

SIGHT OUT OF BLINDNESS



Miss Maud Emerson Lincoln, of Marblehead, Mass. Her First Flower.

BY ANDREW WAILES FORD.

A TWENTY-YEAR-OLD girl, blind from birth, suddenly recovered her sight as she was putting away a dish in the china closet of the dining-room of her mother's home at Marblehead, Mass. Her world, which she describes as "a world of blackness," became instantly and strangely peopled with cups and saucers, glasses and plates.

Sight came to Maud Emerson Lincoln in the snap of a finger. In fact, when she discusses the miracle which made her see she snaps her long, slender fingers with a sharp click like that of castanets and says:

"Something snapped—like that—in my right eye. I heard it, and then suddenly I saw. Two days later the same thing happened to my left eye." What did she see? What did she think of it? How does the world impress a girl blind since two days after her birth when she sees for the first time?

Miss Lincoln says that her first feeling was one of extraordinary fear. "My hand shook as I put away the plate I held. Something that stung poured into my right eye, and turning from the half darkness of that china closet, I saw a short, plump woman standing by the dining-room table—and I knew she was my mother.

"The fact that I was actually seeing my mother, looking into the eyes of the woman who had watched over my specially helpless childhood, frightened me. Really, my mother's face—and it is a sweet face—scared me to death. I looked at her and screamed!

"Then I ran over to the sofa and

threw myself upon it, hiding my face in the cushions. I begged my mother to go away. I couldn't bear the sight I had prayed for all my life!

"I don't know whether persons who have not lived in the blackness as I did for 20 years can understand why I was so frightened.

"Then when I could be persuaded to lift my head from the sofa pillow I went to the window and looked out and I saw the American flag floating from the staff of the town hall, and below, in the little square in front of it, that whipping-post at which Samuel Bowen, namesake of my yellow cat, used to look from my very windows.

"It was wonderful to see our beautiful flag flying over that place where there had once been so much cruelty and pain. And I thought, as I stood there, that the world must always be beautiful wherever that flag flies. Since I have recovered my sight we keep the flag floating over our doorway all the time. Did you see it as you came in?"

"Those red stripes are splendid, aren't they? It makes me feel brave and proud just to look at them. But the color I like best is cerise. My mother bought me this silk petticoat this week. Isn't it lovely?"

With a coquettish lift of the dull brown house dress a vivid flash of cherry-colored silk came into view.

"It's pretty, isn't it?" said the girl who had been blind 10 days before. "Do you think a whole dress of that color would look well on me?"

"I have to wear glasses now. Do you think I will have to wear them always? Would you like to see my eyes with them off, or would it frighten you?"

You see, they move a little all the time, but the doctor says that will go away after I get more accustomed to the light and to seeing so many objects."

Maud Lincoln raised her well-formed right hand and took off her glasses, revealing very large slate-colored eyes, which now and then deepen to blue. Over their singularly sensitive surface there seems to play constantly a slight flickering motion, like the ripple of a pool stirred languidly by an April breeze. These eyes have strange sym-

metries, a perceptible shrinking from their sudden bombardment by a world with which they should have had 20 years to grow familiar.

Nobody but the girl herself will ever wholly realize the shock of this terrible impact.

"For several days after I got my sight I was deaf," she said. "In the blackness I could hear perfectly. But after sight came hearing left me for a time. Then my sense of touch seemed to go. Even now I haven't it back

I was unable to look at a human face without that sensation of horrible fear. I was so scared and my nerves were so upset by having so many objects pouncing against my eyeballs that the doctor made me go to bed in a darkened room and stay there for a week. And there are still many things which he will not let me look at. I have not yet seen the ocean. To be in Marblehead and not see the ocean which gives a living to so many Marblehead fishermen seems a strange thing! But I have heard it growling through many long New Eng-

land winters. When I lived in the blackness I thought of it as of some huge animal—an animal like Samuel Bowen Lincoln—only as big as the world."

"Samuel Bowen Lincoln" is Miss Lincoln's pet and best friend. He is a big yellow cat who once loved nothing so much as to lie at the feet of the tall, slender girl, then blind, who loved to stroke his amber colored fur in the long, dim hours of her lightless days. Since his mistress recovered her sight, however, Samuel Bowen Lincoln has permitted himself to gratify his natural male instinct for prowling. But before Miss Lincoln could proceed with her story Sam had to be summoned from a neighboring fence and introduced.

"Sam is named after Samuel Bowen, a Colonial Judge who once owned the house we live in. You see, our windows look right out on the Town Hall, and in the left-hand corner of the steps you can see an old post. That was the whipping post, and Judge Bowen, who was a very cruel man, used to stand in this window where I am now and see that his sentence to the whipping post was carried out with the severity he desired. There is the post now. Look! See!"

Unconsciously Maud Lincoln says "See!" with the rapture and pride of a

girl I went to the Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston for a while, and learned to read. But after I came back home I forgot it gradually. Now at 20—nearly 21—I will have to begin my education. I learned gradually to help mother about the house, but except for that the only thing I can do is to play the organ. Of course I play only by ear. Would you like to hear me? I am sorry, but I can play only hymns and 'Tipperary.' I can sing, too."

The tall girl seated herself on a wooden bench in front of the old-fashioned organ that is the chief ornament of the pleasant New England parlor. Later on she will have the long free stride of a well built, strong woman, but as yet her step is timid, tentatively the step of one who has walked in darkness for 20 years.

"When I first saw the keys I couldn't play," she said. "They frightened me so. But now I have gotten used to seeing them and all my pieces have come back to me."

"Swinging back to the keys the girl played slowly, solemnly the opening bars of Cardinal Newman's hymn, 'Lead, Kindly Light,' and in a surprisingly clear, true alto voice sang the opening verse: 'Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom;



Little Stories of the Great War

A Useful Boy Scout.

IN a station in France one day a Red Cross train arrived and busy doctors, nurses and ambulance men attended to the wounded with their usual quickness and skill. But busiest of all seemed to be a khaki-clad youngster of perhaps 14, who made a breathless sprint along the platform carrying a great heap of cabbages and onions, on his way to the kitchen quarters. And as he raced along the ambulance men gave him an affectionate if subdued cheer. He was a bright little fellow with charming manner. He spoke only French, but assured every one who asked him that he was British-born and bred and had been working as an ambulance man since the beginning of the war. The Red Cross men told the rest of the story. To them he was known

Stories and Pictures for the Little Ones

Hopeful, Anyway

AND here's another of the thousand and one stories that are told about the little boy sitting on the bank of a stream and the kindly-faced, inquisitive old man who comes along.

In this case the boy was particularly red-haired and freckled and—fresh. And the old gentleman really meant to be good-natured and sociable.

"What are you fishing for, my little man?" he asked with a smile that was intended as reassuring.

The freckle-faced boy looked up at him a moment, gazed, spat in the water and answered:

"Scutchems?"

The White Carnations

LETTY sat scanning the evening paper one Saturday afternoon early in May. Now to read the jokes on the last page of that paper was nothing new to Letty, for she always greeted her father when he returned home from business with "Have you got the paper, Daddy?" and then, "Are the jokes any good?"

But if her parents had watched her on this particular evening they would have seen that the little girl was absorbed in an article of the first page.

This was a story about "Mother's Day," which would be on the following day, as that was the second Sunday in the month of May.

The story was written about a lady—Miss Anna Jarvis—who had for many years been trying to get the United States to celebrate this day. It spoke of the respect that ought to be shown to mothers by a public observance, at least once a year. And it asked for a public recognition by every son and daughter offering the mother a white carnation, and wearing one themselves.

The slogan for the day is—"The Best Mother Who Ever Lived."

Now Letty knew that she had the very best mother who ever lived, and she thought the idea of the carnations the best she had ever heard.

She dropped the paper suddenly and said, "I think I'll run around the block, just to pick up an appetite."

Daddy laughed, for that was his favorite expression every Sunday be-

Excusable Error.

(Birmingham Age-Herald.)

"How many people came over originally in the Mayflower?"

"I believe the latest estimate is something like 9,784,325 persons."

"Nonsense. The vessel could only carry a few hundred."

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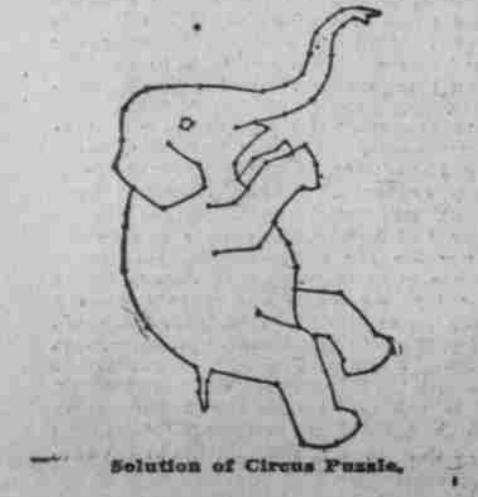
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Solution of Circus Puzzle.

Mother's Day

THE second Sabbath day in May, by good folks has been set away—

That they unto their mothers prove
How deep and lasting is their love.

This pure white flower that all should wear
Will show the thanks that children bear.

Their mothers for their care and love;
It glows with light from heaven above.

The white Carnation thus has grown
To be by children always known.

It makes the day Miss Jarvis set,
Least some of us perhaps forget—

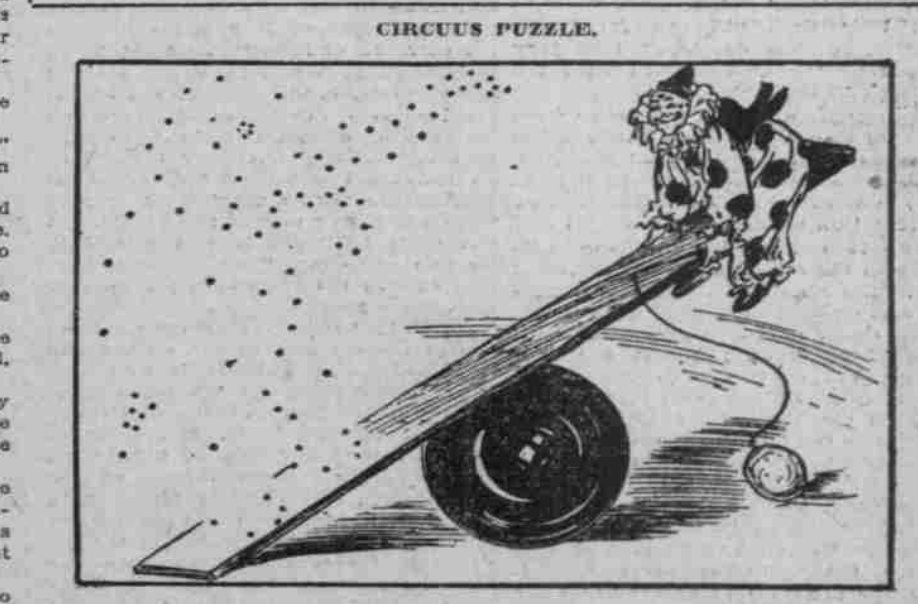
The loving care and watchfulness,
The Mother's words and fond caresses.

So let us on this ninth of May
Wear this white bloom for Mother's Day.



"I Don't Know. I Never Caught None of 'em."

OUR PUZZLE CORNER



See if you can discover what is on the opposite end of the see-saw by cutting the dots with a pencil.

HIDDEN DESK ARTICLES.

I put a rose in Kate's buttonhole when she recited in school.

Philip endured much pain from his tooth.

Mr. Pape rented a talking machine for my party.

The rule, Rose made applied only to herself.

CITY PUZZLE.

If the following are written, one below another, their zigzag letters, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and ending at the upper right-hand corner, will spell the name of a large city of the United States:

1. A word meaning hidden.
2. Raising up.
3. Articles of wearing apparel.
4. A benefit or advantage.
5. Reckless.

Answers.

Hidden Desk Articles: Ink, pen, paper, ruler.

Zigzag Puzzle: Cleveland, 1. Concealed; 2. elevating; 3. overcoats; 4. privilege; 5. desperate.