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Indiaola Stone-Tingler
Life History

"I never was no hand to run around, I like to stay at home and work an' try to have somethin', tho' I've never had much Goodness knows, but I'm still hopin' to do better. I'm thinkin' about movin' this spring; there aint a thing to be made here on Casteel. We haint even got a garden spot. Last year we carried dirt from 'way up the holler an' piled it on that piece o' slaty ground, an' we set as purty plants out as ever I seen an' what did it all amount to? Not a hill o' beans. We didn't raise nothin'; not enough tomaters fer the table, let alone any to can. Now this year we have a good offer to move on Mr Plymale's place; theys plenty o' fruit there and all the patches o' land that we can work, an' he don't ask no rent. He wants us to look after the place, an' take care of it, an' he will pay Sam a dollar an' a half a day to work fer him, an' Mrs Plymale said she had work fer me part o' the time. I've been workin' fer her anyhow. I washed an' ironed fer her a-monday, an' she give me a hunk o' meat; seven or eight pounds, I reckon; we didn't weigh it, an' she give me a half-gallon can o' beans an' one of tomaters. I didn't git done till mighty nigh night an' she had me to eat supper with her; said it was too fur to walk with not

a bite in my stomach. So I stayed an' took supper, an' walked home after dark an' carried my meat an' fruit, an' I'm a-tellin' you, I was teetotally wore out when I got there. Mrs Plymale is awful good to me, an' she aint a bit stingy with her meat. Mr Plymale salted down five nice hogs last fall an' here a-while back when I worked fer her, she give me a half of a shoulder o' meat, an' how long do you reckon it lasted at my house? Jus' two days. You see there is ten there to eat; Everett an' Nellie an' Lee brung his wife in a few weeks ago, Its too much an' we hain't got the room either. I told Lee he ought to go on back an' stay with his wife's gran'ma, We couldn't keep him athome before he was married, an' now he don't want to go nowhere else. Trudy's gran'ma raised her an' she told Lee an' her she would give them every thing she has, if they would come an' stay with her. An' she can't live long, she's seventy-four now. I told them they'd better go on back. Lee 'lowed I didn't want him at home. It ain't that I don't want them but me an' Sam ain't able to do so much work now, an' we've got the four children to take care of, an' send to school. The baby one is about to git ahead o' all the others. She's goin' to be promoted, but I don't know whether all of 'em will, or not. I tell 'em they ought to do better. They have so much better chance than I ever had. I never got to see inside o' school house till I was nine year old, an' then, I only got to go six months. Old man Vawter was my teacher an' a good

one he was, too. The six months was not all together, either. I was fifteen the last turn I had at goin' to school, an' I quit an' married Sam Tingler. All the education I've got, I picked up at home.

I was married at home on the twenty sixth of July. Rev. Johnny B. Davis married us. Pappy an' mother never objected, an' we lived with them a-while; then we moved to Potts Valley mines Sam had a good job o' sawin' there, then, an' we made it fine. We hain't moved about like some people do; we've only moved four times since we was married. We've been here fer several years, but we aim to move this spring, an' I told Sam I wanted to git moved as soon as possible, so's we could have an early garden. Everett an' Nellie, are talkin' about buyin' some furniture an' goin' to house keepin' to their selves, an' I told 'em that was the thing to do. They can't always depend on me an' Sam. Everett has been workin' on the road just ten minutes walk from the house, an' he pays me ten dollars a month fer his an' Nellie's board. But you know I cain't board 'em fer that, an' come out. I git the same from Lee an' Trudy; ten dollars a month. Everett says he just cain't work on what I have to eat of a mornin'; I always have rice, hominy, bread, butter an' coffee. I have meat when I can git it. It takes fifteen dollars every two weeks to buy what I cook fer 'em, an' me an' Sam both work all we can, an' have to spend all we git to help feed the others. I told Everett to go on to their selves. Every time he goes to town, he gits drunk an' spends his money. I told him if he was'nt goin' to

buy furniture, he'd as well spend all he makes fer something to eat. Better eat it up, than to spend it fer whiskey. Him an' Lee both got drunk in town last Saturday. They got their W.P.A. checks an' Lee only had in four days. Everett had lost one or two days, so they went to git the checks cashed. I went along to git my five dollars a-piece from 'em so's I could git some groceries, an' the first thing I knowed, I met the big police chief a-takin' Lee to jail, an' the others was a-lookin' fer Everett. I knowed the Chief, an' I begged fer Lee. He told me he would let him off fer that time, provided he got himself out o' town in ten minutes. An' said he would do the same fer Everett. He was a-lookin' to me to git 'em out, an' see that they stayed out. I hunted up another of my son-in-laws an' got him to take Everett, an' another feller got hold o' Lee an' took him. Chief Arritt told 'em an' he told me, if they ever come back to town he was a-goin' to lock em up, an' they would git the limit. They's no sense in sich doin's nohow. Now there's Lee, had been sick; had this hsee flu, an' never got to work but four days, an' spent part o' that fer whiskey. Everett, he lost several days.

I'e had a-many-a-up-an'down in my life, an' will have some more I reckon, before I die. But the worst thing I ever experienced was when I just had three children. It was then Frank was a baby I went out one evening to feed my chickens an' left the little boy older than Frank, in the house. He was playing with a string when I went out. I was not gone but a few minutes, When I went in

the child's clothes was in a blaze. I could'nt find anything to throw over his head but one of Frank's didies, an' that was not much a-count, but it did save his face, some. I took my hands and smothered out the blaze an' throwed water on him. He was burnt awful bad, an' my hands was burnt till they was crispy an' had no feelin'-just felt numb. I never thought o' myself then, but afterword, I saw that my arms was burnt bad, an' my hair an' eye-brows an' eye-winkers was burnt purty nigh off. But my poor little boy was just burnt up. Hewas burnt about six o'clock in the evenin' and died about three next mornin! That was the awfulest time I ever had. An' I didn't know what a narrow escape I had from bein' burnt to death, 'til after the little boy died. It took me a long time to git over it, an' I never wil git over that child's death. I reckon he must have got to throw the string in the fire fer I never did find it. We had a fireple then.

After Sam an' his brother quit saw-millin' he got a job on the railroad. He worked on the section an' one day he was a-comin' in on a lever-car, when a motor car run right into the lever-car. Sam aimed to jump out of the way an' fell, an' broke his ankle. That was another hard time fer me as well as Sam. He suffered a lot, an' had to stay in the hospital fer two week then come home. But he had to go back to have his ankle dressed fer two months or more. He will always be a cripple. He never could work on the railroad any more. He thinks he will git a

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a pension, now soon, an' God knows we need it. We built this little house, or begun it; it ain't finished. We never had money enough to git the windows or lumber fer the partitions. You see, them holes was cut fer windows, but Sam just had to git what he could an' this place is so dark, you can hardly see to work. We meant to have three rooms in here, but we've made out with it all in one. I don't 'low to be here much longer now. We've managed to scrape along without askin' fer much help from the relief, but they's been times when we was pushed, an' right up agin' it fer somethin' to eat an' clothes to keep us warm. It was six year ago that things was the hardest I've ever had. The children all had the whoopin' cough an' was bad off. A deep snow come an' we was plum out o' everything to eat. I told Sam I was a-goin to town to see Mrs Clark, she's the welfare woman, an' git us some things to eat. The water was up the next mornin' an' the snow an' ice was a-meltin. I had no overshoes, but they wouldn't a-been no account, if I had, it was that mushy. I didn't know how I would git to town, but was a-goin over to the main road an' flag somebody down. When I got to Casteel. it was roarin' an' the icew was beginnin' to break up. I couldn't cross for a-while, had to wait for the water to run down. I had to wade part of the way an' the water, ice an' slush was up to my knees. I was wringin' wet an' mighty nigh froze, too. When I got to the highway, I did not have to wait long till I caught a ride into town. I went to Mrs Clark an' told her what a time I was havin' an' how bad I

needed something to eat. I left the children sick an' hungry that mornin! She asked me how much it would take to run me a week; I told her I could make out on a couple o' dollars. I thought if the weather broke up that Sam could git a few days work somewhere. She said she knew that would not be enough, so she give me enough to last us a couple o' weeks, an' give me some warm clothes. I was sure proud when I got started on my way home. I knowed how glad them hungry children would be to see me a-comin' with a load of groceries, an' they was, too. That was the toughest time we ever had about anything to eat, an' I hope we'll never have to go through the like agin!

Mrs Tingler is short and fat and strong. She has a pleasant round face with few wrinkles. Her heavy, long hair is almost white, but her blue eyes are very bright and youthful. She wears print dresses most of the time. The one she was wearing was a ready-made small figured lavender print with zipper closing. She had new low-heeled black oxfords; gray cotton hose, a new up-to-date hat and coat. She was going for a visit. She said: "I got this hat to wear to my pappy's burial. He died at my house. He come on a visit an' got sick. He was sick fer seven weeks. I was broke down when he died. He would'nt let nobody else wait on him but me. He was buried the day before Christmas. It didn't seem bit like Christmas to me, last year. I miss him so much."

Mrs Tingler's eyes were moist; tears were very near the surface as she talked about her father. He had led a wandering

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life after his wife died several years before. He seemed to care more for Mrs Tingler than for any other one of his children. He had farmed; had run a mill for years. Was a fairly good stone-mason and photographer. His mother, Mrs Jenny Stone, was one of Alleghany's most beloved characters. She lived alone on the side of the mountain, for years. She was a practical nurse and was one who could be depended upon to come at any hour. She was one of the last of the old-time spinners, and knit wool socks until a few weeks before her death, a few years ago.

The three rooms in which Mrs Tingler lives, were clean, but crowded. The three beds had been carefully made; the pillow cases were snowy white. The curtains, too, were clean. The part used for the kitchen was somewhat upset; as it was still early and the morning work had not been completed. The yard had been swept very clean. There were signs of many flowers the past summer, and the perennials were still there and beginning to bud.

"I've raised ten children, or they are about raised. The baby one is nine year old. I told you about the one that got burnt up. I've got four girls married; an' two boys. but Frank an' his wife have separated. They said they couldn't git along. I don't know what was wrong or whose fault it was; both, I reckon. I don't know whats wrong with the young an' risin' generation, seems like they are never satisfied. My oldest girl married a bootlegger. He kep on makin' likker after he was married. Me an' Sam told him what would happen, but he wouldn't listen, an' he

got caught an' was sent to the State Farm fer two year. He got out before that, but me an' Sam helped him to git out. We went on some kind of a bond; stood good fer him not runnin' away or boot leggin' any more, an' they let him come home. We done it fer Mary's sake. She was havin' such a hard time. I don't know what made her fall in love with a boot-legger in the first place. My other two girls got very good men. They don't drink, an' they both work but Nellie, now, her man will take his drink every chance he gits. It was him I was tellin' you about, what was about to be put in jail last Saturday, an' I begged him off. Nellie married young, but I hain't never heard her say she was sorry she married Everett, but he ain't much good. Its time he was makin' a start to do sometin' fer Nellie an' his self. I think."

Mrs Tingler does not appear to be worried greatly by now having a bootlegger and a drunkard in the family, although she and her husband are sober people, and she is an active member of the Methodist Church. Her husband returns thanks at his table in the face of his boot-legger son-in-laws and lives a quiet life. Occasionally, he has to threaten to kick some of them out, and it would very likely make a better home if he did just let go, and carry out his threst. Sam and Indiaola are growing old; too old to be burdened with so many young, worthless people sitting idly by, depending upon them for their meals.

Mrs Tingler, like her grandmother is a practical nurse, and has been very successful as a midwife. She is always ready

and willing to leave her own home to assist others. She is a capable worker and has no trouble to pick up work. Her labor is partially lost, as it brings in little remuneration.

Her husband is a man of powerful frame. His broken ankle has rendered him a cripple for life. He limps badly and has to carry a cane to assist him in walking. He is a kindly old man and somewhat pathetic in his present condition. He was, before the accident, a very strong man and a great worker. He was, in the early part of his life, quite prosperous. He has had so much bad luck that he has almost given up. But he does seem to be cheered up with the prospect of moving where he can get steady work and with a reasonable hope of receiving a pension to bring a feeling of security for the time when he will not be able to work.

Sam and Indiaola hope to go to this new home taking with them only their four younger children. Indiaola said: "I think its time fer them fellers to git to work fer therselves, an' we can make it lots better without them."