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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Kathy J. Lyday-Lee entitled "Selected Mountain Literature of Will Allen Dromgoole." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in English.

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SELECTED MOUNTAIN LITERATURE OF WILL ALLEN DROMGOOLE

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Kathy J. Lyday-Lee

August 1982

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ABSTRACT

Will Allen Dromgoole (1860-1934), a versatile and popular author during the late 1890s and 1900s, was a native Tennessean who wrote novels, short stories, poems, and essays and edited a weekly column, "Song and Story," in the Nashville Banner from 1903 until her death. Dromgoole's literature revolves around her experiences in life, with settings unmistakably derived from her knowledge of Tennessee. In this study the works in which Dromgoole portrays the mountaineer and his culture are the primary focus. Two of Dromgoole's contemporaries, George Washington Harris and Mary Noailles Murfree, have received acclaim for their efforts in portraying the Tennessee mountaineer, but Dromgoole has been largely ignored since her death. Even though she did not publish as much mountain literature as Murfree, her literature of the mountains, especially the short stories, is as good as any mountain literature published during this time. In order that Dromgoole's contribution to Tennessee literature—and to Appalachian literature in general—may be fully realized and appreciated, this edition of her mountain literature has been compiled. It consists of ten stories, two articles on the Melungeons, numerous column excerpts, and nine poems.

After a brief critical and biographical introduction, Dromgoole's literature is examined by genres. With the short stories attention is given to theme, character, and literary dialect; the Melungeon articles are examined for historical accuracy. The column material is of interest because of the factual accounts Dromgoole presents, and the poetry is analyzed with regard to form and subject matter.

An examination of Dromgoole's mountain literature shows that she excelled in fiction particularly, but was capable of representing the mountaineer in several mediums. An edition of this material shows Dromgoole's value as an accurate depictor of Tennessee mountain life. Additionally, because of the renewed interest in regional literature, a collection of this sort is a useful text through which to study the nineteenth-century mountaineer since it gives the reader a broader sample of nineteenth-century mountain literature.

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

I. CRITICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

Regional literature constitutes an important part of the American literary heritage, and most regions of the United States can proudly boast of at least one author who tells of some aspect of that region. Such regional authors as Hamlin Garland, Bret Harte, and, to some degree, Mark Twain, set forth standards that they felt should govern local color literature. In his collection of critical essays, Crumbling Idols (1894), Garland defined local color as being literature through which "the writer spontaneously reflects the life which goes on around him."[1] A few years later, Harte, in his essay "The Development of the American Short Story" (1899), stated that "the secret of the American short story was the treatment of characteristic American life, with absolute knowledge of its peculiarities and sympathy with its methods."[2] Perhaps the most outspoken of the critics was Mark Twain, who believed that only by "years and years of unconscious absorption, years and years of intercourse with the life concerned," could an author adequately represent a region and its people in literature.[3] The one

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[1]Hamlin Garland, "Local Color in Art," Crumbling Idols, ed. Jane Johnson (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 52.

[2]Bret Harte, "The Development of the American Short Story," What is the Short Story? eds. Eugene Current Garcia and Walton R. Patrick (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, and Co., 1974), p. 33.

[3]Mark Twain, "What Paul Bourget Thinks of Us," The Complete Essays of Mark Twain, ed. Charles Neider (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1963), p. 168.

common belief shared by these authors was that, in order for regional literature to be good, it must realistically represent the people, their lifestyle, and the dialect peculiar to them. These principles do not apply to all literature, nor do these writers mean to imply such; the purpose of local literature, according to these local colorists, is to depict a specific region and its people, and in order to do justice to these people, accuracy is very important. Therefore, the writer inaccurately or unjustly portraying a culture in his writing defeats the purpose of local color fiction.

Much local color literature concerns the South, some of it dating back to the first settlers' accounts of their adventures, much of it written in the nineteenth century, and some of it continuing today. In the nineteenth century there was a surge of interest in the isolated, mountainous regions of the Southeast; during this time a profusion of fiction and nonfiction appeared which dealt specifically with the mountains of Tennessee, their people and culture. For the purpose of studying the mountain literature of Will Allen Dromgoole (1860-1934), only examples of late nineteenth-century mountain literature by other authors who use Tennessee as a setting are included as measures of comparison. Some of this literature is of higher quality than others, usually depending on the author's purpose and/or experience. Since nearly all of the writers are striving to depict a particular region of the state, their fiction must be classified as local color literature. It is by virtue of this fact that some of the literature succeeds, while other works fail; some authors represent their subject accurately,

while others do not realistically portray the region they seek to describe.

One author who wrote of a Tennessee mountaineer during this period was George Washington Harris, but his Sut Lovingood's Yarns (1867) are not local color fiction in the sense that the rest of the examples are. Harris depicts the Tennessee mountaineer in a biased, stereotyped manner; the reader must keep in mind, however, that Harris's purpose was not to portray the mountaineer realistically, but to use him, his lifestyle, and his language for purposes of humor, and sometimes as a backdrop for the author's political and philosophical views. The caricature of Sut Lovingood became this vehicle, and character became subordinate to theme.

Even though Harris's portrayal of the mountaineer is not altogether accurate, there is a purpose involved. Unfortunately, not all accounts of the mountaineer and mountain life are even this accurate, and indeed there were authors who depicted the mountaineer in an inaccurate and derogatory manner, violating the very nature of local color fiction as defined by the critical principles cited earlier. One such literary figure who created an undesirable picture of mountain life for her readers was Louise Regina Baker, an elusive figure about whom little is known, who lived in Maryland but wrote of Tennessee. There is no evidence of her having visited, much less lived, in Tennessee, and the manner in which she represents the mountaineer in the novel Cis Martin, or the Furriners in the Tennessee Mountains (1898), her only mountain work, lends strong support to this statement. She could have easily obtained general information about Tennessee and its

people by reading earlier literature, such as Mary Noailles Murfree's works, but insight gained through first-hand knowledge of the mountains and mountaineers is seriously lacking in her work. Baker consistently refers to the mountains as "the Tennessee mountains" and speaks of them as a hostile, foreign place. Of course, to those who had never been to the mountains, these isolated, rugged regions may well have been frightening places where criminals fled and primitive lifestyles were the norm. The main characters in the novel are an upper-middle class family who have experienced financial failure and have traveled to the mountains so that the father, an ex-professor of Greek and Latin, can try his fortune in the lumber business. The story is narrated by the oldest daughter, Cis, who is newly arrived from a finishing school in the East; her main goal in the novel is to rescue her family from the mountains by publishing a book her father has written. She is eventually successful and the Martin family returns to civilization. In this unrealistic novel Baker presents an unflattering and highly inaccurate picture of the mountaineer. For example, one mountain woman gives her son away as a Christmas present, while at another point in the story some of the women ramble uninvited through a house, looking through dresser drawers, touching everything in sight, and generally behaving rudely. These actions are not typical of the mountaineer and show Baker's lack of experience with these people. Such examples appear throughout the book and represent the misconceptions of mountain society that were being propagated by this type of literature. Unfortunately, tales of the mountains were very popular

during this period, and because of such biased accounts, an unfavorable stereotype of the mountaineer was born.

Comparable to Baker is Sarah Barnwell Elliot, a Tennessean by adoption who was born in Savannah, Georgia, but spent most of her life in Sewanee. Her novel, The Durket Sperett (1898), exhibits a sentimental plot with two-dimensional, stereotyped characters. Elliott presents a high contrast by having semiliterate mountain dwellers, or "covites" as they are called, work for the well-educated city dwellers. The mountaineers frequently do not behave like mountaineers, but more like city dwellers. The story revolves around a melodramatic plot: good mountain boy saves innocent mountain girl from the corrupting influences of both the evil villain and city life. The importance of the moral principle, that is, good triumphing over evil, takes precedence over characterization. There does, at least, seem to be purpose to this work, and the mountain characters are not maligned in any way. In contrast to the three examples given thus far, two of the more successful writers of Tennessee mountain fiction, Mary Noailles Murfree and Will Allen Dromgoole, achieve moral purpose as well as believable situations in their works.

Mary N. Murfree, the undisputed champion of the Tennessee mountaineer in the nineteenth century, wrote generally accurate accounts of mountain life. On the whole, her use of dialect is good, and her characters are adequate, although often stereotyped, especially in the early works. In fact, after examining all of her fiction, one can nearly always place her characters in a few categories, and even though she wrote many mountain stories and novels, variety within the plots

and in the characters is seriously lacking. This flaw may be attributed perhaps to the fact that Murfree was an invalid and could not travel far into the mountains on foot. Instead, the mountain people who lived around Beersheba Springs, Murfree's summer home, visited her and related accounts of their lives, which the author then used in her stories. As a result of her affliction, and, consequently, her inability to travel great distances, Murfree's first-hand knowledge of the Tennessee mountaineer was restricted to small geographical areas within traveling distance of her home, Murfreesboro, or places she visited, such as Knoxville and the Smoky Mountains. She had, therefore, "no more than a summer cottager's acquaintance of the mountaineer."[4] Regardless of minor shortcomings, Murfree's stories are well-written and interesting, but more importantly, they were extremely popular. And even though she lacked the experience needed to make them as realistic and believable as they could have been, her stories reflect a familiarity with mountain life that makes them successful local color literature.

Unlike Harris, Baker, and Elliot, but much like Murfree, the subject of this study, Will Allen Dromgoole, proved to be an excellent recorder of mountain life; she did not lack experience and only on occasion used stereotyping to present her ideas. According to the recorded factual accounts of mountain life by such mountain experts as Horace Kephart (Our Southern Highlanders, 1913), Cratis D. Williams (The Southern Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction, 1961), and Levi Powell

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[4]Isabella Harris, The Southern Mountaineer in American Fiction, 1824-1910 (Diss. Duke University, 1948), pp. 97-98.

(Who Are These Mountain People?, 1966), the settings and characterizations of Dromgoole's stories ring true to reality. In addition, her literary mountain dialect, for the most part, reasonably reflects the speech of the nineteenth-century mountaineer of East and Middle Tennessee. On at least one occasion Dromgoole spent several weeks with mountaineers in East Tennessee, staying with mountain families as their house guest, and she frequently ventured into the mountains near her summer home in Estill Springs. In other words, Dromgoole knew a variety of mountain people firsthand; she had the experience necessary to produce realistic stories with accurate settings, speech and characters. Unfortunately, Dromgoole published only a few mountain stories; eight appeared in the Boston Arena, five of which were anthologized in two volumes of short stories, "The Heart of Old Hickory" and Other Stories of Tennessee (1895) and "Cinch" and Other Stories (1898). One story, "Tappine," never appeared in the Arena, but was anthologized in "Cinch" and Other Stories. Dromgoole's earliest mountain story was apparently a tale entitled "Mad Mose's Heroism," written especially for the Christmas issue of the Birmingham Herald in 1887. This story has appeared in no other publication; in addition to these stories, there are two non-fiction articles in the Arena describing the Melungeons of Hancock County, works which were criticized because of the author's lack of objectivity.[5] Only a handful of Dromgoole's 8,000 poems deal with the

[5]The Melungeons are a group of mountaineers who live in the upper East Tennessee county of Hancock and are of mysterious origin. Before writing the two articles on these people, Dromgoole spent two months locating them and observing their way of life, spending the nights in their cabins when possible. More information about this phase of Dromgoole's life and these works will be given in the following section.

Tennessee mountains and hills specifically, although there are several more that concern other subjects of Tennessee. Besides the literature that actually deals with the mountaineer, Dromgoole mentions the mountaineer in several of her "Song and Story" columns in the Nashville Banner in the form of anecdotes or personal comments regarding her experiences with these people; there is also an informative and perceptive interview with the author in The Coming Age magazine in which she discusses the mountaineer and his life, supporting the fact that she did know mountain culture and speech through personal contact. More complete information concerning Dromgoole's various literary achievements will be given in the following section.

Will Allen Dromgoole led a long, eventful life, and to know the details of this life and her interests helps in understanding why she began writing mountain literature, why she stopped after such a short time, and why she used the themes she did. Born on October 25, 1860, in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Dromgoole was the last child of John Easter Dromgoole and his second wife, Rebecca Mildred Blanch.[6] Hoping for a son in this second marriage, Dromgoole's father chose the name William Allen for the child and used it, even though the new child was a girl.[7]

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[6]The Dictionary of American Biography (1944), p. 265.

[7]Bearing a masculine name had certain advantages for a woman in the nineteenth century, especially if one aspired to be a writer. Although the confusion over her name was probably a help at times, on other occasions it created some embarrassment, and usually not for Dromgoole. One of the most frequently repeated anecdotes has her being invited to the bachelor quarters of Mr. Hezekiah Butterworth, editor of the Youth's Companion; another story tells of a well-known editor who meets Dromgoole and tells her that he is looking for a Mr. Dromgoole, to which Dromgoole replies, "Well, I am your man." (Winfield Hogaboom, "The Little Girl Who Lived in the Mountains," The Los Angeles Herald, 31 March 1901.)

The Dromgooles claimed French, Irish, English and Dutch ancestry, with the family line beginning in America before the American Revolution when Dromgoole's great-grandfather emigrated from Sligo, Ireland, and became part of the early Methodist movement in this country.[8] Chiefly educated at home and in private schools, Dromgoole graduated from the Clarksville Female Academy in 1867 and later studied at the New England School of Expressionism in Boston.[9] According to B. O. Flower, the editor of the Boston Arena and a close friend of the author's, Dromgoole was "studious and inclined to introspection." Flower also mentions that Dromgoole's mother was instrumental in fostering her literary career, stimulating a love for literature and encouraging her to write. Unfortunately, her mother died before any of the daughter's work was published. Depressed by her mother's death in 1884 and confronted with the responsibility of caring for her aged father, Dromgoole took her mother's earlier advice and began writing professionally.[10]

In 1886, Dromgoole's first published work appeared in the form of a novel entitled The Sunny Side of the Cumberland, a sentimental love story and travel narrative that Dromgoole later denied writing; it in fact only bore her first two names, although the book was copyrighted by Will Allen Dromgoole.[11] Her first published short story, "Columbus

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[8]Sarah Cash, "Will Allen Dromgoole Gave 25 Years of Song, Story," The Nashville Banner, 7 April 1960, p. 14.

[9]The Dictionary of American Biography, p. 265.

[10]B. O. Flower, "A Daughter of Tennessee," Arena, 31 (1904), 88.

[11]"Miss Will Allen's Song and Story," The Nashville Tennessean, 7 April 1976, p. 60.

Tucker's Discontent," not only was accepted in 1886 by Youth's Companion, but was awarded a prize of $250 for its excellence.[12] Dromgoole, however, did not achieve recognition until 1890, and in her words: "It was not until 'Fiddling His Way to Fame' appeared in the Arena that I suddenly found myself famous, and since then I have had more orders for work than I have been able to fill."[13] Because of the success of "Fiddling His Way to Fame," the Arena "premiered" nearly all of Dromgoole's short stories; and although she wrote for other periodicals in New York and Boston while she was studying in New England, she seemed to favor the Arena over the others. Beginning in February 1890, she also edited and contributed to Will Allen's Journal: A Literary Society Weekly, a twelve-page newspaper-like publication which included articles, literary reviews, political columns, local news, advertisements for local merchants, and a number of other features; it was published in Nashville, but for only a few years.

In the late 1800's, Dromgoole spent most of her time writing, but she did occupy herself with some interesting activities which reveal other sides of her personality. Earlier, she had studied law with her father, but under Tennessee law women were not allowed a license to practice. Undaunted by this sexual discrimination, Dromgoole did the next best thing; in 1885 and 1887, she served as engrossing clerk in the state senate, the latter term under Governor Robert Love Taylor,

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[12]The Dictionary of American Biography, p. 266.

[13]Mr. and Mrs. Hall Burks, "Miss Will Allen Dromgoole and Franklin County," The Franklin County Historical Review, 4 (Dec. 1972), 27.

a prominent figure in two of her mountain stories. In 1889, she ran again for clerk, but was defeated, and in 1891, she sought the clerkship, but her nomination was opposed by some senators who complained that she "writ agin the mount'ns."[14] This claim by the senators probably stemmed from unfavorable articles about the Melungeons, which were first published in the Nashville Daily American in 1890 and in the Arena in 1891. Comments concerning this unfortunate episode seem to indicate that these charges were not fairly made and that they had been politically motivated, especially since there had been a change in administrations early in 1891. After this disappointing defeat, Dromgoole taught public school in Tennessee and then in Texas for a short time; facts of her life during this period are sketchy.[15] Upon her return to Tennessee Dromgoole began her newspaper career, her first position being with the Nashville World. During this period she also worked for the Nashville Daily American and the Banner, edited the juvenile department of the Sunday South and contributed to the same department of the New Orleans Picayune, now the Times-Picayune.[16]

In the years following her mother's death, Dromgoole spent nearly all of her time with her father, the two "chums" being practically inseparable; he was her primary focus during this difficult but busy time of her life.[17] In 1887, with her first earnings, she had a cabin

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[14]Winfield Hogaboom, "The Little Girl Who Lived in the Mountains."

[15]The Dictionary of American Biography, p. 266.

[16]Hogaboom, "The Little Girl Who Lived in the Mountains."

[17]In 1898 Dromgoole published perhaps the most autobiographical work of her entire career; it was called Rare Old Chums, and even though the names are different, the book mirrors the life she and her father

built in the foothills beside the Elk River, where she and her father enjoyed fishing. In the small town of Estill Springs, the "Yellowhammer's Nest," as she called it, became the Dromgoole home, and even when she moved to Nashville following her father's death in 1897, Dromgoole would return frequently to the cabin.[18] It was in this peaceful environment, far from the bustle of city life, that she wrote most of her fiction and some of her columns, and the people of the small community supplied Dromgoole with material for some of her finest stories, columns, and poems. For many years after Dromgoole's death, the cabin was left undisturbed, but it was unfortunately destroyed by a 1972 fire.[19]

Between 1900 and October, 1902, Dromgoole contributed articles sporadically to the Nashville Banner. Late in 1902, she was hired by the Banner as a permanent staff member; and in December of 1903 she originated the successful column, "Song and Story." In addition to the column, Dromgoole wrote many historical and public service articles for Nashvillians, which became popular features of the Banner Saturday, and later Sunday, editions. During her frequent travels in the United States and abroad, she became a staff correspondent and kept Nashvillians informed about such cities as New York, Boston, Paris, and Rome. Along with this journalistic phase of her life, however, came the decline of

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led after her mother's death. It is an important work in that it offers insight into the feelings she had towards her father, and how much he meant to her, and how much he supported the work that she did. Although brief, the book is a tribute to their life together in the cabin at Estill Springs.

[18]Russell E. Mooney and Marianne Turpin Burke, eds., The Mooney Genealogy (produced under the sponsorship of the Knoxville Chapter of Daughters of the American Colonists, 1964), p. 139.

[19]Burks, p. 25.

her mountain literature; instead, she concentrated on other types of stories, poetry, and, of course, her newspaper column and feature articles.

Dromgoole's life took an interesting turn when the United States entered World War I in April, 1917. Openly patriotic in her column, Dromgoole volunteered her services to the United States Navy, and in May, she was recruited as a warrant officer in the yeomanry branch of the Navy, perhaps being the first female to serve in this capacity.[20] In a telegram which appeared in the May 4, 1917, Banner, Dromgoole reassured her readers from her base in Norfolk, Virginia, that "Song and Story" would not be disrupted by her military service since her assignment dealt with public relations; more specifically, her duties included recruiting young men into the Navy, visiting ships, and delivering patriotic speeches. The next year she became chief librarian at the Cherrystone Naval Base in Chesapeake Bay and was director of the YMCA at the base.[21] "Song and Story" was still published in the Banner on a regular basis during this time, but Dromgoole kept her readers informed about her experiences in Virginia rather than in Tennessee, her travels to nearby states and cities, and her "war" experiences; her column format was not altered, only her subject matter. For unexplained reasons, by November, 1918, Dromgoole had returned to Nashville and had resumed her career at the Banner office.

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[20]"Will Allen Dromgoole, Beloved Southern Poet and Novelist, Is Dead," The Nashville Banner, 1 September 1934, pp. 1-2.

[21]Cash, p. 14.

During the later years of her life, Dromgoole kept busy by writing her column and other feature articles for the Banner, and with the death of R. H. Yancey in 1922, she became the literary editor of the paper as well. Because of the popularity generated by her writings and because of her military service, Dromgoole was in great demand as a lecturer and public speaker at literary groups, patriotic clubs, and writing circles; in addition to these public honors, she was named Poet Laureate by the Poetry Society of the South in 1930. Among her many literary accomplishments are thirteen books, dozens of stories, eight thousand poems, five thousand columns of "Song and Story," several articles, an operetta ("The Birds of Tennessee") and two plays (The Tennessean and In Tin Cup Alley). Some of her poetry was so popular that it was set to music.[22]

When Will Allen Dromgoole died on September 1, 1934, the Banner carried the news of her death on its front page. The last direct descendant of her father and mother, she is buried in the Evergreen Cemetery in Murfreesboro beside her mother. After her death various honors were accorded her. A Dromgoole Literary Circle was established at Middle Tennessee State College, and a dahlia was named in her memory only three weeks after her death.[23] In addition to these tributes, St. Cecilia Academy of Nashville set aside a Dromgoole room, which contains a bust of Dromgoole made by Sister Mary Luke Truman, several signed Dromgoole editions, and furniture from the author's library; the school library contains the bulk of Dromgoole's personal library.

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[22]Ibid.

[23]Cash, p. 14.

Dromgoole, although not Catholic, maintained a close friendship with the sisters at the school while she lived in Nashville; this friendship was perhaps prompted by the fact that one of her nieces was a sister at the convent of St. Cecilia.

Although Dromgoole was very popular at the time of her death, few people today remember anything concerning the author or her writings. What scraps of information can be gathered from articles and interviews show her to have been a dynamic woman, small of stature, with red hair that she dyed in later years, gifted with a good sense of humor, and a brilliant conversationalist. Other personality traits revealed by colleagues and friends were that she never revealed her age; she listed herself a Democrat and her chief interests as literature and music; and she loved to fish, hunt, camp, and travel.[24] A Banner biographical sketch said of her: "She is a very modest body who shrinks from putting herself forward . . . working patiently with pen and hoping for the best that may come of all she writes, made happy when she knows that here and there she has given cheer or pleasure or comfort to someone who needed it." In the same article she is described as being "strong-willed, stout-hearted, sentimental, and a little dreamy and a hard, tireless worker."[25] All of the above qualities are evident in the work presented in this edition.

Dromgoole's obscurity today, after she enjoyed such prominence and popularity during her lifetime, is the reason for this study.

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[24]The Tennessean, p. 60.

[25]"Will Allen Dromgoole," The Nashville Banner, 10 June 1905, p. 10.

Dromgoole's mountain literature, although not large in quantity, is relatively high in quality. As compared with her popular contemporary, Mary Noailles Murfree, Dromgoole wrote less mountain material, but it is equal to Murfree's in the quality of character, setting, theme, and dialect. And while Murfree's works are included in many anthologies of southern literature, Dromgoole's are not. An annotated edition of Dromgoole's mountain literature, excluding the novels, with analysis of theme, purpose, characters, and style will show Dromgoole's merit as an accurate depictor of mountain people and culture. In the interest of Tennessee literature, as well as Appalachian literature in general, her contributions need to be recognized as valid portraits of a society which no longer survives in this century—at least not in the form that existed in the nineteenth century.

The following section briefly introduces all the genres to be presented in this edition, with appropriate comments and analysis. This analysis will vary because of the different nature of each genre. Dromgoole's short stories, essays, columns, and poetry are rich in Tennessee history, and some are semiautobiographical, mirroring her philosophies and personality traits, as well as embodying many characteristics of the new literary trend of realism. With this collection of mountain literature, readers will see Dromgoole's worth as a Tennessee mountain writer, and her works will have a more secure place in Tennessee literature.

Now that background information has been given on Dromgoole's life and works, some attention should be given to the procedures used in editing this collection of mountain literature. The majority of the

editing occurs in the short stories. As mentioned above, five of Dromgoole's short stories have only been published once, but the other half first appeared in the Arena magazine and then later in one of two collections of short stories. Some changes between the early and later versions are to be expected, but these differences are minor. In some instances the dialect has been simplified or clarified to make reading easier, or a typographical error in the original printed version has been corrected. Dromgoole never alters characters or story lines although she occasionally adds descriptive passages. Through these changes in particular, the reader is allowed a glimpse of the author's creative process. The primary problem in editing all of the mountain literature is that there are no extant manuscripts; because of this, the editor is forced to rely on printed versions. Additionally, with two versions of the same story, the editor must note discrepancies when they occur without knowing whether some changes were made purposely by the author or inadvertently by the printer. In most cases, the answer is obvious, but in a few instances, only an original manuscript could provide the solution. Although such originals of Dromgoole's non-mountain stories do exist, handwritten copies of the mountain works, to this date, have not been located. Other editorial comments in the form of footnotes concern the location of the stories, definition of terms, explanation of some dialect features, and historical and biographical allusions that require further discussion. All of this information helps the reader to understand Dromgoole's literature as well as to appreciate her skill as a writer and her knowledge of not only the Tennessee mountaineer, but the history and geography of the state.

II. INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE

A. THE SHORT STORIES

The second largest group of Will Allen Dromgoole's literature is her short stories; in fact, she wrote so many stories for such a variety of publications that it is impossible to arrive at a specific number. In addition, other unpublished manuscripts and typescripts have been found. Most of Dromgoole's stories were published in the Arena; however, other stories appear in newspapers such as the Boston Courier, the New York Herald, and the Birmingham Herald. Aside from her juvenile short fiction, which was published almost exclusively in the Youth's Companion, Dromgoole's short stories fall into three categories: those with Negro characters, those with mountain characters, and a miscellaneous category that usually focuses on Nashville and poor whites, but also includes a handful of stories that fall outside all of these groups. The stories of the mountains are the smallest group and are perhaps the most experimental. Eight of the mountain stories were first published in the Arena; five of these were later included in collections of Dromgoole short stories. One story never appeared in the Arena but was included in a collection, and one very early mountain story appeared only in the Christmas, 1887, issue of the Birmingham Herald.[26] Dromgoole

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[26]In chronological order, the stories and sources in which they appear are: "Mad Mose's Heroism," The Birmingham Herald, Dec. 25, 1887; "Fiddling His Way to Fame," Arena, 2 (1890) and HH (1895); "The War of the Roses," Arena, 5 (1892); "The Leper of the Cumberlands," Arena, 7 (1892) and COS (1898); "Ole Logan's Courtship," Arena, 10 (1894) and HH (1895); "Cinch," Arena, 11 (1894) and COS (1898); "A Humble Advocate," Arena, 14 (1895) and COS (1898); "The Herb Doctor," Arena, 17 (1897);

wrote mountain short stories between 1887 and 1904, and during these years her mountain literature underwent much improvement and many changes. Unpolished sketches evolved into accurate portraits of mountain life and people, and strong statements of personal and religious philosophies pervade the later works especially.

Before Dromgoole's mountain fiction is examined, some background on the state of mountain literature during the late nineteenth century should be given. Few people knew much about the mountaineer during this period; the isolated mountain regions were too difficult to get to, and frequently the residents were inhospitable and wary of strangers. Although it was rare for travelers to venture into these rugged hills, most people were curious about the mysterious mountaineer, and many accounts of mountain life were published during this time, literature that proved to be popular with Northern readers in particular. Some of the earliest, good mountain fiction was written by Mary Noailles Murfree, a contemporary of Dromgoole's who wrote sentimental but entertaining stories of the Tennessee mountaineer. One of the pioneers in reporting the factual life of the mountaineer was Horace Kephart, whose Our Southern Highlanders is still considered an authoritative account of the Tennessee-North Carolina mountaineer and his lifestyle during the early twentieth century. According to Kephart's description of the real-life mountaineers he met in his travels, Dromgoole's characterizations are accurate. It was not, however, Dromgoole's purpose in her

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"Tappine," COS (1898); and "The Light of Liberty," Arena, 31 (1904). All further references to these stories will be cited parenthetically within the text.

mountain fiction to portray the mountaineer accurately, and she took the writer's privilege of poetic license. And even though Kephart's descriptions were of twentieth-century mountain people, there was not much difference between the lifestyle of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century mountaineers. After World War I, however, the life of the mountaineer changed radically because of progress and technology; also, many of the men who had been in the war and had "seen the world," courtesy of the U.S. Army, chose not to return to the mountains and their rather limited way of life. Kephart's study is important because he captured the mountain culture before this change occurred.

The mountaineer of the late nineteenth century and early twenteith centuries was a member of an extremely broad and diversified subculture in America. As in any subculture, there were many types of mountaineers, many lifestyles, and different speech patterns. In literature stereotyping occurs frequently because the author, in his attempt to stress a theme, often minimizes the differences in a culture; this was a particular problem in the early mountain literature because of the authors' general lack of knowledge of mountain people. The ability of an author to depict a people or culture depends usually on his experience with and knowledge of the people and situations he seeks to represent. Dromgoole had the experience to write very accurate tales of the mountains; she did not, however, always do so. Many times, especially in the later stories, theme becomes the most important element, requiring her to slight her characterization in favor of a moral. Stereotyping often results in her stories because of this, but it is usually not a derogatory type of stereotyping. In only a couple of instances does she depict a

mountaineer in an unfavorable way, and it usually occurs so that an important point can be made.

Upon examining Dromgoole's mountain literature, one may easily see her versatility in portraying the mountaineer through different genres. The quality of this literature, however, is questionable. The Melungeon essays are subjective, the column material brief and anecdotal rather than literary, and the poetry sentimental and mediocre. Dromgoole's short mountain fiction, on the other hand, exhibits quality and diversity in subject matter and style, and even though the collection of mountain stories is small as compared, for example, to Murfree's volumes of mountain literature, Dromgoole chose to develop several different themes and character types. In the ten mountain stories in this edition, a variety of themes, characters, settings and speech patterns may be observed. Instead of continually using excessive stereotyping and limited mountain types, Dromgoole seeks to make each story an individual work; none of the tales imitate each other, and, although a few of the characters share common traits, each is differentiated in some manner. A few of the characters undergo a change in values while others are stronger, more defined versions of earlier, weaker characters. And although some of the themes are repeated in the stories, Dromgoole chooses different methods through which to project them. In addition to varied themes and characters, Dromgoole's settings display a wide variety as well, illustrating that the author was at least familiar with maps of Tennessee if not with the actual geographic areas. Dromgoole also makes good use of a literary mountain dialect,

employing common, recognizable features consistently, but including, as well, specific words and folk idioms peculiar to certain areas of the state.

It is because of this deliberate variety in theme, character, setting, and speech that Dromgoole's stories do not run together in a wash of similarity and mediocrity. Each is a definite and clear picture of mountaineers in a specific setting who are dealing with a variety of emotional, physical, and sociological problems. Further discussion of the themes, characters, settings, and dialect in the stories will give more specific evidence of Dromgoole's versatility and talent as an accurate story-teller of mountain life in Tennessee.

The majority of Dromgoole's stories concern the moral principles of her characters and the decisions they must make in order to follow these principles. Dromgoole seems to be concerned with honesty and fairness especially, condemning those who violate their own principles as well as those of others or those who have no morals to begin with. In the earliest short story, "Mad Mose's Heroism," the main character, Mose Faris, is a crusty, old mountaineer who lives away from society and has contempt for those who violate his world. He especially dislikes rich people who live in the valley and who don't use good common sense when venturing into the mountains. The specific targets of his rage in the story are the children of a wealthy valley man who have naively traveled up Roan Mountain when the weather was obviously (at least to Mose) too bad for an excursion. He calls them "a passel of fools" and "a passel o' pint blank idjits" (p. 100). Initially, the reader sees a stubborn, hateful, old mountaineer who has no regard for his fellow

man. Toward the end of the story, however, Mose realizes that the children could not possibly come down the mountain in the blizzard, so he sets out to find them, complaining all the while. This shows that, even though he dislikes the children because of their background and the fact that they taunt him and call him names, his sense of humanity overrides his contempt for them. Mose does save them and even gives them shelter for the night in his humble cabin. The cynical mountaineer has mellowed by the end of the story. Dromgoole, even in this very early tale, clearly shows that goodness must triumph over evil and inhumanity.

The best example of a man who stands up for his personal beliefs is the character of the governor in "Fiddling His Way to Fame." This character is the epitome of fairness and honesty, not only refusing to take a bribe, but exposing the offer to the entire state legislature. This trait of honesty has long been attached to the mountaineer, and Dromgoole herself speaks of the mountaineer's sense of honesty in several columns and interviews. This same sense of honesty is seen even more clearly in Dromgoole's last mountain story, "The Light of Liberty," in the character of Jim Hardeman. In addition to being honest, the mountaineer hates being confined, coveting his independence; in this tale, the author places these two traits side by side, in opposition to each other, making the character choose between them. Jim Hardeman is imprisoned for a crime he feels was morally justified, killing a man who called him a liar—a violation of the mountain code of honor. This trait of vengeance is echoed in several of Dromgoole's columns and even though she may not approve of it, she at least recognizes it as an

important part of the code. Dromgoole has her character state that he would rather be dead than have no liberty, but when Hardeman has a chance to escape through a hole in the tunnel of the coal mine in which he is working, he says that he would rather be dead than to be a runaway. Following his code of honor, Hardeman reports the hole to the prison authorities and is rewarded for his honesty by being given his freedom. Dromgoole's message that "Honesty is the best policy" is very obvious here, and she also draws a clear picture of the complicated code of ethics that the mountaineer lives by. Once again, good triumphs over temptation.

In the rather long story, "Cinch," Dromgoole adds a twist to the traditional good versus evil theme. The mountaineers are a man and his wife, Jerry and Isabel Stamps, whose world is invaded by Bob Binder, a mountaineer who left the mountains eight years earlier to move to Texas, but has returned. The interaction between these characters is complicated, and morality and principles play major roles in the story's outcome. Stamps is a brutal, seemingly uncaring man who mentally and physically abuses his young wife, Isabel. Binder realizes this and tries to persuade Isabel to leave with him. Isabel reveals that she is pregnant and tells Binder that she must remain with her husband because of her moral obligation to him. Binder tries to "buy" Isabel and the child from Stamps by offering him money in exchange for their freedom, an act which enrages Stamps because it is in total violation of his code of honor. The reader sees in the end that Binder, who was symbolic of goodness initially, has been tainted with evil, and Stamps, the epitome of selfishness and evil, has mellowed toward the end by the birth of his

child on Christmas Day. The implication here is that by being gone from the mountains for so long, Binder has been corrupted by the outside world and can no longer understand or function within the mountain code of ethics, something which he does not seem to realize. Again, principles of the characters—Isabel's devotion to her less-than-acceptable husband because of the marriage bond and Jerry's refusal to accept a bribe—are the controlling factors in this tale. Passions, particularly love, are important in most of Dromgoole's stories and in a later story, "Tappine," the title character defends her right to love the man she chooses, even though he ignores her and treats her badly. In defense of this choice, she says, "A woman can't holp who she loves, and she can't allers love as she knows ter be wise an' right" (p. 268). This strong tie of love, even when others are not able to understand it, must be respected. Loyalty to one's heart and to one's principles is a theme that ties these stories together.

Another theme that emerges in Dromgoole's short mountain fiction is the issue of women's rights, human rights that were denied mountain women by society as well as by their husbands. In "A Humble Advocate" the character of Josephine Cary is very much like Isabel Stamps in that she has a brutal husband, yet she, too, has stayed with her husband until she decides that she cannot live with him anymore, not so much out of selfishness, but out of concern for the safety of her children. In this story, Dromgoole takes an earlier idea and develops it into a portrait of feminine strength and rebellion. Josephine rebels against her husband, Ike, by going into town to try to vote, although legally this was impossible. She defies her husband, stands up to his physical and

verbal abuse, as well as the taunting from the other mountain people who have come into town for the election, in order to fight for the principles of fairness. Josephine is not lobbying for women's suffrage only but for the rights that women have not to be mistreated and beaten by their husbands. This was a very strong stand for Dromgoole to take 1895 and mirrors the efforts of a character in an earlier story, "War of the Roses." In this tale, the young heroine, Denie Lynn, disobeys her fiance, Eb Ford, by appearing at a corn-shucking during election time wearing the white rose of the Democrats, although most of the people were wearing the Republican red rose. Denie is ridiculed publicly by the neighbors, but not as violently as is Josephine Cary; Eb chastizes her initially and then ignores her, for his pride has suffered. Denie states her position clearly when she says, "I'd ruther be the onliest one ter wear her hones' colors ez ter be the onliest one not brave enough ter stan' by her principles" (p. 146). Both Denie and Josephine stand by their principles and are willing to suffer humiliation in order to defend them.

In the stories discussed thus far Dromgoole has been concerned primarily with variations of the good versus evil theme, or morality versus immorality and the virtues of strong personal principles. There are a handful of stories that do not deal with these themes at all. For example, in "The Leper of the Cumberlands," the main character of Granny Corbin is faced with death and suffering caused from milksick fever. She is known by the neighbors as a fatalistic, religious person who never questions "God's will." Her faith is tested when her husband and grandchildren die from the fever, and, although she is deeply

saddened by these losses, her faith never wavers. Throughout the story the strong mountain woman weathers the storms of ridicule from her neighbors because she truly believes in her faith. Fatalism and a strong religious faith are other common characteristics attributed to the mountaineer and can be seen in other Dromgoole stories such as "The Herb Doctor" and "Tappine." In summary, the key theme in this story does not concern moral principles, but a strong, unwavering faith in God.

A different sort of theme exhibited in three stories is the contrast between mountain life and life in the valley or life in the city; sometimes education plays a role as well in this contrast. In "Mad Mose's Heroism" this theme is shown through Mose's contempt of the valley residents; their values are contrasted with Mose's, and the mountain man implies that even though these wealthy people are educated, they are ignorant about mountain life and the dangers of traveling in the mountains during the winter season. In "The Herb Doctor" the title character, although uneducated in the traditional sense, has more knowledge of medicine and human nature than do the school-educated doctors. Miss Elizabeth Rogers, a sickly girl from the city, admires the intelligence of the herb doctor, Stephen Youry, because of his honesty and ability to heal physically and mentally troubled bodies and minds. In the third example, "Tappine," Dromgoole contrasts the ignorant, naive, mountain girl Tappine to the "worldly-wise" summer visitor, Mrs. Ennerly. Once more, the mountain character, although uneducated, proves to have a better grasp on the meaning of life in general. Dromgoole's appreciation of the qualities of honesty, simplicity, and serenity in the mountain people is evident in

these three stories, and is not shown so much through the mountain-valley contrast, but through the innocent and ignorant mountaineer as compared to the supposedly educated and experienced outsiders.

One story that does not fit into any of the previously discussed themes is "Old Logan's Courtship," a story whose main thematic vehicle is humor. Dromgoole rarely uses humor in her stories, much preferring pathos and sentimentality. In "Old Logan's Courtship," however, the main character, Loge Beasley, resembles Irving's Ichabod Crane in both temperament and appearance. The reader, laughing at Loge's predicament and not with him, does not sympathize with the situations he gets into in the end of the story; because of Loge's naiveté, appearance, and buffoonery, the reader tends to find his actions laughable and circumstances deserved. This tale is quite a departure from the other Dromgoole stories in that there is no moral or message, no sentimentality, or sadness or injustice; it should be read solely for diversion.

In summarizing Dromgoole's themes, it is clear that she wanted to make statements regarding a variety of subjects. One of the strongest messages that comes forth is that a person's principles are of paramount importance ("Fiddling His Way to Fame," "The War of the Roses," "The Leper of the Cumberlands," "Cinch," "A Humble Advocate," "Tappine," and "The Light of Liberty"), principles of goodness as opposed to evil, fairness as opposed to cheating, and following one's heart as well as one's mind, regardless of the opposition encountered. An early statement of women's rights emerges in two of the stories ("The War of the Roses" and "A Humble Advocate"), and Dromgoole concerned herself with this struggle in later literature as well as in her column; she

eventually lobbied for the suffrage movement in the early twentieth century. The mountain versus the valley theme may be seen several times ("Mad Mose's Heroism," "Cinch," "The Herb Doctor," and "Tappine"), sometimes much stronger in one story than in another. In these same stories the theme of innocence versus experience may also be observed. Finally, the one example of humor ("Ole Logan's Courtship") completes the major themes Dromgoole uses in her short mountain fiction. Through careful manipulation and combination of these themes, the author clearly voices her feelings, but her voice is not overbearing or preaching; it is overly sentimental at times, but one must take into consideration that sentimentality was enjoyed and perhaps even expected by the readers of the late nineteenth century. Dromgoole's versatility in thematic structure allows each story to be singular and memorable.

Theme is undoubtedly a very important aspect of a literary work; however, without characters a work does not truly live, and Dromgoole's mountain characters are as diverse as her themes. The success of Dromgoole's stories rests mainly on the accurate portrayals of the mountain people, portrayals which convince the reader that Dromgoole relied on firsthand experience from which to draw her characters. In an unsigned article in a 1898 Nashville Banner, the author states that Dromgoole's books, in general, have been favorably received and have brought her "a generous popularity." Unfortunately, not all reviewers felt this way, and in this same article a review from the Chicago Record is quoted:

> Tennessee has furnished Mr. Dromgoole with the material for these sketches; but they are not convincing. His exaggerations of types have been, not toward the grotesque,

> but rather to putting melodramatic sentimentality into clods. In a great measure, he has apportioned conventional emotions among characters upon whom they hang as illy as might tailor-made garments.[27]

The author of the article hastens to defend "Mr." Dromgoole by saying that

> . . . whatever may be Miss Dromgoole's faults, she has not sinned against the proprieties in the way that the Record critic would indicate. Such people and such characters as she has described, homely and provincial as their environment may be, are fully capable of all the finer human feelings with which she has endowed them. The Record's critic has probably looked upon gaping rustics from car windows and thus gathered the idea that they are "clods," scarcely animate and incapable of sentiment, but he knows nothing of the Tennessee mountains or the people who dwell there.[28]

With this last sentence, the author of the article has hit upon the truth of the matter; during the late nineteenth century few outsiders knew enough about Tennessee and the mountains to comment authoritatively on mountain literature, either favorably or unfavorably. Dromgoole, on the other hand, did know the mountains of East and Middle Tennessee and had had contact with enough different types of mountaineers that she could have created a variety of characters and could have represented them as accurately as she wanted to—or as stereotyped, as the case may be.

Even more importantly, Dromgoole publicly commented on the mountaineer, both in articles and in her long-running "Song and Story" column. For example, in an interview published in 1899 in the Coming

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[27]The Nashville Banner, December 10, 1898, p. 6.

[28]Ibid.

Age, Dromgoole was asked to discuss the Tennessee mountaineer and his personality. In her words:

> The mountaineer in the rough, as I care chiefly to discuss him, is a jewel. He has some strong and splendid characteristics. He is honest, he is the soul of hospitality, he hates a lie, he will "pay back" an injury if it takes him till the day of his death to do it. He takes every man at his word, grants every man honest until he proves himself unworthy of trust; then he takes him at his true value and treats him accordingly.[29]

Dromgoole supports this statement by telling the interviewer several specific experiences she had with mountaineers. Much later in a "Song and Story" column, Dromgoole comments on people who write "untruths" about the mountain regions, saying that "whenever a villain is needed there are the Tennessee mountains."[30] During her lifetime Dromgoole defended the mountaineers of Tennessee and exhibited a love and respect for these rugged people that is clearly seen in her mountain fiction.

Before examining Dromgoole's mountain literature, it will be helpful to examine documented characteristics of real-life mountaineers, in order to measure, to some degree, her accuracy in presenting the mountaineer. Historically, the southern mountaineers are of Scotch-Irish and German blood, descended from the English colonists of Virginia and the Carolinas; they have lived relatively isolated for approximately two centuries. Thus, they have developed, unintentionally, "a life of their own, in manners and thought, and their speech is the purest and

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[29]"Miss Dromgoole and Her Work," The Coming Age, 1 (June, 1899), 604.

[30]Will Allen Dromgoole, "Song and Story," The Nashville Banner, February 14, 1925, p. 8.

plainest of all the examples of the English language spoken by any people anywhere today."[31]

Authorities of mountain culture are usually in agreement regarding the physical appearance, personality traits, and speech patterns of the mountaineers, with occasional disagreement in minor areas. Horace Kephart, noted author of Our Southern Highlanders and foremost authority on the early twentieth-century mountaineer and his way of life, spent much time exploring the mountains of East Tennessee and Western North Carolina and learning about their inhabitants. He says that the mountaineers are lean[32] and tall,[33] generally with "lean faces, sallow, level-browed, with high cheekbones." The predominant gray of the eyes is described by Kephart as being the "feral eye of primitive man."[34] This metaphor is exact since in many ways the mountain way of life is very primitive and competitive. The mountain women are said to be relatively pretty in youth, but by age thirty-five "a mountain woman is apt to have a worn and faded look with form prematurely bent," due to long hours of hard work and taking care of her family.[35] According to most sources, gauntness is the predominant feature of the men, and the women are smaller, but equally as strong and hard-working as the men. The observations thus far are basically parallel with a few minor

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[31]Levi Powell, Who Are These Mountain People? (New York: Exposition Press, 1966), p. 22.

[32]Horace Kephart, Our Southern Highlanders (New York: Outing Publishing Co., 1913), p. 212.

[33]Ibid., p. 213.

[34]Ibid., p. 214.

[35]Ibid., p. 215.

deviations and allow the reader to visualize the Tennessee mountaineer. Later, it will be seen that Dromgoole stays close to these standards of physical appearance in her description of the mountaineer.

Just as there are certain physical traits attributed to the mountaineer, there are, according to the experts, some general traits that appear inherent to his personality. The two major traits emphasized by the majority of authorities are the mountaineers' ruggedness and independence. These qualities naturally developed because of the isolated geographical environment more than anything else. The mountains are an isolating factor, and this, coupled with the lack of transportation in or out and the austerity of life that the mountaineer led, has developed a "ruggedness and independence of character" and has produced a self-reliant type of society.[36] Because of the independent nature of the mountaineer, his culture has often been stereotyped unfavorably, with the people frequently characterized as stupid, lazy, and dirty. W. T. Crouch, in his book Culture in the South, clears away this misconception with the following statement:

> Let it be emphasized that the differences between the culture of the people of the mountains and of other sections of the country are not due to poverty, to lack of energy, to degeneracy, or to innate inferiority, but to a general lag due to isolation. And as this isolation has conserved pre-Revolutionary methods in agriculture, household activities, standards of living, status of women, character of family organization, so has it preserved the prevailing belief and public institution of the same period.[37]

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[36]W. D. Weatherford and Earl C. Brewer, Life and Religion in Southern Appalachia (New York: Friendship Press, 1962), pp. 6-7.

[37]W. T. Crouch, Culture in the South (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1934), pp. 389-90.

Many of these "pre-Revolutionary" tendencies may be observed not only in the characters of some of Dromgoole's mountaineers, but also in their way of life.

A second highly acclaimed virtue of the mountaineer is his hospitality and mannerly nature. A mountain man said to Horace Kephart one time, "Stay on stranger; pore folks has got a pore way, but you're welcome to what we got."[38] Stories such as this echo through the pages of books on the mountaineer, and one authority goes so far as to say that "hospitality is the cardinal virtue of the mountaineer."[39] Additionally, there is an old saying that "if a mountaineer likes you, he will die for you, and if he dislikes you, you will in all probability die for him."[40] Kephart describes this code of honor as being a mixture of both cruel and savage elements.[41]

According to most of the experts on mountain culture, the mountaineer is generally shy and reticent, especially concerning praise, but can become violent when his life, family, or property are threatened. A statement that summarizes the mountaineer's character is that he is free from awkwardness and uncouthness; he has an "unpresuming dignity, a quiet courtliness, unspoiled by the conventional forms of etiquette and politeness. There is a genuine, unhurried serenity. [He is] a free person who can afford old-time, homely ambitions."[42]

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[38]Kephart, p. 200.

[39]Samuel Hunter Thompson, The Highlander of the South (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1910), p. 26.

[40]Weatherford and Brewer, p. 68.

[41]Kephart, p. 193.

[42]Charles Morrow Wilson, "Elizabethan America," Atlantic Monthly, 144 (August, 1929), 238-44.

Henry Jones Ford gives a more complete and specific summary in seven statements that describe qualities associated with the mountaineer:

> (1) a dislike for making a display of the more tender feelings of [his] nature;
> (2) an undemonstrative manner that may have great firmness behind it;
> (3) a dour exterior that may cover up a genial disposition and a kind heart;
> (4) a wariness, combined with a firmness of purpose;
> (5) a practical attitude combined with underlying sentiment;
> (6) a capacity for hard and patient work; and
> (7) a reserve of strength that may surprise the world.[43]

Other miscellaneous aspects of the mountaineer's character which relate specifically to some of Dromgoole's stories are that the mountaineer is fond of sport,[44] has a fatalistic outlook on life,[45] is a proud race, scorning charity,[46] and is unashamed of poverty.[47] Many of these traits are a direct result of the isolation of the mountain families. East Tennessee mountain ridges and valleys ("hollers") are surrounded by steep mountains, making travel difficult, especially during the late nineteenth century. And while the Middle Tennessee mountainous areas are not as isolated as portions of East Tennessee, travel was still extremely difficult during this time. Both of these areas, because of this isolation, are out of touch with the rest of society and out of

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[43]Henry Jones Ford, The Scotch-Irish in America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1915), p. 12.

[44]Powell, p. 29.

[45]Jack Weller, Yesterday's People (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1965), p. 37.

[46]Kephart, p. 253.

[47]Ibid., p. 255.

necessity have fostered individualistic and independent societies which in their very nature breed self-sufficiency and self-reliant attitudes.

In the following discussion of Dromgoole's mountain characters, many of the above characteristics of the real-life mountaineer appear; however, not all of the qualities are used by the author, who tends to prefer the general, more recognizable attributes, perhaps so her readers can easily identify with the characters. In Dromgoole's earliest mountain story, "Mad Mose's Heroism," the character of Mose Faris is a two-dimensional figure, similar to many found in literature of this period. Dromgoole describes him as being "sullen and silent and morose, not caring for the friendship of any, and had an uncanny habit of talking to himself . . ." (p. 97). Mose is labeled insane and bewitched by the children of the valley for his mysterious manners and habits. The cabin where Mose dwells is isolated and inaccessible, a suitable place for the rugged and independent mountain man. Mose has no patience with the valley residents, and the mountains become the symbolic wall between the two worlds; significantly when the valley children enter Mose's world, they need his help to survive. Dromgoole emphasizes the loneliness of the area by using descriptive words such as solitary, lonely, and desolate when referring to Mose. When the children come over the road near Mose's cabin, his contempt for them is obvious; they have invaded his desolation, and he cynically says that they will get what they deserve for calling him names and foolishly being in the mountains with a blizzard imminent. After Mose realizes that the children are in danger of freezing to death, his conscience persuades him to go after the children and try to save them. Dromgoole describes this moment:

> He had been morose, mad. The children were right, he was "Mad Mose," to have despised and misjudged them, and most mad not to have prevented them from attempting to cross the dangerous gap at nightfall, he stood face to face with himself and sat in merciless judgment upon his unmanly nature . . . (pp. 107-108).

Guilt leads Mose into the snowstorm, and after finding the children he takes them to his cabin. By the end of the story, the children are safely home, and the "mad" mountain man is having Christmas dinner with the valley folks. The sentimentality of this tale is overbearing, and the character of Mose is rather superficial and unbelievable, but Dromgoole makes a good beginning here with her portrayal of an isolated and haunted mountaineer.

The second story that focuses on a male character is "Fiddling His Way to Fame," the central figure being the Governor of Tennessee. This tale is not one of the mountains, but rather of a man originally from the mountains of upper East Tennessee who has become successful as the governor of the state. During the course of the story, he reveals his background by lapsing into his mountain dialect and by telling tales of his growing up in the mountains. The Governor is described as "an important looking gentleman . . . a good fellow . . . the free man . . . and the huntsman" (p. 114). Dromgoole, as in most of her stories, tends to give descriptions of her characters more through personality traits than through actual physical description.

The Governor is obviously important and a figure respected by the other characters in the story as may be noted by their comments. They appreciate the fact that, even though he has fulfilled his dreams of success, he is able to lapse into his mountain character; he reveals

that he has not forgotten his previous way of life and shows a humble nature. During the story Dromgoole shows the Governor to be honest, as is seen when he refuses a political bribe offered him while he was in the state legislature. He is loyal to his mountain upbringing and his native Tennessee, humbly saying,

> Waal, I hev had some success, I say it meekly; an' I hev felt some little pride. I say it meekly; an' I hev hed some happy minutes in my life. But the happies' minute I ever knowed war that minute when I sot my foot on my native East Tennessee sile agin . . . (p. 127).

Another instance of loyalty to the state occurs when he votes for the Republican ticket instead of his usual Democratic party, because he felt that the stand taken by the Republicans was the best for the state, and, of course, he receives much harassment from his fellow Democrats. The Governor defends his actions by saying that Tennessee is "the little strip God breathed upon and Nature kissed, to set it all a-bloomin'. And I 'lowed ez I aimed ter stan' by her, an' by her ole iron-filled hills till the breath lef' my body . . . (p. 132). From the above passages it is easy to see where the Governor and Dromgoole stand on their loyalty to Tennessee. The Governor is an all-around likeable and respected character, an honest man who stands up for his principles at all costs.

Dromgoole's next mountain story, "The War of the Roses," was published two years after "Fiddling His Way to Fame" and concerns a young courting couple, Denie Lynn and Eb Ford, who become separated because of a political quarrel. Both characters are stubborn and believe in their principles, but Eb, like the rest of the male characters in the story, does not feel that women should be involved

in politics, especially not publicly. He is a proud, quiet man who is also an expert fiddler. This great pride keeps him from forgiving Denie's disobedience and obstinance, traits which Dromgoole develops more fully in the later story "A Humble Advocate." Eb exhibits a temper and is quick to fight when offended—again, traits that are frequently given to mountain characters in Dromgoole's stories. In a twist of sorts, Dromgoole has Eb changing his mind and switching his political preference after meeting a fiddling stranger at a social gathering, a stranger who turns out to be none other than the fiddling Governor of Tennessee, Bob Taylor. The tunes they played together on their fiddles make Eb reconsider his obstinance, and he forgives Denie and sees her political reasoning as well. The primary characteristics of the mountaineer exhibited in Eb Ford are the intense sense of pride, "paying back" insults with a fight, and belief in principles.

Dromgoole's next portrait of a male mountaineer is a radical departure from previous characters; the story itself is surprisingly good, considering the author's inexperience with this type of style, and it lacks the effusive sentimentality so often found in her works. The principal character in "Old Logan's Courtship" is Loge Beasley, a stereotyped figure, "loose-j'inted, hide-bound; [with a] bean-pole figger" (p. 170). In his fifties, Loge is still "tied to his mother's apron strings," so to speak. She controls his life, decides when and whom he will marry, and knits his socks. In the story Loge decides that he has remained a bachelor long enough, and he tries to choose a suitable wife from three sisters in the neighborhood (suggested by his mother, of course), one of whom he feels obligated to marry. The mood

of the courting episode is set with Dromgoole's description of the scrawny Loge, decked out in his Sunday best, riding a horse with his legs touching the ground (p. 176), a scene not unlike Irving's description of Ichabod Crane.

During the courting, Loge is very nervous and awkward and ends up looking extremely foolish in front of the young women. He puts his horse in the stable so he can begin his courting, but neglects to close the stable door, which allows his horse to escape. In the meantime, he manages to get his thumb stuck in a shovel handle (p. 179), a most embarrassing situation for him. Having lost his horse earlier, Loge is forced to spend the night at the girls' house; when he wakes the next morning, he finds his trousers missing, which makes him look even more foolish. Appropriately, his mother must bring him more clothes. After all of this humiliation, Loge decides not to get married after all. Dromgoole has used a real-life experience of an acquaintance of hers and has drawn a humorous portrait of a rough, but also meek and somewhat ineffective mountaineer in "Old Logan's Courtship."

The only major mountain character of either sex in Dromgoole's eighth mountain story, "The Herb Doctor," is the title character, the herb doctor Stephen Youry. Dromgoole takes more time to describe Youry's appearance than in any previous works. He is tall and slender, with a "figure like an arrow, straight, strong, unswerving, suggestive perhaps of the character it embodied" (p. 236). Youry wears the mountaineer's "ordinary dress" (p. 236), which is not described specifically except for the slouch-brimmed hat that covered his "sun-red" hair. His face is almost effeminate with eyes of soft blue, but

"a certain subtle power" lurked—a certain "still and quiet conscience." This mountaineer also possesses an honest face and a quiet dignity that pervades his very being (p. 236).

The personality of Youry is revealed through his reactions to the people not of his particular class, especially Miss Elizabeth Rogers, the summer visitor from the city. Youry is looked upon with scorn by his neighbors, who call him "odd and comical," and the people from the city do not take him or his practice of medicine seriously and deem him a coward as well (p. 240). The doctor at the resort says that Youry "retards science and spreads humbuggery" with his folk remedies (p. 242). Elizabeth's reaction to the man, however, is quite the opposite, describing him as "one of nature's gentlemen" (p. 240).

Through the course of the story Youry shows himself to be a humble man, "ignorant as man counts knowledge" but well-learned as a mountain healer (p. 237). He expresses love for Tennessee (p. 237) but is embarrassed to speak of his love for Elizabeth (p. 255) because he feels socially beneath her. Finally, he admits his love for her since it is against his principles to lie (p. 254). This polite, dignified man exhibits perception which transcends the capabilities of a normal man. For example, when Elizabeth says that she is ailing and needs his medicinal herbs, he says that she needs happiness, not herbs, for "that's what ails most women, if they could know it" (p. 246). At this point in the tale, he knows nothing of her career as an unhappy singer, or that some doctors have erroneously said she was suffering from an incurable sickness.

One aspect of Youry's character which is occasionally seen in Dromgoole's characters is his great religious faith. He puts all the faith he has into God, knowing that He alone can judge man. Ironically, it is partly because of this faith that Youry is destroyed in the end. The internal conflict between his faith and the temptation to seek vengeance over an issue that occurred years before shadows Youry throughout the story, and at the end, revenge wins (p. 256). One gets the impression from Dromgoole's conclusion that Youry has been punished for deserting his faith and his act of vengeance by losing both Elizabeth and his life.

Stephen Youry is the most exact replica of a real-life mountaineer in Dromgoole's literature, and he exhibits many of the general qualities associated with the mountaineer—honesty, pride, a strong faith, and the desire to seek revenge when wronged. He is also a natural man, uneducated but wise, and extremely independent and sensitive. The old saying, "Still waters run deep," can be applied to this character, and Dromgoole sets the reader up for the uncommon reversal of character in a creative manner by obtaining the reader's sympathy first and then by holding it throughout the trials of the herb doctor; even the fact that he is a murderer does not make him "bad" in the eyes of the reader at this point. This portrait of the Tennessee mountaineer is perhaps Dromgoole's finest because of its beautiful realism and the ethereal qualities she transmits through the character of Youry.

In the final mountain story that Dromgoole wrote, "The Light of Liberty," her main character, Jim Hardeman, exhibits some of the classic characteristics of the mountaineer. Dromgoole very carefully and

specifically describes Hardeman before the reader learns of his circumstances, and from the beginning of the story he is pictured as being rebellious; however, "the defiance in his eyes was not that of a criminal . . . but more the recklessness of youth, defiant of the ills of fortune and ignorant of the deadliness of despair" (p. 287). The sheriff, who is hunting Jim, gives the reader a further idea of what type of character he is:

> He ain't a bad lot, Jim ain't . . . He's bore a good name for bein' clever and obligin' and respectful to his elders, always. A little wild, but not bad, not givin' to drinkin', and as honest as the daylight. He's got a temper like the devil, and that's the worst of Jim Hardeman (p. 287).

In this passage, Dromgoole gives some specific information about Jim, emphasizing that he is basically a good man. She then relates his character to the ways of the mountain class to which he belongs, a method she has used in past stories but never to this extent and certainly not this obviously. She writes:

> . . . Jim was young; ignorant save in nature's knowledge; wild as the buck he chased upon his native mountains, and as free . . . ; of a class to whom the laws of society . . . are well nigh a dead letter; bred, born and triumphing in the broad, self-assertive creed of the mountaineer, that Honesty is Justice and Right is Law. . . (p. 288).

In the last two descriptions, Dromgoole has identified Jim Hardeman as being both a mountaineer and the vehicle for her theme: the concept that honesty is justice.

Through narrative flashbacks the reader learns that Hardeman has shot a fellow hunter in a dispute over a killed deer. Both men think they have shot the animal, and when Jim insists that the deer is rightfully his, the other hunter calls him a liar (p. 291). To call a

mountain man a liar is a grave mistake because it insults his honor. To avenge his injured pride, Jim shoots his companion for this breach of conduct. One is reminded in this story, as well as in others, of the medieval chivalric code, which is similar, in many ways, to the code of the mountaineer.

A friend tries to get Jim to say that the shooting was an accident, but Jim replies that to say that would make him a liar; he says that he will run, but will not lie because he "hates a lie like pisen" (p. 292). After running from the sheriff, Jim decides that he would rather be dead than hide like a hunted animal, and the sheriff captures him as he prepares to plunge off a cliff. Jim is tried, convicted, and sentenced to prison, but since, according to the authorities, a mountaineer will not last six months in prison, he is sent to the coal mines to serve his term (p. 293). This observation refers to the mountaineer's strong sense of independence and his hatred of being confined. After several unsuccessful escape attempts, Jim has the chance to escape unnoticed through a hole in the mine tunnel, but he conquers the "light o' liberty" (p. 298) by telling the guards about the escape route. Because of his honesty and by proving that he could be master of himself, Jim is freed from prison.

In this tale, Dromgoole masterfully takes one small aspect of the mountain code of ethics and puts it into an effective framework which shows the importance of this virtue of honesty within the mountain society, as well as how it works in two different situations: Jim's refusing to lie about the shooting and his reporting the hole in the tunnel.

With this final portrait of a mountain man, Dromgoole closed her career as an author of short mountain fiction. In the six examples given above, however, a composite figure of the male mountaineer is clearly seen. All of her male characters are different in their appearance and situations, but they embody many of the same characteristics, such as pride, honesty, and the tendency to right the wrongs done to them. The one exception in this group is Loge Beasley ("Ole Logan's Courtship"), who is a buffoon, looking like a mountaineer but not having any of the traditional characteristics shared by the others. In the mountain stories which have women as their central characters, a wide variety of types is not seen; many of the women are similar not only in appearance, but also in attitude, some being better defined versions of earlier characters.

The first mountain story to place primary emphasis on a female character is Dromgoole's third story, "The War of the Roses," in which Denie Lynn is the central figure. Denie is not the meek, submissive mountain woman seen in so many mountain stories and novels; in fact, Dromgoole seems to purposely avoid creating such images with her heroines, and the ones that are submissive are usually admired because they stand up for what they believe is right for them. Set in opposition with her fiance, Eb Ford, Denie proves to be as stubborn as Eb is concerning political preferences, but she possesses a quiet resolution which gives her an air of dignity throughout the story. Denie's courage is revealed, along with her principles, when she arrives at a community corn-shucking wearing the white rose of the Democratic party. The members of the community, all Republicans, immediately begin

chastizing and ridiculing Denie for disobeying her fiance and overstepping her boundaries as a woman. Additionally, they tease Eb for being unable to control Denie, taunts that wound his pride. Through all of this, however, Denie lives up to her convictions by saying that she would rather be honest about her political choice than to lie about it in order to please Eb and the neighbors (p. 146). Dromgoole, significantly, has Denie winning out in the end, to some degree, even persuading Eb to vote the Democratic ticket.

Both main characters in this story are "flat," and neither is as convincing as some of the later characters, but it is still very early in Dromgoole's career (1892) and having a woman defy her man publicly by voicing her political opinions was a bold step for the author to take, perhaps at the risk of offending many readers. In a later story, "A Humble Advocate," Dromgoole takes this same idea a step further and creates a much more believable character in the form of Josephine Cary.

In the same year "The War of the Roses" was published, a mountain story appeared which used as its main character an old mountain woman named Granny Corbin, and although no physical description is given by the author, the reader may easily picture a wrinkled, almost ageless, work-worn mountain woman with a strength to match her years, a stereotype found in many works of mountain literature. The story revolves around a disease called the "milksick," an illness caused by drinking milk poisoned by certain plants and apparently common in rural areas during this time. Granny accepts the fever with a fatalistic attitude, a trait often attributed to the mountaineer, by saying, "I air not question' o' the Lord's doin's . . . He made the milksick ez it air, so

I reckin it air all right, bein' ez I ain't never heard ez he ware give to makin' mistakes. I reckin it air all right" (p. 157). Even though Granny and her family exhibit a strong sense of independence throughout the story, she goes out of her way to help her neighbors when they are sick. According to the author, "she had such a natural way of making trouble seem less hard than it was" (p. 158). Granny, although a tough, strong, old woman, shows sympathy and understanding through such small and simple acts as covering a little girl's grave with flowers so it would not look so bare (p. 159) and helping her neighbors through personal crises. Granny and her family are also poor, but to her, wealth is purely relative, and monetary gains are not the riches one should seek in life (p. 161).

The theme of the tale, as in so many other Dromgoole's stories, is embodied by the main character; the conflicts revolve around Granny's belief in God and fate and the attitude of the neighbors towards this belief. When her family is stricken with the milksick, "her faith was in the balance. She who had preached confidence must now prove her own" (p. 168). The community often tired of Granny's fatalistic approach to life and wondered if she could accept fate so readily when faced with disaster herself. Although she loses her husband and grandchildren to the fever, Granny remains strong and true to her faith. She states simply at the end of the story, "All is well" (p. 169), leaving no doubt in the neighbors' minds as to the strength of Granny's convictions. With the character of Granny Corbin, Dromgoole's female characters, and indeed her characters in general, reach a more realistic

stage, and they continue to grow and become more believable as the stories progress.

Whereas strength and a strong religious faith are the primary elements of Granny Corbin's character, Dromgoole gives quite different qualities to the central character in "A Humble Advocate," Josephine Cary. Resembling a stronger version of Denie Lynn ("The War of the Roses"), Josephine also defies tradition by standing up for her principles and rebelling against her man, but this time he takes the form of a husband rather than a fiance. Dromgoole, in "The War of the Roses," "Cinch," and "A Humble Advocate," seems to be consciously creating situations involving rebellious mountain women whom she knew deserved better lives but seldom ever achieved them in the male dominated society of the nineteenth century. Josephine Cary is described as having "small, labor-marked" hands (p. 216) and a dreary life, a "cat and dog existence," essentially being a servant to her husband and children (p. 217). Dromgoole further describes her as having a pleasant face that showed "resolve, spirit, and a courage that death itself could not put to shame" (p. 218). At one point she declares that she only stays with her husband, Ike, because of the children (p. 218) and also because she knows that it is useless to rebel against him (p. 221). In a strong statement against male domination Josephine says:

> The laws o' this kentry gives a man the rights ter hol' the lash, an' he hol's it.
>
> The laws, I <u>say</u>! A pretty thing the laws o' this land air, a-settin' by an' seein' chillen bein' kerried ter thar death, an' allowin' as it air all right bekase the father hev a right ter do as he likes with his own chillen. An' whar air the law fur the woman, I say? Why don't they let the women he'p make 'em ef they-uns hev got ter live up ter 'em? . . . Lor, but wouldn't I like ter he'p make the laws

> fur this county; an' wouldn't I jest give the women a showin' ter live, though? Wouldn't I? (pp. 221-222).

Dromgoole reinforces and qualifies this statement, making sure that the reader does not see Josephine merely as a suffragette:

> She had never heard of woman suffrage in her life. She only knew that she had felt the lack of the law's protection and recognized in a vague way that the man who governs the woman is not competent to make impartial laws for her (p. 222).

Shortly after Josephine voices her opinions about the unfairness of the lawmakers, she finds out that laws are being considered to give women the right to vote, and she decides to go to town on election day to investigate the situation (p. 230). Earlier she had visited neighbor women and had talked to them of women's voting rights, but they called her "cracked" (p. 228); her husband's response to her comments are: "Listen at the fool . . . The idee o' women votin'? What do women know about the laws o' the land?" (p. 228). Regardless of these attitudes Josephine travels to the voting precinct where she is, of course, ridiculed by all the people in the town, who greet her with taunts, such as "You-uns air jest ninety-nine year ahead o' the time" and "Fetch the baby 'long ter vote, too, Mis. Cary? Ye know ef the law allows the woman it ought ter allow the baby ter vote too" (p. 231). In response to these sarcastic remarks, Josephine makes the following resounding prophecy: ". . . some o' you-uns'll live ter see the women o' the land castin' o' their votes yet" (p. 231). Needless to say, this was a dramatic statement for Dromgoole to make in 1895. Dromgoole makes it clear that Josephine did not want the right to vote just to have that single privilege, but that she wanted some fairness and protection from

brutal men like her husband; to Josephine, the right to vote represented this freedom and the first step in achieving her safety.

The final story which contains a female character as its focal point is "Tappine." The young mountain belle is introduced in the following way:

> A slight, frail figure, full of lissome grace, . . . she wore a gown of dark blue cotton that brought out . . . the fair pinkish complexion, always found among the very young girls of the mountains, and the bright, loose waves of hair that fell about the slight, evenly sloped shoulders . . . Her eyes were blue . . . yet despite her youth . . . there was that about her that bore evidence of strength, which might, under stress of necessity, leap into life (p. 262).

This description is one of the fullest given by Dromgoole in her mountain literature and is done to emphasize the beauty, youth, and delicacy of the girl, but also her potential strength and determination—key elements later in the story.

Tappine, besides being beautiful, has an intricate personality and is deeply profound, almost too profound for her tender years. Her life revolves around Jeff Mabry, a mountain boy for whom she swears undying love, even though he is unworthy of her love and ignores her. Several persons warn Tappine about Jeff, but she disregards the advice repeatedly, choosing instead to follow her heart. She is contrasted with the worldly-wise summer visitor, Mrs. Ennerly, a woman who tries to persuade Tappine to forget Jeff and marry Ben Cary, a mountain boy who loves Tappine and is deserving of her. Tappine responds to this request by saying that she cannot marry Ben because she does not love him, which shows her to be a caring, honest girl (p. 274). In the end of the story, Tappine dies because of her love for Jeff, who has killed a man and is

hiding from the authorities. In her haste to warn Jeff of an approaching posse, Tappine is killed when her horse, scared by a gunshot, plunges off a cliff. Ironically, Dromgoole implies that it is Jeff who fires the shot, mistaking Tappine for the posse and killing his one hope for salvation. As she is riding to warn Jeff, the narrator says, "Her courage, the boundless heroism of her love, that brooked neither death nor danger, was . . . sublime, grand; something a man might fall down and worship" (p. 283). Because of her greath strength and love, Tappine is destroyed. In this mountain story, Dromgoole achieves a finesse that is lacking in the earlier stories. The characters are more distinctly human, possessing characteristics that enable them to rise above the realm of stereotypes.

Through the examples given above, one may see that Dromgoole's women characters are not as varied as her male mountaineers are, but they are more experimental and seem to represent the personal philosophies of the author more than the male characters do. Denie Lynn ("The War of the Roses") and Josephine Cary ("A Humble Advocate") are the rebels against the traditional, male-dominated society, not necessarily a new type in mountain literature, but certainly more strongly rebellious in Dromgoole's stories. The importance of strength is exhibited by all of Dromgoole's female characters to some degree, but especially through the characters of Granny Corbin ("The Leper of the Cumberlands") and Tappine ("Tappine"); Granny also represents the strong fatalistic and religious values of mountain society, while Tappine embodies the quality of honesty and the need to follow one's personal convictions and one's heart, much like the male characters of the Governor ("Fiddling His Way

to Fame") and Jim Hardeman ("The Light of Liberty"). Once again, Dromgoole has repeated themes and types, but the author seeks to use these themes in different situations and through different character types.

One mountain story that was written during the middle of Dromgoole's tenure as a writer of mountain fiction is "Cinch," actually a novella because of its length. In this tale, Dromgoole gives nearly equal treatment to each of the three main characters, Jerry Stamps, his wife, Isabel, and Bob Binder, a mountaineer who has returned home after a long absence. The men are much different from each other and are types not seen in Dromgoole's earlier works. Isabel Stamps, the mistreated mountain wife, appears to be the forerunner of Josephine Cary ("A Humble Advocate").

As usual in Dromgoole's short stories, a bare minimum of physical description is given to the characters. Binder, who has spent the last eight years in Texas, has returned to the mountains and is described as being well-dressed (p. 188) and having a "bearded, sun-browned face" (p. 184). He is close to Jerry Stamps' age, for he mentions that they grew up in the mountains together (p. 190). Isabel, the next character described, is pretty and young, with a "cameo delicacy" about her and golden hair, but her figure is weary and drooping (p. 186). This picture of the young but worn mountain woman is repeated in much mountain fiction, and Dromgoole uses it in two of her own stories ("Cinch," and "A Humble Advocate"). Binder becomes entranced by the "restful sweetness of [Isabel's] sad young face" (p. 186), and Dromgoole later makes a metaphorical allusion to the Madonna (p. 215), which is a hint of

symbolism since Isabel has just given birth to a son on Christmas Day. The initially vague character of Jerry Stamps becomes more and more specific throughout the story, primarily through descriptions of his boorish behavior; in the beginning he is said to have a "tall and slender figure" and "a bloated, reckless face, a boyish face" (p. 193).

The personalities of the three characters are built slowly, but purposefully, with only glimpses given at the beginning; by the end of the story, however, the characters seem more intricate with more three-dimensional personalities. Binder, from the start, is portrayed as being much more sophisticated, worldly, and sensitive than Jerry Stamps. He has come home to find his boyhood friend not only married but an abusive husband as well. Upon meeting Isabel, Binder feels pity for her but also a kind of idealistic love, which creates the final conflicts and resolutions. During the story, Binder is held in direct contrast to Jerry—Stamps being evil and Binder being good. Appealing to Stamps' passions, gambling and drinking, Binder is able to play on Isabel's deep loneliness. Binder, thinking he can offer Isabel and the baby a better life, tries to steal her from her cruel husband. In fact, Binder goes as far as to contemplate pushing Stamps off a cliff one night after Jerry drinks himself into a drunken stupor, but Binder reconsiders since his morals will not allow him to kill a man (p. 207). Desperately trying to rescue Isabel from her pain, Binder offers Stamps money in exchange for her freedom, thinking that Stamps will gladly accept the offer. These seemingly heartless schemes of Binder's are devised because he hates to see Isabel suffer at the hands of her husband, and the only

way she will leave is if her husband wishes it. For these reasons Binder feels that he is justified.

Isabel Stamps, the center point of the conflict, exhibits certain stereotyped characteristics attributed to the mountaineer, such as hospitality, loyalty to her husband and child, and a fatalistic approach to life. She offers to "knock up a snack" for Binder when he first arrives, even though she doesn't know him. This virtue is explained by the narrator in the following way: ". . . the mountaineer is ever king of his own domain, ever the hospitable host" (p. 185). Isabel is typically naive, especially when Binder mentions Texas. According to the narrator, Binder knew that to the people of her class Texas was the "limitation of all distance" (p. 190). Binder also observes that Isabel has been hurt emotionally, is lonely, and is very wise for her young age (p. 191), much like the young girl Tappine ("Tappine"). Later, Isabel shows Binder bruises on her arm, the results of rough treatment from her husband (p. 194), which infuriates Binder. In fact, it is through Binder's description of the situation that the reader sees Isabel as an unloved, neglected woman, but also one who accepts her role as wife and soon-to-be mother with the fatalistic attitude that this is her chosen road and she must walk it alone if necessary. Jerry's gambling and drinking may cause more emotional pain than the bruises do physical harm, but Isabel can do nothing to stop it for fear of more physical retaliation; out of love for her unborn child, she avoids Jerry's rages. During the story, Isabel goes through separate stages of emotion; she wants to leave her husband and go off with the romantic figure of Binder, but her conscience will not allow her to selfishly overstep her role as

wife, and more importantly, mother. This is her lot in life and she accepts it calmly.

The opposite of his wife, Jerry Stamps is the gruff, crude, and cruel mountaineer often seen in stereotyped mountain fiction. Dromgoole repeats this stereotype, but more acutely, in the character of Ike Cary ("A Humble Advocate"). Seldom ever stereotyping without reason, Dromgoole rescues Jerry from remaining in this state by having him reform in the end, a quick change that modern readers, no doubt, find hard to accept. Throughout the story Stamps proves himself to be impatient, a wife-beater (pp. 192-195), hospitable to guests (p. 199), unfeeling, insensitive, and more interested in a game of cards than in his wife's feelings (p. 200). To add insult to injury, he even makes Isabel sit and watch the card game she so violently opposes, knowing how she feels about his gambling (p. 201). Not only does Jerry gamble, but he drinks and goes on a three-day drunken spree, ignoring his wife (p. 203). Towards the end of the tale, Jerry is playing cards and drinking at the mountain store and is not the least bit affected when he hears that Isabel has delivered a son (p. 210). In fact, at this point he almost accepts Binder's offer of money in trade for Isabel and the baby, only to realize his mistake (p. 211). Suddenly, and somewhat unbelievably, Stamps becomes aware of his responsibility as a father and threatens Binder. The story ends with Jerry and Isabel reconciled by the birth of their son on Christmas Day. With these three characters, Dromgoole gives nearly equal emphasis and importance to all; she has the evil force (Jerry) mellowing and reforming to become decent, while the apparent hero (Binder) is tainted with the bribe he offers Jerry.

The elements of true melodrama are twisted by the author in this didactic story to show that even bad characters may have good, human qualities and that even the superficially good characters can show hints of evil.

Although the major characters in Dromgoole's mountain stories are important, many of the tales contain minor mountain characters that are of varying importance. When one looks at the stories chronologically, the first group of characters seen is the band of men that accompany the Governor in "Fiddling His Way to Fame." These men serve as a backdrop against which to show the mountain character of the Governor; they do not, however, affect the plot of the story, which consists of the tale the Governor narrates. However, in the Governor's story of his youth and rise to importance in the state government, there are minor characters of importance, especially his hard-working mountain parents and siblings. None of these really contribute much to the story, but they do serve as good sources of information about the Governor's personality and background.

In "The War of the Roses" and "The Leper of the Cumberlands," the people in the mountain community are shown as antagonists of the main characters, respectively, Denie Lynn and Granny Corbin. The neighbors who gather at the corn-shucking in the first tale serve as a chorus of sorts, echoing the mass disapproval of Denie's political stand; they chastize, ridicule, and jeer at the young heroine, and are generally seen as narrow-minded, wary people, who are unreceptive to change. In the other tale, the community cynically speaks of Granny's beliefs and manners, even though she has frequently gone out of her way to help them in times of stress. As a whole, the group is seen as ingrates who

view Granny's personal philosophies and faith skeptically. In both stories the minor mountain characters are two-dimensional and are not really discussed enough to be stereotypes, but Dromgoole successfully makes her points by contrasting the beliefs of the minor characters as a whole with those of the major characters.

Dromgoole experiments with form in "Old Logan's Courtship," having a mountaineer acquaintance of Loge Beasley narrate the entire tale, but the reader never gets a clear picture of the narrator. The other minor characters are vague as well, but Loge's mother can be pictured as an over-bearing, over-protective, nagging woman who still very much controls her son. The three sisters whom Loge goes to court receive minimal attention, but appear to see the situation as a huge joke; they are polite to their visitor but seem to be on the verge of bursting into laughter throughout Loge's visit. Because of the distance Dromgoole creates by using a narrator, none of these minor characters ever comes into focus during the tale.

The only minor characters in the story "Cinch" are the men who play cards with Stamps at the mountain store and the mysterious figure of Josephine's mother, and they are not described in enough detail for the reader to be aware of anything but a vague presence. Dromgoole's complete attention in this story is devoted to the three main characters. In "A Humble Advocate" the minor characters, however, are once again important contrastive elements in comparison to the major character, Josephine Cary. The most important minor character in the tale is Josephine's husband, Ike Cary, a cruel drunkard who is constantly threatening his wife and children. He also beats them and regards his

wife, and apparently women in general, as the weaker sex: "Lor' these women; they air obleeged ter know it all" (p. 220). Ike's sentiments are more specifically echoed by another minor character who says to Josephine: ". . . my wife gits all the rights she air entitled to in this worl' . . . She hev got the right ter milk the cow, an' cook the victuals, ter rise up an' set down. What more mortal critter air wantin' of air too much for Jeff Bynum ter say" (p. 224). The attitude of the mountain men towards the mountain women is clear enough here, although probably exaggerated so that Dromgoole's intentions are clearly reflected to the reader, and the plight of Josephine is more sympathetically received. One must not assume that most of the mountain men felt or acted in this manner simply because Dromgoole represents a few mountaineers in this light.

Ike Cary is very much like a crueler, more abusive Jerry Stamps ("Cinch"), and when he hears Josephine's prophecy that one day women will be allowed to vote (p. 231), he throws a bottle at her and whips her publicly (p. 232). A stranger intervenes at this time and stops Ike, calling him a "damned brute" (p. 232) for treating his wife as a possession. Dromgoole uses this final analogy, that of women to slaves, to drive her point home. In this story, perhaps more so than in any other, the minor characters are of great importance. The mountain community serves as a chorus again in this tale, but they are given more personality and depth, as well as more lines. The only voice of conscience, besides Josephine, is the stranger who seems to be running for political office of some kind, since he mentions that he will try to bring forth reforms when he gets elected to the legislature (p. 232).

For the first time, the minor characters are important in their own right; they no longer are mere backdrops, but stronger elements of the conflict who act rather than just speak.

The last story that contains important minor mountain characters is "Tappine," and once again, the conflict centers on the major female character, Tappine, and the men in her life, two mountain youths, Ben Cary and Jeff Mabry. Ben and Jeff are complete opposites, a technique Dromgoole apparently enjoyed using. The quality of good is represented by Ben, while Jeff represents evil. Jeff is the neighborhood "ne'er-do-well" (p. 267), a boy who is thought to be uncivilized (p. 268), unreasonable (p. 270), and who is jealous of Ben's attention to Tappine, which causes him to scorn her from that minute on, although she had done nothing to deserve it (p. 268). Also a fighter, Jeff kills a man and is hunted down for the crime, which eventually leads to Tappine's death. Jeff never really becomes the villain, at least not in the sense that Jerry Stamps ("Cinch") and Ike Cary ("The Humble Advocate") do, but he does exhibit selfish and unfavorable traits.

On the other hand, Ben Cary is described as having the "unaffected sincerity of the mountaineer who recognizes distinction neither of class nor wealth" (p. 269). He is a friendly, hard-working young man who would be worthy of Tappine's love (p. 270) and who would have made her a fine husband. Unlike Jeff, he is good, sensitive, and honest (p. 264), but Tappine shuns his affections by being indifferent (p. 271). Ben is not present in the story as much as Jeff, but his role is equally important and his presence is felt continually. To complete the ironic twist that Dromgoole weaves into this tale, it is Ben who tells Tappine

where Jeff is hiding, so it is actually he, in a sense, who sends the girl he loves to her death, completing the misfortune of fate in this tale. Once more the minor characters have an essential place in the story, and even more so than in "A Humble Advocate," the two minor male characters, Ben and Jeff, are the direct cause of the conflicts and the outcome of this story.

As seen in the stories, the minor mountain characters are important, but there are several stories which contain minor characters who are not mountaineers, yet who have very important roles in the stories. In "Mad Mose's Heroism," for instance, the valley children provide the conflict by being lost in the storm, a situation which forces Mose to react the way he does. And in "The War of the Roses," the conflict is partially resolved through the appearance of the fiddling Governor at the corn-shucking. In "The Herb Doctor," one of the main characters is Miss Elizabeth Rogers, a city woman who is unhappy with her life as a singer. It is this disappointment that attracts the attention of the herb doctor, Youry, to begin with. Through their friendship and love, the character of the mountain herb doctor is full realized. Likewise, in "Tappine," the city dweller, Mrs. Ennerly, is the woman in whom Tappine confides her love for Jeff, and it is primarily through Mrs. Ennerly's conversation with and advice to Tappine and Ben that their characters are shown. Dromgoole illustrates a versatility here in being able to combine both mountain and nonmountain types to state her themes, and a general trend in the stories is for both the major and minor characters to be more three-dimensional figures; her minor characters, in particular, evolve into important elements in

the later stories rather than being mere voices. In the later stories as well ("Cinch," "The Humble Advocate," "The Herb Doctor," and "Tappine"), Dromgoole seems to want more equal emphasis placed on several characters rather than just one or two. Her stories improve primarily because of her character development; many of the same themes are used in two or more stories, but it is Dromgoole's characterizations that allow these themes to have more depth and to be more powerful in the later stories.

Will Allen Dromgoole's superior use of mountain types and themes make her short mountain fiction far better than much of the same sort of literature being written during this period. In order to give more accuracy and believability to her stories, Dromgoole carefully chose specific locations, settings that do not really have any bearing on the themes perhaps, but places that add realism to the tales because readers can frequently identify them. One feels that the author knew of these places and had perhaps been there, which is a possibility since Dromgoole did travel extensively in East and Middle Tennessee. Seven of the stories take place in East Tennessee, the majority set in the mountains near the North Carolina-Tennessee border, the exceptions being "Fiddling His Way to Fame," which occurs near Dayton, Tennessee; "Tappine," whose setting is the resort area of Beersheba Springs, near Sewanee; and "The Herb Doctor," set near the Kingston-Rockwood area. The mountains in these last three stories are not nearly as rugged or as isolated as the mountains farther east, at least not to modern day travelers. In the late 1800's, however, travel in this area was very difficult.

Dromgoole sets two of her earliest stories ("Mad Mose's Heroism" and "The War of the Roses") near Roan Mountain, near Elizabethton, and a later story ("A Humble Advocate") in the mountains near Sevierville. Perhaps the most rugged and isolated setting is found in the story "Cinch," set near Chattanooga in what is now Polk County. This setting is given in more detail than in other stories, with careful description of the difficult route Binder has come. One can place the story in the vicinity of Reliance, Tennessee, because of the author's mentioning of three neighboring mountain ranges. There is no way of being certain that Dromgoole visited all of these areas, but she does make reference to many of them in later "Song and Story" columns, which leads one to believe that she indeed did travel there earlier in her life. She did make one documented trip in 1891 to Hancock County in Upper East Tennessee, spending two months tracking down and studying the elusive Melungeons, so it is possible that she visited other areas of the region during this time. More than likely, she also would have been familiar with the area around Beersheba Springs, since her own summer retreat in Estill Springs was located about sixty miles away.

There are only three stories set in Dromgoole's native Middle Tennessee, and only one ("The Leper of the Cumberlands") has a specific, traceable setting. The mention of Milksick Mountain pinpoints the story to a very rural area of White County near Sparta. Again, the area is not as mountainous as East Tennessee, but in the late nineteenth century, even this area was an isolated region because of the mountains that surrounded it on either side. The final two Middle Tennessee stories ("Ole Logan's Courtship" and "The Light of Liberty") have vague settings,

possibly because a specific setting is not necessary, especially in "The Light of Liberty," where the theme is the main concern. Neither of the two stories depends on the settings or the mountains in any form.

In producing settings for her stories, Dromgoole chose to be fairly realistic in most cases, giving the readers a good grasp of the area and the obstacles the mountaineers met when faced by a life in such a rugged region. In this respect, the settings are vital, for they are an important part of the whole picture. There is no question that Dromgoole subordinates scenery to character, but her descriptions of the mountains and hills add a touch of beauty to the stories, highlight the desperate plight of some of her characters, and reveal her love for the mountains and nature in general. The settings, although certainly not as important to the overall work as theme and character, help to define Dromgoole's work as mountain literature and her characters as mountaineers who are directly influenced by their surroundings.

As the personality of the mountaineer is affected by the isolation of the Southern Highlands, so is his speech. Dromgoole was very much aware of the mountaineer's dialect and tried to incorporate it realistically into her characters' speech patterns. It has been shown that Dromgoole strove for as much realism as possible when depicting her mountain characters and the settings of the stories, and her use of an accurate literary dialect is no different.[48] Before examining

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[48]Sumner Ives in his article "A Theory of Literary Dialect" (Tulane Studies in English, 2 (1950), pp. 137-182) defines literary dialect as an "author's attempt to represent in writing a speech that is restricted regionally, socially, or both" (p. 137). He goes on to say that this may be only through spelling changes or that it may be

Dromgoole's literary dialect, however, it is necessary again to set forth some general principles, specifically, the most obvious and recognizable elements of mountain speech—elements that both reader and writer would easily recognize. Because of the limited scope of this study, the dialect of the mountaineer will be discussed in general terms only and in no way should be interpreted as an overview of Appalachian speech, either present or past.

Since certain areas in the mountainous regions of Tennessee were almost impossible to reach during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, much of the language of the mountains contains remnants of European languages. Because of the isolation, the language of the outside world either never reached the mountain people, or filtered so slowly that by the time the words reached the mountaineer they were out of date. As a result of this slow process of vocabulary acquisition, slang is seldom heard in mountain speech, and by the same reason the dialect does have certain distinct qualities.

There is no one mountain dialect in Tennessee; Dromgoole was firm on this point when she stated that the dialect differed from region to region in the state. She summarized the content of mountain speech by saying that it was original, expressive, and beautiful and that the mountaineer, not having a word for an occasion, makes one up and "makes one that says precisely what he intends to say . . . The mountaineer confines himself to plain facts, using as few, and those

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approached with scientific accuracy, representing the lexical, grammatical, and phonetic peculiarities (p. 137). Ives clearly makes the point that authors are artists, not linguists and that nearly all examples of literary dialect are deliberately incomplete because of this distinction (p. 138).

few in as strong, words as possible."[49] Other observers of mountain dialect say that the mountaineer is not original, that his use of colorful metaphors and exaggerations are extremely obvious and merely folklore.[50] The fact, however, that mountain speech is economical, concise, colorful, and exact is the point upon which most authorities agree.

One of the more specific elements found in mountain speech is the misuse of grammar, such as irregular verb tenses (e.g., holped = helped, writ = wrote);[51] double, triple, and even quadruple negatives (e.g., "That boy ain't never done nothing nohow.");[52] irregular plurals (e.g., beasties = beasts, posties = posts);[53] and one part of speech being used for another (e.g., a verb serving as an adverb = "thoughted enough").[54] Other common elements are the omission of sounds (elision), usually indicated by an apostrophe (e.g., goin' = going);[55] substituting one sound for another, especially vowels (e.g., fur = far);[56] carryovers of Elizabethan or Chaucerian speech (e.g., hit, afeard, ax);[57] redundancy (pleonasm), (e.g., "I done done it.");[58] and colorful folk idioms and compound nouns (e.g., biscuit-bread, granny-woman).[59] When authors try to imitate mountain dialect, they usually work with these features;

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[49]"Conversation With Will Allen Dromgoole," The Coming Age, 1 (June, 1899), 615.

[50]Cratis D. Williams, "The Content of Mountain Speech," Mountain Life and Work, 37 (Winter, 1961), 14.

[51]Kephart, p. 284. [52]Ibid., p. 287. [53]Ibid., p. 285.

[54]Ibid. [55]Ibid., p. 277. [56]Ibid., p. 278.

[57]Ibid., p. 288. [58]Ibid. [59]Ibid., p. 286.

however, few authors are capable of recording the dialect accurately.[60] Literary dialect is different from actual speaking dialect, and no author would be able to keep a reading public if he used pure mountain dialect. It is a speech to be heard, not read. Dromgoole, therefore, is not totally accurate in this respect, as will be seen later, but she shows in her use of mountain speech that she is familiar with the language. The important ideas to remember are that the Tennessee mountaineer does have a dialect peculiar to his type and that this dialect takes many forms. As compared to some of her contemporaries, Dromgoole is one of the few authors who adeptly uses dialect in her fiction; she knows enough about mountain speech to incorporate the facts but has the discretion to know when to use it and when not to.

As stated earlier, Dromgoole was very much aware of the mountaineer's dialect. When interviewed in The Coming Age in 1899, she made it quite clear that the dialect of different sections of the country varied and that all mountaineers do not have the same speech patterns.[61] More specifically addressing the matter as well as the misconceptions of the public, Dromgoole states: "Because the mountaineers have been

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[60]Since Horace Kephart recorded the language of the mountaineer in the early twentieth century, his description of mountain speech is closer to that which Dromgoole heard and used in her tales. An excellent modern study of mountain dialect is Walt Wolfram's Appalachian English (Arlington, Va.: Center for Applied Lingustics, 1976), which mentions the same differences between mountain speech and ordinary speech that Kephart does, but Wolfram's study approaches the dialect of Appalachia much more scientifically. For the purpose of this study, a general source, such as Kephart, will suffice, especially since his observations are based on firsthand experiences with the mountaineer of the early 1900's.

[61]"Conversation With Will Allen Dromgoole," p. 614.

charged with a dialect . . . some of the journals seem to have grasped the idea that all Tennessee talks the same way . . . This is absurd, and shows a glaring ignorance somewhere."[62] Dromgoole makes further comments in this article to show that she was familiar enough with the mountaineer and his dialect to be qualified to represent him and his speech in literature. Generally consistent in her use of dialect, Dromgoole employs the same basic elements in all of her works, but she has a wide variety of vocabulary words and folk expressions at her command which serve to differentiate the characters from each other; these folk idioms are seldom repeated. The only story which shows any gross inconsistency is her first one, "Mad Mose's Heroism," and these problems may be attributed to either a novice author or a typesetter at the Birmingham Herald.

Dromgoole's literary dialect will be examined according to the categories listed earlier; irregular verb forms, double negatives, irregular plurals, using one part of speech for another, elision, using one sound in place of another, Elizabethan influences, redundancies, and folk idioms. Dromgoole's use of visual dialect will be examined to determine how well she relates her characters' dialect to the reader. Finally, Dromgoole includes many other less familiar and less obvious aspects of mountain speech that will be discussed briefly as evidence that she knew a great deal about mountain speech patterns. The author's use of dialect in the short stories is so extensive that only a few examples from the stories will be given for each category; and for every

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[62]Ibid., p. 615.

example given, there are dozens more, identical or similar to it, scattered throughout the stories. By examining these samples, it will be easy to see that Dromgoole was a conscientious recorder of mountain dialect, but that she also had the reader in mind when she wrote it.

Irregular verb forms seem to dominate literary mountain dialect. Dromgoole uses literally hundreds of irregular verb tenses as well as subject and verb disagreement in her tales. A few of these irregular tense forms seen in the stories are afeard (p. 248), holp (p. 140), hearn (p. 106), growed (p. 184), set = sit (p. 188), bust (p. 170), digged (p. 163), frez = froze/frozen (p. 100), and of course, the ever present ain't. Less frequent are the examples of subject-verb disagreement, such as it ware (were) (p. 247), it have (p. 298), it are not (p. 153), mountains is (p. 185), I be (p. 125), and they thinks (p. 173). These elements add a distinct mountain flavor to Dromgoole's characters' speech.

Dromgoole makes very little use of double negatives [ain't no (p. 190)] and substituting one part of speech for another [cowboyin' (p. 195)] and jubileein' (p. 100), both examples of turning nouns into verbs]. Only one example of an irregular plural is found, and it occurs in the earliest mountain story, folkses (p. 104). Dromgoole's use of elision, especially using the apostrophe to denote the omission of sound, is excellent and consistent. The three common forms she uses throughout the stories are o' = of, an' = and, and -in' = -ing endings. These are standard forms used when mountain dialect is represented. A few other examples are sp'iled = spoiled (p. 290), with the apostrophe denoting a sound change as well as an omission of sound, mount'n (p. 189),

and c'u'd (p. 173). The last example is also a visual aid because if the apostrophe were left out, the reader would see cud, i.e., "a cow chewing her cud," rather than could. Dromgoole's example looks like the word cud, but by using the apostrophes she makes it clear to the reader that the word she intends is a corruption of could. In Dromgoole's writing there is also a noticeable lack of final d and t sounds, such as ole = old, breakfus', stan', and chile, sometimes denoted by an apostrophe, at other times not.

Besides irregular verb forms, the most prevalent element in mountain speech is the use of one sound, usually a vowel sound, for another. This inexplicable phenomenon of mountain speech is one of the main tools of the recorder of mountain speech, and Dromgoole uses it adeptly. Some of the common examples seen in her stories are air = are, fur = for, yer = your, ware or war = were, hev = have, and wuz = was. For some speakers these forms may be readily recognizable, while for others they may be alien forms. Other more specific examples include yerbs = herbs (p. 240), pizen or pisen = poison (p. 163), sperit = spirit (p. 99), ruther = rather (p. 292), ef = if (p. 298), yaas = yes (p. 139), cheer = chair (p. 188), fraish = fresh (p. 118), and obleeged = obliged (p. 220). These few examples are common but unexplained characteristics of mountain speech.[63] Dromgoole uses hundreds of them in her short mountain fiction, and to have perceived them all, she must have had extensive experience with the mountain speech patterns.

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[63]See Lester Berrey's article, "Southern Mountain Speech," in American Speech, 15 (February, 1940), 48-50.

Elizabethan elements are included in every dialect pattern of each Dromgoole story. The a-prefix is found frequently as are ax = ask and amongst. Betwixt is used in a few of the stories, while ye is seen in over half of them. An interesting aspect that is seemingly unexplainable is that hit is seen only in the stories set in East Tennessee, but it is not limited to East Tennessee mountain speech today. It is possible, however, that in Dromgoole's lifetime, she only heard it used by the mountaineers of East Tennessee. The redundant constructions are usually limited to the commonly heard this here and that there (thar). The most interesting facet of Dromgoole's dialectal patterns is her extraordinary use of idiomatic words and expressions, many confined to the mountainous areas and some considered relics today.[64] Dromgoole uses the familiar you-uns, we-uns, and they-uns invariably, but seldom repeats any of the others about to be mentioned. A few of these colorful expressions are nigher (p. 185), mosin' on (p. 185), "knock you up a snack" (p. 187), sneak-thief (p. 211), argerfyin' (p. 123), bimeby (p. 129), spang deef (p. 218), "honest as the daylight" (p. 287), jouncin' (p. 173), passel (p. 222), tussle (p. 264) and catawampus (p. 264). Expressions such as these are placed with discretion throughout the stories; they seem a very natural part of the characters' dialects and add realism to the overall effect.

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[64] A relic is generally considered to be a word or phrase that has practically dropped out of use except in a specific area; this particularly is common in mountainous areas where a great deal of isolation has occurred.

For a writer using literary dialect, the most important duty is to make sure that his readers are able to understand it. If the reader has to struggle with every word, the book will not hold his interest very long. This understanding is usually achieved by simple spelling changes, depicting the word the way it sounds. Sometimes this makes the word look odd, but if it is repeated out loud the author's reasoning is usually seen; however, some authors defeat this purpose by using a form that is totally unacceptable to the eyes of the reader (e.g., G. W. Harris's use of ove for of). Dromgoole on the other hand masterfully uses visual aspects of literary dialect as an artist's tool, easily communicating a word's pronunciation to the reader. A list of her better forms includes reckin = reckon (p. 247), Dallis = Dallas (p. 195), laffed = laughed (p. 121), pore = poor (p. 217), kerried = carried (p. 119), git = get, yer = your, and gintleman = gentleman (p. 211) and uv = of (p. 117). In most of these cases, the way Dromgoole spells the word is the way most people pronounce it anyway, especially in rapid speech; the spelling change only emphasized this. Occasionally in words such as valu'bles (p. 200) and fam'ly (p. 177), the omitted letters indicated by the apostrophes, a and i respectively, are not pronounced in ordinary speech; Dromgoole, by using the apostrophe, is merely stressing this point. At times there are questionable forms found in Dromgoole's literary mountain dialect that look too strange to be understood by most readers, whether the sound is correct or not. She uses relatively few of these but there are some, such as ontil = until (p. 118), sesso = say so (p. 225), becase = because (p. 221), and ole 'oman = old woman (p. 225).

Dromgoole's mountain dialect contains a great many forms other than the ones mentioned above, too many in fact to do a detailed analysis here; however, in order to further exemplify Dromgoole's accuracy and knowledge of factual mountain speech, several of them will be listed. Additional ungrammatical elements found in her mountain dialect are double comparatives [e.g., more fairer (p. 237)] and irregular pronouns [e.g., hisself (p. 286), the'rse'ves (p. 128), and which instead of who (p. 191)]. The intrusive r sound is commonly heard in mountain speech and Dromgoole uses it frequently. A few examples are oblergated = obligated (p. 139), cornsent = consent (p. 217), ter = to (p. 98), useter = used to (p. 194), and sorrer = sorrow (p. 191). An example of palatalization occurs in the word cyards (p. 210) and Dromgoole follows a verb with a preposition several times in the story "Cinch" (e.g., "sleep o' nights" (p. 198) and "trust to me" (p. 204)]. All of these elements are characteristic of mountain speech according to Lester Berrey in his article "Southern Mountain Speech"; thus it seems that Dromgoole did know enough about mountain speech to record it accurately. Not only does the author use the standard and recognizable speech elements which alone result in superficial dialect, but she goes beyond that by being consistent and and by incorporating more obscure characteristics of mountain speech into her characters' dialects.

In the seventeen years Dromgoole wrote short mountain fiction, she showed sensitivity as well as versatility in dealing with the mountain way of life. Even though she offers little physical

description of her characters, through descriptions of their personalities and actions, the reader perceives a clear picture of mountain society as she saw it, usually a somewhat over-romanticized and sentimental picture, but always an effective and interesting one. Her mountain men run the gamut from a sophisticated governor of Tennessee to an Ichabod Crane-like clown and from the cruel, insensitive young husband to the very sensitive mountain healer. The women begin as rather weak, but stubborn figures and end as portraits of feminine strength and rebellion. Dromgoole's early mountain characters are rather flat, but by 1894 with "Ole Logan's Courtship," her mountaineers begin to evolve into more three-dimensional figures with true mountaineer qualities. In "Cinch," the author combines three such characters in a realistic way to form what is perhaps the best of her mountain stories in an overall sense. In the last four stories she centers her attention on one central character, and after "The Herb Doctor" (1897), perhaps her best portrait of the Tennessee mountaineer, she concerns herself with themes rather than characterization. By this time Dromgoole has developed her mountain characters to the point where they are able to be secondary to a more important theme. Her characters become so effective that they are capable of relaying important ideas to the reader instead of the simple, stereotyped themes such as good vs. evil. Josephine Cary ("A Humble Advocate") is the spokeswoman for women's rights, an issue which goes far beyond the right to vote; Tappine ("Tappine") is the symbol of inner feminine strength which is able to transcend the boundaries of death; and Jim Hardeman ("The Light of Liberty") is the symbol of honesty. All of these characters are superb

representations of the mountain character, but that fact has become secondary to Dromgoole's symbolic intentions.

During the course of the stories, Dromgoole's characters have matured, and the author's literary dialect, although less obviously, has gone through some developing stages also. Dromgoole experiments with her characters' speech patterns in a manner which may only be seen by comparing all ten stories. For example, in "Fiddling His Way to Fame," the governor lapses into a practically illiterate mountain dialect, quite a change from his normal sophisticated speech seen in the beginning and end of the tale. The change is somewhat implausible, but Dromgoole handles it well, making her reader believe that it is possible. The dialect in this story is different from that of the other stories in form and style, but for an early attempt at representing Appalachian Mountain dialect, she does a remarkable job, and it is quite an improvement over her initial attempt, "Mad Mose's Heroism." It is obvious in both of these works that she lacks experience in presenting mountain speech on paper, but she shows much improvement in the later stories.

Another interesting approach to dialect is seen in "Cinch," in the character of Bob Binder, who is returning to the mountains after a long absence. His dialect is more refined than the Stampses', since it has lost much of the mountain tendencies, but he soon begins to pick up the dialect patterns again. This is a clever use of speech that helps to reinforce character, since Binder fluctuates from literate English to semiliterate mountain speech as frequently as he changes his mind in the story. The entire effect is one of indecision and parallels Binder's actions in the story.

Perhaps the most innovative dialectal experiment that Dromgoole attempts occurs in "Ole Logan's Courtship." Although Loge Beasley is the main character, he never speaks in the story. Instead, Dromgoole has a narrator with a heavy mountain dialect relate Loge's comical experiences to the reader. The entire story is in dialect, without interruption, except for a final framing sentence. In this tale Dromgoole proves beyond doubt that she can realistically and accurately sustain a high quality of mountain dialect for an extended period of time. It is by far the best example of literary mountain speech in any of her short stories. The remainder of the stories are not unusual as far as dialect is concerned, each having one or two main characters who speak realistic mountain speech.

Dromgoole's later works are better than the earlier ones in theme, character, and speech because of her increasing familiarity with the mountain culture and dialect, as well as with her craft of writing. From the beginning of her mountain short stories (1887) to the end (1904), Dromgoole completed an experiment, showing that she could compete with the contemporary mountain authors on their own level. In the few pieces she wrote, she exhibits an aptitude for representing the mountaineer accurately in both character and speech in a way that rivaled even her major competitor, Mary Noailles Murfree. Dromgoole measures up to the mountain literature of the time as well as to the real-life vision of the Tennessee mountaineer as he existed in society.

Each of Dromgoole's ten stories is a memorable work in itself; each is different, and collectively they represent an assortment of character types. To add more realism to the stories, the settings and

speech patterns are not repetitious, nor do they "bleed" together. The author herself perhaps best explains her literary philosophy and the goals towards which she strived in the following excerpt from a 1919 "Song and Story" column:

> The real worth of a book or story is that you find something in it that while fitting into the perfect setting may still be detached, separated and made to fit into any need of life, or pain, or joy or loneliness and distress. Just as one may loosen a pearl from a string, detach and separate it from its mates, and still it will remain a perfect gem.[65]

Although not all of Dromgoole's mountain stories are "perfect gems," most of them are above average in quality and the remainder are no less than mediocre and sentimental. B. O. Flower, a friend of the author's and the editor of the Boston Arena, highly compliments Dromgoole's mountain fiction:

> Unlike many persons who assay this field of literature Miss Dromgoole never overdoes the dialect, and those familiar with the vernacular as spoken in Tennessee and Kentucky will recognize the absolute fidelity to the requirements which characterize these amusing and faithful sketches.[66]

As compared to other mountain fiction of the time, Dromgoole's stories are admirable because of her attempts at realism as well as the experimental qualities embodied in both the style, characterization, and speech patterns.

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[65]Will Allen Dromgoole, "Song and Story," The Nashville Banner, September 7, 1919, p. 8.

[66]B. O. Flower, "Books of the Day: A Southern Woman of Genius and Her Work," Arena, 14 (1895), 508. This article is also used as the Preface to "The Heart of Old Hickory" and Other Stories of Tennessee (1895).

B. THE MELUNGEON ARTICLES

In addition to writing fiction and poetry, Will Allen Dromgoole had a taste for travel and especially enjoyed visiting the mountains of Middle and East Tennessee. In her later career as a journalist for the Nashville Banner, she wrote frequently of her travels at home and abroad. Along with this interest in exploring new places and meeting interesting people, she had a flair for reproducing these experiences in print—vivid, colorful, and sometimes controversial portraits. One of the most interesting chapters of Dromgoole's life was her tenure as engrossing clerk in the state Senate, a position she held for two terms. It was during this time that she learned of a mysterious race of people who lived in the hills of upper East Tennessee and were called Melungeons by the other residents of Hancock County.[67] Intrigued by this small group of dark-skinned mountaineers with Indian-like features, Dromgoole journeyed three hundred miles in the summer of 1890 to Sneedville and spent several days with the Melungeons, living in their cabins, eating their food, and observing them carefully. The information she gathered from those she talked to and visited with was first published as two separate articles in the Daily American (later the Nashville Tennessean) on August 31 and September 14 of 1890. Both articles

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[67]There have been several studies and articles written on the Melungeons; however, the most comprehensive work to date is The Melungeons: Yesterday and Today, by Jean Patterson Bible [Rogersville, Tennessee: East Tennessee Printing Co., 1975]. An excellent and thorough account of the history of the Melungeons as well as the theories of their origins, the book also includes an extensive bibliography for those interested in pursuing the study of the Melungeons.

underwent revision and were published in the Boston Arena in 1891 as "The Malungeons," (March) and "The Malungeon Tree and Its Four Branches," (June).[68]

The initial columns in the American created a stir among the readers in Nashville and many surrounding counties, including Dromgoole's native Rutherford County, and prompted many letters to the editor, some supporting Dromgoole, others ridiculing her. The debate continued for two weeks in September and caused Dromgoole more distress than she probably had imagined. Having lost the race for Senate engrossing clerk in 1889, Dromgoole sought nomination for the position in 1891. Unfortunately, the articles, sharp in their criticism of the Melungeons, offended not only the subjects of the articles, but the Senators who represented them. Using the excuse that Dromgoole misrepresented their constituents, the Senators from upper East Tennessee accused her of writing "agin the mount'ns," and Dromgoole was unsuccessful in her efforts to secure a nomination for the clerk position. The details of this controversy are recorded in a January 30 article in which the author says, "So sharp was Miss Dromgoole's pen that even the thick hide of the mountaineer himself felt the sting, and voices of vengeance were muttered from every hillside and re-echoed from every mountain

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[68]Dromgoole used this spelling, as did others during the early twentieth century; the spelling, melungeon, is preferred today because of the etymological connections with the French melange and the Portuguese melungo.

peak . . . ."[69] Dromgoole was apparently unaware of the controversy surrounding her articles and had been campaigning for her nomination, but ". . . at the very moment of victory, Nemesis, in the shape of a big, rough-bearded Solon from an up county, arose and roared out: 'She wrote agin the mount'ns! I war be knownst ter it, an' I'm agin her.'" The author of the article goes on to say that Dromgoole "sealed her fate" by "incautiously" giggling. Then, "another hill-county legislator was hoisted to his feet by his indignant colleagues to second the objection. He did it tersely and effectually. 'She 'lowed the wimmen folks went b'arfoot an' ther men talked a diurlect. I'm agin anybody as is agin the mount'ns!'"[70] The comments made in the last speech are direct references to the articles published in the American.

The defeat in the legislature affected Dromgoole to the point that when a friend requested her to write some mountain stories of Tennessee for his magazine, she replied to him by writing a poem in which she describes her hurt and disappointment at being rejected in such an unfair manner. In the poem she accuses those who accused her of being ignorant and prejudiced, saying that they misunderstood her intentions:

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[69]This article, "She Wrote 'Agin the Mount'ns,'" may be found in a scrapbook in the Dromgoole manuscripts, Special Collections, Hoskins Library, The University of Tennessee. The newspaper in which the article appeared cannot be determined. It is assumed because of the circumstances and details described that the year is 1891.

[70]The debate that occurs here is not recorded in the Senate Journal of 1891; however, only election results are listed and not the controversy surrounding them. No evidence regarding this episode has been found in either of the Nashville papers.

"She writ agin the mount'ns," Will,
 That's what they charge of me.
This ignorance and prejudice
 That speaks of Tennessee.
"She's made our mount'ns into hills,"
 This is the sin, they say,
That locked the State-House doors on me,
 And drove my muse to bay.[71]

Dromgoole continues to say that she will write no more tales of the mountains, but since most of her mountain literature was published after 1891, it is clear that she did not keep this promise.

In the newspaper columns and the articles in the Arena, Dromgoole differentiates between Melungeons and the white mountaineer, although by virtue of where they live, Melungeons are mountaineers. Her candid, highly subjective observations undoubtedly offended many people, and even though her experiences were probably honestly recounted, the apparent bias exhibited in the accounts earned her the disrespectful title of "Miss Will Allen Damfool," a name coined by the Melungeons.[72] An honesty and a frankness that was part of Dromgoole's personality is obvious in the two articles, but there is a journalistic attitude expressed as well, an almost analytical attitude of a reporter recording the facts. Unfortunately, the weakness that mars both of these articles is the inability of the author to maintain a journalistic style. In fact, throughout her career, Dromgoole could never quite separate her fiction style from her journalistic technique, and, at times, efforts which should have been objective in nature became liberally embellished

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[71]The complete ten-verse poem is printed in the article, "She Wrote 'Agin the Mount'ns'." The "Will" referred to is possibly Dromgoole's close friend Will T. Hale.

[72]Bible, pp. 48-9.

with excessive sentiment and romantic descriptions, as well as personal judgements. Later in her career, Dromgoole perhaps realized this flaw and did not pursue work as a reporter but as a columnist who concentrated on human interest stories, which resulted in her very popular column, "Song and Story."

Dromgoole's first article, describing the Melungeons and their life-style, is the more offensive of the two. The second deals solely with the possible origins of this mysterious group of mountain people. Since Dromgoole does not give any sources for her information, one must assume that she received all of her facts from those she talked to. Regardless of this lack of positive evidence, Dromgoole's accounts or theories of Melungeon origin basically agree with the information published between 1900 and 1975. And although several extensive studies have been done in this century to determine where these people originated, there have been no conclusive results. Dromgoole's explanations in "The Malungeon Tree and Its Four Branches" seem as believable and accurate as most later theories. In fact, Jean Patterson Bible, the author of a comprehensive study of the Melungeons, says that most of Dromgoole's conclusions regarding Melungeon origin have "proved to be correct, but others are still open to question."[73] Bible also points out that, regardless of the theories produced and evidence supplied, there is no positive way to know the origins of the Melungeons. Too many questions cannot be answered, so the mystery will, in all likelihood, remain unsolved.[74]

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[73]Bible, p. 7.

[74]Ibid., p. 73.

Although Dromgoole's representations of the Melungeons seem to be accurate in that they concur with later descriptions, it must be noted that many of the later accounts were probably based on Dromgoole's findings, or at least heavily influenced by them. The author, it appears, unwisely based her articles on a very small number of Melungeons, and in all fairness to these people, it should also be realized that, as in all cultures, there were many different types of Melungeons. Not all lived or behaved in the way Dromgoole depicted them in her essays; not all were poor or uneducated. Using her literary license, Dromgoole unfairly painted a picture of "almost unbelievable squalor, ignorance, and superstition."[75] Unfortunately, both works appeared not only in a local newspaper, but also in a widely-read periodical and were taken at face value by readers who knew nothing of her subject, or the mountaineers of East Tennessee. This only served to propagate the derogatory picture of this small group of mountaineers, and possibly all mountain people in general.

In support of Dromgoole, however, there is evidence that she was not the only person to describe the Melungeons in a less than favorable light; in fact, prejudice toward the mixed-breed Melungeon was not uncommon. It was evident in the attitude of the white mountaineers who shared this region with the Melungeons, as well as those who wrote letters to the Daily American defending Dromgoole's comments. There were several reasons for this dislike, as Dromgoole and Bible point out in their respective studies. Some of the accusations made against the

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[75]Ibid., p. 48.

Melungeons were that during the Civil War they were bushwackers, owing allegiance to neither side, and that they illegally counterfeited gold coins and brewed moonshine. These claims were substantiated only by tales passed through the generations; no positive proof is available, but these accusations did nothing to contribute to the good image of these people.[76] Even though there is bias in Dromgoole's narrow-minded sketches, the reader must be reminded of the limitations of travel and knowledge of the mountains in the late nineteenth century. For these reasons, her efforts should be applauded because of the initiative and courage it took for a woman not quite thirty years old to make a long journey into the rugged and isolated mountains of East Tennessee. The stylistic quality of the articles is surprisingly good since Dromgoole was only beginning her literary career, and these accounts give modern readers a rare, if unfavorably colored, glimpse into the lives of a group of people who exist today only as a remnant of the past population and who still remain a mystery.

C. THE "SONG AND STORY" COLUMN

Although Dromgoole was well known for her fiction, her greatest popularity came as a result of her weekly column in the Nashville Banner that began late in 1903 and ended with her death in September 1934.[77] Dromgoole actually began working at the Banner late in 1902

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[76]William L. Worden, "Sons of the Legend," The Saturday Evening Post, October 18, 1947, pp. 128, 130.

[77]The excerpts from Dromgoole's column that concern the mountaineer are listed in chronological order in Part II, Section III. When reference to specific column material is made, the date of the column is placed in parentheses within the text.

as a reporter, but her column, "Song and Story" first appeared on December 19, 1903. In a July 2, 1922 "Song and Story" column, Dromgoole describes her initial experiences at the Banner by saying that she began her newspaper career with the "chief end and object [being] the gathering and judicious disseminating of news." She further admits, however, that she was not suited to that type of work, that her "work was not of that nature, and clearly did not fit into such a scheme of things." The editor of the Banner, R. H. Yancey, called her into his office one day in 1903 and told Dromgoole:

> You have a good head for sizing up situations; you do good verse and prose. You have a good grasp of political situations. What I am trying to say is, you have talent and versatility. Why don't you get up a feature of your own; something new, and give it a personality? Put short stories, and poems into it and give it a name to suit it. And . . . there is room for a feature like that in the Banner.[78]

Dromgoole took advantage of Yancey's offer, and the feature column that eventually became "Song and Story" was born. For two and a half months Dromgoole experimented with different titles for her feature, and most of the early columns contained materials based on specific themes. Some of the experimental titles were "Southern Waifs," "Songs and Stories," "Smiles and Tears," "Chords and Sounds," and "Southern Song and Story." Eventually, Dromgoole chose "Song and Story," which she borrowed from a line from Father A. J. Ryan's poem, "The Conquered Banner": "It shall live in Song and Story."[79] Dromgoole's column usually ran in Part II

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[78]Will Allen Dromgoole, "Song and Story," The Nashville Banner, July 2, 1922, III, p. 6.

[79]Ibid.

of the Saturday Banner, but it does appear on occasion on other days and in other sections. In September, 1917, the Banner began publishing a Sunday edition, and Dromgoole's column moved to the larger Sunday edition, usually to Parts III or IV. The column ran every week except for two weeks in either July or August, during which time Dromgoole took her annual vacation to Estill Springs. Additionally, there were other times when the column did not appear, once early in Dromgoole's career when she took an extended overseas trip and later, only a few years before her death, when she was ill.

When Dromgoole first established her column, she wrote on only one subject for the length of the column; for example, one column deals only with children, another with religious faith, and still another with southern customs. However, once the column became "Song and Story," Dromgoole wrote about many different topics within the same column, although she would frequently devote several paragraphs to the same subject, such as ill-mannered citizens of Nashville, a book she had recently read or a favorite author, children, women's rights, working women, Negroes, religion, and the death of a friend or relative, to name a few. Dromgoole was a well-read person and had a variety of interests, characteristics that are often reflected in the column material. The "Song" in the title of the column refers to the over 7,500 poems published in the thirty-one years of the feature, while the "Story" refers to the short anecdotes or personal comments about Nashville happenings, politics, and a myriad of other subjects. There are always several poems in each column, and Dromgoole closes each column with a few quotations from famous persons, usually poets, authors, or philosophers. Anecdotes of

the mountaineer, the poor whites, and especially the Negro seem to be among Dromgoole's favorite topics. The author's love for books—new and old—and their authors as well is shown by the thousands of comments she makes about the literature she has read. She also frequently eulogizes friends or famous people who had been influential in her life, sometimes using a poem for this purpose.

In addition to being informative, Dromgoole's column was a source of strength for many readers because of the author's positive outlook on life and her philosophical and spiritual advice. There were pleas for the unfortunates of Nashville and comments on her many travels, especially the trips she made to Texas in 1898 and to Los Angeles in 1901. On occasion she comments critically on world or national affairs, such as elections, World War I, and the suffrage movement, but most often, Dromgoole's sharp tongue is reserved for the people of Nashville who committed such indiscretions as spitting tobacco on street cars, not giving women seats on trains, and young women not dressing appropriately for work. Dromgoole takes the role of a social conscience in her column and does not treat rude or improper behavior lightly, verbally chastizing those who offend her sense of decorum.

As compared to other subjects, the mountaineer receives little space in "Song and Story," but what Dromgoole chooses to include gives the reader some interesting factual information about the mountains which substantiates the fact that the author was familiar with the life of these regions. And although the column material concerning the mountains of Tennessee is fairly frequent during the early years, it practically disappears by 1913, with only a few isolated examples appearing later.

Her comments and anecdotes regarding the mountaineers usually concern their behavior and personality traits. In many instances, Dromgoole's keen sense of humor is obvious in her stories of the mountaineer.

The majority of mountain material in "Song and Story" concerns the character and personality of the mountaineer. Some of these sketches are also used for other purposes, but most deal only with a specific facet of mountain life. Dromgoole's column began nearly at the same time she ended her career as a writer of short mountain fiction, yet her anecdotes of the mountaineer focus on many of the same qualities she stresses in the short stories. A few of the aspects of mountain character she mentions are the importance of the mountain code of honor and the propensity of mountaineers to fight when angered (11-28-03); honesty and cleanliness (1-16-04, second excerpt); the habit of drinking, sometimes in excess (1-16-04, second excerpt, 3-5-04, and 1-18-08); the sense of hospitality (3-13-09); the mountaineer's isolation (3-13-09 and 5-21-22); and his aversion to strangers "poking" around (4-17-09, 5-21-22, and 10-5-30). The mountaineer's often subtle and ironic, but very keen, sense of humor is exhibited in several examples, as well as his gift of insight into certain personalities and situations (3-19-04, 4-17-09, 7-6-12, 10-5-30), and Dromgoole also points out the mountaineer's ability to hold a grudge (4-6-12) and the importance of standing by one's personal principles (5-28-04, second excerpt).

Many of Dromgoole's mountain columns contain mountain dialect, and the author shows her love of language by incorporating different aspects of mountain dialect into her anecdotes. Most of these examples concerning language are humorous because of the situations and

misunderstandings that arise when a naive mountaineer does not know what a specific word means (1-16-04, first excerpt, and 3-12-04). In another example, the reader becomes the confused one because of Dromgoole's use of mountain terms that most readers would not recognize, in this case, the words jimjams and jimmy-john, as well as the name Jeems (3-5-04). Dromgoole mildly makes fun of the mountaineer's ignorance in these particular anecdotes, but she also illustrates well the complications that language can create when both parties are not equally informed.

In several columns, Dromgoole uses a mountain saying or a story as a vehicle for either an expression of personal philosophy or to state a moral. For example, some important points the author stresses are the benefits of being good to and thinking of other people rather than oneself (5-8-04, first excerpt); the mistreatment of women by their husbands (4-8-05); the importance of not going through life holding grudges (4-6-12); living life as it comes rather than worrying about it (1-2-05); being optimistic instead of pessimistic (2-22-08 and 5-28-04, first excerpt); and the importance of bettering oneself or at least being the best one can be (12-7-12). There are also some columns that discuss such miscellaneous topics as a female distiller of local fame in upper East Tennessee (1-18-08) and the values of life in the mountains as opposed to city living (8-21-09). Dromgoole addresses many subjects in her column, but more importantly she displays her knowledge and respect of the mountaineers, their language, lifestyles, and characteristics in general. Of added importance is that Dromgoole related this information to her readers, entertaining them yet informing

them of the mysterious mountaineer—a segment of American culture that most early twentieth-century readers had never come into contact with.

Will Allen Dromgoole is not remembered today for her novels, short stories, or poetry, but many Nashvillians and those people in the surrounding areas recall the column she wrote. These columns, which at her death numbered over five thousand, enlightened, inspired, and entertained the readers of the Banner for many years. Throughout these years many aspects of the author's personality can be seen in the column material that is not obvious in her fiction, although there are autobiographical elements in the fiction as well. Dromgoole reveals herself to be witty, well-read, sentimental, very religious, optimistic, concerned for others, and outspoken. She served as a "voice" for the people to listen to and as a figure for them to emulate. After her death in 1934, the Banner ran columns of tributes—letters and poems—from readers who wanted to show their appreciation to the woman who had meant so much to them for so many years. By reading the "Song and Story" columns concerning the mountaineer, one is able to realize only a very small part of Dromgoole's legacy, but even this sample offers insight into her deep respect for a culture she knew well and wanted to share with her readers—her friends.

D. THE POETRY

During her lifetime, Will Allen Dromgoole wrote approximately 8,000 poems, most of which appeared in the "Song and Story" column over a thirty-one year period. Some of the poetry, however, was originally published in other newspapers, such as the New York Herald and the

Boston Courier, and many of her poems were reprinted in various local and national publications. There was never a published collection of Dromgoole's poetry, although shortly after her death, a niece attempted such a project.

Dromgoole's poetic subjects include religion and faith, patriotism, eulogies for friends and relatives, holidays, especially Christmas and Easter, and nature, to name a few. Her most famous and most often printed poem is "The Bridge-Builder," a tribute to her father. In the collection of Dromgoole's poems, there exist a large number of poems devoted to the subject of Tennessee and famous Tennesseans, but only a few deal with the mountains and mountaineers of Tennessee. As far as style is concerned, Dromgoole's poetry follows traditional patterns of rhyme and form and is often excessively sentimental, a quality that is evident in most of her literature. To modern readers this sentimentality mars the poetry, but much of her work was enjoyed and praised by those who read her column in the Banner. In fact, for her efforts as a poet, Dromgoole was named Poet Laureate by the Poetry Society of the South in 1930, and several of her verses were set to music. Just as Dromgoole's mountain short stories and column material are small as compared to the total of her efforts in each area, so is the collection of poems dealing with the mountains and the mountaineer. In fact, only nine have been included in this edition.

The three earliest mountain poems are all written in a modified mountain dialect, with the author using words such as thar for there, jest for just, yer for your, and ain't to create a mountain "flavor." Dromgoole also consistently leaves off the final g on words ending in

-ing, which gives the verse a distinctive mountain sound. In the first two poems, the ballad style is used; both tell a story and concern community activities that the mountaineer is identified with: a "hoe-down," or square dance, and a corn-shucking. Looking at the poems individually, one sees that the first one, "Dancing Tucker in the Mountains," opens with a stanza that is used as a refrain which is repeated after stanzas three and seven. The other stanzas contain eight lines with lines two and four rhyming as well as lines six and eight (abcbdefe). "A Tennessee Corn-Shucking" shares the same rhyme scheme. Dromgoole enjoys repeating certain lines throughout a poem, and "Dancing Tucker in the Mountains" exhibits this tendency, but "A Tennessee Corn-Shucking" does not. While Dromgoole describes a square dance in a humorous, light-hearted fashion in the first poem, "A Tennessee Corn-Shucking" is very sentimental and tells the very sad tale of a young Tennessee couple who meet at a corn-shucking, fall in love, marry, and move to Texas. Dromgoole implies through her speaker, the young husband, that the wife dies of a broken heart because she misses her native Tennessee, especially in the fall during corn-shucking time. Both of these poems are ballads, at least in content if not in form. The third poem in mountain dialect, "Missin' of You," is also a sentimental tale of one who is grieving for a dead loved one. Written in first person, the poem has four-line stanzas; the rhyme scheme (abcb) and meter are very even and create a lyrical quality. The tone in this poem is rather pessimistic as opposed to the calm acceptance found in "A Tennessee Corn-Shucking"; the speaker says that life is no longer worth living because the loved one is not there to share it with him

or her. Dromgoole's later poems tend to be more positive and optimistic; this poem was published in 1905, but could have been written earlier and may reflect the author's feelings about her father's death in 1897.

"My Mountain Home," the next mountain poem Dromgoole published, reveals the author's deep regard and respect for the mountains and her mountain home—possibly the Yellowhammer's Nest in Estill Springs. Dromgoole also writes this poem in first person and uses more archaic poetic language (thee, ere, erst, and thy), forms that frequently appear in her poetry, than she usually does in her mountain poems. She addresses the mountain as a person in most stanzas, and the mountain home represents safety and security to the speaker; Dromgoole thought of her cabin in Estill Springs in much the same way. In this poem, the poet also exhibits a deep love and respect for nature in general and speaks of the mountain as a "healer," only one of the many elements of personification seen in this poem. The form of "My Mountain Home" is traditional with six-line stanzas and even-line rhyme. The remainder of Dromgoole's mountain poems are similar to this one in that they reveal both a physical and spiritual love for the mountains.

"In the Hills of Tennessee" is an eight-line poem, whose even lines rhyme. The author emphasizes that her heart lies within the hills of Tennessee because of their beauty. The same attitude is expressed in "Far Hills and Near" with the strength as well as the beauty of the mountains emphasized. This poem is written in six-line stanzas with a rhyme scheme of ababcc: the couplet at the end of the verse is a new technique that Dromgoole uses often in her later poetry, but not in any other mountain poems. The next two poems, "The Mountains" and

"Lone Mountain" are both written in four-line stanzas with rhyme schemes of abab. "The Mountains" contains a first person point of view and again reveals the spiritual qualities that Dromgoole associates with the mountains specifically and with all of nature generally. "Lone Mountain" describes a specific place that Dromgoole mentions in her short story "Fiddling His Way to Fame." Otherwise, this poem is not distinctive from the others in either form or style.

The final mountain poem, "Deserted," was not published in the Nashville Banner, and the manuscript has no date on it. The work appears to be an early poem and probably refers to either Dromgoole's cabin near the Elk River or a nearby cabin. It, like many of the other mountain poems, consists of four-line verses with an abcb rhyme scheme. Again, as in many of Dromgoole's poems, the past and the memories associated with it figure prominently. The author's love for the mountain solitude and sense of past are once more clearly revealed in this final poem.

Although Dromgoole's poems of the mountains are few, they, like the rest of her mountain literature, reveal the author's deep respect for the mountains—their beauty and strength. Most of these poems may be classified as nature poems, although the first three focus on persons; much of the verse exhibits sentimentality and sometimes melancholy. As far as representing the mountaineer in literature, Dromgoole presents the type much more clearly in her short stories and column material than in her verse. It is, however, interesting and somewhat rare to find three poems in mountain dialect that have as their subject the mountaineer. Dromgoole is best remembered perhaps as a

poet, and in the early twentieth century her fame rested primarily on her ability as a writer of poetry and the "Song and Story" column, which contained most of her poems, rather than her ability to write fiction. Ironically, by modern standards, most readers would find her poetry much too sentimental in content and too traditional in form to be enjoyed, and would see her fiction as interesting accounts of a culture that does not exist today. The poetry does, however, serve to emphasize that Dromgoole was an extremely versatile author who was successful not only in writing fiction and verse, but also as a columnist of recognition. The fact that she represents the mountains and the mountaineer in each of these categories attests not only to her literary capabilities but also to her love and respect for this stratum of society.

PART II: THE LITERATURE

I. THE SHORT STORIES

MAD MOSE'S HEROISM

He was not insane. The most daring man on Roan Mountain would not have dared charge Mose Faris with insanity.[80] Indeed the bravest of them would have been slow to prefer a charge of any description against him, for there was scarcely a man, woman or child on the Roan that was not afraid of him. Not that he was wicked or cruel, or dangerous in any sense. They could not say that he was. But he was sullen and silent and morose, not caring for the friendship of any, and had an uncanny habit of talking to himself, a thing which belongs exclusively to the witches, or to those in league with the evil one. In plain words, the man had a bad name. Hence they called him Mad Mose, and shunned him as if he were indeed possessed of an evil spirit. He lived alone in a tumble-down log cabin at the foot of the Little Roan that guards the entrance to the Haunted Gap, a place where nothing human had ever been known to live through one of the dreadful Roan

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[80]This mountain story is the earliest published mountain story of Dromgoole's found to date. It is not as polished nor as mature as most of her other mountain works. The setting is in Carter County, on Roan Mountain; the mention of Roan Mountain, Little Roan Mountain, the Bald, and the Doe River all substantiate this fact. Since this story was published in a newspaper, there are several errors that may be due to the typesetter or printer, rather than to the author. The dialect is not as consistent as in other stories, a fact that may be the fault of the author or the newspaper staff. This story is important because it shows the author in her earliest stages, and the evolution of her mountain characters, themes, and dialect can be traced from this story to the last one, dated 1902.

Mountain winters—nothing except Mose Faris himself. He had chosen his habitation there for sole reason that it was isolated and inaccessible, with the snow sometimes piled twenty feet deep in the gap, and the lonely Bald on one side and the Great Roan on the other, while far as the eye could follow, north, south, east, or west, the great billows of mountains rose higher and more high, until lost in a mist-shrouded wall that seemed to thrust its way into the very clouds, an effectual barrier against the world beyond the mountains.

"I allus wondered what's on 'tother side o' it," said Mose one December afternoon as he hung his rake in the old stunted balsam, the only tree that had the fortitude to thrust its root into the haunted soil.

"I allus wondered what was on 'tother side o' it."

He had said the same thing many times, while his passionless, pale eyes followed the purplish rim that walled the horizon.

"Hit appears ter block up the road ter everwhere," he continued the conversation with himself, as he fastened the rake more securely in the gnarled and knotted balsam bough. He would rake no more that winter; it was Christmas eve, and that meant rest. More rest than the time-burdened mountaineers would have asked, but there was not much prospect of work when the winter really set in, and Mose knew he would rake no more until spring; no, not if the rich man's road up the Roan should be blocked past traveling.

A grayish cloud was gathering beyond the Bald; it meant snow. Mose seated himself upon the rotted doorstep and dropping his sharp chin to his hand, sullenly studied the darkening landscape. Solitary

and desolate, he seemed a part of the loneliness about him. If only he had lighted a pipe for company, there were the mountains; and they were like himself, grim, solitary, and self-sufficient.

He sat there for an hour, watching the shifting slants of sunlight falling upon the Bald, to be blotted out by the pursuing shadows. A crimson curtain hung a moment against the cabin's blank window; the next the wind rattled the ill-fitting sash and tore the temporary brightness from its place. The balsam boughs moaned disconsolately.

Mose rose and shook himself like a dog that has dozed too long in the sunshine. He stretched his long arms above his head and clasped his short fingers at the back of his neck. The wind again rattled the window and the loose batten door.

"Laud!" it sounds like er sperit," he said.

He opened the door, and reaching for the shelf just within, brought out a bag of potatoes and a pan. He emptied the potatoes into the pan and started toward the spring at the foot of the narrow trail leading down the Roan. The next moment he stopped to listen.

"Sholy that air wheels," he said. "Some one comin' down the mount'n." The sound of wheels grew more distinct, until a small wagon slowly turned the nearest curve of the zigzag mountain road, and peals of childish laughter rang out merrily on the brisk December breeze.

The man unaccustomed to the companionship of humanity listened a moment to the voices; then his sullen voice grew more stern than even its want [sic].

"Confoun' 'em," he hissed, "a trampin' down that ther' road as I hev jest worked, an' a jubileein' over it same 's ef I hadn't a sweat an' frez by spells whilst I war a-workin' it."

He turned to go and hide himself, as was his custom, until the vehicle should pass by. He was a moment too late; the wagon made the turn, and the occupants, catching sight of the tall, gaunt figure on the doorstep, waved the branches of holly with which the wagon was heaped, and shouted:

"It's Mad Mose, the witches' son!" "Mad Mose, the Bad Man's boy!" "Mose the conjurer!" "Whoop up, Jerry, before he conjures us!" "Are you going to have Christmas at your house, Mose?" "Have you got a turkey?"

His anger took the form of sullen silence; he stood watching the children and listening to their saucy jeers until the wagon made the next bend and disappeared in the shadowy balsam forest.

"They'll git paid back long afore they reaches the settlement," he said, turning his head to catch the grating of the wheels on their slow journey toward the little settlement that lay beyond the Haunted Gap.

"A passel o' fools," growled Mose; "a passel o' fools ter be a-gallavantin' over this here mount'n this time o' day an' hit a-goin' ter snow in less'n half er hour; a passel o' pint blank idjits."

He opened the cabin door and went in. The rude door swung to behind him, leaving the room in darkness, save for the feeble light that forced an entrance through the dust-curtained window. The lonely master of the lonely cabin dropped upon one knee before the fireplace

and stirred the white ashes with a piece of dried balsam wood. The cherry red coals seemed to smile saucily at him for a moment, then dulled to a less brilliant hue.

"Umph! saw what I war a-thinkin' did ye?" said Mose, as he bent a bit of kindling wood across his knee. "Waal"—he continued by way of apology to the mind-reading coals—"taint none o' my fault ef the finman[81] as hev bought up the kentry lets his four brats go a'gallavantin' over the mount'n in December an' a snow storm a-brewin'; he air from the valley an' knows everything; the mount'n hitse'f air his'n, an' he sholy ought ter be acquainted with his own lan'; that's all I hev ter say about it."

The pieces of kindling wood broke into countless splinters with the pressure brought to bear upon it, but when he applied them to the coals they refused to burn, though he blew upon them with all his might. The coals were evidently dying, a white ash film had gathered upon them.

"What in the nation air ye a-growlin' about anyhow?" exclaimed Mose, as the film grew whiter and more heavy. "They-uns ain't nuthin' but chillen? Waal I never! hain't they got a daddy as knows er'nough ter holp the Almighty ter run this universe? an' hain't they got a mammy to keep keer uv'em? They don't know the mount'n like me. Waal, they kalkerlates on stayin' long enough ter git acquainted. I can't see as it air any lookout o' we-uns, nohow."

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[81] This form is peculiar in that it could mean fine man—referring to the wealthy valley gentleman, or it could be a misprint, which was meant to read ginman, which would be a phonetic representation of gentleman with the medial consonant cluster omitted.

He applied himself again to the fire but to no purpose; the coals were dying; he was in danger of even losing his "light" that he had tramped half a mile up the mountain to beg of some woodsmen burning brush. He had expected to keep it all winter; there were no matches in the house in case he lost his fire, and the settlement was five good miles distant. He blew again and again, but the coals only glowed a second and grew feebler.

"Lawd! Lawd!" said Mose, interpreting according to his comprehension the meaning of his failure. "Er man ought ter be ashamed ter hol' a grudge against chillen. Waal, chillen ought ter know er man air not er dog ter be kicked at, an' ef he war, a dorg will snarl when it air kicked."[82]

A spark shot upward and struck him full in the forehead, then dropped into the ashes and went out. Mose rubbed the spot where the spark had touched and continued to talk:

"Yaas," he said, "I know it air Christmas, an' I ain't such a fool ez not ter know what that air. Didn't them brats ax the word ef we-uns war goin' ter hev a Chrismus dinner to our house? A 'turkey' I 'low"—he propped himself with knee and hand upon the rough, cold hearth—"I hev somethin' ez air more better than turkey; much more better than turkey."

His head dropped lower, his sharp chin touching his breast; he was thinking; thinking of the Christmas time and its meaning; thinking

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[82]This is an example of the inconsistency in the speech of Mose Faris. The form dorg is certainly realistic in mountain speech, but Dromgoole doesn't use it in later works.

of another Christmas, the first the world ever knew, when the old Judean hills trembled with the strange new message.

"On earth peace, good will toward men."

The wind tapped at the window pane; the shadow of the swaying fire fell across the fading daylight. Mose suddenly lifted his head.

"I'll do it," he said firmly. "Git out!"

He had conquered something, somewhere; he chuckled jubilantly, and once more blew upon the fagots in his dismal fireplace. The blaze shot up with a victorious roar, the broad, good blaze illuminating the cheerless habitation with blinding brightness, and dispatching scouts to chase away the skulking shadows from the furtherest corners, they scrambled upward through the dust-browned rafters and hung amber colored crystals among them; they crept along the clayclinked wall and swung pictures upon it, pictures that danced with fantastic merriment whenever the broad blaze flickered. The cabin was transformed from a hovel into a glowing palace. Only the man's face, passionless and sullen, seemed not to catch the revivifying brightness.

He stood in the center of the room and studied the poor surroundings.

"Not much to be jubileein' fur," he muttered, "an' if it war not fur the word I hev give that ther' fire I wouldn't be such a fool ez ter say I'd hev one."

He opened a covered barrel that stood in one corner and thrust his arm into it; his dull face brightened as he drew out the contents, a possum, five squirrels and a brace of partridges, all dressed and salted ready for the pot.

"Talk about turkey when 'possum air vis'tin the neighborhood," he chuckled, "tain't nowher."

He seized a pail and for the second time started to the springs. He opened the door; darkness had descended; something sharp and cold struck him in the face, again and again, and again. Just as he expected, it was snowing. The great fluffy flakes dropped upon his jacket so fast that it was coated with a delicate down long before he reached the spring at the foot of the trail.

"The gap'll be past trav'lin' less'n half er hour, with sech a storm, an' hit so dark, an' the Doe never easy foa'din' in good daylight, let 'lone sech a night ez this air. They'll lose the way, an' miss the ford, an' be plum frez ter death, too."

He was talking to himself of the children on their perilous ride through the lonely mountain gap.

"It do seem's ef the folkses air right in givin' the word that I be the only critter ez kin live in this here gap kentry," he said as he dipped his pail into the deep, still water. "Ennyways them chillun air in fur it. The fool uv a daddy to let 'em start an' hit so nigh a night. Some don't know a snowcloud from a green goadvine nohow; he war plum cracked ter let 'em."

Mose did not know that the wagon had made frequent stops in descending, and that more than two hours had been lost while the merry little occupants, Rob, Ruth, Charlie, and Bess, robbed the mountain side of its treasures of holly and wintergreen with which to deck the Christmas dinner table at Aunt Mildred's cottage in the little village

beyond the gap; not dreaming that twilight was chasing the sun behind the Roan, and that beyond the Bald a snowstorm was gathering.

Storms travel rapidly in the mountains, and night swoops down upon the gorges almost before the sun is fairly behind the higher peaks. Mose knew the gap was wrapped in darkness before the children could have reached the entrance to it. "Ef some'n ud cut 'cross by the cattle trail an' head 'em afore they get inter it—" he looked up, "blacker'n black," he said, "but a man ez air a man can't—" He finished the sentence under his breath as he bent himself against the storm and hastened to his cabin with the cherry [sic: cheery?] window turned toward him with inviting brightness.

He set the pail on the shelf and kicked the blazing log further in the fireplace and threw on another; a large, half-seasoned ash that would burn all night.

Then he drew on his head a curiously fashioned cap of red fox skin that covered both head and neck.

"I may not git back 'ginst daylight," he said as he dropped the latch string, closing the door behind him, shutting the warmth and brightness, and strode forward into the darkness and the storm.

There are few places more secure from danger than the Roan during the summer season.

Wild animals are not known there, and even humanity itself is scarce. One can travel three days without meeting a human being in the lonely wilds. Even the snakes go lower down, for more social quarters.

The only danger is that of missing the path; the one wagon road leads directly down the mountain, through the gap to the settlement;

there is no possibility of missing that in summer season when there is no snow to cover it. But the short cuts, or trails, are numerous and deceiving.

The children from the "rich man's house," as Mose called the home of the new settler from the North, who had bought largely and settled upon the Roan, had driven sedate old Jerry to and from the settlement time and again. So when Aunt Mildred, who had made her home as near her brother's as her fear of the mountain storms would permit, invited the little folks over to a Christmas dinner they were but too glad to accept the invitation. They knew what Christmas at Aunt Mildred's meant, "turkey and cranberries, popcorn and butternuts, holly and wintergreen, with a Christmas tree to begin with, songs and all, just like home," declared Charlie, over and again while they "practiced up" the half forgotten carols with which they had been accustomed to celebrate the Christmas times at "home," before coming to the isolated Roan.

But however pleasant it might be in summer, the road through the gap was full of perils in winter, and many a team had been known to enter the gorge in snowtime that never came out again.

Mose knew the wagon with the children in it could not have gone further than the foot of the mountain since it passed his cabin; if he could only reach it before it passed into the gap where the snow had without doubt entirely hidden the road. A man could not keep the track such a night, still less a child. He shuddered at the thought; unless he could get there in time, it meant death to the little travelers.

"Why the biggest ain't but fifteen," he said. "I hearn his mammy say so; an' the little one air just seven; I hearn that too."

He pushed on through the darkness, down the zigzag trail, while the snow fell silently on the crisp rhododendron leaves and piled white pillows on the drooping balsam boughs.

Mose tried vainly to shut out visions that would come of the snow-shrouded Christmas morning. He could see baby Bess, like a little white rabbit fast asleep in his snowbed; and near by Ruth, timid Ruth, who had always run away when he came near, afraid of his fullen face and mad ways. Poor little Ruth, she would not have run from him in the morning when he should lift her, like a frozen fawn, from her cold covert. Poor little Ruth, she would never fear him more.

And there was Rob, stout-hearted, honest Rob, he had kept heart in the others to the very last. Mose knew it as well as if he had been there all the while. He would know exactly where to look for Rob—somewhere near the horse, probably holding the reins in his dead hands. And Charlie, brave, fearless Charlie, who never felt the least fear of the "Witch's Son," but had taunted him face to face, fearlessly; and one day when Mose had threatened to "tan his hide" had stepped boldly out before the tall mountaineer and pushing back his blue jacket sleeve, doubled his baby fists and shouted, "try it, you coward." Fearless Charlie; Mose knew he would not play the coward though death chased him in a mountain snow storm. He knew he should find Charlie with his face toward his destination, whether dead or alive.

Then the man's conscience stirred; he had never understand child-nature, how could he?

He had been morose, mad. The children were right, he was "Mad Mose," to have despised and misjudged them, and most mad not to have

prevented them from attempting to cross the dangerous gap at nightfall, he stood face to face with himself and sat in merciless judgment upon his unmanly nature. The wind arose and swept by him with armsful of snow with which to heap the lonely hollows.

"I'd ez lief be dead," he said. "Yaas, I'd ruther be dead ez ter be branded like Cain an' let alone like er varmint. I ruther ez ter—" A gust of wind drowned the sentence, the balsams drooped lower with their burden of snow and met in archway over the path behind him. The rhododendron no longer brushed his legs, and the holly ceased to tap his cold cheek as he brushed too near—he stood at the entrance to the Haunted Gap.

"Ef they-uns ain't frez they air plum scairt ter death," he said as he breathed upon his numb fingers and listened for the sound of wheels. Only the wind in the fir trees, the melancholy sob of the forest.

Mose did not know whether to wait or to go on; he believed the children could not have passed. He had passed into the gap, yet he knew he could hear the sound of the wheels if the wagon had been descending anywhere within a mile of where he stood.

At length he decided to go on, and again he strode forward into the darkness and the wide, pitiless waste known as the Haunted Gap.

For an hour he trudged bravely on, sometimes losing the path, at others guessing at the way, while the wind lulled, the forest grew silent and the snow fell fast and free, covering his rough coat until he could scarcely carry it, so weighty had it grown.

At length he stopped—it was no use—if the children were beyond that line they were past help. The line was the Doe, the wild mountain river, swollen and turbulent, and impassable except with the most skillful watchfulness. There was but one hope for the unfortunate wanderers—that they had not entered the gap—and even in that case, Mose thought they must be "froze to death."

He put his hands to his mouth and shouted in that plaintive musical call peculiar to the mountaineer:

"Hoo-ooh-ooh-hoo!" Three times he called; far away toward Little Roan the disconsolate echoes repeated his cry: "Hoo-ooh-ooh-hoo!" There was no other answer, and he turned to slowly retrace his steps up the mountain.

Slowly, indeed, was the ascent, for he was stiff with cold and fatigue, and hunted with horrible forebodings. Suddenly a thought occurred to him:

"They'd be afeard to answer me," he said, "all but the gamey one," and so he changed his call in the effort to imitate the father of the children.

"Bessie!" he called, "Bes-sie!" and far up the mountain side a child's voice answered:

"Hoo-ee!"

Again and again the call and the answer and Mose hurried in the direction from whence it came.

Suddenly it ceased.

"They-uns foun' out it air me and' it skairt 'em," he said, and again the man's evil nature struggled for supremacy.

"Ef they-uns be so powerful afeared of witches and sich, go home ter yer warm fire Mose Faris, an' let 'em be," said his tempter. He hesitated; a lamb bleated somewhere down in Wilder's Cove. A thought of the shepheards [sic] "keeping watch over flocks by night" came to him.

"Not on Christmas eve," he said, and again he pushed on in the direction from which the voice had come.

Another bend of the zig-zag road and Mose stopped.

Above him, full fifty feet, on the next bend, towered the great overhanging cliff, always strangely grand and majestic, but he had never beheld them in such splendor. Underneath the roof-like projection a fire had been kindled; broad and good the blaze climbed upward, flooding the grim old bluff with amber and ruby, and clothing the jagged rocks with irridescent richness.

The old Judean hills: Mose had scarce time to frame the thought which came to him before a song floated out on the silent night:

"Glory to God in the highest,
On earth peace, good will toward men."

He could see them, the objects of his search, about the fire, and he stood still to hear the rest of the midnight carol on the mountain side.

"Glory to God, the angels sang;
Through the bright skies the chorus rang."

The old Judean hills and the message:

"Glory to God in the highest,
On earth peace, good will toward men."

An unusual sight indeed, and to the man listening and watching behind the laurel bushes it carried a superstitious thrill, and gave new meaning to the song sung six thousand years before in old Judea.

"Hit's because o' Chris'mus," he said, as he crept back into the road and began to whistle a careless, half musical tune.

"Nobody ain't afeard o' whistlin'," he told himself, "an' hit'll tell 'em some'n comin's anyhow." It did tell them. Rob and Ruth were waiting and watching until he should turn the bend. Little Bess lay curled upon a black bear skin, sound asleep, with the firelight on her chubby face where the tears were still undried.

"Plum skairt ter death," said Mose, 'an' I don't blame 'em nuther." And at that moment Charlie stepped out before the others and threw down the gauntlet to his old enemy.

"Mr. Bad Man's boy," he said, "if you'd hurt anybody on Christmas eve you're a heap meaner'r I thought you were, there!"

"A game little bantam, ye be," laughed Mose. "I come ter fetch yer ter my Chris'mus breakfus; not ter eat yer, yer onderstan', but fur you-unz ter eat the breakfus'"

It was not a time for compliments. Mose lifted the sleeping Bess in his arms. As he did so the child's soft cheek touched his own, cold and hard; one little hand sought his neck; the golden head nestled closer to his bosom. It was the first time a child's caress had ever been given him, and it brought to him the sweet old message that was carried to the shepherds: "Peace, good will toward men."

Through the stormy night they fought their way back to the cabin, by the narrow trail, Ruth and Charlie riding old Jerry, while Rob carried

a torch from their "Christmas bonfire," and Mose, with the horse's bridle over one arm and Bess fast asleep in the other, leading the way.

"When we found we couldn't make it," said Rob, "and it began to snow, we just drew up under the bluff and unhitched Jerry, right there where we left the wagon, because we thought the wind would blow over us, and the snow, too. I had some matches in my pockets, where I had been shooting firecrackers, and we built a fire and made up our minds to stay till daylight; then I could leave the others and go back for help. Good for mother; she thought it might turn cold, and so she tucked two big bear skins and a lap rug in. There wasn't any hope of getting away, for father thought we were at auntie's, and auntie thought we were at home, you know."

"What made ye sing?" asked Mose.

"Oh, we had two reasons for that; it kept us from thinking about scary things, and hearing noises. Once we tried telling tales, but we could hear the bushes crack like a bear might be in them, so we decided to sing, just as loud as we could hear our Christmas song we'd learned for Aunt Milly's, and have that much of our Christmas anyway. But somehow we couldn't forget the Christmas tree at auntie's, and nobody to get the goodies and things, and Bess began to cry, and cried until she went to sleep, I wonder if we couldn't get to auntie's to-morrow, anyhow."

"I 'low mebbe yer could," said Mose, "if the wagon bed ain't too heavy fur a sleigh."

"A sleigh!" three voices rang out in jubilant surprise, and Mose pushed open the cabin door and bade his visitors make themselves at home.

There was a big Christmas dinner at Aunt Mildred's the next day, and there was an unexpected, but not unwelcome guest, it was Mose. His night on the floor of his shedroom that his guests might be comfortable had not dulled his resolution to be social. And the night in the humble hut on the mountain side had lessened neither the appetite nor good spirits of the other guests.

The message to the shepherds had been told again, and as the sweet old message must ever do, it had blessed both bearer and receiver, the message of peace.

"Peace on earth, good will toward men."

FIDDLING HIS WAY TO FAME

We had fallen in with a party of Alabama boys, and all having the same end in view,—a good time,—we joined forces and pitched our tents on the bank of the Clinch, the prettiest stream in Tennessee, and set about enjoying ourselves after our own approved fashion.[83]

Even the important looking gentleman, sitting over against a crag where he had dozed and smoked for a full hour, forgot, for the nonce, that he was other than wit and wag for the company; the jolly good fellow he, the free man (once more), and the huntsman.

Our division had followed the hounds since sun-up: the remainder of the company were still out upon the river with rod and line. The sun was about ready to drop behind Lone Mountain, that solitary peak, of nobody knows precisely what, that keeps a kind of solemn guard upon the wayward little current singing at its base. Supper was ready; the odor of coffee, mingled with a no less agreeable aroma of broiling bacon, and corn cake, was deliciously tantalizing to a set of weary hunters. But we were to wait for the boys, that was one of our rules, always observed. The sun set, and twilight came on with that subtle light that is half gloom, half grandeur,[84] and mingled, or tried to, with the red glare of the camp fire.

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[83]According to the landmarks that Will Allen Dromgoole (W.A.D.) gives the reader, the Clinch River and Lone Mountain, the story takes place in Rhea County, whose county seat, Dayton, sits at the foot of the mountain.

[84]In the edition, "The Heart of Old Hickory" and Other Stories (hereafter cited as HH): glow.

While we sat there, dozing and waiting, there was a break in the brush below the bluff upon which we were camped. "A deer!" One of the boys reached for his rifle, just as a tall, gaunt figure appeared above the bluff, catching as he came at the sassafras and hazel bushes, pulling himself up until he stood among us a very Saul in height, and a Goliath, to all seeming, in strength.

He took in the camp, the fire, and the group at a glance. But the figure over against the crag caught his best attention. There was a kind of telegraphic recognition of some description, for the giant smiled and nodded.

"Howdye—" he said: and our jolly comrade took his pipe from between his lips and returned the salutation in precisely the same tone in which it was given.

"Howdye; be you-uns a-travelin'?"

The giant nodded, and passed on, and the figure of our comrade dropped back against the crag, and returned to his pipe. But a smile played about his lips, as if some very tender recollection had been stirred by the passing of the gaunt stranger.

It was one of the Alabama boys who broke the silence that had fallen upon us. He had observed the sympathetic recognition that had passed between the two men, and had noted the naturalness with which the "dialect" had been returned.

"I'll wager my portion of the supper," he said, "that he is a Tennessean, from the hill country." He pointed in the direction taken by the stranger. He missed, however, the warning—"Sh!" from the Tennessee side.

"A Tennessee mountaineer—" he went on. "His speech bewrayeth him."

Then one of our boys spoke right out.

"Look out!" he said, "the Governor is from the hill country too."

The silence was embarrassing, until the figure over against the crag took the pipe from between his lips, and struck the bowl against his palm gently, the smile still lingering about his mouth.

"Yes," he said, "I was born among the hills of Tennessee. 'The Barrens,' geologists call it; the poets name it 'Land of the Sky.' My heart can find for it no holier name than—home."

The Governor leaned back against the crag.[85] We knew the man, and wondered as to the humor that was upon him. Politician, wit,

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[85]The governor in this tale is modeled after Robert Love Taylor, who served as governor of Tennessee from 1887-91 and from 1897-99, and was in real life a fiddle player, but was not, however, a poor mountaineer as depicted in the story. He was from a distinguished, although not wealthy, family. This character figures prominently in another of W.A.D.'s short stories, "The War of the Roses," and additional notation may be found there. In the 1895 second edition of HH, W.A.D. adds an author's note to the end of this story, which reads as follows: "Since this story appeared, first in the Arena magazine, then in a former edition of The Heart of Old Hickory, it has called forth much pleasant speculation regarding the honorable gentleman suspected of being the hero of the sketch. The author desires to state that the story was not designed as history. Further, had she dreamed for one moment that it would have met with the generous reception that has been accorded it, she would have been careful to make this statement at the first. It is chiefly a fancy sketch with some of the characteristics of a great and good man to rest upon, as a sort of framework or foundation,—no more, no less."

comrade, gentleman; as each we knew him. But as native, mountaineer, ah! he was a stranger to us in that role.[86]

He had "stumped the state" twice as candidate, once as elector. His strange, half humorous, half pathetic oratory was familiar in every country from the mountains to the Mississippi. But the native;—we almost held our breath while the transformation took place. And the governor-orator[87] became the mountaineer.

"I war born," he said, "on the banks o' the Wataugy, in the county uv Cartir'[88]—in a cabin whose winders opened ter the East, an' to'des the sunrise. That war my ole mother's notion an' bekase it war her notion it war allus right ter me. Fur she war not one given ter wrong ideas.

"I war her favorite chil' uv the seven God give. My cheer sot nighest her'n.[89] The yaller yarn that slipped her shiny needles first slipped from hank ter ball acrost my sunburnt wrists. The mug uv goldish cream war allus at my plate; the cl'arest bit uv honey-comb, laid crost the biggis' plug uv pie, war allus set fur me. The bit o' extry sweetnin' never missed my ole blue chany cup.[90]

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[86] HH: addition of "We had heard of the quaint ease with which he could drop into the speech of his native hills, no less than the grace with which he filled the gubernatorial chair."

[87] HH: ". . . governor-orator for the moment became . . . ."

[88] Carter County is in upper East Tennessee, the county seat being Elizabethton. The Watauga River is a tributary of the Holston River and flows through the northeast corner of the state.

[89] HH: ". . . set nighest hers." W.A.D. frequently felt the need to simplify her mountain dialect, no doubt for the ease of her readers.

[90] HH: chiny.

"An' summer days when fiel' work war a-foot, a bottle full o' fraish new buttermilk war allus tucked away amongst the corn pones in my dinner pail.

"An' when I tuk ter books, an' readin' uv the papers, an' the ole man riz up ag'inst it, bekase I war more favored ter the book nor ter the plow, then my old mount'n mammy, ez allus stood twixt me an' wrath, she riz up too, an' bargained with the ole man fur two hours uv my time. This war the bargain struck. From twelve erclock[91] ontil the sun marked two upon the kitchen doorstep I war free.

"Ever' day fur this much I war free. An' in my stid, whilst I lay under the hoss apple tree an' figgered out my book stuff, she followed that ole plow up an' down the en'less furrers acrost that hot ontrodd'n fiel'—in my stid.

"I've travelled some sence then, plowed many a furrer in the fiel' o' this worl's troubles, an' I hev foun' ez ther' be few ez keers tur tek the plow whilst I lay by ter rest.

"An' when the work war done, an' harvest in, I tuk ter runnin' down o' nights ter hear the boys discuss the questions o' the day at Jube Turner's store over ter the settlemint.

'T war then the ole man sot his foot down.

"'It hev ter stop!' he said. 'The boy air comin' ter no good.'

"Then my ole mammy riz agin, ez sot down ez detarmint ez him; an' sez she:—

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[91] HH: er'clock.

"'He be a man, Josiah, an growin' ter be one mighty fast.[92] An' he hev the hankerin's uv a man. The time hev come fur me ter speak. The boy must hev his l'arnin'-books his min' calls fur. He aims ter mix with men; an' you an' me, ole man, must stand aside, an' fit him fur the wrastle ez he boun' ter come. Hit air bespoke fur him, an' ther' be'n't[93] no sense in henderin' sech ez be bespoke beforehan'.'

"She kerried, an' I went ter school. The house air standin' now—a cabin in the valley, nigh the banks o' the Wataugy. I tuk ter books they said, like beans ter cornstalks. An' winter nights I'd pile the pine knots on the fire, to light me ter the secrets uv them blue an' yaller kivers.

"An' she'd set by an' holp me with her presence, my ole mount'n mother would. She even holped me to gether up the pine knots when the days war over short. She holped me ever way. Her heart riched down ter mine an' l'arned its needs, an' holped ter satisfy them. She flung the rocks out uv my way, openin' up the path before—the path her partial eye had sighted, every inch uv it.

"She saved the butter an' trudged offter[94] the settlemint ter sell it, so's I could hev a daily paper, when she see ez I war hankerin' fur it.

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[92] HH: "'He be a man, an' he hev the hankerin's uv a man."

[93] HH: be'n't, an inaccurate representation of be not, since nothing is omitted between the e and n became ben't, a more accurate form (cf: don't).

[94] HH: ". . . an' sent it offter the settlemint . . ."

"An' when it kem, I'd set ther' on a kaig an' read it ter the mount'n boys, an' Jube, they-uns flocked ter me like crows flockin' ter a corn-field, an' me it war, a mount'n striplin', ez dealt the word o' politics ter they-uns.

"But somethin' worrit me: a hitch war in my l'arnin'. Still, the ole man in the cabin begin ter grow more easy like an' teek[95] ter readin' an' war not ill-pleased ter git the news. An' he fretted sometimes ef I tarried ter the store, bekase he war a-waitin' fur the news. But I war troubled; and that eye ez war allus open ter my ailments see that I war worrit. An' one day when I kem down the road, she met me, my ole mammy, an' she put her hand onter my arm, an' walked along o' me. An' sez she:—

"'What air it, Robert, ez be a-troublin' uv ye, son?[96] I be yer mammy, an' ez sech yer frien', an' I aims ter know yer ailments.'

"An' I tuk that tremblin' hand close inter mine, an' I spoke my min', my feelin's, freely.

"'I be worrit,' sez I, 'becase I be onable ter make out ef I be right or no.'

"'In politics?' sez she.

"'Yaas,' sez I, 'in politics. I git but one side o' the matter, an' I know ez ther' be two. An' I be'n't satisfied with this side, an' still I be onable ter make out the tother!'

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[95] HH: teok. This is probably a misprint, since there is no reason for using this form.

[96] HH: "'What air it, son, ez be a-troublin' uv ye, I . . . .'"

"She onriddled me at onc't.'

"'You-uns must hev the other paper, son,' sez she. 'Your granddad war a politician under Clay; and ther' war two sides then, an' ther' air boun' ter be two now, although the word uv it may not retch the Wataugy.'

"I never will furgit the first day that it kem, that Dimercratic paper. I went ter the settlemint, I knowed the paper war a comin, an' I guessed what it would be; a coal o' fire ter that Republican stronghold.

"I tuk my fiddle down; it war my mother's thought.

"'Play 'em Sally Gal,' sez she, 'afore the mail comes.'

"I done it; an' they-uns war toler'ble frien'ly; fur the mount'n boys allus hev a weakness fur a fiddle an' a mount'n fiddler.

"But when the mail war opened—Laud! how they swore an' tuk on. Some laffed; a mighty few though, an' some winked ter one ernother. Some cussed outright, an' all war thunderstruck. Ez fur me, I went out ter it, an' it kem in ter me. I war a Dimercrat from that good day.

"I tuk it home; the ole man list'ned, countin' it a mightly joke ter hear me an' brother David argerfyin' 'bout the two sides, an' some times he'd say which beat in argerfyin', but he mostly allus went with Alf.[97] Bimeby Alf tuk the Republican paper, ez my time give out, an' we-uns went tergether ter the settlemint; an' we'd mount a kaig, him on one, and me on t' other, and we'd give the news ter both sides, him an' me. Some few sided long o' me, but most war tuk to Alf. An' so it war onderstood ez I war Dimercrat, and Alf Republican.

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[97]Alfred A. Taylor (1848-1931), Republican brother of Robert, defeated for governor by Robert in 1886 but elected to Congress two years later. Alf Taylor was finally elected governor in 1920.

"It tickled the ole man mightly. He useter call in the Wataugy boys ter hear us argerfy o' nights, and they-uns sot in jedgmint ez ter which uv we-uns war the best at sech. Alf allus got the vote, an' one night I riz up; fur I war mad some, an' I give the word ez how a Dimercrat would never stan' no chance o' justice in sech a onfair destrict. They-uns laffed, but ther was one ez sot her face aginst sech. 'A house set aginst itself air boun' ter come ter bad luck,' my ole mammy said.[98]

"One day ther' war a meetin' ter the settlemint, a political meetin', an' Jube war buckin' up the boys right peart, an' war about ter sweep off everthing. I moved about a bit among they-uns, an' after a little the word war giv ez ther' war a split.

"Then kem a row, an' Jube he druv the Dimercrats out'n o' his store, an' they held the'r meetin' in the blacksmith's shop. An' I war goin' out along o' they-uns, an' Jube see me; an' he sez, sez he:—

"'Come back here, Bob, an' vote your good ole daddy's principles.' Fur Jube war boss o' that ther' destrict. But I war mad, an' I sez, sez I:

"I aims ter vote my own principles," sez I, "an' they be Dimercratic."

"An' when that day war over, ole Si Ridley he rid over ter we-uns[99] cabin on the Wataugy an' give the word as I war nominated ter

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[98] HH: mother. Mammy is an accurate mountain usage in some areas, but perhaps W.A.D. sensed that this form was too similar to Negro dialect.

[99] HH: we-uns'.

the Legislatur aginst big Judge Griggsby, the rankest Republican ter all that county.

"Then the ole man riz up in real dead earnest. He named me fur a fool an' a upstart, an' let on ez how he never 'lowed that playful argerfyin' o' Alf an' me would ever be tuk fur more'n a little playful talk.

He swore he'd thrash the heresy out o' me. Then my ole mammy, she riz up.

"'Nary lick, Josiah,' sez she. 'He hev the right ter choose, an' he hev done it.'

"Then he give the word ez he'd vote aginst me same's he would any other blamed Dimercrat. He kept his word. On the day uv election him an' the boys went over ter Jube's ter vote.

"Folks showed considerable interest, a-lowing ez blood war more stronger nor politics, an' that the ole man would come over ter me in the eend.

"But he didn't; he jest voted clean an' open fur Griggsby, an' I 'lowed the boys would foller his lead. But when Obadiah, my oldest brother, stepped up an' drapped in a vote fur me, I cl'ar furgot myse'f, an' I jest flung up my hat an' shouted, 'Count one fur the Dimercrat.'

"The ole man war pow'ful mad. But when Alf an' Ike an' Hugh voted with him, it kinder eased him some. But when Sim an' Lucius cast lots with me, I yelled agin.

"'Hooray fur Dimocracy!' sez I. An' the ole man he jest lifted up his ridin' switch, and' sez he:—

"Stop, sir! Take off your coat, sir. I'll thrash that Dimocracy out'n o' you.'

"Ye could a heerd a pin drap. Then I ketched ole Jube Turner's eye. He allus 'lowed there war no backbone to a Dimercrat. An' when I see him I flung back my coat an' bowed my shoulders fur the ole man's lash.

"The boys drapped back, disappointed, an' I heard a hiss ez the first blow fell. Forty licks. I tuk 'em without a tremble. An' when the last un fell, I riz up an' tore off my hat, an' tossed it up ter the rafters, an' sez I, ez loud ez I could, 'Hooray fur Dimocracy! Forty lashes hev heat it ter red hot heat.'

"Then a yell went up, an' I knowed ez Carter County war gone Dimercratic fur onc't, afore ole Jube stepped out afore the boys, an' tuk off his hat an' sez, 'I be fur the feller ez can't be beat out o' his principles.'

"Them war stormy times in the cabin on the Wataugy, I kin tell ye. The boys built a bonfire top o' Lynn Mount'n jest acrost the river.[100] It lit up the kentry fur miles, an' my ole mammy watched it through her tears ez she stood in the cabin door; but the ole man didn't speak ter me no more till I war startin' off ter Nashvill ter tek my seat, ez 'the member from Carter.'

"But my ole mammy follered me down ter the settlemint, wher' the boys war waitin' ter say good-by, an' she tuk my han' 'n hers, an' sez she:—

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[100]The town of Elizabethton sits at the base of Lynn Mountain in Carter County.

"'Legislatur or plow boy, remember ye air born ter die!'

"'Mend up the road law,' said Jube, at partin', 'an' let down the gap ter the still house.' Fur Jube had a taste fur apple-juice an' corn squeezin's.

"Waal, I moved along toler'ble peart. Ef I could set the boys a-laffin', I war toler'ble sartin' ter kerry my p'int. If I couldn't, some-un would move adjinement,— 'Ter give Bob time ter ile up,' they said. 'Ilin' up' meant gittin' my fiddle ready an' callin' the boys tergether in a committee-room or somewher's, an' tollin' 'em inter measures with 'Rabbit in the Pea Patch'—'Chicken in the Bread Tray,' an' some o' the other mount'n tunes. The mount'n boys war allus sure to come under after a pull at the ole fiddle. It jest put 'em inter a kind o' jubilee that would a' let the State o' Tennessee go ter the devul, if unly the fiddle war left.

"'Remember ye air born ter die.' I could hear it in the twang o' the fiddle-strings, a-playin' the boys inter harness, in the clerk's voice a-callin' the roll, in the speaker's gavil a-knockin' fur order.

"One mornin' ther' war a big railroad bill afore the House, an' the Dimercrats went one side the track, and the Republicans went t'other. An' I sot ther' awaitin my turn ter vote; an' when it kem, I riz up scacely knowin' what I war a-doin', an' sez I:—

"'I be born ter die! I be aginst that bill.'

"An' the boys set up a yell, a-callin' ter me not ter do it. An' the nex' day the papers named me fur a Jonah, an' said ez I war showin' uv the East Tennessee streak ter my bacon. The streak in East Tennessee bacon air a Republican streak, they 'lowed. An' they made game o' my

sayin' I war born ter die. I went ter bed that night toler'ble crushed. But in my dreams, I war back ter the fair valley o' the Wataugy, an' a face deep-scarred an' wrinkled riz up afore me, an' a pair o' faded eyes looked inter mine, an' I heeard the voice o' my ole mammy, 'Stan' by your principles. Ye air born to die!'

"So I went 'long. One day ther' war a mighty rumpus over a bill to shet off gamblin' in the State o' Tennessee. Times were hot, an' word war give ez how some aimed ter hev that bill, spite o' locks an' safes an' clerks an' sargeants. Ther' war a night session. An' I war at it. An' ez I run my han' inter my desk, it tetched a package. I tuk it up; pinned ter it war a note. '$10,000 fur a vote aginst the Gamblin' Bill,' it said.[101] I drapped my head on my desk an' groaned. I war unly a mount'n stripplin', an' that temptation war orful, orful.

"'Remember ye air born ter die.' Ole mount'n mother. I could hear her voice above the voice o' the tempter.

"When my name war called, I riz up, that roll o' gunpowder in my hand. I helt it out afore 'em all, high up ez I could retch, an' I yelled out in reg'lar mount'n fashion—'Who bids?' sez I, 'who bids? Ten thousan' dollars fur some man's honor.[102] Come an' git it whosever air minded. Ez fur me, I air not a bidder.'

"An' I flung it with all my might acrost the house, an' I heeard it fall at the clerk's feet ez I called ter him to put me down fur that bill. 'Fur it, 'till the crack o' doom.'

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[101] HH: $5,000.

[102] HH: Five thousan' fur some man's honor.

"Laud! I never kalkulated on raisin' such a rumpus. I war the bigges' man in Tennessee that night. I went ter bed, ter be woke up by the brass band under my winder, a-playin' 'Hail ter the Chief.'

"I war allus a fool about a band anyhow, an' when I heeard that grand old tune, played fur me,—me, I jest drapped back 'mongst the kivers and cried like a baby.

"Me, hid away in a forty-ninth class bo'rdin' house,—me, the plough-boy o' the Wataugy. Then the boys bust in an' ordered me inter my clothes, an' drug me out fur a speech. An' when I heeard the yellin', sez I, 'Boys, in the name o' creation what hev I done?' An' some-uns said, sez he, 'Ye've turned the water-pipe loose on hell,—that's what's ye've done.'

"I went home shortly after that—went a-wonderin' what Jube would say. Fur Jube war toler'ble fond uv ole Sledge now'n then.

"Waal, I hev hed some success, I say it meekly; an' I hev felt some little pride, I say it meekly; an' I hev hed some happy minutes in my life. But the happies' minute I ever knowed war that minute when I sot my foot on my native East Tennessee sile agin, an' felt the hand o' honest old Jube Turner tek holt o' mine an' wring it hard, whilst he looked away to'des the blue hills, for the tears war in his eyes, an' sez he: 'Ye'll do ter trust, youngster!'

"The ox wagin war ther' ter meet me ter fetch me up the mount'n. The ole steers, Buck and Bill, hed flags a-flyin' from the'r horns, an' the wagin war all kivered up in cedar branches an' the pretty pink azalea that growed right around our cabin door. An' h'isted squar' on

top uv all war a pole, a sign-board, with a flag a-flyin', an' on it my ole school-marm hed writ a line:—

"'The plough-boy o' the Wataugy; Truth, the sledge hammer o' the mountaineer!'

"An' how the boys did shout! They fairly drug me ter the wagin, an' then all fell inter line, an' sot out fur the cabin long side the Wataugy.

"Home! that little cabin wher' the winders turned ter meet the sun; the waters sang ther' all the year aroun', sang and sobbed. One part the pretty river red'nin' in the sun, an' t'other dead black with the shadow uv the pines that cap the summit uv Lynn Mount'n.

"An' the boys come down ter meet me at the bars, an' the ole man, proud uv his son, ashamed uv the Dimercrat, leanin' on his staff under the greenin' hop-vines. An', best uv all the vision uf a little ole woman, standin' in the door, shadin' her eyes aginst the sunlight, waitin' fur her boy.

"The flag floated above my head; the boys yelled the'r-se'ves hoarse; the wagin creaked, an' Jube's whip cracked about the spotted steer's back. But I heeard nothin'; I see nothin', but my mother waitin' in the door. She tuk me in her arms, an' drapped her cheek upon my bosom.

"'My boy,' she said; an' it war wuth ten times over the whole that I hed won.

"But the ole man war worrit. A sign pinned ter the wagin-hed hed tuk his eye.

"'The Champion o' Democracy,' it said.

"'Take it down,' said some one, 'it worries the ole man. An' one riz up ter cut it down. But I war ther' afore him, an' I retched out ter take the hand that would cut away my colors.

"'Stop!' sez I. 'Boys,' I went on, 'they be my colors. I'll not hide 'em from the eye uv God or man.'

"Then they raised a shout: 'Them colors'll stan' ye good stead fur Congress,' they said, 'bimeby.'

"They done it. It war this way. Ther' war foul play in the convention, the Republican convention. An' ole Bony Pettibrash, who aimed to boss that kentry, got the nomernation. That riled the boys, and they-uns swore he never should be elected. So when the Dimercrats nomernated me, the t'other elemint being ag'inst ole Pettibrash come out fur me, an' I went ter Congress.[103]

"I had ter work fur it though, fur Pettibrash hed his follerin'. He war a pow'ful hand at argerfyin'; though not much on a joke. He war long winded, an' my unly chance war in the fac' that the boys got tired uv him. I laid my plans—t'was my ole mammy holped me, an' her ez suggested.

"One night we-uns war ter meet at the log school house an' discuss matters. A big crowd war ter be ther', an' I tuk my fiddle along, accerdentally, so ter speak. The boys war lookin' oneasy.

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[103]The character of Bony Pettibrash is apparently modeled after the real-life figure of Major Augustus Pettibone, who ran against and was defeated by Bob Taylor for a congressional seat in 1878. Pettibone defeated Taylor two years later. The name Pettibrash perhaps reflects personal feelings of the author regarding this political figure. [Daniel M. Robison, Bob Taylor and the Agrarian Revolt in Tennessee (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1935), pp. 53-54.]

"'Can't ye tell a good coon yarn, Bob?' they sez. But Jube 'lowed a 'possum story ez I knowed would tek better.

"Then I whispered in Jube's ear the plan I hed laid out.

"Jest afore speakin' time I onwropped my fiddle an' twanged a string.

"'Give us a tune, Bob,' sung out Jube, 'ter liven us up a bit whilst we're waitin'.'

"I tetched the bow acrost the strings, 'Rabbit in the Pea-Patch,'—the boys began to pat; soft at first, then a bit more peart. Then I played up—that ole Rabbit went a-skippin' an' a-trippin', I kin tell ye. Far'well ter the peas in that patch. How the boots did strike that ole puncheon floor! Jube led. I could hear his leather 'bove all the rest.

"All 't onc't I struck inter 'Rollin' River'; fur I see ole Pettibrash eyein' uv me through the winder. Jube see it too—an' sez he—'Plenty o' time, boys, fur speakin'. Out with the benches, an' let's hev a dance.'—Out they went, an' the gals an' wimmen folks kem in; an' then I tuk the teacher's desk, an' put my fiddle ter my shoulder, an' sez I, "Boys, ef yid[104] rether hev cat-gut music ez ter hev chin, I'm yer man. But I'll jest mek all the speech I've got ter mek in mighty few words. It air this. I'm agin the Blair Bill an' fur the fair thing. Them's my sentiments in Congress or on the mount'n.'[105]

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[104] HH: ye'd. This is a more accurate form, visually and phonetically.

[105] The Blair Bill supported by Republicans in Congress was designed to give federal funds to the states for the support of public education. Funds were to be distributed on the basis of illiteracy

"Then I tetched up the fiddle, an' give 'em 'Chicken in the Bread Tray,' whilst ole Pettibrash war left ter chaw the ragged eend o' disapp'intment. It war midnight when we quit. We offered ter 'divide time' about eleven o'clock, but the boys war in fur a frolic. Waal, we-uns went to Congress, me an' the fiddle. An' that ole fiddle went long o' me ter all the speakin's afore it went ter Congress, an' it beat ole Pettibrash all ter hollow fur argumint. 'Fiddled his way ter Congress,' the papers said, and' they didn't miss it ez fur ez I hev knowed 'em ter do.

"But the fiddle war not done yit. The papers talked mighty about it, an' about me 'fiddlin' my way ter fame' an' sech.

"One day a question kem up fur the protection uv iron, an' I voted fur it, long with the Republicans. Ye see I war a mount'n boy; an' them ole hills o' Tennessee, sech ez war not filled with marble war chuck full o' iron or coal, or sech. I war boun' ter stan' by the mount'n. The papers abused me mightly, an' 'lowed ez I played the wrong tune that time.

"That night I had a diff'rint surrenade, on mightly diff'rint instrumints from the ole Tennessee brass band. They war tin horns, an'

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rates. Republicans wanted to siphon off federal monies in order to justify retaining the high protective tariff during the days of a national Democratic administration. Tennessee leaders were divided over the question of the Blair Bill; one of the strongest supporters was Senator Howell E. Jackson while one of the strongest opponents was Senator Isham G. Harris. Robert L. Taylor's position in the mid-1880s on the Blair Bill was vague and ambiguous, perhaps deliberately so. Republicans dropped the Blair Bill once their party was restored to the presidency with the election of Benjamin Harrison (1889-93). [Robison, pp. 74-89; Roger L. Hart, Redeemers, Bourbons & Populists: Tennessee, 1870-1896 (Baton Rouge: La. State Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 92-95.]

busted buckets, an' cowbells; an' ther' war a feller ez give out the tunes, an' one war this:—

"'The Whelp o' the Wataugy,' an' the band applauded right along.

"The next war:—

"'The Fiddlin' Mugwump,' an' the band seconded the motion.

"'The Protection 'Possum o' the Cumberlands' fetched down the house.

"Then some-un called fur me, an' I went out, me an' the fiddle. An' I didn't say a word; I jist tetched the bow acrost the strings, an' begin ter play.

'Kerry me back,
Kerry me back ter Tennessee!'

"Fur a minute all war still ez the dead. Then some-un shouted, 'Go it Bob!' An' the whole earth fairly shuk with the'r shoutin'.

"'Fiddle away, ole coon,' they hollered. 'Go it, my whelp!'—'Hooray fur Tennessee!'

"The next mornin' ther' war a big poplar coffin settin' on the steps o' the capitol, an' a big fiddle laid 'pon top o' it, an' on a white card war painted in black letters:—'Hang up the fiddle an' the bow' An' another card said:—'Kin any good come out o' Nazareth?' meanin' East Tennessee.

"Then the mount'n in me riz big ez a mule. An' that day I made a speech. A speech fur Tennessee, with her head in the clouds an' her feet in the big Mississippi. An' I 'lowed ez I aimed ter stan' by her, an' by her ole iron-filled hills till the breath lef' my body, spite o' coffins an' fiddles, cowbells an' tin horns. 'An' she'll stan' by me'

sez I, 'I be'n't afeard ter risk ole Tennessee.' An' I give the word ez I'd never hang up the fiddle till East Tennessee ordered it, an' ole Jube Turner signed the documint. It war all in the papers nex' day an' I jest mailed 'em out ter Jube. He war mightly tickled, an' the boys all laffed some when he read it out ter they-uns.

"I made one more race, me an' the fiddle, an' hit war the stormiest race I ever set out fur. I hed a new foe ter fight this time, one ez ole Pettibrash couldn't tetch with a forty-foot pole. Hit war Alf, my own brother.[106] The Republicans put Alf[107] out to head me off, thinkin' ez I wuldn't make the race ag'inst my own brother. I war with Jube when the news o' Alf's nomernation kem.[108] An' Jube he swore an' cussed like all possessed. He give the word ez I hed to make the race fur Gov'ner o' Tennessee ef the whole fam'ly kem out ez candidates.

"I went home. I war not able ter face the ole man an' the Republican elemint i' the fam'ly; so I went out an' sot on a log behin' the cabin an' watched the sun a-settin' behin' Lynn Mount'n. So, it seemed ter me, my sun war goin' down behin' the mount'n o' helplessness—my sun o' success.

"After a while my ole mother foun' me out an' kem down, an' I told her ez how I war hendered by Alf bein' a candidate.[109] An' she heeard me out an' then—sez she—an' her words were slow an' keerful:—

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[106] HH: Hit war jist my own brother.

[107] HH: him.

[108] HH: I war with Jube when the news o' the nomernation kem.

[109] HH: . . . I war hendered by my brother bein' a candidate.

"'Ye hev the right; Alfred knowed ez ye aimed ter mek the race, an' he hev unly done this ter hurt the Dimercrats. Ye hev the right ter go on fur yer party, the same ez Alfred hev fur his. Ye hev that right.'

"Then I riz up an' went in. An' I tuk down the old fiddle, an' teched it gentle like, an' all the ole times kem crowdin' back. I see the Hall o' Representatives. An' I heeard the clerk's voice callin' uv the roll. An' the shouts o' the boys a-contendin'. Then it changed an' 'Hail ter the Chief' said the fiddle in my ear, unly it war a brass band. Then the tune turned agin, an' I heeard the cowbells an' the tin horns an' the hissin' uv the people. Then it began to fade, an' 'Kerry me back. Kerry me back,' an' I riz up an' shuk the fiddle in the face o' the whole house, an' sez I—[110]

"'Yaas, I'll go. I <u>will</u> go. All hell can't hender me.'

"An' I went. Me an' the fiddle, fur it tuk tall playin' ter git above Alf ez war up ter all my tricks.

"Nip an' tuck we run,[111] me a neck ahead on the home-stretch. me an' my fiddle. 'Fiddled himself inter the Gov'ner's cheer,' they said; an' ther' war some toler'ble tall fiddlin' done after we got ther'.

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[110] <u>HH</u>: Then it began to fade, an' then it wur a white-tailed rabbit skippin' an' skeedadlin' through turnip patch while all the world seem ter beat time to the tune of the fiddle, singin' me to glory, an' I riz up an' shuk the fiddle in the face o' the whole house, an' sez I—

[111] <u>HH</u>: Nip an' tuck we run together on the first quarter, together on the second; Alf a nose behin' on the third, an' me . . . .

"I aint laid her by yit, my ole pardner. Ther's a vacancy ter the United States Senate jest ahead, an'—"

There was a shout down the river: the fisherman had returned. The Governor rose and shook himself.

"Ah, gentlemen," he said, "we shall have fish for our supper after all."

Richard was himself again.[112]

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[112]C.f. Colley Cibber's version of Richard III, V, iii (1700).

THE WAR OF THE ROSES

Squire Walker never meant the gathering should take a political turn. All the squire intended, or thought of, was getting his corn shucked. So when he issued invitations in the good old way, that is, by mounting his clay-bank mare, and striking off across the mountain, calling from door to door, that on Thursday, October the 15th, there would be a corn-shucking at his place down at the Ford, it was the least of his intentions that anything of a political nature should disturb the harmony of the occasion.[113]

No husking, mind you, but a shucking. Such as they have nowhere to such perfection as in Tennessee. Such royally rousing good times, with cider, and apple butter, pumpkin, and mountain dew never in lack.

The squire had not once thought of politics, although, to be sure, it was a "political year." Across the mountain somewhere two brothers had been nominated for governor of the State; and down in the valley there were exciting times, rumors of which, vague at first, but gaining in interest all the while, had even cross the mountain and disturbed the quiet of the region round about the Ford.

"Disturbed it mightily," the squire declared, when on his rounds to issue invitations to the corn-shucking he found the election excitement at fever heat among his neighbors.

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[113]The setting for this story is in the mountains of East Tennessee, near Elizabethton. One of the characters mentions going to Elizabethton to vote, and the Little Doe and Watauga Rivers are mentioned.

"Bob an' Alf!" "Bob an' Alf!" "Bob an' Alf!" was on every lip, with the emphasis to mark the favorite; the emphasized conjunction denoting the conservative mugwump who "looked at principle rather than party." Some made a mighty joke of the campaign; others took it with solemn seriousness; but all took a part.[114]

Such times were never heard of in that part of the country. The squire was disgusted.

"Such an etarnal rumpus about nothin'," he declared to the clay-bank. "The whole kentry upsot about two saplin's a-want'n ter be gov'ner o' Tennessee, an' my corn a-want'n ter be shucked sech as never ware."

Corn-shucking is a courtesy, however, as sacred to the mountaineer as assisting at a funeral, or "settin' up with a corpse." To say nothing of the visions of pumpkin pies, pumpkin bread, apple butter, and apple cider, barbecued pig, and the dew (that would swing an even balance with any political move ever set on foot) that ever arose before the husker's mental eye at the mention of a Tennessee corn-shucking.

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[114]The title of this story alludes to an actual historical event in Tennessee, the gubernatorial campaign between two brothers, Bob and Alf Taylor, in 1886. The title was borrowed from English history; the Democrats, represented by Bob Taylor, adopted the white York rose, while the Republicans, represented by Alf Taylor, wore the red Lancaster rose. The actual "war" was a series of debates between the two brothers, which were more entertaining than political. This friendly sibling rivalry occurred during a time of economic and political turmoil for Tennesseeans, and the people probably enjoyed the shallowness of the candidates' sparring and their "folksy" way of delivering speeches, as well as their famous fiddling (Robison, pp. 61-68; Hart, pp. 90-92, 96-97).

Still, the neighborhood was excited; no mistake about that. The feeling extended to the very women and children and might indeed be said to have descended to the stock.

Every new baby, as well as every new mule, pet dog, or calf, was promptly labelled in honor of one of the opposing candidates.

The house against itself wrought trouble in other houses. Brother stood against brother as candidates, and brother against brother as voters.

Down in the first district, at Pete Siles' house, "t'other side the Wataugy," matters were becoming serious enough. Man and wife had actually quit speaking, "all 'count of the 'lection," the neighbors said. Pete said it was "all 'count o' the baby," that innocent youngster having made his appearance in the very heat of the political canvass and demanded of the authors of his being a name. Mrs. Siles promptly declared for the Democratic nominee, her people having always supported that ticket. But Pete's people had been as stubbornly loyal to the other side; and, very naturally, Pete desired his first born to bear the name of his own chosen candidate.

Little Mrs. Siles was not a woman to yield lightly. She called that boy "Bob." When she was a trifle vexed she called him Robert. Pete as persistently called him "Alf." He made a point of calling him too, whenever Mrs. Siles did. Then each would regard the other in a manner that said most distinctly, "Never!" "Wish I may die if I do!"

But the split was not confined to families. Lovers and friends took up sides against each other. Such a time was never heard of in that quiet neighborhood.

"I hev seen times an' times," said the squire, "but I ha'n't seen no time like this time, not in all my born days."

There were Elridge Ford and Denie Lynn who had been keeping steady company for two years, had up and had a split along with the rest. Denie, whose folks lived over in Sullivan, the one Democratic county of Eastern Tennessee, was herself a stanch Democrat, "a reg'lar mossbank." Eb Ford was a "red hot Republican." Both were rather given to expressing their political preferences. And in the great race between the brothers the lovers naturally "took sides." A quarrel, bitter and prolonged, was the result, and the couple quit speaking.

So matters stood when the squire issued invitations to his corn-shucking at the Ford on the Watauga. It is customary to work with the corn all day, and to dance all night, as a remuneration, at these entertainments; and the festivities are sometimes prolonged far into the next day, the frolic depending somewhat upon the amount of pumpkin pie and apple cider that has been prepared.

"Yaas, Square," said young Ford, when the clay-bank had stood a moment at the gate of the politician-lover's home, "I'll come. Fetched if I don't! There's a speakin' o' the candidates nex' day down 't 'Lizbethton, but I'll run the resk o' gitt'n' back 'n time fur hit. I be plumb sick o' politics, anyhows. I'll come ter the shuckin', an' fetch my fiddle."

"So do, Eb, so do," said the squire; "I ware aimin' ter ax ye ter fetch the music along. I'll feel oblergated ter ye, Eb. I certainly will."

"That's all right," said Ford. "I'll be ther'. I aint the one ter refuse ter holp a neighbor, an' I be sick o' this here politics, anyhow."

The truth was Ford was sick of the quarrel with Denie; although he was not ready to admit it, nor to forgive, without some show of repentance on her part, the "stubbornness" of his sweetheart.

When Denie received her invitation to the shucking, she looked the squire in the face and said:—

"I'm calculat'n pow'ful on gitt'n over ter 'Lizbethton ter hear the candidates, but I'll come, Square Walker, an' do my part."

And as the squire rode away to Pete Siles' cabin further down the mountain, pretty Denie sighed and went back to her washtub under the hop vine shed, wondering if Eb Ford would be there. Then she 'lowed he wouldn't "'count o' 'lection," and she sighed again, vaguely wondering how a corn-shuckin in Tennessee would go off without Eb Ford and his fiddle.

Pete Siles likewise accepted the invitation to make one of the huskers.

"Don't keer if I do, Squar'," he declared, as he spat the yellow tobacco from his mouth, a necessary proceeding indeed if he was expected, as he assuredly was, to give a verbal answer to the invitation. "I don't keer ef I do. The ole 'oman hev been that pesky an' tetchy lately as it be wusser'n pizen ter stay in the house. She air more techous nor a yaller jacket. I aint knowed no peace since 'lection opened up. An' ez fur music, I aint heeard no good music since last Chris'mus. I'll come, Squar', an' fetch my fiddle an' holp Eb make a fuss fur the young folks atter shuckin's over."

"I wish yer would, Pete," said the squire, and Pete swore that he would, half wishing that, despite her peskiness, the rebellious little mother in the cabin was able to go along with him and enjoy the fun.

"Ruthy do jest natchelly love a fiddle, same's a man," he told himself, when the clay-bank's tail was swishing in and out among the stunted autumn greens like a yellow banner that was losing its gandy coloring along with other autumn things, as the squire rode cautiously down the zigzag bridle path. "Ruthy do p'intedly love a fiddle."

So indeed does every loyal mountaineer. The quick ear tuned to catch the faintest murmur of the forest, and to interpret each breath of wind, or move of nature's wildwood growth; to find the faintest foot-fall of the timid deer; to catch the muffled breathings of the skulking bear, the wiry fox, the hidden cat,—the ear tuned to nature's delicate moods cannot be dull to the flute, the violin, or the echoing horn.

"Eb Ford an' his fiddle ull be o' the comperny," had been inducement mightier than the yellow pumpkin, or the golden cider with which to toll the jolly huskers to their places.

By sun up, the squire's great barn had been opened to receive its guests, who came by twos, and threes, and wagon loads. The seats had been arranged around the walls, and in rows that extended the full width of the barn. The floor was covered with fresh, new straw; the corn was piled in heaps in reach of all. At the top of the partition which separated the barn from the crib, half dozen boards were torn away, and it was over this partition the huskers were to toss the corn into the crib on the other side.

They wore their Sunday clothes; for the frolic that was to follow the shucking demanded something more genteel than homespun frocks and copperas breeches. An odd bit of adornment, worn by each guest, consisted of a rose-bud, either white or red, pinned upon the bosom. Not one but wore it, a badge, evidently, for every eye was turned to inspect each newcomer as he or she entered, to discover what were his or her colors.

Eb Ford was among the early arrivals, but after a glance at the rows of buxom girls congregated to one side of the barn, and whose fat fingers were clumsily tearing away the rustling shucks, he quietly slipped into a place among the men, with a careless "howdy, folkses," and an indifferent nod toward the space allotted to the girls.

"Gimme the fiddle, Eb," said the squire, as Eb held the precious treasure a moment across his knee. "I'll fetch her up ter the house, and put her away keerful till night."

The musician passed the fiddle over the heads of his neighbors into the squire's outstretched hands.

"Put her wher' the chillen can't hender her, Square, ef ye please."

"I will, Eb, I will. I'll lay her long side o' Pete's fiddle in the chist, an' let 'em git acquainted. Mebbe she ull l'arn that thar tune o' Pete's you-uns sets so much store by, Eb; that un about 'Cotton-Eye Joe.'"

"An' I'm a-hopin'" sang out Pete's shrill treble from the rear of the barn, "that while you-uns' fiddle air l'arnin' 'Cotton-Eye,' mine ull feel obligated ter l'arn 'Sally Gal' o' yourn, Eb. That air a

plumb pritty tune, an' I hev sometimes 'lowed I'd ruther hear it ez ter hear all the angels together singin' in glory."

"Thankee, Pete, thankee," said Eb. "So air 'Cotton-Eye Joe.' I allus set store by 'Cotton-Eye.'"

"Now, Eb," sang out one of the men, "ye an' Pete put off complermint'n' o' one 'n'other till night, an' fall too over ther'. Jest look at the gals over yander, wait'n fur ter be kissed."

This was followed by a good deal of laughing among the men, much blushing among the girls, and the day's sport was fairly begun.

Only Pete kept wishing Ruthy had been there to hear the "compliment ez Eb Ford passed over his fiddlin'," for Eb was himself the acknowledged "head fiddler o' that destrict."

Eb meanwhile felt that Pete's compliment to him fell rather flat since Denie Lynn wasn't there to hear it. Then he wondered <u>why</u> Denie was not there; and he worked on in a half-hearted way, saying but little, and wholly unconscious that a pair of snappy blue eyes were watching him keenly from the opposite side of the room where red-haired Sis Fraley was shucking corn. Sis wore a flaming red rose in her voluminous bosom, and was bent upon bringing the adornment before the notice of young Ford, for whom Sis had long entertained feeling not altogether sisterly.

The squire had insisted upon politics being "drapped." Excitement ran too high to be altogether trusty, and corn-shuckings in Tennessee <u>had</u> been known to break up in rows, hand to hand fights, for far less cause than a red and white rosebud. The squire was nervous; and the

slightest allusion to the election was promptly met with an entirely different subject.

"White roses grow ter you uns' place?" was a gauntlet thrown into the camp of the red men, who promptly accepted the challenge, until, as the squire declared, "the whole country ware upsot by politics."

Eb Ford felt less pride in his red badge of Republicanism than when he rode two miles out of his way to beg it of old Granny Gorman, who, a rank Republican, was "raisin' roses fur that elemint ter wear." Eb had meant to spite Denie mightily with the unconscious little rosebud. Denie did not really believe he would come out boldly for the red, against her white; he meant to show her that he would; that "he was a man of his own head."

"Women ought ter keep out'n o' politics anyhow," he told himself, "an' men hev got ter stand up fur the'rse'ves if they be men."

And he set his lips in a resolute determination, not unlike the manner in which a golden-haired, soft-cheeked young girl, riding across the mountain at that moment behind her brother on the big roan, set her lips, and glanced down at the creamy rosebud pinned in her bosom under her mother's big plaid shawl.

And when, half hour later, the same big brother, followed by the same golden-haired young girl, each wearing the symbolic white bud, quietly entered the barn, and took their places with the huskers, young Ford's spirits took a decided turn.

From moroseness he went to such an extreme as to be almost boisterous. Nobody in the room was having such an altogether, all 'round good time as Eb Ford. He detected Sis Fraley's keen eyes the

very moment Denie and her brother entered the barn, and began a vigorous fliration on the spot, boldly intimating that the red roses found an affectionate affinity for each other, and laughingly wondering why it was that no red ears came to his hand.

"The kisses 'll give plumb out afore my turn comes, Square," he complained to the master of the festivities, "an' Sis'll be plumb outdone ef I don't ax fur jest one kiss anyhows."

The laugh which followed this sally was indulged by all, except the demure little champion of the white rose, the only "white rose girl" in the barn. She lifted her brown eyes a single instant, such honest, sincere eyes, and so full of a half contempt, to Eb's then quietly went on tearing away the golden shucks from the full ripe ears of corn.

Eb saw the look, and at once dispossessed himself of the idea that Denie was jealous. It was one of those quiet glances which merit adopts, and which, like a quick, sharp flash of lightning turned upon the lesser soul, proclaims at once its inferiority. Eb felt it keenly, and felt that his coarse jesting had somehow lowered him in Denie's estimation, as well as in his own self-respect.

"She air disgusted," he told himself, and with the reflection came a consciousness of the difference between the two girls sitting side by side shucking corn. The quiet modesty of one contrasted strangely with the bold coquetry of the other; and he felt that he had descended to an inferior place in the scale of merit, to a level with the coarse coquette.

He subsided at once into his natural, quiet self, stealing a glance now and then at Denie, wondering why it was that her fingers

did not have that fat, heavy shape so conspicuous among the others. They were slender, nimble fingers, and the tiny black ring upon the second left hand finger, which he had made for her with one of his own guttapercha buttons, aided by the blacksmith's red-hot poker, but brought out more conspicuously the whiteness of the pretty hand. His heart was softening greatly toward his stubborn little sweetheart. If only she would throw aside that detested white rosebud, he felt it quite within the bounds of possibility that he would "knock under" sufficiently to "make it up" with Denie.

Sis Fraley began to feel, by that mysterious something, that is more than instinct and less than intuition, that she was losing ground, and set about at once to redeem herself. Her sharp voice rang out with bold disapproval: "I'd hate mightily ter be the only gal in the neighborhood ter wear a white banner, I would."

Instantly Harry Lynn's golden head, the fac simile of Denie's was lifted; he was ready to defend his sister against every girl in Sullivan County, if the necessity arose. For an instant Eb, too, thought of speaking up in Denie's behalf. But Denie was quite capable of defending herself; she motioned Harry to sit down. Eb she quietly ignored. The voice which replied to Sis was as quietly gentle as ever.

"I'd ruther be the onliest one ter wear her hones' colors," she declared, "ez ter be the onliest one not brave enough ter stan' by her principles." And turning the white rose gently, so that it seemed to nestle a trifle closer to the brave heart of its defender, Denie went quietly on shucking Squire Walker's corn.

Whether the fates, in the disguise of a red ear of corn, meant to help matters on, nobody knows; but it was at that identical moment that Eb Ford, turning the shucks back, found the long-expected, hope-helping, love-testing red ear. It peeped coyly at him from the brown silks and golden husks. Everybody saw it and laughed. Sis Fraley smoothed her red ringlets and flashed a triumphant glance of her blue eyes at Denie, quietly shucking the corn.

Eb knew this was his time; now or never. If he should throw the ear to Sis it meant an everlasting goodby to Denie. For Denie had spirit enough hidden under that quiet gentleness. She had not seen the red ear until the general laugh caused her to look up. Eb hesitated, smiled, and lifted the love-ear high above his head. The next instant it shot across the barn and dropped into the straw at Denie's feet.

Pleased, surprised, and slightly frightened, the girl instantly arose, according to the usual custom, to pay the customary forfeit, when embarrassment took possession of her, and hiding her face in her hands she waited for her lover to come and take his own.

What spirit of mischief put the thought into the brother's heart it is impossible to say; but, amid breathless silence, and just at the moment when Eb had risen to claim his forfeit, Harry sang out an unwise, "Rah fur Bob!"

The huskers burst into a roar of laughter, and Eb, understanding Harry's exclamation to infer that Denie, as champion of the white rose, had conquered the red, doggedly dropped back into his seat, and poor Denie was left alone, standing in full view of the huskers, modestly warding off the kiss that never was to come.

Quivering with anger the brother slipped his hand into his belt.

"Set down ther', Denie!" he commanded, "an' don't be makin' a fool o' yerself."

Sis Fraley seized the opportunity to put in an opportune stroke.

"I allus ware a Alf man, myse'f," she announced in her sharp treble.

"So ware a sight o' other blamed fools," promptly responded young Lynn. And for a while all the squire's calls of "Cider! Cider, boys!" were powerless to quell the riot.

Eb Ford flew at Harry Lynn's throat, but was held back by the glitter of steel in the hand of his antagonist. But when some enthusiastic "red roser" in the rear of the white champion, wrenched the deadly knife from his grasp, brother and lover were instantly locked in a hand to hand scuffle which meant blood to both, perhaps death to one.

They fought like madmen, the squire alone striving to restore peace.

Denie, calmly indignant, climbed upon a bench, and stood watching the fight. She stood utterly alone, as quietly observant, as cruelly, coldly interested as though she might have been some female Nero fiddling over burning Rome.

"Call him off, Denie," cried the squire, catching sight of the bright, golden head. "Call Harry off, he air on top, anyhows."

The girl's cool, clear answer reached the ear and penetrated the hot brain of the man lying, like a baffled tiger, under Harry Lynn's strong grasp.

"I won't!" she said. "He desarves a whoppin' an' I hope Harry 'll gin him one."

The next moment a small stream of blood was seen to trickle from the hand young Lynn lifted to strike at the dark face beneath him, and the crowd understood that Ford had set his teeth in the other's arm, and concluding the red had about squared things with the white rose, the supporters of Ford's color pulled the men apart, and the squire announced dinner full twenty minutes before the shoat, barbecuing before the kitchen hearth, was toasted to its proper brown.

The dinner was a failure, despite the squire's wife's best efforts. The boys stood about in groups and talked politics, each more stubbornly red or white rose than before the riot in the barn. The girls stole off in groups, and "hoped ez Denie Lynn ware satisfied now, seein' ez two men hed fit fur her." And Sis Fraley took occasion to remark that "men might kerry on some with gals ez crossed 'em, an' favored fightin' an' sech, but when it come ter marryin', they allus looked out fur t'other sort."

Even Pete Siles concluded he "had as well stayed at home with Ruthy an' Alf ter hear politics ez ter come ter Square's ter hear 'em."

The thought of the evening frolic and the dancing brought but little pleasure. For if Eb was the favorite fiddler, Harry Lynn was the champion dancer of the district. Denie, too, never lacked for partners, and when the evening closed in with a delightful sprinkle of snow, and the large kitchen had been cleared for the dancers, the girl did condescend to a little flirting.

Eb went off into a corner and swore he'd "fiddle fur no blamed political getherin' ez ware ever gethered."

So Pete took the fiddle, and ere long the ravishing strains of "Cotton-Eye Joe" were alluring the dancers to their places. When Eb saw Denie, demure little Denie, who had never quite settled it with her conscience that dancing wasn't wicked in one who had been dipped at the Baptist "June meet'n,'" in Little Doe River, step out among the dancers, he determined to be as "independint ez any gal critter ever borned," and straightaway sought Sis for a partner, taking, however, no notice of her triumph when, in passing Denie, she "allowed ez men kerried on, an' men married."

The dance was scarcely more a success than the dinner had been. Pete's old fiddle was as much a-jangle as Pete's conscience, and soon the huskers gave up trying to make merry, and seating themselves on the benches ranged around the room, fell into the one absorbing subject—politics.

The Squire was in dire distress.

"This won't do," he declared. "Boys, ye must enjoy yerse'ves. It air snowin' like blazes outside, ye can't go home till daylight, an' ye must lay to an' enjoy yerse'ves. Here air cider, yander be sperits, an' ther' be possum, an' shoat, an' pie in the shed room ready ter han'."

A vigorous rap upon the outer door cut short the squire's invocation. He cast his eye at Eb, sulking in a corner.

"Shouldn't wonder none ef 'tware the sheriff o' the county come ter 'rest you youngsters fur fight'n'," he said with good-humored banter, and hastened to open the door.

It was snowing, a pitiless night, black as Erebus. The squire was not a man to turn a traveller from his door, but when the stranger, closely buttoned in a great coat, and with hat pulled over his brows, instead of entering, beckoned the host outside, the good man hesitated a moment. Only a moment, however, then stepped out, pulling the door to behind him. Soon he returned, followed by a tall, heavily set man, and the two passed into the "big room," (the best room) where a few couples dropped in now and then to sit a moment before the great log fire. The squire's face wore a knowing look, and the stranger, having seated himself before the blaze, and removed his hat, glanced, with a twinkling eye, at the red and white badges of the young people who were staring at him in a kind of indifferent wonder. His head was large, round, and somewhat bald; he wore no beard, but a dark, slight mustache and <u>burnsides</u> gave a half cunning, jovial expression to the full dark features. Suddenly, in the next room, Pete's fiddle called the dancers to place again.

The stranger started, and lifted his head like a blooded hound that hears the call to chase. Eb Ford, seeing the gesture, was moved to say:—

"Like the fiddle, stranger?"

The voice that replied was of that rich, slow sweetness, found only in the hills of Tennessee.

"Mightily," he said, "mightily."

Others came in, and passed the usual "Howdy," to which the stranger replied, "Howdy," smiling pleasantly. The squire passed to and fro, eyeing the guest curiously, but saying nothing. Pete came at last, bringing his fiddle, and placed it beside the stranger, on the bench before the fire, while he went to get a "bite long o' the others."

The strange man eyed the fiddler narrowly, and Eb, eyeing him, would have sworn he put out his hand toward the instrument, then drew it quickly away.

"Play?" said Eb, carelessly.

"Jest a bit."

Silence.

"Ye can gin us a tune ef ye'r minded ter. I'll loan ye my fiddle ef Pete won't his'n."

"You uns play, too?"

Eb nodded. "Some."

Something, a flash of soul perhaps, who shall say? passed from man to man, and the stranger lifted the fiddle slowly, lovingly, and rested it gently against his shoulder. He drew the bow across the strings once, twice. Eb pricked his ears, and drew a trifle nearer. There was a master stroke in that handling of the bow. Again it was drawn across the tense, simulative catgut. And through the rooms, the rafters, out to the very shedroom itself floated, carrying delicious surprise in every note, the well-known strains of "Rabbit in the Pea Patch." Pete, in the shed room, dropped his knife with a great clatter, and the squire made at once for the door.

"The chillen hev got holt o' it, Pete, but I'll—"

"Hush!" commanded Pete. "That aint no chillen." He listened a moment, a half eaten slice of pie in his hand. "'T aint Eb," he said, "he couldn't fetch that note, not ter save his soul from torment. An' it air not—me—, in the name o' God, who air it?" And Pete, the forgotten pie still in his hand, bustled away after the unknown fiddler.

One by one the old familiar airs were played. But never had they heard them thus; this was music. Old quarrels were forgotten in the general pleasure when the strange musician consented to be led away to the kitchen to play for the dancers. The frolic took on something of life at last The squire looked in every five minutes, but only to say, "Great I Am!" and to walk away again. Eb Ford glanced at Denie, keeping time with her nimble little body in a graceful, suggestive swing. The glance said, "Will you?" as plan as could be. Denie nodded a response, and together they stepped among the dancers, the red rose and the white.

There was no rest until daylight. Then, when the snow lay soft and white upon the valley, and the gray shimmer of the new dawn hovered above the hills, the fiddler drew his magic bow across the strings gently, gently; Home, Sweet Home! The dancers went out softly, as if their footsteps might awaken the slumbrous sweetness of the music, and it take flight forever. Pete was the last to go. At the gate he turned to the squire, who was helping to saddle the horses.

"Who air he?" he said, earnestly.

The squire put his lips to Pete's ear and whispered a name.

"G-r-e-a-t Jehosaphet!" and the next moment Pete was hurrying home as fast as the little brown mare could carry him.

"Ruthy!" he called to his wife. "Ruthy! Wake up. I hev got a name fur the baby."

His wife opened her eyes and stared. "He hev got a name a'ready," she said quietly. "What ails o' you-uns, Pete?"

Pete only stalked over to the cradle and shook it.

"You Bob!" he shouted, "wake up thar! Ye jest sleeps on same 'sef ye waren't named after the bes' fiddler this side o' the kingdom come. You Bob, I say, wake up thar!"

Six months later Eb Ford was heard to express himself after this wise:—

"When I heeard that thar fiddle talkin' 'bout 'Home, Sweet Home,' I jest got ter want'n one o' my own that bad, I up an' axed Denie ter ride home hind o' me stid o' Harry, an' she done it. We uns aint never rid no other way sence. An' that's how come I voted the white rose ticket that air time."

THE LEPER OF THE CUMBERLANDS

High above the valley, in solitary grandeur, towers the weird old summit of the Milksick Mountain.[115] Too distinct[116] to claim close kinship with the Cumberlands, too remote to be named among the brotherhood of the Great Smokies, it stands alone; a monarch without subjects, a banished king of a proud old range trending off to the eastward, even away from its accursed companionship. It presents an awesome front, even in its affliction refusing baser fellowship than the clouds which sometimes drop a kindly veil across its rugged brow. The very fence surrounding it has a pitiful significance, as if it said, "Set apart!" "Stricken!"

The verdure, true, is always green there, summer or winter, making a tantalizing temptation for the cattle constantly grouped without the bars, watching with longing eyes the hardy luxuriance which crowns the Milksick Mountain. But woe to the cattle venturing beyond the prohibitory bars! woe to the cattle, and woe to the lips that drink of their milk!

It had brought woe enough, indeed, to the humble dwellers of the valley round about, had this "mountain of poison," as they called it;

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[115] In the edition of "Cinch" and Other Stories (1898) (hereafter cited as COS), the word high became far. W.A.D. also added the following note to the anthologized story: "This mountain, as described, may be found in White County, Tennessee. The secret of the milksick poison has never been discovered, although scientists are constantly at work seeking to unravel Nature's great mystery." Milksick Mountain is southeast of the city of Sparta and east of Doyle.

[116] COS: Too distant.

and one by one, as the deadly milksick had left its mark upon them, the afflicted families had moved farther on, and away from the dangerous locality, until only Grandad Corbin's little cabin remained in the shadow of the "Stricken Monarch." This is the name scientists have given it; for the Milksick Mountain has baffled science, lo, these years.[117]

To the people in Bear Cove it is known as the "Leper of the Cumberlands"; and what to do with it, how to protect themselves from its uncomprehended curse, was a question finally settled by the erection of a great fence entirely surrounding it, and made double secure by placing a fine of one hundred dollars upon the hand lifted to lower the bars for any cause whatsoever.

The fence might be scaled at will, but the bars were not to be removed, lest by a slip of man's memory the cattle should find an opening into the deadly pasture. True, the bars might have been dispensed with altogether, only that the mountaineer never dispenses with them, and the fine was found to be an ample protection.

Secure in this safeguard Grandad Corbin and his wife, Granny, had dwelt for more than fifty years under the shadow of the mountain, guarding the eastern pass to Hickory Valley.

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[117]Milksickness, also called the "trembles," is a disease caused by drinking milk from cows that have fed on poisonous plants, usually white snakeroot, and should not be confused with undulant fever (brucellosis), a sickness caused by drinking milk infected with the brucella bacteria. [Russell Cecil, ed., A Textbook of Medicine, Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1944, p. 465.]

Poor grandad spent much wonder upon the nature of the poison which affected the bright, tender growth; but to granny it was neither a matter of worry nor conjecture.

"I air not questionin' o' the Lord's doin's," she would declare. "He made the milksick ez it air, so I reckin it air all right, bein' ez I ain't never heeard ez He ware give ter makin' mistakes. I reckin it air all right."

All right! That is just what the people of Hickory Valley, and more especially that part of it belonging to Bear Cove, would have expected Granny Corbin to say.[118]

Indeed, Ben Sykes, surly Ben Sykes, declared: "Granny air mightily noted for that word. Everything air 'all right' ter her. That air the chorus ter her song, an' she air tolerble steddy ter sing it. 'All right;' it air allers 'all right.' All troubles an' ailments that comes ter folks air 'all right,' an' just what ought ter be, ef a body listens ter Granny Corbin. But I'm a waitin' ter see ef things'll be so mighty 'right' when the trouble lays at her own door. Granny's had a precious little ter fret over, an' it's mighty easy ter say trouble an' afflictions air 'all right' when they air sent ter other folks. Granny's got her name up fur that. I'm a waitin' ter see how she bears her own troubles."

So she had, as Ben said, "got her name up" as a comforter among her humble neighbors. Where trouble went they had learned to look for Granny Corbin, and it was seldom, indeed, that they looked in vain.

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[118] These two geographical landmarks further define the setting for this story. Both may be found on the state survey map of White County.

She had such a gentle way of carrying hope to afflicted hearts, such a natural way of making trouble seem less hard than it was, she was a very welcome visitor among the suffering, was dear old Granny Corbin.

None knew this better than Ben Sykes; for despite his braggadocio and scepticism, Ben had very sad and tender recollections of the day his only girl died, and all sunlight and warmth seemed to have left the world together with the little form they were laying away under the dogwood trees on the side of the mountain beyond Lost Creek; and when they had left her there alone, under the blooming dogwood, he had crept back, when the rest were gone, to weep by the little grave that held his heart. For Ben's life at home was not a sunny one; his wife was quarrelsome, and hard to please; and now that the child was gone, he dreaded what it might be—the place he called home—for himself and his son Ruben. Ruben, he knew, would not stand it very long, for he was full grown at eighteen, and only the week before had threatened to leave "if the etarnal fuss went on."

It was the child that held the divided house together—the little girl sleeping under the dogwood trees. The little heart would grieve no more for the harsh words spoken; the little lips would no more kiss away the furrows of care and frowns of impatience. Ben sighed for his future peace as he crept back for a last moment on the little red mound that covered his child.[119] It had seemed so bare and desolate, just as her little life had been. If the grass would only hurry and cover it,

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[119] COS: baby girl.

he thought it would not be so hard to leave her there. He longed for, and yet dreaded to see it—the little barren mound. But when he saw it, his heart gave a great bound, and the tears started to his eyes, and ran down upon his rough cheeks.

"Granny Corbin," he said, "it ware certainly granny ez done it."

The little grave was literally covered with the delicate dogwood blossoms. First the petals, creamy and pink and pure white, telling how the trees had been violently shaken, until the grave beneath them was well-nigh covered. Then there were sprigs of the pretty blossoms, armfuls, grouped about the little mound until it was, seemingly, only a mound of bright blossoms.

It was a very simple thing to do, a very little thing may be, but it helped him in his sorrow. He never thought of his child again as lying alone in the damp, dark earth. She was asleep in a bed of flowers. It was a very sweet and comforting thought, and in his heart he blessed the hand that had decked the resting-place of his darling.

The next week she had come to him again—dear old Granny Corbin—come to him, as she always came, on the heels of sorrow. Ruben had left—run away; "gone forever," he declared. And granny had come over to tell him it was "all right" that his son should desert him, and his child should die, and his house "be give over ter torment." He was very angry, and he told granny to "cl'ar out," and to go home and learn what trouble meant before she went out as comforter.

"It's mighty easy ter tell folks trouble air 'all right' so long ez it air not yer own," he declared. "But wait tell it stops ter yer

own door, an' see if it's all so right. Wait tell it stops, I say, an' then come a sayin' ez it air all right, an' mebbe[120] I'll b'lieve ye."

Ben was not the only one who scoffed, however, and wondered if affliction would not weaken the old woman's faith, but at the same time was comforted and helped by her.

There was the widow Larkins, whose son Jeff was brought home one day with a bullet in his breast, and the scent of whiskey still upon him. Granny had slipped in behind the men bringing the dead boy in; and when his old mother, blind with grief, had reached her hand across the bed in a helpless, stricken way, they had met Granny Corbin's warm, friendly clasp come to meet her from the other side.

Sympathy was not abundant in the Larkins' neighborhood, for many had felt the effects of Jeff's drunken recklessness. But granny did not stop to consider that. Death is death in the household, whether it takes the pet lamb or the black sheep. So she helped to wipe away the blood, and smoothed the tangled hair upon the white temples, and folded his hands gently upon his breast, and laid a sprig of sweet azalea blossoms upon his bosom, and another against his cheek; and then carried his mother to look at her boy, lying so still and pale and gentle among the white sheets and the sweet azalea blossoms.

He had never seemed so clean, so pure and childlike since the days when he slept upon her bosom—the far-away days of babyhood. Into her heart there crept a hope, a faith, that was to cheer her always,

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[120] COS: maybe.

that he might perhaps be fit to die after all. It was her boy, her babe, come back again, clear and white, in the arms of death.

"It's mighty easy," Ben Sykes said when he heard of it, "it's mighty easy ter comfort when ye don't know what trouble air. Jest wait, I tell ye, tell it stops ter her door; then ye'll see if it air 'all right,' though it air 'sent of the Lord.'" So Ben said, and said it until others began to say it, and began to wait, without really knowing it, for the trouble that was to unsettle Granny Corbin's faith.

And granny lived on in the cabin under the shadow of the Milksick Mountain, "blessed of the Lord," she declared, for her son Ab and his wife and their five little ones shared the chimney corner with her and grandad.

"Not a chick nor a child missin'," Ben declared, "how can she know the sorrer of death an' of deserlation?"

True, they were poor, as the world went, but wealth was a stranger among the Bear Cove people, and granny was as well off as the rest of them. She had the cabin and the patch of ground surrounding it, and "old Star," the cow that had, according to granny, "literally raised the two last chillen, ez her mammy had the oldest ones afore her." The land, true, was a trifle too near the Milksick to be of any great value; for the unknown poison was liable to spread, and had a way, the neighbors said, "of travellin' round ekal ter the mumps an' the 'hoopin' cough." But granny troubled herself very little about the mountain. Grandad worried some, to be sure, but after all it was more wonder than worry that made him sit for hours under the low eaves of the cabin with his faded eyes fixed upon the awesome old summit.

"I allers wondered what ailed it," he said one day, as he watched the dreamful shadow clouds drifting above the forsaken height. "I allers wondered what ailed the Milksick anyhow."

Granny looked up from the heel she was turning upon her knitting needles. "I air not questionin' the doin's of the Almighty," she declared. "He made the Milksick ez it air, so it air bound ter be all right, sence He done it."

But grandad could not accept the riddle so quietly. For half a century he had lived under its shadow, to wonder at the curse.

"Waall," he insisted, "I'd jest like ter know, afore I die, what it be ez hev pizened the Milksick Mountain."

"Ye can't l'arn it, Obadiah," said granny. "Smarter folks nor we-uns hev been a docterin' of it, an' a wonderin', an' at the last they-uns haint no wiser nor we-uns."

"Parson Orman, he lowed," said grandad, "ez it air a leper, an' hed ter be sot aside, count o' its bein' onclean. It ware a likely sayin' o' Parson Orman's; fur whenever I look at the Milksick, fenced off ther' ter itse'f, it seems ter be a sayin', 'Onclean! onclean!' ever time I look."

"Yes," assented granny, "it do seem ez ef the hand o' the Lord ware upon it. Yit, I'm thinkin' it air all right, spite o' its ailmints."

"I ud like ter go over ther'," said grandad, "an' look about a spell, an' try ef I couldn't make out what ails it. Some o' the scienters lowed it ware the dew on the yarbs, an' ez it ware all right after the dew dried up. But the cattle ez went in in dew-time went

jest like them ez got in when the dew ware gone. All of 'em went a flyin' down ter the creek, ravin' mad, ter drink theirse'ves ter death. An' some lowed t'ware min'ral in the groun' ez pizened the yarbs above the groun'. But they digged, an' digged, an' ther' never ware no min'ral foun', not ter this good day. So they jest h'isted the fence, an' furbid folkes a projeckin' with the Milksick Mount'n any more. But I ud like ter try ter find it; 'twould be wuth consider'ble ter find out what air hid over ther' in the milksick pen."

"Obadiah!" Granny's voice was sharp in pronouncing grandad's name. "Ye hev got no bizness ter be talkin' sech afore the chillen. Nex' thing we-uns knows Burke an' David'll be lett'n' down them bars, an' who's ter pay the hunderd-dollar fine fur the life of me I can't see."

Grandad said no more; but he thought about it a good deal. He had always wondered at the old Milksick's curse. But public feeling was against any tampering with the poisonous growth. The folks had suffered too much from broken rails, and bars left down, and poisoned cattle, and deadly milk. Their feelings were very emphatic on the subject. Grandad knew it.

"Ef a cow was ter git in fifty year from now, they'd say I done it, ef they once knowed I hed been in ther'," he said. So he never ventured beyond the bars; discretion was the better part of curiosity.

But unfortunately grandad's caution did not descend to his grandsons, Burke and David, or else they were too young for its development. Long after the old man was asleep that night, the boys lay awake in the trundle-bed, whispering each other of the wonderful something

which grandad had said was hidden in the milksick pen, and which must be worth so much to the finder.

The moon was flooding the poisonous pasture with her full, soft light when two figures slipped noiselessly through the cabin door, and sped away toward the grim old mountain rising to the left of the garden patch.

Click! clack! the bars were dropped from nervous little hands—carefully dropped. But when a low "moo" sounded among the azalea bushes across the road, both boys started with guilty fear, and the half-lifted rail fell with a crash that seemed to awake the very hills.

Both took to their heels, but stopped, breathless and panting, when they heard old Star's bell tinkling among the azalea bushes. It was only the cow that had frightened them, but guilty consciences refused to face their fears a second time. They crept back to the trundle-bed where the little sisters were quietly sleeping. It was not long until they too were asleep. And while they slept, old Star was contentedly grazing within the poisonous limits of the milksick pen.

It was "sun-up" when Ben Sykes and Abner Corbin, returning from an all-night hunt, stopped at the gate of the Corbin place. Early as it was, Ab's wife had breakfast ready. The odor of broiling bacon came, deliciously appetizing, through the cabin door when Ab's wife opened it a moment to bid Ben "come in an' have a bite of warm vittels along of Ab."

But Ben declared he must go on, and was about to do so, when the sound of childish laughter made both men turn and look where the boys,

Burke and David, were coming down the road, holding to old Star's tail, and shouting as they came.

In response to their shouts the cabin door opened again, and two tangled tow heads appeared in the light of the misty morning. Polly and Docie, their frocks unbuttoned, and their faces unwashed, but with their tiny tin cups, bright and clean, came bounding out at the first sound of old Star's coming.

Within the cabin another ear had caught the familiar tinkle of the cow bell, and baby Bess turned in her trundle-bed.

Another turn, and the bare feet touched the puncheon floor; then came a kind of swift, right-about movement, a half pull, half crawl, that brought her to the cabin door, where she sat, waving her hands and calling, "Too Tow," as lustily as the rest.

Ben Sykes watched the little ones gathered about the docile animal.[121] Burke was the real milker, and he sat with the piggin between his knees, guiding the streams of creamy milk safely through the tiny cups that were thrust now and then between his hand and the piggin, when the younger milkers found their own efforts a trifle slow. Close to Burke's side crouched David, ostensibly "keeping off the calf"—in reality, waiting his turn on the milking-stool. Polly and Docie crouched close to old Star upon the other side; so close, indeed, that more than once Burke called out,—

"Git back ther', Polly, else ye'll be tromped ter death!" Or else, "Move back, Docie, afore ye upset the piggin!"

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[121] COS: "Ben watched . . . ."

The two men at the gate watched until one tiny cup was full, and Polly ran to fetch it to the baby crowing delightedly in the cabin door.

"I declar'," said Ben, "them babies of yours air a plumb pretty sight; an' ole Star air a wonder fur gentleness."

"Yes," said Ab, "them youngsters would find it mighty dry livin' without the cow." And then Ben said "good-day," and Abner Corbin went in to his breakfast, and his family grouped about the modest table.

A frown darkened Ben's brow as he trudged homeward. No cheery welcome and happy children awaited him at the cabin in Bear Cove. A bit of broiled bacon and corn bread, seasoned with his wife's ill temper, was the best he could hope for.

"No wonder they-uns kin talk so cheerful," he muttered. "Not a chick nor a chil' missin'. No wonder granny finds things 'all right' allers. Wait till trouble comes ter they-uns, I say; jest wait till it comes."

It came—swift and sharp and terrible. One of those blows before which reason itself falls in the grasp of despair.

Ben himself tottered with weakness when a messenger went through the cove at sunset telling the awful story of the milksick poison that had appeared, with terrible fatality, in Granny Corbin's cabin.

It was noon of the next day when Ben Sykes visited the stricken house. He could not bring himself to go sooner; he felt somehow as if he had expected the calamity until expectation had become a wish for it. "But not this," he told himself, "oh, my God, not all this."

He had not expected patience and forbearance in the face of this terrible trial; it was too much to ask of the human heart amid such dire misfortune.

The neighbors had shrouded the dead when Ben arrived, and made them ready for their humble burial. David, Polly, and Docie lay on the little trundle-bed, fast-locked, pretty, sinless lambs, not in the sweet sleep of restless childhood, but in the old, old sleep of death—that sleep which locks alike the lips of childhood and of age, and seals alike the laugh or sigh upon the lips of grave or gay—that old, old sleep of death.

Under the white sheet on another bed, Bess, the baby that had crowed in the sunshine on the cabin doorstep, lay still and white,—a little frozen mountain flower, poor little dead babe,—by the side of grandad.

As for him, the old man upon whose silver-crowned temples death had lain a gentle hand, the smile upon his face might have been the smile of childhood come again, or, perchance, the smile of knowledge gratified, when death made clear the mystery that had baffled science, and led the old man to the light through that self-same riddle, the milksick poison.

Burke crouched in a corner, sobbing beside the bed where Abner watched the course of the poison throbbing in his wife's veins.

Granny moved from bed to bed, where lay the living and the dead, ministering to one, tenderly stroking the dead brows of the other. The blow had fallen heavily, mercilessly. More than once the assembled neighbors sought to speak their sympathy, but words were choked by sobs. She, indeed, the stricken and afflicted, was the calmest of them all. It seemed as if she needed sympathy of none, nor asked for it. But they understood, those simple folk, she leaned on a stronger arm than theirs.

Once she stopped beside the bed where grandad lay, and lifted up the sheet, and gazed down at the calm, dead face of him who had travelled at her side for half a century.

While she stood thus, tearless and heartbroken, a shadow fell upon the doorstep. It was Ben, the scoffer, but silent now and full of shame.

Granny turned to him, and lifted up her face, pale with grief, and scarred full deep with age. The memory of his words awoke in the poor brain—words spoken when his own heart lay crushed and bleeding:—

"Wait tell trouble stops at yer own door, then say ez it's 'all right,' an' I'll believe ye."

The words came back with startling meaning; her faith was in the balance. She who had preached confidence must now prove her own, and that, too, to this man whose future might depend upon her strength, sorely tried. She glanced at Ben standing in the sun-lighted doorway, then at her dead, stretched in solemn stillness under the white sheets.

The poor lips opened to speak. "It hev come, neighbor," she said, "the hand of the Lord air upon me"—she hesitated for a single instant, and the silence grew intense. But if they expected any faltering, any swerving of the faithful old heart, they were mistaken. One faded hand was laid on grandad's marble brow; the other pointed to the trundle-bed, where the poor dead babies lay:—

"It air all right; all right, else it had not a been."

There was a hush of awe, and not devoid of reverence, in the room, as many a humble, doubting heart took hold again on hope. To Ben, the troubles that had well-night crushed him down seemed puny things,

indeed, before that majesty of faith which, wrapped still in the pallid arms of pain, could rise triumphantly among the ashes of despair to say that "All is well."

OLE LOGAN'S COURTSHIP

Ole Loge he's been a-courtin'.

Naw!

Is, now. He tol' big Si, his uncle, an' big Si he tol' little John, his nevvy, an' little John he tol' me. Little John wuz comin' down the road f'm his place, j'inin' mine on yon side, an' I met him—jest like I met you bit ago, comin' up f'm your, j'inin' mine on t' other side—an' him an' me we sot ourse'ves on the rail fence here jest like me an' you're doin' of now; an' little John he wuz pow'ful tickled about somethin'. I didn't know at first that that loose-j'inted, hide-bound, bean-pole figger of Loge Beaseley wuz passin' down t' the cross-roads yander. Little John he begin to whittle a cedar splinter, like I'm a-doin', an' whilst he wuz whittlin' uv the cedar he tol' me about ole Loge's goin' a-courtin'.

An' little John he said the firs' thing Loge had to git his own consent to wuz the makin' of his mind up. When that wuz done the worst wuz over—so Logan allowed. But shucks! it wuz no more en half, if Logan hadn' been sech a blamed fool not to know it. But you see, bein' ez it had took Loge nigh about forty year to make up his mind to go court'n' it seemed sort o' big when he got it made up, naturly.

An' his ma, ez thinks to this good minute Loge's wearin' knee pants and caliker jackets—when he tol' his ma 'bout his aimin' to git married, the ole lady jest bust out a-cryin' and said she wuz afeard he wuz too young to know how to choose, an' hadn't he better put it off a spell till she could look about fur him?

But Loge allowed he had about made up his mind it wuz to be one o' the Sid Fletcher gals, though he aint no ways made up his mind as to which un. Then little John said as how his ma took on mightily, and said the Sid Fletcher gals would do no ways in the worl' 'count o' their pa bein' a unbeliever. She wuz afeard it might be in the blood.

But Loge he helt out fur the Sid Fletcher gals, so little John say, and went up stairs to black his boots. They wuz his Sunday boots, an' they aint been wore much since ole Miss Hooper died, in the Cripple Creek neighborhood.[122] An' his ma, sett'n' down stairs an' hearin' the blackin' box whackin' back into its place on the floor ever' time Loge took the bresh out'n it, she smiled like an' begin to wonder ef 't be Miss Mary, though she 'lowed it might be Mandy; it couldn't in reason be that thar frisky little Jinnie.

Then she hoped to goodness Loge's wife ud be a knitter. Loge ud need some un to knit his socks when she wuz gone; an' some un to darn 'em, too, for she say there wa'n't another man in middle Tennessee as hard on his socks, so little John said Loge's ma said, as Loge Beaseley. An' as fur clean socks, Mis' Beaseley allowed there hadn't been a Sunday mornin' since Loge took to sleepin' upstairs, stid o' in the trundle bed in her room, that she ain't been obleeged to fetch his socks up to his door and wait there to git his s'iled ones; Loge bein' that furgitful he ud put on one clean un an' one s'iled un, one white

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[122] W.A.D. sets this tale in Middle Tennessee near Cripple Creek. Unfortunately, there are several Cripple Creeks in this part of the state, so exact placement of the story is impossible.

an' one red, maybe, or else jest put on both the same ole s'iled uns ag'in an' sen' the clean uns back to the wash tub.

Loge's bashful, you know, mighty skeery o' women. Ain't never looked at a gal on Cripple Creek, barrin' the Sid Fletcher gals. He had opened uv the big gate wunst fur Mandy when she rid a buckin' horse to meet'n', an' the blamed critter jest wouldn't side up to the gate so's she c'u'd reach the latch.

An' wunst when there wuz a campmeet'n' over in the Fox Camp neighborhood what they useter have ever' wunst[123] a year, Loge he wuz there. An' he passed a hymn book to that pretty little Jinnie o' the Sid Fletcher gang. The pars'n he axed Loge to pass the books roun', and Loge done it. Little John say he handed in an' about sevin books, bein' that flustrated he didn't know there's anybody else at the meet'n', after Jinnie smiled, an' kep' a "Thank you, sir, I've got a book," ever' time Loge offered her another.

All the folks wuz smilin' too, but he didn't know it; he didn't know he had set his big foot down on Jinnie's new cloth gaiter, or that he had clear furgot to turn back the hem o' his pantaloons that he had turned up in crossin' the creek on the rocks, havin' walked over to camp 'count o' his ma havin' rid the sorrel mare over on Sadday, her havin' to fetch a lot o' victuals an' sech fur Sunday. An' he didn't know ez he'd wore one red sock an' one white un; his ma not bein' there to see

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[123] HH: wunct is spelled consistently as onc't. The author has spelled the word more correctly in the later edition, but the earlier form is truer to the sound of the word. Often in literary dialects, an author will sacrifice more accurate sound for a more acceptable visual form, as is the case here.

ez he got fellows. An' little John say there wuz the fool a-poppin' up an' a-dodgin' up an' down the meet'n' house with three inches o' red a'shinin' up on un leg, betwixt shoe an' pantaloons, an' three inches o' white on t'other—just like a jockey at a race track or a fool clown in a circus fur all the worl'.

An' little John say to cap it all, an' clap the climax, there wuz a long white string a-dodgin' Loge's lef' heel as roun' the meet'n' house, makin' ole Loge look like one o' these here wooden limber jack fellers that run up a stick an' double theirse'ves inter a knob ef you pull a string. That's what little John say. An' everybody wuz a-laffin', an' Jinnie she wuz snickerin' behin' her hymn book, fur ever' time she smiled Loge he'd come a-jouncin' back to poke another book at her.

But lor, ole Loge allowed all them smiles wuz jest 'count o' him; an' little John say that's how come he first got that fool notion about goin' a-courtin'. Little John say ole bach'lors are sech blamed fools, an' so stuck on theirse'ves, they thinks if a woman looks at 'em they're breakin' their necks to marry of 'em.

So ole Loge he got it into his head to git married. Though he wa'n't settled in his min' as to which o' the gals he'd take. He wuz kind o' stuck on the whole gang, little John say. An' Loge say he owed it ter all o' 'em to marry 'em, he wuz 'feard. Now, there wuz Miss Mary, the ol'est one; little John say Loge foun' a guinea nes' wunst in the corner o' the fur end fence what divides their two plantations. 'Twuz some time in May; there wuz twenty odd eggs in the nes' when Loge found it. Little John say Loge knowed it wuz a guinea nes' 'count o' the old guinea hen bein' a-sett'n' on it whenst he foun' it. An' the fool

skeered her off; she didn't want to git off much, but Loge made her. He punched her with a fence rail till he broke three eggs; but he got her druv off at last.

An' then he picked up the eggs in his hat an' fetched 'em up to the house, allowin' they must be Miss Mary's, bein' as they wuz on her side the fence; and bein', too, as Miss Mary wuz the housekeeper an' 'tended to the chickens an' things, her ma bein' knocked up with rheumatism fur the last endurin' five years. So Loge he fetched the eggs up in his hat, mighty keerful not to break a single one. He tromped across the clover bottom, two corn fiel's, a cotton-patch, an' a strip o' woods lot, bareheaded, in the blazin' sun; little John say his bald head look like a b'iled beet with the skin took off when he got to the kitchen door an' give the eggs to ole Aunt Cindy, the cook, askin' her to give 'em to Miss Mary fur him.

Ole Aunt Cindy she looked sorter skeered like, a minute, an' then she gin a grunt, but she aint sayin' nothin' till Logan's gone home. Then she walked out the back door an' flung them guinea eggs over in the hog lot. Then she went in the house an' tol' Miss Mary ole Logan Beaseley done broke up the guinea nest they wuz lookin' fur to hatch out nex' day. She say there wuz twenty-one little dead guineas layin' over in the hog lot, all just ready to hop out o' their shells.

Miss Mary didn't say much—she's allus mighty quiet an' sober an' dignified; but Mandy, the second gal, she flared up an' allowed a fool-killer would be a mighty welcome vis'tor to <u>that</u> neighborhood, <u>that</u> he would. An' Jinnie, the young, pretty one, she jest laffed out, fit to

kill, an' asked Aunt Cindy if she couldn't have scrambled guineas fur breakfast.

Ole Logan wuz bewitched, I reckin. Little John say he wuz camgined.[124] He didn't know which o' the gals he ud take, but he tol' his ma he felt obligated to marry one o' the Sid's, 'count o' havin' paid 'em consider'ble notice—meanin' the big gate, the hymn book, an' the guinea eggs—an' folks ud be ap' to talk if he didn't. Besides, the gals would expect it, an' feel sorter slighted if he didn't marry into the fam'ly.

Him an' Sid wuz good frien's. He had borrowed Sid's chilled plow wunst when his own wuz at the blacksmith's an' the river riz so's he couldn't go fur it. An' Sid had borrowed Loge's steelyards wunst to weigh some cotton, before sendin' of it off to the gin. He didn't visit anywheres else much, outside o' funer'ls an' meet'n's at the church.

So he set off on the sorrel; that little runt of a mare with the sway back, an' a tail that the calf chawed off one night when Loge put the calf up in the stable along o' the mare, so's to keep it from chawin' up the saddle blanket hangin' in the back po'ch. Little John say his uncle met Loge comin' up the lane on the sorrel. He say he knows ole Noah took that little swayback in the ark with him, 'count o' it bein' little like, an' its back makin' a good seat fur his grandchillen to ride on.

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[124] HH: conjured.

An' he say that Cripple Creek wuz right smart up, an' ole Loge had to hol' up his long legs to keep 'em out the water, 'count o' havin' on his best Sunday pantaloons; spankin' new ones to go courtin' in. So Loge he hitched his feet up behin' him, 'g'inst the swayback's flanks, an' plumb furgot to take 'em down any more, but rid right up to the gate with his legs hunked behin' him, like a grasshopper ready fur to jump.

He seen the gals at the winder, all smilin' a welcome, as Loge thought, an' again he begin to wonder which one he orter take. He tied the sorrel to a hick'ry limb an' went on up todes the house.

The house has got a new wing made o' log; it aint quite finished yit, an' there's two front doors. Loge couldn't fur the life uv him tell which door he orter take, an' he begin to git orful skeered that minute. He went on, though, bekase he see he couldn't make it back to the sorrel without passin' the winder again; an' he allowed to his uncle, big Si, as how he'd a ruther died as to a-parsed that there winder again. So he plunged right on, inter the wrong door, an' run into the gals' room where Miss Mary wuz sort'n' out clean clothes, 'count o' it bein' Sadday evenin'.

When she looked up from the pile o' petticoats she wuz count'n' an' see that figger o' Loge's in the door, she jest riz right up, an' says she, kind o' fierce like, "Father's down in the cornfiel'; you can go down there, or I'll ring the bell fur him."

Loge he begin to twist his coat tails; they wuz already half way up to his armpits, so little John say; an' little John say he reckin he clear furgot about havin' come a-court'n', fur says he, "No'm; no, Miss Mary, you needn't ring the ole man up—I jest called by over

here to—to—er"—he saw a cedar pail on the shelf in the open passage way betwixt the back end part o' the house, the dinin' room an' kitchen, an' the front part where the fam'ly lives, an' that cedar pail wuz the savin' uv him—"I jest come over here," says he, "to git a goad o' water."

An' Miss Mary she stepped to the passage with him, an' p'inted first to the pail on the shelf an' then to the wellsweep down in the yard, an' says she, "There's the pail, it's full an' fresh, but if it ain't enough to satisfy your thirst yonder's the well."

Loge allowed to his uncle as he decided right there he wouldn't choose Miss Mary; he begin to see she didn't suit him. He say he wuz afeard she couldn't darn socks.

It was jest when Loge lifted the goad to his mouth that Jinnie she called out to Miss Mary from her ma's room, an' say she:—

"Sister Mary, ma says you're to fetch Mr. Beasley right in here to the fire"—the ole 'oman keeps a fire goin' winter an' summer, 'count o' the rheumatiz—"she says she knows he's tired after his thirsty ride."

Rid four miles fur a goad o' water; cross Cripple Creek three times, an' Pant'er twicet, to say nothin' o' Forkid Branch that winds in an' out an' up an' across them two plantations like a moonstruck chicken snake tryin' to foller out the corporation line o' them Tennessee towns what hev been down with the boom fever,[125] an' aint made out to set

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[125]The term "boom fever" could relate to the atmosphere present in a "boom town," possibly a mining town in this instance, where a town becomes suddenly prosperous due to a new coal mine being established.

itse'f straight yit! That sharp little Jinnie seen through that excuse in half a minute, an' that's why she called out to Loge to come in.

But little John say the fool ain't no more'n heard her voice than the goad went whack to the floor like a sky rocket on the home run.

"You're to come right in, Mr. Beasley," says Jinnie, "an' you're to put your horse in the barn first, if you please, because pa's got a new heifer cown that's had to be turned in the yard to keep her out o' the cornfiel'. An' she's that give to chewin' things Aunt Cindy has to dry the clean clothes in the kitchen to keep her from eat'n' us all clean out of a change. She's e't up two tablecloths an' a sheet, three petticoats an' a brand new pair o' my sister Mary's stockin's. She'll eat your saddle flaps teetotally off if you leave your mare out there."

Ole Loge he looked foolish; the yearlin' at home had gnawed them saddle skirts into sassage meat long ago. He put his horse up, though, in the barn—the big barn what opens on to the lane. An' little John say the blamed fool furgot ter shut the barn door, an' the mare walked out same time Loge did, an' walked right on back home.

Well, little John say it begin to rain todes dark, an' the ole man he tol' Loge he mus' stay all night; an' Loge he done it. You see, they built up a right peart fire, 'count o' rheumatiz an' rain, an' they give Loge a seat in the cornder. An' when black-eyed Mandy axed him if he didn't think a sprinklin' now'n then wuz healthy, he bein' Methodist, ole Loge got that skeered he made a lunge at the big iron shovil an' begin to twist it roun' an' roun', an' to say he didn't know but what t'was! Then he begin to jab his fingers through the iron ring at the end o' the shovil handle; an' he kep' that up till he got to his

thumb; an' hit went through all right, but it stuck. Loge he got plumb skeered then; twis' an' screw as he would the darn thing wouldn't budge. So when ole man Sid axed him to stay all night he said he would, bekase you see he couldn't go home nohow if he'd a mind to 'less he carried the shovil, too.

An' then the supper bell rung, an' the ole man' bid 'em all out to supper; but Loge he said he wouldn't choose any—he wuzn't a mighty hearty feeder at night, count o' dreams. An' little John say the folks went out an' left him, an' bein' left to hisse'f he set about gittin' loose. He tried an' he tried; an' at last he made up his min' to sneak out the front door and cut out fur home, shovil an' all. Then he remembered he'd orter licked his thumb, an' he tried that, but it wouldn't go. Just as he got up to tiptoe out, the shovil hangin' on like a partner at a picnic, an' 'bout the time he'd walked half across the room, the blamed thing slipped off'n that licked thumb o' Loge's, an' struck the hard floor like a clap o' young thunder.

Loge he jumped like a trounced frog, an' give one skeered little beller, like a Durham bull with the hiccups.

Before the family went in to supper Loge he'd made up his mind, in an' about, as it mus' be Mandy. It appeared 's if that ud be more gratifyin' to his ma, as Mandy seemed turned religious, talkin' o' Methodists an' sech. But when that shovil drapped an' Loge bellered out like he done, an' he heard Miss Mandy come out into the passage an' call out to Jube, the hired man, that big Buck, ole Sid's yaller steer, wuz in her ma's room breakin' up things, Loge say he set it right down to hisse'f as she wouldn't do fur a farmer's wife—not knowin', like she

done, that steers wouldn't come up into a house an' desturb things, not fur nothin'. He say farmer's wives mus' learn better'n that.

So little John say that Loge made choice o' Jinnie. An' Jinnie she seemed mighty willin', bein' young an' gaily. An' she set her cheer up close to Loge's an' talked mighty polite to him after supper. She tol' him he ought to git married, an' have a wife to look after his socks an' things. An' she axed mighty kind about his ma, an' got it all out o' Loge 'bout his ma want'n' him to wait till he wuz older, an' all that.

An' them two talked on till Miss Mary got up an' went off to bed; an' Mandy went out in the kitchen an' set with ole Aunt Cindy; an' ole Sid an' his wife went sound asleep in the chimbly cornders, an' didn't wake up till the clock wuz strikin' twelve. Then the ole man lit a light an' showed Loge off into the new room, hit being the only spare room in the house, an' hit not finished. As I wuz sayin' the daubin wuzn't all in, nor all the chinkin'; but bein May, an' Loge healthy, the ole man ruminated as that didn't matter much.

But he tol' Loge as he'd better blow out his candle before he undressed if he wuz afeard o' being seen through the cracks. An' Loge done it, an' <u>when</u> he had done it he couldn't find a cheer to hang his Sunday pantaloons on. He felt all over the room, mighty keerful, but he couldn't find no cheer. He wa'n't goin' to hang them new breeches on the bare floor, that was <u>mighty</u> certain. An' he wuz afeard to hang 'em on the foot o' the bed, count o' it bein' low, an' they wuz likely to be rumpled, too, Loge bein' consider'ble of a kicker. So he jest smoothed the pantaloons out keerful an' laid 'em, longways, between two o' the logs o' the house, where the chinkin' ort to a-been. Little John

say Loge tol' big Si he felt like it wuz a young baby he wuz layin' by to sleep, he wuz that partic'lar not to wrinkle up his breeches. An' ten minutes after he put 'em there he wuz sound asleep betwixt two o' Miss Mary's best sheets.

It wuz sun up when ole Loge woke up, an' the ole man war callin' him to breakfast. Loge called back he'd be there in a minute, an' he begin to hustle about to dress hisse'f. He reached fur his pantaloons—then he stopped still, like the blame blockhead that he is. They wuz gone! clean gone![126] He searched on the floor, an' he flung off the bed clothes to look there; he got down on his hands an' knees to look under the bed. He even tore open Miss Mary's bureau drawer to see if he didn't git up in his sleep an' cram 'em in there. Then he felt down his long legs to see if he mightn't forgot an' kep' 'em on. Naw, sir; nothin' there but skin an' bone—bare carcass. He scratched his head an' tried to think; they wuz sho'ly round somewheres; he had jist furgot, in one o' his absent-minded fits, an' laid 'em somewheres. He looked behin' the door, an' on top the wardrobe, an' under the bed again; he pulled all the gals' things out o' the bureau drawers an' shook 'em up piece by piece; he looked in the slop bucket, an' behin' the washstan'; he raked out the cedar bresh the gals had decorated the fireplace with an' looked there; he stuck his head up the chimbly an' looked there;

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[126]The central incident of Loge's losing his trousers seems to be based on an actual incident that W.A.D., no doubt, was familiar with. A former teacher of hers, Prof. E. Scobey, apparently had a similar experience with misplaced "breeches." Specifically, one night he laid his trousers on a chair by an open window, and by morning they were gone, quite mysteriously. [Mary B. Hughes, The Story of Historic Rutherford County, Murfreesboro: Mid-South Publishing Co., 2nd ed., 1960, p. 66.]

then he tuk it out again, kivered with soot an' ashes, an' went back to bed, an' give out that he wuz mighty sick, an' would some un please go fur his ma.

An' little John say his ma come over terrectly, but she went home again in a minute; jouncin' up an' down on the swayback sorrel like a house afire. An' little while later she rid over agin with a bundle tied to the side saddle; an' after while ole Loge he watched fur a chance when there wa'n't nobody lookin' to sneak off through the woods an' go home.

He'd made up his mind not to marry yit; Jinnie she wuz young, an' could wait a bit.

An' little John say, that later in the day Jinnie she was nosin' about in the yard to see if her rose bushes wuz putt'n' out proper, an' she see the new heifer cow a munchin' mighty contented like, on a little pile o' truck that looked like carpet rags. An' she got a fishin' pole an' fished it up, an' looked at it, laffin' fit to kill, all the time. Then she called to the gals to come there quick; an' when they come says she,—

"Here's what ailed him—here's why he didn't want no breakfast, an' here's why his ma made them two trips this mornin'."

Then Miss Mandy she say she'd like to know what that roll o' strings got to do with the clothes bein' all flung o' the drawer. An' little Jinnie say she reckin ole Loge wuz lookin' to see if he could find anything 'mongst Miss Mary's clothes as would fit him, so's he could come to breakfast.

"Bekase," says she, "these are bound to be his breeches. I know it's breeches, by the buckles; the cow ain't chawed them past identifyin'."

Then little Jinnie she laffed mightily, an' tol' the others she a good min' to send the things home with her compliments.

An' the next week I got a bid to the weddin' of Jinnie an' little John.

Yes, sir, ole Loge he went a-courtin'; he tol' big Si, his uncle, and big Si he tol' little John, his nevvy, an' little John he tol' me.

And the man on the rail fence chuckled, and went on carefully whittling the last of his cedar splinter.

CINCH: A CHRISTMAS STORY

The air was full of plaintive suggestiveness: drifting leaves, bursting burs, the startled scurry of a rabbit through the crisping brown grasses. Autumn in the mountains, Nature's time to die. A haze lay upon the river, the old Indian-loved Himassee,[127] and veiled the finer line of mountains rising above Sweetwater Valley. Higher up, where the road lay along the rim of the mountain, overlooking the valley, a rider had drawn rein, and sat gazing down into the mist-enwrapped silence in a sort of fascination that seemed almost to illumine his bearded, sun-browned face.

"Well," said he, rousing from his revery, "it is pretty. It has growed more prettier since I been gone, danged if it ain't. Lord, Lord, but if I haven't a-thirsted for it, as that there Texas parson useter say, 'like rain in a dry an' thirsty land.' The very sight of it's coolin', blamed if it ain't. An' if yonder ain' Sugar Creek friskin' along same 's ever to the Himassee. Well, well, well!"

He had been absent eight years, yet the fact that nature had stood still during the interval of his own varied wanderings filled him with surprise. It was like meeting, after years of separation and silence, a friend, and finding his friendly heart unchanged.

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[127] Himassee is a typographical error, perhaps due to a handwritten original that the printer could not read. COS: Hiwassee. The Hiwassee River flows out of North Carolina into the southeast corner of Tennessee and flows into the Tennessee River.

"Now I do wonder if old man Stampses cabin is still standin' over yonder on the side o' the Knob where it useter stand. I'm good mind to ride down there an' see; they're blood kin to me, an' if the old folks are gone maybe that triflin', liquor-lovin' Jerry's livin' there. An' if I ain't forgot more'n I think, I know a nigher cut to the house than the big road. Oh, but it is pretty, the mountains is; an' I've missed 'em, oh, I've missed 'em might'ly!"

He had fallen to dreaming again, his keen dark eye passing from peak to peak, sighting Cardwells, Chilhowee and Frog Mountains.[128] The sound of a horn, long, winding, melodious, among the rocky steeps, aroused him; he shook himself, as if the witchery of dreaming had been a material bulk, to be thrown off at will.

"Well, I must be mosin' on; Christmas'll be comin' along here by an' by," he declared.

Giving the reins a jerk that turned the horse's head eastward, he struck off into one of the little cattle trails with which the mountains abound, laughing the while like a boy to discover how well he remembered the old parts. For two miles, he rode on; silent, after the manner of the mountaineers. Only once, in the woods upon his right hand his sharp eye detected a buckeye tree, and instantly he rode his horse under the freighted, low-drooping limbs.

"The best luck in the world, findin' a buckeye tree is," he told himself, and gathering two of the largest buckeyes he could reach,

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[128]The setting for "Cinch" is in Polk County near the North Carolina-Tennessee border in the mountains. This is ascertained by the mention of the three mountain ranges, the Sweetwater Valley, and the city of Cleveland.

slipped them into his pocket and rode on, back by the cattle trail in the direction of Stamps' cabin on the Knob.

In a little while the woods broke away; the whole earth seemed to lie at his feet bathed in sunshine and carpeted with purple and scarlet and bright gold. He found himself upon one of those odd elevations, neither hill nor mountain, which across the Carolina line are known as balds, but upon the Tennessee side go by the no more euphonious name of knobs. Almost at his very feet stood a house, a weather-worn log cabin of the primitive build—a room on either side, with a broad, open passage between; a shed room in the rear, an ash hopper so near that it gave the impression of being a part of the house. A group of gnarled old cedars brushed their dark boughs in a kind of rhythmic time against the gray-boarded roof.

In the opening passage, in the full glare of sunlight, a woman was sitting. She was busily at work upon a piece of sewing that lay in a white heap, its coarseness concealed by distance, upon her knees, and had not noticed the stranger's approach. The face attracted him strangely; there was a cameo delicacy about the pretty, pinched features, and the October sunshine made a warm sheen in the brown-red hair. The face, the attitude, the half suggestion of weariness in the slightly drooping figure, even the gold-red tints in her hair, all were in keeping with the over colored death abroad in the hills. The strange man studied the picture intently while his horse went down the little bridle path to the gate, his hoofs giving out only a soft rustle among the dry grasses. To his restless, wandering heart it was like heaven; the restful sweetness of the sad young face might have belonged to the

face of a cherub. She stood out in contrast against his own turbulent nature as the quiet of the mountains contrasted with the wild western life to which for eight homeless, danger-crammed years he had given himself. As he drew nearer the horse set his foot upon a loose stone; the woman gave a little start and looked.

"Good mornin'," said he over the rickety gate. "Is this where the Stampses live?"

"Yes, Jerry Stamps lives here," was the reply. "Leastways," she went on quickly, "he calls this home: mostly he's to be found at the settlement on the mount'n."

He did not in the least understand her meaning, though he detected the reproach in her voice, and noted the quick attempt to conceal the rash and too ready complaint in a show of hospitality. "Won't you-uns light an' come in? Jerry'll be along befo' long, an' while you're waitin' I'll knock you up a snack fur yer dinner."

There are moments that come to all when fate stands at the elbow of life ready to take advantage of the next step made; fateful moments[129] we call them, and looking back upon them through the smoke and dust of after years we can trace all life, for shade or shine, from the step taken at one of these moments. It was such a moment with him; he hesitated—saw her get up and go into the room at the left of the passage. She was hiding her sewing, the odd little heap of domestic; he did not know that she tucked it carefully under the bolster of her bed, blushing scarlet while she drew the bolster carefully over it.

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[129] COS: "fateful moments" is enclosed in quotation marks.

When she went back he had dismounted and was coming down the little pretense of a walk to the door. He was well dressed; to her, accustomed only to the coarse jeans of the mountains, he was royally clad. A gaudily prominent chain depended from his watch pocket; in the bosom of a white shirt three golden studs shone lustrously. For a moment she felt almost timid. But the mountaineer is ever king of his own domain, ever the hospitable host.

"Hadn't you better put yer horse critter[130] up?" she asked, the red still tinging her cheeks. In the eyes lifted to his he saw the liquid lights come and go with vitalizing warmth.

"No'm," said he. "Il'' just set a bit if you don't mind, and wait for Jerry. Thank you, ma'm, but I can get my own cheer."

He dropped into the shuck-bottomed chair with a lightness that seemed to her young experience the perfection of all grace. It brought back the fair days of her own first sweet youth, not long gone, when she had tripped lightly over the puncheon floors to the tune of "Rollin' River," in faraway Sequatchee Valley.[131]

She seated herself upon the doorstep, in the sunlight, and he saw the warm sheen return to the pretty gold-red hair, coiled girlishly upon the shapely small head. For a moment both were silent; he with

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[130] COS: nag.

[131] The Sequatchie Valley is in lower East Tennessee and consists of a seventy-mile valley on either side of the Sequatchie River, that stretches northward from the Tennessee-Alabama line, where the Sequatchie River empties into the Tennessee River. Present-day Tennessee counties included in the valley are Bledsoe, Marion, and Sequatchie.

wonder at the luck that had dropped him down in the company of the very girl, he told himself, that he had "travelled earth over to find."

"Pretty country hereabouts," he found voice to say at last.

"Hit's fair," was the uncertain reply. "I ain't keerin' fur the mount'n country much. I'm valley-born. I'm a S'quatchee Valley gal."

There was the familiar drawling sweetness in her voice that had tracked and trailed his memory like a sleuth hound in all his weary wanderings, in his yearnings for home, and had driven him back at last, homesick, heart-hungry for the scenes that had surrounded his first manhood. He talked only enough to keep her talking—the voice was heaven's music to him.

"Yer horse looks like it might 'a' come a tolerble fur ride," she said, with a glance at the wind-blown, foam-flecked animal fastened to the low fence palings.

"He ain't come so far; he's just from Cleveland down here; he wasn't much shakes of a horse to begin with," he told her.

"Air you-uns from Cleveland?"

"Texas."

"From whar?"

Had he said from paradise she would not have been more surprised. Texas—that far-off myth-land of the mountaineer.[132] He laughed aloud at

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[132]Texas was a special place to W.A.D., seemingly as important to her in many ways as Tennessee, as is exemplified by her comments about this state in her column, "Song and Story," Dromgoole is still a name found in Texas, and W.A.D. visited relatives there often. At one point she taught school in Texas for several months, following her defeat in the state legislature. In an interview (1899) W.A.D. stated that she would eventually like to move to Texas and resume her career there. There is no evidence of her having done this, and there are no explanations why this move never came about.

her wonder; he knew that to the people of her class Texas was the limitation of all distance—almost of all life, indeed.

"Lord, I know just how you feel," he declared. "I useter feel the same way till I went there, eight years ago. Now it ain't no more than a canter over inter Kintucky or Alabama. Still," he modified, "lookin' at it one way it seems a good bit off, too. When a fellow got homesick it seemed like the tag end o' creation. And I always was homesick; I always wanted to come back. I'm mount'n born. Me an' Jerry useter play together—played marbles in this very yard; and when we got bigger we fished together in Sugar Creek many a time; to say nothin' of Himassee River. And I just couldn't forgit it. I was always hankerin' for the mount'ns."

The wonder in her eyes gave place to incredulity. "'Pears to me," she declared, "as I'd shake the dusk of 'em off mighty quick if I could git ter Texas."

Poor, pretty young thing; there was a wound somewhere in the young heart that could not quite hush its plaining. He set himself to find it, to learn the nature of the wound, after which he would look to a remedy.

"Would you like to go to Texas?" he asked. "It's mighty far an' lonesome."

"Would I? Lonesome? Psher! I know lonesome."

There was no need of further words. "I know lonesome." That expressed it all, the longing and helpless loneliness of her life. He felt its narrowness and pitied her—he who had seen Texas.

"Yet," he said, as though following out his own thoughts, "it's lonesome; a body can't content hisse'f to love the levels when he's once knowed the mount'ns. You'd be honin' for the hills again in no time. You'd soon be sorrowin' for Tennessee. You'd die out there for the sight of a tree."

"Sorrer ain't killin'." There was knowledge, founded upon experience, in the simple declaration. "Sorrer ain't killin'. If it ware the graveyards 'ud be full."

She lifted her eyes to the distant peaks; the little complaint seemed to have been made to them, the veiled, unresponsive hills, rather than to him. Yet his large, man's heart went out to her in sympathy. To her, trouble was imaginary, of course. She was too young to have felt the real fangs of it; yet, to youth, pain is pain, whether it be real or fancied, and so he pitied her, felt for her, wondered what petty, girlish grief had unblinded her young eyes to the heavy truth that sorrow doesn't kill.

"Do you live here?" Even as he asked the question he remembered that she had said she was "a Sequatchee Valley girl." Her reply quite startled him.

"Yes, I live here, of course. I am Jerry Stampses' wife."

"Which?"

He had supposed her a young girl, a visitor perhaps, perhaps a kinswoman; at most a poor girl earning a home for herself by working out, among friends.

"I'm Jerry's wife"—he scarcely heard her—"married better'n a year ago. If you don't believe it, look"— She had begun to unbutton

the wristband of her sleeve; there was a bitter note in her voice, a hard line about the mouth that should have known only girlish gladness. A moment she hesitated, pushed the sleeve slightly up, hesitated again, then as though ashamed of her impetuous confidence, drew it quickly down, buttoned the band again, and laughed.

A harsh, mirthless laugh it was, that made him shudder, and think of a young fellow the cowboys had hung one night. He was a young fellow just come out from Kentucky, and brave as the bravest. A belt, containing money, belonging to one of the gang, was missing; they had searched for it for three days, and finally charged the Kentucky lad with having stolen it. Proud, hotblooded and defiant, he had sworn he would die before he would submit to being searched. And they had hung him; they had not really intended to hang him, only, they said, "to scare the little fool into measures." Instead of being frightened when they led the pony under a limb and adjusted the rope about his neck, he had laughed, and flung himself from the saddle; cheating them, he had believed, of their triumph. The next day the belt was found where the owner had secreted and then forgotten it. And in the dead boy's trunk they found a little diary, kept in a boy's unformed hand. There were pages and pages of impassioned nonsense; then came other pages of wild ravings because of some one's falseness;[133] the wild determination to run away, go West and be a cowboy. But it was the last entry had caught

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[133] COS: The addition of: ". . . falseness,—someone he had loved. Ah, Christ! that love, humanity's comforter, can still be the root of her keenest agony. The wild determination . . ."

and held their hearts: "Life holds for me no hope so sweet as that of laying it down." After all, they had but given him that which he sought—death.

And this girl-wife of Jerry Stamps had recalled to him the young martyr. She, too, had learned that laying life down is not always its hardest feature.

She drew her sleeve down, holding it fast, lest the inclination to disloyal confidence return with irrestible force.

"Shucks!" she exclaimed, when the silence began to grow embarrassing, "it ain't anything. An' yonder comes Jerry down the road. I can't see him yet, but I can hear his horse. Thar ain't another horse critter in this country comes gallivantin' down the mount'n like Jerry Stampses. I reckin Jerry must 'a' scented comp'ny an' come home; it couldn't 'a' been dinner he smelt fur I ain't tetched it, more'n ter put on the punkin."

She went back into the shedroom leaving him to make his own introduction to her husband; though, as for that, he had forgotten to tell her who he was and why he had called. He had cared only for her story; his own appeared as nothing against the pretty misery of hers. He wanted to tell her not to bother with getting dinner for him, but she had not given him the opportunity; already he could hear her among the pots and pans, and already the man of the house was coming across the yard.

The visitor rose, hat in hand, and stood waiting. A moment and the tall, slender figure of Jerry Stamps cast its gigantic shadow upon the floor. A bloated, reckless face, a boyish face despite the

marks of dissipation, met his. The two regarded each other intently, before the stranger extended his hand, and with a low, chuckling laugh said:—

"Howdy, Jerry—if you haven't forgot old friends and kinfolks."

"Bob Binder, or I'll be blowed," exclaimed Stamps. "Whar'd yer come from, what made yer stay so long, an' how long ware yer gittin' here? If this don't beat my time! Settin' here gossippin just like yer useter do eight year ago. Whar'd yer come from, anyhow?"

"Texas."

"Texas? Hell, yer better say; thar ain't no sech great differ'nce as I can make out. Had yer dinner?"

"No, but it's no matter. Don't let your wife go to any trouble for me."

"Waal, she may go ter a little fur me, then: I'm hungrier'n a b'ar. Hurry up thar, Belle; thar ain't but twenty-fo; hours in a day."

He dropped down upon the step where his wife[134] had sat, and from the kitchen Isabel could hear their talk; now low and reminiscent, now merrily resonant with some gay experience of the western plain. Once when her husband's laugh echoed through the passage, she paused in the work of slicing potatoes for the frying skillet, and drew up her sleeve. A bluish, sullen looking bruise shone revealed against the pink-white flesh. The laughter seemed to have set the wound to stinging.

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[134] COS: she. It is interesting to note that one of W.A.D.'s sisters was named Isabel, the source perhaps for this name.

"I ware about ter show him that," she sobbed, "ter prove ter him I ware a lawful wife. Any fool ud know a woman wouldn't take a lick like that off any but her husband. No other man have the right ter so bruise[135] her." Alas! that man should so mistake his privileges. Her tears fell softly, unchecked; the bitterest of them were for the reflection that she was a wife of but one year.

"Been cow-boyin'?" Her husband's voice drowned the soft sound of her sobbing.

"Some."

How restful this new tone that had come into her life for a moment. And how pleasant the unspoken sympathy she had recognized in his eyes searching out her sorrow—how temptingly, ruinously pleasant.

"I had a ranch for three year, out on the Rio Grande, an' made myse'f a bit of a start. Then I went to San Antony an' Houston an' Dallis. Saw a bit o' the world."

"What business d' ye foller all that time? Must 'a' done somethin', jedgin' from the size o' yer watch chain."

There was a moment's silence before her husband's laugh again reached the ears of the woman in the kitchen. "I see," said he. "Been suckin' of yer paws, I reckin. What the hell fetched ye back here? Anybody as can make money, buy gold chains an' store clothes, an' can see the sights o' the world, ter come a-mosin' back here amongst hedge-hogs an' screech owels air pretty bad off fur gumption, that all."

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[135] COS: abuse.

"Wall," said Binder, "as I was tellin' your wife, I got homesick."

"'Homesick,' hell!"

"Fell to hankerin' after the mount'n; the run of water in a laurel thicket; the feel of a bowlder under my feet; the sight of a tree."

"Did, eh? Told Is'bel that? I'll be boun' she didn't respon' ter no sech slack jaw as that. Said she'd like ter git a chance ter see Texas; she'd like ter git foot loose o' Tennessee sile one time. Oh, I know Belle."

"I tell you, Jerry," the visitor quietly ignored the outbreak, "I have laid 'wake nights in the corral long o' the horses, with the stars shinin' down on me, that lonesome that I actually cried. Cried for the sound o' the wary wind in the tops of a Tennessee cedar, man as I was. Think of it: long level miles o' land, nothin' but land, and wavin' grass that made your brain rock; sunshine until your very eyeballs blistered. Then nights so still you could a'most hear your own ghost go by; moonlight so constant an' so bright, it reminded you of them midnight suns you've heard tell of off yonder in Norway somewhers. Why it's most daylight on them Texas prairies before the moon goes down. An' fires—great God! they swoop down an' skit across them prairies, an' sweep your ranch off the face o' the earth in half a minute. Nuthees, chills, tarantulas, horse thieves: that's Texas."

"An' what air Tennessee?" demanded Stamps. "A bed o' rock; a chenk[136] o' mount'ns, with ribs o' iron an' belly o' coal that's brought

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[136] COS: chunk.

up in a lump by the rich syndicates, who set the pore ter work it at a dollar a day, an' a passel o' stinkin' convicts fur comp'ny. A little runt of a cornfiel' now'n then over which state an' gov'mint air wras'lin' like the devil; what's the gallon o' whiskey come ter after state an' gov'mint have had their pull at the kaig? Sometimes the kaig air left fur the owner o' the cornfiel', but more of'n he gits the bare cob of a stopper fur his sheer. Taxes an' trusts an' syndicates an' booms an' starvation; that's Tennessee. Damned if hell ain't healthier, or Texas either."

How different to the other, the wanderer from home. The injustice of the accusation hurt him to his very soul. His voice, even, when he repudiated the calumny, had a softer tone; unconsciously he fell into the dialect of his people, which he had lost among his western associates.

"She ware allus mighty sweet ter me," he declared. "Tennessee ware allus home ter me, Texas or no Texas. I honed fur her like a man hones fur his wife an' babies. Why, once when I ware cowboyin' it out on the Rio Grande I rid thirty mile ter hear a Metherdis' preach, beca'se he allus preached about the mount'n. I didn't tell the boys—they'd 'a' laffed me out o' Texas. I lied ter them; told 'em I ware goin' court'n'. But I went ter meet'n', ter hear the old Metherdis' talk about the mount'n. He give out thar that day that Christ allus loved the mount'n might'ly, an' that He useter go off an' lonesome on it, all by Hisse'f. An' seem ter me I knowed percisely how He felt. Whilst he ware talkin' I could see Frog Mount'n, plain as day. An' I got ter honin' fur home till I fell away ter skin an' bone, an' couldn't

sleep o' nights. Lord! Lord! I'd a died if I'd knowed I couldn't come back to they-uns."

He waved his hand, a kind of salute to the sombre, mist-veiled peaks. His dark, deeply-set eyes kindled with the joy of nearness. Life might offer broader vistas, but none more fair, more dear.

When Isabel called them to dinner, they kept right on with their talk, Jerry ignoring her presence, and she refusing to allow Binder to draw her into the conversation, though she knew that he talked for her. For her were recounted the midnight rides across the prairies, the race from Indians, the capture of wild horses. For her he described the wonderful cities he had visited, the magnificent buildings, museums, theatres, churches. He even attempted a description of the fine women he had seen,[137] and was rewarded with a quick brightening of her eyes, a smile, when he told of their "furbelows an' fine fixin's";[138] silk shirts that trailed a yard on the floor, and hats loaded with feathers costing, to her simple experience, a small fortune. It was worth a trip to Texas to be able to bring back the smiles to that poor little face.

"How long ye goin' ter stay?" said Stamps. "Long 'nough ter give yer nag a bite, I reckin."

He had not intended stopping for any great time, but the pathetic little face of his cousin's wife, repeating with silent

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[137] COS: addition of ". . . seen, the cotton fields, acres and acres, white as the drifted snow, and corn, bare miles of it without stump or store to bar or break the level beauty of the pictures. He was rewarded . . ."

[138] COS: . . . "furbelows an' fine fixin's of the women"; silk . . .

eagerness the question her husband had asked, bewitching him with its unspoken pleading, held him with a fascination as new to him as it was delightful. Was Jerry really unkind to her, he wondered; was he mean, brutal? Or was it neglect alone that had printed that hopelessness in the fair young face? He decided to stay awhile; at all events until he had satisfied himself that she preferred to unravel her life's mystery without his assistance.

"Well," he replied to his cousin's question, "if you've got a spare peg for my hat I'll hang up a day or two. If you haven't I'll stop down ter Uncle Silas Moore's down the valley; or else over to Cleveland."

"Silas fiddlesticks!" said Stamps. "Stay right whar ye air; if ye can put up with pore folks' livin'. I'll hitch up an' go fur yer duds after dinner. Thar's the whole o' the roof-room fur yer, and if that's too cramped thar's the horse lot, an' you can occupy hit, Texas fashion."

He laughed aloud at his own smartness. He was not sorry to have his fine kinsman stay; the latter's nimble tongue and rare experiences rendered him particularly pleasant company.

"I guess I'll choose the roof room," said Binder. "Say, Jerry, what's become o' the old cabin us boys useter sleep in? Useter stand in the front yard."

"Waal, the last time I see that cabin, it ware only yistiddy evenin'; it had been invited ter a back seat, an' ware occupied by as likely a fam'ly o' gopher rats as ye ever set eyes on. The ole man

gopher ware settin' on the do'step pickin' his teeth with a cedar splinter, an' a-jawin' at the ole 'oman fit ter kill."

"Is the door locked?"

"Locked? Who'd ye 'spect ter lock it? It ain't been locked sence Bragg busted of it open, endurin' of the war, ter git we-uns' meat out fur the rebels ter feed on. Locked; I say!"

He got up, pushed his chair back and crammed his hat down upon his long, tangled hair.

"Look after Bob's nag, Belle," he said to his wife. "I'm goin' ter hitch up the wagon."

"I can attend to my own horse," Binder interposed. "An' I'd rather go for my trunk, too. There's valu'bles in it."

"Valu'bles?" laughed Stamps. "Paw suckin' must pay out in Texas. Can't yer put a feller on ter yer tricks? Come, Bob, now what game did yer play?"

"We played cinch. I'll learn you how to play if you want."

A teacup slipped from Isabel's hands and crashed into a dozen pieces upon the hard puncheon floor.[139] Had Stamps been an interpreter of the human countenance he must have seen the pleading in the glance his wife gave their guest. But Stamps saw nothing but the fascination of a new game of chance, and with the gambler's greed he was ready to seize upon it. He slipped his arm through Binder's, and the two walked off together—gamblers both to the heart's core.

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[139] COS: ". . . crashed upon the hard puncheon floor into a dozen pieces."

When Binder's trunk had been put away in the spare room, and Isabel had cleared away the supper things, by the light of a dripping tallow candle they had their first game of cinch. It was a four-handed game, but Binder explained that it could be played with two dummy hands until Stamps could become acquainted with it.

"Then we'll play with the boys at the settlement, maybe. Unless Cousin Belle here'd like to take a hand."

A pallor crept over the face lifted for a moment from the sewing upon her lap, and she got up quickly to leave the room.

"I ain't playin' o' no cards myse'f," she said, "an' thar'd never be none played in my house—if I had a house."

"Pity ye ain't got none," Stamps retorted, as the door closed upon her.

It was an every night thing. Jerry resented Isabel's opposition to the game as an insult to his guest, and at last she learned to be silent. He even forced her to sit by while they two played. He gave no further heed to her, however, and was ignorant that she paled and flushed, trembled and quaked under the steady, searching eyes of the man calling himself a Texan. Not that she was afraid of him; it was herself she feared; her own poor, starved little heart, aching and breaking with its own desolation. His eyes were full of the unspoken sympathy her life yearned for; she had but to respond once to the glance she dared not interpret, in order to have the wild, passionate devotion her girlhood had dreamed of, her wifehood missed, poured at

her feet. He understood her thoroughly, and while he played to the husband's passion he played upon the wife's loneliness. True[140] at times a great pity for her would spring up in his heart; and more than once, while the beautiful Indian summer drifted into desolate winter, he resolved to go away and leave her to work out the riddle of neglected wifehood as neglected wives must, alone. Then her sweet face would beam upon him, and he would declare that it was for her good that he stayed on; for her good that he was opening to her profligate young husband another road to ruin. He saw her growing whiter, frailer, more silent every day; and thought how upon the warm, sunflooded prairies of Texas his love[141] would woo the roses back to the thin cheeks, the smiles to the colorless lips. His heart yearned for her, ached to take her away from the daily death she suffered.

She had not been, like her husband, bewildered by his wealth and show. She might have been, had she like him had a craving for such. But she did not; yet had he assailed her chiefest weakness also, her craving for affection. If he could have assured her a taste of the real blessedness of the wifehood that had been her dream and her delusion, she would have followed him to earth's ends.[142]

One afternoon he came upon her as he had seen her first, in the sunshiny passage, the little bundle of sewing upon her knees, her hands

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[140] COS: True is omitted.

[141] COS: The more modest "his affection" is used.

[142] COS: Addition of gladly.

folded idly upon the small white heap, her fathomless eyes fixed upon the distant peaks of mountains. Jerry had been off on a drunken spree for three days.

Isabel started, and crushed the coarse domestic under her palms when Binder stopped at her side and stood looking down upon her with that strange, compelling gleam in his eyes.

"Cousin Belle," said he, "this is a mighty hard road you have elected to travel in."

Her bitterness of heart found outlet in words at last: "This here cinch o' yours ain't makin' of it any more easier, as I can see," she replied.

He placed his hand lightly upon her bright bowed head, stroking the soft waves gently.

"Ain't it, Belle?" he said. "Then I'd[143] ought to go away an' not bother you about it. I meant it for good; I swear it. I meant it, I played it so's I could stay along here an' kind o' look after you, Belle. 'Peared to me you war lonesome. I didn't mean to worry of you, cousin, an' I'll go away if you say so; today, now."

Without a word, she seized his hand and carried it to her lips, held it there, and burst into tears.[144]

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[143] COS: I'll. This form is a double modal, will ought, a characteristic of some mountain dialects.

[144] COS: W.A.D. inserts a paragraph here which adds little to the story except excessive sentimentality, a reflection perhaps of the literary attitudes of the nineteenth century, as well as perhaps the tastes of W.A.D.'s audience. The paragraph reads: "So in the heart of a neglected woman is one touch of tenderness enough to sweep away the barrier of all bitterness."

"Never you mind, now," he said, reassuringly. "Don't you worry. I'm a-thinkin' of how to pleasure you constant. That's what I'm here for, just to help you. You just trust to me, Cousin Belle."

"I can't," she sobbed. "I can't never trust ter nobody any more. My trust air all killed, killed, killed. It's been so long since anybody tried ter pleasure me, 'pears like I've clear forgot the feel of pleasure."

He took her hands in his, pressing her head against his side. There was an odor of musk in his clothes. Even in her sorrow she noticed the perfume, and thought what a great thing it was to be a man and free—free to go to Texas where life was glitter and perfume.

She did not observe that the bundle of work had slipped from her lap and lay upon the floor. But Binder, whose keen eyes lost but little, saw the scrap of domestic as it fell: shaken out of its wrinkles he saw it take the shape of a little shirt, a tiny baby garment, and he understood for the first time that she was soon to be[145] a mother. For a moment he was dumb. That little muslin shape, telling in unspoken pathos the story of the untried, unshared, uncomforted motherhood, shamed and silenced him. Then his hot anger was kindled against the man who was to be father to the little unborn baby. To be alone, abused, neglected at a time like this! no wonder she went about the place like a doomed soul, ready to accept any refuge offered.

"I'm going to fetch you away from here, Belle," Binder broke out fiercely. "I've heard his talk to you when he was drunk; an' when he's

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[145] COS: "to become."

sober he's off, neglectin' you shameful. I'm goin' to fetch you away from here, away from Tennessee; away to Texas, where they string up a fellow for wife beatin' same's a bologna sausage. I've got money, Belle, lots of it; enough to give you rest the balance of your days. You'll go back with me, won't you, Belle?"

Go? The temptation lay before her weary eyes like a golden pathway straight from her darkness into day's perfection. Safety, shelter, peace, love. Women will barter heaven for these things.

"I—dunno," she faltered. "I ware not thinkin' o' that. I dunno what Jerry'd do if he knew this. Kill me plumb, I reckin."

"I'll make him give his consent."

"Make Jerry Stamps?" She gave her head an unconscious little lift that made him laugh outright.

"Well, I can," he said. "I've got the screw will press him. Will you go if he gives his consent?"

He saw the hesitation, the wavering; the temptation had its charms. He slipped his arm about her shoulders and with a sudden swift movement stooped and kissed him, full upon the parted, trembling lips.

The effect was electric; she bounded like a startled fawn to her feet, eyes ablaze, the delicate nostrils distended, lifted her arms, dropped them; the white lids fell under his passionate glance, and she saw the little brown domestic shirt lying upon the floor, between them.

The rebound came with quick, delicious thrills, that swept through her whole body. The motherhood awoke, and seemed to whisper presciently of the craving for affection that was soon to be satisfied,

when baby fingers should press the no longer lonely bosom. She shook off his touch upon her shoulder, stooping to regain her treasure:—

"I dunno," she said sharply. "I dunno anything. I don't even know what I ware sayin' of."

She covered her blushes with both hands, the little shirt against her cheek, and staggered away from him. He heard the latch fall heavily into its place as the door of her room closed upon her.

For days he did not see her again, except when Jerry was about. And the autumn faded; the time of Christmas drew near, and with it came the time of her deliverance.

He thought she grew sadder, more thoughtfully quiet; she no longer ran away when she found herself alone with him. She was too weary to contend against her temptation. And he offered it her constantly, in a thousand little careful acts which her condition rendered her doubly capable of appreciating. But when he pleaded with her to fly with him she always gave him the same uncertain reply.

"Wait till after Chris'mas; I'll tell you after Chris'mas."

"But if I get his consent?" he urged shrewdly.

"His consent means that he flings me off," she replied. "Oh, yes! I reckin I'll have ter go if he gives his consent—after Chris'mas."

The hours were days while he waited, and the effort to keep up the good feeling between the husband and himself became indeed an effort. Yet he never once left off trying to hold the confidence of the man whose peace he was about to slay. He held him in his toils as a snake

holds its victim. If he[146] were late joining him at the store where they played cinch with the men there, Jerry would walk the floor and rage for him like a youth for his first sweetheart. The game ended, he would call to him, "Tell us about the night ye rode ter the ranch before the prairie fire, Bob"; and he would enjoy the interest expressed in the recital as keenly as though it had been his own story they were applauding. And all the while he drank, drank, drank, with his last glass reminding Binder to take him home to bed all right. There was scarcely a night that he was not in his power; scarcely a night that he could not have dropped him off the bluff and had a dozen witnesses to swear he was too drunk to have walked down the path without falling off the mountain. But he restrained himself; he was waiting to get the consent without which Isabel would refuse to go—waiting for that, and for Christmas. She had stipulated Christmas, "after Christmas." He did not know that she was waiting for the baby and the effect its coming might work.

As the blessed season drew nearer and more near, his impatience became torture. There were days he did not eat, nights when he thought his brain was giving way. And good St. Hilary's cradle did not swing within the radius of his grasp, to rock him back to reason.

The night before Christmas he sat with the men in the back room of the settlement store, among mackerel and coffee scents, playing his last game of cinch.[147]

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[146] COS: "If Binder."

[147] COS: Addition of "Others came in and went out, or sat about among the boxes, listening to the talk,—watching the game."

He had not seen Isabel for five days, having absented himself from the house that she might feel the full weight of her aloneness before he put to her his final offer of escape. But he had calculated as man calculates—leaving out God, who stands beyond man, and leaving out the unexpected, which they tell us is what always happens.

He had plied Stamps with whiskey until his tongue began to thicken; he had told his best stories, sung, laughed, cried "Merry Christmas" "as they do it in Texas," and staked his silver dollars until the eyes of his fellows were fairly dazzled.

It was when the hands of the little dusty clock on a shelf over the door pointed to midnight that he chanced to glance toward the window against which the moonlight fell weirdly, grotesquely bright. The next moment he shuddered and started up with an oath.

He had seen distinctly, pressed against the murky, dusty pane, a gaunt, gray face; a woman's face. Isabel it was, but grown old; how old and haggard and gray.

"What ails ye?" said the storekeeper. "Somethin' give ye a start?"

"I seen a ghost, a sure enough ghost, Mr. Hartson. Its face was pressed against that window yonder."

"You seen the devil," laughed Stamps. "Mighty quare, a feller come from Texas not ter know his friends when he meets 'em."

This raised a laugh in which Binder did not join. At that moment a fleshless, ghoulish hand appeared, and tapped against the pane.

"There! there it is again. Look for yourself."

They did look, every one of them, and they saw the ghost's face return; it was close against the pane.

"Jerry! Jerry! Jerry!" a quavering voice called.

He half rose with an oath. "What the devil's ter pay out thar?" he demanded.

"Jerry, I'se come from my granddaughter, Is'bel. Thar's a mighty fine boy down to you-uns' place, Jerry."

The ghost vanished, its midnight mission accomplished. The men laid down their cards to laugh—all but Binder. In an instant he felt his plans give way, his unholy hopes perish before this new comer, this babe born at Christmas. It had come, as life always comes, for good or ill, for better or worse, for power or pain. Only a babe's life; a thread a breath might snap in sunder. A tiny thing; the babe's head had not learned the pressure of the mother's breast, nor its little lips the secret of milk drawing. Young; one of God's little ones. The Christmas sun would be the first of suns to give the little strangeling welcome into the world it shone upon, and in which he, God willing, would have the right to shine also. Through every chink and crevice the golden rays would come rejoicing; searching for the babe born in the cabin, as once in old Judea the startled stars stood still in wonder for the babe born in a manger.

The tallow candle sputtered and flared, and cast the shadows of the gamblers upon the bare, brown wall, grotesquely. But the game had lost its flavor. It was the babe's doing.

"Well," said Hartson, "I reckin it's about time ter quit; Jerry'll be wanting' ter git off home ter see his heir."

Clearly Stamps had no idea of allowing himself to be teased; he tilted his chair, his boot heels fastened securely upon the lowest rung, and with his largest air of bluff said:—

"Got mighty keerful o' Jerry all 't once. When I git so blamed anxious ter go home as not ter be able noways ter stand it I'll notify the crowd. Pass that thar jug over here, Texas. An' deal the cyards, Jim."

"Naw," said Hartson, "naw he won't. It's time ter stop. Ye ought ter go home ter yo' sick wife. If me an' Jim stop you-uns 'll be boun' ter, seein' as it takes four ter play this here cinch. Hit'll soon be Christ'mas day anyhow."

"Well, what if it air?" demanded Stamps. "Hit'll come off just the same, I expect, whether ye play cyards or not. I ain't goin' home till I git ready. I ain't never goin' if I don't feel like it."

Binder's dark eyes emitted flashes; he was thinking of the woman in the cabin, alone in her hour of trial, save for the old grandmother, whom she had sent upon her last hope of enticing the ungracious father to his home, with the news of the baby's coming.[148]

"Take another drink, Jerry," said he. "One more for lagniappe, as they say in Houston; we call it luck in Tennessee."

As the already drunken Stamps lifted the jug to his lips, Binder added: "That's what a man gits fur bein' married. Now look at me: I

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[148] COS: Additional paragraph: "The straggiers got up and went out, followed by Hartson, who declared he was going to close up. Only Jerry and Binder remained in the back room."

can go all the world over if I'm so minded. Better trade 'em off, Jerry. Say the word, an' I'll trot 'em off ter Texas termorrer an' give you your freedom. Or, better,[149] I'll give you-uns the money ter light out, an' I'll stay here in your stead."

Stamps lifted his eyes; in a twinkling Binder had lowered his, but too late. Quick as he was, Stamps had caught the serpent gleam hiding in their dark, unholy depths. In that one swift, devouring glance all the unholy passion, the sinister and secret meaning of his every action since he had come to his house that fair October morning, lay revealed. This was why he had lingered, this the foundation of all his fine talk and finer professions of friendship. For this he had tossed his money constantly before the bewildered eyes of the victim he was making ready to stab. It was all plain reading to Stamps. He lowered his right hand, and lifted it to the table again; the sickly candle rays reflected the glitter of steel where the muzzle of his pistol shone beneath his broad, brown hand.

"You damned son of Satan," he hissed. "So that air yer game, air it? Be still thar; move a finger an' I'll blow yer blasted brains out fur ye. Cinch! ye think ye've got a cinch on a feller's soul, I reckin. Damn ye! Ye Texas horse-thief, ye."[150]

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[149] COS: "'Or, better,' he leaned forward and half whispered in Stamps's ear,—'I'll give you-uns . . .'"

[150] COS: "'Ye Texas gintleman ye,—ye're a damned Tennessee sneak-thief, that's what ye be, gol-darn yer black heart ye.'"

Binder had half risen, his hand upon his hip. The two men who had made partners for the others offered a feeble protest.[151] They even got Binder's pistol from him, leaving him helpless, at the mercy of the man he had wronged.

It was scarcely a glance that Stamps cast upward, into the dingy rafters, festooned with the web of the spider, and ornamented with the nexts of wasp and dirt dauber. But in that glance he saw, beyond, behind the gray, gauzy spiders' web, the dust and soot, a woman's face, pictured against the smoke-discolored boards; a face full of unspoken reproach; eyes in which hope's hard death was reflected plaintively. It was the face of the woman for the possession of whom a professional gambler had offered him money.

"God!"

The quick, stifled exclamation burst from his lips in spite of his effort to restrain it. It came to him like a knife thrust, this cruel, barbarously inhuman thing that he was doing; leaving his wife, his wife who had lain upon his heart and had once believed him tender, leaving her to the pity, the confidence, the insulting affection of a man whose extremest sense of honor boasted no loftier height than the gambler's table. What a travesty he was upon the sacred name of husband, and of father—he <u>was</u> a father. He had not thought of that, and as his heart whispered the blessed word he felt the warm thrill of conscious fatherhood creep through him,—something new and strange and indescribably sweet.

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[151] <u>COS</u>: ". . . for the others came rushing back to separate the angry cousins."

Slowly he rose, his hand still grasping the glittering weapon, his keen eyes never for an instant turned from the startled man who had too rashly risked his last throw of the die upon which his fate swung dependent. Amid breathless silence he lifted, poised the weapon:— "I give you," he said, in low, even tones, "jest three minutes ter quit this country. Open that door thar, Hartson. Git up; take that path up the mount'n, an' the fewer stops ye make this side o' yer cussed Texas the better it'll be fur yer health."[152]

A moment, and the tall, skulking figure disappeared like a black shadow in the white moonlight that lay upon the mountain.

In the chill gray of the Christmas dawn Stamps lifted with trembling fingers the latchstring of his own little cabin. As he did so there came to him the faint cry of a little child, a baby. Again that delicious sense of fatherhood swept his being; again he remembered that other Christmas babe in faraway Judea. With noiseless step he entered: a slow fire burned in the deep old fireplace. An iron lamp swung by a rod from the sooted jamb, a tiny blue blaze sputtering a protest against the liquid grease that threatened its extinguishment. The old grandmother, who had tramped up the mountain with news of the babe's birth, nodded in the corner, her fireless pipe held fast between her toothless gums.

Jerry seized the lamp and carried it to the bedside. Isabel's bright head lay like a heap of spun gold upon the pillow; the lamplight brought out all the hidden, burnished beauty of the soft, girlish

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[152] COS: Addition of "ye cussed runaway."

tresses. The blue reflection of the blaze fell upon her face, tinging it with daintiest sapphire; it bathed her bosom, bare and white, showing him the tiny head pillowed against the exquisite fairness, in dreamless, infant slumber; it stole beneath the mother's eyelids and they opened.

She smiled and put out her hand, to lay it on his bosom: "Hush," she whispered, "else you'll wake our baby."

Our, not mine; the simple words touched him as no sermon could have done.

"God!"

It was not spoken as he had been wont to speak the name of God; it was more a breath of reverence that had come with the babe at Christmas time. He drew nearer, almost afraid of the little bundle of humanity that had come to claim his sonship.

Isabel's glad eyes waited his approval; he read the wifehood beaming in their honest depths and knew the man he had sent stumbling out across the mountain would not be missed in the heart the babe had come to fill. The neglected wife might fall a victim to the tempter, but never the worshipping mother.

Many thoughts awoke in his heart and held him silent. To Isabel his silence held a different meaning; she withdrew her hand, turning her face from him, and speaking for the baby at her breast:—

"If yer ain't got a word o' welcome fur us, Jerry Stamps, I reckin we'll have ter do without it," she said sharply.

He laid his hand upon her head, stroking it gently; it was the first time she had ever seen him embarrassed.

"I can't think of a blessed thing ter say, honey, exceptin' of jest Christmas gift."

She laughed softly, like a happy child, and lifting her arm placed it about his neck, drawing his rough, red face down to her own soft cheek.

"We're goin' ter be mighty happy now, I reckin," she whispered. "An' I'm mighty glad he came at Chris'mus; 'pears like he's almost of some kin ter Christ."

And who shall doubt that the mission of the two, at all events, was one?—a mission of love, humanity; a message of good tidings of great joy.[153]

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[153] COS: This last paragraph undergoes the following modifications: The phrase "good tidings of great joy" is enclosed in quotation marks within the text and is followed by the unquoted phrase "of peace to all and good will?"

A HUMBLE ADVOCATE

Sunrise in Jones' Cove.[154] The great encompassing mountains stood solemn and weird and silent, capped with cloud and carpeted with everlasting green about their feet where the winter scarce finds an entrance into the well screened cove slumbering among their rugged bases. Winding in and out among the gaps and crevices of the mountains Big Pigeon River might be seen fighting its way to the beautiful French Broad.

The sun was peeping over the mountains, a great round, red eye of fire. The cove still lay in shadow and in silence. It might have been a dead world, indeed, for all sign there was of life, save for the one lone figure leaning upon the low palings of the rude gate in front of a little weather-beaten cabin standing at the Cove's head, just at the point where the road begins the ascent of the mountain.

As for the woman, she too might have been a part of the deadness, as she stood there with one small, knotted labor-marked hand clasping the paling, the elbow of the other arm resting upon it, her chin in her hand, and her bright, brown eyes fixed in melancholy musing upon the distant peaks of mountain rising above the valley. Only, looking well into the face, one could not fail to see the fire that still hid in the

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[154]Because of the mention of the Big Pigeon River, Pigeon Forge, and the French Broad, the setting for this tale is most likely in Sevier County in the mountains around Sevierville. One of the characters also talks of going down to Sevierville to vote.

dark eyes, like a slumbering coal-bed that waited only the revivifying breath of excitement to fan it into a living glow.

Within the cabin a man lay sleeping upon a bed over which was thrown a quilt of many-colored stripes. Two burly, calfskin-covered feet depended floorward beneath the coverlet, and the arm, thrown with the careless abandon of the weary sleeper over the man's head, wore a sleeve of heavy, gray jeans. Evidently he had thrown himself down to sleep without undressing. Upon a low trundle-bed at his side a boy of six years and a baby of one were sleeping. The woman at the gate was waiting for the man to awaken and eat his breakfast. It was already cooked, and was only waiting the pleasure of the liquor-sodden sleeper before the woman would bring it out from the skillets and pots ranged about the hearth where she had set it to prevent the food getting "stone cole" before he should sober up sufficiently to call for it.

It was a dreary life, a cat-and-dog existence for her, the silent young watcher at the gate.

"Ef I could only get my own cornsent ter hold my tongue I reckin it would be better," she mused. "But 'pears like I'd be obleeged ter die sometimes ef I didn't try ter head Ike Cary off in some o' his doin's. 'Special when he begins ter hender the chillen; the pore little chillen as can't holp the'rse'ves in noways. I jest can't be still then; I be obleeged ter fight fur my chillen. Even the ole hen out thar'll do that much fur her young; or the wil' varmints in the woods. I can't git my own cornsent ter be less keerful o' my young than the hens an' the b'ars an' sech."

It wasn't an unpleasant face that was lifted for a moment to the sunlight stealthily creeping over the mountains; it showed resolve, spirit, and a courage that death itself could not put to shame.

"I hev s'arved that thar man in thar ten year, good an' faithful. I didn't come ter him em'ty-handed nuther. I had a hunderd head o' cattle an' a half a hunderd acres o' valley lan'. An' I ware not accounted a bad-lookin' gal nuther, them days. But the law allowed as Ike Cary could keep my lan' an' truck more better nor me, an' so it ware his'n after I ware married ter him. Whose it air now I can't tell. The still-house got it o' Ike, I know that much. They-uns useter say, too, over yander in Elmiry whar I ware raised, that I ware right sprightly. Some allowed I'd make my mark ef I lived an' got my growth. I made it, yes; a mighty crosty kind o' mark it ware, when I married Ike. I ain't lacked in my sarvice none nuther, as I can see; an' what I hev got in exchange fur hit air blows and hard names. Lord, ef it ware not fur the chillen, the chillen that he air ruinin' of, I'd h'ist my heels an' take that thar road up the mount'n, an' travel away from here quicker'n yer could say 'Jack Roberson.' If it ware not fur the chillen I'd do it."

For the children; how many weary woman have bowed their backs to their burdens, and taken their crosses again for the sake of the children—the children, God-given to keep the soul and body in harness if not in unison!

"You Josephine? Am I got ter wait all day fur a mouffull o' cole victuals? Or hev ye gone spang deef that ye can't hear noways, when I call ter ye? Hi God, ye air gitten too peart an' independent ter suit my fancy. Standin' thar sun-gazin', air ye? an' me a-waitin'

fur my breakfus'. Gol darn ye, ef yer don't come in here an' fish out them victuals I'll fling the shovel at yer; else't this here brat as can't make out ter git itse'f 'wake like other folks."

She was in the cabin long enough before the man had completed his complaint, and was dishing up the breakfast. She paid no heed to his threats until he strode over to the trundle-bed where the baby was sleeping, the older child having risen when Cary called his wife to get his breakfast up.

"Stan' back from thar," she commanded. "You-uns jest let that thar chile be, Ike Cary."

Whether it was the glitter in the restless eyes, or whether he was too stupidly indifferent to carry out his threat, she neither knew nor cared; with a low laugh of derision he drew his chair up to the table and began to eat his breakfast. The woman sat near, not eating, but waiting upon her husband, and the little boy who scrambled up into a chair at her side and began calling for a dodger.

"I'd wash my face an' hands first ef I ware ye," said the mother. "It air plumb bad manners ter eat without washin'."

"Let him be," said Cary. "What be the use anyhow? They-uns'll be dirty ag'in 'ginst dinner time. Eat yer breakfus', son; pappy'll let ye."

"That ain't no way ter raise chillen," said Mrs. Cary. As she had so many times told herself, she couldn't get her own consent to hold her tongue where the children were concerned.

The man made no reply; he was busy with the chicken she had broiled and set before him. When he had finished and pushed back his

plate, he seemed in a better humor—disposed to talk, indeed; though the talk always meant either an argument or a season of ridiculing the woman whom he regarded as his weaker half.

"Whar did you-uns stay las' night?" She put the question timidly, knowing from experience what the reply would be.

"Wall, now, Miss Master, whar do ye reckin?" said he. "I ware somewhars, that ought ter satisfy ye. But Lor, these women; they air obleeged ter know it all. Waal then, ef ye must know, I ware down ter the Forge; an' some o' the candidates ware thar, an' we had all the liquor we could carry, an' more. An' they-uns ware powerful anxious ter git my vote, too, I can tell ye. Offered me"—

She bent her small, bright eyes upon him a moment, then made a gesture as of waving him off:

"If you-uns hev been a-takin' of bribes an' sech, Ike Cary, I don't want ter know it."

"Jest as ye please, jest as ye please. But stir yer stumps an' get the cuckle-burrers out'n that thar brat's head. I aims ter fetch him ter town with me terday."

"He ain't fit ter go," she replied. "He ware ailin' all night. I gin him paregoric twicet endurin' o' the night."

"He's a-goin' jest the same," said Cary. "An' ef you-uns wants ter sen' him off lookin' like the witches hev had him, I ain't keerin'. He's my chile. I reckin, an' I aims ter do ez I please with him. Git up, son, an' git yer hat. Pappy's gwine let ye ride behin' him down ter S'vierville terday."

Rebellion was useless; she had tried it too often not to know. She smoothed out the tangled yellow hair, and washed the face that shone again with the anticipation of a ride to the county-seat. And when the man extended a leg and reached his hand to the boy to drag him up to the saddle behind him, she stood at the gate and "saw them off" with the best grace she could summon.

"Keep a holt on the tail of yer pappy's coat, son," she admonished the smiling youngster. "An' Ike, you-uns hol. on ter Benny; he ain't use ter ridin' behin', an' he'll slip off inter Pigeon River or somers, an' git hisse'f drowned, ef ye ain't keerful of him."

"Lord, Lord, listen at the critter," said Ike. "Air he my chile or not? That's what I'd like ter know."

As they rode away she stood watching them through eyes in which anger had dried the tears that might otherwise have come to her relief.

"Ter hear that man talk anybody would think as it air all his chile, an' that he never had no mammy; leastways that she got no more ter say in the raisin' of him that ef she ware a stick. Women air no better than that nohows, I'm a-thinkin'. The laws o' this kentry gins a man the right ter hol' the lash, an' he hol's it.

"The laws; I say! A pretty thing the laws o' this land air, a-settin' by an' seein' chillen being' kerried ter thar death, an' allowun' as it air all right becase the father hev a right ter do as he likes with his own chillen. An' what air the law fur the woman, I say? Why don't they let the women he'p make 'em ef they-uns hev got ter live up ter 'em. That's what I want er know. Lor, but wouldn't I like ter

he'p make the laws fur this country; an' wouldn't I jest give the women a showin' ter live, though? Wouldn't I?"

She had never heard of woman suffrage in her life. She only knew that she had felt the lack of the law's protection, and recognized in a vague way that the man who governs the woman is not competent to make impartial laws for her. The thought had come to her often before; but this morning she was so impressed with it that she did not hear a step coming along the path, the nigh cut down the mountain. She had unconsciously given voice to her thought, not knowing that she had an audience: "Set a passel o' men ter make laws fur the women they expec' ter own! Shucks! Like ter made good uns, I reckin."

A man stood at the foot of the path; he had heard every word of the foolish complaining.

"Never you min' 'bout that Mis. Cary," said he. "Thar's better days a-comin' fur the women folks I shouldn't wonder. I heeard las' week whenst I ware down ter Knoxvul ter witness fur Si Odem, as ware indicted fur stealin' of a horse—Si never took the horse no more'n you did, an' I went down ter witness as he ware over ter my house the very day he ware 'cused o' stealin' the cussed critter over in Knox County. I tol' the jury that, but they-uns 'peared not ter take my word somehows, an' Si ware sent ter the penitentiary fur ten year. But I heeard, whilest I ware thar witnessin' fur Si, as how the women folks ware goin' ter be let ter vote befo' mighty long. I went ter one o' the'r meetin's whilest I ware thar. 'Tware helt in a tent; an' how them women did talk about the men ware a scan'le, Mis. Cary. Lord, Lord, ef the women don't beat my time! Wantin' ter be let ter vote, same as men!

First thing ye an' me knows, Mis. Cary, they'll be axin' ter be let wear pantaloons, and galluses, an' sech. Then who air ter cook breakfus', I'd like ter know? Thar ain't no tellin' what the women o' Tennessee won't be a-wantin' of next."

She was listening with wide, dilated eyes; her heart was beating like a hammer.

"Air it true that they ull be let ter vote?" said she. "Air that a true word, Jeff Bynum?"

"Wall, now, Mis. Cary, hit ain't quite settled yit," said Jeff. "This air the shape they-uns hev got it inter. The women folks they-uns allows thar be lots o' meanness kerried on in Tennessee, an' they let on as how if they-uns be let ter vote they ull send good men ter the legislatur'—men as won't take bribes, an' will put down liquor, an' wipe out wife-beatin', an' mebbe kill the Ole Scratch hisse'f, fur all anybody knows."

There was a flash of the dark eyes, a quiver of the strong lips that should have had a girlish laugh upon them, instead of that weary woman-look they wore.

"Did the women o' Knoxvul say that air?"[155] Her face flushed with the pride she felt in them; she could have fallen at their feet in very worship.

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[155] COS: Knoxville. W.A.D. sacrifices sound for visual effect.

"The women o' Knox an' Hamulton,[156] an' some from as fur as Shelby hitse'f," said Bynum.[157] "I declar' ter goodness, Mis. Cary, it ware a plumb caution the way they-uns talked. One got up an' allowed as she wanted ter vote ter holp develop a moralerty in gov'mint. I wondered what the fool allowed she ware talkin' 'bout. An' another one wanted ter vote beca'se she didn't want ter be classed with lunertics, she said. Another one didn't want ter be put with idjits, though I could see mighty plain as she ware one, p'int blank. An' one ware ag'in bein' put down in the law with crimernals an' furriners, an' said she wanted a ekal right ter her own chillen. 'Women's rights' they-uns called it. Lord, Lord, my wife gits all the rights she air entitled to in this worl'; all her entitlemints an' more, ef the truth ware knowed. She hev got the right ter milk the cow, an' cook the victuals, ter rise up an' ter set down. What more mortal critter air wantin' of air too much fur Jeff Bynum ter say."

He waited for her to agree with him, but she was silent. She was no longer listening; she was thinking of those brave women in Knoxville. How her soul went out to them! The slumbering fires of her nature awoke and made response to their effort, those brave few fighting, contesting every inch of the road, their way to freedom—their way, and the way of all womanhood. She was with them as surely as though she had been in their meetings, been one of them. She recognized the need; her

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[156] COS: Hamilton. Another example of the above.

[157] The mentioning of Knox, Hamilton, and Shelby Counties emphasizes the fact that women from all over the state, Chattanooga and Memphis as well as Knoxville, were speaking out for their rights.

heart responded to the justice of their claims. She would have footed it all the way to Knoxville, gladly, just to have told them how she thanked them for their effort.

The visitor saw the keen interest in the young face, and, not unwilling to make himself interesting, proceeded to talk.

"I tell ye now, Mis. Cary," said he, "I be goin' down ter fed'ral court nex' month, ter witness fur Abe Stores, as air indicted fur illicit distillin'; an' I'll keep my ears pricked, an' ef I heear any more about this here thing o' the women votin' I'll let ye know. It air a mighty fine subject now, shore. They-uns allowed the law ever' created critter have a sesso except lunertics, an' convic's, an' idjits, an' furriners, an' babies, an' women. But shucks, says I. What's the good o' votin'? Hit ain't henderin' the workin's o' Satan, as I can see. He air jest as lively terday as befo' the women axed ter be let ter vote, Mis. Cary."

She made no reply, and glancing at her face he saw that she was not thinking of him. Half aggrieved he turned away.

"Wall, I must be a-mosin'." said he.

The words recalled her wandering senses; she remembered the courtesy due to a visitor, even in her wonder over the strange knowledge that had come to her.

"Won't you-uns come in an' git a bite o' breakfus'?" she said. "Hit ain't cole yet, though Ike hev e't his an' gone."

"Naw'm, I must be a-mosin' on; I ware at a coon hunt las' night, an' the ole 'oman she'll be a-lookin' fur me ter be in time

fur breakfus'. Good day, Mis. Cary. I'll be shore ter let ye know 'bout the votin' whenst I come back from witnessin' fur Abe."

He was laughing silently as he went down the sun-flooded road with the loitering step of the all-night reveller.

"Lord, now, wouldn't she cut a figger at the polls? An' wouldn't the boys jest etarnally laugh Ike out'n the Cove ef his wife ware ter take ter votin' an' sech? But ef she ware ter take a notion ter it all S'vier County couldn't stop her, she air that heady an' high-strung."

Ike, meanwhile, was pursuing his way as calmly unconcerned as though he had the world at his feet. When he reached his store, early as it was, he saw the usual crowd of loafers congregated, waiting for him to open up for the day.

He tossed the key into the midst of them as he rode past, half turning in the saddle to call out to them:

"Open the darned thing, some of ye. An' some of ye shut the door ternight, 'g'inst varmints an' sech. Holp yerse'ves ter barter an' sech, an' leave yer truck somers in thar. I'm goin' down ter S'vierville ter lay in some goods, mebby. Bob Bolton, air that yer snaggletooth countenance over thar? Whar air that root o' rattlesnake's-master you-uns ware gwine ter fetch ter trade fur some sorghum so brisk? Mis. Durham she jest doctored herse'f on corn whiskey whilest she ware waitin' on the rattlesnake's-master, that thar time she got herse'f bit. Got t'arin' drunk—tight as the devul; killed the p'ison, howsome-ever. But fetch it 'long, fetch it long; thar a plentier more folks fur the rattlers ter cut the'r teeth on exceptin' o' ole Mis. Durham. Good

day, folkses. Walk in an' make yerse'ves ter home. An' ef so be thar's any 'mongst ye not hones' enough ter charge up what he gits, why, let him steal it, he's welcome. Ef he'd ruther be a rogue as ter be a hones' man he hev got my cornsent ter so be."

The summer waned, the days grew shorter; then came the light frost, and autumn, gaily resplendent, settled upon the hills. The trees were a rustling burden of scarlet and gold and amethyst. Then came the hoarfrost, and vegetation died like a newly born joy in the heart of a woman. The scarlet and gold gave place to ashes and dust; denuded nature's heart lay bare. Then came the rains, November, and the election. Mrs. Cary had heard nothing from Bynum; indeed she had not expected to hear. She had heard enough to awaken her heart to the great possibilities that lay buried in the bosom of that mysterious future that might dawn sometime for the women of Tennessee.

She felt sometimes that had fate dealt her a different lot she might indeed have been one of them—one of the helpers in the great cause that was already dear to her. Yet, "I dunno, nuther," she would tell herself when this thought was in her heart. "Idunno; mebby[158] I wouldn't know so well what the need air ef I hadn't a felt it as I hev done."

Experience, mighty mother of despair, had taught her what it was to be a slave to man's meanness and ignorance. A slave—she remembered that one of the Knoxville women had said she wanted the ballot because she wanted her liberty. The thought had taken possession of her, that

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[158] COS: mebbe.

humble woman, lost among the hills of Tennessee, lost to everything but ignorance and despair. Liberty; why, it was liberty that reared Bunker Hill, made America—liberty, the foundation and chief corner-stone of the very government itself; the palladium of all peace; the base of the triangle upon which is founded all brotherly love and good fellowship. And woman was the only one of God's creatures to whom it was denied. But it would come—it must; the mighty minds of earth would take hold some day and knock off her shackles and set her free.

The idea possessed her; she could talk of nothing else. Afternoons when Ike would be away at the store, or off on a drunken bout somewhere, she would take the children and go off to some of the neighbor women's houses and talk to them about it. But she got little sympathy; they called her "cracked," after awhile, and some wondered why Ike Cary didn't make her "stop sech etarnal foolishness."

She had never attempted to talk to Ike about it but once. It was one evening when he came home from Pigeon Forge in high glee because of a speech he had heard down there in favor of his chosen candidate for the state legislature.

"Did ye hear anything o' the women bein' let ter vote, whilest ye ware down ter the Forge?"

She had put the question timidly; perhaps that was why it angered him.

"Listen at the fool," said he. "The idee o' women votin'. What do women know about the laws o' the land? I declar ter God, Josephine, ef you-uns ain't gittin' foolisher an' foolisher ever' day ye lives. Ye ain't got as much gumtion as that thar child thar this minute. Now, I

want ter tell ye as I hev heard enough 'bout that thar fool notion you-uns hev took up. I air not goin' ter be laughed plumb out'n the state o' Tennessee, ef I know it."[159]

The next day she took her baby under her arm and went to pay a little visit at the house of her neighbor. It was near the time of the election; the men were going to and from the county-seat every day. She might learn something of the great question that had so agitated her mind. But the woman did not once broach the subject, and it was not until she was leaving that Mrs. Cary herself mustered courage sufficient to ask about it.

"De Lor', Mis. Cary," was the reply, "ye an' me better stay at home an' 'ten' ter the chillen an' the men-folks, an' leave votin' an' law-makin' to them as the Lord meant ter take charge o' it. Naw'm, I air not lookin' ter vote. My ole man allows as a woman's place air ter milk the cow an' cook the victuals an' 'ten' ter the men-folks—ef they-uns hev got any men-folks ter 'ten' ter; them as haven't may go votin', I say, an' the Lord hev mercy on the'r souls."

And as Mrs. Cary walked homeward in the gray twilight the woman regarded her from the doorstep with a curiously pitying expression.

"Josephine Cary air in an' about deranged," said she. "She hev took ter vagrantin' roun' the mount'n till folks air talkin' mightily

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[159]The woman suffrage crusade in Tennessee was an inchoate movement in the late nineteenth century, but it steadily gained support across the state in the early twentieth century. Tennessee gained lasting attention in 1920 as the state whose ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment made woman suffrage possible throughout the nation.

about her. An' they do say as she talks polertics same as a man. Land o' Moses! what air this worl' a-comin' ter, I say."

Mrs. Cary had not made herself obnoxious, however, even to the men. She would talk politics; they found that hard to forgive, 'tis true, because she didn't always agree with them; but as to the question of the women voting, the men made light of that, and because it was something so entirely novel and unlikely, they forgave her that "bit o' gol-darned foolishness." But many were the jokes cast at Ike on her account; her shoulders bore the marks of them. Ike had his own ideas as to the proper means of putting a stop to the ridicule she excited.

The morning of the election dawned at last, clear, cool, a forerunner of the nearing winter. The voting was done in the old way, so long customary among the mountains, and Ike's store was utilized as a precinct.

Josephine had settled it in her own mind that she would go to the election, merely as a matter of interest. There could be no harm in her going; it was at her husband's store, and other women would be coming in to trade before the day was over. Ike had taken the older boy with him early in the morning. It was nine o'clock before Josephine set a pot of pumpkin to boil, and gathering the baby under her arm set off up the mountain.

A stranger, a man from one of the valley towns, was seated near the election boxes, leaning back against the low, rough counter. He glanced up when Josephine entered, to wonder at the brightness of the small, dark eyes regarding him from beneath the black sunbonnet. Her

entrance was the signal for the settlement jokers to begin; the forms of greeting were varied:

"Come ter vote, Mis. Cary?" asked one.

"Lor, Mis, Cary, the women ain't let ter vote yit."

"You-uns air jest ninety-nine year ahead o' the time, Mis. Cary."

"Fetch the baby 'long ter vote, too, Mis. Cary? Ye know ef the law allows the woman it ought ter allow the baby ter vote too. Women an' babies air disbarred; the law disbars ye both; mebby it'll admit ye both."[160]

The woman shifted her baby to the other hip, and regarded her teasers silently for a moment; she was like some wild creature of the forest at bay, as she turned upon them, with the only weapon at her command, her tongue:

"Yes," said she, "the law air ekal ter that; the laws o' Tennessee air ekal ter 'most anything. But"—she paused, set the baby upon the counter, and put into its hand the end of the ball of twine used for tying bundles, then slowly lifted her hand—"some o' you-uns'll live ter see the women o' the land castin' o' the'r votes yet. Let them as laugh look ter it."

The prophecy fell with a strange force from the narrow, strong lips. They regarded her with a kind of awe for a moment, the boldest among them forgetting to sneer.

It was at this moment that Ike, who had been in the rear of the house filling a quart bottle with kerosene for a customer, came forward,

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[160] COS: addition of "by and by."

the bottle in his hand. He glanced a moment at the silent, gaping crowd, with their gaze fixed upon the woman who had lifted her voice in prophecy. His swarthy face grew livid; without a second's hesitation he lifted his arm and hurled the bottle with all his strength at her head. It crashed past her and went to pieces in a thousand fragments upon the wall behind her. The woman never flinched.

"What air ye doin' here?" demanded the angry husband. "Didn't I tell ye ter stay at home whar ye b'longed, ye dad-burned hell-cat? Comin' here ter make a fool o' yerse'f befo' a passel o' fools as ain't got no more sense than ter laugh at ye! Lemme git at ye; I'll see ef"—

The group separated to make way for him as the half-drunken man strode past them; he carried a rawhide whip that he had jerked from the hand of one of the men who had driven a yoke of oxen to the store. The woman moved aside, not to dodge the blow, but to shield the child playing with the twine-cord upon the counter. One sharp, cutting blow descended upon the thin, stooped shoulders, but before he could lift the whip for a second the strange man leaning against the counter sprang to his feet and seized his arm.

"Don't you do that again," he commanded. "Don't you dare to strike that woman again, you damned brute, you. I mean what I say; no man shall strike a woman where I am, not if I have to hand for it. Drop that lash, you coward, and get back to your oil-tubs. A pretty thing, you, to call yourself a man! Men!"—he turned to the wonder-stricken crowd about the door—"you see for yourselves how the laws of the state need mending. If I go to the legislature from this country the very first bill I shall introduce will be one to make wife-beating a felony

in the state of Tennessee. Now you may elect me on that ticket or not, just as you choose."

A few minutes later he stood outside watching for Josephine to come down the rude steps preparatory to going home.

"Why did you come here, my good woman?" he said, wishing to offer some kind of help to the poor creature. "Why did you come here? See what you have brought upon yourself."

He pointed to a blood-stain upon her shoulder where the rawhide had cut through to the skin. She glanced at the stain and then at him. Something in his voice appealed to her; this was her opportunity to say a word, to help along the women of Knoxville.

"I air not keerin' fur that," said she; "what I air keerin' fur air my liberty; I want my liberty. 'Pears like the women air the only created critters as hev not got the'r freedom in this worl'."

Instinctively there recurred to him a scene he had witnessed in his youth: a slave was being beaten for running away; he was bound with thongs, and another slave was made to ply the lash; it was of rawhide also, and there was blood upon the slave's shoulders. He received his punishment without a groan; but the next day he ran away again, and was found dead along the roadside, <u>en route</u> to liberty. And this woman of Tennessee, with her bruised and burdened back, demanded hers.

"Aye, God, and she shall have it," he told himself as he galloped home through the midnight; "she shall have it, if word of mine can avail to help along her cause. Liberty? Why, men have died for liberty; they have died to give the gracious boon to other men. Yet for woman—who has thought of <u>her</u>?"

The words of the mountain woman throbbed in his thoughts: "'Pears like woman air the only created critter as ain't got her freedom."

He saw again the gaping crowd, the sneering faces, the uplifted lash. Again in his ears was sounding the one word of defence offered: "Some o' you-uns'll live ter see the women o' the land castin' o' the'r votes yet."

Prophetic words, and big with meaning![161]

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[161] In 1885 Dromgoole made a statement in the Nashville Banner which reflected her ideas about women's roles in society. She says that women should work if they have to and should not be ridiculed or persecuted if they choose to do so; however, she also says that she does not advocate "women's rights to the extent of the ballot box." (Nashville Banner, 8 January 1885, p. 1.) It would seem that by 1895, Dromgoole had come closer to supporting women's rights to vote, but she was certainly not a suffragette. In this story she is making the point that women have the right not to be mistreated and if voting is the solution, then it is something that should happen. By 1920, Dromgoole openly supports the women's suffrage movement in her column "Song and Story."

THE HERB DOCTOR

The mountains touched the sky. Or so it seemed to the man standing upon the river's bank watching the unbroken line of purple walling out the very world beyond Clinch River, growing dimmer and dimmer, until, lost in the descending clouds, the mountains seemed indeed to touch the sky. Only one point, one solitary, mysterious peak, cut squarely in sunder by the river, cloven from base to summit, stood out brave and bold against the fainter outline of the further hills—Lone Mountain, that mysterious peak of nobody knows what, standing off and apart from the great range trending off to north and south among the purple distances.[162]

The wind rose among the trees, sending a bright scurry of leaves, scarlet and gold and pale rose, sweeping down upon the river, making the current a bed of living light as it swept on and out to find the Tennessee a mile or so below. And full in the track of the scarlet leaves, rounding the base of the mountain, a boat came floating. Now and then the dip of an oar sounded faintly as the young man in the stern of the skiff lazily returned to his task of guiding the small craft.

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[162]The setting for this story is in Roane County near Kingston and Rockwood. Since the narrator mentions a man standing on a bluff looking at the Clinch River, with the Tennessee River close by, the probable location would be close to the point where the two rivers join, which is approximately at Kingston. Lone Mountain is also mentioned, but if the man were standing on one of the high ridges in the area, it is possible that, on a clear day, the mountain would be visible, although it is actually some fifty miles away.

In the centre of the canoe a girl was standing, balancing herself by a long, stout pole that she held in her hands. Her hat lay in the bottom of the boat, and her hair, loosed from its fastenings, hung in bright golden waves, among which wind and sunlight were playing some merry game of hide and seek, perhaps, if one might judge from the waving, glinting beauty of the golden tresses. As the boat came noiselessly down stream, the girl began to sing: a rich, nimble voice of the purest soprano, that came down the river like the tones of a silver bell. The boatman turned his head to listen.

The watcher upon the bank had not seen the skiff, however; he was watching the sunset, the gaudy autumn-painted forest, the leaf-flecked river. He was a tall, slender man with a figure like an arrow, straight, strong, unswerving, suggestive perhaps of the character it embodied. He wore the ordinary dress of the mountaineer, and a large broad slouch surmounted his head. From beneath the hat, waves of silken sun-red hair fell against his neck and throat; an odd, unusual figure, but one whose chief claim to the unusual lay in the face turned to the sunset; a face never, never to be forgotten once gazed upon; a face in which the very gentleness of Christ himself seemed to slumber. Eyes of the softest blue; a low, smooth forehead against which the gold-red ringlets lay in pretty girlish grace that might have made the face effeminate but for a certain subtle power that lurked about the slender lips parted in a smile of admiration now, yet lips that spoke that peace above all dignities,—the "still and quiet conscience." And when he spoke the winds themselves might well have hushed their murmurings to catch those gentle accents. He was a humble man, a

mountaineer, and ignorant as man counts knowledge; but one whom nature had most graciously equipped for the most merciful of man's callings, the physician's.

"Now," said he, his gaze fixed on the mountain, "it certain'y air fair, fair. And seems to me it gets more fairer every day, as though God favored it and it ware prosperin'. It gets more fairer all the time, Lone Mountain do."

There was a sound of dipping oars, and the dreamer turned his head to see the boat bearing the man and girl come drifting down the river. The expression of his face changed, a smile parted his lips, the beauties of nature were forgotten for the nonce before that other, subtle beauty of humanity.

"Now," said he, "I wonder if that ben't the lady as ware ailin' and have come to find her health, at the cleebeate spring furnenst the Lone. I'll be bound it air; else Bledsoe Creighton wouldn't be a-hangin' round her as he air. He bo'ds nigh thar, a-doctorin' of the sick as comes to find their health. A measly cur as ever ware."

Yet, despite his contemptuous words, the gentle expression of his face did not change; he was not thinking indeed of the physician whom old Cyrus Armstrong had brought from one of the valley towns below and installed as "resident physician" to the Eureka Springs, old Armstrong's little resort among the Tennessee hills. He was nothing to this man, this dreamer upon the Clinch's bank, nothing more than a name, a somebody whose taunts he had heard but not felt, seeing the man was nothing to him. He was looking at the girl—the fluff of muslin, rounded arms, golden hair.

"I declare to goodness," said he, "her face has got a kind o' glory look, comin' down the river in that track o' sunlight. Call that old Cyrus Armstrong's niece? I allow the boys ware right when they let on as there ware a word give as how old Cy had done and done some crime or 'nother in his younger days that he ware obleeged to leave his kith and kin and refugee to these parts. He ain't no mountaineer, that's certain. And he has his follerin' from the valley somewheres. But that gal—"

The boat slowly turned and drifted to the bank at his feet. The girl was laughing: the man had lost an oar. The skiff must anchor to suit herself, that was certain. And just as the moment when, within but two feet of the bank, she struck a jutting snag that sent her rounding to the current again with a force that must have started her fairly down to the more dangerous current of the Tennessee, the watcher above stepped nimbly down to the bank, grasped a long, loose, naked limb that lay upon the rocks and reached it out quickly to the boatman, who scowled, but seized the offered help and held on with a grip that brought his rescuer waist-deep in the water. As the boat lurched and steadied herself a moment the boatman called out sharply:

"Put your pole out, Miss Elisabeth, and steady her against the bed of bottom of the river; it's shallow here."

The girl obeyed indifferently, mechanically; her gaze was fixed upon the man who had hastened to their rescue with so opportune assistance. A moment and the stranger lifted his eyes to hers and smiled.

"Now, may be, lady," said he, "that you can hold the stick with me and let the doctor have the pole. I dassen't step no further out; the current goes right fairly strong out there."

The boat swung into place, and grated sharply against the bank. A moment and the two men stood confronted; neither spoke, though both stood waiting: one dripped from head to foot, the water oozing from his boots, when once more he stepped out upon the bank. There would be no introduction, if that was why he waited. Perhaps he understood this; yet the gentle benignity of his countenance never altered. It may have been this, perhaps, that angered the other so that the fire kindled in his eyes, his nostrils quivered. Still, the timely aid that had been rendered could not be ignored; the "doctor" pointed to the dripping boots and said with something of a sneer:

"You'd best go home and take them off. Then take four grains of quinine. Wait! I'll write it down, sir, if you can't remember.

The other smiled.

"Thank you mightily," said he; "I might may chance remember, if there ware need of your prescription. But there ain't: I have my yerbs, thank you; and maybe I would not be able to make out the writin' after it ware writ. Good evenin', lady."

He bowed with courtly grace and turned into the laurel lining the mountain's slope, leaving the gentleness of his presence with one, the sting of his dignity with the other. When he had disappeared the girl turned to her companion with eager interest.

"Who is he?" said she. "Or what is he? I know without telling that he is something extraordinary."

"Yes," said the doctor, "he's an extraordinary fraud."

"That," said she, "he is not. I'll venture my life there is no deceit there. Falsehood never yet wore such a front. Come, be fair;

who is the man who dragged you out of Clinch River, and went off dripping wet to leave you warm and dry?"

"No, don't give him too much glory, Miss Rogers; he went off dripping wet to leave you warm and dry."

"So much the more is he entitled to my interest. Surely you will not refuse me the man's name."

"No," said the doctor, "it can't hurt me for you to know his name. Well, then, that odd, comical creature is no more nor less than the 'yerb doctor.'"

"The what?"

The doctor laughed. "Well now," said he, "it depends on whom you are talking to as to what that man is. The mountaineers, you know, are in grades, so to speak. To the very ignorant, his patients I should say, he is the 'yarb doctor;' he calls himself 'the yerb doctor,' which is a grade more advanced than the 'yarbers." Your uncle would doubtless call him 'the herb doctor," which isn't mountaineer at all, but importation."

"And the shoddiest imitation," declared the girl. "Yerb doctor,—why there's melody in that. Come, be generous; the man who is not generous never can be great. Your 'herb doctor' is one of nature's gentlemen. He resented your insult, for you were insulting, first to his ability as a physician, then to his manhood, since you refused to introduce him to me. Yet, at the same time that he tossed you back your rudeness in that quiet 'May chance I couldn't read the writin',' he did not forget to say 'Good evenin', lady.' Come, I like your 'herb doctor.'"

Her defence angered him for an instant; yet he realized that to say more would be only to call forth a more emphatic defence. So, smothering his feeling, he said:

"Yes, you like him; I see that. Well, if you want him—"

"Pardon me," she interrupted, "I 'want' no man. And if I were so unfortunate, still—perhaps you heard my uncle say the doctors regarded my case as hopeless."

He could have cursed himself for the thoughtless speech.

"Oh forgive me, Elisabeth," he exclaimed, "forgive me! I did not think what I was saying. I have been rude, thoughtlessly uncivil. But at the same time I must say I do not believe one word of what they say. This air, these waters will bring back new life to you. They shall, I swear it. Listen—"

She laid her hand upon his arm, lightly.

"Hush," she said. "You know nothing about it. I know that I am going to die. All the doctors in the world cannot alter that. It is something that I do not like to discuss, and that I am trying to learn to accept, though to the young life is generally sweet. Take me home now; this October air cuts like a knife through my thin muslins."

Silently they began the ascent of the mountain. As they approached that point upon which was located the little line of cabins known as the "Eureka Springs," he placed his hand upon hers lying against his arm.

"Elisabeth," he said in the low soft tone of the lover, "Elisabeth, I have known you such a little while—"

She stopped him with a gesture of impatience.

"Don't; it is of no earthly use. I have tried to prevent your speaking all along, and now I must tell you frankly that it is of no earthly use. I am doomed, dead, so far as this world is concerned, already. If it were not so, I am still dead to love, to love for all save my art. I loved one man at one time; all the passion of my soul lived and died in that. He never felt a throb of love for me, although he told me otherwise. The true woman, they will tell you, should scorn a man like that; but for me, I loved him so well that when he died my heart died too to love. I have no life outside my art. I live for and in that only. Don't try to make a romance out of me. If you're going to fancy yourself in love with me, why I shall leave off going out with you; that's all of it. Now tell me something more about your 'herb doctor.' Has he no name? Is he merely the 'herb doctor'?"

He answered her impatiently, yet her threat of denying him her company made him afraid to show his real vexation.

"Oh, yes," said he, "he has a name, or one he goes by. His name is Youry, Stephen Youry; though you might live here a thousand years and scarcely hear it spoken. To the natives, among whom he tinkers with his herbs, he is merely the 'yarb doctor.' I must admit, however, they have a great respect for the poetic-looking gentleman, as well as great faith in him. They are quite ready to die by his 'yarbs,' as I've no doubt many of them have already done and will do before they learn the value of quinine and calomel. You can't understand, Miss Elisabeth, how such men interfere with the regular practice of medicine, retard science, spread humbuggery."

"Yes," said she, with a little flash that he could not quite interpret, "I think I can understand quite well what an obstacle such men must be. And now we are at the gate and I am going to run right in and get into something warmer. Good night. I shall see you again, soon." And before he could offer protest she had disappeared in one of the low-lighted cabins, designated for her use, of her uncle's miniature and picturesque "hotel."

The next day she went out alone, early, lest he should follow her. She went off to the little mountain graveyard near one of the highest bluffs overlooking the Clinch. She was very fond of strolling here among the old, old dead, whose tombs were standing like gaunt old ghosts in the twilight. It was, or had been, the burying place of the aristocratic Southerners who had once owned cabins near the wonderful chalybeate spring in the old days of long ago. There was one tomb that especially attracted her—a slab of gray marble that had once been white, two hands clasped in parting, and, above, the name "Clara" and the date "1830." She had found a stone, a flat, broad stone, nearer the bluff's edge, upon which the same name was carved, with several others: "Evelyn," "Ruth," "Edith," "Joel," "Aunt Eunice," evidently the chaperon; and underneath the words "Our party, 1830." And one of them had died and been left in all her sweet young beauty to sleep under the moaning hemlocks and the gray old cedars that crowed the mountain top.

Elisabeth was fond of the weird old graveyard with its old, old tombs, and often stopped to rest under the soughing cedars, or to watch the Lone, that in the fading sunset seemed to keep a grim guard upon the ancient dead.

This afternoon she went over to the bluff upon whose flat top were recorded the names of the once merry party. She crept down among the ferns and scarlet leaves, watching the sundered mountain across the river sobbing at its base. After a while she began to sing; softly at first, then louder, until a step arrested her attention. Some one was coming up the trail, the little footpath leading up the mountain. A glance told her who it was; the slender figure, the loose, light hair, the slow, half melancholy step could belong only to the herb doctor. She felt a strange desire to run away that was inconsistent with the wish she had often expressed to know him. For from the first his very name and calling had had their fascination.

From the first moment she saw him he had interested her strangely, strongly. When she saw him now, coming toward her with that gentle smile that was half pity, half courtesy, she almost resented it; there was something in it so near of kin to pity. For a moment she felt that the keen eye of the herb doctor had probed her complaint and read the fear gnawing at her heart. But as he drew nearer she forgot everything but the gentle benignity of the quiet, boyish face. He drew the big slouch hat back from off his brow and said in tones as gentle as the face itself:

"Good evenin', lady."

She only started, a half smile parting her lips, while he brushed back the loose locks lying on his temple and, with another bow, by way of introduction said:

"I'm the yerb doctor."

Then she broke into a laugh, held out her hand without rising, and said: "Oh, you are, are you? Well, how do you do, 'Herb Doctor'? I think we'd best shake hands, because you're pretty sure to have me on your list of patients soon or late. I'm an invalid, you know."

He took the slight, white hand between his strong, herb-tainted fingers and pressed it lightly in the half-professional way that had become a sort of second nature with him, and without further ceremony seated himself upon the bowlder at her side.

"Yes," said he, "I have heard about you. I heard about you all the way down to the Ford last week, how weakly you ware, all disencouraged like and run down." She started and set her small teeth in her lip. His quick, professional eye caught the look of fear that sprang into her face, and he hastened to reassure her.

"But don't you be a-worryin' 'bout that," said he. "It didn't come from any as knows anything about you. Jest one o' the mountain boys letting his tongue take exercise a bit, I reckin. Said there ware a lady come to stop a spell with Cyrus Armstrong at the Eureky. And he allowed as how you looked like one o' these here lily flowers he saw a-growin' once. Some one had brushed it hard in passin,' and had broke the stem. Yet there it hung, a little broken flower, a pale white lily hangin' by a broken stem. There ain't no sech great harm in any one's a-sayin' that, I reckin. But to me you air more like one o' these here little purple vi'let flowers, the sassy things that bloom down under-side the bluff in springtime, and God knows as they air pretty."

She laughed aloud, and, rising, made him a mock courtesy.

"You ought to know better than to feed the sick on sugar, sir," said she. "Yet it's pleasant treatment, I admit. You'll have me on your list of patients, I warn you. Be sure you get me wholesome herbs, Herb Doctor."

He regarded her earnestly, soberly, a moment, and then said in his slow melodious drawl: "If I ware you, I would jest let the herbs alone. I'd let all medicines alone, and learn jest to be happy. That's all you're needin' of. Not herbs, not medicine, jest happiness. That's all that ails most women- if only they could know it. Women air mostly right unhappy; I have noticed that. I have seen a many a woman die, and mostly glad, glad. All but one that I remember of. There ware one as begged so hard to live I could 'a' mighty nigh died in her stead. She ware pore and humble, too, and had a man as beat and bruised her; yet that pore woman prayed to God to be let to live; she fought for life, fought as men fight for liberty sometimes. Not for her man's sake, not for life's sake, and not bekase she ware afeard o' death. There ware a little crippled idjit baby, a child that she had fetched into the world, a little 'flicted thing that man had set his heel upon. She ware afeard to leave the idjit boy. Life hadn't dealt her fair, life had been a hell to her; yet that pore woman chose her hell before God's heaven for that little idjit's sake. Women need happiness mostly, not healin' yerbs, lady."

The melancholy story, the voice's wonderful pathos, touched her, thrilled her with a feeling that was almost awe. He saw the effect the story had produced and hastened to divert her thoughts.

"Look at that sunset, lady. I often come down up here to watch it, and yesterday I stopped down there under the bluff to hear you sing."

"To hear me?"

"Aye, and it ware like the angels in their glory. It certainly ware nice."

His simple praise pleased her. There was a tremble in her voice when she said: "You should have heard me at my best when I sang before the footlights. I have sung for thousands, thousands; half my life has been before the footlights, and I have had my share of praise. But I don't think anybody ever said quite so nice a thing to me as you have said, Herb Doctor. What is your name? I forget it. Or wait, have you a name?"

He smiled, and said, "Yessum, my name air Youry, Stephen Youry. But mostly they only call me 'Doctor,' jest 'Herb Doctor.'"

"And just 'Herb Doctor' it shall be," declared Elisabeth. "Nothing could possibly add to the name's great fitness."

"And yours air 'Lis'beth," said the doctor, "Miss 'Lis'beth?"

"Just 'Miss 'Lis'beth,'" said she. "And I am glad you like my singing, Herb Doctor."

"I like it mightily," said he. "I like all music mostly, though I can't sing a note to save me. I reckin I am like the niggers, I hope to sing when I get to heaven. But I reckin all the happy spirits will sing there?"

It was a question plainly. She had no chance of answering it, and she was not willing he should know just yet how little her thoughts had been upon heavenly things. She evaded:

"You believe in spirits, Herb Doctor?"

He hesitated, flushed, and said in low, earnest tones, "Yessum, I believe it air permitted to the dead to walk the yearth."

"And you believe in—God?"

He almost bounded from the bluff.

"Great God A'mighty, yes. Don't you?"

"I—I—don't know. I never thought of it till lately. I thought only of my art, my voice, until I lost my hold on art. And now I have nothing, nothing. I believe in nothing."

"Why, you've got God," said he. "And God's enough for any life. Now don't you fret and worry. Jest let it all slip, only hold on to God. He's enough for you. And don't you get afeard; jest you think of yourse'f as one 'God holds within the holler of His hand.' You're sech a little scrap, and His hand air large, large. It can hold you mighty safe. Jest think of yourse'f as helt there, 'in the holler of His hand.'"

What a thought for despair! The young face lost something of its restless pain. His quiet faith seemed to slip like a breath into her troubled spirit, sweet with all healing.

"It is a beautiful thought," she replied. "I will remember it, Herb Doctor. Before you came here I was watching those golden bars stretching across the sky and wondering what might lie beyond them, and I fancied that purple cloud the sea of death that must be crossed before the golden bars would lift. And I was afraid, oh! I was afraid of death and what might lie beyond the golden bars."

"Heaven lies there," said the doctor, "jest heaven. The Book says that. You believe the Book, Miss 'Lis'beth? The Book air true, you know."

She hesitated. Not for the world would she be the one to drop a seed of doubt in his great faith. "How do—you—know?"

His face broke into smiles. "How do I know? How do I know that boneset will cure chills? that steam o' chamomile will break up fever? I know because I have tried it. And I have tried the Book, and I know for sure that it air true. And now, lady, I be goin' to fetch you home. The dews air fallin'."

He rose and handed her the hat that she had thrown aside, and they together took their way home through the dewey mountain forest. Once, laughing, she said to him, as he pointed out an herb that he made use of in his practice:

"You are fonder of your herbs than your patients are, I'm afraid, Herb Doctor."

"Yes," said he, "I love 'em. To me they seem like that the Book meant when it said 'the leaves air for the healin' o' the nations.' God made the yerbs, and they air good because they air His handiwork.

A smile trembled upon her lips. "Don't you suppose that Dr. Creighton thinks God made the quinine too?"

Instantly his face clouded. She saw an expression there that almost made her fear.

"I don't like to talk about that man," said he. "He makes me forget myse'f sometimes. Miss 'Lis'beth—" He stopped, stepped aside into a clearing among the trees, and pointed to a tall, dead-looking

tree that stood upon the summit of a distant bluff. "You see that tree there?" said he. "My father, miss, ware hanged upon that tree. I saw the deed done."

She shivered, screamed unconsciously, and drew away from him.

"Yes, lady," he continued, "I saw the deed done, with these eyes. He ware a good man; had helped his many a pore man on the road of life. But he had a temper like the devil. He knew it though and kept it careful under hand. I never saw him let his devil loose but once, and that once he killed a man. They hung him on that tree; a mob done it. And I, I have my father's spirit; and I have the tree."

Her heart ached for him, this humble man fighting against his "devil" thus, his inherited demon, that might rise at any time to dash his manhood to its death. She understood that he meant to tell her he was afraid of this man who could so goad and tempt him unto evil; that he was afraid of himself, and that he had that fatal tree as his reminder always. She felt for him with all her soul; involuntarily she held out her hand.

"Oh, you must never, never let him vex you!" she exclaimed. "Don't regard him in any way; let his taunts be as the wind, the idle wind, that's not worth noticing. I beg of you to remember, to forbear, to keep out of his way."

He sighed and turned again into the path. "I humbly pray God always," said he, "that He will stay my hand."

Her heart ached for him, struggling, alone as he was, with this terrible temptation always.

They had many talks and many quiet strolls together; always had his gentle patience soothed and helped her. And the while he, that evil genius that antagonized the better spirit of the man, grew more restless and more jealous of the humble healer of the hills.

And so the autumn drifted; winter locked the mountain in a frozen grasp; anon the springtime came again in robes of quivering young greens, abloom and all alive with beauty. And all the while the blood in the heart of the girl grew warmer, stronger, her step lighter, her voice echoing happily among the hills. She had followed the herb doctor's one prescription— "let medicines alone and tried to be happy." He had helped her mightily, allowing her to follow him into the woods where all the healing roots were hidden, explaining their powers, entertaining, amusing her always, amusing her at the expense of his own peace, his own heart's happiness. She suspected nothing. To her he was merely the humble, good man, the ignorant wise man of the mountains, a sort of faithful dog who guarded all her steps. She was ignorant of the lonely nights he passed her dwelling and stopped to watch at midnight a light that sometimes flickered from her window, and to wonder if she could be "ailing." One night while watching thus he saw a figure steal out from the shrubbery that studded the unkept yard and, stooping to the shadows, disappear down the path beyond the house. He knew that it was Creighton, the man who never missed an opportunity of humbling and of taunting him. For an instant his hands clinched, and he set his teeth hard in his under lip. Only an instant, however, and he was himself again. Yet, though the struggle had been brief, the drops stood out upon his brow and he breathed heavily as one who had fought a battle or

had run a race. And indeed he had fought in that little space a mighty battle with his own rebellious spirit.

"Sometimes," he gasped, "sometimes I can skecely withhold my hand from striking. I could 'a' killed him then—"

Suddenly he lifted his eyes to the window, where a faint ray from a night lamp fell through the half-drawn curtains. Instantly he dropped his face upon his breast; his lips moved slowly: "Help me, my God! help me to remember always and to control my spirit."

The next day he came upon Elisabeth in her favorite place down by the old rock on the bluff. She saw him in the path below and beckoned.

"I was wondering if you might not pass," she told him. "I have waited quite a long time, too."

Smiling his old gentle smile, he took the seat beside her, placing upon the ground the bunch of herbs he had been gathering in the forest. He had stopped at the mountain spring further up the path and bathed his hands, though the stain of the roots still soiled his fingers. It was always so. Elisabeth had learned to ignore the stains, or rather to accept them, since he had told her how they were the marks of his profession.

To-day the girl was nervous, restless; something had disturbed her quiet. She began to talk rapidly as soon as he was seated.

"Herb Doctor," said she, "I am a failure, a great failure, do you know? Some women are born thus to be failures, in order to disprove the accepted order of things. I am one of those. Do you catch my meaning, Herb Doctor?"

Clearly he did not. The honest, earnest face was turned to her full of wondering confusion, as he answered simply, "No, lady, I'm no scholar."

She laughed aloud. "'Scholar'?" said she. "Why, it's the wise who never understand, Herb Doctor. Well, then, do you know what society means?"

He shook his head and smiled. "Not as you know it, lady."

"Oh, I'm not so familiar with it," said she. "I'm an artist, a singer. I have built my sand house, to be sure, as every woman does; but I have built in Art's name, rather than in Love's—a thing most women do not. As for society, there is but one key fits its doors—wealth. I never had it; never missed it, since I had my art, my sand house. A year ago the poor foundations trembled, and I fled, fled to these hills, where I found you, who helped to prop the structure to a new foundation. I am well again; my sand house sits upon the shore secure—

While Life's wild waves are lulled.

It was you who laid the new foundation. I owe you much, Herb Doctor, so much that I wish to save you something. And so I tell you frankly that I am a failure. Do you know what love is, Herb Doctor?"

She saw the flush rise slowly in his throat; his eyes were fixed upon the bunch of mountain herbs lying at his feet.

"That knowledge comes even to the humbles', lady," said he.

"A deadly foe to the sand house," said she with a mock effort at mirth. "Now society, Herb Doctor, expects its children to do thus and so. Suppose I use you as example. Suppose that—I—should—fall—in—

love—with—you; I who had built a passing fair house on the fickle sand. Society would say, for it has its interest even in a poor singer if she sings to suit it, 'What, cripple your career with love?' On your part now—"

She saw the blood slowly leave his lips, his throat, every drop. His face was set and pale as marble; even the band about his neck which the sun had scorched was bloodless, like a piece of parchment. It was as though his body had been drained of every ruddy drop. He understood her meaning at last, and with a readiness that almost startled her he gathered up the gauntlet she had thrown down at his feet. Yet was it rather in her defence than in his own he spoke, even then, to set her mind at rest.

"'On my part,' lady?" said he slowly, as one who feels his way over dangerous ground, "why I've no 'part' in it. They'd never surely think me such a fool to fall in love with you. Excuse my boldness, lady, but your sand house is secure from Stephen Youry. He'd never think to lift his yerb-stained hands to sech as you."

He lifted them as he spoke, those poor dumb fingers that seemed to call on God to witness they were clean despite the herb stains and the marks of daily toil. Involuntarily both rose, he and she, and stood for one mute moment confronting each other. His words had hurt her to the quick. Pale and silent she turned to leave him, when he placed himself directly in her path.

"Stay, lady," said the gentle voice, "and hear me out. Ye know me better than to so misjedge my words. I never lied to man nor woman in my life till jest this hour when I said how I did not love you. I

can't leave that lie on my soul. Hear me out, Miss 'Lis'beth, and forgive me for my words. For what am I, a humble getherer of yerbs, to lift my eyes to you? And yet I love you, lady, more than life and next to God. I love you as the stars that shine o' nights above my cabin winder; far off, all good and bright and beautiful, givin' me light, helpin' my shaddered heart, lightin' my lonely way; yet not mine, never in all the lonesome years once mine, not once in all the w'ary pilgrimage; mine to look at only, to dream of, to love always. Lady, I have finished; jedge me."

Judge him, ah Christ in heaven! Father of love's self, who ever yet was fit to sit in judgment on Thy gracious gift? She stood before him like a lily, drenched and purified of every earthly stain; she lifted up her hands, clasped them, and sobbed:

"Forgive me, oh forgive me. I never meant to cause you pain. I never knew there could be love—like this. Oh my God! to think how I have made you suffer!"

Her grief hurt him far more than all his own. With his familiar and unselfish tenderness he took the small white hands in his, seeking only to comfort, to reassure her.

"There, there," said he, "don't worry, don't you fret. Don't think about it any more; we'll let it be as though it never ware. Miss 'Lis'beth, I am goin' now to see a woman die 'way down in Wild Cat Cove. Good-bye, Miss 'Lis'beth."

He still held both her hands clasped fast in his. She was weeping. Her sobs cut him like a knife.

"Miss 'Lis'beth," he said, "I have thought sometimes (it ware a foolish thought maybe) that with a chance I might 'a' been some worthy of your love—"

There was a step, the quivering new greens of the glad earth parted, and a man's face looked out upon them, a sinister, a scornful face, the face of his old enemy, Bledsoe Creighton.

For a moment no one spoke, but each face expressed the thoughts of him to whom the face belonged. The quick eye of Elisabeth read more in the quiet features of the herb-gatherer than Bledsoe Creighton saw. He had found him but a yielding, peaceful man; he knew nothing of the hidden fire, the deadly, daily fight, the strength gleaned from the blasted tree from which had swung the mutilated body of his father. Instinctively, scarce knowing what she did, the girl sprang between the two whose lives had crossed her own with such wild tragedy. And then, it seemed a moment, the herb doctor was master of himself again; he stooped and gathered up his little bunch of healing roots and, touching the brim of his hat with his slender, herb-stained finger, said:

"Good evenin', lady."

The quiet dignity was like a lash to the spirit of the fiery Creighton. He sprang forward, lifted his walking stick, and hissed between his teeth:

"You damned root-grabber, you—"

And as the cane descended the horror-stricken girl caught the glimmer of steel, a long flash of a glistening blade that rose and fell and buried itself in the quivering heart of Bledsoe Creighton. The next moment she was alone, the herb doctor had shot one glance over his shoulder, one hideous, horrified glance, and fled.

She was the only witness to the deed. She could have cleared him at a breath. There never was the faintest hint of prosecution. The very children were ready to swear to his gentle goodness ever, while the old and feeble, the broken and despairing, called upon their God to witness he was clear of the stain of murder. Yet he fled, fled forever.

They never saw nor heard of him again. Only to her, that one dear woman whom his soul had worshipped, to her was it given to know his most unhappy end.

She had turned back to her world, her "sand house" which his hand "had helped to prop." The world received her gladly, gave her back her vacant place in its affections.

And one night when the new year was all ready to be born and all the earth was full of God's peace and His benediction she sang before the footlights for a charmed thousand. But amid the glare and flush she saw one face, a faded, frightened, fearsome face, that stared at her a moment in mingled fear and admiration. The next moment it was gone. She knew him on the instant; but oh the change, the pitiful, sad change! It was as though his sin had traced its photograph in blood upon that once mild countenance. And always he was looking back in that guilty way that she had seen him last when fleeing from his crime.

That night she had a summons; it was the old, old story,—a man hurt, sent to see her in the hospital. She went at once. Something whispered it was he. She went in all her stage dress to receive his dying message.

Oh the shame of it, the pity! He lay upon a couch snow-white save for the blood that dripped incessantly from out a wound somewhere

on his body. As she bent to speak to him his closed eyes opened, and with a cry of horror she drew back. Could this be the gentle face that she had known, this guilty, fearful thing lying against the hospital pillow? She shuddered and drew back. He saw and understood.

"You fear me, lady?"

It was the voice that she remembered; but oh that changed, that fearful face!

"Come closer, lady," said the dying man. "I cannot harm you now. You see me laid so low, so low—"

He paused; a sob rose in his throat and choked him. And then the spirit of the woman wakened and, drawing near, she laid her soft, white hand upon his own, his that had helped to set her sand house on its fair foundations.

"How could you?" said she softly. "Oh, how could you run away? They never could have harmed you. I saw it all. I would have been your witness, the one to clear you—"

He lifted up his poor thin hand and motioned her to silence.

"To 'clear' me, lady? None but God could 'clear' me of my crime. I did not run from <u>them</u>, not from the law, but from myself, my guilty, murderous conscience. It ware this pursued me, would not let me sleep, but ever follered fast as I could travel. Listen, lady, for my time is short; but I've a message to the world this New Year's night. My heart was right before my God, but not my feller man. I loved my God, but hated him, my brother man. This was the fire that burned and blasted. And what ware <u>he</u> that I should soil my soul with him? a man I hated, that was all. It follered me, my crime; I met it everywhere

—in the crimes of other men, in little children's faces on the streets, for they ware innocent. He was his own avenger, him I killed. The law forgot me, let me pass; but murder set its mark upon my face. I saw you start to-night and pale. I knew you read it there. I could not look the world fair in the face again. Now, lady, go, go take my message: He who slays his feller man but slays himself, the best of manhood in him. No need of law and ropes and trees to mete out punishment; crime is its own dread punishment. He who kills his brother kills himself, the best of manhood in him."

She stood within the lighted doorway of that place of death listening while the New Year's bells pealed forth the Old Year's going. Across the east the gray began to shimmer in the sky; a quiet brooded over all the world; the city's heart was still, broken only by the bells' mad jubilance. Yet was it not the stillness of a perfect peace, despite the New Year's message sounding in the bells' glad paean? Crime and confusion only slept, they were not dead; man's arm was still against his fellow man, his heel upon his throat.

The singer drew her cloak about her slender form, and, lifting to the empty heavens her troubled, tear-wet face, she whispered to the slumbering night that message which the dead had left:

"He who kills his brother kills himself, the best of manhood in him."

And all the while the bells clanged on their message of good will. The watcher sighed and lifted up her soul to heaven:

"Grant us, O Christ, thy peace on earth, and gracious good will to each other!"

TAPPINE

Love that is born in the heart of a woman,—what a curious thing it is! It comes uncalled, unsought, and often unwanted. And oh, the ravages it makes! Now, there was Tappine,—who ever would have looked for love like that in the heart of a little mountain maiden? But then, love, like God, is no respecter of persons. Which is natural too, since God and love are one.

It was morning at Beersheba;[163] every cedar and pine astir with the good winds that sweep across the mountain, making the great plateau indeed a health-crown to the brave old Cumberlands.

Already the summer was astir, the guests arriving. The big hotel would soon open its doors to the nature-loving few who still haunt the beautiful stillnesses of Beersheba.

Over among the cottages, picturesque log palaces indeed, might be seen one set apart from the rest somewhat. Larger, handsomer, furnished with all the richness of a Southern ease-lover. The windows stood wide open, a banner of lace waving from each. In the piazza a hammock of gay colours was swinging, and in the hammock the young Mrs. Ennerly lay curled up among her silken pillows. She held a book, but Mrs. Ennerly was not reading. Her thoughts were far away among the purple distances of another mountain, where, in the first fond flush

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[163]The setting for this story is Beersheba Springs in Grundy County, a popular resort area in the 1880s and the summer home of Mary Noailles Murfree.

of girlhood, she had registered her one romance, her "one folly," she sometimes told herself; though she always told herself this with a sigh, as though the folly might have had its tender side, no less than its foolish.

Her one romance; life has but one romance, indeed; say what we may, do what we please to disprove it, there is, deep down in every heart, but the one truly warm spot upon which the soul will fondly fix itself at last, when youth and dreaming shall have given place to memory.

The lady in the hammock was thinking of her one bright spot, where the winds soughed softly in the autumn-time, and the brown leaves drifted down among the hollows of a hundred old graves, over on that other mountain where her poor little romance had begun and ended all in one bright, brief autumn.

Suddenly the dreamer lifted herself upon an elbow to listen; through the open door of the dining-room the voice of her husband's mother came, softly modulated, after the manner of well-bred gentlewomen, and in striking contrast with the joyously untrained voice of the visitor, with whom the lady was conversing.

"Yes, we are back early this year," the elder Mrs. Ennerly was saying. "Alice was really homesick for the mountain, and so we ran off before the season was fairly open. My son will not come for awhile, and then for just a little time; he is busy, always busy; so that we shall be quite alone, we two. How is your grandmother, this summer?" The younger Mrs. Ennerly leaned forward in the hammock:

"Mother! Oh, mother! Send Tappine to me."

Tappine did not wait to be sent; in another moment she stood framed by the dark doorway, a picture that had caught the artistic eye of the city woman many a previous summer. A slight, frail figure, full of lissome grace, and of the innocent ease that belies the knowledge of posing. She wore a gown of dark blue cotton that brought out with peculiar emphasis the fair pinkish complexion, always found among the very young girls of the mountains, and the bright, loose waves of hair that fell about the slight, evenly sloped shoulders.

Her eyes were blue, darkly, richly blue, with lashes that fell like a fringe of lace upon the softly babyish cheek. Yet despite her youth, and the pink and white of the childlike complexion, there was that about her, in the flash of the eye, the curve of the thin, well-cut lip, that bore evidence of strength, which might, under stress of necessity, leap into life.

The blue eyes danced with undisguised delight as they rested upon the figure in the hammock. Mrs. Ennerly extended a jewelled hand: "Tappine, I had begun to believe you had really forgotten that I was here."

There was that in the voice, that tone of real pleasure, that caused the older woman, listening, to wonder again, as she had so many times wondered, at the strange affection that had sprung up between these two whom fate had seemingly set as far apart as fate well could do. She had told herself more than once that it was the child's beauty—for Tappine was undeniably pretty—and a sort of sympathy for her surroundings that had won the affection of her daughter-in-law. Again she had told herself that it was lack of company that had brought her

daughter to seek the girl for a companion in her tramps through the woods. But as the season advanced and there was no lack of company, had she chosen to have it, and the lady still chose Tappine in preference to any of the visitors that thronged the hotel, the good woman ceased to wonder, and accepted the odd friendship as one of her daughter's freaks, that she would tire of by and by.

As for Tappine, she recognised nothing odd in the friendship; the mountaineer does not look for distinctions, does not see them. The girl stood framed in by the old dark door until the lady in the hammock extended her hand. At that she stepped quickly forward and took the soft bejewelled hand between her own sun-browned palms.

"I say 'forgot,'" she laughed; "as though I ain't been honin' ter git here ever sence the stage horn blowed fur Beersheby yistiddy. But granny took a suddint notion ter be spinnin' an' thar ware no wool for bats in the house, so I ware obleeged ter go over ter Alt'mont after some. Becase when granny goes to spinnin'—well! she air a-goin', that's all. I rid like a Injun all the way, in hopes ter git back in time ter come over here las' night. But when I got home granny had a mis'ry in her side an' wouldn't be lef' alone, lest she might die an nobody ever know it. This mornin'—"

Tappine's pretty face broke into dimples, which the handsome lady was quick to interpret:

"This morning you came, anyhow? In defiance of 'bats' and 'mis'ries;' is that it? Well, draw up that footstool there, and tell me all about yourself. How is Ben? And are there any new flirtations? And is Jeff behaving himself after his usual bearish fashion? Tappine, you are blushing; your pink ears tell me so."

In the blue eyes something glittered with suspicious brightness before the fringed lids veiled their secret.

"Now, Mis' En'ly," the slow voice was lifted in protest, "you know Jeff air jest allers a-makin' believe he air mad about the boys, Ben Cary an' them, a-comin' ter see me. Las' week he actually got fightin' mad with Nate Beene fur axin' of me ter dance with him at the infare down in Dark Holler, as old Mis' Beene give ter her daughter Judy, as got married. Nate's mail-carrier acrost the mount'n, you know. Well, them two had a tolerable tussle, an' Nate he jest lit in an' whipped Jeff plumb good fashion. I liked ter 'a' kilt myse'f laughin', it ware so comical, an' so onexpected to Jeff, who air mostly give ter doin' the whippin' his own se'f. An' Jeff he got that mad he sent Nate word he'd meet him in the Hollow some o' these days an' wallop him until his folks couldn't tell which ware man and which were mail-sack. An' Jeff air good to do it, ef he can; you rickerlict Jeff can be toler'ble catawampus in his temper now'n then."

"I recollect that he never was worth one good, honest thought from you, Tappine," was the reply; "and I had hoped that you would have found it out for yourself by this time, and would have been ready to give your heart to good, honest Ben, who really loves you. As for Jeff, he is just a cross-grained, jealous, ne'er-do-well—"

"Now, Mis' En'ly, you never would give Jeff jestice. He's a sight better than you think, an' I shouldn't wonder ef I ware ter blame fur most of we-uns' little fracases anyhows. You-uns can't jedge him like me as have lived nigh him allers."

"But—"

The argument was promptly brought to an end by a dexterous move on Tappine's part.

"Mis' En'ly," said she, "the mount'n air jest full o' laurel, an' the trailin' arbutus ain't nigh all gone. I allowed maybe you'uns 'ud like ter take a walk."

Evidently the mountain girl understood the weaknesses of her city friend, and indeed she well might, since she had trailed the mountain with the great lady since a little girl in short frocks, hunting for the forest treasures, first of flowers, later of nuts and the bright leaves of the autumn. Tappine had not misjudged the fascination of the familiar paths. In a short time Mrs. Ennerly had exchanged her house gown for a short, dark walking-dress, and was deep in the heart of the woods with Tappine.

"We will go down the Backbone and take a peep into Dark Hollow," said the lady, "and then we will climb back up the bluff and go over to Ben's house and give the order for the summer wood. Is that your grandmother calling, Tappine?"

They were passing a little low, picturesque cabin, half hidden under a mass of greening vines, gourds, and jack beans. An old woman stood in the door, shading her eyes with her gaunt, brown hand and calling shrilly to the girl too absorbed in her companion to hear the querulous, well-known voice.

"Tappiny! Tappiny, I say! Thar ain't no meal in the barr'l; some-un'll be obleeged ter go ter mill afore long."

Tappiny! Was it possible to twist that name, with its own pretty music, into such a hideous sound? Tappiny! The girl herself rebelled.

"Pears like," she declared, when, after a friendly word to the old woman, the two passed on, "pears like I could put up with granny's tormentin's a sight better ef she would call me 'Tappine,' or else 'Teen,' like Jeff an' the rest calls me. I just hate that thar 'Tappiny.' Hush! some un's comin' down the Backbone, Mis' En'ly."

They stood upon that little narrow steep, with its curious distortions and contortions, long and steep and dangerous, rising like a blank wall, with rigid, sharp sides, between the two valleys, to which the mountaineers have given the name of Backbone. On one hand lay the mythical lowland known as the "Gulch," on the other, deep down, and full of awesome glooms, and rank, even at midday, with the shadows, nestled the Hollow, Dark Hollow indeed, as the mountaineers had named it. What a spot for a suicide; what a dangerous, deadly spot for a leap into eternity, and what a spot for a horse travelling adown that steep incline with the one narrow broken path before, and certain death on either side in case of a misstep, or a slip over the ragged, rock-ribbed steep!

The horseman coming down the steep at that moment had evidently no fear of the Backbone; the two women crowded close to the bluff's edge as the sound of hoof-beats, uneven, careless, indifferent alike of danger or of strangers, came nearer and nearer. A moment more, and the horse, a gallant gray, trotted leisurely into the open highway. The rider was a young man, stalwart and straight as an Indian. He sat his steed, too, with something of the easy abandon of the man of the plains. He wore neither coat nor vest, and his feet and lower limbs were encased in long leathern riding-boots as a precaution against the mountain

streams through which his route would carry him. For the rider was neither more nor less than Jeff Mabry, the ne'er-do-well of the neighbourhood, who had been so fortunate as to win the heart of Tappine, the mountain belle.

Jeff was going hunting, evidently, for a rifle was slung across the saddle bow, and a cartridge-belt was tightly buckled about his waist. As the familiar, graceful figure became silhouetted against the bright blue of the sky that seemed to almost rim the dangerous steep, a flush mounted to the girl's cheek. Instantly Tappine was the coquette, ready to almost repudiate the acquaintance with the man whose praises her nimble tongue had but a moment before delighted to sound. As the gray horse trotted nearer, the attitude of the girl changed, the scarlet of the pretty face gave place to a half pallor; the coquetry was lost in the anxiety with which she awaited the action of her capricious lover.

Was he still jealous? Tappine was but human, after all, and so long as Jeff allowed this flame of his adoration to blaze before her eyes, just so long was she ready to add fuel to its fire.

But to-day she felt keenly anxious that he should be friendly, should appear well in the eyes of the woman who had so often, and so strongly, condemned him.

But a glance at the sullen, boyish face convinced her that her hopes were doomed to their usual disappointment. She drew farther back, to the very edge of the bluff, as he passed her with a scowl and a careless "Howdy, Teen," together with a sullen little nod at her companion, whom he at once recognised as "the fine lady from the valley as Teen have took up with."

There were tears in Tappine's eyes when the gray horse trotted out of sight down the Backbone. Mrs. Ennerly laughed softly:

"Is he jealous of me, Tappine?" she asked. "Is he afraid I shall run away with you some day,—spirit you off the mountain, and so away from his uncanny influence? Or is it just the ugly, bearish nature of the man that renders him so uncivilised? Take care, Tappine, it isn't a pretty promise you are holding out to your life, in consenting to marry Jeff Mabry."

"Now, Mrs. En'ly," the girl immediately assumed the defensive again; "you-uns mustn't lay it up ag'inst Jeff fur not speakin' more friendly. He air just mad at me, an' he done that ter spite me. He ain't got any grudge ag'inst you-uns."

The lady stopped and placed a hand upon the girl's arm, firmly: "Tappine," said she, "I am a woman of the world, and I know men as well as women. The man who treats his sweetheart whom he hopes to win, as that boy treats you, will be to the wife he has <u>won</u>, a brute. I shouldn't allow him to trifle with me a moment longer, were I you, and I shouldn't love him either, were I in your place."

The girl tossed her bright head and broke into a laugh, a loud ringing laugh, which, despite the music of it, was lacking in that more delightful quality, mirth.

"Now, Mis' En'ly," said she, "jest ter listen at you-uns! A woman can't holp who she loves, and she can't allers love as she knows ter be wise an' right. Why, she might tell herse'f she ware a fool till she drapped dead, an' still go right on lovin' foolish, plumb inter eternity. That's woman natur, I know <u>that</u> much, Mis' En'ly, an'

I ain't no 'woman of the world' neither, an' I don't know so pow'ful much about men, but I know that much o' women. They can't allers love ter suit the'rse'ves, an' mighty seldom ter suit the balance o' the world."

The worldly-wise woman was silent. "Women can't always love to suit themselves." She had no philosophy with which to argue the too sad truth of the mountain girl's dearly acquired wisdom.

Farther down the mountain, where the great distortion inclines to the level again, the narrow road separated into two forks, one leading down into the dismal fastness of Dark Hollow, the other sloping gently into a little tilled enclosure, in the centre of which stood a cabin of new-hewn logs. The sunshine lay in bright, golden patches upon the doorsteps, and full in the midst of the brightness a man was sitting, busily at work upon some diminutive bit of carpentry that was engaging the attention of two children pressing as close to the knees of the young carpenter as the brisk playing of a handsaw would permit. It was a pleasant face, beaming with honest and surprised delight, that was lifted in response to Mrs. Ennerly's call. He rose at once and strode briskly forward, leaving his unfinished work for the youngsters to enjoy after their own ideas.

"Waal, now, if this air not a surprise, I'll be blessed!" he exclaimed, with the unaffected sincerity of the mountaineer, who recognises distinctions neither of class nor of wealth. "Howdy-do, Mis' En'ly, an' Teen too; waal, waal, waal. I hope you-uns air well, Mis' En'ly. No'm, I ain't fitten ter shake hands; the chillen got after me ter make 'em a wagin; they're my sister Emily's chillen, an'

I have been a-tinkerin' on that wagin till my hands air that rough an' splintery they ain't fitten to be shook. But I'm monstrous glad to see you back to Beersheby, I sholy am. I heeard night befo' last you-uns ware on the way, an' I laid off in my mind ter go by ter-night and ax Teen to go over thar with me, an' find out ef you wanted the wood same as common. I flung one load over anyhows, ter begin on. I reckin it's all right. I knowed Teen would be willin' ter go, because Teen ain't never been knowed ter refuse ter go ter Beersheby yit, after it air known you-uns' house air open."

He laughed and looked at the girl, waiting for her to admit the pleasant charge. But Tappine was not listening. Her glance was fixed upon the Hollow, with its deep and echoless shadows, its mysterious glooms and mist-shrouded paths into which her lover had ridden away with a careless word and an angry heart. "Women can't love to suit themselves." Alas! poor Tappine, hers had been a wisdom born of that most bitter teacher, experience.

It was not till Ben put his hint into a plain request that Tappine came back to a realisation of what he was saying.

"Will you-uns walk over to Beersheby ter-night, Teen? I want ter be sartain Mis' En'ly found the house all right, as it ware lef' ter my care."

Tappine hesitated; she had that moment resolved that she would leave off teasing Jeff by her flirtations, and meet the sensitive, jealous lover upon his own terms. Jeff was reasonable enough, she considered, when she didn't "vex him with her foolishness." Which meant that Jeff was so wholly <u>unreasonable</u> as to demand the entire

allegiance of his sweetheart. Ben was waiting for her answer, however, and Mrs. Ennerly was watching. She shook off her sudden, unspoken subjection, and replied with careless indifference:

"Yes, I can go, I reckin, ef my granny don't need me."

It was a week later that Mrs. Ennerly came over to the cabin to challenge the girl for a tramp through the forest. Tappine was leaning upon the low palings of the gate, her long, loose hair floating lightly in the brisk breeze of the mountain summer, her bare, brown arms crossed upon the wooden palings, her eyes following the fast receding outlines of a horse and rider disappearing down the road in the mist of the morning.

Something bright—and bitter—shone in the blue eyes for a moment, and trickled slowly down, to fall unchallenged upon the bare, brown arms. The instant horse and rider disappeared, the bright head of the watcher dropped upon the folded arms, and Tappine burst into tears.

"Tappine! Tappine!" It was the soft voice of the well-bred "woman of the world," who "understood men," and who understood so poorly the tender, human heart of woman.

"Tappine, what a little goose you are. Leave off your crying and come away to the woods with me. Is it another quarrel, or is it that granny's demands are too many this morning?"

Tappine lifted her head a moment and pointed down the long, zigzag road to the Backbone.

"It's all over for true this time," said she. "Yonder goes Jeff, ridin' out o' my life, fur ever. He got mad becase Ben fetched me over

ter you-uns' house last week, an' he allowed—oh, Mis' En'ly, he allowed as how I might—go—to—the—devil."

"Tappiny! You Tappiny, I say!" The shrill voice of the old grandmother came from the cabin door. "The dinner's ter bile, Tappiny; stir yer stumps, child, stir yer stumps."

Clearly there could be no walk that day. Mrs. Ennerly said good-bye, and Tappine took her sore little heart into the old cabin, and set about her humble task of preparing the midday meal. And all day the sunshine fell in golden patches about the cabin door, shooting long, shimmering rays far into the room, as though to woo her from her grief. But Tappine did not see the brightness. For her there were only shadows, and premonitions of evil about to fall upon the little life that had been scarcely more than a bird's light life, flitting in and out among the shine and shades of the mountain.

Ben dropped in after dinner to tell her of the great times they were to have at a protracted meeting near by, and to ask her to go "along of him."

But Tappine sighed, and allowed she couldn't go, there was so much to do at home. So poor Ben said good-bye long before he was ready to go, because he saw that Tappine was not listening to him, or thinking of him in the least. But at sunset Ben came galloping back on his fiery brown mare, and, throwing the bridle-reins over the little low fence paling, which the gallant little mare must have long since learned to regard as her proper hitching-place, went dashing into the cabin where Tappine sat at her spinning-wheel, with such a tale of horror upon his lips as sent the hot blood freezing back to the girl's

heart while she listened. And he had scarcely finished his story before Tappine was speeding away across the mountain to Beersheba, her hair damp with the evening dews, her lips white and dry, her throat aching with the strange, wild news she carried. She burst into the little sitting-room, where Mrs. Ennerly, sitting among the twilight glooms, busy with her thoughts and fancies, rose impulsively at the first sound of the girl's voice, hoarse and broken as she had never heard it.

"Mis' En'ly! Oh, Mis' En'ly, he air gone. Jeff air gone; he have kilt Nate Beene, the mail rider, an' have run away, an' they air trackin' of him with dogs—"

She fell forward into the extended arms of the strange, beautiful woman, in whose heart the innocent, warm-souled girl of the hills had made for herself a place.

Later the story was told again, by Ben, while Tappine lay among the silken pillows of Mrs. Ennerly's own couch; and listening, Tappine's were not the only tears shed for sorrow's sake.

They had found the mail-carrier where the river wound like a sluggish snake, among the laurel brakes of Dark Hollow. A bullet from Jeff's own rifle was in his brain, and Jeff had ridden straight down to the ford, turned his horse loose, and struck out, they said, straight for the mountains.

She never saw him again, poor Tappine, for he never returned; and after awhile she tried to persuade herself that he was dead. "Wandered away, maybe, somewhars, an' fell off a bluff an' ware kilt," she told herself, "or else some un maybe have murdered of him." Yet she never forgot to be thankful that he escaped the dogs, the track-hounds with which they had set out to hunt him.

The summer waned, the brown leaves were drifting down to fill the deeper hollows of the wood, and one morning Tappine went over to the cottage at Beersheba. For with the coming of the brown autumn Mrs. Ennerly would be going. Tappine found the lady with her couch drawn up before the fire, for the air was chilly already.

They talked of many things, quietly at first, for the lady so well versed in the affairs of the world knew enough of the heart to understand that its griefs are sacred and are jealously guarded even in the hearts of the humblest.

Suddenly Mrs. Ennerly reached her hand and placed it upon Tappine's gently.

"Tappine," said she, "hadn't you better marry Ben? He is such a good fellow, and would count it all joy just to be allowed to walk by your side, and to care for you. You are young, Tappine, and you've no idea what a sombre thing life is for a woman alone, and unloved. You will feel the loneliness of it as you grow older, and will yearn for the companionship of human sympathy and affection. Couldn't you give Ben the joy of caring for you, Tappine?"

The brown fingers closed with spasmodic strength about the white bejewelled ones. The words had cut like a knife into the wounded heart.

"I couldn't do that, Mis' En'ly," said Tappine. "I couldn't git my own consent ter so harm a man as never harmed me, but jest only loved me. I couldn't do it nohows. Pears like it would in an' about break my heart ter look acrost the table ever' mornin' fur a face I love an' find another face thar. An' ter wake up in the night a-dreamin'

it may be of the arms I love, an' daresn't cry out with the pain of disapp'intment even; fur fear o' troublin' him, the man as loves me, an' I don't love. I couldn't bear it nohows. Pears like 'twould be more lonesomer than 'twould be ter set alone all yer life, with the free right ter think o' him yer love, an' ter sob it ter yer pillow at night, in the dark, an' know it air no sin, because thar be no unloved husband lyin' next of you. Pears like 'twould be more comfortin', jest ter make a sort o' friend o' sorrer. Pears like I'd feel myself a awful coward, jest to marry a man fur fear o' livin' lonesome all my days, an' maybe wantin' of a home an' sech."

The fine lady among the cushions held her book before her face, upon the pretty rounded outlines of which the firelight had been playing pleasantly. As Tappine's low voice died into silence, the book slipped from the slender fingers, and Mrs. Ennerly rose with the quick, impulsive movement of a child. Tappine unconsciously rose at the same time. The lady placed a hand upon either shoulder of the slight figure before her, heavily, bearing the girl down to her knees before the couch upon which she herself dropped wearily among her cushions, and, her hands still pressing the girl's shoulders, began to talk. She talked rapidly, as though afraid she should repent the confidence; her eyes sparkling the while, and her throat, where the lace fell away from it, shining white and polished as marble.

"Tappine," she said, "I am a woman of almost another world than yours. It is impossible we should look at life from the same standpoint, and to some it would seem almost unnatural that we should ever have crossed each other's lives in this friendly, altogether

unconventional way. Yet women are women, or woman is woman, the world over, and possessed of woman's weakness. In this are they alike: every woman has hidden in her heart a grave; under lace or homespun it makes no difference; the grave is there. Not one but has it. Some sow the spot with deeds of charity, which spring into a sort of blooming after awhile, which serves to hide the grave's unsightly outlines. Some plow it down, level and batter it smooth with the shovel of folly, hoping to hide it from the world's eye. Some go grandly on, bearing their grave with them, scorning disguise and make believe content. They do God's work; do it grandly, bravely; hearing his voice above the sounding of the hollow tombs. Yet, the grave yawns; the soul sorrows,—Tappine! Tappine!—"

She withdrew her hands from the girl's shoulders, and dropping back upon the couch, buried her face among the silken cushions.

To the ignorant, sorrow-stricken girl watching her, with undisguised surprise, there was something exquisitely sacred in the sudden abandon of grief. She understood so well what sorrow meant; she understood so well that the grave in the lady's heart was open to her sympathetic confidence. Bending over the prostate figure, she softly stroked the bright waves of her hair lying against the fair temples; a caress in every stroke of the brown fingers.

"Mis' En'ly," the low voice was full of its own natural healing, "I reckin I ought not ter say it, but it somehow helps me mightily ter know as how you-uns have suffered an' been sorrowful, too."

At this reference to her secret, Mrs. Ennerly, in the full tide of the confidence for which her heart had so long hungered, drew the

girl to a seat beside her, and, covering the brown hands with her jewelled fingers, said:

"You are a brave girl, Tappine,—a brave girl. I am a coward. I haven't so much as the right to nurse my sorrow and 'make a friend' of it; for I am one of those who wake to find the unloved arms about them, and dare not cry out for fear of hurting him,—my husband.

"Yet, once (every woman has her once), I loved a man, oh, so dearly! A man whose very voice made heaven in my life. I met him in the mountains,—not here; no matter where, we met but that one brief autumn-time. Yet those two short months make all the summer of my life's little love. We used to scour the mountain, he and I, horseback, in the golden autumn afternoons. Sometimes we stopped to rest and ramble among the graves of a little old, old graveyard among the mountains, where the dead for more than half a century had slept along the mountain's side. Long abandoned as a burying-ground, the quaint old tombs held charms, fascinations, that I could not describe to you. It was our favourite resort; that quaint, deserted burying-ground.

"One evening, passing the place at sunset, we discovered that some one was being buried there; the sound of voices, and low, suppressed sobs, first warned us we were close upon a funeral procession.

"Full of curiosity, we waited until the train, following their pathetic burden, had passed in among the tombs; then we dismounted and followed, determined to witness the interment.

"It was two babies, little new-born twins, they were laying away to sleep among all that array of old, old dead. Alas! the sadness of it,—the pity! And that graveyard,—that lonely little resting-place

among the pines and soughing cedars! I buried my heart there, my youth; all of me that was worth the living I left dead there in that humble little spot among the ancient dead and the new-born babes. I felt it dying while the acorns dropped among the gray tombs; and the leaves, amber and scarlet, and gay purple, went drifting down to fill the hollows of the sunken mounds. Did he know? Did he dream I loved him? Did he understand? Did the dead there understand what I had left with them when I rode away in the scarlet sunset?"

She had forgotten the girl at her side; she was communing with her own heart, as she had communed all the lonely years in silence.

"Did he know my heart broke, I wonder, while he told me in that slow, tortuous way of his approaching marriage? Was it nothing to him that the scarlet and amber of my life were dying like the tints upon the autumn? Did he dream I loved him more than God? Did he understand that in the telling of his story, a grave yawned between us, deeper, more real than those ancient, dust-filled hollows at our feet?

"When he lifted me back to my horse, I caught one glimpse of his face: a wild joy thrilled through me. The devil tempted me, Tappine. Did he love her,—that other one who was soon to be his wife? His hand on mine lay half a second, burning, throbbing; one word from me,—and then I put my devil from me, Tappine: I laughed, spoke a careless word of congratulations, mounted, and rode with him away through the scarlet evening,—away into the sombre future. It is all right, child; don't weep so. Sorrow has its compensation, ever: mine has been that I did not speak the word that would have made my happiness, and made her whom he married other than his wife. Throw back the shutter, Teen, and let the light in, child. We've been too long among these graves."

No more was said, ever; from that time the grave in the beautiful woman's heart was closed indeed. To Tappine the confidence was something too sacred, almost, to remember,—a confidence wrung from despair. While for the older woman, the unburdening of her heart had been as a gentle shower to a dry and thirsty land; from henceforth her sorrow was a memory, fair and fond and sacred, rather than a tomb. True, she did not forget the pain of it, but it was a chastened sorrow, something to be remembered at quiet evening times, when peace and gentle summer lay upon the world. And thus did she remember.

And sometimes there came to her fancies, vague and beautiful, that on that other mountain, where her dream was born and perished, she was not forgotten; sometimes, in the quiet evenings, she loved to think of him as lingering in the dewy dusk about the little rural burying-ground, with perhaps a sigh for memory.

But for Tappine, sorrow had not learned to "sob itself to sleep." Could she have known her lover dead, she would have felt less keenly the pain of loving. But always she held a vision of him as of one fleeing, fleeing, for ever fleeing from his pursuers; the bloodhounds upon his track, danger in every bush and brake and gorge. At night she wakened to hear, as part of her troubled and uneasy slumber, the deep, relentless baying of the dogs, and the far-away clatter of hoofs, still fleeing,—fleeing. One morning Ben rode over in hot haste; again the brown mare stood at the gate, the lines tossed lightly over the low palings, while Ben stopped to say a word in low tones to the old grandmother, carding her bats under the crisping leaves that still hung from the eaves of the little porch.

Tappine, the frail body but a shadow among the deeper shadows of the room, sat back among the glooms of the kitchen, her head resting against the spokes of the idle wheel, where her hand had been wont to make gay music in the old glad days of summer.

She lifted her face; an eager, startled look sprang to her eyes as her quick ear caught a carefully spoken name. The next moment she was at Ben's side, the old fires in her eyes and in her heart.

"What is the word you-uns have brought, Ben Cary?" she demanded. "What is the word you have brought of Jeff?"

Her tone forbade parleying, or subterfuge of any kind. He told her the truth at once.

"Jeff air not run away, Teen," said he. "Or leastways they have tracked him to his hidin'-place. He air hid out in a cabin over yander on Collins River—"

Slowly the last drop of blood left her face; her eyes seemed to burn into him, like coals of fire. He hesitated, but she lifted her hand in majestic command.

"Go on," said she, "go on."

"Well, Teen, I don't know as I ought to tell you, but Jeff have sent word to his folks that he could make out to git away now, since the stir for him air over some, ef he had a horse. But the man he sent the word by,—it ware Jeff's own blood kin, too,—he fetched the word to the sheriff 'stead o' to Jeff's folks, becase thar's a tolerable big reward out fur Jeff fur killin' of the mail-kerrier. I heeard the men talkin' at the tanyard as I come by, and the men allowed as the sheriff would git here from Altamount long befo' the old 'oman, Jeff's mammy,

got the word o' his wantin' of a horse. Though to be sure it air a mighty short little cut through to the cabin whar Jeff air in hidin'; ef thar ware some one to warn him. It air that old cabin as they useter hold meetin' in till Collins River et the foundation out; jest across the foot-bridge, nigh the old trail. What air you-uns a-goin' ter do, Teen?"

She had pushed past him, and stood a moment in the cabin door, her eyes aflame, her hand lifted.

"Stand out of my way, Ben Cary," she commanded. "Stand out o' my way! Only one word wanted fur a man as be hunted and hounded ter his death, an' you-uns refuse to speak it. I'd hate ter call myse'f a man, an' be you-uns. Stand out o' my way! I ain't got any time to waste on sech as you be."

Mechanically he moved aside. To him there was something regal in her bearing. A protest came from another quarter, however; the old grandmother planted herself in her path.

"Whar air you a-goin' of, Teen?" she demanded. "It air aginst the laws of the State to holp sech as be runnin' away from jestice. Do you-uns go back in the house, Teen."

Alas! the days of blind obedience were gone.

"Stand out o' the way, granny," said the girl. "This air no time for foolishness."

She turned her back upon the shadows of the house that had indeed been a dwelling-place of shadows for her; her face to the light, and to danger, which was light too, since it was danger incurred for love's sake. The two watched her silently from the little brown porch.

Her head made a golden target for the sun's rays as she stood a moment at the gate, and, with a quick, graceful movement, peculiar to the women of the hills, she slipped the bridle-reins from the low palings and tossed them over the brown mare's head. A moment, and she was in the saddle, dexterously twisting the lines into a lash. A stinging blow fell between the ears of the sensitive, half-broken steed, that sent her bounding forward at a rate that must have unseated any but the most fearless of riders. Before the two upon the porch could fully understand her meaning, the sharp, reverberating sound of hurrying hoof-beats came back to them from the road down which the fearless rescuer had disappeared in a cloud of yellow dust.

She had not heard the startled shout of the mare's owner, imploring her not to strike the animal.

"Don't hit her! Don't hit the mare, Teen! She'll plumb break your neck if you hit her!"

But Teen was gone; the mare had shot from the blow dealt her like a ball from a rifle. As the last glimpse of horse and rider vanished, the old woman turned to Ben.

"Go after her!" she shrilled into his startled ears. "Go after her! Ef the mare don't break her neck, the sheriff'll arrest her and fetch her ter jail. Go! Run, I tell you! Don't stand thar like a fool an' let my gran'chile be killed."

Breathless and spent, he reached the forks of the road where she must come down the Backbone into the Hollow, beyond which stood the forsaken meeting-house in which the fugitive had taken a temporary refuge. Not once had his ear lost the sound of those hurrying

hoof-beats; he could hear them now, as he stood at the crossing to wait for her; away up, high above him, in the air, as it were; those quick, sharp, unerring beats, in even gallop. The mare had not once broken her gait; he remembered that, even in the midst of his fright for the gallant rider, riding at that moment along the narrow, dangerous ledge of the Backbone,—that little wall-like comb that divided two almost impenetrable gulches.

Nearer came the hoof-beats, and nearer; a moment, and clean-cut, an exquisite silhouette against the bright blue of the sky, her hair a banner of floating gold, the mare a chiselling of gleaming bronze, Tappine dashed into view along the Backbone. He watched, breathless and admiring, at the foot of the road where it inclined to the level again.

"It's a God's mercy ef the mare don't kill her befo' she ever gits off o' that thar ridge," he murmured, as the brave beast bore gallantly down, without a swerve or break, towards the forks at the foot of the great ridge. Her courage, the boundless heroism of her love, was to Ben something sublime, grand; something a man might fall down and worship.

"Lord! if I could win a woman like that, ter love me like that—"

The mare was galloping straight on, down the steep incline, as evenly as across the velvety cove-lands; a moment more and she stood upon the narrowest ledge of all that narrow wall. That passed, and Tappine might hope for life. Suddenly, far down the Hollow, a shot rang out; some careless hunter, perhaps, on the trail of a fox. But

Ben, watching the flying steed dashing along the narrow ledge, gave vent to a sudden startled cry of horror. For one instant the brown mare seemed to literally stand on air, as she lifted herself in one desperate leap before she went crashing down the bluff's side, through brake and bush, carrying her dauntless rider to her death.

THE LIGHT OF LIBERTY

"Surrender!"

The command cut the air like a knife. Surrender! Who could understand what that word meant to the man standing like a beast at bay upon the verge of the precipice, sheer, blank wall overlooking the wildest and most turbulent of all Tennessee rivers, the Caney Fork?[164]

Three breathless days and nights he had been chased by the sheriff's posse. Three days and nights through tangles, wild-grape and laurel and cane-brake, throwing the dogs off the scent now and then by taking to the water nights, only to find at daybreak that they had found the trail again; until at last they had chased him back to the river, the bluff, the great sheer precipice, where they held him—trapped,

He had run like a deer and doubled like a fox, with the baying in his ears, until he told himself he must hear it forever, that long, resounding, half-jubilant, half-pathetic rise and fall of sound telling of the trail, hot and sure and deadly. He knew the sound. What mountain boy does not? He had heard it many times as he chased the startled doe to cover. He knew what lay at the end of it, always: it was—death.

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[164]The setting for this tale is vague; the Caney Fork River is mentioned, but it winds through Middle Tennessee. W.A.D. apparently felt no need to pinpoint this adventure specifically as she does in her other stories, perhaps because the moral expressed in this tale is much stronger than in any of her other tales, and takes precedence over all other elements such as character and setting.

"Surrender!"

The fugitive grasped the bough of sturdy laurel at his side, and cast a quick, inquiring glance at the stream below the bluff. It was green almost to blackness. Farther up it was a boiling white froth where it lashed and tore itself among the sharply jutting rocks. Behind him stood five armed men and two gaunt hounds, with heads hanging, tongues lolling, and great ears touching their thin, fleet legs.

Within ten feet of the fugitive one man stood apart from the rest. It was the sheriff, and he had known this boy he was chasing all the young fellow's life; known him and loved him as his own, even while he stood holding him covered with his pistol and demanding his surrender. So close was the weapon that the click of the trigger as the officer cocked it sang a startling menace in his ears.

"Come, Jim," said the sheriff, "surrender. I'd hate mightily to have to shoot. Better go peaceable. Will you?"

The man ground his teeth, and,—

"No! by heaven, never! Not with that (and he glanced again at the deep, dark current) in reach."

He made one short, quick movement toward the bluff's edge, when—crack! the sheriff sent a ball singing within an inch of his head.

He halted, groaned, and threw up his hands. There was nothing else to do. While the posse advanced to take him he looked across the stream toward the friendly covert of tangled laurel and wild spruce:

"Ef I c'u'd a-retched that," said he, "God hisself couldn't a-found me." And with a submission born of utter defeat he extended his wrists for the handcuffs. The click of iron as the lock was clamped

announced to the waiting posse that at last Jim Hardeman, wanted for the murder of Joe Anderson, had been captured.

He was but a boy. The down was not yet strong upon his lips, and the flesh had not lost the delicate pink of boyhood. The defiance in his eyes was not that of the criminal, careless of the metings of justice, but more the recklessness of youth, defiant of the ills of fortune and ignorant of the deadliness of despair. Hope was not yet dead in him, and he knew nothing of the fatal helplessness of environment.

"He ain't a bad lot, Jim ain't," the sheriff told two of his men as they rode in the rear of their prisoner down the mountain. "He's bore a good name for bein' clever and obligin' and respectful to his elders, always. A little wild, but not bad, not give to drinkin', and honest as the daylight. He's got a temper like the devil, and that's the very worst of Jim Hardeman. It was that devil of a temper got him into this; and I'm proper sorry for him. I hated like fury to arrest him. But duty air duty, you know."

It was true: Jim was not "bad," albeit a murderer. The story of the murderers who reach the state prison is pretty much the same. "Not a bad lot," the officials will tell you; "a much better class than the larceny and other prisoners." Victims to passion, to drink, whose deed was done when blinded by rage, or by liquor; done in a single moment. A lifetime is too short to undo the moment's work. With imprisonment comes grief, remorse, but not viciousness. They are easily controlled. It is the little thieves who must have the lash. No, Hardeman was not bad. Even in his fatal crime there was a touch of something to be admired.

Consider: humanity must not be considered as a whole. Heredity and environment play equal parts in the great drama, with the weights, if there be weights, about the neck of environment.

Consider: Jim was young; ignorant save in nature's knowledge; wild as the buck he chased upon his native mountains, and as free, loving the great encompassing fastnesses as well; of a class to whom the laws of society, like the civil laws, are well-nigh a dead letter; bred, born and triumphing in the broad, self-assertive creed of the mountaineers, that Honesty is Justice, and Right is Law; and believing himself armed with both, he had, not unnaturally, fallen upon evil. And notwithstanding the fact that "half the mountain" came down to testify as to his "quietness," his "sociableness," and general good character, Jim Hardeman was sentenced for life.

It wouldn't have been half so hard to die, to die and be done with it. It was this lying like a dog in leash, year in, year out, that drove him mad. Nothing to wait for but death; nothing to look forward to but the grave. Yet he kept himself in hand until the time came to tell his wife and boy good-bye. Then he broke down. He was crying when he took her head between his palms and held it against his breast so that she might not see his tears.

"Don't you fret," said he, essaying the comforter; "don't you fret now, Zalea," taking the name he had loved to call her by, because, he declared, she "ware more like the pink-and-white azalea blossom when it fills the bluff in springtime than she ware like mortal maid or woman." "Don't you fret nor worry. Ef I'd listened ter you-uns I wouldn't be leavin' you an' little Jim this day. You jest go back home

ter yer folks a spell, an' some night, ef ye hear a woodpecker tappin' on the roof, don't ye be skeered, but jest be ready ter travel. For I ain't give up ter spen' my days in no prison. No, my God! that I ain't!"

He lifted his clenched hands above his head, and shook them heavenward defiantly. When he looked again she was gone, and the sheriff stood at his side, with the manacles, waiting.

"Yer don't need them," said Jim, doggedly.

"Put your hands out, boy. I don't intend to let you make me shoot you," said the officer, in a voice that brought Jim's tears to the surface again.

The story of his crime, as it came out at the trial had been a brief one. As he said, had he listened to his wife, things would have been different with him. Zalea was always "up against fire-arms," and had always predicted harm to come from those "caperin's over the mountain for days an' days, with Bob Jeffreys an' Joe Anderson, a-huntin' of deer an' sich."

Indeed, Zalea's opposition to his hunting began to grow tiresome. Her persistence and insistence aroused his temper at last, and engendered that opposition to home slavery which is so fatally irksome to some natures. Rather than have words about it, Jim left home the morning of the tragedy before his wife was awake. He glanced at her lying asleep, the boy's pink cheek resting against her throat, as he passed the bed. How pretty they looked! They might both have passed for children, as they lay with their pink-and-white faces nestled against the coarse, white pillow. He was strongly tempted to kiss the delicate red girl-lips, but a fear of her opposition to his going when

his heart was quite set upon it, held him back. "She'd up an' set right down on it," he told himself, "an' then there'd be the very devil to pay, an' the whole day's fun be sp'iled. I'd ruther take the jawin' when I come back." He stooped and touched his lips lightly to the child's tousled hair, and went out softly, closing the cabin door behind him. A smile curved his lips; a smile that lingered after he had mounted his horse and was galloping across the mountain. He was thinking of the boy. He called him "Daddy" only the night before, and for the first time. The happy red slipped along his throat and over his face, until lost in the yellow, boyish hair that curled about his temples. "Daddy!" and to hear it for the first time! The world might hold many sorrows for him; it could never take from him the memory of that exquisite joy.

All the morning the hunters rode, starting nothing. At noon the only trail they had found proved a cold one, and Jeffreys went off into the brush with the dogs to drive, leaving Hardeman and Anderson to stand conveniently near the path usually followed by the deer seeking the salt-licks by the spring below the bluff.

Jim felt vaguely that he ought to go home; but all day he had consoled his conscience with the promise of a deer-skin to make a rug for little Jim. "That'll tickle Zalea mighty nigh ter death," he told himself. "An' ter go home now, an' empty-handed,—waal—not ef I can he'p it."

"Hide and horns to the first drawer of blood" is a custom as ancient as the chase itself. In this instance the question was, who drew first blood? The deer passed Anderson, not before the hounds,

but unconscious of danger, tripping easily down to the licks. Anderson did not notice until the buck, suddenly scenting danger, threw up its antlered head, and with an angry snort went scurrying out of Anderson's rifle range, only to be brought down by a ball from Hardeman's, as it rushed blindly upon him. Then had come the dispute. Anderson swore it was his ball that had slain the buck, and Jim, knowing that he lied, claimed the deer's hide as his by right of "first blood."

Then Anderson with an oath declared he lied, "was not better than a thief," and struck him smartly with his bare, brown palm across the cheek.

"Liar" and a blow. One who prefers that charge against a mountaineer is always called upon to "eat" it.

When Jeffreys reached the place, Anderson was lying over against the dead buck with a hole in his breast, and Jim was telling him it was he who killed him, "'count o' bein' named a liar."

Jeffreys' heart lay like lead in his bosom. Jim Hardeman was his Jonathan, whom he loved with a love surpassing <u>all</u> loves.

"Jim," said he, his toe touching the hem of the dead man's trousers leg, "you'd hang for this. The law ain't furbiddin' men ter be named 'liar' in Tennessee; though I don't say it ought not ter. You-uns have got a wife an' baby, Jim, an' that skunk down thar (touching the trousers' leg) ain't wuth the sorrowin' o' Zalea an' little Jim. Nobody seen this but ye an' me, Jim, the killin' o' Anderson <u>ware a accident</u>."

Strange blood courses through the veins of those mountaineers; strange blood, that slips on, generations upon generations, without change or adulteration. Jim slowly gathered himself erect:

"Naw," said he, "I killed him. He named me 'liar' an' I killed him fur it. Ef I swore it 'accident,' I'd be just what he named me. I ben't a liar; I won't tell one, not ef I hang fur it. I hates a lie like pisen. I killed him. I'll make a run fur it, but I won't lie."

Then had followed that wild race for freedom: days of dodging, nights of running, panting, blistered and torn by stone and thorn, with the sound of the hounds baying forever in his ears.

One stolen moment at his home; his young wife's fear and agony; his boy's arms about his neck; the warning tap of Jeffreys upon the shutters; and again the pitiless flight; again the sound of the dogs in hot pursuit; the cool, swift current of the Caney Fork. And at last the sheriff's command to "surrender."

He was almost glad to drop down upon the jail's rude bunk and sleep—sleep without the sound of bloodhounds in his ears.

"A man better be dead than be a runaway," he told himself, recalling the horrible chase as he stripped off his slashed socks, glued to the flesh with blood clotted from the cuts the stones had made upon his body. "Yes, by God," and he lifted his clenched fist and shook it heavenward, "I'd ruther be dead! I'd ruther be dead a thousand times as to live through that chase again. Oh, my God! help me! help! h-e-l-p!"

And with a broken wail he dropped upon the prison bed and slept. But even in sleep the chase went on; the thorns still tore, and the jagged stones cut mercilessly. Once he started up and reached for the gun that he had dropped in the Caney Fork; a dog's muzzle was at his throat. He woke with a groan, the terror in great cold drops upon his

brow. The relief of finding himself in jail was so great that he buried his face in the pillow with a sigh of thankfulness. The next moment he burst into sobs for very shame of the sigh.

The trial was not along one, and it was to Jeffreys he owed his life. Jeffreys had brought his wife and boy down, and had told the tale that saved him his neck, and had given him instead the verdict of imprisonment.

"For the term of your natural life!"

The judge's voice sounded in his ears like bells tolling the passing of a soul. It would ring there forever, he fancied, as he stood among his fellow-convicts under the black bank of the coal mines under the mountain, not less black than the darkness enshrouding his own future.

A mountaineer could not live six months in the main prison, so they had sent him to the mines.

"For the—term—of your nat—ural life!"

The mule's shoes striking the rock-bedded tramway fashioned the words of his sentence, as he sat in the hurrying coal car.

"For the—term—of your nat—ural life!"

The rattle of the chain, the rush of coal down the chute, the ring of the blacksmith's hammer repairing his pick, all, everything, had but one sound, one meaning to him.

"For the—term—of your nat—ural life!"

And he was scant—twenty-two!

Why, his grandmother, "still gaily," was staying with Zalea in the cabin; and his great-grandfather had been dead but six months.

One hundred and three years old, they said. Why, he might live as long! Who could tell? And in that case he would be in prison—, he made the calculation on the wall of the tunnel, by holding his lamp against a block of whitish rock and tracing the figures with the smoke from the burning wick. One hundred and three: one, naught, three. Subtract twenty-two. Two from three, one; two from naught, eight; eighty-one. Eighty-one years in bondage.

"Great God, I can't!" he cried aloud, his whole soul up in rebellion. He had tried to be kind, obliging, always. Why, Anderson himself, were he alive, would swear how he rode five miles through a blizzard one midnight to fetch the doctor, without whose ministrations Anderson would have died before day.

"I wish he had," he groaned. "I wish to God he had a-died, an' saved all o' this trouble."

They knew his desperate rebellion, and more than once remonstrated with him; its futility, its danger, and its sure means of dragging time out endlessly.

"Yield!" the warden said to him one day, after a bitter outburst. "Submit yourself quietly to fate, and things will seem easier to you, boy."

"Yield?" said he. "Submit! Live and die like a mole rootin' under this hell-pit? Never!"

To escape: that was his one dream. He looked for his opportunity as a shipwrecked sailor looks for the morning. To escape! Oh, for the chance of the "trusty" going to the village; for one hour in the smith's shops under the shack; for one guard in sight, and all

that wilderness of mountain before him. He envied the very dogs lying under the guard's shed—free. Oh, for one touch of his fingers among the wild azalea bushes crowding the bluff all about the mines. They nodded to him as he passed in sight of them, the sweet, old flowers that bloomed along the mountain path at home, and for which his wife was named! They were fading now; they soon would be white and blighted; they had a pallid look,—the same look he had seen upon his girl-wife's face when he kissed her good-bye in jail. She would grow white and blighted too, and shrivelled, and old, and wrinkled before his term would end. Old! why, she would be dead and buried, and his boy would be an old man. It was horrible.

The next day he tried to escape by hiding in the tunnel. Two days they waited for him to come out; then sent the dogs to hunt him. The next week he went over it all again, with the same result. The third time he attempted it the warden remonstrated.

"Give it up, Jim." His sympathy had always been with the hapless criminal. "Give it up! Surrender! You'd only be captured again if you made it. This old ball of ours ain't big enough to hide a runaway. Give it up, boy. Surrender, and serve it out like a man."

And Jim set his teeth in his lip and answered:

"Never! Give me ten foot start, and I'll make it."

"You'll make your grave, that's what," said the warden. "Better give it up. I'd hate to see you hurt. Think of your wife and child."

"By God," said Jim, "it's because I can think of nothing else that I want to break this cursed dungeon."

The next mail-day brought him a letter from his mother that sent him to his work more gloomy, more hopelessly rebellious than ever.

There had been a rise in the Caney Fork that had washed away the fences; the corn had not been planted half, "hands were so skerce." The young heifer had choked to death in the stall one night, and the steer "broke a leg leaping the milk-sick bars." Zalea was ill "with pining so," but little Jim could walk, "holding to a cheer."

Homesick? Oh, he would barter his soul for one week there, in which to fix them up again; to mend their fences, plant the crops, replenish the stock, comfort his poor, troubled wife, and hold his boy one hour upon his breast.

"God!" He thrust the iron pick with all the strength of his agony into the black, glistening wall. "God! for help!"

The pick crashed into the blackness; the coal cracked, crumbled, fell at his feet with a rattling jubilance, dragging a mass of rock and earth and slate from its foundation. And there, as though the great, round globe had cracked and parted, the tunnel ended, and the blue sky smiled blithely down into his startled face.

Freedom! The pinkish laurel touched the great, gaunt seam his hand had ripped in that grim dungeon's side. He stared, speechless, at the strange, unreal thing his hand had wrought. Then the joy awoke in his breast, and with a chuckle of sweet ecstacy he dropped upon his knees and hands and crawled slowly through the breach that heaven had opened to the cry of his despair. Free! The blessed light of liberty about him! He stood up, shook himself, glanced up the friendly heights, wondering which trail might prove the surest, and started. Six feet he went, and stopped. The dogs; he must dodge the dogs, the hounds. "The fiends of hell," he called them, hearing them, in fancy, already

on his trail. And hearing them, he stopped dead still there in his tracks. He waited, listening, living again those three wild nights, a fugitive before the law. His head dropped on his breast, his hands to his side; the slow tears started and rolled down his boyish, beardless cheek:

"I can't," said he, lifting his face up to the heights he hungered for. "I'd ruther be dead than be a runaway, afeard a'most to breathe. I'd ruther be—here." He looked up at the blue sky hungrily, and shook his head:

"Ye ain't no light o' liberty. "ye're jest a cheat—a lie."

He stopped and plucking a branch of the sturdy mountain laurel, a branch crammed full of rose-pink bloom and leaves as green as emeralds in the sun, held it to his face an instant, then turned slowly back.

Back to the breach his hand had made; stooped and crawled in—in to his dungeon and his life's servitude. Then there came to him the memory of all the four-score men in that same tunnel, and he began to work with all his might, pushing back the stones, heaping the coal up, hiding the light from those desperate ones who would sell his life for freedom any hour. One last look at freedom; one last sweet breath of hope, and he lifted the laurel branch and waved it as a friend waves putting out to sea, to those he leaves on shore.

"Good-bye," he whispered brokenly. "Good-bye to you-uns; good-bye to—liberty."

And all the sweet, pink blossoms and green leaves seemed to nod and smile, "Good-bye."

And then he fell to work, calking crevices, stopping loopholes that were leaking light, heaping stone on stone, even cramming his old coal-sooted miner's cap into a gap he stood in doubt of. And then, the thing being done, he leaped upon his half-filled car, dropped the blooming twig down out of sight, and with a yell demoniac set the slow mule jogging toward the pit's mouth. How endless seemed the tunnel; how fierce the fear that he should meet some fellow-convict whose prying eye might search out that all-speaking trophy at his feet. The old mule crawled rather than walked, but at last in the distance the good, round eye of daylight and blue sky smiled through the pit's mouth.

At the entrance he seized the branch of laurel and springing to the opening stopped, as the prison regulations demanded, and holding the branch high above his head, waved it, a signal, a message, and a triumph. The startled guards saw and leaped to action. Some ran to the pit's mouth, thinking of those five-and-eighty convicts behind it. Others ran to fetch the warden tidings of the breach Jim Hardeman had found.

They said the boy's face shone like a star as he stood there with the sunlight in his face, the blackness of the pit behind him, and smiling, held that bit of mountain laurel up to greet the warden:

"Cap'n," said he, "I surrender. I fight no more. I'll serve my time out quiet, or die a pris'ner ef I must. But, Cap'n, <u>I have seen the light o' liberty</u>, an' it—have—conquered me."

"Eighty men and more were in that tunnel with him, your Excellency." The warden had himself carried the story to the Governor; he meant to strike a blow for Jim, and he did. "He could have taken

the last one with him and made a stand my guards would have had no show against. But he didn't; and the poor fellow never once thought of a pardon. The simple fact that he had proved himself master of himself just conquered him. Oh, but this will be Heaven's tidings for Jim, your Excellency."

And it was. The warden chose the early morning for his news. He called the boy out from the line of prisoners, to face the laughing guards and listening convicts, and explained to him and them how, sometimes, it was deemed well to reward certain acts of heroism, thoughtful consideration, and good behavior. And with this in view the Governor of the great State of Tennessee had empowered him to act as bearer,— and he took from his breast a folded sheet, to which a great, round seal was fixed; and then, looking into the boy's startled eyes, he forgot his little speech. The mighty paper fluttered to his feet, as he took his joy-dumb prisoner by the hand, and pointing with his other to the bright, blue heaven smiling on them, said:

"Jim, boy, that <u>is</u> the light of liberty. Now run along home, old fellow."

II. THE MALUNGEON ARTICLES

Were you ever when a child half playfully told "The Malungeons will get you?" If not, you were never a Tennessee child, as some of our fathers were; they who tell us all that may be told of that strange, almost forgotten race, concerning whom history is strangely silent. Only upon the records of the State of Tennessee does the name appear. The records show that by act of the Constitutional Convention of 1834, when the "Race Question" played such a conspicuous part in the deliberations of that body, the Malungeon, as a "free person of color," was denied the right of suffrage. Right there he dropped from the public mind and interest. Of no value as a slave, with no voice as a citizen, what use could the public make of the Malungeon? When John Sevier attempted to organize the State of Franklin, there was living in the mountains of Eastern Tennessee a colony of dark-skinned, reddish-brown complexioned people, supposed to be of Moorish descent, who affiliated with neither whites nor blacks, and who called themselves Malungeons, and claimed to be of Portuguese descent. They lived to themselves exclusively, and were looked upon neither as negroes nor Indians.

All the negroes ever brought to America came as slaves; the Malungeons were never slaves, and until 1834 enjoyed all the rights of citizenship. Even in the Convention which disfranchised them, they were referred to as "free persons of color" or "Malungeons."

Their condition from the organization of the State of Tennessee to the close of the civil war is most accurately described by

John A. McKinley [sic], of Hawkins County, who was chairman of the committee to which was referred all matters affecting these "free persons of color."[165]

Said he, speaking of free persons of color, "It means Malungeons if it means anything. Although 'fleecy locks and black complexion' do not forfeit Nature's claims, still it is true that those locks and that complexion mark every one of the African race, so long as he remains among the white race, as a person doomed to live in the suburbs of society.

"Unenviable as is the condition of the slave, unlovely as slavery is in all its aspects, bitter as is the draught the slave is doomed to drink, nevertheless, his condition is better than that of the 'free man of color' in the midst of a community of white men with whom he has no interest, no fellow-feeling and no equality."[166] So the Constitutional convention left these the most pitiable of all outcasts; denied their oath in court, and deprived of the testimony of their own color, left utterly helpless in all legal contests, they naturally, when the Senate set the brand of the outcast upon them, took to the hills, the isolated

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[165]In 1834 John A. McKinney chaired the constitutional convention's three-man committee that received the petitions calling for emancipation of slaves in Tennessee. Dromgoole mistakenly claims that the committee dealt with problems of free blacks. [Robert H. White, Messages of the Governors of Tennessee, 1821-1835, Vol. 2 (Nashville: The Tennessee Historical Commission, 1952), pp. 610-615.]

[166]This is not an entirely accurate quotation from the McKinney committee report. There is nothing in the McKinney report indicating that anyone had the Melungeons in mind. In fact, McKinney's committee concerns itself with slaves and only indirectly with free blacks (White, p. 611).

peaks of the uninhabited mountains, the corners of the earth, as it were, where, huddled together, they became a law unto themselves, a race indeed separate and distinct from the several races inhabiting the State of Tennessee.[167]

So much, or so little, we glean from the records. From history we get nothing; not so much as the name,—Malungeons.

In the farther valleys they were soon forgotten: only now and then an old slave-mammy would frighten her rebellious charge into submission with the threat,—"The Malungeons will get you if you ain't pretty." But to the people of the foothills and the nearer valleys they became a living terror; sweeping down upon them, stealing their cattle, their provisions, their very clothing, and household furniture.

They became shiftless, idle, thieving, and defiant of all law, distillers of brandy, almost to a man. The barren height upon which they located, offered hope of no other crop so much as fruit, and they were forced, it would appear, to utilize their one opportunity.

At the breaking out of the war, some few enlisted in the army, but the greater number remained with their stills, to pillage and plunder among the helpless women and children.

Their mountains became a terror to travellers; and not since within the last half decade has it been regarded safe to cross Malungeon territory.

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[167]Dromgoole overstates what the 1834 constitution says about free blacks, for it actually does little except deprive them of the right to vote (White, pp. 610-615).

Such they were; or so do they come to us through tradition and the State's records. As to what they are any who feel disposed may go and see. Opinion is divided concerning them, and they have their own ideas as to their descent. A great many declare them mulattoes, and base their belief upon the ground that at the close of the civil war negroes and Malungeons stood upon precisely the same social footing, "free men of color" all; and that the fast vanishing handful opened their doors to the darker brother, also groaning under the brand of social ostracism. This might, at first glance, seem probable, indeed, reasonable.

Yet if we will consider a moment, we shall see that a race of mulattoes cannot exist as these Malungeons have existed. The race goes from mulattoes to quadroons, from quadroons to octoroons, and there it stops. The octoroon women bear no children, but in every cabin of the Malungeons may be found mothers and grandmothers, and very often great-grandmothers.

"Who are they, then?" you ask. I can only give you their own theory—if I may call it such—and to do this I must tell you how I found them, and something of my stay among them.

First. I saw in an old newspaper some slight mention of them. With this tiny clue I followed their trail for three years. The paper merely stated that "somewhere in the mountains of Tennessee there existed a remnant of people called Malungeons, having a distinct color, characteristics, and dialect." It seemed a very hopeless search, so utterly were the Malungeons forgotten, and I was laughed at no little for my "new crank." I was even called "a Malungeon" more than once,

and was about to abandon my "crank" when a member of the Tennessee State Senate, of which I happened at that time to be engrossing clerk, spoke of a brother senator as being "tricky as a Malungeon."

I pounced upon him the moment his speech was completed. "Senator," I said, "what is a Malungeon?"

"A dirty Indian sneak," said he. "Go over yonder and ask Senator _____; they live in his district."

I went at once.

"Senator, what is a Malungeon?" I asked again.

"A Portuguese nigger," was the reply. "Representative T ____ can tell you all about them, they live in his county."

From "district" to "county" was quick travelling, and into the House of Representatives I went, fast upon the lost trail of the forgotten Malungeons.

"Mr. _____," said I, "please tell me what is a Malungeon?"

"A Malungeon," said he, "isn't a nigger, and he isn't an Indian, and he isn't a white man. God only knows what he is. I should call him a Democrat, only he always votes the Republican ticket." I merely mention all this to show how the Malungeons of to-day are regarded, and to show how I tracked them to Newman's Ridge in Hancock County, where within four miles of one of the prettiest county towns in Tennessee, may be found all that remains of that outcast race whose descent is a riddle the historian has never solved. In appearance they bear a striking resemblance to the Cherokees, and they are believed by the people round about to be a kind of half-breed Indian.

Their complexion is a reddish brown, totally unlike the mulatto. The men are very tall and straight, with small, sharp eyes, high cheek bones, and straight black hair, worn rather long. The women are small, below the average height, coal black hair and eyes, high cheek bones, and the same red-brown complexion. The hands of the Malungeon women are quite shapely and pretty. Also their feet, despite the fact that they travel the sharp mountain trails barefoot, are short and shapely. Their features are wholly unlike those of the negro, except in cases where the two races have cohabited, as is sometimes the fact. These instances can be readily detected, as can those of cohabitation with the mountaineer; for the pure Malungeons present a characteristic and individual appearance. On the Ridge proper, one finds only the pure Malungeons; it is in the unsavory limits of Black Water Swamp and on Big Sycamore Creek, lying at the foot of the Ridge between it and Powell's Mountain, that the mixed races dwell.

In Western and Middle Tennessee the Malungeons are forgotten long ago. And indeed, so nearly complete has been the extinction of the race that in but few counties of Eastern Tennessee is it known. In Hancock you may hear them, and see them, almost the instant you cross into the county line. There they are distinguished as the "Ridgemanites," or pure "Malungeons." Those among whom the white or negro blood has entered are called the "Black-Waters." The Ridge is admirably adapted to the purpose of wild-cat distilling, being crossed by but one road and crowned with jungles of chinquapin, cedar, and wahoo.

Of very recent years the dogs of the law have proved too sharp-eyed and bold even for the lawless Malungeons, so that such of the furnace fires as have not been extinguished are built underground.

They are a great nuisance to the people of the county seat, where, on any public day, and especially on election days, they may be seen squatted about the streets, great strapping men, or little brown women baking themselves in the sun like mud figures set to dry.

The people of the town do not allow them to enter their dwellings, and even refuse to employ them as servants, owing to their filthy habit of chewing tobacco and spitting upon the floors, together with their ignorance or defiance of the differences between meum and tuum.

They are exceedingly shiftless, and in most cases filthy. They care for nothing except their pipe, their liquor, and a tramp "ter towin." They will walk to Sneedville and back sometimes twice in twelve hours, up a steep trail through an almost unbroken wilderness, and never seem to suffer the least fatigue.

They are not at all like the Tennessee mountaineer either in appearance or characteristics. The mountaineer, however poor, is clean,—cleanliness itself. He is honest (I speak of him as a class) he is generous, trustful, until once betrayed; truthful, brave, and possessing many of the noblest and keenest sensibilities. The Malungeons are filthy, their home is filthy. They are rogues, natural, "born rogues," close, suspicious, inhospitable, untruthful, cowardly, and, to use their own word "sneaky." They are exceedingly inquisitive too, and will trail a visitor to the Ridge for miles, through seemingly impenetrable jungles, to discover, if may be, the object of his visit.

They expect remuneration for the slightest service. The mountaineer's door stands open, or at most the string of the latch dangles upon the "outside." He takes you for what you seem until you shall prove yourself otherwise.

In many things they resemble the negro. They are exceedingly immoral, yet are great shouters and advocates of religion. They call themselves Baptists, although their mode of baptism is that of the Dunkard.

There are no churches on the Ridge, but the one I visited in Black Water Swamp was beyond question an inauguration of the colored element. At this church I saw white women with negro babies at their breasts—Malungeon women with white or with black husbands, and some, indeed, having the three separate races represented in their children, showing thereby the gross immorality that is practised among them. I saw an old negro whose wife was a white woman, and who had been several times arrested, and released on his plea of "Portygee" blood, which he declared had colored his skin, and not African.

The dialect of the Malungeons is a cross between that of the mountaineer and the negro,—a corruption, perhaps, of both. The letter R occupies but small place in their speech, and they have a peculiar habit of omitting the last letter, sometimes the last syllable of their words. For instance "good night"—is "goo' night." "Give" is "gi" etc. They do not drawl like the mountaineers but, on the contrary, speak rapidly and talk a great deal. The laugh of the Malungeon woman is the most exquisitely musical jingle, a perfect ripple of sweet sound. Their

dialect is exceedingly difficult to write, owing to their habit of curtailing their words.

The pure Malungeons, that is the old men and women, have no toleration for the negro, and nothing insults them so much as a suggestion of negro blood. Many pathetic stories are told of their battle against the black race, which they regard as the cause of their downfall, the annihilation, indeed, of the Malungeons, for when the races began to mix and to intermarry, and the expression, "A Malungeon-nigger" came into use, the last barrier vanished, and all were regarded as somewhat upon a social level.

They are very like the Indians in many respects,—their fleetness of foot, cupidity, cruelty (as practised during the days of their illicit distilling), their love for the forest, their custom of living without doors, one might almost say,—for truly the little hovels could not be called homes,—and their taste for liquor and tobacco.

They believe in witchcraft, "yarbs," and more than one "charmer" may be found among them. They will "rub away" a wart or a mole for ten cents, and one old squaw assured me she had some "blood beads" that "wair bounter heal all manner o' blood ailimints."

They are limited somewhat as to names: their principal families being the Mullins, Gorvens, Collins, and Gibbins.

They resort to a very peculiar method of distinguishing themselves. Jack Collins' wife for instance will be Mary Jack. His son will be Ben Jack. His daughters' names will be similar; Nancy Jack or Jane Jack, as the case may be, but always having the father's Christian name attached.

Their homes are miserable hovels, set here and there in the very heart of the wilderness. Very few of their cabins have windows, and some have only an opening cut through the wall for a door. In winter an old quilt is hung before it to shut out the cold. They do not welcome strangers among them, so that I went to the Ridge somewhat doubtful as to my reception. I went, however, determined to be one of them, so I wore a suit as nearly like their own as I could get it. I had some trouble securing board, but I did succeed at last in doing so by paying the enormous sum of fifteen cents a day. I was put to sleep in a little closet opening off the family room. My room had no windows, and but the one door. The latch was carefully removed before I went in, so that I had no means of egress, except through the family room, and no means by which to shut myself in. My bed was of straw, not the sweet-smelling straw we read of. The Malungeons go a long way for their straw, and they evidently make it go a long way when they do get it. I was called to breakfast the next morning while the gray mists still held the mountain in its arms. I asked for water to bathe my face and was sent to "ther branch," a beautiful little mountain stream crossing the trail some few hundred yards from the cabin.

Breakfast consisted of corn bread, wild honey, and bitter coffee. It was prepared and eaten in the garret, or roof-room, above the family room. A few chickens, the only fowl I saw on the Ridge, also occupied the roof room. Coffee is quite common among the Malungeons; they drink it without sweetening, and drink it cold at all hours of the day or night. They have no windows and no candles, consequently, they retire with the going of the daylight. Many of their cabins have no floors

other than that which Nature gave, but one that I remember had a floor made of trees slit in half, the bark still on, placed with the flat side to the ground. The people in his house slept on leaves with an old gray blanket for covering. Yet the master of the house, who claims to be an Indian, and who, without doubt, possesses Indian blood, draws a pension of twenty-nine dollars per month. He can neither read nor write, is a lazy fellow, fond of apple brandy and bitter coffee, has a rollicking good time with an old fiddle which he plays with his thumb, and boasts largely of his Cherokee grandfather and his government pension. In one part of his cabin (there are two rooms and a connecting shed) the very stumps of the trees still remain. I had my artist sketch him sitting upon the stump of a monster oak which stood in the very centre of the shed or hall-way.

This family did their cooking at a rude fireplace built near the spring, as a matter of convenience.

Another family occupied one room, or apartment, of a stable. The stock fed in another (the stock belonged, let me say, to someone else) and the "cracks" between the logs of the separating partition were of such depth a small child could have rolled from the bed in one apartment into the trough in the other. How they exist among such squalor is a mystery.

Their dress consists, among the women, of a short loose calico skirt and a blouse that boasts of neither hook nor button. Some of these blouses were fastened with brass pins conspicuously bright. Others were tied together by means of strings tacked on either side. They wear neither shoes nor stockings in the summer, and many of them

go barefoot all winter. The men wear jeans, and may be seen almost any day tramping barefoot across the mountain.

They are exceedingly illiterate, none of them being able to read. I found one school among them, taught by an old Malungeon, whose literary accomplishments amounted to a meagre knowledge of the alphabet and the spelling of words. Yet, he was very earnest, and called lustily to the "chillering" to "spry up," and to "learn the book."

This school was located in the loveliest spot my eyes ever rested upon. An eminence overlooking the beautiful valley of the Clinch and the purple peaks beyond. Billows and billows of mountains, so blue, so exquisitely wrapped in their delicate mist-veil, one almost doubts if they be hills or heaven. While through the slumbrous vale the silvery Clinch, the fairest of Tennessee's fair streams, creeps slowly, like a drowsy dream-river, among the purple distances.

The eminence itself is entirely barren save for one tall old cedar and the schoolmaster's little log building. It presents a very weird, wild, yet majestic scene, to the traveller as he climbs up from the valley.

Near the schoolhouse is a Malungeon grave-yard. The Malungeons are very careful for their dead. They build a kind of floorless house above each separate grave, many of the homes of the dead being far better than the dwellings of the living. The graveyard presents the appearance of a diminutive town, or settlement, and is kept with great nicety and care. They mourn their dead for years, and every friend and acquaintance is expected to join in the funeral arrangements. They follow the body to the grave, sometimes for miles, afoot, in single file. Their burial ceremonies are exceedingly interesting and peculiar.

They are an unforgiving people, although, unlike the sensitive mountaineer, they are slow to detect an insult, and expect to be spit upon. But injury to life or property they never forgive. Several odd and pathetic instances of Malungeon hate came under my observation while among them, but they would cover too much space in telling.

Within the last two years the railroad has struck within some thirty miles of them, and its effects are becoming very apparent. Now and then a band of surveyors, or a lone mineralogist will cross Powell's mountain, and pass through Mulberry Gap just beyond Newman's Ridge. So near, yet never nearer. The hills around are all said to be crammed with coal or iron, but Newman's Ridge can offer nothing to the capitalist. It would seem that the Malungeons had chosen the one spot, of all that magnificent creation, not to be desired.

Yet, they have heard of the railroad, the great bearer of commerce, and expect it, in a half-regretful, half-pathetic way.

They have four questions, always, for the stranger:—

"Whatcher name?"

"Wher'd yer come fum?"

"How old er yer?"

"Did yer hear en'thin' er ther railwa' comin' up ther Ridge?"

As if it might step into their midst any day.

The Malungeons believe themselves to be of Cherokee and Portuguese extraction. They cannot account for the Portuguese blood, but are very bold in declaring themselves a remnant of those tribes, or that tribe, still inhabiting the mountains of North Carolina, which refused to follow the tribes to the Reservation set aside for them.

There is a theory that the Portuguese pirates, known to have visited these waters, came ashore and located in the mountains of North Carolina. The Portuguese "streak" however, is scouted by those who claim for the Malungeons a drop of African blood, as, quite early in the settlement of Tennessee, runaway negroes settled among the Cherokees, or else were captured and adopted by them.

However, with all the light possible to be thrown upon them, the Malungeons are, and will remain, a mystery. A more pathetic case than theirs cannot be imagined. They are going, the little space of hills 'twixt earth and heaven allotted them, will soon be free of the dusky tribe, whose very name is a puzzle, and whose origin is a riddle no man has unravelled. The most that can be said of one of them is, "He is a Malungeon," a synonym for all that is doubtful and mysterious—and unclean.

THE MALUNGEON TREE AND ITS FOUR BRANCHES

Somewhere in the eighteenth century, before the year 1797, there appeared in the eastern portion of Tennessee, at that time the Territory of North Carolina, two strange-looking men calling themselves "Collins" and "Gibson." They had a reddish-brown complexion, long, straight, black hair, keen, black eyes, and sharp, clear-cut features. They spoke in broken English, a dialect distinct from anything ever heard in that section of the country. They claimed to have come from Virginia and many years after emigrating, themselves told the story of their past.

These two, Vardy Collins and Buck Gibson, were the head and source of the Malungeons in Tennessee. With the cunning of their Cherokee ancestors, they planned and executed a scheme by which they were enabled to "set up for themselves" in the almost unbroken Territory of North Carolina.

Old Buck, as he was called, was disguised by a wash of some dark description, and taken to Virginia by Vardy where he was sold as a slave. He was a magnificent specimen of physical strength, and brought a fine price, a wagon and mules, a lot of goods, and three hundred dollars in money being paid to old Vardy for his "likely nigger." Once out of Richmond, Vardy turned his mules' shoes and struck out for the Wilderness of North Carolina, as previously planned. Buck lost little time ridding himself of his negro disguise, swore he was not the man bought of Collins, and followed in the wake of his fellow-thief to the

Territory. The proceeds of the sale were divided and each chose his habitation; old Vardy choosing Newman's Ridge, where he was soon joined by others of his race, and so the Malungeons became a part of the inhabitants of Tennessee.

This story I know to be true. There are reliable parties still living who received it from old Vardy himself, who came here a young man and lived, as the Malungeons generally live, to a ripe old age.

The names "Collins" and "Gibson" were also stolen from the white settlers in Virginia where the men had lived previous to emigrating to North Carolina.

There is, perhaps, no more satisfactory method of illustrating this peculiar race, its origin and blood, than by the familiar tree.

Old Vardy Collins, then, must be regarded as the body, or main stem, in this State, at all events.

It is only of very late years the Malungeons have been classed as <u>families</u>. Originally they were <u>tribes</u>, afterward <u>clans</u>, and at last families. From old Vardy Collins the first tribe took its name—"Collins"—or as they call it, "Collinses." Others who followed Vardy took the name of Collins also. Old Benjamin Collins, one of the pioneers, was older than Vardy, but came to Tennessee a trifle later. He had quite a large family of children, among them Edmund, Mileyton (supposed to have meant <u>Milton</u>), Marler, Harry, Andrew, Zeke, Jordan. From Jordan descended Calloway Collins who is still living and from whom I obtained some valuable information.

But to go back a step. Benjamin Collins was known as "old Ben," and became the head of the Ben tribe. Old Solomon Collins was the head

of the Sols. The race was increasing so rapidly, by emigration and otherwise, that it became necessary to adopt other names than Collins. They fell, curiously enough, upon the first or Christian name of the head of a large family connection or tribe. Emigrants arriving attached themselves as they chose to the several tribes. After awhile, with an eye to brevity, doubtless, the word tribe was dropped from ordinary, every-day use. "The Bens," "the Sols," meant the Ben and Sol tribes. It appears that no tribe was ever called for old Vardy, although as long as he lived he was the recognized head and leader of the entire people.

This is doubtless due to the fact that in his day the settlement was new, and the people, and the one name Collins covered the entire population.

The original Collins people were Indian, there is no doubt about that, and they lived as the Indians lived until some-time after the first white man appeared among them. All would huddle together in one room (?), sleep in one common bed of leaves, make themselves such necessary clothing as nature demanded, smoke, and dream away the good long days that were so dreamily delightful nowhere as they were on Newman's Ridge.

The Collins tribe multiplied more and more; it became necessary to have names, and a most peculiar method was hit upon for obtaining them.

Ben Collins' children were distinguished from the children of Sol and Vardy by prefixing the Christian name either of the father or mother to the Christian name of the child. For instance, Edmund Ben, Singleton Ben, Andrew Ben, and Zeke Ben, meant that Edmund, Singleton,

Andrew, and Zeke were the sons of Ben Collins. Singleton Mitch, Levi Mitch, and Morris Mitch, meant that these were the sons of Mitchel Collins. In the next generation there was Jordan Ben (a son of old Benjamin Collins) who married Abby Sol, had a son who is called (he is still living, as before stated) Calloway Abby for his mother. The wife before marriage takes her father's Christian name; after marriage that of her husband. Calloway's wife, for instance, is Ann Calloway. It is not known, and cannot by any possibility be ascertained at what precise period other races first appeared among the "Collinses." For many years they occupied the Ridge without disturbance. The country was new, wild, and the few straggling settlements were glad of almost any human neighbors. Moreover, these strange people, who were then called the "Ridgemanites," the "Indians," and the "Black-Waterites" (because of a stream called Black Water, which flowed through their territory, the bed of which was, and is, covered with a peculiar dark slate rock which gives a black appearance to the stream), had chosen the rocky and inaccessible Ridge, while the fertile and beautiful valley of the Clinch lay open and inviting to the white settlers. The Ridgemanites were not striving for wealth evidently, and as land was plentiful and neighbors few, they held their bit of creation without molestation or interruption for years. They were all Collinses, as I said; those who followed the first-comers accepting the name already provided them. There was no mixture of blood; they claimed to be Indians and no man disputed it. They were called the "Collins tribe," until having multiplied to that extent it was necessary to <u>divide</u>, when the descendants of the several pioneers were separated, or divided, into <u>clans</u>. Then came the Ben clan, the Sol clan, the

Mitch clan, and indeed every prominent head of a large relationship was recognized as the leader of his clan, which always bore his name. There was, to be sure, no set form or time at which this division was made. It was only one of those natural splits, gradual and necessary, which is the sure result of increasing strength.

They were still, however, we must observe, all Collinses. The main tree had not been disturbed by foreign grafting. and while all were not blood descendants of old Vardy they, at all events, had all fallen under his banner and appropriated his name.

The tree at last began to put forth branches, or rather three foreign shoots were grafed into the body of it, viz: the English (or white), Portuguese, and African.

The English branch began with the Mullins tribe, a very powerful tribe, next indeed for a long time to the Collins tribe, and at present the strongest of all the several branches, as well as the most daring and obstinate.

Old Jim Mullins, the father of the branch, was an Englishman, a trader, it is supposed, with the Indians. He was of a roving, daring disposition, and rather fond of the free abandon which characterizes the Indian. He was much given to sports, and was always "cheek by jowl" with the Cherokees and other tribes among which he mingled. What brought him to Newman's Ridge must have been, as it is said, this love for freedom and sport, and that careless existence known only to the Indians. He stumbled upon the Ridge settlement, fell in with the Ridgemanites, and never left them. He took for a wife one of their women, a descendant of old Sol Collins, and reared a family known as

the "Mullins tribe." This is said to be the first white blood that mingled with the blood of the dusky Ridgemanites.

By marriage I mean to say (in their own language) they "took up together," having no set form of marriage service. So old Jim Mullins took up with a Malungeon woman, a Collins, by whom he had a large family of children. Some time after he exchanged wives with one Wyatt Collins, and proceeded to cultivate a second family. Wyatt Collins also had a large family by his first wife, and was equally fortunate with the one for whom he traded her.

After the forming of Hancock County (Tennessee) old Mullins and Collins were forced to marry their wives according to the laws of the land, but all had children and grandchildren before they were lawfully married.

The Mullins tribe became exceedingly strong, and remains to-day the head of the Ridge people.

The African branch was introduced by one Goins (I spell it as they do) who emigrated from North Carolina after the formation of the State of Tennessee. Goins was a negro, and did not settle upon the Ridge, but lower down on Big Sycamore Creek in Powell's Valley. He took a Malungeon woman for a wife (took up with her), and reared a family or tribe. The Goins family may be easily recognized by their kinky hair, flat nose and foot, thick lips, and a complexion totally unlike the Collins and Mullins tribes. They possess many negro traits, too, which are wanting to the other tribes.

The Malungeons repudiate the idea of negro blood, yet some of the shiftless stragglers among them have married among the Goins people.

They evade slights, snubs, censure, and the law, by claiming to have married Portuguese, there really being a Portuguese branch among the tribes.

The Goins tribe, however, was always looked upon with a touch of contempt, and was held in a kind of subjection, socially and politically, by the others.

The Mullins and Collins tribes will fight for their Indian blood. The Malungeons are not brave; indeed, they are great cowards and easily brow-beaten, accustomed to receiving all manner of insults which it never occurs to them to resent. Only in this matter of blood will they "show fight."

The Portuguese branch was for a long time a riddle, the existence of it being stoutly denied. It has at last, however, been traced to one Denhan, a Portuguese who married a Collins woman.

It seems that every runaway or straggler of any kind whatever, passing through the country took up his abode, temporarily or permanently, with the Malungeons, or as they were then called, the Ridgemanites. They were harmless, social, and good-natured when well acquainted with one—although at first suspicious, distant, and morose. While they have never encouraged emigration to the Ridge they have sometimes been unable to prevent it.

Denhan, it is supposed, came from one of the Spanish settlements lying further to the South, settled on Mulberry Creek, and married a sister of old Sol Collins.

There is another story, however, about the Denhans. It is said that the first Denhan came as did the first Collins from North Carolina,

and that he (or his ancestors) had been left upon the Carolina coast by some Portuguese pirate vessel plying along those shores. When the English wrested the island of Jamaica from Spain, in 1655, some fifteen hundred Spanish slaves fled to the mountains. Their number grew and their strength multiplied. For more than a hundred years they kept up a kind of guerilla warfare, for they were both savage and warlike. They were called "mountain negroes," or "maroons." The West Indian waters swarmed with piratical vessels at that time, the Portuguese being the most terrible and daring. The crews of these vessels were composed for the most part of these "mountain negroes." When they became insubordinate, or in any way useless, they were put ashore and left to take care of themselves. It is said the Denhans were put ashore on the Carolina coast. Their instincts carried them to the mountains, from which one emigrated to Newman's Ridge, then a part of the North Carolina territory.

So we have the four races, or representatives among, as they then began to be called, the Malungeons; namely, the Indian, the English, the Portuguese, and the African. Each is clearly distinct and easily recognized even to the present day.

The Portuguese blood has been a misfortune to the first Malungeons, inasmuch as it has been a shield to the Goins clan under which they have sought to shelter themselves and to repudiate the African streak.

There is a very marked difference between the two, however. There is an old blacksmith, a Portuguese, on Black Water Creek, as dark as a genuine African. Yet, there is a peculiar tinge to his complexion

that is totally foreign to the negro. He has a white wife, a Mullins woman, a descendant of English and Indian. If Malungeon does indeed mean mixture, the children of this couple are certainly Malungeons. The blacksmith himself is a Denhan, grandson of the old Portugese emigrant and a Collins woman.

This, then, is the account of the Malungeons from their first appearance in that part of the country where they are still to be found, Tennessee.

It will be a matter of some interest to follow them down to the present day. Unlike the rest of the world they have progressed slowly. Their huts are still huts, their characteristics and instincts are still Indian, and their customs have lost but little of the old primitive exclusive and seclusive abandon characteristic of the sons of the forest.

III. THE "SONG AND STORY" COLUMN

November 28, 1903

The genuine Tennessee mountaineer makes nice distinctions of honor. He is pretty generally right, too. Indeed, there is very little that is small about the Tennessee mountaineer, and not anything that is doubtful, not even his politics. His "no" means no, and his "yes," yes. He never "guesses" or "reckons," and seldom "maybe's." His "I will" has no secret provision against circumstance or change, and his "I won't" is as big as a mule, and as stubbornly changeless. He isn't quarellsome, but if he accidently bucks against a fight he is pretty sure to be in it. He comes pretty close to Stephenson's summing up of the requisites to manhood: He is no fool, and certainly no scp.

I saw one, a young man, at a dance once, and some one had "got his mad up." He was in his fighting togs in two seconds. Some of the boys tried to quiet him, at least temporarily. At heart they must have sympathized with him.

What was he made about? This is the way he told it:

"You see, stranger, he called me 'a coward!' I had stood his 'liar' already, because I may let slip one sometime or nuther, now 'n then, as 'casion called fur. I had stood his 'liar' and took his 'thief,' though I deny it. But, stranger, that thar man ain't drawed breath as kin call Jim Buck a coward and not eat it. Eat it, stranger, that's what I said. Coward! I've got a brother in the penitentiary fur killin' his man, an' one ware shot after shootin' the skunk that stole his horg, an' one ware hung fur murder o' the firs' degree. And the

last man of 'em had a chance ter skip it and wouldn't. Coward! The Bucks don't breed sech!" (II, p. 1).

January 16, 1904

And then, there was a little mountain girl who, if she expressed herself in original English, she none the less struck home to the situation.

"Mary," said her kinsman, "do you always tell the truth?"

"Yes I do."

"Don't you ever tell a story, Mary?"

"No, I don't."

"Not one little story, Mary?"

"No, not a single one."

"You're an awfully good girl, Mary. I hope you're no prevaricator."

"No, I ain't. I'm just what I am, an' I ain't no ammer, and that's what I am (II, p. 6).

January 16, 1904

There isn't any round-aboutiveness to the Tennessee mountaineer. Men, women and children are alike in that. They are truthful, they are clean, they are most always honest, they strike straight from the shoulder, and they are so solemnly in earnest that even their wit sometimes seems to be a part of the funeral procession. They don't generally talk a great deal, but when they do speak, they pretty nearly always say something.

Just a bit in his cups, however, his tongue gets loose, as the saying is, at both ends. It was at a sort of woman's suffrage meeting,

a small affair in a region not much given to such advanced ideas, that one quite succeeded in breaking up the meeting. The woman lecturer had been talking for quite a long while, and the mountaineer had given the best possible attention, under the circumstances. Finally, the lecturer, summing up the injustice of politicians, and the rascality of men in general, began applying remedies, as well as reasons, for the unhappy state of affairs. In a sudden burst of indignation she exclaimed:

"And yet women go on blindly accepting slavery and injustice. (The mountaineer's back straightened.) Go on putting their necks to yoke; go on marrying—"

"Good Lord A'mighty!" cried the mountaineer. "In course they do! Listen at the female woman, will somebody. Why, if they didn't go on marryin' what'd become o' the darn pop—"

"We will rise and be dismissed," said the lecturer. And her voice was as the upper flat of a big refrigerator, just after the ice-man has made his rounds (II, p. 6).

March 5, 1904

She was an old mountain woman, her "man" had been "took suddint," and a neighbor, hearing the news, had come over to make neighborly inquiries. "Air it anything oncommon ez Jeems hev got?" said she.

"Naw, hit ain't in noways oncommon; at least not to say in these parts. Jeems hev got the jimjams, an' that's all he hev got. An' the reason of the jimjams air the jimmyjohn. I hev allers noticed that too frequent jimmyjohn means a mighty sure case o' jimjams; an' Jeems hev

been toler'ble friendly with the jimmyjohn, an' ther ben't no denyin' of it"[168] (II, p. 3).

March 12, 1904

She was an old woman of the hill country, and she had come over to the store at the settlement to barter some things. She met there some friends of her acquaintance. Said one lady, in the course of conversation:

"Well, I have no superstitions, myself."

"Nor I hain't neither," said the mountain woman; "nairy superstition, though I tell ye right now I don't want ter see the new moon through the bresh" (II, p. 3).

March 19, 1904

A man walked into the group of men gathered about the settlement store. A mountaineer of sturdy type and sarcastic humor. At the man's heels followed a dog, such a dilapidated, forlorn, mean looking cur that other dogs, having something of a reputation themselves, dropped their

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[168]According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term jimjams means a case of nerves or a "fit" of sorts; it can also mean a peculiarity or habit. In medical terms, "jimjams" could be what is commonly referred to as "D.T.'s," or Delirium tremens, an illness characterized by shaking, confusion, and hallucinations [Benjamin F. Miller, M.D., The Complete Medical Guide (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), p. 471]. Jimmy-john is a corruption of the term demi-john, which originally meant a bottle of wicker or reed, but in more modern times has come to mean a crock or earthenware jug (OED). The meaning of this story rests upon the reader's knowledge of these words and is obvious once the terms are translated. James (Jeems) has been into the moonshine (jimmy-john) and is intoxicated and acting peculiarly (jimjams).

tails and gave the cur right-of-way without hesitation. If a cat caught sight of him its back shot up like a bow, and it scurried for the nearest tree. As it came near the store it began sticking its nose into every bag, and smalling keg and parcel in the house. Three times the store-keeper kicked him out. He was not only a mean dog; he was so ugly that in times of berries, or fruit, or ripening grain and melons, the neighbors jokingly asked "the loan of that thar dog ter skeer the crows and thieves out of the crop."

Finally one day a very smart young fellow wanted to know of the owner why he kept such a dog.

"I'd kill hem, ef he ware mine," said the smart fellow. "Yessir ef I had a dog as unbeguil'in' as that thar dog I'd pizen him. Say, why don't you kill him anyhow?"

And then the mountaineer, being pressed for the "why" gave it: "Waal," said he, "the reason why I don't kill that thar dog air siv'ral. He air right wuthless, no denyin'. And he ain't sharp pritty, and he's tolerable mean, and some sneaky; an' he steals on occasion, some; and he's allers a-stickin' of his nose into other folks' business. But I tell you, they useter tell me that thar dog had a good strain to him somwhar. Shep, or 'foundlan',or collie, or somethin'; but it hain't never crept out yit, that thar good strain haven't. I hev been a-looking fur it a mighty long time, but it ain't never showed itself yit. But I reckin it sholy must be thar."

"An' ye're keepin' of him all 'count that thar good streak what ain't never showed itse'f?" said the smart fellow.

"That I be'n't," said the owner of the cur. "You missed yer guess a mighty longways that thar time, sho'e as you bawn. I'm a-keepin' of him beka'se he air that like folks that ef I ware ter kill him, I'd feel like I hed bodaciously pizened a whole passel o' folks of my acquaintance."

And the smart man never answered a word (II, p. 3).

May 28, 1904

She was an old mountain woman. Days when I was disheartened she called to me above the noise of the treadle as she sat at the loom: "Don't get disencouraged now. Whatever you do, don't get disencouraged."

One day when we had been talking she said to me: "I know in my soul you make me think of a man I useter know whenst I ware a widder-woman livin' over yander, t'other side Elk River. That man ware called the Squire, an' I reckin' he ware in an' about the measlies', meanes', white man that ever ware. An' his meanes' hits ware at women folks, as didn't have any men folks ter hit back for 'em. An' me bein' a widder-woman, he up't an' treated me right mean, accordin' ter his nature. Once that man made a little land deal up twixt him an' me, an' he cheated me that bad I just couldn't get over it. I useter feel like, Lord! if I jest could take a hick'ry stick an' hit him, jest one good honest lick, I'd feel better the balance o' my days. I thought a lot about that. An' the more I thought, the more I felt sure that if I could give that rascal one lick it would ease my mind. I jest wanted to hit him bad. An' one day it come to me that it ware my own min' I ware tryin' to ease, when it might better to have been the Squire's.

So I changed my way o' meetin' him, with my head up, an' my eyes straight before me. Instead, whenever I met him I'd pull up my nag an' sing out gaily as a cricket: "Good mornin', Squire; I hope you're well an' hearty this morning', Squire.'"

"I ware that polite it plumb got away with him, sir; an' at last one day he rid over to my place, an' hitched his nag to the horse apple tree, an' walked in; an' sez he: 'Madam, I've rid over here to fix up that little land deal twixt you an' me. I allow,' sez he, 'I got more'n my lawful sheer in that thar deal, an' I want to change the line. Now what do you-uns think would be the fair thing?'

"Well, sir, I ware knocked all of a heap." "Sez I, 'Whatever you say is right, Squire, I'll abide by. For,' sez I, 'I ain't afeared but you'll be fair to me. For I've been a-think' a sight about that there trouble twixt you an' me, an' sez I to myself, 'a conscience is too big a thing fur a man to be carryin' around with a stain on it.'"

"Think o' others! think o' others! instead of wantin' to hit back at 'em; try to help 'em to ease thar own minds. Fur a man that's acted mean to a woman air bound to feel it, if he be a man; an' a conscience air a mighty werryin' thing sometimes, when it sets out to try itse'f" (II, p. 3).

May 28, 1904

She was an old woman, and somewhat "set," may be, "in her ways." One day they were trying to persuade her against her will.

"Oh, Granny," they said, "don't be narrow; times have changed since you were a girl. Things have broadened. Get out of the narrow way, Granny."

"Git out the norrer way, is it? Well, I'll lay I'll not. Seems ter me all the present day an' generation know air the trick o' skeerin' folks out o' thar principles by the cry of 'norrer!' Norrer folks air so skeered o' being named 'norrer' they're in an' about 'shamed ter tell when it's twelve erclock, sun'time. As fur me, whenst I ware a gal I l'arned as how that thar broad-gauge road ware the shore an' sartin' road ter destruction everlastin'. I hain't had no call ter change my l'arnin', so far."

Lots o' truth in that (II, p. 3).

January 2, 1905

She was an old mountain woman, and one day sitting in her cabin door watching the rain fall in that slow monotonous drizzle which means the dreaded "wet spell" that seems to last forever, someone remarked upon it:

"What do you do in the mountains in winter?"

"We don't 'do'," was the reply, "we just lives through it."

And there are times, that whether on the mountain or off, that come to all of us; times when all we can do is "just to live through it"; times when to sit still is the very hardest of all tasks, and yet is the only hope upon which victory hangs; times when the floods rise to the windows of the soul, and the lights of faith are darkened until the very stars are hidden; times when all we can do is just "to live through it." Perhaps it is a slander of a falsehood: the faithlessness of a friend we have loved or trusted, or worse than all, the feeling that we have been needlessly and heartlessly sacrificed. There is

nothing we can do; all the preaching since Adam will not help the hurt in our heart; all we can do is grip our strength together and "live through it." We can, but it takes time and—it hurts (II, p. 9).

April 8, 1905

From away up in the mountains of Tennessee comes a funny little wail anent the divorce question. The writer tells of a man whose wife took French leave of him. Now he is too poor to hire a nurse for his children, too poor to hire help to work for him, too poor to hire a house girl to clean up and dress his children, too poor to hire a cook, and so . . . he has to take care of them. Now then, that very poor man has to make beds, dress his children, fetch and carry and drudge, just like a woman. Being too poor to hire a negro to do this, he wants a wife, he does; one who will take charge of the whole blooming outfit, without money and without price. Humph! Mightn't this "poor" man be a trifle too "poor" to marry? (II, p. 3).

January 18, 1908

Away up from the mountains of Eastern Tennessee comes the true story of Old Aunt Sallie Mullins.[169]

Aunt Sallie Mullins was a famous distiller in her day, and her day was a very recent one too. She touched the beam at 500 pounds, and in her case it was decidedly a case of might against right? Well that depends on the point of view.

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[169]Aunt Sallie Mullins is in all probability Mahala Mullins, also known as Big Haley, "whose moonshine was known from one end of the Appalachians to the other in her time." She died in 1902. (Jean Patterson Bible, Melungeons: Today and Yesterday, p. 100.)

It was my privilege once to spend a few weeks at the home of "Little Johnny Mullins," a son of Aunt Sallie, who lived at the foot of the ridge, while the older people lived on top of it. They were clever old folks. I found nothing wanting in their hospitality. Aunt Sallie made whisky, and it is said she made no secret of it. Now and then a stray "revenuer" found his way up the "Ridge," and always he made a point of calling for Aunt Sallie. She never resisted arrest; on the contrary she always greeted Uncle Sam's invaders in a friendly spirit, and seating herself on the doorstep would say:

"All right gentle-men, come and take me."

And they never one time did go "and take her"; they couldn't; there wasn't a wagon on the mountain that would hold her 500 avoirdupois, and it wouldn't do to go spilling an old woman like that all down the mountain. So she lived and died there, a distiller, open and aboveboard, to the last day of her life. Most of the revenue officers knew her, but the man isn't himself known who was ever able to "take her" (II, p. 7).

February 22, 1908

I once knew an old woman in the mountains of Tennessee who had a loom. I used to climb up by her on the bench and watch her weave. Whenever I went over to watch the loom, the old lady seemed somehow to understand that it was a time of darkness, of some nature, to me, for she always made room for me and began to talk away like a house afire. And if I didn't respond as cheerily as she liked, she would chirp in between

the evolutions (sic) of the bobbin with this: "Don't get disencouraged; jest don't get disencouraged, and it'll all come out right."

I have thought a whole heap about my old friend's admonition since those days among the rugged hills, and the strong, able-bodied, healthy-souled people, and it seems to me that the wisdom of her words grows bigger and bigger as the years, with their burden of cares and responsibilities, slip between. "Don't get disencouraged; jest don't get disencouraged."

It isn't easy to toil against discouragement, and all that makes work possible at all is the object sought, the obligation resting upon the toiler. Sometimes the burden may seem unbearable; and sometimes it may be that this burden of responsibility is used for us to stifle the cries of some weightier sorrow in the heart. As, for instance, you have sometimes heard one sigh, "I simply haven't the time to nurse my grief," or "I was too busy to think of myself." So, after all, it may be that one grief helps to bear another—a hard lesson, but perhaps not an unwholesome one, after all. But the more I think and see and study upon the great tragedy of humanity the more I am impressed with the warning of the great man who said: "Unless it makes you a more thoughtful man or woman, be sure you are not getting the best out of your sorrow" (II, p. 3).

March 13, 1909

An old mountain woman was sitting in her doorway when two travelers stopped to beg a drink of water. The woman, all smiles, came

out with a brown, curltailed gourd and pointed to the spring just across the road.

"That looks good," exclaimed one of the travelers; "oh, but that gourd does look good; why I haven't seen a gourd like that since I was a boy, in knee breeches."

They had their draught, crystal pure and heavenly sweet, and went back to return the gourd.

"Thank you, ma'am," said one of them, "that was good. I should like to repay you some way for that."

"Well, then," replied the old woman, "take a cheer thar and tell me what's goin' on in the valley."

"W-h-a-t?" the man's astonishment was written all over his face.

"The news, man, I want the news," insisted the old woman. "You see we useter get it all up here at least onc't a week; fur then we-uns took the weekly paper and the old man went over to the store on Saturday reglar to get it, and thar he got all that was goin'. But since the gov'mint took ter sending the paper 'roun to the door, why they ain't no call fur the Sat-day tramp, and so thar we air. Now you-uns set down thar an' tell a curious old woman what's goin' on, an' ef you don't get a glass o' buttermilk fit fur the Preserdint, I miss my guess."

"And," said the man, "we did exactly as she said; told her everything goin' and were rewarded just as she promised. An if that old woman didn't enjoy the gossip of the great world—well, but it was curious, and it was fine. I can understand now how so many of our big brainy men come from the mountains of Tennessee" (II, p. 8).

April 17, 1909

The man who reckons upon the dullness of the Tennessee mountaineer reckons without his host. The mountaineer, when he sets his head to it is capable of the keenest ridicule, the most delicious humor, and the most cutting irony. A funny story is told of the resentment of the people among the Cumberland foothills when they learned that they had been dubbed "the covites" by university students in the habit of going down there to "carry the gospel" to the benighted heathen. When they heard they were known as "covites" they promptly explained that it was a nickname given them by the "university parasites" (II, p. 6).

August 21, 1909

Here is a mystery: Why any man who can live in the mountains of Tennessee, can successfully raise chickens, and all the chickens he wants, of all the kinds he wants, from big, fluffy Wyandottes to little old-fashioned yellow-legs, who has a good old-fashioned home, with a good old-fashioned sure enough mother to keep it for him, to feed him on good old-fashioned egg bread and fried ham, with good old-fashioned black gravy, and chicken pie, and sure enough unchicoried coffee, clear and red in the cup, with good old-fashioned long-sweetening, or short, as he may elect, and sure enough butter-making country cream from the country cows, who can grow his own tobacco, and smoke it too, in the corner of his own snug old-fashioned chimney corner, who still can look a blazing black log in the face without dropping dead, who has all the range of all the hills of Tennessee, for all the cattle and stock he

may elect to own, refreshing springs of water that the angels of heaven must pronounce perfect, unlimited, undiluted, and untaxed, springing free and unpiped from the rock-ribbed fountains to which God Almighty holds the eternal secret, who can have the free air of heaven for his nostrils with never a feather's breath of smoke and grime to mar its glory, for whom is outspread all the eternal vistas of the skies, with no more unsightly stack than his own towering hay stack to curtail the view, who can have time to sit under his own hop vine and "wonnut" tree, and watch his own bees hiving his winter's store of honey, who has time to eat, to drink, to dream, and to grow fat, who has a bite for himself and a bone for his dog, and a "cinch" on the cider mill; why a man, who has all this, free and unlimited, wants to "swap jobs" with the follow in a hotbed of grey, stone with uncertain friends and more uncertain politics, is a mystery too much for the almighty hand of almighty man, and the half-mind of ordinary woman. It is like swapping off life and health and a free man's heritage for pellagra and appendicitis.

Why does he want to?

Search me.

And as the cop exclaimed of the runaway nag:

"Head him off, somebody, for God's sake" (II, p. 8).

April 6, 1912

Away up in the mountains of Tennessee there lived a family a few years ago, well known throughout the district for courage, and also for that less commendable quality, revenge. In a little log house on the

crest of the tallest bluff dwelt the last survivors of the family, an old man and his old wife.

The stranger who chose to visit there was made welcome, even given that gracious hospitality that is to the soul of the mountaineer as breath to his body. The cabin was neat as scrubbing brush and woman's work could make it. An although the furniture was skimp and of the humbliest sort, it was enough, and plenty too. The bed, an old-fashioned concern with rope cords instead of slats, had a tall white featherbed, so white in its drapery, so tempting in its softness, as to make the heart of the weary throb with visions of rest and paradise. But! (And there is a nasty, mean "but" of some sort to every paradise) over this white, soft resting place dangled a dusty, half-work pair of man's boots.

Naturally the visitor wanted to know the meaning of the unusual decoration, and this visitor took the liberty of asking.

"Them boots," said the old man—and he was something of a grand old man too, and had suffered many wrongs at the hands of so-called friends—"them boots ware my son's boots. He had 'em on his feet when he ware shot down, in the back, by raiders. I am a-keeping of 'em there to remind me of the grudge I owe the man who set the sleuths on my boy's tracks. That ware ten years ago come spring, but I'll even things up with that there fine gentleman som o' these here good days."

Think of it! Carrying an unsleeping and unsatisfied hate in the heart for ten, long, good years; spoiling with hate one-seventh of the time allotted of God to the ordinary life of man. It is unheard of, foolish, disgusting. Yet that old man had something wherewithal to

justify his complaint. Unlike him in this respect there are many who go through life with an imaginary grudge eating away the good clean soul of justice and gentleness and brotherly sympathy which by God's good grace is theirs.

Don't hold grudges; if some one has wronged you, or said hateful and unfair things of you, stop to think if you haven't been equally unfair to them. Such a thing is most like to be. Perhaps they have heard of your unjust censure too. And then, too, perhaps the same dog that fetched the bone of gossip to you carried it back to them. Perhaps you are not all guiltless either. Perhaps they are not. But what of it? It was a wise man who said something to the effect that a man can't help ugly thoughts getting into his head sometimes, but he need not allow them to make nests in his brain.

Don't hold your grudges; unless you want to grow crooked and cross-sided instead of tall and straight and noble and commanding, as God meant you to grow. Such things are too little for big, beautiful life. They are too little for the grandeur of spirit that is possible to men and women who refuse to be warped and trammelled by grudges and those small sins whose very littleness is their own damnation.

Don't hold grudges. Perhaps the very ones against whom you are cherishing the little matters of revenge, hanging the boots of outraged friendship over your bed as a reminder, are nursing some sore of equal magnitude against you.

There was never a one-sided quarrel, and no matter whose the blame, or what the cause, put it out of sight; take up the frazzled edges of love and friendship and make good the wrong to yourself and to

others that the hidden hate has wrought. Not one of us is perfect, not one is above reproach, or suspicion, or blame of possibility of failure, or of falling. And you know what the old rhyme says, quoted as remembered:

"There is so much bad in the worst of us,
And so much good in the best of us,
It ill becomes any of us
To talk about the rest of us" (II, p. 2).

July 6, 1912

Women, perhaps more especially mountain women, can be cuttingly sarcastic when they choose to be. The other day a small boy of the hill country, who had heard a good deal of politics lately, and especially of the presidential campaign, and not being old enough to grasp the situation altogether went to his mother for enlightenment.

"Mother," said he, "can a hound dog run for President of the United States?"

"Shouldn't wonder," was the reply. "They run for might nigh ever'thing" (II, p. 2).

December 7, 1912

There was a woman in the hills of Tennessee, one of those sturdy, invincible souls who view the path outlined by duty and obligation and march straight for it, down it, through it, to the perfect end.

She was poor and ignorant, but hers was a fine soul.

The old woman had two sons, and for these she fought as the knightliest of knights fight for their honor's sake, which is the

grandest of all battles. The old mountain mother struggled and slaved and toiled, denied herself all things, to place her sons safely upon the road to independent manhood.

At last when it was done, when the boys were grown up, moved away, married and settled down among the progressive men in their respective places in the world, the heart of the busy old mother was near to breaking with the loneliness. She was already old, but suddenly a great light broke in the wonderful soul of her; there was nothing for her to work for now, the boys being fixed in their places, and so she determined to learn to read and write in her own barren old age, and in this way to surprise her sons; make them less ashamed if such a thing could be, of the ignorance of their mother, if some day she might go to see them.

It was a hard task, but in the love light of devotion it became a joy. Slowly the aged fingers, hardened by toil, unbent and learned to form the letters of her name and of theirs. Slowly the knowledge grew with practice; the lips learned the simple lesson of spelling; and one day she ventured to write a letter to her youngest born in his Western home.

It was a crude sort of a letter, like the writing of a little child indeed, but it was wonderful too, and so the boy found it. He and his wife were thrilled with the splendor of the achievement, that their lonely old mother should, for their sakes and for the joy of hearing from them, and of pleasing them, learn to write in her old age.

They figured out the poor, misformed letter, than answered it. They told her how glad they were, and how fine was her achievement, and

now they would hear from her often, and "that was the best of all."

When that letter reached the grim old hills that guard the Eastern pass to Tennessee the mountain mother shed tears of happiness; so emboldened was she by it that she ventured a second letter, one to her older son, he who had married away up in the ranks above him, and who, once the idol of her heart, was also the darling fear of it.

She sent the little half-printed, half-written missive, hope trembling in every line of the rude pen. The answer to it broke her heart.

"That you should do anything so silly," wrote the man-son; "never try to write to me again; I should be mortified to death to have my wife know my mother could write no better than that."

Hurt to the soul of her, the old brave mother carried the letter to the friend who had helped her in her task of learning, and laying it upon her knee she said:

"As long as my younger son and his dear wife are willing to cypher out the scrawls I make, I am going to keep on writing; but this man—I think I never want to see his face again" (II, p. 2).

May 21, 1922

A man from the mountains, "nameless here forevermore," said he could "match" that story of Harvey Hannah's about the mountain people of Tennessee.[170] Maybe he can, but I'm telling you there "ain't"

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[170]Hannah was an unsuccessful candidate in the Democratic gubernatorial primary in 1922. Austin Peay won the primary and subsequently defeated Republican Alfred Taylor in the general election.

nobody can out-match that fearless "contingent," and there are mighty few can beat Harvey when it comes to spinning a yarn. Harvey is after the scalp of his Uncle Alf, you know, and they say there are plenty of good and loyal people rooting for him this blessed minute. The man spinning the yarn said that the mountains are God's country; the mountaineers know it, and they simply won't stand for mere common man to come nosing around in that land of pure delight—and things.

No sir, they won't stand for any familiarity, and you can't go taking them for granted just because they don't live in the valley and own a Ford.

And so it happened that one day a stranger from the valley went up into the mountains and got lost. He rode up to a cabin where sat a young boy on the rail fence, dangling his legs and grinning. Said the stranger:

"Son, where will this road take me?"

"Right straight ter Kingdom Come, stranger," said the boy.

The man ruminated a bit, then said,

"Kingdom Come is in Kentucky, though, isn't it?"

"Naw, stranger," said the boy, "it's in heaven." (Only the boy didn't call it heaven.) (III, p. 4)

December 13, 1925

A young fellow in the mountain district of Tennessee dressed one morning in his best clothes and rode off on old Kit, the mule. All mountain mules seem to be Kit or Beck, and his was Kit. There was to be a dance over in the "Hollow," and a dance in the Hollow usually lasts

all night and sometimes the following day. The furniture is always moved out into the yard, the family cookstove along with the feather beds and other furniture. The young man was in high spirits.

He was due home the next morning, at the very latest. There was the plowing to be done. He was gone a week. When finally he returned his clothes were soiled, rumpled, ruined: the old mule, even, looked the worse for wear. Mountain folks are not inquisitive, as a rule, but this was something unusual:

"You're a plumb sight!" said his mother. "A plumb scandalous figger of a man; all caked up with mud and trach. Tuk a whole week, did it, to 'cumulate all that real estate?"

"Aw, Maw, hush up," grinned the boy. "I staid a week, yes'm. You see, I fell in love."

"Huh!" said Maw, "looks more lak you fell in a well" (I, p. 6).

October 5, 1930

The typical Tennessee mountaineer, of the backwoods' type, isn't given greatly to humor, but when he does "get funny" he says something to the point, although even then the humor of it lies chiefly in the way he says it. Here is an instance.

A man from another state was traveling along a narrow road he had been told would bring him out to the State highway. Being somewhat uncertain of the way he drew up the car before the door of a cabin where sat an old man dozing in the sun. He looked up at the stranger's call but that was all. Said the traveler:

"Will you please tell me where this road goes?"

"Nowhars. It stays right thar whar God A'mighty put it."

And that was all that could be got out of him. He didn't like the highway, which brought strangers of every type, good and bad, "hailing at the house like he ware a guide book."

And there is another store a traveler told of a recent trip through these same mountains. He met, however, a different type in the old man, he accosted and lingered hoping for a moment's chat. The old man responded willingly enough, if dryly, to the numerous questions put to him. Finally the stranger, looking up at the tattered roof of the cabin and thinking of the rigors of winter, asked:

"Do you stay here all the time?"

"Not quite," was the reply. "I step down to town sometimes" (III, p. 8).

IV. THE POETRY

Dancing Tucker in the Mountains

'Way up among the mountains,
The breezy, bracing mountains,
The blue an' balmy mountains
The hills o' Tennessee!

In Polly Marchbanks' cabin,
With tallow dips for light,
The boys and girls together
Would meet a Sadday night,
An' maybe it wasn't han'some,
An' 't wasn't good ter see
The way they all danced Tucker
In the hills o' Tennessee.

What a rush for pardners,
When the game was fairly on;
With allers one gal missin',
So Tucker danced alone.
An' the fidle in the corner,
With a "tweedle-deedle-dum"
An' a "tweedle-deedle dee,"
While the boys an' gals danced Tucker
In the hills o' Tennessee.

'Way up among the mountains,
The breezy, bracing mountains,
The blue an' balmy mountains.
The hills o' Tennessee.

The boys a-gallavantin',
With heads up in the air,
An' pretty gals a-gigglin',
God knows He made 'em fair!
An' the good ol' fiddle goin',
With a "tweedle-deedle-dee,"
An' a "tweedle-deedle-dum,"
An' Tucker standin' lonesome like,
A-suckin' of his thumb.

An' 't was "Hands a-roun' the circle!"
  "Tweedle-deedle-dum,"
An' "Tweedle-deedle-dee,"
  "Chassay to the lady!"
Tweedle-deedle-dum,
  An' tweedle-deedle-dee,
"Give yo' pardner yo' right han'—"
  Gewhilliken! the rush!
An' all promernade,"
  Jemima Ann, the crush!

With Tucker, may be sprawlin'
  Full length the puncheon floor;
An' dancers all respondin'
  In one tremendous roar,
While the fiddle kep' the keynote,
  With a "tweedle-deedle-dum,"
An' a "tweedle-deedle-dee,"
  That's how they all danced Tucker
In the hills o' Tennessee.

'Way up among the mountains,
The breezy, bracing mountains,
The blue an' balmy mountains,
The hills o' Tennessee.

Banner, 11-28-03, II, p. 1

A Tennessee Corn-Shucking

'Twas a mighty good ol' fashion,
  Back thar in Tennessee,
When the corn had all been gathered
  To have a shuckin' bee.
A huskin', some folks call it,
  But the style in Tennessee
Of namin' it a shuckin'
  Ware good enough for me.

Talk about yer golden punkin,
  Talk o' frost and cider-time,
When persimmons air a-ripenin'
  And 'possums in their prime;
Talk o' dancin', ef ye're mind to,
  Talk about yer Christmas spree,
Them Tennessee corn-shuckins
  Ware good enough for me.

Back thar among the mount'ns!
  Oh, for them hills again!
In a cabin by the cross-roads
  I first met Lethe Jane.
Her voice ware like the music
  When birds an' brooks combine;
Her name for me ware "Sweetie,"
  An' mine for her "Sunshine."

'Twas at a big corn-shuckin',
  An' the Lost Cove boys ware there,
An' the gals from t'other mountain,
  An' might' nigh ever'where!
An' Lethe she ware settin'
  Jest oppersite to me,
An, I kept a-kind o' whisperin',
  "Pretties' gal in Tennessee!"

An' I clear forgot the shuckin'
  Till Bob Gray touched my hand;
Sez he, "You've got a red-ear!
  Come! claim yer kiss, ol' man."
I held it up to Lethe—
  Her pretty eyes sought mine—
An' sez I, as I flung it,
  "I want my kiss, Sunshine."

One time, as I remember,
  'Twas at a shuckin' bee,
I had a talk with Lethe,
  An' Lethe talked with me;
An sez I, kind o' haltin',
  Ye ben't afeard, Sunshine?"
Sez she, "Not with you, Sweetie,"
  An' she laid her hand in mine,—

An' before another autumn
  My Lethe Jane an' me
Just mounted my roan filly
  An' rid out of Tennessee;
To Texas, nigh the border;
  We struggled there a year;
An' not a blessed murmur
  From Lethe did I hear.

But women's hearts air curious;
  I've thought about it some—
How did I know my gal-wife's
  Ware breakin' to get home?
Them little tricks o' heartache
  That don't come round to men,
But light upon a woman
  Like a sort of drippin' rain,—

A-stealin' of her roses,
  With thar slow an' steady drip,
An' kind o' sort o' stiflin'
  The laugh upon her lips.
An' one night upon the Brazos,
  In our little cabin home,
When the moon shined on the river,
  An' the little crickets hummed,—

A night in early autumn—
  About corn shuckin' time;
An' the wind it kept a-whisperin'
  Like a half-breathed funeral hymn;
A funeral for Lethe;
  So so it seemed to me,
In that little Texas cabin
  So far from Tennessee.

I set beside my gal-wife,
  An' Death set side o' me;
A solemn, awful presence!
  An' all at once sez she:
"You've got a red ear, Sweetie,
  Come! fling it over here to me!"
She ware back at the corn-shuckin',
  Back home in Tennessee.

An' the wind it kept a-whisperin'
  In that lonesome funeral way,
And the fodder blades ware shinin'
  In the moonlight clear as day;
An' her head war on my shoulder,
  Her pretty, golden head,
Sez she, "The crop air gathered!"
  An' Lethe Jane ware dead.

So when the year grows ruddy,
  The golden fodder shakes,
An' pretty ring-doves callin'
  Down in the willer brakes,
An' all the trees air noddin',
  As lonesome as can be,
I sighs, an' sez, "They're shuckin'
  Back home in Tennessee."

Banner, 9-17-04, II, p. 7

Missin' of You

Seem like I jest can't forgit you,
  Though I try the best I kin.
Seems like nuthin' lef to liv for
  Till I see your face ag'in.

Sometimes seem like I kin hear you,
  Callin' to me on the stair;
An' I turn an' look to see you
  With the sunlight on your hair.

An' the shadder of the mountain
  Falls upon my cabin door;
Where the sunbeams useter gambol,
  All along the puncheon floor.

An' the river ripples seaward,
  Like the jingle of a rhyme;
But I only hear my spirit,
  Callin' for you all the time.

Winter comes, the frozen stubble
  Rattles to the rabbit's tread;
And the winds call low and lonesome,
  Where the summer leaves lie dead.

An' the gray mists hang their banner,
  Solemn like, an' cold an' still,
Mong the white slabs of the graveyard,
  Over on the Southern hill.

Summer comes, the shadders linger,
  In my heart an' on my door;
For since you been gone an' left me,
  Ain't no summer-time no more.

An' the wild bird in the rose bush
  Sing the best it kin, I know;
But seem like I sca'ce kin hear him,
  Just for missin' of you so.

Missin' of you in the forest,
  Missin' of you on the stair;
Missin' of you in the cabin,
  Missin' of you everywhere!

Makes no diffunce o' the weather,
  If it's foul or if it's fair;
Makes no diffunce what the world is,
  If the one we love ain't there.

Banner, 1-2-05, II, p. 9

My Mountain Home

Beloved mountain, back to thee
  I come a weary child;
These silent shades where erst I roamed
  Ere fate's unrest beguiled,
And fair as fabled phantoms are
  The happy future smiled.

I've chased the phantoms one by one,
  As heedless dreamer must;
I've torn the veil from false Hope's face
  And startled pale Distrust;
I've kissed the golden apple's cheek,
  And found the mocking dust.

Dear mother-mountain to thine own
  I lay my heart and weep;
Back to the hemlock and the pine,
  The shadow-girdled steep;
The mellow mists, the soughing winds
  That sing my soul to sleep.

Sweet healer, to thy calm I cling,
  Thy blessed balm I seek;
Oh, lay thy healing to my heart
  Before the strained cords break;
The shadows creep across my soul,
  And Faith's foundations shake.

They need not tell me that my pain
  Awakes no kindred sigh;
They need not tell me that my tears
  Have found thy great heart dry;
Thy crags and shadow-glens, I know,
  Repeat my spirit's cry.

My soul, storm-driven, turns to thee,
  Sweet Ararat, and clings;
Back to the shelter of thy crags—
  No olive branch she brings,
But safe within thy silent shades,
  She folds her broken wings.

Banner, 3-17-06, II, p. 7

In the Hills of Tennessee

In the hills of Tennessee,
Where the sun is shining;
Where the laurel and the thorn
With the rose is twining,
Where the purple skies bend down
To the white cliffs serried;
In the hills of Tennessee
All my heart lies buried.

Banner, 10-13-06, II, p. 6

Far Hills and Near

On the far heights the sunbeams fall
  Caressing, warm and still;
The purpling shadows, long and tall,
  Enfold the nearer hill.
But at its foot a wild flower grows
The distant mountain never knows.

The far heights beckon, call and woo,
  And promise happy things;
But in the near hill's rugged view
  A joyous fountain sings,
And greening grasses, cool and sweet,
Give resting to the tired feet.

The distant far heights' visioned face
  Reveals no noble scars;
And oft at night their lofty grace
  Is circled with the stars;
The rugged souls the near hills stand
To grapple, guard, endure, command.

Banner, 9-16-16, III, p. 10

The Mountains

I gaze upon your rugged face,
  And marvel at your calm;
I see, carved in your stolid grace,
  The sculptured soul of Balm.

You who have watched the aeons roll,
  Unmoved in kingly might,
In you I see the changeless soul
  Of God, and Truth, and Right,

You tower along the far clouds' path,
  Serene in drifting blue;
Oh, hills, teach me the sturdy faith
  To stand alone like you.

To stand alone and unafraid,
  Howe'er my rede shall run;
To lift aloft an unbowed head,
  Storm-scarred or warm with sun.

I gaze upon your rugged face,
  Like life, deep-seamed with care;
And every line of stolid grace
  Shows God's great finger there.

I've watched the sullen storm clouds drift,
  And grapple with your form;
I've watched you battle through the rift,
  And tower above the storm.

Teach me the silence of great sould,
  Like yours, too large for speech,
The heights blazed in your granite scrolls,
  Which only stout hearts reach.

I gaze upon your rugged face,
  Like life, deep-seamed with care,
And in each line of stolid grace
    I read God's finger there.

Banner, 2-17-24, III, p. 10

Lone Mountain

Like a sword, the river thrust
The proud mountain through,
Left it standing where it must,
One, though cleft in two.

And it stands forever there,
Half on either shore,
Wondering if, some other where,
Shall they meet once more.

Severed forms, they proudly stand,
Towering in the sun,
Proudly telling all the land
Still their hearts are one.

Parted lovers, wondering still,
If perchance will be—
Laggard Time their breath will heal
Or Eternity.

Banner, 9-21-24, III, p. 10

Deserted

There's a little old log cabin
In the hills of Tennessee,
Where the radiant golden summer
Smiles in voiceless ecstasy.

In the shadow of the mountain,
'Mong the sturdy Southern hills,
Where the brave Elk ripples softly
Wooing all the laughing rills.

There's a little knot of cedars,
There's a sagging, worn old gate,
And a whippoorwill's low plaining
In the twilight desolate.

And there's a rambling honeysuckle,
And a path that's growing green,
Where the sunlight falls and flickers,
With a shadow and a sheen.

There's a white clematis waving,
In the waif-winds overhead;
There's a ragged doorstep waiting,
For the footsteps of the dead.

O! that little empty cabin,
Waiting, waiting all forlorn,
In the hush of midnight waiting
For the glory of the morn.

O! that little footpath greening,
Trailing vine, and closed door,
Waiting, like a heart breaks waiting
For a step that comes no more.

There's a little old log cabin
In the hills of Tennessee,
Through the sad years' harsh unresting
I can hear it speak to me.

And I hush my heart to listen,
Half in rapture, half in pain;
Then, bold in its magic message,
Turn to face life's fight again.

Thus forever, calling softly,
Silent voices still attest
Love's strange, unvoiced, holy nearness
To the children of unrest.

Unprinted; date unknown

PART III: CONCLUSION

I. CONCLUSION

In 1899, during an interview in The Coming Age magazine, Dromgoole observed: ". . . the mountaineer [has] figured so much in the fiction—such exquisite fiction, too—of the more experienced writers that I am doing but little in that line now."[171] Dromgoole apparently felt that others were writing better mountain literature or that the market was not as profitable for works dealing with the mountains. It is unlikely that the author had lost interest in the mountains since she states clearly in later years how much she loves and respects the mountain people and their culture. The last mountain story Dromgoole published, "The Light of Liberty" (1904), is, in fact, the only mountain tale of hers to appear in the twentieth century. Both of Dromgoole's Melungeon articles were published in 1890, and the majority of the column material concerning the mountaineer was printed before 1913; most contain stories of events that happened much earlier in the author's life. Similarly, most of the mountain poems were published in the Banner during the early years of the "Song and Story" column. All of these facts make it obvious that Dromgoole's period of mountain literature began early in her career and for all practical purposes ended by 1915, with only occasional poems and columns appearing in the later years, and with most of these concerning experiences she had had earlier in life.

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[171] "Conversation with Will Allen Dromgoole," The Coming Age, 1 (June, 1899), 617.

There are several possible reasons for Dromgoole's virtual abandonment of the mountains as a subject for her fiction and poetry. The suggestion that others were writing "better" mountain literature must be taken seriously. Dromgoole began writing mountain stories nearly ten years after Mary N. Murfree, who is considered to be the most important writer of Southern mountain fiction in the nineteenth century. Murfree's national popularity more than likely affected Dromgoole's decision, for though her mountain fiction was highly acclaimed it was not as well received nationally as Murfree's. One major difference between Dromgoole and Murfree, however, was that Dromgoole was interested in writing on many different topics and in all genres, while Murfree confined herself primarily to mountain subjects and fiction. Dromgoole obviously had no one favorite subject or genre, choosing instead to experiment with various topics and forms of literature.

Another possible reason for Dromgoole's turning away from mountain literature was her long newspaper career, which began in 1902 and continued until her death in 1934. In addition to her weekly column, which undoubtedly required much of her time, Dromgoole became the literary editor of the Banner in 1922 and was also kept busy with many speaking engagements. Because of these added responsibilities to her career, Dromgoole wrote very little fiction of any kind during the last ten years of her life, preferring to devote her time to the column and her poetry. Of course, these are all conjectures since the author never made any public statement as to why she stopped writing about the mountaineer, but by examining Dromgoole's life it is easy to see that she was a woman who enjoyed living life to the fullest and

seeking new experiences. In view of these personal characteristics, it seems reasonable to apply the same philosophies to her writing; Dromgoole enjoyed challenges and seemed to challenge herself to try as many new techniques and subjects as was possible during her career. Dromgoole's literature is as versatile and as diversified as was its author.

Because Dromgoole wrote such a small amount of mountain literature as compared to Murfree, for example, it is difficult to evaluate with regard to style and theme. Additionally, literature of this sort should not be judged by modern standards because regional literature is not accepted today as enthusiastically as it was sixty years ago. By looking at observations of several of her contemporaries, however, it is obvious that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Dromgoole and her writings were enjoyed and admired by many. A general measure of Dromgoole's popularity can be seen by the fact that in 1898, over fifty thousand cloth-bound copies of her works were sold.[172]

In 1899, the person who interviewed Dromgoole in The Coming Age says that "she is one of the few modern writers who can interpret her creations in such a manner as to delight the most fastidious, possessing the rare power of throwing life into her renditions, without at any time overacting or straining after effect."[173] The author continues to

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[172]"Miss Dromgoole and Her Work," The Coming Age, 1 (June, 1899), 613.

[173]Ibid.

praise Dromgoole by speaking of her great versatility, saying that "one might imagine the work ["The Heart of Old Hickory" and Other Stories of Tennessee] to be by several authors . . . Rarely do we find an author who succeeds . . . in changing the atmosphere of the various stories to meet the different phases of life depicted."[174] Dromgoole's versatility is an often-mentioned strength, and most of her reviewers seem to enjoy her style and treatment of characters as well as the emotional quality of her work. For example, M. L. Littleton says in a 1904 Arena article that "love pervades her work; not the love of passion, but . . . the love of man for his brother man . . . The moral strength of her 'people' rings true; it is founded in faith . . . ."[175] Dromgoole's love of mankind is obvious in her works, but perhaps even more predominant is her love of nature. Although she subordinates scenery to character, there are moving descriptions of the mountain settings, descriptions that could only come from a person who knew the rugged beauty and splendor of the mountains.

Many people praised the above aspects of Dromgoole's works, and there are those who also publicly voiced their respect for her as a person as well as a writer. An example of Dromgoole's popularity and the respect given to her by colleagues is a statement made by her close friend Will T. Hale:

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[174]Ibid., p. 606.

[175]M. L. Littleton, "In the Footsteps of Will Allen Dromgoole," Arena, 32 (September, 1904), 295.

> No feminine writer in Tennessee is better or more favorably known than Miss Dromgoole. She deserves her reputation. I have had many strangers, first meeting me, to mention Miss Dromgoole's just fame—not realizing that I might become envious! Well, she deserves all success, and if I could make it greater, it would give me pleasure. Everyone knows she is a poet, and she is a novelist of merit also.[176]

Perhaps the most influential person in the initial stages of Dromgoole's career was B. O. Flower, editor of the Arena and close friend of the author's. In an article in his magazine, Flower offers one of the first glimpses into the personality of Dromgoole, as well as some insight into the quality of her work:

> Miss Dromgoole is nothing if not a southerner, and her love of the South is only surpassed by the affection she feels for the mountains and valleys of dear old Tennessee. She is a woman of conviction and possesses the spirit of our era in a large degree . . . Her new volume of short stories merits more than a passing word of notice. It illustrates the author's power and versatility in a forcible manner, and will prove a valuable addition to the literature of genuine merit from the pens of southern writers. The first two sketches, "The Heart of Old Hickory" and "Fiddling His Way to Fame," are semi-historical, and in each ex-Governor Taylor is a prominent character. The first of these sketches is, in my judgment, one of the finest short stories of the present generation. It has proved unusually popular and displays the wonderful power of its gifted author in blending humor and pathos, while investing with irresistable fascination a sketch which in the hands of any other than an artist would appear tame and insipid. It is a masterpiece in its way, and like all her writings deals largely with the hopes, sorrows, aspirations, and tragedies of the common life in Tennessee.[177]

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[176]Will T. Hale, "Southern Literary Matters," The Nashville Banner, 26 August 1923, p. 7.

[177]B. O. Flower, "Books of the Day: A Southern Woman of Genius and Her Work," Arena, 14 (1895), 506-08.

Flower continues his praise in another publication by saying,

> They [the stories] proved exceedingly popular and have been more widely used by public readers and elocutionists than the sketches of any other contemporaneous short story writer. These two volumes afford an admirable illustration of the remarkable versatility of the author.[178]

Such praise was not uncommon during Dromgoole's lifetime. As an illustration of this, the 1910 Vanderbilt University Commencement exercises honored Dromgoole with a program chosen entirely from the author's works in appreciation of her excellence as an author. Another honor bestowed upon Dromgoole was her appointment as Poet Laureate in 1930 by The Poetry Society of the South. In addition to these public honors, Dromgoole received hundreds of letters from readers who appreciated and loved her "Song and Story" column; Dromgoole never reveals the contents or authors of these letters in her column, but she frequently mentions receiving them and thanks her readers for responding to her work. After Dromgoole's death in 1934, the Banner ran a front page article on her life-long accomplishments, and later issues contain tributes—some in prose, others in verse—written by readers from many parts of the country who wanted to show some small measure of appreciation to the woman who had meant so much to them. One article that appeared shortly after Dromgoole's death summed up what many people undoubtedly felt about her life and her passing:

> Her writings possessed a fidelity to nature, an insight into the emotions and a charm of delineation that attracted

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[178] B. O. Flower, "A Daughter of Tennessee," Arena, 31 (1904), 89. The two volumes Flower refers to are "The Heart of Old Hickory" and Other Stories of Tennessee and "Cinch" and Other Stories.

> immediate attention . . . She was the author of thirteen books. Her dialect stories were cameos of the hills and equal the best work of [Murfree] . . . Miss Dromgoole's place, however, in the literature of the South will be enduringly won, in the opinion of most, by her productions as a poet. The power was a gift in which she took delight, cultivated and expanded. Many of her compositions exhibited the delicacy of Keats, the tenderness of Lanier, and rich imagery of Timrod.[179]

As the above passage states, Dromgoole was primarily known for her poetry, but before she began her journalistic career, her fiction was very popular as well. In late 1903, however, with the inception of her column, Dromgoole's reputation, from then until her death, rested upon her skill as a columnist and poet. In a time when sentimentality was enjoyed and appreciated, Dromgoole gave her readers tales and poems that were full of melancholy and overwhelming sentimentality. Dromgoole much preferred the sentimental styles of the late nineteenth century to the realism of Dreiser and Howells. According to M. L. Littleton, "her realism is not that dreary thing so often mistaken for it,—materialism,—but rather an intuitive spiritual vision born of genius for quick, reportorial observation, and cultured by the suffering that is every woman's due who toils upward to artistic success."[180] Dromgoole's fiction and poetry contain a curious mixture of styles that bridges the gap between the nineteenth-century Victorian and the more

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[179]This article may be found in a scrapbook in the Dromgoole Manuscripts, Special Collections, Hoskins Library, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The clipping has no date, title, or newspaper name on it, but because of the nature of the article, it is presumed to have been written shortly after Dromgoole's death.

[180]M. L. Littleton, p. 295.

modern twentieth-century realism, but not belonging truly to either time. The author liberally applied morals to almost everything she wrote; even her column material is frequently made tedious by overbearing advice. It is this overriding sentiment and moralizing that perhaps led readers away from Dromgoole's works in the twentieth century. Furthermore, Dromgoole's popularity was affected adversely by the fact that local color literature was being supplanted by the more realistic literature of the period. For many years regional and local literature was considered by many to be inferior to the more realistic literature of the twentieth century, and only the very best of the local color writers survived—a group which did not include Dromgoole. It was not until the late 1960s, when an interest in regional literature was revived, that readers began to rediscover some of Tennessee's earlier mountain literature. Once again, however, the nature of the literature, especially the form and themes of the poetry, the excessive sentimentality, and the heavy mountain dialect no longer spoken, proved to be a hindrance to the appreciation of the works.

Regardless of the problems associated with it, all of this literature of the mountains is important, perhaps not in a national sense, but certainly in a regional sense, because it defines a culture, people, and language of a specific time period—a society which has not existed since World War I. The accounts are fictional, for the most part, but the authors sought to represent their subjects as accurately as was possible within their experience and still maintain the appreciation of their readers. And any person studying the nineteenth-century mountaineer should examine the fictional as well as the factual

accounts of the mountaineer, the former being more frequently found than the latter.

The mountain literature of Will Allen Dromgoole may be insignificant when placed in the context of all American literature, but within the context of Tennessee literature, and even Appalachian literature, her works are equal in quality, if not quantity, to those of any writer of mountain fiction during this period and should be recognized as such. Dromgoole's forte was not in mountain literature, but she proved that she could write acceptable and realistic stories of the Tennessee mountaineer that were enjoyed by her readers—not merely superficial stories of the mountains with cardboard characters and stereotyped speech, but stories that mature with the author, stories that incorporate realistic characters, settings, and speech to project a reasonably accurate fictional image of a people and culture that no longer exists in the form Dromgoole describes. Dromgoole's literature, and that of others like her, should be dusted off and read in order to preserve a history that few of us know anything of. Ironically, Will Hale predicted that "a generous number of the things written by Miss Dromgoole will not willingly be allowed by the public to die."[181] Yet in the course of less than fifty years, Will Allen Dromgoole, whose name was a household word in Middle Tennessee in the first half of this century, and her literature, once read by thousands, are generally

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[181]Will T. Hale, "Will Allen Dromgoole," The Library of Southern Literature, ed. Edwin Anderson Alderman and Joel Chandler Harris (New York: The Martin and Hoyt Co., 1909), p. 1433.

unknown to modern readers; those who remember her at all recall only that she had a long-running column in the Banner. Even her living relatives know little about her. It is rather curious that such a dynamic, outspoken, and talented writer who was popular throughout her lifetime could be forgotten in such a short time.

In closing this study, a quotation from Emma Bell Miles' The Spirit of the Mountains serves beautifully to describe the almost spiritual qualities that are often seen in Dromgoole's mountain literature, as well as the love that all who love the mountains feel:

> Only a superficial observer could fail to understand that the mountain people really do love their wilderness—love it for its freedom . . . The charm and mystery of bygone days broods over the mountain country—the charm of pioneer hardihood, of primitive place, of the fatalism of ancient peoples . . . To one who understands these high solitudes, it is no marvel that the inhabitants should be mystics, dreamers given to fancies often absurd, but often wildly sweet . . . All alike cling to the ungracious acres they have so patiently won, because of the wide world that lies outside their puny fences, because of the dream vistas, blue and violet, that lead their eyes afar among the hills.[182]

Will Allen Dromgoole was no superficial observer; she at times was a dreamer "given to fancies often absurd," and she had "dream vistas," though many of her dreams were realized during her lifetime. Dromgoole knew, loved, and respected the mountain people especially because of their honesty and simple ways of life. That Dromgoole empathized with the mountaineer can be seen in the sensitivity exhibited in her stories.

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[182]Emma Bell Miles, The Spirit of the Mountains (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1975), pp. 17-19.

Of the noted mountain authors of Tennessee, Dromgoole has been overshadowed by two of the most popular—Harris and Murfree. Murfree is considered the best depictor of the Tennessee mountaineer, while Harris is considered one of the most important humorists of the nineteenth century. Today, Harris's popularity exceeds both Murfree's and Dromgoole's. Dromgoole has never had as high a reputation as Murfree or Harris, and the possible reasons for this are numerous, as have been previously stated. Two more obvious reasons are that Dromgoole scholarship is virtually nonexistent, and her books have been out of print for many years. Her poetry was never collected, and since the "Song and Story" column was printed in a newspaper, it was most likely thrown away soon after the paper had been read. In addition, Dromgoole's works are not found in any anthology of Southern literature, there are very few biographical encyclopedias that list her, and she is not mentioned in any of the standard scholarly works on Southern literature. Considering the quality and versatility exhibited in her short mountain fiction, Dromgoole is entitled to some credit of her own and certainly to more recognition than she has received since her death. More importantly, her mountain literature needs to be remembered and preserved in order to fully understand the impact and contribution of the mountaineer to the rich and diverse heritage of Tennessee.

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