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# In the Land of Saddle=Bags.

THE PROTESTANT PEOPLE OF APPALACHIAN  
AMERICA.\*

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On a modern map we see a well-defined territory, comprising the western portions of the Atlantic States, northern Georgia and Alabama, and eastern Tennessee and Kentucky, which may be said to constitute one of the natural grand divisions of our continent. This region has great diversity of climate, altitude and surface, but it all has one striking character—

\*The record of Protestant emigrations from Europe to America is necessarily obscure and defective. They did not go out with a flourish of trumpets. The Huguenots of France melted from sight, taking with them the brain and nerve of the nation, and were scattered over both hemispheres. Germany had its evictions and shiftings of population. England and Scotland have been continuously drained. But these great movements have been inconspicuous. Secrecy was often necessary to safety, and when the great cause seemed to fail, protesting churches and households acted independently and resolutely, and set their faces toward some land of new promise. They disappeared before the face of the oppressor, and fulfilled a Divine purpose in a new and larger world. The Mayflower company is an example, most fortunately put on record, showing the trials and aspirations of the families of a Protestant exodus whose limits no historian has yet defined. It is the purpose of the present article to show how one great stream of this Protestant migration has been lost in the wilderness for thrice forty years.—W. G. F.

istic—it is a land of saddle-bags. One great limitation confronts its inhabitants—they can travel only on horseback. It requires more effort for the average American Highlander to reach the capital of his State than for a resident of Chicago to visit London.

It seems like a surprising geological oversight that this territory has no kindly arms of the sea, no inland lakes and no navigable streams. The lack of waterways renders it more inaccessible than any mountain district in Europe. Bridle paths, following the course of streams, and circuitous wagon roads threading the “gaps” and traversing the larger valleys, form its only avenues of communication with the world.

But this condition of affairs was not so evident to new settlers in America four and five generations ago. To them all “the western country” was a wilderness, and no maps existed which could reveal the difference between western New York, with its lakes and the great coming Erie canal, and western Virginia. Besides, the first settlers found very good valley land in the Southern mountains—ample domains for the first generation. It was only with the increase of population that it became necessary to cultivate the thinner soil and steeper sides of the “knobs.”

This, then is the unwritten history of the first comers. There were the Scotch-Irish, most numerous of all, with their well-known characteristics of temperament and principle. And then came the English dissenters, (Cromwell himself once engaged passage to America). The town and family names of the west counties of England which were most concerned in the ill-starred uprising of “the Protestant Duke” of Monmouth are to be found to-day in eastern Kentucky and Tennessee. The German contingent was much smaller, and came mainly through the southwest valleys from Pennsylva-

nia. The Huguenot strain made its mark in men like John Sevier, in Tennessee.

Many of these adventurous exiles tarried for a generation in the coast colonies, and then "went west" under the same great impulse which affected all Americans after the Revolution. A smaller number seem to have found their way almost at once into the hills.

The influence of slavery showed itself in the first half of this century in driving many of these liberty-loving families into the mountains, and in walling them up there with a barrier of social repulsion. The line between mountain and lowland came to represent diversity of type and ideas, animosity even, and so made more effective the isolation of the mountain folk.

#### OUR CONTEMPORARY ANCESTORS.

And now what has been the unwritten history of the descendants of these Protestant dissenters in the obscurity of their mountain home during the last hundred years? The answer must be that, compared with what has been going on in the great modern world, nothing has happened to these solitary dwellers in the hills. They took into their mountain valleys the civilization of the colonial period—and that is the prevailing type among them still. To understand the mountain people of to-day one needs a little historic imagination. With this he will perceive that most of what a superficial observer would call their faults are really honest survivals from the times of their forefathers. The colonial dialect, with its strong Saxon flavor, and scores of words like *brickety*, *sorry*, *soon* for *early*, *pack* for *carry*, etc., is one of the first discoveries. As we become more intimate with them we find that unlettered dames can repeat long ballads from the old Scotch and English anthologies—

ballads which refer to "the Turkish lady" and other subjects of Crusading times, with odd variations to adapt them to their far-off American home!

And the colonial condition of arts and sciences still survives here in large degree. Splint-bottomed chairs, such as went to the attic in western New York fifty years ago, homespun bedcovers which are coveted by fashionable ladies to-day, grease lamps, burning lard with floating wick, hand-mills, which turn out a delicious grist for breakfast cornpones, blacksmiths who can also tinker clocks, extract teeth, preach, and "raise a crap"—these are a few of the externals which lead us to characterize the mountaineers as "our contemporary ancestors"

Passing beyond externals we find a colonial hospitality, a colonial disregard of the sacredness of human life, and a colonial religion of literalism and fatalism. And it is here that we find sad divergence from the Protestant characteristics of the earlier time. Pioneer conditions prevented the maintenance of the educational standard so essential to Protestantism. Preachers were scarce, and they could have meetings but once a month. They had the civilization of the colonial period, but that civilization did not include the common school, the division of labor, or the full idea of toleration. Preachers were scarce and they began to "put up with" men who had little or no education. This was the fatal fall, for Protestantism without intelligence is impossible. No Protestant people has ever been so destitute of educated leaders. That a man should not know the meaning of Easter, and preach upon the story of Queen Esther on Easter Day, is more amusing than harmful perhaps, but when he begins to boast that he preaches without study, and without "taking thought," so that when he gets up in the pulpit "the devil him-

self don't know what's a-going to be said," we can not smile. It is no wonder that such men neglect "the weightier matters of the law" and give their main efforts to obscure and controverted points. A solemn debate as to whether the "Missionary Baptist" or the "Southern Methodist" is the only true church has occurred within a few miles of Berea. Resolutions denouncing missions as unwarrantable interferences with the "decrees" of Providence, and Sunday-schools as unauthorized by Scripture, are passed by ministerial conventions every summer. Of course these views are not held by all the numerous denominations in the mountains, but those who do profess a belief in missions and Sunday-schools too often fail to contribute to the one or sustain the other.

And meanwhile the people are without the true incentives of the Gospel. It is pathetic to find an intelligent young teacher complaining that he can not find out what Christianity is, or what the Lord really wants of him, although he has listened to preaching more or less all his life. And it is still more pathetic to find an aged woman who has brought up a large family of children, faithfully training them in the best of all the traditions with which she is acquainted, and who yet says with a quaver in her voice, "I haint never heard no call of the speerit. I haint nary sign that I'm one of the elect."

The morality of the mountain people, too often quite separable from their religion, is greatly varied, though on the whole much better than would be expected. Their conventionalities are not the same as those of our towns and cities, but they have moral standards to which they adhere with rigid insistence. In one valley it sometimes happens that the leading families remove, as did the Lincolns, to some western State, and society collapses. The tales of extreme degradation told

by travelers may be true, but they need not be accepted as typical.

These then are the striking characteristics of this great population: First, the absence of the distinctively modern ideas and habits of thought. Second, a survival of many customs and ideas which belong to past centuries. And, third, a certain pathetic shyness mingled with a proud sensitiveness as they realize that somehow they are at a disadvantage in the presence of "strangers," or "furriners," as visitors from the outside world are often called.

#### THE RECORD OF THE MOUNTAINEERS.

Although thus isolated from their fellow-countrymen, the mountain people have contributed their share to our national greatness. A number of writers have recently been rescuing from oblivion their Revolutionary record. In the same county where Berea College now stands Daniel Boone was besieged in his fort by a company of Indians under command of a British officer, and summoned to surrender in the name of King George. It was a horde of stalwart hunters from Tennessee, Kentucky and the Carolina mountains who administered a crushing defeat to the British forces at King's Mountain, and set in motion the current of events which culminated at Yorktown. In the war of 1812, New Orleans was defended by men with long rifles from the hills whose powder-horns were filled with stuff of their own manufacture, the saltpeter having come from caves in the mountains.

In the Civil War their services were still more marked. The great mountain region was not tenanted by slaveholders. Its inhabitants were not the "poor whites" degraded by competition with slave labor, but a self-respecting yeomanry—really the best middle class the South possesses. They owned land and had the in-

dependence of spirit which belongs to possessors of the soil. Neither the Northern nor the Southern leaders seemed to have taken account of the mountain element, but they were speedily reminded of it by the action of West Virginia in seceding from secession, and the vigorous opposition of Eastern Tennessee simply showed the temper of the whole region. Union soldiers were actually enlisted in the mountains of Alabama and the Carolinas. Kentucky was held in the Union by its mountain counties. And the transfer of 200,000 fighting men from the forces counted upon for the Confederacy, to the Union side, was a mighty make-weight in the scales of civil war. Every movement of the Confederates from the East to the West was hindered by this island of loyal sentiment. The Union soldiers who in other parts of the South were guided by the faithful negro, and assisted in their escape from Southern prisons by his friendly aid, received like services from the mountaineers. Their loyalty is the more to be admired because it was loyalty in the immediate presence of the enemy: a loyalty that cost them dearly in the breaking of cherished associations, the destruction of property, and the sacrifice of many lives. And it is a service to the nation which has never been fitly commemorated nor recorded. The mountain regiments had no badges, poets, or historians. They dispersed to their scattered homes and it is only at the fire-side that their deeds of valor find commemoration to-day.

It is to be remarked that for many mountain men the war was an education. They were carried out of the narrow circle of previous experience and brought into contact with men from other sections, and returned to their homes with larger ideas than their fathers or grandfathers had ever had.

That the native vigor and capacity of these

people has been obscured but not extinguished is shown by the record of those few individuals who have made their way to the region of larger opportunities. Stonewall Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Admiral Farragut (whose mother's name was McIven), Munsey, the great Methodist orator of Baltimore, Rev. George J. Burchett, of Oregon, Commander Maynard, of Spanish war fame, Parson Brownlow, Col. Robert Clay Crawford ("Osman Pasha") are examples of the sterling abilities of the mountain people.—*The Missionary Review of the World*.

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