

ADDRESS
OF
MRS. CORA WILSON STEWART
BEFORE THE
Southern Educational Association
Houston, Texas
DECEMBER 1, 1911

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MRS. CORA WILSON STEWART
INSTITUTE INSTRUCTOR AND LECTURER

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The Twenty-Second Annual Convention of the Southern Educational Association came to a close at the City Auditorium last night, and was universally pronounced the most successful ever held in the Association's history. As one of the leaders phrased it, "A new epoch for education in the South was begun here during the sessions of the convention," and on all sides were expressions embodying just this sentiment.

Dr H L. Whitfield, the president-elect, just prior to the close of the final session, sounded the note which seemed to be in the air, when he said that what was now needed was for the teachers to go back to their respective fields and do the things they had been talking about during the convention. The applause with which this was greeted showed that there were others who felt the same way about it.

A large number of the delegates left last night for their respective homes, and more will leave this morning. A number of them took advantage of the opportunity to visit Galveston before leaving this section and went by excursion to that city yesterday.

Four Generations at School

Athwart the gloom that characterized the attitude of the earlier speakers of the Southern Educational Association, a clear rift broke at the morning session yesterday. Through it shone the famous silvery moonshine of Kentucky playing an entirely new role from that for which that Kentucky element has achieved renown in the past.

In distinct contrast to the Jerimiac lamentations of those who occupied the earlier programs, Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, mountain superintendent and president of the Kentucky Educational Association, delivered a message of reassurance. More than reassurance, her address bore a burden of optimistic outlook, and promised the salvation of the country from the afore described decadent tendencies of civilization through the sturdy, untainted Anglo-Saxon and Norman strains of blood preserved in the mountains of her State.

She was introduced as the only school superintendent who had placed night classes in every school in the county.

The county she represents contains forty-five such night schools, held every moonlit night in the year and attended simultaneously in some instances by four generations. At some of these schools, she said, grandparents, bowed and gray, study at the same desks that their grandchildren and great grandchildren worked during the same day.

While in other parts of the country, she said, people have to be forced through legislative acts to take education, the mountaineers of Kentucky press eagerly forward after it.

She exhibited instances where adults had learned to read and write within two weeks' and a month's time.

With a graceful style and charm of manner she drew a pleasing picture. Though nothing sad was told, there was a sweetness of thought,

tone and delivery that caused eyes to water over the large assemblage of hearers.

The general topic of discussion was the education of the mountain child.

"The mountain child," she said, "so long isolated and retarded, so long enslaved by poverty and ignorance, so long imprisoned between high hills and bridgeless streams, has missed much in the march of civilization, but has preserved the purity of his Anglo-Saxon blood, and has gathered strength to fit him for a development more rapid than the world has ever witnessed.

Wonderfully Interesting Characters

"He stands out before the world to-day a creature wonderfully interesting in his possibilities for development and wonderfully pathetic and appealing in his lack of opportunity. His intellect has never been weakened by wines, alcohol or dissipating narcotics, his perception has never been dulled by the glitter and glare and rush of the money-mad world, and his blood has never been infused with the sluggish, impure blood of alien races.

"Commensurate with these natural advantages, a new and distinct and powerful type of citizen will enter the arena of America's activities and America's achievements to measure his abilities against those who have inherited generations of culture and to add his quota of greatness and usefulness to the nation's citizenship."

Mrs. Stewart pictured the mountain child as inherently upright and honest, with an inbred contempt for pettiness of all kinds. The boy who cheats in the mountain school, she said, is promptly banished by his fellows.

Her description of the new work being done in Kentucky was intensely interesting. The people, she said, were the descendents of the best blood of the earlier colonists, and inherit all their stalwart characteristics. Among them are poets who can not reduce their ballads to writing, and orators who would thrill any assembly of cultured people in the country, who are illiterate.

Mrs. Stewart was preceded by Prof. J. C. T. Noe, of Lexington, dean of education of the Kentucky State University.

—*Houston Post*.

THE CHAIR: It is with great pride and pleasure that I present the next speaker, who is a Kentucky product, a "live wire" of the Kentucky mountains. I have often thought that if she in her environment can do great things, how much more should we, who live in so much better environment, accomplish. Her environment is to that of yours what Helen Kellar's is to the normal child. The lady whom I shall introduce to you is the only County Superintendent in the United States who has established night schools in every school of her county. In these schools men and women students from 21 to 86 years of age have learned to read and write. Last year more than 1,200 of these older students attended the night schools.

I now take great pleasure in introducing to you Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart, Superintendent of Rowan County, Kentucky, who also has the honor of being President of the Kentucky Educational Association. (Applause.)

Mrs. Stewart held the closest attention of the large audience during the presentation of the following paper, the reading of which was frequently interrupted by applause.

THE EDUCATION OF THE MOUNTAIN CHILD

MRS. CORA WILSON STEWART, MOREHEAD, KY.

The mountain child, so long isolated and retarded, so long enslaved by poverty and ignorance, so long imprisoned between high hills and bridgeless streams, has missed much in the march of civilization; but has preserved the purity of his Anglo-Saxon blood, and has gathered strength, fresh-

ness and receptiveness which fit him today for a development more rapid than the world has ever witnessed. He stands out before the world today a creature wonderfully interesting in his possibilities for development, and wonderfully pathetic and appealing in his lack of opportunities.

His intellect has never been weakened by wines or dissipating narcotics; his perceptions have never been dulled by the glitter and glare and rush of a money-mad world, and his blood has never been infused with the sluggish, impure blood of alien races. When opportunities are added commensurate with these natural advantages, a new and distinct and powerful type of citizen will enter the arena of America's activities and America's achievements, to measure his abilities against those who have inherited generations of culture, and to add his quota of greatness and usefulness to the nation's citizenship.

An analysis of the character of an individual may guide us in determining his worthiness, his needs and his possibilities. Heredity, that powerful agent which, though it may not fix a destiny against all environment, may invest a character with such qualities of true greatness as will forbid contentment with an inferior sphere, has lavished upon the mountain child qualities of honesty, pride, originality, ambition, loyalty and reverence.

Honesty is one of the most pronounced characteristics of the mountain child. His contempt for dishonesty, in any form, is always strongly manifested. The boy who cheats in a mountain school is promptly banished from the playground, an outcast from the associations and good offices of his fellows; while the one who fights and conquers is eulogized and worshipped as a hero. And when the mountain boy becomes a mountain man, it is because of this same overwhelming contempt for dishonesty that he has earned the reputation as juror for sending to the penitentiary the man who has stolen a hog, while he oftentimes exonerates the one who has taken human life. Locks and keys are superfluous attachments on the doors of mountain homes. Public sentiment is sufficiently strong to bar all attempt at theft, and robbery is, in that country, a thing unknown. The mountain child, backed by generations of honest men and women and having the abomination for dishonesty so strongly inbred, absolutely will not compromise with it in

yet it is a subject which has scarcely been touched, and affords today a rare and prolific field for some gifted writer of child stories. Untrammelled by the world's customs, and having but a limited knowledge of its books, he is one of the freest and most independent of thinkers. His originality stamps every crude composition, every invention, every utterance, and every effort as something different from the hackneyed phrases and efforts employed by the masses of children of this age. It is a delight to read of the sayings and doings of an original child; but it is better to develop and utilize him, and to apply his originality to the science, art, literature and invention of the world.

Ambition and loyalty, two well-known traits of the mountain child, have already been too widely advertised by his fathers. Not to blood-thirstiness must be attributed the feuds which have arrayed clan against clan, but to a loyalty which knows no satisfaction in giving or requiring less than life itself, and to an ambition which prefers notoriety to obscurity, condemnation to oblivion, and which accepts the world's scorn rather than escape the world's notice. The call of the feud is but the call of this ambition—an ambition to achieve, to excel, to display his prowess, to overcome; or the call of a loyalty which has threaded itself down to him through the generations from his early ancestors, the Scottish clansman. Such an ambition, properly directed, might mean an achievement of no inferior order; and such loyalty under cultivation, may become support of church, organization, State or nation so unswerving that neither need fear his desertion, treason, or failure of duty.

Whatever may be said of the ignorance of the mountain child, he is wiser than many learned men in his knowledge of God. Religious fervor and reverence for his Creator are instincts as lasting within him as his immortal soul. Men of affairs and large responsibilities may feel that they can assume and direct such without invoking divine aid and guidance; but The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come knows that when he is "only a boy" and must rise to the occasion "and ack like a man," it will require the sustaining power of the Omnipotent. The mountain child is devout in the days of his youth, and among his fathers you will find no atheists.

The tastes, talents and inclinations of the individual should guide us somewhat, too, in his training for higher usefulness. The mountain child is by nature poetical. What the child of the plains accepts as a matter-of-fact occurrence, the child of the hills invests with mystery and charm and weaves into crude rythmical verse or ballad. His teacher can witness that the mountain child is a poet; that he turns with indifference from prose to read poetry with delight; that the preparation of prose composition is regarded by him as a hardship, while the same subject will be presented in verse with ease and often excellence. "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" has many a counterpart among the hills. Not only romance and tragedy, but even trivial neighborhood occurrences and peculiarities are sufficient to inspire descriptive ballad or verse. The ballad is, in fact, his weapon of ridicule—and again, his instrument of eulogy. These compositions may deal with subjects as sublime as love or war, or as ridiculous as the teacher's faults and frailties. Even letters in rhyme and poetic subscriptions are not rare among the first communications of mountain boys and girls.

Oratory is one of his richest gifts, there being many a Cicero and Demosthenes among the hills whom even illiteracy cannot chain to silence. If he finds no other avenue for the practice and display of this talent, frequently he seeks the pulpit of a certain sect which welcomes unlearned men as ministers, and permits six or eight speakers to address an audience at one sitting, and there he displays this natural oratory which fills and inspires him. Not a dearth of speakers, but an overabundance of them may be found in certain mountain counties. In some counties there are very few men who will not attempt to express their views or to preach or deliver an oration before an audience; and a child omitted from the school exhibition program is a child deprived, insulted and outraged.

There are sufficient distinct characteristics and talents of the mountain child to occupy a discussion of greater length than the time allotted to this; but there are other conditions of equal importance to the child and to those who may be interested in his development.

If there be one who can surpass the mountain child in wealth of character and in brilliance and originality of mind,

there is none who can equal him in the insatiate desire for knowledge. As one long starved eats ravenously, the mountain child, long deprived of opportunity, embraces it with unusual and astounding avidity. More than a child-like curiosity must be satisfied by all with whom he comes in contact. Every visitor is converted into an instructor, and subjected to an examination or quiz. This remarkable curiosity is not the only symptom of an eager, hungry mind; for such brave and heroic efforts have been made by mountain girls and boys in their struggle for an education as would entitle them to an honored page in education's history. These incidents have never graced the pages of the newspapers, however, which have devoted so much space to his fathers' vendettas.

For instance, journalism, one of the most crowded and exacting professions, did not appear too difficult for one little mountain couple, brother and sister, age 10 and 12; so they started a little newspaper, styled "The Young Mountaineer". Having no equipment but a few galleys of discarded type, they used a picture frame for a chase, and wedged in the type with sticks, and published for several years this crude little sheet to defray their expenses in school.

One mountain girl, living on a cliff twelve miles from any settlement, having no available means, and desiring a college education, set herself up in competition with the great hosiery factories of the world and knitted socks at twelve and a half cents a day, and laid her hard-earned fund at the shrine of education.

Another girl, being denied employment in a college town in any position requiring the services of a girl, sacrificed her womanliness and her pride, over-reached her strength and endangered her health by masquerading in masculine attire and assuming the sterner, severer duties of a boy. She had worked her way almost through school when her identity was discovered, and she was forced to retreat; and there was not a student in her class which stood in scholarship above or equal to her.

One other incident, a mountain boy in North Carolina, learning that there was scholarship to be secured in a school in the Kentucky hills, set out a-foot at once to claim the coveted prize. He did not halt or hesitate, was not deterred

by distance or danger, but braved alone every peril of the mountain fastness, and endured every hardship of its rough and rugged road, and walked into the school with bare and bleeding feet, but a happy heart, to claim the cherished opportunity.

Such incidents as these, and others equally as significant, exonerate the mountaineer forever of the charge that he is indifferent concerning education, or that he is content or satisfied with his present condition. These incidents all occurred within a small area; to enlarge the area and to extend the acquaintance with the mountain child, will but produce more overwhelmingly convincing evidence. The cause of education has nowhere, indeed, so faithful an advocate and follower as the mountain child; the goddess, Minerva, has no subject so loyal and adoring worshipping at her shrine. His allegiance to her should surely be rewarded by her prompt and hearty recognition of him. There are races and classes which have to have education forced upon them. To force education upon the indifferent and the self satisfied, while the most eager, hungry-minded children of the nation cry for learning, is like taking bread from the starving and forcing it upon the satiated. This organization, which is pledged to the advancement of the cause of education in the South, does well today to consider the thousands of children within its Appalachian region. It does well to remember who these children are—not the descendants of the African, the Mongolian, or other inferior races, but the sons of the Clays, the Jacksons, the Lees, the Marshalls, and all the nobility of the South; boys and girls, who, like little Chad, have kinsmen in the valleys more distinguished, but none more proud and honorable.

Who and what the mountain child is—his abilities and ambitions are easier to outline than a proper and adequate course of instruction suitable to his needs and environment. His educational advantages, if equal in provision to those of other children, must necessarily be limited by the topography and climatic conditions of his country; for when the short term public school is efficient, the child is deprived of much of the session, for even the rain, which blesses flock and field, renders mountain roads impassable and swells the bridgeless streams between the mountain child and the school.

Faithful and efficient service on the part of the road builder seems as necessary a condition in the education of the mountain child, as faithful and efficient service on the part of the school teacher. The educational advantages of the masses of mountain children lie entirely in the short-term public schools. Denominational institutions, scattered here and there, have afforded for the last quarter of a century superior advantages to some, and in several Southern States high schools have been established, which add to the advantages of those who live adjacent to the town, or can overcome poverty and ignorance sufficiently to reach and attend them. Even the institutions which he has, in fact, are not always accessible, and will never be until he has overcome to some extent the handicaps of poverty and rugged roads.

Good roads, longer and more efficient elementary schools, with a more practical course of study, efficient secondary schools with industrial departments, separate and well-equipped industrial institutions, all have their part to play in his education. Being more poetical than practical, he needs the balance of industrial training. He needs to have his ideals readjusted—the best and truest retained, the lowest and most pernicious elevated or destroyed. He needs industrial training, not merely as a balance and a force of readjustment, but as an avenue of escape, emancipation from pauperism to prosperity, from ignorance to intellectuality.

His course of study needs to be altered to meet his condition and environment. Instead of the mathematics of the stock exchange, the shipyard and the clearing-house, he needs the mathematics of the field, the forest and the mine; it will do him no harm to ascertain the boundaries of Liberia or Manchuria, to read Cicero or Cæsar, provided he also learns the elements of the soil beneath his feet, "which lifts bread to him and roses sweet". He had better know how to discover the secret wealth of the hills than to know the greatest depth of the Atlantic Ocean; should know how to live in contentment, comfort, peace and prosperity among the hills, as well as to recount the world's famous battles and to enumerate its most successful generals. He should be taught, not only how to construct a correct English sentence, but how to convert each tree into its highest use,

whether for shelter, fruit or shade; and how to use each furrow of the soil in his valleys and on his hillsides to their adapted purpose. He may scan poetry with profit, but with greater profit could learn to scan the secret wealth of the hills, to drag forth and enrich himself with their hidden treasures. Practical education and industrial training will not woo him from his higher ambitions nor prevent him from reaching higher attainments; they will only assist him to greater achievements.

The crying needs of the hour in the Southern mountains are industrial training for the young mountain child, and some provision for at least the rudiments of an education for the adult, those mentioned by one speaker previously as being "children in the acquirement of knowledge", and I will add, not merely in the lack of knowledge, but in their childish eagerness for it, as well. While I would not add to the burdens of the already over-burdened South, I must declare it my conviction that we are responsible for the development of more than its Appalachian youth; we are responsible, too, *for the education of his father and his mother*. There is in the mountainous section of the South as great demand for intellectual development among those who have passed youth's golden age without having shared youth's opportunities and glory, as ever burned in the breasts of any unfortunate, retarded people. Even if these people were resigned to their fate, would it be good political economy to overlook and neglect them, and shall the South wait for its highest achievement and recognition, its greater glory and completer culture, until this people of remarkable vigor and longevity live out their quarter or half century in ignorance and die? But, I wish to emphasize the fact that they are not resigned; that the hearts of these adult mountain children throb with a yearning for intellectual freedom as great as filled the hearts of our forefathers for civic and religious freedom. Whatever may have been the experiences of others who are engaged in mountain work, whether they have been confronted with the startling evidences of this demand, I do not know; but to me it has appealed with overwhelming force.

In response to this great need, we have answered to some degree in Kentucky with an experiment, already mentioned by the President of this Association, as "the rural

night school," or "moonlight school". Before I relate the history of that experiment, may I take you into my confidence and relate the specific incidents, personal experiences which enlightened me as to the necessity of providing some educational facilities for adult mountaineers.

Mollie McGlothin, a mountain woman, bent with age, came into my office one morning, fondling a letter tenderly. Her daughter had grown up and secured an education, had gone to Chicago and engaged in business. Her letters were the one bright spot in the old woman's existence, and the drafts which they contained were often the only means of relieving her present necessities. When a letter came, she usually went to the home of some neighbor and engaged their services to interpret its precious contents. Occasionally she came to town, some seven miles, to enlist my services, and I anticipated that such was her mission on this occasion. "A letter from Jane!" I exclaimed. "Shall I read it for you, Mollie?" Her face fairly beamed. "No," she replied, "I have learned to read and write, and am going to answer it myself." "Learned to read and write!" I exclaimed in astonishment. Why, only a month ago she was ignorant of the significance of the slightest literary character. I questioned her and drew from her this simple story: "Well, sometimes the neighbors were busy and sometimes the cricks were up, and I got tired, anyway, runnin' round botherin' the neighbors, and, then, I jist wanted to read with my own eyes what Jane had writ with her own hand, so I went to the store and got me a speller, and I sot up till midnight at night, and sometimes till daylight until I larned to spell and read and write." And to verify the statement, she spelled out slowly the words of her daughter's treasured missive; and then, under my direction, she sat down and wrote her first letter, an achievement which delighted her beyond all expression, and *which must have delighted Jane more.*

A few months later a prepossessing mountain man of middle age came into my office, and while waiting for me to dispatch some other business fingered several books wistfully, turning them over and over again, and laying them down at last with a sigh. Knowing the scarcity of interesting books throughout the country, I inquired whether he wished to take one home with him to read, and he replied

with tears in his eyes, "No, I cannot read or write. I would give twenty years of my life if I could."

Again, a short time afterward, at a school entertainment in the country, a tall six-foot sturdy handsome mountain lad of twenty-one, stepped out and, without embarrassment and with great force and power, sang a long and interesting ballad, partly original and partly borrowed from his English ancestors. When he sat down I went over and took a seat beside him, and said, "Dennis, I should be pleased if you would write me a copy of that ballad. It is worthy of publication." He replied, "I would if I could write. I have thought up a hundred of them, some better and longer than that, but I forget them before I could get somebody to write them down."

Each of these incidents were impressive; together they were overwhelming. Opportunities must be provided for them, but how? The day schools were already crowded, and the mountain people must employ every hour of the day, anyway, in toil to eke out an existence. Then came the inspiration, "the rural night schools," or "moonlight schools", as we have designated them, because they were conducted on moonlight nights, when travel along steep and rugged roads was not so hazardous. I gathered the teachers around me, outlined the plan, called for volunteer service, and without any difficulty enlisted them heart and soul in the cause. On Labor Day, September 4th, the teachers observed as a real Labor Day, by walking over their districts, explaining the plan and announcing the opening, which was to occur the following evening. The demand was great; the teachers knew it and I knew it, and we confidently expected that there would be an average of two or three pupils to each teacher, making perhaps 150 adult pupils in the county; but we never knew how great it was until the doors opened and the school bells rang out for the first moonlight schools in America, when twelve hundred boys and girls, ranging in age from eighteen to eighty-six, came trooping up out of the hollows and over the hills, some to receive their first lesson in reading and writing, and some to improve their limited education. Illiterate merchants who had been in business for years, ministers who had been attempting to lead their flocks along paths of

righteousness, lumbermen who had engaged in commerce without having in their possession the keys of learning which would most successfully unlock its doors, took advantage of the opportunity, and actually learned to read and write. Mothers came that they might learn to write letters to their precious sons and daughters in distant lands; fathers came that they might learn to read and write sufficiently to exercise the divine right of suffrage with secrecy and security. They came with different aims and purposes, but, after all, inspired by the one great aim—the escape from the bondage of ignorance and the stigma of illiteracy. Almost one-third of the population of one little county was enrolled, and it was a county which contained no greater proportion of illiterates than many others in the South, both lowland and highland. They had all the excuses and all the barriers which any people might offer—high hills, bridgeless streams, rugged roads, weariness from the day's hard toil, the shame of beginning study late in life, and all the others; but they were not seeking excuses - they were sincerely and earnestly seeking knowledge, and *I have in my hands some proofs that they found it.* Their interest, their zeal and their enthusiasm were wonderful to witness. It was truly an inspiring sight to see these aged pupils bending over the desks which their children and grandchildren had occupied during the day. I have witnessed many degrees of joy and pride, but their delight in learning and their pride in their achievements exceeded any joy that I have ever witnessed. It was an inspiring sight to see the patient, noble, unselfish young teachers, instructing by night as well as by day; and it is an inspiring thought to remember who these teachers were—mountain girls and boys who had secured an education, and had gone back to elevate their own communities; teachers who knew best the peculiarities and limitations of their senior pupils, and could best encourage and inspire and lead them along the road of learning. They used as a text a little newspaper, especially prepared for the occasion, containing simple sentences concerning the movements of people with whom they were acquainted, together with such sentences as would inspire their county pride and awaken them to continued effort. The object in using this paper was as much to save them from the embarrassment of using a primer, and to arouse in them the feeling of

importance in being, from their first lesson, a reader of a newspaper, as for the objects already enumerated.

The first session of the rural night schools was a decided success; and letters from persons who had ever been denied the delightful privilege of correspondence found their way in large numbers into the mails. Some of these letters came to my desk, as I had offered a Bible to each one who would learn to write a letter during the first two weeks' term. They may not be so interesting to you as they were to the recipient; but I can assure you that her first love letter was not so highly prized. The first one I received is as follows:

Vale, N.Y. Sept.
Mrs. Cora Wilson Stewart
Morehead, N.Y.

Dear Miss. C. -

I attended the Night
School at Open fork during
Weght but one and learned dury
fast I am 49 years of age and this
is my first letter I ever wrote.
Hearing of your kind offer of
giving a book to anyone
who wr ote you there first
letter I will ask ou to send
me one of your books and I
assure you it will be greatly
appreciated. Yours truly
Mrs. C. J. White.

School No. 72

Triplett Ky.
Sept. 28. 1911

Mrs. Caro Wilson Stewart
Marblehead Ky.

Dear Friend

This is the
first letter I ever wrote
I am twenty one years
old.

I attended night school
every night and learned
to write now I don't
have to get some one
to write for me when
I have to write
All the praise belong
to you for planning
night school

Dennis Hall

And Dennis can now write, not only letters, but can
write his ballads before they are lost from memory.

Last, I will read a letter from the man who deplored so pathetically his inability to read and write.

Munson, Ky,
Oct. 18, 1911.

Miss Cora Wilson Stewart
Dear friend I will try
and rite you a few lines
to let you know that I
am well and hope you are
the same well I can
say that this is my
first letter and I would
have wrote sooner but
I have bin gone for a
while and of course I
am a new hand at the
bisnet and cant rite
but little but I am glad
that I can rite as well
as what I can I learned
this at night school

and was glad that
I had the chance to
go to school and glad
tht I went and I peached
night school for I mist
my chance when I was
a school boy but I have
heard sed that tha
never get to old to
learn

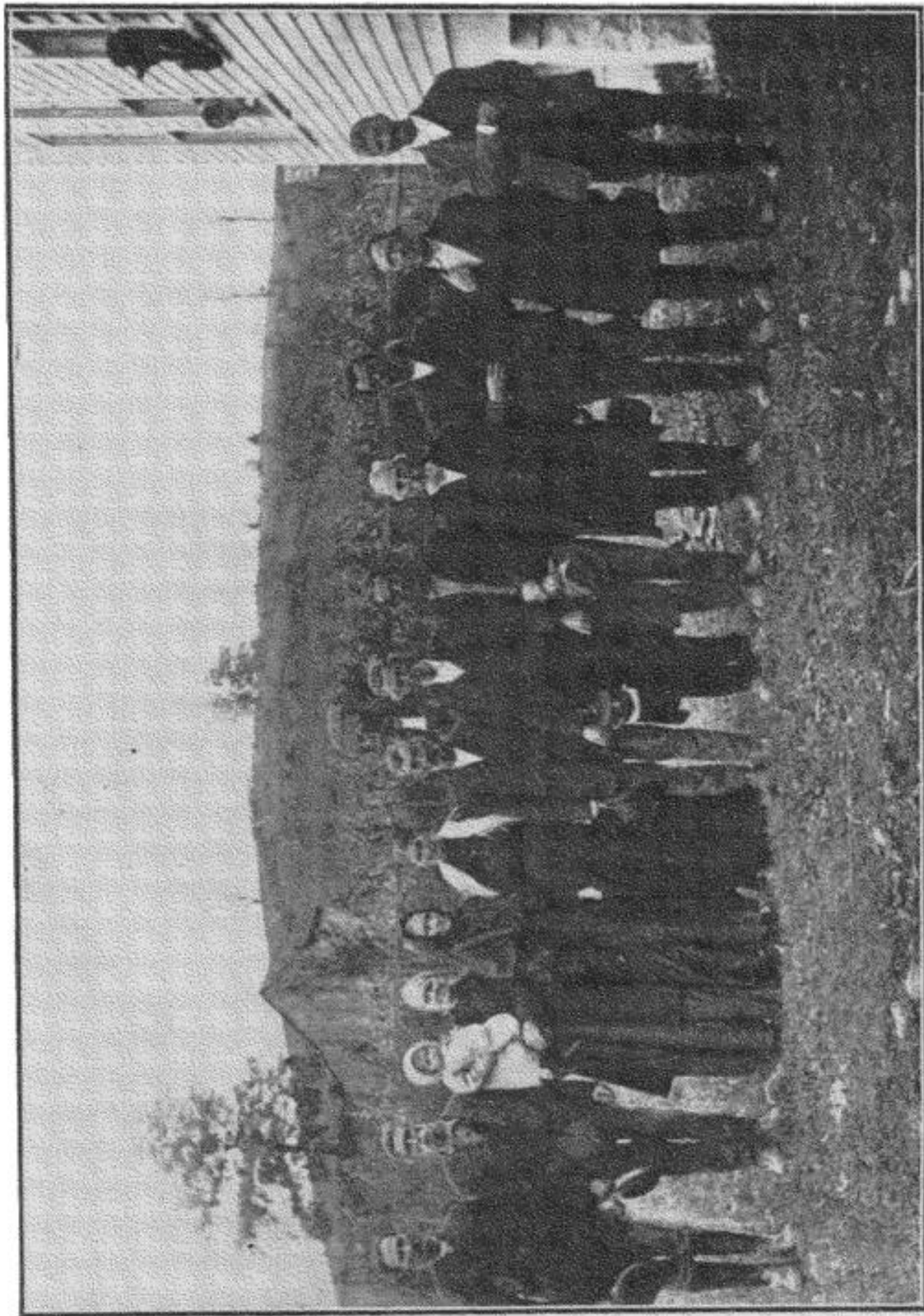
Miss Gottle Richards
is a fine little teacher
and she is gon to teach
night school I am
more and I would be
glad to go ever night
well I will close fore
this time excuse bad
Spring E. Edgar Gittleton

The price for his training was not the proffered "twenty years of his life," but merely interest and application.

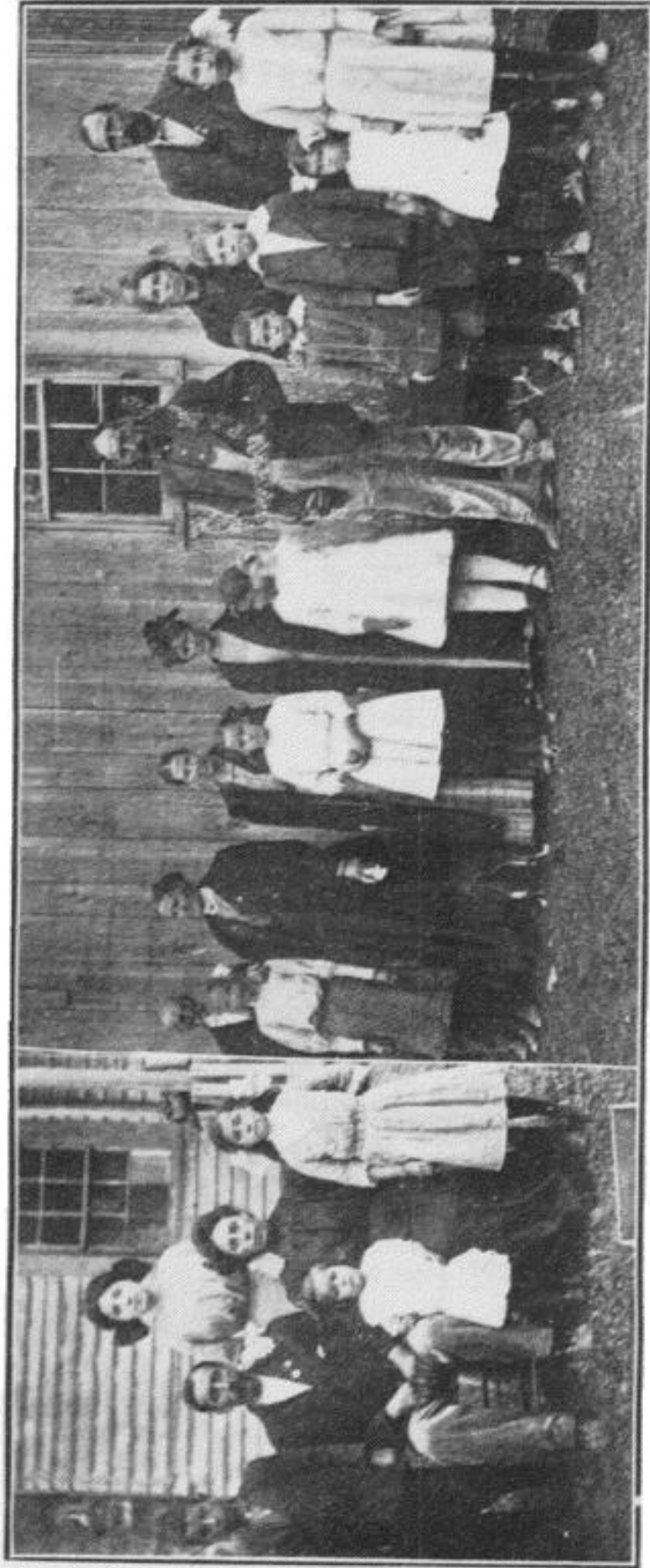
I hold in my hand some interesting pictures of these adult pupils, the picture of a woman 86 years of age, the oldest student in America; a night school class of persons who had passed over the crest of the hill of life, each one being over fifty years of age; a group of four families who were in one school at one time, the children during the day and the fathers and mothers at night; the picture of a Baptist minister, past fifty years of age, who had for thirty years been leading his followers blindly and ignorantly, but after the first session of "moonlight schools" could preach from the text found in Job, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?"



THE OLDEST PUPIL IN AMERICA, AGED 86



A NIGHT SCHOOL CLASS, ALL PAST FIFTY YEARS OF AGE



FOUR FAMILIES WHO WERE IN ONE SCHOOL, THE CHILDREN DURING THE DAY AND THE PARENTS AT NIGHT



BAPTIST MINISTER WHO LEARNED TO
READ AND WRITE

The reports from the various schools bore witness as to the great interest of the people and the demand for an extension of the term. The question, "Was the night school popular?" "Was there a demand for an extension of the term?" brought, in every instance, an affirmative reply. The question, "What was the effect on the day school?" was answered in each instance by the reply, "It increased the interest and the attendance." Parents who had never seemed to be in sympathy with the school made sacrifices, after their attendance at the night school, to send every child. To the teachers' reports were appended many letters, telling in an enthusiastic way of the fine spirit manifested and the great good accomplished, and the result was of course an extension of the term. I could spend hours telling you of pathetic and inspiring incidents, of incidents of joy over the emancipation from ignorance; but there is not time to dwell on the subject longer. Suffice it to say that the rural night school fills a much-needed want in the lives, not only of the adult mountain child, but of any other adult country child in the South. It has been tried and adopted in one county in Kentucky, and is already being adopted in others. By this means we propose to wipe out illiteracy from the mountainous section of Kentucky and

to present that people to the commonwealth, a people happy, contented, intelligent and useful, not merely in its younger generation, but in its entirety.

For the older mountain child we can foresee, when educated, years of satisfaction, usefulness and prominence, and for the younger, there seems no pinnacle of success beyond his reach. And when industrial training and literary culture have vied as to which can equip him best, when he has become master of the vineyard, lord of the field and forest, alchemist of the hidden gold beneath his feet; when golden grain rustles in his valleys, prophetic of a plenteous harvest, and ripened fruits sway in the boughs on his hillside, telling of skill and prosperity, when he has redeemed every barren and rocky hill side and transformed them into such fertility that fruit and grain and fattened flock flourish abundantly over his land, then he, who was so long deprived, will open the treasures of his storehouse to develop the world's youth, and will turn again to the Muses who first enticed him—poetry and oratory, and as poet, literateur and statesman will lead the world along a higher plane of thought and endeavor.