

as a living force till it is incorporated in the great Being which knows not death." For this religion, he says, there is no need of church or ritual or priest, or even of clasped hands or bended knees. The blue roof of its universal sanctuary is inlaid with stars. But Father Tyrrell points out in twenty places that humanity needs more than this. The woods, indeed, for hermits, for mystics, for rare souls who respond to the inaudible influences of the Divine Spirit in the fragrance of the flowers; but for most of us, duller persons, houses and churches, which though they do shut out the sky, shut out also the wind and the rain.

They who believe that theology ought to be as frankly open to restatement as biology draw a distinction between theology and revelation. Revelation is a divine and certain disclosure of truth,

whereby religion has a foundation other than the conjectures of philosophers. It is variously defined and limited as consisting generally of the Bible, or of the ecumenical creeds, or of the Deposit of Faith. But, however defined, it is the subject matter with which theology deals. The idea of the liberal theologian is that revelation and theology are related as the mind of man is related to the books of the psychologists. Let the psychologists study the mind with all the diligence they may. Let them report what they discover, and submit their reports to the test of all honest criticism. Let them enjoy the common human privilege of making mistakes, and let them correct the errors one of another without heat or anxiety, and without fear lest truth suffer in the process. And let the theologians do likewise.

---

## HILLSBORO'S GOOD LUCK

BY DOROTHY CANFIELD

WHEN the news of Hillsboro's good fortune swept along the highroad there was not a person in the other three villages of the valley who did not admit that Hillsboro' deserved it. Every one said that in this case Providence had rewarded true merit, Providence being represented by Mr. Josiah Camden, king of the Chicago wheat pit, whose carelessly bestowed bounty meant the happy termination of Hillsboro's long and arduous struggles.

The memory of man could not go back to the time when that town had not had a public library. It was the pride of the remote village, lost among the Green Mountains, that long before Carnegie ever left Scotland there had been a collection of books free to all in the wing of Deacon Bradlaugh's house. Then as now the feat was achieved by the united efforts of all inhabitants. They boasted that the town

had never been taxed a cent to keep up the library, that not a person had contributed a single penny except of his own free will: and it was true that the public spirit of the village concentrated itself most harmoniously upon this favorite feature of their common life. Political strife might rage in the grocery stores, religious differences flame high in the vestibule of the church, and social distinctions embitter the Ladies' Club, but the library was a neutral ground where all parties met, united by a common and disinterested effort.

Like all disinterested and generous actions it brought its own reward. The great social event of the year, not only for Hillsboro', but for all the outlying country, was the annual "Entertainment for buying new books," as it was named on the handbills which were welcomed so

eagerly by the snow-bound, monotony-ridden inhabitants of the Necronsett Valley. It usually "ran" three nights so that every one could get there, the people from over Hemlock Mountain driving twenty miles. There was no theatre for forty miles, and many a dweller on the Hemlock slopes had never seen a nearer approach to one than the town hall of Hillsboro' on the great nights of the "Library Show."

As for Hillsboro' itself, the excitement of one effort was scarcely over before plans for the next year's were begun. Although the date was fixed by tradition on the three days after Candlemas (known as "Woodchuck Day" in the valley), they had often decided what the affair should be and had begun rehearsals before the leaves had turned. There was no corner of the great world of dramatic art they had not explored, borne up to the loftiest regions of endeavor by their touchingly unworldly ignorance of their limitations. As often happens in such cases they believed so ingenuously in their own capacities that their faith wrought miracles.

Sometimes they gave a cantata, sometimes a nigger-minstrel show. The year the interior of the town hall was changed, they took advantage of the time before either the first or second floor was laid, and attempted and achieved an indoor circus. And the year that an orchestra conductor from Albany had to spend the winter in the mountains for his lungs, they presented *Il Trovatore*. Everybody sang, as a matter of course, and those whose best efforts in this direction brought them no glory had their innings the year it was decided to give a play.

They had done *East Lynne* and *Hamlet*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Macbeth*, and every once in a while the local literary man, who was also the undertaker, wrote a play based on local traditions. Of course they gave *The Village School* and *Memory's Garland*, and if you don't remember those delectable home-made entertainments, so much the worse for you. It is true that in the allegorical tableau

at the end of *Memory's Garland*, the wreath, which was of large artificial roses, had been made of such generous proportions that when the Muses placed it on the head of slender Elnathan Pritchett, representing "The Poet," it slipped over his ears, down over his narrow shoulders, and sliding rapidly towards the floor was only caught by him in time to hold it in place upon his stomach. That happened only on the first night, of course. The other performances it was perfect, lodging on his ears with the greatest precision.

It must not be supposed, however, that the responsibilities of Hillsboro' for the library ended with the triumphant counting out of the money after the entertainment. This sum, the only actual cash ever handled by the committee, was exclusively devoted to the purchase of new books. It was the pride of the village that everything else was cared for without price, by their own enterprise, public spirit, and ingenuity. When the books had overflowed the wing of Deacon Bradlaugh's house, back in 1869, they were given free lodging in the rooms of the then newly established and flourishing Post of the G. A. R. In 1896 they burst from this chrysalis into the whole lower floor of the town hall, newly done over for the purpose. From their shelves here the books looked down benignly on church suppers and sociables, and even an occasional dance. It was the centre of village life, the big, low-ceilinged room, its windows curtained with white muslin, its walls bright with fresh paper and colored pictures, like any sitting-room in a village home. The firewood was contributed, a load apiece, by the farmers of the country about, and the oil for the lamps was the common gift of the three grocery stores. There was no carpet, but bright-colored rag rugs lay about on the bare floor, and it was a point of honor with the Ladies' Aid Society of the church to keep these renewed.

The expense of a librarian's salary was obviated by the expedient of having no librarian. The ladies of Hillsboro' took

turns in presiding over the librarian's table, each one's day coming about once in three weeks. "Library Day" was as fixed an institution in Hillsboro' as "wash day," and there was not a busy housewife who did not look forward to the long quiet morning spent in dusting and caring for the worn old books, which were like the faces of friends to her, familiar from childhood. The afternoon and evening were more animated, since the library had become a sort of common meeting-ground. The big, cheerful, sunlit room full of grown-ups and children, talking together, even laughing out loud at times, did not look like any sophisticated idea of a library, for Hillsboro' was as benighted on the subject of the need for silence in a reading-room as on all other up-to-date library theories. If you were so weak-nerved and sickly that the noise kept you from reading, you could take your book, go into Elzaphan Hall's room and shut the door, or you could take your book and go home, but you could not object to people being sociable.

Elzaphan Hall was the janitor, and the town's only pauper. He was an old G. A. R. man who had come back from the war minus an arm and a foot, and otherwise so shattered that steady work was impossible. In order not to wound him by making him feel that he was dependent on public charity, it had been at once settled that he should keep the fire going in the library, scrub the floor, and keep the room clean in return for his food and lodging. He "boarded round" like the school-teacher, and slept in a little room off the library. In the course of years he had grown pathetically and exasperatingly convinced of his own importance, but he had been there so long that his dictatorial airs and humors were regarded with the unsurprised tolerance granted to things of long standing, and were forgiven in view of his devotion to the best interests of the library, which took the place of a family to him.

As for the expenses of cataloguing, no one ever thought of such a thing. Cata-

logue the books? Why, as soon hang up a list of the family so that you would n't forget how many children you had; as soon draw a plan of the village so that people should not lose their way about. Everybody knew what and where the books were, as well as they knew what and where the fields on their farms were, or where the dishes were on the pantry shelves. The money from the entertainment was in hand by the middle of February; by April the new books, usually about a hundred in number, had arrived; and by June any wide-awake, intelligent resident of Hillsboro' would have been ashamed to confess that he did not know the location of every one.

The system of placing on the shelves was simplicity itself. Each year's new acquisitions were kept together, regardless of subject, and located by the name of the entertainment which had bought them. Thus, if you wished to consult a certain book on geology, in which subject the library was rich, owing to the scientific tastes of Squire Pritchett, you were told by the librarian for the day, as she looked up from her darning with a friendly smile, that it was in the "Uncle Tom's Cabin section." The Shakespeare set, honorably worn and dog's-eared, dated back to the unnamed mass coming from early days before things were so well systematized, and was said to be in the "Old Times section;" whereas Ibsen (for some of Hillsboro's young people go away to college) was bright and fresh in the "East Lynne section."

The books were a visible and sincere symbol of Hillsboro's past and present. The honest, unpretending people had bought the books they wished to read, and every one's taste was represented, even a few French legends and pious tales being present as a concession to the Roman Catholic element among the French Canadians. There was a great deal of E. P. Roe, there was all of Mrs. Southworth — is it possible that anywhere else in the world there is a complete collection of that lady's voluminous pro-

ductions?—but beside them stood the Elizabethan dramatists and a translation of Dante. The men of the town, who after they were grown up did not care much for fiction, cast their votes for scientific treatises on agriculture, forestry, and the like; and there was an informal history club, consisting of the postmaster, the doctor, and the druggist, who bore down heavily on history books. The school-teacher, the minister, and the priest had each, *ex officio*, the choice of ten books with nobody to object, and the children in school were allowed another ten with no advice from elders.

It would have made a scientific librarian faint, the Hillsboro' system, but the result was that not a book was bought which did not find readers eager to welcome it. A stranger would have turned dizzy trying to find his way about, but there are no strangers in Hillsboro'. The arrival even of a new French-Canadian lumberman is a subject of endless discussion.

It can be imagined, therefore, how electrified was the village by the apparition, on a bright June day, of an automobile creaking and wheezing its slow way to the old tavern. The irritated elderly gentleman who stepped out and began blaming the chauffeur for the delay, announced himself to Zadok Foster, the tavern-keeper, as Josiah Camden of Chicago, and was electrified in his turn by the calmness with which that mighty name was received.

During the two days he waited in Hillsboro' for the repair of his machine, he amused himself first by making sure of the incredible fact that nobody in the village had ever heard of him, and second by learning with an astounded and insatiable curiosity all the details of life in this forgotten corner of the mountains. It was newer and stranger to him than anything he had seen during his celebrated motor-car trip through the Soudan. He was stricken speechless by hearing that you could rent a whole house (of only five rooms, to be sure) and a garden for

thirty-six dollars a year, and that the wealthiest man in the place was supposed to have inherited and accumulated the vast sum of ten thousand dollars. When he heard of the public library he inquired quickly how much it cost to run *that*? Mr. Camden knew from experience something about the cost of public libraries.

"Not a cent," said Zadok Foster proudly.

Mr. Camden came from Chicago and not from Missouri, but the involuntary exclamation of amazed incredulity which burst from his lips was, "Show me!"

So they showed him. The denizen of the great world entered the poor, low-ceilinged room, looked around at the dreadful chromos on the walls, at the cheap, darned muslin curtains, at the gaudy rag rugs, at the shabby, worn books in inextricable confusion on the shelves, and listened with gleaming eyes to the account given by the librarian for the day of the years of patient and uncomplaining struggles by which these poverty-stricken mountaineers had secured this meagre result. He struck one hand into the other with a clap. "It's a chance in a million!" he cried aloud.

When his momentous letter came back from Chicago, this was still the recurrent note, that nowadays it is so hard for a poor millionaire to find a deserving object for his gifts, that it is the rarest opportunity possible when he really with his own eyes can make sure of placing his money where it will carry on a work already begun in the right spirit. He spoke in such glowing terms of Hillsboro's pathetic endeavors to keep their poor little enterprise going, that Hillsboro', very unconscious indeed of being pathetic, was bewildered. He said that owing to the unusual conditions he would break the usual rules governing his benefactions and ask no guarantee from the town. He begged therefore to have the honor to announce that he had already dispatched an architect and a contractor to Hillsboro', who would look the ground over, and put up a thoroughly modern library

building with no expense spared to make it complete in equipment; that he had already placed to the credit of the "Hillsboro' Camden Public Library" a sufficient sum to maintain in perpetuity a well-paid librarian, and to cover all expenses of fuel, lights, purchase of books, cataloguing, etc.; and that the Library School in Albany had already an order to select a perfectly well-balanced library of thirty thousand books to begin with.

Reason recoils from any attempt to portray the excitement of Hillsboro' after this letter arrived. To say that it was as if a gold mine had been discovered under the village green is the feeblest of metaphors. For an entire week the town went to bed at night tired out with exclaiming, woke in the morning sure it had dreamed it all, rushed with a common impulse to the post-office where the letter was posted on the wall, and fell to exclaiming again.

Then the architect and contractor arrived, and with the jealous instinct of New Englanders to hide emotions from outsiders, Hillsboro' drew back into its shell of sombre taciturnity, and acted, the contractor told the architect, as though they were in the habit of having libraries given them three times a week regularly.

The architect replied that these mountaineers were like Indians. You *could n't* throw a shock into them that would make them loosen up any.

Indeed, this characterization seemed just enough, in view of the passive way in which Hillsboro' received what was done for it during the months which followed. It was the passivity of stupefaction, however, as one marvel after another was revealed to them. The first evening the architect sketched the plans of a picturesque building in the old Norse style, to match the romantic scenery of the lovely valley. The next morning he located it upon a knoll cooled by a steady breeze. The contractor made hasty inquiries about lumber, labor, and houses for his men, found that none of these essentials were at hand, decided to import everything from Albany; and by noon of the

day after they arrived these two brisk young gentlemen had departed, leaving Hillsboro' still incredulous of its good fortune.

When they returned ten days later, however, they brought solid and visible proof in the shape of a train-load of building materials and a crowd of Italian laborers, who established themselves in a boarding-car on a side-track near the station.

"We are going," remarked the contractor to the architect, "to make the dirt fly."

"We will make things hum," answered the architect, "as they've never hummed before in this benighted spot."

And indeed, as up to this time they had never hummed at all, it is not surprising that Hillsboro' caught its breath as the work went forward like Aladdin's palace. The corner-stone was laid on the third of July, and on the first of October the building stood complete. By the first of November the books had come, already catalogued by the Library School and arranged in boxes so that they could be put at once upon the shelves; and the last details of the interior decoration were complete. The architect was in the most naive ecstasy of admiration for his own taste. The outside was deliciously unhackneyed in design, the only reproduction of a Norwegian *Stave-Kirke* in America, he reported to Mr. Camden; and while that made the interior a little dark, the quaint wooden building was exquisitely in harmony with the landscape. As for the interior, it was a dream! The reading-room was like the most beautiful drawing-room, an education in itself, done in dark oak, with oriental rugs, mission furniture, and reproductions of old masters on the walls. Lace sash-curtains hung at the windows, covered by rich draperies in oriental design, which subdued the light to a delightful soberness. The lamps came from Tiffany's.

When the young-lady librarian arrived from Albany and approved enthusiastically of the stack-room and cataloguing,

the architect's cup of satisfaction fairly ran over; and when he went away, leaving her installed in her handsome oak-finished office, he could hardly refrain from embracing her, so exactly the right touch did she add to the whole thing with her fresh white shirt-waist and pretty, business-like airs. There had been no ceremony of opening, because Mr. Camden was so absorbed in an exciting wheat deal that he could not think of coming East, and indeed the whole transaction had been almost blotted from his mind by a month's flurried, unsteady market. So one day in November the pretty librarian walked into her office, and the Hillsboro' Camden Public Library was open.

She was a very pretty librarian indeed, and she wore her tailor suits with an air which made the village girls look uneasily into their mirrors and made the village boys look after her as she passed. She was moreover as permeated with the missionary fervor instilled into her at the Library School as she was pretty, and she began at once to practice all the latest devices for automatically turning a benighted community into the latest thing in culture. When Mrs. Bradlaugh, wife of the deacon and president of the Ladies' Aid Society, was confined to the house with a cold, she sent over to the library, as was her wont in such cases, for some entertaining story to while away her tedious convalescence. Miss Martin sent back one of Henry James's novels, and was surprised that Mrs. Bradlaugh made no second attempt to use the library. When the little girls in school asked for the Elsie books, she answered with a glow of pride that the library did not possess one of those silly stories, and offered as substitute, *Greek Myths for Children*.

Squire Pritchett came, in a great hurry, one morning, and asked for his favorite condensed handbook of geology, in order to identify a stone. He was told that it was entirely out of date and very incomplete, and the library did not own it, and he was referred to the drawer in the card

catalogue relating to geology. For a time his stubbed old fingers fumbled among the cards, with an ever-rising flood of baffled exasperation. How could he tell by looking at a strange name on a little piece of paper whether the book it represented would tell him about a stone out of his gravel-pit! Finally he appealed to the librarian, who proclaimed on all occasions her eagerness to help inquirers, and she referred him to a handsome great Encyclopedia of Geology in forty-seven volumes. He wandered around hopelessly in this for about an hour, and in the end retreated unenlightened. Miss Martin tried to help him in his search, but, half-amused by his rustic ignorance, she asked him finally, with an air of gentle patience, "how, if he did n't know *any* of the scientific names, he expected to be able to look up a subject in an alphabetically arranged book?" Squire Pritchett never entered the library again. His son Elnathan might be caught by her airs and graces, he said rudely enough in the post-office, but he was "too old to be talked down to by a chit who did n't know granite from marble."

When the schoolboys asked for Nick Carter she gave them those classics, *The Rollo Books*; and to the French Canadians she gave, reasonably enough, the acknowledged masters of their language, Voltaire, Balzac, and Flaubert, till the horrified priest forbade from the pulpit any of his simple-minded flock to enter "that temple of sin, the public library." She had little classes in art criticism for the young ladies in town, explaining to them with sweet lucidity why the Botticellis and Rembrandts and Dürers were better than the chromos which still hung on the walls of the old library, now cold and deserted except for church suppers and sociables, which were never held in the new reading-room, the oriental rugs being much too fine to have doughnut crumbs and coffee spilled on them. After a time, however, the young ladies told her that they found themselves too busy getting the missionary barrels ready

to continue absorbing information about Botticelli's rhythm and Dürer's line.

Miss Martin was not only pretty and competent, but she was firm of purpose, as was shown by her encounter with Elzaphan Hall who had domineered over two generations of amateur librarians. The old man had received strict orders to preserve silence in the reading-room when the librarian could not be there, and yet one day she returned from the stack-room to find the place in a most shocking state of confusion. Everybody was laughing, Elzaphan himself most of all, and they did not stop when she brought her severe young face among them. Elzaphan explained, waving his hand at a dark Rembrandt looking gloomily down upon them, that Elnathan Pritchett had said that if *he* had such a dirty face as that he'd *wash* it, if he had to go as far as from here to the Eagle Rock Spring to get the water! This seemed the dullest of bucolic wit to Miss Martin, and she chilled Elnathan to the marrow by her sad gaze of disappointment in him. Jennie Foster was very jealous of Miss Martin (as were all the girls in town), and she rejoiced openly in Elnathan's witticism, continuing to laugh at intervals after the rest of the room had cowered into silence under the librarian's eye.

Miss Martin took the old janitor aside and told him sternly that if such a thing happened again she would dismiss him; and when the old man, crazily trying to show his spirit, allowed a spelling-match to go on, full blast, right in library hours, she did dismiss him, drawing on the endless funds at her disposal to import a young Irishman from Albany, who was soon playing havoc with the pretty French-Canadian girls. Elzaphan Hall, stunned by the blow, fell into bad company and began to drink heavily, paying for his liquor by exceedingly comic and disrespectful imitations of Miss Martin's talks on art.

It was now about the middle of the winter, and the knoll which in June had been the centre of gratefully cool breezes

was raked by piercing north winds which penetrated the picturesquely unplastered, wood-finished walls as though they had been paper. The steam-heating plant did not work very well, and the new janitor, seeing fewer and fewer people come to the reading-room, spent less and less time in struggling with the boilers, or in keeping the long path up the hill shoveled clear of snow. Miss Martin, positively frightened by the ferocity with which winter flings itself upon the high narrow valley, was helpless before the problem of the new conditions, and could think of nothing to do except to buy more fuel and yet more, and to beseech the elusive Celt, city-trained in plausible excuses for not doing his duty, to burn more wood. Once she remarked plaintively to Elnathan Pritchett, as she sat beside him at a church supper (for she made a great point of "mingling with the people"), that it seemed to her there must be something the *matter* with the wood in Hillsboro'.

Everybody within earshot laughed, and the saying was repeated the next day with shameless mirth as the best joke of the season. For the wood for the library had had a history distinctly discreditable and as distinctly ludicrous, at which Hillsboro' people laughed with a conscious lowering of their standards of honesty. The beginning had been an accident, but the long sequence was not. For the first time in the history of the library, the farmer who brought the first load of wood presented a bill for this service. He charged two dollars a cord on the scrawled memorandum, but Miss Martin mistook this figure for a seven, corrected his total with the kindest tolerance for his faulty arithmetic, and gave the countryman a check which reduced him for a time to a paralyzed silence. It was only on telling the first person he met outside the library, that the richness of a grown person knowing no more than that about the price of wood came over him, and the two screamed with laughter over the lady's beautifully formed figures on the dirty sheet of paper.

Miss Martin took the hesitating awkwardness of the next man presenting himself before her, not daring to ask the higher price and not willing to take the lower, for rustic bashfulness, and put him at his ease by saying airily, "Five cords? That makes thirty-five dollars. I always pay seven dollars a cord." After that, the procession of grinning men driving lumber-sleds towards the library became incessant. The minister attempted to remonstrate with the respectable men of his church for cheating a poor young lady, but they answered roughly that it was n't her money but Camden's, who had tossed them the library as a man would toss a penny to a beggar, who had now quite forgotten about them, and, finally, who had made his money none too honestly.

Since he had become of so much importance to them they had looked up his successful career in the Chicago wheat pit, and, undazzled by the millions involved, had penetrated shrewdly to the significance of his operations. The record of his colossal and unpunished frauds had put to sleep, so far as he was concerned, their old minute honesty. It was considered the best of satires that the man who had fooled all the West should be fooled in his turn by a handful of forgotten mountaineers, that they should be fleecing him in little things as he had fleeced Chicago in great. There was, however, an element which frowned on this shifting of standards, and, before long, neighbors and old friends were divided into cliques, calling each other, respectively, cheats and hypocrites.

Hillsboro' was intolerably dull that winter because of the absence of the usual excitement over the entertainment, and in the stagnation all attention was directed to the new joke on the wheat king. It was turned over and over, forwards and back, and refurbished and made to do duty again and again, after the fashion of rustic jokes. This one had the additional advantage of lining the pockets of the perpetrators. They egged one another on to fresh inventions and

variations, until even the children, not to be left out, began to have exploits of their own to tell. The grocers raised the price of kerosene, groaning all the time at the extortions of the oil trust, till the guileless guardian of Mr. Camden's funds was paying fifty cents a gallon for it. The boys charged a quarter for every bouquet of pine-boughs they brought to decorate the cold, empty reading-room. The wash-woman charged five dollars for "doing-up" the lace sash-curtains. As spring came on, and the damages wrought by the winter winds must be repaired, the carpenters asked wages which made the sellers of firewood tear their hair at wasted opportunities. They might have raised the price per cord! The new janitor, hearing the talk about town, demanded a raise in salary and threatened to leave without warning if it were not granted.

It was on the fifth of June, a year to a day after the arrival of Mr. Camden in his automobile, that Miss Martin yielded to this last extortion, and her action made the day as memorable as that of the year before. The janitor, carried away by his victory, celebrated his good fortune in so many glasses of hard cider that he was finally carried home and deposited limply on the veranda of his boarding-house. Here he slept till the cold of dawn awoke him to a knowledge of his whereabouts, so inverted and tipsy that he rose, staggered to the library, cursing the intolerable length of these damn Vermont winters, and proceeded to build a roaring fire on the floor of the reading-room. As the varnished wood of the beautiful fittings took light like a well-constructed bonfire, realization of his act came to him, and he ran down the valley road, screaming and giving the alarm at the top of his lungs, and so passed out of Hillsboro' forever.

The village looked out of its windows, saw the wooden building blazing like a great torch, hurried on its clothes, and collected around the fire. No effort was made to save the library. People stood

around in the chilly morning air, looking silently at the mountain of flame which burned as though it would never stop. They thought of a great many things in that silent hour as the sun rose over Hemlock Mountain, and there were no smiles on their faces. They are ignorant and narrow people in Hillsboro', but they have an inborn capacity unsparingly to look facts in the face.

When the last beam had fallen in with a crash to the blackened cellar-hole, Miss Martin, very pale and shaken, stepped bravely forward. "I know how terribly you must be feeling about this," she began in her carefully modulated voice, "but I want to assure you that I *know* Mr. Camden will rebuild the library for you if —"

She was interrupted by the chief man of the town, Squire Pritchett, who began speaking with a sort of bellow only heard before in exciting moments in town-meeting. "May I never live to see the day!" he shouted; and from all the tongue-tied villagers there rose a murmur of relief at having found a voice. They pressed about him closely and drank in his dry, curt announcement: "As selectman I shall write Mr. Camden, tell him of the fire, thank him for his kindness, and inform him that we don't want any more of it." Everybody nodded. "I don't know whether his money is what they call tainted or not, but there's one thing sure, it ain't done us any good." He passed his hand over his unshaven jaw with a rasping wipe and smiled grimly as he concluded, "I'm no hand to stir up law-breakin' and disorder, but I want to say right here that I'll never inform against any Hillsboro' man who keeps the next automobile out of town, if he has to take a axe to it!"

People laughed, and neighbors who had not spoken to one another since the quarrel over the price of wood, fell into murmured, approving talk.

Elnathan Pritchett, blushing and hesitating, twitched at his father's sleeve. "But father — Miss Martin — We're keeping her out of a position."

That young lady made one more effort to reach these impenetrable people. "I was about to resign," she said with dignity. "I am going to marry the assistant to the head of the Department of Bibliography at Albany."

The only answer to this imposing announcement was a giggle from Jennie Foster, to whose side Elnathan now fell back, silenced.

People began to move away in little knots, talking as they went. Elzaphan Hall stumped hastily down the street to the town hall, and was standing in the open door as the first group passed him.

"Here, Mis' Foster, you're forgittin' somethin'," he said roughly, with his old surly, dictatorial air. "This is your day to the library."

Mrs. Foster hesitated, laughing at the old man's manner. "It seems foolish, but I don't know why *not!*" she said. "Jennie, you run on over home and bring me a dusting-cloth and a broom for Elzaphan. The books must be in a *nawful* state!"

When Jennie came back, a knot of women stood before the door, talking to her mother and looking back at the smouldering ruins. The girl followed the direction of their eyes and of their thoughts. "I don't believe but what we can plant woodbine and things around it so that in a month's time you won't know there's been anything there!" she said hopefully.

## THE CONTRIBUTORS' CLUB

### THE WEAK JOINT IN THE SENTIMENTALISTS' ARMOR

THERE are surely no more noble-minded persons alive than the man and wife who point the moral of this tale. Though they live in a palace of art, surrounded by treasures which kings might covet, rarities unexcelled, unique, priceless, yet they live with an austerity which cloistered nuns would call a hardship — and all for conscience' sake. Fish? meat? They have tasted neither for many years. No gloves of leather are on their hands; no shoes of leather are on their feet; no dress of silk or wool. Nothing but cotton or linen for them. In the stern purity of their self-denial they refuse butter and eggs and milk. A plain dish of boiled carrots, some olive oil, a few nuts, a little savory relish dressed with sweet herbs, is their fare. Compassion is their creed, and in nothing that demands bloodshed or cruelty will they share. There is something so lofty in their asceticism that I cannot speak of it without admiration. It is one of the beautiful follies of the world, deserving its own shrine, to which might journey troops of pilgrims anxious to obtain the purity of heart which these two typify in their refusal to be stained with the blood of beasts, in their resolve to be free from entailing any suffering upon any creature.

And yet I find a flaw in all their self-denial, — the folly of the sentimentalist. He is a man to beware, if he be under fifty, because he always knows too little to be trusted. His judgment is not sound. His grip on facts is but a fumble, and half of his self-sacrifice is worthless because it lacks sense. The fundamental trouble with the sentimentalist is his ignorance of common facts. Why do my friends refuse milk? It would deprive the young calf of his natural nourishment and we should

get veal in consequence. Quite useless to remind them of the objectionable domestic character of most veal creatures when grown up; wholly so to remark that the remnant saved live and grow up to be thriving cows. With the actual facts they have no concern; nothing satisfies them but the total emancipation of the cow and a full regard for her rights of motherhood. (They have no children themselves.) Butter and milk are off the programme of the world's foods already, and they hasten the day of the cow released from servitude, quite free to make her own shelter in winter and browse or starve in liberty. But why are eggs denied? An egg in the course of nature hatches out into a happy, fluffy little chicken, and fried eggs for breakfast means so many little lives cut off from the joys of existence. (There are no happy little children in their home.) It is indelicate to remind my noble-minded friends of the fundamental facts of life, to hint to them that an unfertilized egg and a cold boiled potato stand an equal chance of producing fluffy little chickens. They *will* deny themselves eggs. And eggs are off the list, from simple ignorance of nature's laws. Indeed, ignorance seems to be a large part of the game. It would be quite impossible to play it so vigorously if the light were let in ever so little.

But what causes me to marvel is the complacency with which my friends dress in cotton. Cotton! Of all the blood-dyed fabrics wherewith men have invested themselves is there another so red with human woe as cotton cloth? There have been times when every yard of it was grained with the life-blood of a human being. From the slave who raised the plant to the English spinner waiting, starving for it by his idle loom, from the hectic woman breathing lint in the mill and the child robbed of health and child-