

**THE SCRIPTURE CLUB OF
VALLEY REST,
OR, SKETCHES OF
EVERYBODY'S NEIGHBORS**

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The Scripture Club of Valley Rest, or, Sketches of Everybody's Neighbors by John Habberton

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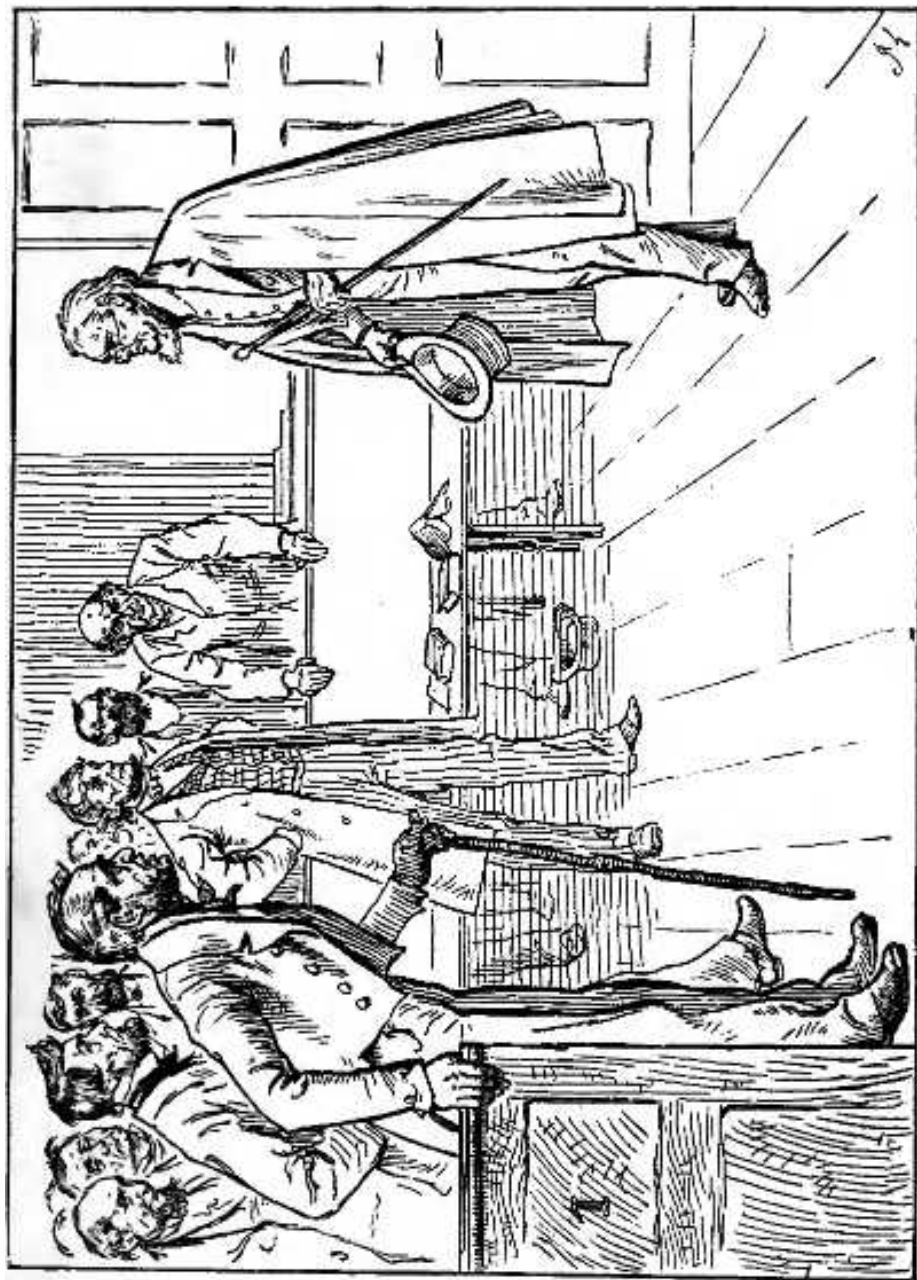
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JOHN HABBERTON

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BROTHER HUMBLETOP WITHDRAWS.

THE
SCRIPTURE CLUB
OF VALLEY REST

OR

SKETCHES OF EVERYBODY'S
NEIGHBOURS

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"The Barton Experiment," "Helen's Babies," Etc.

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SCRIPTURE CLUB.

CHAPTER I.

A LIBERAL MOVEMENT.

THE success of the Second Church of Valley Rest was too evident to admit of doubt, and there seemed to be no one who begrudged the infant society its prosperity. Most of its members had come to the village from that Western city known to all its inhabitants as being the livest on the planet, and they had brought their business wits with them. At first they worshiped with the members of the First Church, established forty years before, and with an Indian or two still among its members; but it soon became evident to old members and new that no single society could be of sufficient

theological elasticity to contain all the worshipers who assembled in the old building. There were differences of opinion, which, though courteously expressed, seemed great enough to claim conscientious convictions for their bases ; so with a Godspeed as hearty as their welcome had been, the newer attendants organized a new society. They were strong, both numerically and financially, so within a year they had erected and paid for a costly and not hideous church building, settled a satisfactory pastor, and organized a Sunday-school, three prayer-meetings, and a sewing society. The activity of the new church became infectious, and stimulated the whole community to good works ; occasionally one of the other societies would endeavor to return some of the spiritual favors conferred by the Second Church, but so leisurely were the movements of the older organizations that before they could embody a suggestion in an experience the new church would have discerned it afar off and put it into practical operation.

It was in the rapid manner alluded to that the Second Church came finally by a feature which long and gloriously distinguished it. It was 11.50 by the church clock one Sunday morning when Mrs. Buffle, wife of the great steamboat owner, who made his home at Valley Rest, noticed her husband's face suddenly illumine as if he had just imagined a model for the best lake packet that ever existed; it was only 12.10, by the same time-piece, when about thirty of the solid members of the church, remaining after service, gathered in a corner of the otherwise vacant building, and agreed to Mr. Buffle's proposal that there should be organized a Bible class especially for adults.

"When you think of it," explained the projector, "it really seems as if there'd be no end to its usefulness. I call myself as orthodox a man as you can find in any church, anywhere, but there's lots of things in the Bible that I'm not posted on. I suppose it's the same with all of you; each of you may have thought a great