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The Author of "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm."

By Alice Blythe Tucker Wilcox.

Not long ago I was talking to a friend who had lately met Kate Douglas Wiggin. "Did you like her?" I asked, knowing pretty well what the answer would be. "Like her? Why, I loved her at once. Who could help it?"

The words of my friend voice the opinion of all who know the gifted author of "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," and other charming stories. Her kindness of heart and the charm of manner that results from it, win everyone. Unlike many successful writers, Kate Douglas Wiggin meets you directly and simply, without affectation and without posing. And she does not save herself for literary people; in New York she is known personally by all classes, rich and poor, old and young, and in her country home, in a farming district of Maine, she is beloved by all. It was her childhood home, and naturally everyone is very proud of her. To the old people she is still the "Kate" of years ago, while the young look up to her as the gracious embodiment of their best ideals.

One would know from her books that Kate Douglas Wiggin's greatest interest in life is found in children and young people. Although denied children of her own, she is one of the biggest - hearted mothers I have ever known. Indeed, someone has called her "The childless mother of America's motherless chil-Any child appeals to her, but it is the motherless waifs that touch most keenly her kind heart. She is a constant visitor at, and helper in, the kindergarten of New York's East Side, and it is characteristic of her, that, for the poor little ones who seldom see beauty in any form, she dresses in her prettiest and best. One can imagine what it means to these tots of the tenements to have such a beautiful, radiant, and helpful visitor, and one who never leaves without leading in a game or telling a story. For Kate Douglas Wigherself, is an expert kindergartener having founded and taught the first Free Kindergarten in San Francisco many years ago when she was only a young girl. It was to get money to rent a larger room for her classes that she ventured to write "The Bild's Christmas Carol." So successful was this, her first book, that she decided that she could best meet the needs of the little children in the city on the Pacific slope by giving up actual teaching and devoting all her time to writing stories, the proceeds of which would go toward expanding the free-kindergarten work. Since then, book has followed book, some not so laughter-provoking, and yet heart.touching as "The Bird's Christmas Carol," but all charming, and gll dealing with phases of child life. Her greatest success was reached when "Rehecca of Sunnybrook Farm' made its appearance. The little girl wearing her coarse and homely dress, buttoned down the front, that no time might be lost from a busy life in the process of dressing, but clutching her cherished pink parasolsuggesting the inherent love of beauty and idealism in the child that no poverty had power to destroy-has made herself known and beloved everywhere.

One of the very interesting things about "Rebecca" is that she has made an actual place for herself in the author's home. Last winter I was having luncheon with Kate Douglas Wiggin in her New York apartment. It was served in the library, as no other guest but myself was present. Photographs of Relecca as she is characteristically em- what Carlyle's wife said to him when,

bodied by Edith Talliaferro in the sick and discouraged over his work, he Perhaps you know I have actually edited west, were everywhere on wall spaces, and on tables, and from where I sat I could see on the piano in the next room Rebecca's identical pink parasol, while not far from it was the hat she wore on the stage journey from Sunnybrook

"She might be a daughter gone out for a while," I remarked.

"And to think that when I brought her into the world I was so discouraged about her!" exclaimed my hostess. "My experience helps to prove that it is hard for an author to estimate rightly her said, "Kate, this book is by far the your greatest success." I shook my farm house in Maine, where "Rebecca"

dramatized version of the story, which read to her his finished Sartor Resartus. has appeared north, south, east, and "It is a work of genius, dear," she assured her husband. Although the book received, at first, no recognition, time has confirmed Mrs. Carlyle's verdict. Surely it is good to know that, as in these cases, husbands and wives are often so bound together in sympathy that an insight into the true value of each other's achievements is given with-out the encouragement of which the world would be left the poorer by much that it now considers worth while.

By the way, Kate Douglas Wiggin's married name is Mrs. George Riggs, her for an author to estimate rightly her husband being a well-to-do business man own work. It was my husband who of New York. Every spring, Mr. and Mrs. Riggs go abroad for a few weeks, best you have ever written. It will be returning in the early summer to the

a cook-book !"

As she spoke, she took from a table a book of some hundred pages, attractively bound in blue and white, and proceeded to write in it, "From Kate Douglas Wiggin—better editor than cook l''
But, as I told her then, and as I think even more strongly since I have tried some of the recipes that appear under her own name, "I has ma doots o'

For the author of "Rebecca of Sunaybrook Farm" is one of those interesting and seldom-met women who combine in a remarkable degree the qualities and talents which one thinks of as purely feminine-possibly, in this case, a result of her New England upbringing - with the artistic and literary insight, and the power of close application that help to make the successful author. Of course, Kate Douglas Wiggin is, first and foremost, the writer-and glad and thankful we all are for this-but she is also what we still like to think of as the womanly woman, one whose heart finds satisfaction in the life of the home. And she has unbounded faith in the influence of the home on character. Indeed, this is the theme of her latest book, "Mother Carey's Chickens." And those who wish Carey's Chickens." And those who wish to know her as she is in mind and heart, could not do better than to read this book, for "Mother Carey" is an unconsciously drawn, but none the less faithful study of the the author herself, doing exactly what one knows she would do if placed amid circumstances similar to those in the story.

Someone says Kate Douglas Wiggin could not depict a villain if she triedunder her touch he would gradually become a delightful person, whom we all should perforce love. In truth, her stories prove that she believes in the innate goodness of human nature, and it is this belief that makes both her and her books powerful influences for good.



Kate Douglas Wiggin. Author of "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," and other stories.

country about my little Rebecca would York. seem to prove that my husband was

right." Then the author told me further of to write had meant to her-of how he had constantly encouraged and helped her by his advice and sympathy. The story was similar to that which another gifted writer had told me only a short time before, and it also reminded me of

head despondently enough, but the let- and many other books have been writters I still receive from all over the ten. The winters are spent in New

"Here I do very little writing," the author told me. "Mr. Riggs and I have so much to see and hear, so many to what her husband's faith in her power visit and be visited by, so much interesting work for children to get in touch with, that I can find time for only a stray article now and then. "And, of course," she added, "I have my housekeeping duties here, for, unlike many who spend only a few months of the winter in New York, I really keep house.

## The Windrow.

R. W. Service, the poet of the Klondike, has been for some weeks in the Balkans, where he went in search of new literary material.

The doctors and dentists of Winnipeg have been demanding that the Legislature take steps to prevent the sale of "comforts" for babies.

district to all the weeks of the second A paper cloth, to be known as "textilose," is to be manufactured on a large scale at Manchester, England.

. . . . Nine theaters in New York are dispensing with their orchestra and installing organs, which are veritable orchestras in themselves, being fitted with attachments to produce the effect of all the instruments in an orchestra.

. . . . . At this late date, it has been decided to erect, in Salem, Mass., a statue of Nathaniel Hawthorne. The long neglect has been due to the fact that Hawthorne, never popular during his lifetime because of his extreme shyness and reticence, embittered the people of Salem by his writings, in which, they declared, he had "slandered" some of the Salem folk. Now the descendants of these same folk are beginning to recognize that "lazy Nat Hawthorne" was, in truth, a very great genius, and that upon his memory alone the fame of Salem rests. The statue, as planned by Bela L. Pratt, will represent the author sitting on a rock covered with seaweed, as though looking out to sea, resting, as he did so often, on the long, solitary