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MISS CELESTINE

By Fielding Ridge.

FROM the Acadian hamlet came shouts of children who were turning to advantage the last moments of daylight. I could see their little figures clearly outlined against the horizon as they scampered backwards and forwards in the pasture beyond. Sometimes when a child's mother had patronized the village store in place of weaving her own homespun, a dash of color, a vivid red, was added to the scene.

The sails of the windmill barely stirred in the spring air and as I looked, Rougette and Cherry, Moll and Rose came from the milking pan softly tinkling their bells as they passed.

In a little while, I knew, lights would begin to glimmer in the village windows, and smoke would curl up from the low mud chimneys, a pleasing sign of supper to come. Our neighbor across the way would soon gather in her little flock from the troop of merry, shouting children, and I found myself speculating as to how many times the cry of "Angele, Jacques, venez donc," would come shrilly across the pasture, before they would finally yield to parental urging.

Miss Celestine Lagraize sat opposite to me on the porch. Though conversation languished, it was evident that with her this was not due to a contemplation of the scene. Picturesque it was to me, but to her it was only one of those dull realities which one accepts without thought and to which the idea of beauty does not attach.

As I looked at her, I could scarcely believe that in former years she had been called "la belle Celestine Legraize," but so it was. My hostess had told me but the evening before that at one time Miss Celestine had been the village belle. It was hard to credit it.

True, her eyes were very large and dark, but their luster was gone and there was nothing left of her beauty. After the manner of "Cajans," as they are called in that part of the world, she had aged early.

The topics which we had in common were few, but Miss Celestine's social call was something of long duration. We had discussed flowers, chickens and vegetable gardens until my brain refused to give me another idea. The shadows began to lengthen, and that chill which marks the approach of night became perceptible. Still Miss Celestine lingered. I could not flatter myself that it was because she had found me overwhelmingly interesting. I was aware that it was a part of her social etiquette (one handed down to her for generations) to pay this protracted call. She would have thought it lacking in courtesy if she had brought her visit to a close sooner.

I knew that after awhile she would rise with the time-worn excuse for not remaining still longer, "Eh bien, je m' ennuie pas mais il faut que je m'en aille" (Well, I'm not bored, but I must go).

How often in other days when entertaining "Cajan" visitors had I rejoiced in the fact that I was not forced to confess my own feelings on the subject. It would have been hard to reconcile courtesy and candor!

By chance, in a search for ideas, I mentioned Pointe des Arbres, a thriving Louisiana town which I had visited in my rambles. To my surprise, Miss Celestine suddenly became enthusiastic. She leaned forward and an unexpected color came into her sallow face.

"Ah, that is a place where one might live," she murmured.

I remembered Pointe des Arbres as a little town thriving in a business sense, but hopelessly provincial. I recalled how it aped city customs and thus lost the charm it might have possessed had it clung to country ways. The little Acadian hamlet was at least picturesque. I could not say as much for the town of larger growth. Miss Celestine and I evidently regarded it from a different angle of vision.

"Why, what is so nice about Pointe des Arbres?" I asked with real interest.

"There are so many people there," said Miss Celestine, "and there is the levee to walk on, where one sees all one's friends on Sunday afternoons. Then there are balls in the spring of the year—one is not dead like here. Perhaps," she added hesitatingly as though she feared I might think her boastful, "you do not know that my brother Telesphore is a master mechanic in Pointe des Arbres. Yes," she continued, "and he lives in the red house near the postoffice."

I remembered the place as a gaudy little structure with a horrible pretense at style. The flower beds were primly defined by a border of blue and red stakes about six inches high, while two ferocious looking dogs grinned at one from either side of the steps. I had never been inside, but in driving past, I had often wondered if I might not decide with a reasonable certainty that within on the parlor hearth rug the counterpart of these dogs might be found in vivid red on a background of blue! But it was evident that to Miss Celestine's mind this house represented all that was beautiful.

"I was never there but once," she said wistfully, "but some day I hope I shall go back for a while. My brother is married and has three children," she said as I showed a becoming interest in the subject, "and my sister-in-law wants me to come and live with her."

"And will you do so?" I asked.

"But no," she replied. "Who would take care of my mother? She is no longer young."

The words were simple, but they conveyed a world of love.

It was a pleasure to her, I could see, to talk of her brother Telesphore and his prosperity. With no intention of boasting, she dwelt with pride on his house that had a hall down the center (this seemed extraordinary to her). More than that, her sister-in-law kept a servant!

When at last I told her "good-by" she had gained an interest for me. I had met just another person with a "Carcasonne."

It was three years later when I next saw Miss Celestine. Her mother was dead and she had come to live with her brother's family.

Although I was only spending a few days in Pointe des Arbres, I intended to look up my old acquaintance, but before I had time to do so I met her one morning as I was on my way to the post office.

She was rolling a baby carriage while two cross-looking children tugged at her skirts and in voluble French demanded her attention. She was just in front of the gaudy little house—the door stood open and I caught a glimpse of the much-talked-of hall, while I mentally decided that Mme. Telesphore had now virtually two servants!

It seemed to me that Miss Celestine looked much older than when I had last seen her and gray threads were beginning to show in her heavy black hair. Her eyes had tired, dark lines beneath them as if she was often weary, but had no time to indulge in moments of repose.

I wondered if her "Carcasonne" had been all that she dreamed it to be, or if the present ever drifted away and in thought she was back again in the little Acadian hamlet tending her flowers and chickens!

As we stood chatting on the brick pavement, a buggy came rattling down the street.

When one tarries awhile in Pointe des Arbres, one catches the spirit of the place and looks with real interest upon the most trivial occurrences. The affairs of one's neighbors there possess an unparalleled importance; thus I turned instinctively to catch a glimpse of the occupants of the buggy.

The man would have attracted attention anywhere. With his deep-set dark eyes and singularly classic features, he seemed a type of the early picturesque Acadian, and I could not help thinking what a magnificent hero of Longfellow's poem "Evangeline" he would have made.

I noticed little about the woman at his side, except that she was of a massive style of good looks and seemed much overdressed.

"Who is that man?" I asked Miss Celestine, seeing that they had exchanged bows.

"That," she said, slowly, "is Achille Rodrigue, and that is his wife with him."

"Achille Rodrigue," I repeated to myself. Why, that was the man I had heard several people discussing but the evening before as I sat on the hotel porch. They seemed to be much impressed by the fact that after 13 years of unswerving devotion to one woman, he had startled everyone by marrying a widow who had long been keenly alive to the worldly advantages of such a match.

No one seemed to know exactly why he and his first love had never married. Some one suggested that the girl had sacrificed herself to the selfishness of her mother, but whatever it was, Achille Rodrigue had shown a constancy which his associates at first regarded with surprise, but afterwards learned to accept as part of his nature.

His marriage lately, therefore, occasioned no small astonishment, and there were many theories advanced on the subject.

Theophile, the blacksmith, who seemed to know Achille Rodrigue better than the others did, asserted loudly that Achille's great, strong heart had been touched by the widow's open devotion to him and that he had married her out of pity, perhaps wishing to bring into some other life the brightness his own lacked.

Apart from the speakers, sitting in the gray dusk on the hotel porch, I listened idly to the bits of conversation which floated to me on the evening air. My thoughts drifted from Achille to the girl he had loved in those other days. I wondered what had been her fate, whether she had married some one else, or whether she still remembered. A mere speculation on my part, since I never expected to see either Achille or his first love!

"Yes," I said, recalling myself suddenly and turning to Miss Celestine, "I have heard of Achille Rodrigue before," and all at once I regretted that I had ever inquired about him.

Miss Celestine was leaning down and was lifting the baby from his carriage, arranging and rearranging the pillows at his back.

Her face was so averted that I could scarcely see it, but there had stolen over it an expression which made me feel that I had ruthlessly lifted the curtain from a human soul and disclosed depths which I had no right to see.

Now I understood the glamour which had been cast about the little town. After all, the memories which we treasure most are those which are gilded with a brush of our own romance. She had told me that April afternoon as we sat on the porch together, she hoped she would go back to that enchanted land. Now she had returned—and it seemed to me that since fate deals out her favors only sparingly at best, she is sometimes kinder in withholding altogether than in fulfilling in part.—Detroit Free Press

ON WHAT TO READ.

Talmage, the Noted Divine, Gives Some Timely Suggestions.

The Greatest Blessing of a Nation Is an Elevated Literature; Its Greatest Curse, an Impure Literature.

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Dr. Talmage, who has been spending a few days in St. Petersburg, sends the following report of a discourse which will be helpful to those who have an appetite for literature and would like some rules to guide them in the selection of books and newspapers: Text, Acts 19:19: "Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men, and they counted the price of them and found it 50,000 pieces of silver."

Paul had been stirring up Ephesus with some lively sermons about the sins of that place. Among the more important results was the fact that the citizens brought out their bad books and in a public place made a bonfire of them. I see the people coming out with their arms full of Ephesian literature and tossing it into the flames. I hear an economist who is standing by saying: "Stop this waste. Here are $7,500 worth of books. Do you propose to burn them all up? If you don't want to read them yourselves, sell them and let somebody else read them." "No," said the people; "if these books are not good for us, they are not good for anybody else, and we shall stand and watch until the last leaf has burned to ashes. They have done us a world of harm, and they shall never do others harm." Hear the flames crackle and roar!

Well, my friends, one of the wants of the cities is a great bonfire of bad books and newspapers. We have enough fuel to make a blaze 200 feet high. Many of the publishing houses would do well to throw into the blaze their entire stock of goods. Bring forth the insufferable trash and put it into the fire and let it be known in the presence of God and angels and men that you are going to rid your homes of the overtopping and underlying curse of profligate literature.

The printing press is the mightiest agency on earth for good and for evil. The minister of the Gospel, standing in a pulpit, has a responsible position, but I do not think it is as responsible as the position of an editor or a publisher. At what distant point of time, at what far-out cycle of eternity, will cease the influence of a Henry J. Raymond, or a Horace Greeley, or a James Gordon Bennett, or a Watson Webb, or an Erastus Brooks, or a Thomas Kinsella? Take the overwhelming statistics of the circulation of the daily and weekly newspapers and then cipher if you can how far up and how far down and how far out reach the influences of the American printing press.

What is to be the issue of all this? I believe the Lord intends the printing press to be the chief means for the world's rescue and evangelization, and I think that the great last battle of the world will not be fought with swords and guns, but with types and presses, a purified and Gospel literature triumphing over, trampling down and crushing out forever that which is depraved. The only way to overcome unclean literature is by scattering abroad that which is healthful. May God speed the cylinders of an honest, intelligent, aggressive, Christian printing press.

I have to tell you that the greatest blessing that ever came to the nations is that of an elevated literature, and the greatest scourge has been that of unclean literature. This last has its victims in all occupations and departments. It has helped to fill insane asylums and penitentiaries and almshouses and dens of shame. The bodies of this infection lie in the hospitals and in the graves, while their souls are being tossed over into a lost eternity, an avalanche of horror and despair! The London plague was nothing to it. That counted its victims by thousands, but this modern pest has already shoveled its millions into the charnel house of the morally dead. The longest rail train that ever ran over the tracks was not long enough or large enough to carry the beastliness and the putrefaction which have been gathered up in bad books and newspapers in the last 20 years.

Now, it is amid such circumstances that I put a question of overmastering importance to you and your families. What books and newspapers shall we read? You see I group them together. A newspaper is only a book in a swifter and more portable shape, and the same rules which will apply to book reading will apply to newspaper reading. What shall we read? Shall our minds be the receptacle of everything that an author has a mind to write? Shall there be no distinction between the tree of life and the tree of death? Shall we stoop down and drink out of the trough which the wickedness of men has filled with pollution and shame? Shall we mire in impurity and chase fantastic will-o'the-wisps across the swamps, when we might walk in the blooming gardens of God? Oh, no! For the sake of our present and everlasting welfare we must make an intelligent and Christian choice.

Standing as we do, chin deep in fictitious literature, the question that young people are asking is: "Shall we read novels?" I reply: There are novels that are pure, good, Christian, elevating to the heart and ennobling to the life. But I still have further to say that I believe that 75 out of the 100 novels in this day are baleful and destructive to the last degree. A pure work of fiction is history and poetry combined. It is a history of things around us with the licenses and the assumed names of poetry. The world can never pay the debt which it owes to such writers of fiction as Hawthorne and McKenzie and Landon and Hunt and Arthur and others whose names are familiar to all. The follies of high life were never better exposed than by Miss Edgeworth. The memories of the past were never more faithfully embalmed than in the writings of Walter Scott. Cooper's novels are healthfully redolent with the breath of the seaweed and the air of the American forest. Charles Kingsley has smitted the morbidity of the world and led a great many to appreciate the poetry of sound health, strong muscles and fresh air. Thackeray did a grand work in caricaturing the pretenders to gentility and high blood. Dickens has built his own monument in his books, which are a plea for the poor and the anathema of injustice, and there are a score of novelistic pens to-day doing mighty work for God and righteousness.

Now, I say, books like these, read at right times and read in right proportion with other books, cannot help but be ennobling and purifying; but, alas, for the loathsome and impure literature that has come in the shape of novels, like a freshet overflowing all the banks of decency and common sense! They are coming from some of the most celebrated publishing houses. They are coming with recommendations of some of our religious newspapers. They lie on your center table to curse your children and blast with their infernal fires generations unborn. You find these books in the desk of the school miss, in the trunk of the young man, in the steamboat cabin, on the table of the hotel reception-room. You see a light in your child's room late at night. You suddenly go in and say: "What are you doing?" "I am reading." "What are you reading?" "A book." You look at the book. It is a bad book. "Where did you get it?" "I borrowed it." Alas, there are always those abroad who like to loan to your son or daughter a bad book! Everywhere, everywhere, an unclean literature. I charge upon it the destruction of 10,000 immortal souls, and I bid you wake up to the magnitude of the evil.

I charge you in the first place to stand aloof from all books that give false pictures of life. Life is neither a tragedy nor a farce. Men are not all either knaves or heroes. Women are neither angels nor furies. And yet if you depended upon much of the literature of the day you would get the idea that life, instead of being something earnest, something practical, is a fitful and fantastic and extravagant thing. How poorly prepared are that young man and woman for the duties of to-day who spent last night wading through brilliant passages descriptive of magnificent knavery and wickedness! The man will be looking all day long for his heroine in the office, by the forge, in the factory, in the counting room, and he will not find her, and he will be dissatisfied. A man who gives himself up to the indiscriminate reading of novels will be nerveless, inane and a nuisance. He will be fit neither for the store, nor the shop nor the field. A woman who gives herself up to the indiscriminate reading of novels will be unfitted for the duties of wife, mother, sister, daughter. There she is, hair dishevcled, countenance vacant, cheeks pale, hands trembling, bursting into tears at midnight over the fate of some unfortunate lover; in the daytime, when she ought to be busy, staring by the half hour at nothing biting her finger nails into the quick. The carpet that was plain before will be plainer after having wandered through a romance all night long in tessellated halls of castles. And your industrious companion will be more unattractive than ever, now that you have walked in the romance through parks with plumed princesses or lounged in the arbor with the polished desperado. Oh, these confirmed novel readers! They are unfitted for this life, which is a tremendous discipline. They know not how to go through the furnaces of trial through which they must pass, and they are unfitted for a world where everything we gain we achieve by hard and long continued work.

Again, I charge you to stand off from all those books which corrupt the imagination and inflame the passions. I do not refer now to that kind of book which the villain has under his coat waiting for the school to get out, and then, looking both ways to see that there is no policeman around the block, offers the book to your son on his way home. I do not speak of that kind of literature, but that which evades the law and comes out in polished style, and with acute plot sounds the tocsin that rouses up all the baser passions of the soul. To-day, under the nostrils of the people, there is a fetid, reeking, unwashed literature, enough to poison all the fountains of public virtue and smite your sons and daughters as with the wing of a destroying angel, and it is time that the ministers of the Gospel blew the trumpet and rallied the forces of righteousness, all armed to this great battle against a depraved literature.

Again, abstain from those books which are apologetic of crime. It is a sad thing that some of the best and most beautiful bookbindery and some of the finest rhetoric have been brought to make sin attractive. Vice is a horrible thing anyhow. It is born in shame, and it dies howling in the darkness. In this world it is scourged with a whip of scorpions, but afterward the thunders of God's wrath pursue it across a boundless desert, beating it with ruin and woe. When you come to paint carnality, do not paint it as looking from behind embroidered curtains or through lattice of royal seraglio, but as writhing in the agonies of a city hospital. Cursed be the books that try to make impurities decent and crime attractive and hypocrisy noble! Cursed be the books that swarm with libertines and desperadoes, who make the brain of the young people whirl with villainy! Ye authors who write them, ye publishers who print them, ye booksellers who distribute them, shall be cut to pieces, if not by an aroused community, then at last by the hail of Divine vengeance, which shall sweep to the lowest pit of perdition all ye murderers of souls. I tell you, though you may escape in this world, you will be ground at last under the hoof of eternal calamities, and you will be chained to the rock, and you will have the vultures of despair clawing at your soul, and those whom you have destroyed will come around to torment you, and to pour hotter coals of fury upon your head, and rejoice eternally in the outcry of your pain, and the howl of your damnation. "God shall wound the hairy scalp of him that goeth on in his trespasses."

The clock strikes midnight. A fair form bends over a romance. The eyes flash fire. The breath is quick and irregular. Occasionally the color dashes to the cheek and then dies out. The hands tremble as though a guardian spirit were trying to shake the deadly book out of the grasp. Hot tears fall. She laughs with a shrill voice that drops dead at its own sound. The sweat on her brow is the spray dashed up from the river of death. The clock strikes four, and the rosy dawn soon after begins to look through the lattice upon the pale form that looks like a detained specter of the night. Soon in a madhouse she will mistake her ringlets for curling serpents and thrust her white hand through the bars of the prison and smite her head, rubbing it back as though to push the scalp from the skull, shrieking: "My brain! My brain!" Oh, stand off from that! Why will you go sounding your way amid the reefs when there is such a vast ocean in which you may voyage, all sail set?

Much of the impure pictorial literature is most tremendous for ruin. There is no one who can like good pictures better than I do. The quickest and most condensed way of impressing the public mind is by picture. What the painter does by his brush for a few favorites, the engraver does by his knife for the million. What the author accomplishes by 50 pages the artist does by a flash. The best part of a painting that costs $10,000 you may buy for ten cents. Fine paintings belong to the aristocracy of art. Engravings belong to the democracy of art. You do well to gather good pictures in your homes.

But what shall I say of the prostitution of art to the purposes of iniquity? These death warrants of the soul are at every street corner. They smite the vision of the young man with pollution. Many a young man buying a copy has bought his eternal discomfiture. There may be enough poison in one bad picture to poison one soul and that soul may poison ten, and ten fifty, and fifty hundreds and the hundreds thousands, until nothing but the measuring line of eternity can tell the height and depth and ghastliness and horror of the great undoing. The work of death that the wicked author does in a whole book the bad engraver may do on a half side of a pictorial. Under the guise of pure mirth the young man buys one of these sheets. He unrolls it before his comrades amid roars of laughter, but long after the paper is gone the result may, perhaps, be seen in the blasted imaginations of those who saw it. The queen of death holds a banquet every night, and these periodicals are the invitation to her guests.

Young man, buy not this moral strychnine for your soul! Pick not up this nest of coiled adders for your pocket! Patronize no news stand that keeps them. Have your room bright with good engravings, but for these outrageous pictures have not one wall, not one bureau, not one pocket. A man is no better than the picture he loves to look at. If your eyes are not pure your heart cannot be. At the newsstand one can guess the character of man by the kind of pictorial he purchases. When the devil fails to get a man to read a bad book, he sometimes succeeds in getting him to look at a bad picture. When Satan goes a-fishing he does not care whether it is a long line or a short line, if he only draws his victim in. Beware of lascivious pictorials, young man, in the name of Almighty God, I charge you.

Cherish good books and newspapers. Beware of bad ones. The assassin of Lord Russell declared that he was led into crime by reading one vivid romance. The consecrated John Angell James, than whom England never produced a better man, declared in his old age that he had never yet got over the evil effects of having for 15 minutes once read a bad book. But I need not go so far off. I could tell you of a comrade who was great hearted, noble and generous. He was studying for an honorable profession, but he had an infidel book in his trunk, and he said to me one day: "De Witt, would you like to read it?" I said: "Yes, I would." I took the book and read it only for a few minutes. I was really startled with what I saw there, and I handed the book back to him and said: "You had better destroy that book." No, he kept it. He read it. He reread it. After awhile he gave up religion as a myth. He gave up God as a nonentity. He gave up the Bible as a fable. He gave up the church of Christ as a useless institution. He gave up good morals as being unnecessarily stringent. I have heard of him but twice in many years. The time before the last I heard of him he was a confirmed inebriate. The last I heard of him he was coming out of an insane asylum—in body, mind and soul an awful wreck. I believe that one infidel book killed him for two worlds.

A GOODLY HERITAGE

In East Tennessee Valleys and Mountains.

A Most Primitive People, Who Live Near to Nature's Heart and Reck Little of the Outside World—An Interesting Folk.

Within scarce two hundred miles of the center of population of the United States there is an unknown land, and a strange folk live therein.

It was in 1784 that Gen. John Sevier and his band of sturdy pioneers and Indian fighters crossed the Great Smokies from Virginia, drove back the redskins, built Fort Wautaga on the banks of the Holston and established the "State of Franklin." For four years Gen. Sevier was governor of the putative commonwealth. Then the rightful authority of North Carolina, to whom the territory belonged, was reasserted and the State of Franklin ceased to exist. Some years later North Carolina ceded the section to the Federal government and the State of Tennessee was organized. Gov. Sevier again became the chief executive.

It was a goodly land that the brave governor and his followers reclaimed from the savages. It was a land of rolling mountains, of fertile valleys, of mighty streams and sparkling springs. It was a country clad in a forest wealth of giant trees—with poplar, oak, ash, black walnut, pine and hemlock. It was underlaid with rich deposits of coal and iron. Above all it possessed a climate of salubrity and healthfulness not excelled by any in the world.

In all these more than a hundred years, in the great land of East Tennessee—as separate and distinct in thought, people, climate, interest and employment from Middle and Western Tennessee as Maine is from Texas—there has risen but one considerable community, and that one is of comparative insignificance in size and influence.

Depart from any point on the line of one of the few railroads that traverse the country, and a half day's journey astride of a horse will land the traveler in a region as primeval and untamed as when the good Sevier laid down his life for it in 1815. He will find few roads worthy the name; he will cross rivers by primitive fords or ferries; he will see vast timber-clad mountain sides; he will feast his eyes on scenery unspoiled by the hand of man. He will find the agile mountain deer, and great bronze turkeys, and lesser animals and fowls stalking the woods, almost unafraid of their arch enemy. On the higher levels the brooks will be found swarming with trout, speckled beauties who know naught of sportsman's fly and reel. Depart but a few miles from any line of transportation and East Tennessee is an unknown land!

The mountaineers of Virginia and Western North Carolina, who emigrated and made their homes on the western slope of the Great Smokies, were a clannish people, loyal to their friends and implacable to their enemies. With the extermination or withdrawal of the Indian they scattered along down the rich bottom lands of the French Broad and Holston and made homes for themselves. To a large extent the women have always been the indifferent tillers of the soil; idling with "fice," gun and fishing rod has been the masculine employment. In this earlier settled portion of East Tennessee some of the amenities of civilization have prevailed of a later day, still it is crude, unlearned and primitive.

Still Further Westward.

As time progressed some of the more adventurous spirits again moved westward—moved across the Holston and the Clinch, across the intervening mountain ranges, away to the rough and broken surface of the Cumberland plateau, where the tempestuous Big South Fork of the Cumberland had carved a ragged channel for itself between stupendous sandstone cliffs. Beyond this narrow valley they never ventured, for mountaineers they were by birth and education, and to go further was to leave the mountains behind.

Here, for a distance of many miles, along the main stream or in the little laurel entangled "coves," through which some mountain torrent had burst its way, numbers settled. Little, low-doored, stickchimneyed log "shacks" were built, and the occasional narrow tracts of arable land were forced to yield sparse "craps" of corn and vegetables. Available soil for the production of the necessities of life was far from being as plentiful as on the slopes and bottom lands of the Great Smokies, which they had abandoned. But here, in the fastnesses of the Cumberlands, for well toward a century, this strange people has existed in the self-same way. The sons and daughters have married and intermarried, until the entire region is made up of "kin-folks," ultra-clannish and exclusive. Of the outside world they know little and care less. Schools are scarcely known, and few can even read.

But these strange denizens of the half-desert mountains, these forgotten and unknown inhabitants, though surrounded on all sides by progressive and prosperous sections—poorer in substantial wealth than the veriest gutter-snipe of the great cities—have worth and virtues and happiness. They are deeply religious, extremely hospitable and, according to their understanding, honest. Scarce ten miles can be traversed that does not disclose the log "church house." News of the coming of the itinerant "preacher man" is hailed with joy, and the congregation present at these semi-occasional gatherings oftimes represent the total population of a score of square miles. These meetings consist not only of religious exhortation and prayer, but the funeral rites of all who have departed this life since the preacher's last visit are duly celebrated. Often it happens as well that a wholesale wedding takes place on these occasions—many swains embracing the opportunity of having the itinerant place his official stamp and sanction on their connubial state.

No traveler is ever turned aside from the door of the lowly "shack" of the poor white of the East Tennessee mountain district. The salutation of "howdy," followed by invitation to "light and rest yer hat," is invariably a bidding to the best in bed and board that the house affords. The food is the crudest kind—"meat" (fried salt pork), hoe cakes, baked on the lid of the stove or at the open fireplace, and cheap coffee, usually without milk or sugar.

Honest as the Average.

As the world goes, these people are honest. The contents of an unlocked and unattended house would be safe from molestation for all time. The *meum et teum* of the razor-back hogs that run at large and gain a precarious existence, save at the period when the forest sheds its manna of mast, is always respected. However, the obligation of a debt rests very lightly on the shoulders of the average "native." If by chance he becomes possessed of a little money from the sale of a few railroad ties, a dozen bags of corn, which he has toted many miles out to the fringe of civilization, or of a sack of "sang," the ginseng root of the mountains, that has been laboriously harvested by the wife and children, his immediate personal wants are so great as to preclude the possibility of his discharging an indebtedness which any one has had the temerity to extend to him. No man's intention to be just and to do as he agrees is better than that of the native East Tennessean, but he lacks in toto the New England gift of "calculation." His plans invariably miscarry, and his promises are as naught. From the multitudinous excuses he makes to a creditor, based on natural causes—a dried-up spring, a "tide" in the river, muddy roads, a broken cart, or what not—it would seem that the mountaineer has no standing whatsoever with the Almighty.

In connection with one piece of property only has he no respect for proprietary rights, and that is a tree. Wherever he can find it, and successfully dispose of it, that tree is his, inalienably as the water he drinks from the sparkling spring, the ambient air he breathes or the glorious sunshine that envelopes him in its tender embrace the greater part of each day.

During the civil war, notwithstanding the defection of Tennessee, it was this very section that supplied more volunteers to the Union cause, population considered, than any other part of the country, and right royal fighters were they, too. The recent war with Spain witnessed another outpouring of the sturdy East Tennesseans to take service in their country's cause. Rarely, and only from extra ordinary causes, do they ever leave their narrow valleys and wooded hills, but never can they be permanently beguiled from the land they love—the land of poverty, of hardships, of homely ways and simple wants. Here they live on and on—"The world forgetting, by the world forgot."

—American Lumberman.

No Room For Extravagance.

The pay of the Chinese soldier indicates that he must be an even more economical person than the New Zealand bushman, who was able to live on £4 8s a year (on which he kept a horse and entertained). The Chinese private at £3 8s per annum is extremely inexpensive compared with the Englishman at £77, the Russian at £48 and the Italian—the cheapest of European soldiers—at £41. On this three-halfpence a day there is little fear of bursts of dissipation, though the calvaryman has an extra 8s a month for his horse, out of which he replaces the animal if it be killed.—London Chronicle.

Son-in-Law's Reason.

"It is claimed, you know, that lightning never strikes twice in the same place."

"Yes, I'm quite well aware there is such a statement, and I'm afraid it is true."

"Why do you say it in that dismal way?"

"My wife's mother was struck by lightning seventeen years ago and escaped by a miracle. And that's why I say I'm afraid the old saying is too true."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Hetty Green's Patriotism.

Mrs. Hetty Green's reply to the question as to whether her daughter would marry a titled foreigner was a refreshing one. "She will not marry such a man. I would rather have her marry a young American with brains, energy and confidence in himself than any one else." It is a healthy, hearty faith in our country that Americans love.—Indianapolis Press.

What a Whale Weighs.

Have you any idea of the size of the common Greenland whale? Nillson, the zoologist, estimates the full-grown animal to average 100 tons, or 224,000 pounds. That is to say, a whale weighs as much as about eighty elephants or 400 bears. Of course some run larger than this. There are tales among old whalers of whales 110 feet long, and weighing 150 tons. But such are not seen in these days. A 70-foot whale is a big one now.—New York Evening World.

Boomerang Effect.

"Yaas, I heed Jones' speech," said the man with the wondering whiskers. "I didn't have any idea he was so good an' so smart till I heerd 'im tell it."

"I suppose you will vote for him now?" asked the postmaster.

"No, I allow I wun't. He's too dern good to be wasted in a little old county office, he is."—Indianapolis Press