

Crusts and Crumbs

By Albert Ernest Stafford

Sunday World, January 16.h, 1916

THE WHITMAN CLUB of Bon Echo, founded by Flora Macdonald, sent out invitations for a reception recently and I was fortunate enough to be included in the company that assembled in the King Edward on Friday Evening of the 7th. It was an inspiring way to begin the New Year. I had first heard about Flora Macdonald sixteen years ago when she published her book, "Mary Melville, the Psychic," which was recommended to me by Mr. Hague Evans, of whom I wrote in these columns some time ago. It was a long time afterwards before I met Flora Macdonald in person and came to realize not only as a tradition, but as a fact that "Mary Melville" was the sister of the writer, who had only written down with faithful and loving care an account of the remarkable life which had grown up and withered beside her. That book, with its picture of a remarkable father and mother, and its glimpse of a Canada that has been a foundation for much that is yet to come to pass, should be better known than it is. Perhaps one day, as biography, it will have a wider circulation and a better reception than it has yet had as fiction. Those who read "Mary Melville," however, realize that they are dealing with a remarkable family. Mrs. Denison, who is Flora Macdonald, and founder of the Walt Whitman Club of Bon Echo, is a true sister of her own heroine.



MRS DENISON told us that she was first introduced to Walt Whitman by Col. Ingersoll. She had not met the great American orator personally, but had attended the lecture given by him in the old Shaftesbury Hall in 1892. More and more as she became imbued with the spirit of Whitman, she understood that the Voice Eternal was speaking the ancient message in a new form to a new age. She understood, also, that the message was an appeal to the innermost, and that it must fall on many deaf ears. It was an inspiration and encouragement for her in her own work. She distinguished between her own inner self, the Flora Macdonald who thought and wrote and dwelt apart, and the Mrs. Denison, who faced the world and did the world's business. She knew that the Inner Person must be free, and Whitman's appeal stirred her. "Leave all free as I have left all free!" She had been born in the