

## I Saw the Light

I stepped out of the building of Iowa College for the Blind where I had graduated last June. My life was about to take another major turn, another change that was quite unbelievable. What I saw was a miracle of my mind. The sky was dark, heavy with rain that would soon pour down. But across the tops of trees in the distance was a bright light of sunshine and it turned the autumn treetops gold, and orange, and red. And I heard my breath catch in my throat at the imagined site of it. Then I turned the opposite way to get into the waiting buggy. And there on that darkened sky was the brightest yellow light, that I had ever seen in my life. Just a thin line that set the strip of sky ablaze with fire. Again, my breath stopped.

I shook my head and knew I was being foolish. I of course could not see anything. Four months after graduating from a blind school does not give you sight. But as I visited this college which had allowed me to pursue my education and grow my ability to survive, I began to see. I could see colors that I remembered from my younger days before I lost my sight. I could smell the rain and see the clouds. I could feel the warm sunshine on my face and see the bright yellow or other colors it would produce.

I got in the buggy and Pa started back home to De Smet where I would live with him and Ma. We had a long way back to South Dakota. This gave me lots of time to think. But all I could think about was the pictures I was seeing because of that visit to my college. The place where I had spent eight years. I know it was just the associate of the college and the confidence it produced in me.

That confidence would allow me to live all the rest of my days as a productive adult. My blindness was a part of me that just was. It wasn't everything that I am. I would be able to contribute to the household for Pa and Ma by making fly nets for horses. I was able to help with the younger children so Ma could deal with the ailments that afflicted her near her end. I was able to take the stories that Laura had written of our childhood and retell them to groups of children and adults alike. This brought such joy to so many. And I would continue to "see" the colors and things I remembered and share that with others that have never seen. From those images I saw on that day, I was able to allow others to "see" too. And that was my greatest joy all the way to the end of my life.

So, yes, I really did see the light back there in 1899. And I am grateful!