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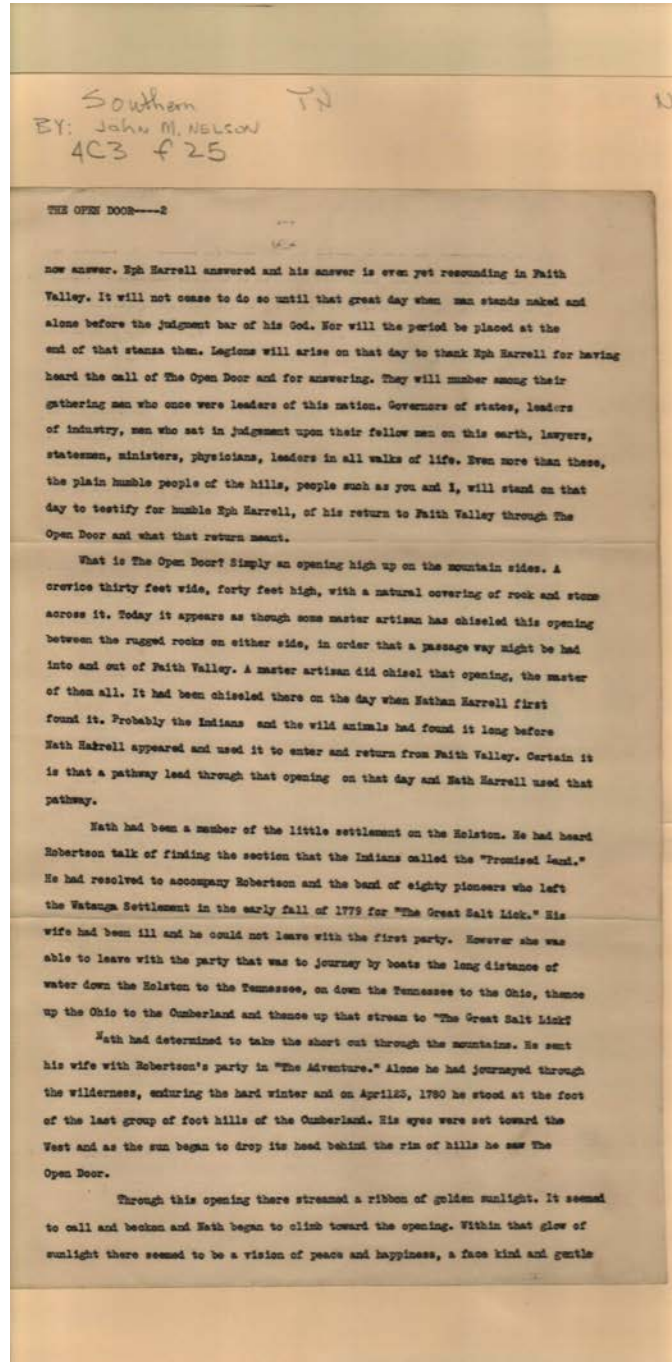
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Harrell, Nathan

Nelson, John M.
Robertson, James

Revealing
The Open Door

Types:

novel



Names:

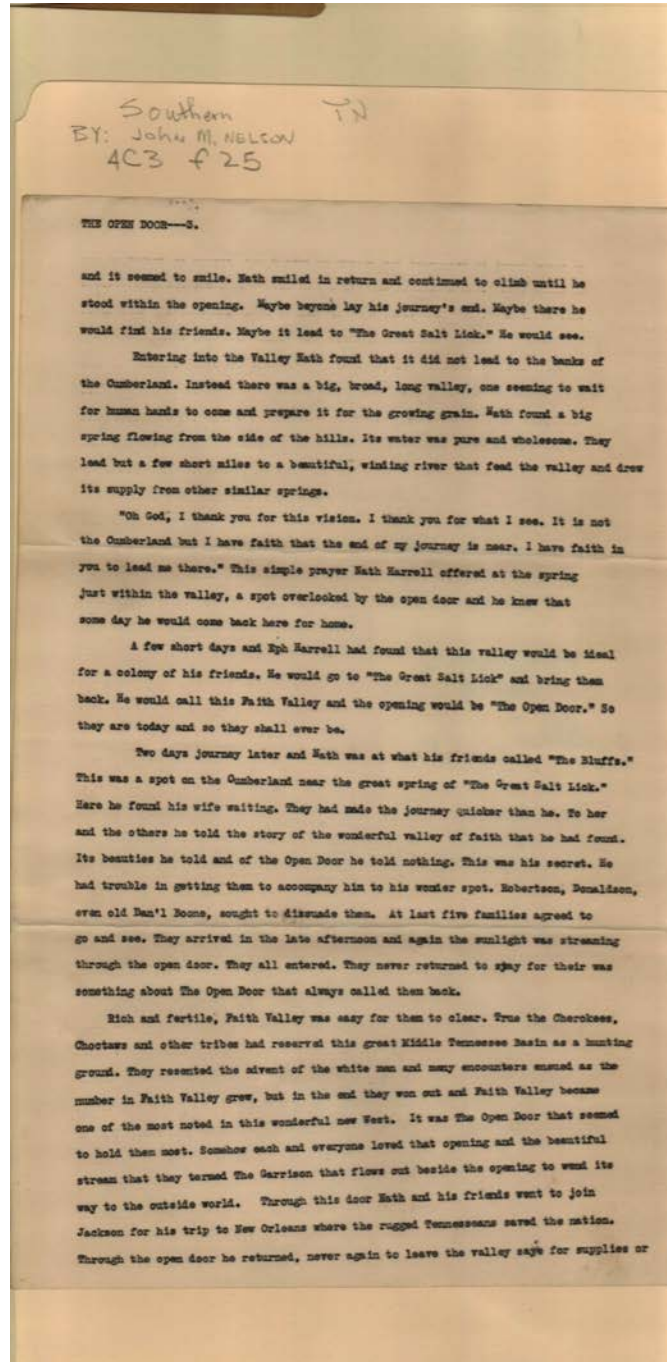
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Harrell, Nathan

Robertson,

Types:

novel



Names:

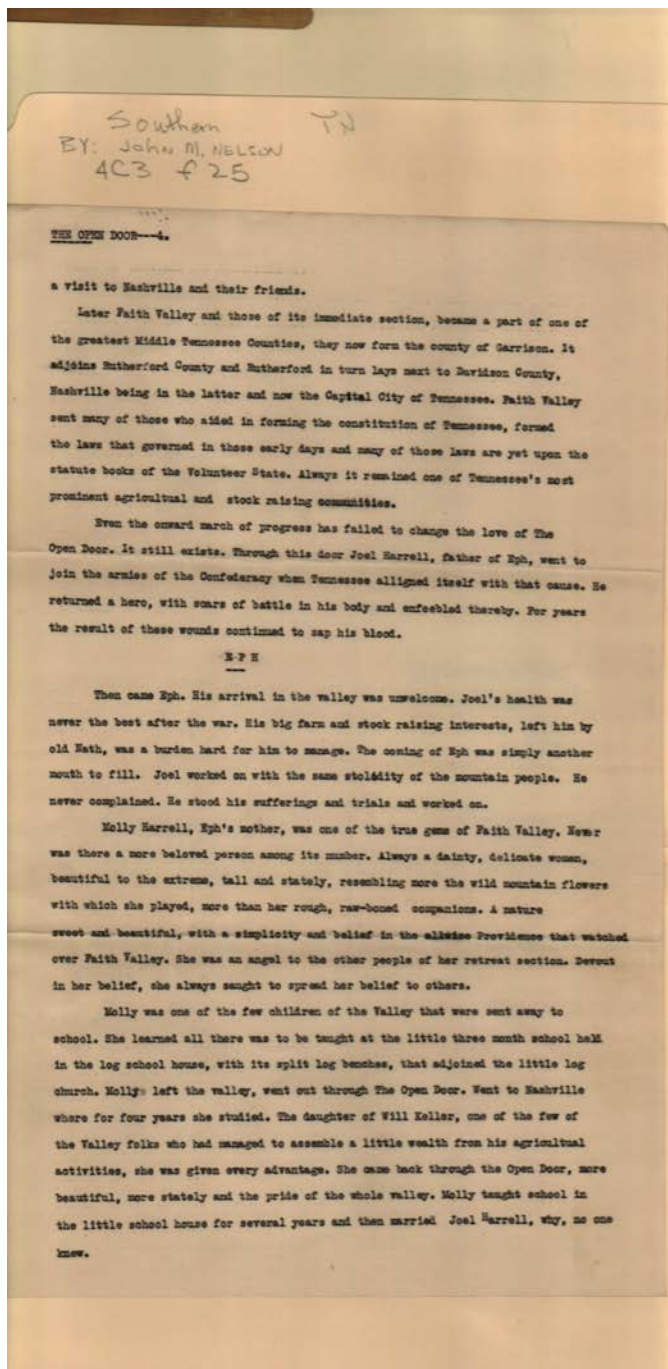
Boone, Daniel
Donaldson,

Harrell, Eph
Harrell, Nath

Jackson,
Robertson,

Types:

novel



Names:
 , Eph
 , Nath
Types:
 novel

Harrell, Joel
Harrell, Molly
Keller, Will

Southern TN
BY: John M. NELSON
4C3 f 25

THE OPEN DOOR--5.

Taking her place in Joel's home, Molly continued to be the saint of the Valley. To her everyone went when in trouble. She never failed them and when she could not solve her problems she took them to her God and found a way out. She went about her work just as did the bees that sipped the honey from the mountain flowers, singing. Her beautiful voice could be heard any day raised in the simple old songs of her people, as she went about her work. She sang the old "meatin' songs" as no one else could sing. Strangers entering through The Open Door, always stopped and listened to her song as it floated through the valley. To the tired worker in the fields her song of religion was said to be more gripping and forceful than any sermon. Her life was a benediction.

When Eph came she seemed to grow even more tender. Motherhood was to her the opening to a new life. She dreamed dreams of greatness for her son. She taught him the simple faith she held in her God. She sought to make her God, his God. She talked to him, as he grew up stronger and stronger, of the great outside world she had seen. She did not want him to become just one of the "Valleyites" She pictured him in a big place. The constant tilling of the soil, harvesting of crops, tending the sheep, the hard winters, these she did not want Eph to suffer. He must become a part of this great outside and she taught him the things she had learned in old Ward Seminary at Nashville.

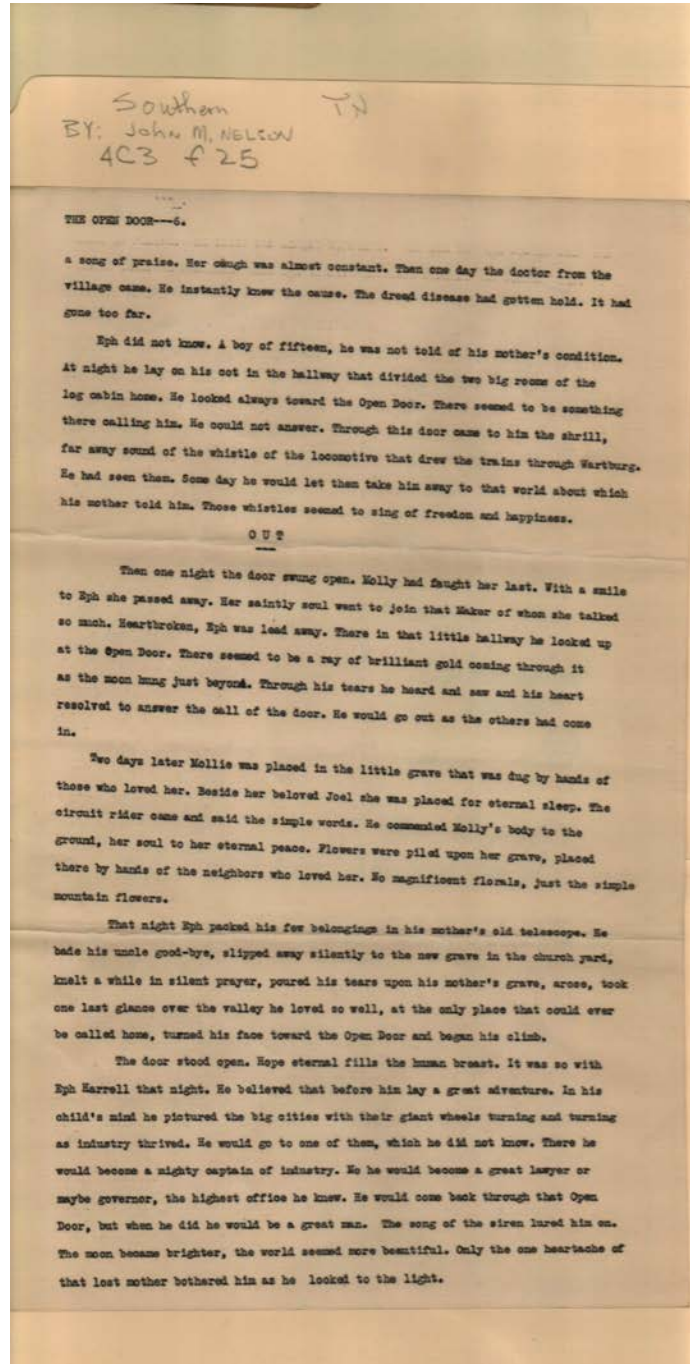
At night, after Eph had come home from school, after he had tended to his chores about the home, she taught the child even more than did the teacher at the school. With such training it was but natural that Eph should become one of the brightest children of the Valley. She told him of The Open Door and what lay beyond, but more than this, she told him of another Open Door that waited for all who would come, the door to eternal happiness.

When Eph was ten years of age the blow came. Joel gave up and slipped away. His going was a severe blow to Molly, but she never complained. Eph did a man's work and spent days in the fields. Her brother, Frank, came to live with them. He and Eph did the work. At night Molly continued her education of her son. She never ceased telling him of the world beyond the open door. She always took him with her to Wartburg, the little railway station that served the valley as its source of supply. There were the stores, the shops, the mills and such other necessary sources for the needs of the hill people.

Under her watchful guidance the seed she was sowing took root. Eph spent his idle hours in study, what few there were. He became strong and powerful, like the hills he loved. Not so with Molly. Her cheeks became more sallow. Ofttimes they appeared flushed and burning but she passed it off with a laugh. Her songs continued. Slowly her strength waned, but she never complained. She went about her tasks with

Names:
, Eph
Types:
novel

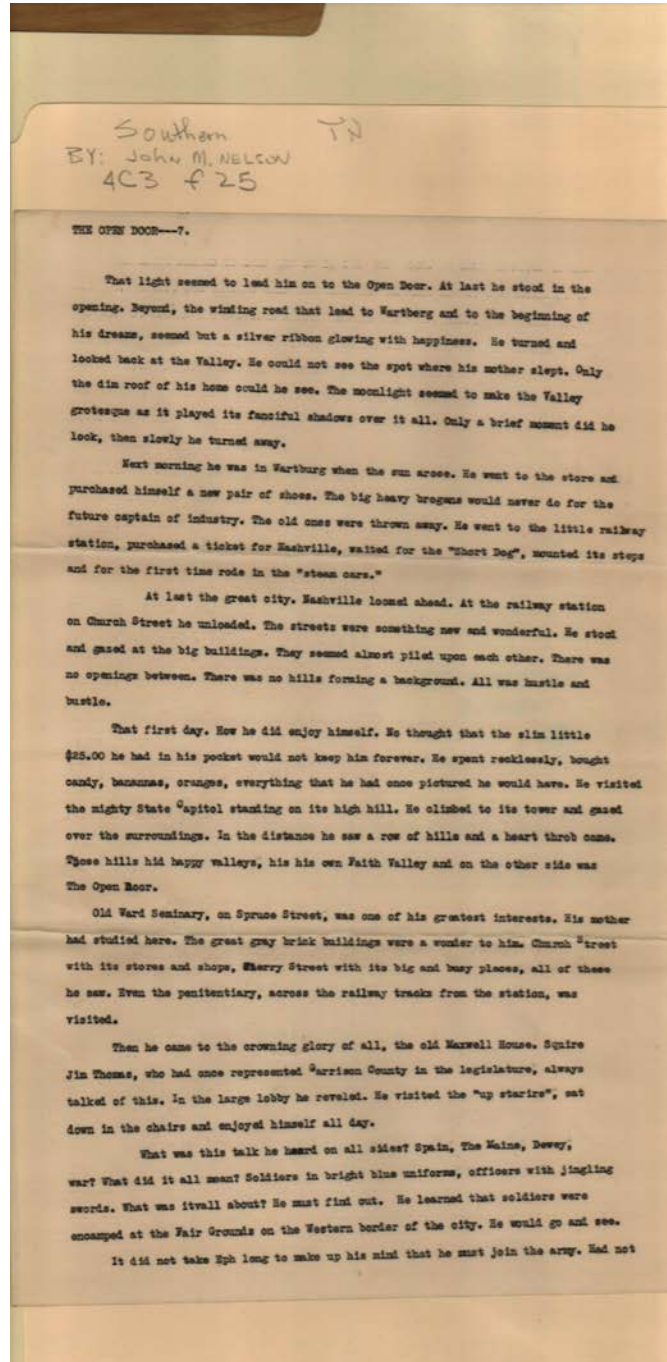
, Frank , Joel , Molly



Names:
, Molly

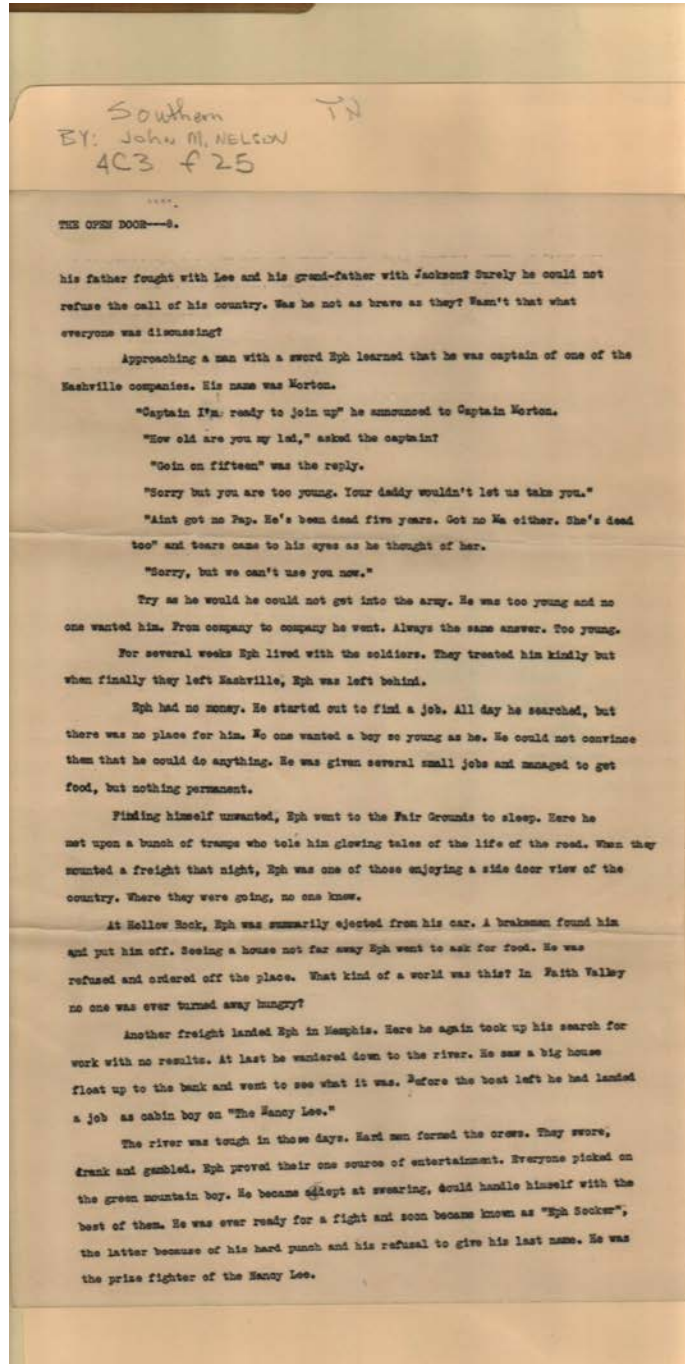
Harrell, Eph

Types:
novel



Names:
 , Eph
Types:
 novel

Thomas, Jim

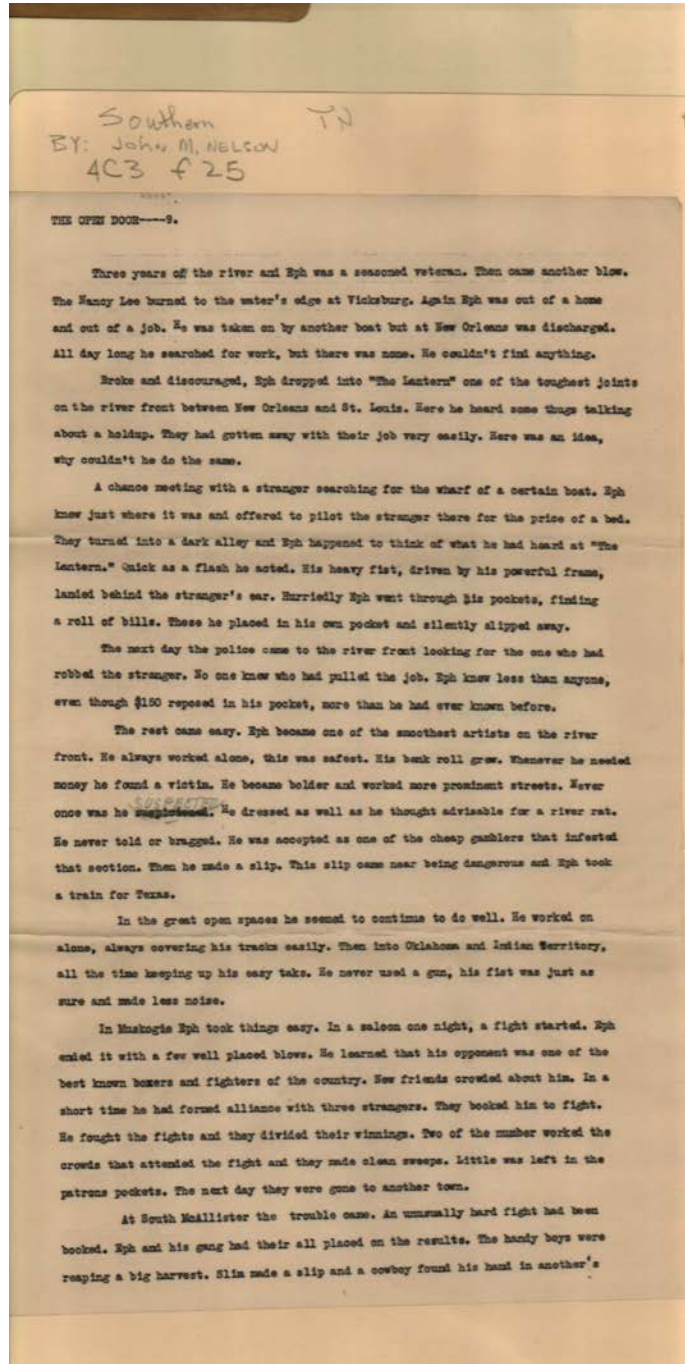


Names:
, Eph
Types:
novel

Jackson,

Lee,

Morton, Captain



Names:
, Eph
Types:
novel

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BY: JOHN M. NELSON
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THE OPEN DOOR—10.

A free for all started. Eph looked around and the next moment he was down for the count. They were not only cleaned but hustled out of town.

That night a bank was found in a small town. The gang soon had the door open, the safe blown and they were on a train again. That was Eph's first big job. He didn't relish the task. There was too much noise about this work. However the \$1,000 in his pocket made it worth while.

Lower and lower Eph slipped. No longer was he the clean limbed, bright eyed boy of the mountains. He had performed almost every crime save that of murder. It looked as though that would be next. No he would not stoop to that. He would make for Chicago and the big cities and work alone.

Working alone and fast Eph soon became noted as the most dangerous underworld character. Every crime was charged to him. From coast to coast he worked, always managing to make good his getaway, never using anything but his fist. His life was simply one dodge of the cops after another. Small town or big city it was the same. He slept but little. He became nervous and jumpy. He needed a rest.

A fresh trim of his beard, his only mask, and Eph slipped away to Florida. All went well until one night Eph decided to pull a job. Why he did not know. He had plenty of money in his pockets, yes bills of big denominations for he always managed to change his small bills for larger ones. This he did at banks so that there could be no tracing. What he kept in his pockets was always new and received in honest transactions. Why he pulled the job he never knew.

Next day he learned that his new beard out had given him away. A razor easily relieved that and his biggest pride was trimmed away. The result in the mirror was startling. His face had hardened and deep lines appeared. Here he was at thirty, looking a man much older. He must stop and rest. Florida would not do for that, he must go back to dear old Chi.

On his way north, riding in state, Eph stepped off the train at Chattanooga. A chance acquaintance saw him and reported that the officers were looking for Eph. He did not hesitate but walked out the depot, passed several officers, was not recognized and soon reached the railway tracks in the other part of Chattanooga. A passing freight gave him an unknown lift. He entered a clean "side door Pullman" and soon dropped off to sleep.

How long he slept Eph did not know. He suddenly awoke with a start. Surely someone had called him by name. Cautiously he slipped to the door and looked out. He saw nothing but a little tank town with no one in sight. The moon was shining bright and if anyone had called him he could see them. That was it he had heard. Quickly he slipped to the ground and sat down on some cross-ties beside the tracks. The train started but he didn't notice. He could catch another soon.

Names:
 , Eph
Types:
 novel

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THE OPEN DOOR---11.

What could this place be. There was something familiar about it? Had he pulled a job here and was he being looked for? What line was he on anyway? He had not noticed to see when he left Chattanooga. Somehow he felt that he knew this place.

The end of the train passed and Eph gave a sudden start. He stood looking at the old depot in Wartburg.

He wonder the place looked familiar. How had he happened to get here? He had avoided the lines of the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis in all his travels. He had been in both Nashville and Chattanooga but he never went from one to the other. To do so he must pass Wartburg.

Nor had he ever pulled a job in Tennessee. Somehow he could never do that. He always seemed to feel that Mother, from her home in the hills, would see if he did and mother must not know how he had failed.

He wonder he had that strange feeling. Yes yonder was the old pump that had given him many drinks of sulphur water. Yes yonder was Brantley's drug store. He would look around a little. Here was the spot where he had pitched horseshoes with the other boys when he had come to Wartburg with his mother.

Slowly he crossed the little open space that stood between the row of stores and the railway tracks. Yes this was Wartburg. Yonder was the little old stone Jail. Gosh but he had seen many of them that could house the whole little building. Yes there was Holden's dry goods store and next to it was Dean's hardware store. Yes Tell's old place was still there. Didn't seem to be much change in the old place.

In the distance there sounded the whistle of a train. Back across Eph's mind flashed other moonlight nights in the distant past. How many times had he lain on that old cot and listened to the song of the whistle of the train. What memories they brought now. What dreams he had once dreamed, but dreams never came true.

Suddenly there came a determination. The Valley, the old home place, the old spring with its wooden covering, the old church yard where mother slept, The Open Door. Yes he would see these again. He must see that open door.

I F

Slowly Eph started down the sidewalk that lead toward the road that lead to the valley. Each store he knew by name. No many of they had changed, but some remained pictured in his mind as he had seen them in those happy days of childhood. Yes happy days. Not a real happy day had he spent since he left the Valley. Here was the little back building. How easy that would be to handle. Yonder was the old flour mills where he had taken many bags of wheat and corn.

So on through the village. He just must have one look at the old Valley. No one would know him. No one would recognize in the man the boy of long ago. How long

Names:
 , Eph
Types:
 novel

Southern TN
BY: John M. NELSON
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THE OPEN DOOR---12.

ago, he did not know. He was back now. Yonder was the old Baptist Church. No, a new building stood in its stead. Across the street stood the old Methodist Church, the biggest building he had ever known in those days. Yes it was just the same, but how small it looked now.

Around another sharp corner and he saw the old school building. How the big boys in the Valley had talked of that old school. It was gone now and in its stead a new and beautiful building stood. Across the street was the home of Dr Foster. Yes it was the same. Around it were many new ones and the little town had certainly grown, but still he could recognise Wartburg.

On out the street leading to the ford across the Garrison. So but he did want to see that old river. What was that, a new bridge? Say how did they ever get that. He would not have to ford the river. Yes he would. The feel of that water would be worth more than anything else. Did it not flow from the springs in Faith Valley?

Following the stream Eph came to the other side. There was the old Academy Building, now almost in decay. Why had they allowed that old landmark to perish? Yes the old church yard was just the same and it lay behind the old building. That at least was natural. Many new graves were now in that yard but it looked almost as it did when he left.

Thus dreaming, passing familiar sights. Seeing an old tree that he remembered, a spring house here and there, Eph wound his way toward the Valley. Instead of the old dirt road Eph was traveling over a hard surfaced highway. No fine ones like he had seen in other places, but a simple stone roadway. The road of the old days was gone and in its place the people from the Valley could make the trip over a good road in winter and summer.

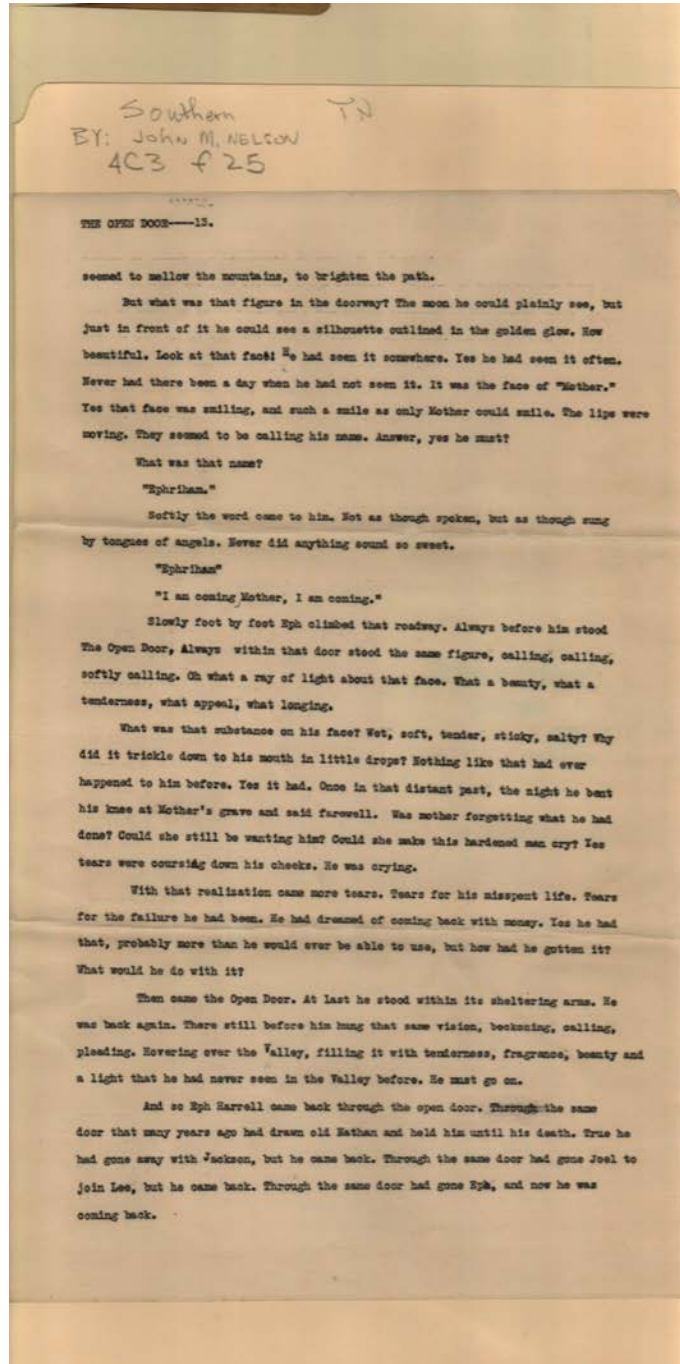
Early in the morning, just as the moon was beginning to reach the top of the hills, Eph came to a turn in the road. Suddenly he came to a stop, his breath came in short gasps, his throat seemed choked and gripping, his heart almost stopped beating. There before him stood the Open Door.

No change there. Still standing sentinel over the only entrance to Faith Valley was the Open Door. The moon was dropping on the other side. Its golden rays were more beautiful than anything he had ever seen and the ribbon of roadway winding up to the opening seemed bathed with a glow so soft, so tender, so appealing that he could not move. Certainly there was never a sight so beautiful in his whole life. The Open door.

What was that figure that appeared in the opening? Was his mind playing tricks on him again? Was the moon forming strange characters or his mind wandering? Long he stood there looking. The moonlight seemed to grow brighter and brighter, but always it came through that open door. He did not seem to see it anywhere else. It

Names:
, Eph
Types:
novel

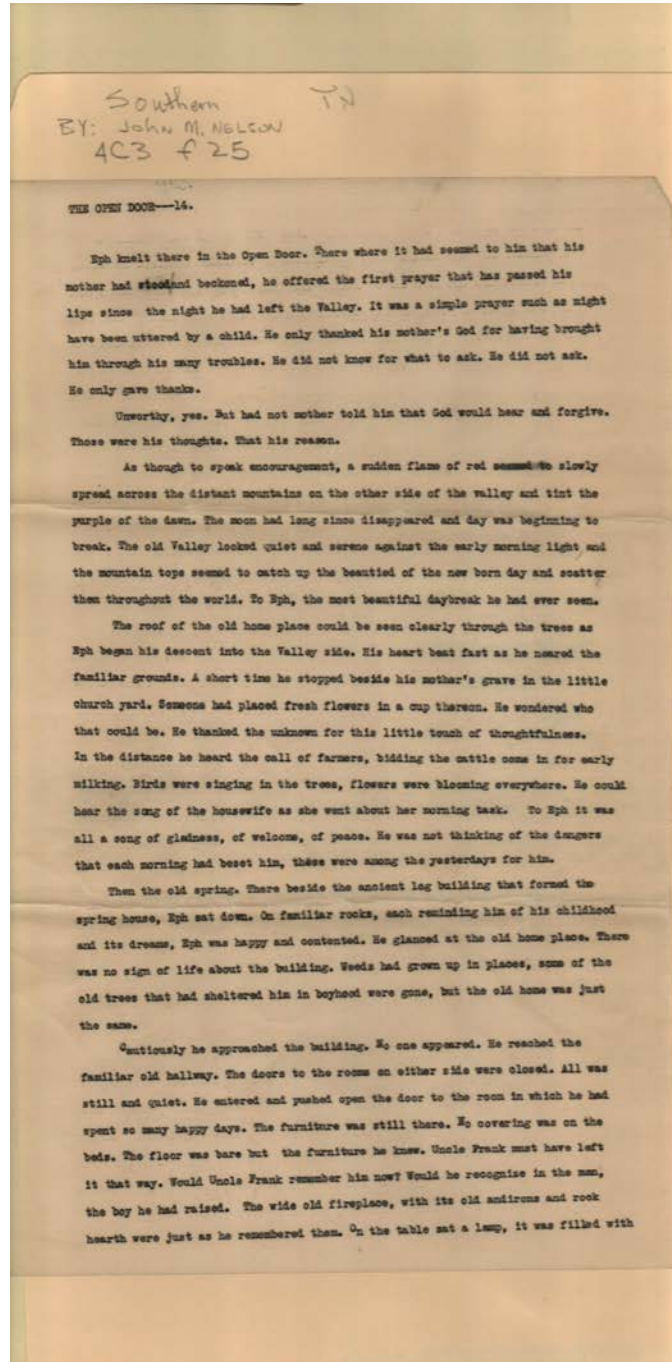
Foster, Dr.



Names:
 , Ephriham
 , Joel
Types:
 novel

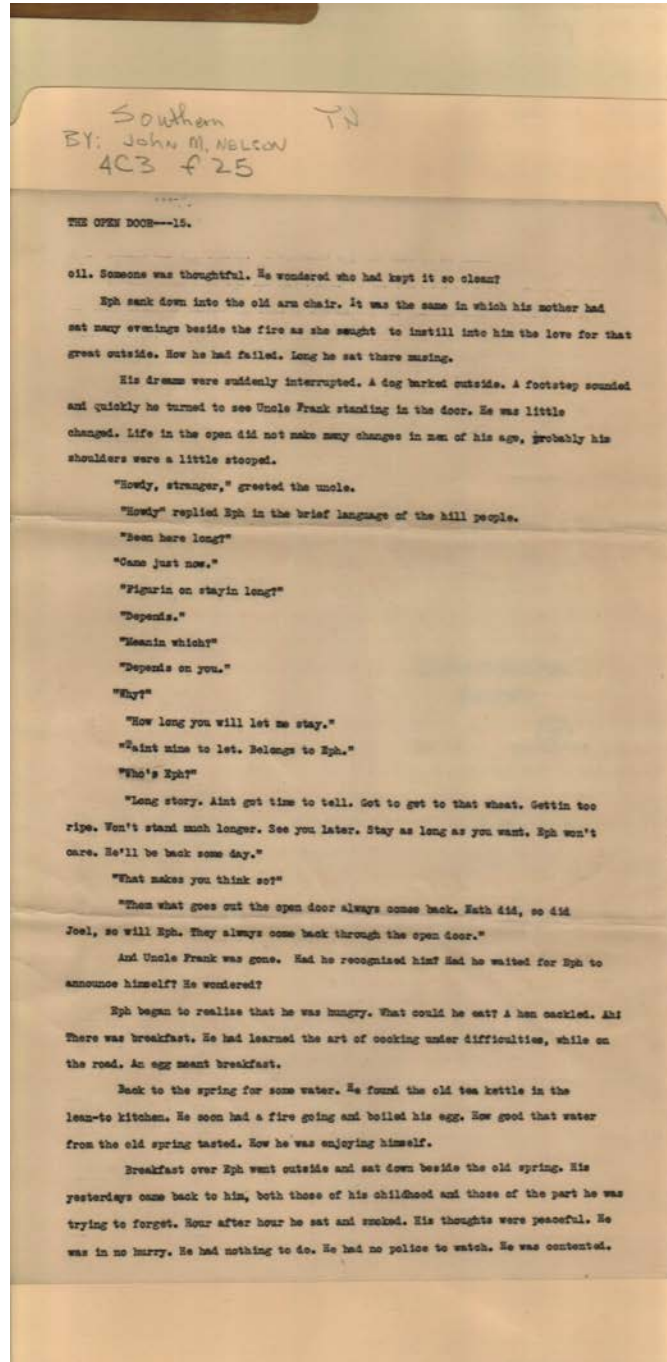
Harrell, Eph
Jackson,

Lee,



Names:
, Eph
Types:
novel

, Frank, Uncle



Names:
, Eph
Types:
novel

, Frank, Uncle , Joel , Nath

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BY: John M. NELSON
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THE OPEN DOOR--16.

All day Eph spent in either looking over the old house, the barn, the corn crib, the hen house and other spots he knew by heart. Always he went back to the spring, for there he could sit and look through the open door. He had no desire to go out. The sun traveled its way across the heavens. He could hear the farmers in the fields, the sound of the binders cutting the grain. Noon came, but he was not hungry. He hadn't thought about eating. He was living on happiness. Sundown, and still Eph sat there alone. Dusk and darkness began to descend.

"Hungry, stranger?"

Eph started. There before him again stood Uncle Frank with a box in his hand.

"Old lady loved as how you might want somethin to eat," Frank continued.

"She sent along a little grub. Get some ham, eggs, biscuit and other things. She wants you should eat. Plenty for breakfast."

"Thanks, that's mighty thoughtful," replied Eph in bewilderment.

"Men must eat. Can't get along without it," and he continued to study Eph's face.

"Face yours familiar? Where from?"

"Everywhere."

"'Cause me, didn't mean to meddle. Just thought you looked kinder familiar."

"That's all right. Glad to have someone to talk to."

"Can't stay. Goin to meetin with the old lady. Meetin's goin on now. Good young preacher from Nashville here. Smart feller. Won't you come along?"

"Way later."

"All right. See you in the morning."

Eph ate the good old country ham and biscuit. Never had anything tasted so good. Here was true people. They never questioned. Why hadn't someone been kind to him in those early days? Why hadn't the spirit of the hills permeated the rest of the world. Here, no one was ever turned away hungry. He arose and went to the spring for another drink of that pure water. He knelt and drank from the running water.

Suddenly he started, raised his head, listened. What was that he heard?

"Hook of ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee--"

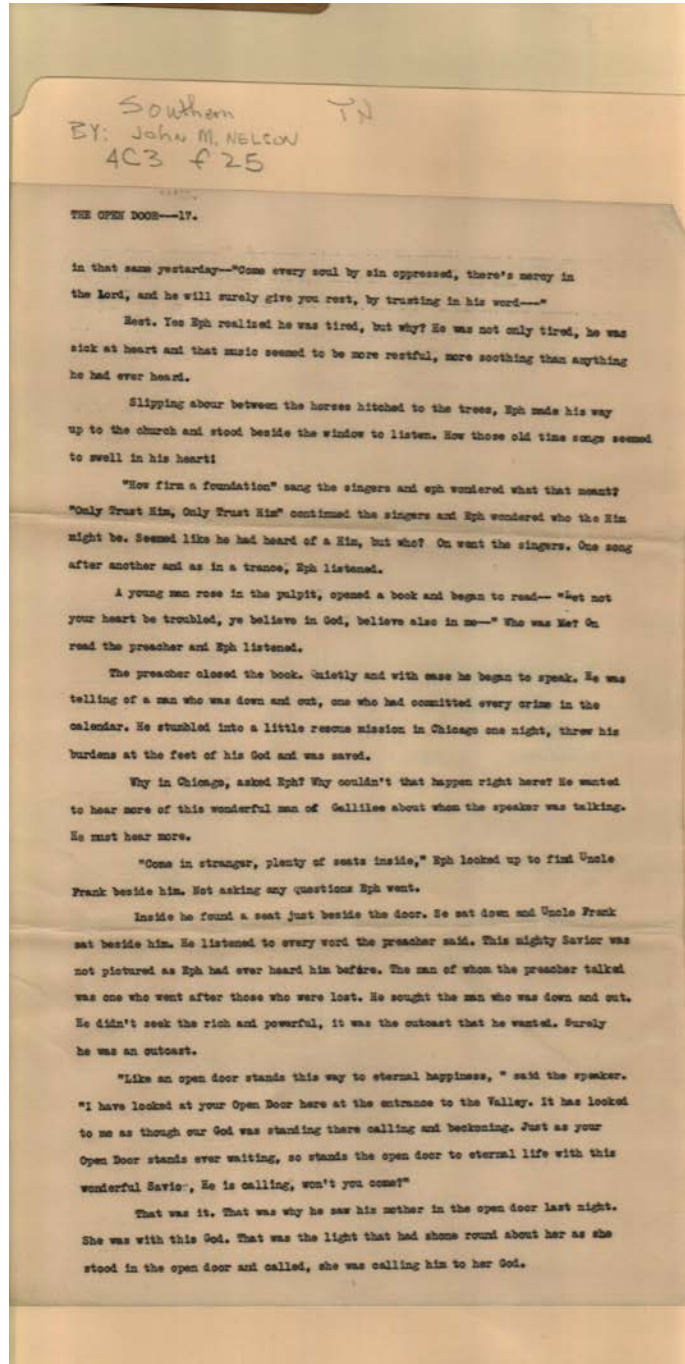
What was that song? Who was singing? There was it coming from He must find it. How sweet it sounded, just like mother used to sing.

Blindly he stumbled through the darkness toward the music. Now the song was growing stronger. Voices mingled in the singing. It seemed to float across the air. It seemed appealing, gripping, pulling. Yes it came from the church and Eph made his way there.

The song changed. An old time organ was playing another song. He had heard it

Names:
, Eph
Types:
novel

, Frank, Uncle



Names:
, Eph
Types:
novel

, Frank, Uncle

Southern TN
BY: JOHN M. NELSON
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THE OPEN DOOR---1d.

A beautiful young woman arose. Softly and pleadingly she sang of a sheep that had gone astray and of a shepherd who left the ninety and nine within the fold and went out into the darkness to seek the one who was lost. Never had Eph heard such a song.

"That shepherd is the man of whom I have just spoken" said the speaker as the song ended. "If you are out of the fold your God, your Jesus is out looking for you, won't you come and let him wash away your black spots?"

"Come weary soul by sin oppressed, there's mercy in the Lord--" sang the singers and Eph arose. Slowly he labored down the long aisle and found a place at the altar. Here the preacher met him, placed a hand on his shoulder and called.

"Do you want to find this man, your God and my God?" asked the preacher?

"I do, but how?" asked Eph.

Down on their knees they went and in a little while all was well with Eph. He had answered the call.

"Fifteen years ago I left Faith Valley," said Eph as he arose to his feet and faced the big congregation. "I have wandered from one end of this country to the other. I have sunk so low that I did not believe I could ever come back. Those yesterdays have always stood before me. I am wanted for crimes I have committed. All this time something has been calling me. I did not know what. Last night I found myself in Wartberg. How I got there I don't know. I thought of Faith Valley. I wanted to come back again. I thought of that open door and I wanted to pass through and so I came back. There in the open doorway I saw a vision of my mother who sleeps in a little grave beside this church. She was calling me back to the valley. I came. That is my simple story, a story as black as anyone ever told. If I can come back again I am back. If you will take me I will stay. I am Eph Harrell."

As he talked a light suddenly came across his face. The hard lines softened, he became radiant. The crowd was still and silent. It looked as though something supernatural lay over this man who was revealing his past. So it was. It was the moonlight, pouring its rays of gold through The Open Door. It fell on the face of the speaker. Eph had come back to the Valley and The Open Door received him.

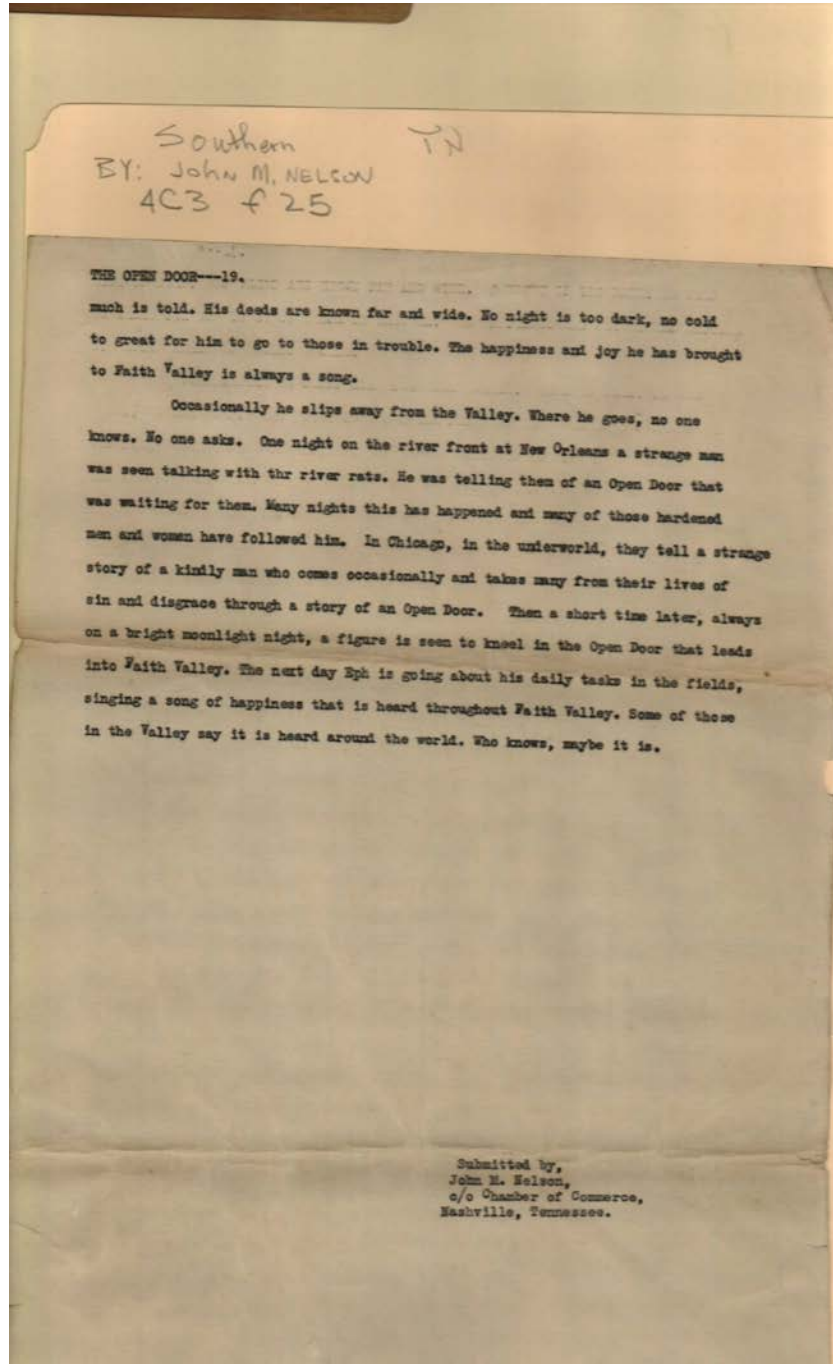
Several years have come and gone since that night in the little old log church in Faith Valley. There is no more beloved resident of this little hill section than Eph Harrell. He goes about among his neighbors and friends, telling them of the Open Door. So then he is a wonder. Here in the Valley he had become what he could not become out in the big world, he was a great man. Of his doings,

Names:

Harrell, Eph

Types:

novel



Names:
Eph

Types:
novel

**Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 4, Subseries C, Box 3, Folder 25
Nashville, Tennessee, "The Open Door" by Nelson, John M. - Southern States**

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Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection

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Collection Scope and Content: The Collection of 114 Linear ft. includes a total of 156 Archival Boxes. The Frances Cabaniss Roberts collection covers the historical records of the Cabaniss Roberts family. This collection contains extensive correspondence records of the Cabaniss Roberts family circa 1830 to 1930.

Archives/Special Collections Access Restrictions: None

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