

**MRS. MARTIN'S  
COMPANY AND  
OTHER STORIES**

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Mrs. Martin's Company and Other Stories by Jane Barlow & Bertha Newcombe

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**JANE BARLOW & BERTHA NEWCOMBE**

**MRS. MARTIN'S  
COMPANY AND  
OTHER STORIES**



TO THE  
ANTHROPOLOGICAL



Univ. of  
California

**MRS. MARTIN'S COMPANY**  
AND OTHER STORIES  
BY JANE BARLOW  
AUTHOR OF "IRISH  
IDYLLS"



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY BERTHA NEWCOMBE

New York  
MACMILLAN AND CO.

1896

KW

*“ Ein Kleiner Ring  
Begränzt unser Leben.”*

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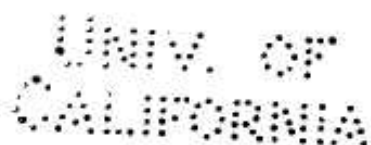
## NOTE

“Mrs Martin’s Company” and “A Very Light Railway” appeared in *The National Review*, “A Lost Recruit” and “A Case of Conscience,” in *The Pall Mall Magazine*. I am indebted to the Editors of these periodicals for permission to reprint the stories here.



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## MRS MARTIN'S COMPANY

MRS MARTIN lived down a high-banked lane, which, as it led no whither in particular, was subject to little traffic, and which she occupied all by herself, though her cabin stood the middle one in a row of three. You could see at a glance that the left-hand dwelling was vacant, for the browned thatch had fallen in helplessly, and the rafters stuck up through it like the ribs of a stranded wreck. The other was less obviously deserted; still its plight could be easily perceived in weedy threshold and cobweb-curtained window. It testified strongly to the lonesomeness of the neighbourhood that no child had yet enjoyed the bliss of sending a stone crash through the flawed greenish pane. Both of them had, in fact, been empty for many months. From the ruined one the Egan family had gone piecemeal, following each other westward in detachments, until even the wrinkled parents were settled in California, where they blinked by day at the strange fierce sunshine,

and dreamed by night back again under the soft-shadowed skies of the ould country. Soon after that, the O'Keefes had made a more abrupt flitting from next door, departing on the same day, all together, except little Kate and Joe, whose death of the fever was what had "given their poor mother, the crathur, a turn like agin the place." Since then no new tenants had succeeded them in the row, which was, to be sure, out of the way, and out of repair, and not in any respect a desirable residence.

The loss of her neighbours was a very serious misfortune to Mrs Martin, as she had long depended upon them for a variety of things, which she would have herself summed up in the term "company." She had been early widowed and left quite alone in the world, so that through most of the inexorable years which turned an eager-eyed girl into a regretful-looking little old woman, she had found herself obliged to seek much of her interest in life outside her own small domestic circle—all forlorn centre. This was practicable enough while she lived under one thatch with two large families, who were friendly content that their solitary neighbour should take cognisance of their goings out and comings in. Upon