them depart. “Stay with us and do something for our young ones, that mostly run wild now, drinking and shooting,” they said. “We will give you the land to build a school on.”

Touched to the heart, seeing the great need, and asking nothing better than to spend their lives in such a service, Miss Stone and Miss Pettit went “out into the world” that winter and gave talks in various cities, by spring raising enough money to start the desired Settlement School at Hindman.

During a dozen years this remarkable school has grown and prospered, until more than a hundred children now live in it, and two hundred more attend day-school.

While its academic work is excellent, special stress is laid upon the industrial courses, the aim being to fit the children for successful lives in their own beloved mountains. To



this end the boys are taught agriculture, carpentry, wood and metal work, and the rudiments of mechanics; the girls cooking, home-nursing, sewing, laundry work, and weaving, these subjects being learned not only in classes, but by doing the actual labor of school and farm.

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Aside from educational work proper, various forms of social service are carried on,—district nursing, classes in sanitation and hygiene, social clubs and entertainments for people of all ages, and a department of fireside industries, through which is created an outside market for the beautiful coverlets, blankets and homespun, woven by the mountain women, as well as for their attractive baskets.

When the children trained in our school go out to teach in the district schools, they take with them not only what they have learned in books, but our ideas as to practical living and social service also, each one becoming a center of influence in a new neighborhood.

A feature of the work that deserves special mention is the nursing and hospital department, the ministrations of our trained nurse. Miss Butler, having done more, possibly, than any other one thing, not only to spread a knowledge of sanitation and preventive hygiene, but also to establish confidential and friendly relations with the people.

The foregoing story, "Sight to the Blind," gives some idea of this branch of the work, the scope of which has been much extended, however, during the three years since the story was written for *The Century Magazine*. In that period the half-dozen clinics held in the school hospital by Dr. Stucky of Lexington, and his co-workers, have brought direct surgical and other relief to the afflicted of four counties. To be present at one of these clinics is to live Bible days over again, and to see "the lame walk, the deaf hear, the blind receive their sight, and the poor have the good news preached to them."

And not only this,—these clinics have demonstrated that nearly one-half the people examined have trachoma or other serious eye diseases, and have been the means of awakening the Government to its responsibility in the matter, so that three government hospitals have already been started in the mountains for the treatment of trachoma.

So valuable, in many directions, has been the influence of the Settlement School, that tracts of land have been offered in a number of other mountain counties for similar schools; but so far only one, that at Pine Mountain in Harlan County, has been begun.

An intimate account of life within the Hindman School is given in a recently published book, "Mothering on Perilous," in which are set forth the joys—and some of the shocks—experienced by the writer in mothering the dozen little mountaineers who, in the early days, shared with her the small boys' cottage. The real name of the school creek is of course Troublesome, not Perilous.

Alas, nearly a thousand eager, lovable children are turned away yearly for lack of room and scholarships. The school is supported by outside contributions, one hundred dollars taking a child through the year. What better use of money could possibly be

made by patriotic persons and organizations than to open the doors of opportunity to these little Sons and Daughters of the Revolution?



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Lucy Furman
Hindman settlement school,
October, 1914.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Mothering on Perilous

Decorated cloth, illustrated, 12mo. \$1.50 net: postage extra,

This book tells in lively fashion of the experiences of a young woman who, to escape from grief and loneliness, goes to work in a settlement school in the heart of the Kentucky mountains.

There she instantaneously “acquires a family” of a dozen small boys and henceforth finds her life “crammed with human interest.” The ludicrously funny and sometimes pathetic doings of the little, untamed feudists, moonshiners, and hero worshippers, form the subject-matter of the tale.

The story centers about one of the boys who has an “active war” in his family and whose martial adventures with those of his grown-up brother give a strong appeal to the narrative and furnish an exciting climax.

“Good luck to this admirably written narrative, a model of direct and simple humor and very sincere human understanding.”—*The Bellman*.

“Certainly no romance of the Kentucky mountains ever told more that was amusing, or picturesque, or tragic than her chronicle does.”—*N. Y. Post*.

“Her style is graceful and clear, and her fascinating narrative cannot fail to widen the horizon of her readers in more ways than one.”—*N. Y. Times*.

“A charming story and it is well told.”—*Christian Advocate*.

“A story full of humor and pathos.”—*Chicago Evening Post*.

“The book forms a valuable link between an interesting and isolated people and the reading public.”—*San Francisco Chronicle*.

NEW MACMILLAN FICTION

Saturday’s Child



By *Kathleen Norris*, Author of "Mother," "The Treasure," etc. With frontispiece in colors by F. Graham Cootes. Decorated cloth, 12mo. \$1.50 net.

"Friday's child is loving and giving,
Saturday's child must work for her living."

The title of Mrs. Norris' new novel at once indicates its theme. It is the life story of a girl who has her own way to make in the world. The various experiences through which she passes, the various viewpoints which she holds until she comes finally to realize that service for others is the only thing that counts, are told with that same intimate knowledge of character, that healthy optimism and the belief in the ultimate goodness of mankind that have distinguished all of this author's writing. The book is intensely alive with human emotions. The reader is bound to sympathize with Mrs. Norris' people because they seem like *real* people and because they are actuated by motives which one is able to understand. *Saturday's Child* is Mrs. Norris' longest work. Into it has gone the very best of her creative talent. It is a volume which the many admirers of *Mother* will gladly accept.



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The Game of Life and Death: Stories of the Sea

By LINCOLN COLCORD, Author of "The Drifting Diamond," etc. With frontispiece. Decorated cloth, 12mo. \$1.25 net.

Upon the appearance of Mr. Colcord's *The Drifting Diamond*, critics throughout the country had a great deal to say on the pictures of the sea which it contained. Mr. Colcord was compared to Conrad, to Stevenson, and to others who have written of the sea with much success. It is gratifying, therefore, that in this book the briny deep furnishes the background—in some instances the plot itself—for each one of its eleven tales. Coupled with his own intimate knowledge and appreciation of the oceans and the life that is lived on them—a knowledge and appreciation born in him through a long line of seafaring ancestry and fostered by his own love for the sea—he has a powerful style of writing. Vividness is perhaps its distinguishing characteristic, though fluency and a peculiar feeling for words also mark it.

The Mutiny of the Elsinore

By JACK LONDON, Author of "The Sea Wolf," "The Call of the Wild," etc. With frontispiece in colors by Anton Fischer. Cloth, 12mo. \$1.35 net.

Everyone who remembers *The Sea Wolf* with pleasure will enjoy this vigorous narrative of a voyage from New York around Cape Horn in a large sailing vessel. *The Mutiny of the Elsinore* is the same kind of tale as its famous predecessor, and by those who have read it, it is pronounced even more stirring. Mr. London is here writing of scenes and types of people with which he is very familiar, the sea and ships and those who live in ships. In addition to the adventure element, of which there is an abundance of the usual London kind, a most satisfying kind it is, too, there is a thread of romance involving a wealthy, tired young man who takes the trip on the *Elsinore* and the captain's daughter. The play of incident, on the one hand the ship's amazing crew and on the other the lovers, gives a story in which the interest never lags and which demonstrates anew what a master of his art Mr. London is.

Neighbors: Life Stories of the Other Half

By JACOB A. RIIS, Author of "How the Other Half Lives," etc. With illustrations by W. T. Benda. Decorated cloth, 12mo. \$1.25 net.

One of the most remarkable books ever written is Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives*. At the time of its appearance it created nothing short of a literary sensation, and it is still found among the widely read and discussed publications. The present volume is a continuation or an elaboration of that work. In it Mr. Riis tells with that charm which is

peculiarly his own and with a wonderful fidelity to life, little human interest stories of the people of the “other half.”

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He has taken incidents in their daily lives and has so set them before the reader that there is gained a new and a real insight into the existence of a class which is, with each year, making its presence felt more and more in the nation. These tales, though in the garb of fiction, are true. "I could not have invented them had I tried; I should not have tried if I could," Mr. Riis tells us in a prefatory note.

The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman

By H. G. WELLS. Cloth, 12mo. \$1.50 net.

The name of H. G. Wells upon a title page is an assurance of merit. It is a guarantee that on the pages which follow will be found an absorbing story told with master skill. In the present hook Mr. Wells surpasses even his previous efforts. He is writing of modern society life, particularly of one very charming young woman, Lady Harman, who finds herself so bound in by convention, so hampered by restrictions, largely those of a well-intentioned but short-sighted husband, that she is ultimately moved to revolt. The real meaning of this revolt, its effect upon her life and those of her associates, are narrated by one who goes beneath the surface in his analysis of human motives. In the group of characters, writers, suffragists, labor organizers, social workers and society lights surrounding Lady Harman, and in the dramatic incidents which compose the years of her existence which are described by Mr. Wells, there is a novel which is significant in its interpretation of the trend of affairs today, and fascinatingly interesting as fiction. It is Mr. Wells at his best.

The Rise of Jennie Cushing

By MARY S. WATTS, Author of "Nathan Burke," "Van Cleve," etc. Cloth, 12mo. \$1.35 net.

In *Nathan Burke* Mrs. Watts fold with great power the story of a man. In this, her new book, she does much the same thing for a woman. Jennie Cushing is an exceedingly interesting character, perhaps the most interesting of any that Mrs. Watts has yet given us. The novel is her life and little else, but that is a life filled with a variety of experiences and touching closely many different strata of humankind. Throughout it all, from the days when as a thirteen-year-old, homeless, friendless waif. Jennie is sent to a reformatory, to the days when her beauty is the inspiration of a successful painter, there is in the narrative an appeal to the emotions, to the sympathy, to the affections, that cannot be gainsaid.