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ONE DOLLAR PER ANNUM INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.

"REGARDLESS OF DENUNCIATION FROM ANY QUARTER."

TOWANDA:

Thursday Morning, April 25, 1861.

Selected Poetry.

HEART SPECTRES.

Who fears a shrouded spectre
Up the hall stairs gliding slow?
Or a warrior lone, half steel, half bone,
In the tower that rooketh so?
The pulchritude, the infant heir,
But not a man, I trow.

Not from without, but from within
Come spectres to appal—
The heart alone is the haunted tower,
And the goblin-trodden hall,
Where shadows of the long ago
Upon the present fall.

There youthful feelings from the death
Of youth itself revived,
And buried hopes and wasted thoughts
In memory's charnel bed,
Starting, unsummoned, into life,
Wander like souls unshrouded.

And stalwart men of dauntless mien,
Of iron nerve and limb,
Knowing of fear but as a name
For something vague and dim,
Pause at its portal, as 'twere watched
By flaming cherubim!

Selected Tale.

A Struggle for Life.

It was the last day of the Indiana Conference. All business was dispatched, and the assembled preachers waited only for that last and most important announcement which would decide for each the scene of the next year's labors. In our Methodist communion the bishop who presides over the annual meeting presides over the "Conference" which the presiding power. His word, in this matter, has been wisely made supreme; and though, with the degenerating Methodists of the East, the body of presiding elders prompts the wisdom of their superior, while the larger and wealthier congregations go one step farther and ask the generous West they stick to the primary mode, trusting to the experience of the bishop that he shall so fit the men to the churches that neither may be wronged.

Nor, let it be said here to the honor of those venerable men, who have now for more than half a century exercised this somewhat arbitrary power, has there often been found cause of complaint.

The list of appointments is prepared during the session of Conference, and is kept strictly secret; so that no one knew, nor could form any probable guess at his fate. The murmuring voices were therefore hushed, and all as usual with one ear when the bishop rose to give their riddles for them.

By one of the willing servants bowed their heads, with a sigh of relief or sorrow and lost their general curiosity in their singular interest. Presently was read out: "Shottover Station; Paul Clifton."

Whereat a few of the elder brethren looked toward the young man so named, scrutinizing him with critical eyes, as though measuring his fitness for this "Shottover Station"; while others the younger preachers, looked up with ill-concealed joy at their own escape.

For they were hard cases at Shottover Station. The church was small and weak; the members, a turbulent set, irreverent to the degree, exceedingly sharp discovering the preacher's weak points, and very ready to take advantage of them. A very stronghold of Satan was Shottover, where the poor minister had hope for but small pay and less respect and might think himself lucky if he got off with whole bones. Once or twice, indeed in the past, they had driven the newly-appointed away by force of their brawny arms and heavy lungs; and once taking an exasperated dislike to a young man, just from college and serving here his first year (and who, they complained, "knew everything"), they combined together and literally starved him out.

Therefore Shottover was a place to be avoided by all means, a plague-spot which had driven several tender-hearted men into other churches; and to which now for some years the youngest member was, by general agreement of the bishop with his subordinate, sent to make trial of his budding powers—just as boys who have run away from home to sea on their first voyage are placed in charge of the sky and royal standing sails, to loose and furl them. Whereby at least those whose romance was not skin-deep, and who were indeed called, not chosen, grow to hate the glorious sea in the precise proportion as they scrape the skin off their tender shins, and are glad at the port, to run away home again.

Which I take to be a fine example of Mr. Darwin's recently advanced theory of "Natural Selection."

Paul Clifton, who sat in pleased unconsciousness a little on one side of the room like a young bear, all his sorrows before him, was a recent acquisition to the Conference. He had graduated with honor two years before at Theological Institute in the West; had preached experimentally, and very respectably, on various occasions, to different churches and country congregations, had "taken a cruise to Europe," and was now counted a promising young man, whom any Conference would be glad to receive; when lo! to the surprise and disappointment of his friends, he had his face westward, and eschewing the well-pots of New York, resolutely wandered into the desert of Indiana. Another John Baptist, said Miss Thomasina Dobbs, a romantic young lady, who was shrewdly suspected to be a Hoosier, was upon the reverend Paul's heart—

Nevertheless, though cleanliness is next to godliness, a dirty shirt is not evidence of the unpardonable sin; and, thank God! I have

coming into the Conference-room, and spread an immaculate pocket handkerchief on the dirty floor whereon to kneel at prayers.

The fact is, that Clifton had been bred in ease, and had the outside of a gentleman, which is a disadvantage sometimes; particularly if the inside does not correspond. He had a young man's natural longing to go out in the world, and see a little of the rough side of it—to try his own wings, which he had now for some years been impatiently fluttering on the edges of the paternal nest. Add to this the honest enthusiasm of a young fellow who believes himself called to show the heavenly road (not as a finger post, as Jean Paul suggests, which only points the way, but does not move itself.) And this tempered, perhaps, by the modest thought that it would be easier, for him, a young and inexperienced man, to lead rough Hoosiers up this steep and narrow path than the more refined and intellectual congregations of the East—a little mistake I have known wiser men than the reverend Paul to make—as though the wildest horses did not need the best drivers. Put these together, and you have, I suppose, nearly the mixture of motives which brought him to avoid the soft ease of a "first class city appointment," and join himself to this unknown future of the backwoods.

The bishop regarded him with mild pity as he read him his fate. A set custom could not be violated on his account; nor, indeed, did the venerable man believe that this trial had best be spared the young preacher. When the last hymn was sung, and the prayer and benediction had dismissed the members to their homes, he walked over to where Clifton sat and shaking his hand encouragingly, said, "Keep up your spirits, Brother Paul! the sword of the Lord is on your side—the sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

"Yes, yes," remarked an old fellow who overheard these words: "I wish there was a little more Gideon though"—while a hard featured circuit rider growled to himself—"Tain't right, hardly. I've a mind to change places with him; he looks like a good young fellow."

"You let him alone," interrupted the old Father-Sawyer; "probable the bishop knows what he's about. Let the young man take his chance. The Lord will provide."

"I don't believe the Lord knows anything about Shottover," retorted the circuit rider, who had enough of Gideon about him, at any rate; and who probably would have rather enjoyed a tussle with that devil of mischief, who was said to be so strongly entrenched in Paul Clifton's new station.

In which regard he differed much from Paul, who was not what you call a muscular Christian, forcing people heavenward by the fear of the Lord and a big fist; but eminently a mild-mannered man, slender, and more given to his Greek Testament than to his dumb-bells. Old Peter Cartwright would have counted him but small potatoes. But then, even Peter is mortal. In fact, I find nothing so very mortal as muscle.

That he might properly prepare himself for personal contest with the sons of Belial who made Shottover a by word and a reproach in the months of the brethren, these took care fully to inform brother Paul of the various disagreeables and trials he might expect in his new station. (Just in this way my grand-mother used to describe to me beforehand, and with great minuteness and conscientiousness, the nauseous horrors of that imitable flavor of disgust, an impending dose of castor-oil as of grandmothers, and particularly those of the male sex.) Thus advised, and in no very sanguine temper, Paul rode into Shottover on the top of the stage, on a Saturday morning; and after refreshing his inner and outer man at the hotel, he proceeded to view his church.

Now, to an earnest and unsophisticated Christian like the Reverend Paul Clifton, used all his life to the comfortably-cushioned pews, carpeted aisles, sofa'd pulpits, and scrupulous cleanliness of our city churches, the little meeting-house at Shottover was like to be a shock. A shock certainly, to his sense of comfort and decency; perhaps (who knows?) to his faith in the Christian doctrine. It is unpleasantly situated in the extreme edge of a bare and sterile clay bank—down which, I verily believe, it will tumble some rainy day. Its low roof; its mud-bespattered walls, once painted a dirty white; its narrow door way, making no allowance for sinners in crinoline; its ragged wagon-shed, like Jack Strain's house, neither wind tight nor water tight, and through whose board-side several generations of horses had gnawed sundry holes, which gave their successors occasional privileged sprints into a cool meadow beyond—thus pointing a Sunday lesson even to obstinate horse flesh, by this pleasant vision of heavenly grass-flecks; and this flanked by an appealing architectural novelty—a bell-tower, or embryo steeple, standing on its own base, and giving the impression to an unfamiliar eye that it had been lifted down by some light-handed giant—all this does not promise well to a man who holds his faith by the ties of mere use and comfort.

Within, the narrow aisles are covered with a fine coating of rich Indiana mud. The hard straight-backed, uncushioned pews afford no rest for the wicked; nor to the pious neither, unless as is some times the case, piety and adipose tissue are found in the same body. The preaching stand has at least the merit of consistency, being neither cleaner nor more ornamental than the rest of the church.—Rain-stained windows; bare, white washed, and partly "peeled" walls, white where no stains of tobacco betoken the resting place of some saint who chews the cud of Virginia content beneath the shadow of the preacher's long arms; and a huge stove, whose pipes stretch like vast arms along the ceiling on both sides, as though preparing to shed a fervid blessing on the assemblage; truly here was found cause sufficient for a series of shocks to Christians of weak faith or sensitive nerves.

Nevertheless, though cleanliness is next to godliness, a dirty shirt is not evidence of the unpardonable sin; and, thank God! I have

known men whose hard hands and soiled clothes hid a soul so clean that, if you were not wretchedly near sighted, and could see all through a coating of clear dirt, you at once took such to your heart.

Such an one was Farmer Leighton. A tall, raw-boned, hard-featured man, with the awkward straggling gait, uncertain poise of body, and splay feet, which are the rewards of an inscrutable Providence for a life of severe toil—perhaps to teach us to look beneath the surface for the truest worth; perhaps also to tell us that man does not live by bread alone, and that Mary did indeed choose a better part than serviceable Martha.

Farmer Leighton was now a well-to-do personage in his little world. A man of some thirty-five summers, in most of which complaining, hay-making, reaping and housing crops—the multifarious, never ceasing toils of the farm—had left their marks not lightly upon him; with scant, grizzled side-whiskers, and a chin wretchedly shaven by a dull razor and an unsteady, wearied hand; hair of that tawny sandy hue, which betokens several generations of rough struggle with forest life, hanging down in straight and tangled locks about his ears and coat collar; and a Sunday suit of blue Kentucky jeans, home-made, and ingeniously contrived to show every angle and rough knot and ungraceful line in the poor, ill used body beneath. This was the man whose harsh cracked voice, with a querulous quaver in it at first, and a strange air of tone of protecting and longing love, called out.

"Now then, old lady!

At which a bright bay mare harnessed to a mud-splashed buggy, standing near the hitching post at the gate, pricked up her ears and wondered what she had done now.

As though there were no other old lady in the world.

"In a minute," answered a voice from within doors, having in it also a certain uncertain tremble—a quaver, however, which stood for the fearfulness of a long and much-loved heart whose meek habit was to fit its motions to the convenience of others; a voice soft and agreeable, even though it was cracked, and hinting of many cares and much housewifely forecast. And presently appeared in the covered way of the comfortable double cabin a portly dame to whom this voice belonged.

Here followed a young girl, blue-eyed and fair-haired, as they are in Indiana, and of such breadth and shapely form, combining both strength and grace, as is the natural result of "hog and hominy," plenty of fresh air, and a total lack of servants and other incentives to a lazy life. Her name is Miranda Leighton—for which I am sorry, for I can not but believe that she should have been called by some such honest and plain name as Susan, Jane, or Eliza. But the Hoosier farmers, having little other grandeur to bestow upon their children are pretty sure to give them grand and outlandish names. And I have a respect for facts, which are stubborn things, but useful in their way.

Miranda unfastened her pony from a rack beneath the wagon-shed, where he had stood under shelter—lucky beast?—and leading him up to the horse block, leaped lightly into the saddle. As she settled herself there, helped by her father's kindly hands, a horseman rode into the opening by a turn of the road.

"There's John now," said Mrs. Leighton.

"John, come, go to church with us."

"I'm going," said he. "There is to be a new minister, ain't that?"

"Yes, and no tricks now, John," urged his mother, beseechingly.

"No, indeed; we're going to listen—see what stuff he's made of. Guess the boys'll be still enough to-day."

"I'll warrant they'll all be thar," grumbled old man Leighton.

Which was a safe guess. For, next to a circus, nothing draws so large a crowd in an Indiana village as public speaking of any kind; and above all, a new preacher. A talent for oratory is worshipped by all the West; and a man who really has something to say, and knows how to say it as though he believed it with all his heart, could not have a more appreciative audience than these rough, unlettered farmers. Nor will you find any where sharper or more relentless critics than these. As logical as children, and as impatient of humbug, they are ever ready with a biting word, which inevitably pierces to the core of some conscious misstatement, or sophistry, which the speaker is not himself taken in by.

So the sister and brother rode off together in advance, while the old folks followed at such leisurely pace as suited the bay mare, who had had her own way so many years that she took it now as a matter of right.

Miranda had just returned from school. In Indiana the boys must work, and their schooling comes, if at all, by fits and starts—as they say lawyers get to heaven. It is theirs to battle with the primal curse from their earliest years, and such learning as they get is picked up at odd times, and chiefly from their Bibles and the agricultural papers. But the girls go to school. For them money is laid by; and as they grow up to young womanhood, poor indeed must be the farmer who does not send his daughter away to a boarding school in some city or larger town, where she has, at any rate the opportunity to gather such of the ways, and thoughts, and accomplishments of a more finished culture as many assimilate best to her nature. With these advantages the daughter becomes the oracle of the house, cherished by all as a being of superior mold, and greatly held in awe by younger brothers, who submit, with what grace may be, to her dominion.—Miranda, as I said, had just returned from school. The free air and pleasant sunshine of this Sunday morning, and the exhilarating center of the pony, raised her spirits, and gave her courage to administer a scolding to John, some of whose tricks she had heard of on her return from School at Louisville.

"Don't you see it's very wrong?" she asked, with such a sparkle in her eyes as made it vaguely doubtful to contrite John, whether it was nearly so wrong as he had before thought to tie a kitten under the bench occupied by the young ladies' Bible class in church, where

had *miawed* dully at every pause in the sermon, to the great distress of the young ladies and the intense delight of the boys.

"Don't you see it's wrong?" she repeated.

"Didn't mother always tell you to be a good boy; and didn't I always tell you to behave?"

"I'm going to be as good as pie, now you've come back, Sis," said John, turning toward the pleased Miranda, a face really expressive of a vast amount of contrition. But alas! as he turned in the saddle a horrifying screech of feline agony interrupted this charming scene.

"O Lord!" exclaimed John, sliding nimbly off his horse, and making a desperate grab after his coat-tails, from a pocket in one of which presently emerged a good-sized cat, spitting out evident rage at her treatment, and with eyes sparkling, head down, and tail erect rushed into the woods.

There was a dead and ominous silence for the space of twenty interminable seconds.

"Now JOHN!" at last exclaimed Miranda very slowly, and with an injured air; "now JOHN!"

And then the little witch could hold her grave face no longer, but burst out into such a peal of laughter that the pony was really at a loss to know what it all meant, while the bay mare hurried up her lagging paces, very much surprised indeed, and anxious to discover the cause of such sudden merriment.

"You bad, wicked boy!" exclaimed Miranda, catching a moment's breath, and with it a grave face; but seeing John still standing by his horse, with red face, and hands closely held to his coat-tails, she broke away again into a laugh which the woods were very glad indeed to echo.

"I didn't mean to've sot on her," said John respectfully, willing to mollify his sister; "guess she ain't hurt much."

"I'll catch her if you like," he added, suddenly, in the hope that an offer of service, of whatever kind, would help him out.

"Tain't that, you dreadful boy. You know very well," laughed Miranda, trying to assume that severity of countenance which she felt the occasion and the offence demanded. "What was the cat doing in your pocket, you dreadful fellow?"

"Can't a feller take his cat to church without you pitchin' into him?" retorted John, in injured tones; and then feeling that defense was worse than useless in his case, and seeing, besides, the bay mare approaching, with father and mother peering curiously at their children, he judged it prudent to remount his horse and ride off at such pace that he was not likely to be caught. But as he rode Miranda noticed, with a chuckle of satisfaction, that he still held one hand carefully near the coat-pocket which had contained the luckless cat.

The Reverend Paul Clifton rose early on this Sunday morning, and was the first man, after the sexton, to enter the church. To say that he felt comfortable would be to make him out a fool, which he was not. It was a novel situation; and I dare say it costs a gentleman more serious thought to preach to a congregation of Indiana farmers than it does Peter Cartwright to expound his Gospel to a Fifth Avenue audience. When he had seen his church (or meeting-house)—when he had made the acquaintances of the sexton, and some others of the leading members—and when he had slept upon his impressions—and now, on this bright Sunday morning, was arrived at the climax of his troubles, the reader who can realize that the Reverend Paul was not only an honest young fellow, but also a man who thought modestly of his own abilities, will not be surprised that he sat in uncomfortable anxiety for the result.

For to fail here was to fail utterly. I am ashamed to refer again to Mr. Darwin (whose philosophy, by-the-way, I distinctly repudiate,) but here was what that eminent naturalist very properly calls a "struggle for life."

It was only in these two days that the solemn question, What is the full force and meaning of this office I have taken upon myself? began to crowd upon him in all its wide and serious bearings.

And what, indeed, it is to be what we call indifferently preacher, pastor, missionary? The natural History of the Clergyman is still to be written. I do not intend to bore the sufficiently impatient reader by interpolating this place any attempt at so important a work. But pending the advent of the great ecclesiastical Agassiz, who shall prevent me from setting down here my little preliminary "Essay on Classification"? See; there is:

1. The whispy-washy young man, who would starve in any other calling, and therefore literally "preaches for a living;"
2. The fluent young man, who preaches because that is the most impressive way of saying nothing;
3. The ambitious young man who sees that the pious Reverend gives, even in our Protestant America, a certain power and influence to its possessor;
4. The wide awake young man, who knows that for him there is no such easy way to gain bread and butter and honor (and a rich wife) as the pulpit;
5. The studious young man, who turns clergyman that he may gain leisure for his favorite books and studies;
6. The young man who has a certain intellectual theory of Christianity, with which he thinks it desirable to quiet the world. This one, I sometimes think, lacks only a little true piety to be indeed the model clergyman of the age;

And, lastly—not to make this list too long—there is your man who, feeling not only his neighbor's, but his own pride, and selfishness, and arrogance, and forgetfulness of God, and of all good words and works, feels also that above all mere dickerings for place, or power, or superfluous bread and butter, or any low ambition whatever, is the divine office of leading his fellows from these abysses, where devils lie in wait for their souls, to those green fields where Christ the Shepherd, ever waits his sheep. To such men He said of old, and says to-day, "Go ye into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature, begin-

ing at Jerusalem." To such, Christ is He who "came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." These are they, the true ministers of his Word, following and teaching Him with that divine love and charity which compels the rudest souls. Shall we complain if any such go forth comprehending their great work vaguely—looking out upon it as through a glass, darkly?—Doubtless, exulting, in fear and trembling? Like Gideon, the son of Joash asking vain signs of their Lord? I think few men ever set out on their life-work—if it be anything higher than mere selfish toil—with any clear ideas of what they are to do. Your logical man is your thorough rascal. So let us not doubt Paul Clifton, if his heart sank down into his boots as he sat in his pulpit on that Sunday morning, watching the entrance of his congregation; who now began to slide in in little awkward squads of six or seven, bashfully examining "the new minister" as they pushed up the aisles into their seats.

They need not strain their eyes to see him. He was no dim religious light, such as some of our city churches affect, and which is so admirable an annoyance that I don't wonder why Wall Street cultivates it. The broad pleasant sunshine pours in boldly through that part of the open and curtainless windows not obstructed by the opaque bodies of Sundry Hoosier lads who preferred a seat in the window ledges—a luxury refused them on week days, when subsided Jehoram Baker, the Yankee pedagogue, here taught the young idea how to shoot.

And now as Miranda, her face composed, and her hand holding her brother's arm, marched the reluctant youth up the aisle, her dress caught one of the intellectual poggons which lay at random about the floor; whereat a small boy, coming behind with his mother, gave an anxious glance, then dove down desperately into the crowd, crying out in his shrill treble, "Dog on it, that's my speller!" Then brandished aloft the precious dog eared volume he had rescued, and was incontinently suppressed by his irate mother, who looked maternal thunders at the unluckyurchin who had dared to "holler out in meetin'!"

Paul smiled as his eyes took in the scene, who grotesque humor relieved him for a moment from his load of anxiety. A man who has really a laugh in him never carries it nearer the surface than when he is thoroughly wretched. And now the service began.

If you think I am going to give you the sermon—or any part of it—you are mistaken. A mere sermon don't often convert anybody not even the preacher. Old John Wesley argued badly of the man who told him that he (Wesley) had converted him; and begged him to pray the Lord to do it over. Webster defines a sermon to be a pious and instructive discourse. Now, it can't be pious without being instructive; and moreover, Dr. Webster's definition excludes a considerable class of sermons, which are neither pious nor instructive, but only logical, or theological, which is worse. For I believe, with one of our greatest preachers, that all theology comes of the devil; and when a man gets into his pulpit and begins to lay out the Christian doctrine to me by rule of thumb, or by any other rule but that golden one of which Christ said that he who keeps this fulfills all the law and the prophets—then I try very hard to run my thoughts off on some little side track of my own, where they may quietly take another train and go to a quite different place from the preacher's.

When Paul rose he read aloud those beautiful promises of Christ on the Mount. And as he read, his heart, so long dumb with fear before this strange people, grew strong and full with the dear love which speaks in every line of those blessed words. It is not so much words a speaker needs as thoughts; and so much thoughts as the one great inspiring thought which shall bind his audience to him, and make him and them from that time kindred and of one spirit. In this sign we conquer. And this sign? I'll call it sympathy. He called it love. In what manner should he speak? How should he manage to please them? Had been Paul's troubled thought.—But now they were no longer they. No longer farmers, uncouth, peculiar, different—but men and brethren, of the same thoughts, the same hopes, the same fears, the same heaven-born aspirations. Not strangers but kindred, saved by the same blood, reaping the same promises tempted in all things, even as was He who suffered all that we might follow him. "Be you all things to all men," said the Apostle; to whom this command was doubtless plainer than to some of his successors.

Do you think words fail the man whose heart is full to bursting? Words these were of Paul's, neither brilliant, nor fine, nor profound, nor trashy; but very simple indeed.—And though this young man had satisfactorily displayed his talents before divers cultivated city congregations, this was in truth the first sermon of his which went to his own heart.—Do you know what Christ meant when he said to them: "Go and preach this gospel to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem?" Jehoram Baker, the callous Yankee pedagogue, who could stand more hard preaching than any man I ever knew, was cheated of his customary nap that morning. The people were very much surprised. They didn't quite understand it. That is to say—they did.—When Paul came among them after service it was not as "the new minister," but as an old friend. He needed no introduction to men and women whose hearts he had touched so nearly. He was one themselves. No fine city gentleman came to teach rough Hoosiers what they knew perhaps better than he. Nor any rude soldier of the Cross, so overwhelming them by the thunder of his gospel artillery as to leave no hearing for the soft loving voice of the great Captain of our salvation, who will not the death of sinners (and surely never wished to see them damned before they were dead.) Nor, lastly, was he, to their conception, any theological mummy, stiff with the wrappings of formulas, and with dry husks where live men keep their hearts.

Only a gentleman.

I hope nobody will ask me to say "Christain gentleman;" because then I shall think my

corrector does not know what it is to be a gentleman.

And do you think a gentleman cannot prevail with such plain folks as these without bluster, and casting away his own true nature? Does not the greater contain the less? And who told you that this old Hoosier farmer, in cowhide boots and homespun clothes, slow of speech and awkward in manner, is not the truest gentleman God ever made?

"Father says you must come home with us," said Miranda Leighton, pointing to where "Father" stood before the meeting-house door holding the mare, who was restive for her dinner. There were a plenty of invitations to "come and stay with us;" but Squire Leighton" carried the day, bore off Paul, who found himself presently in a comfortable farm house, where his host presented him in farmer fashion: "This is the old lady; this is Miranda; and this is John, my boy; I wish he wasn't such a bad boy. Make yourself at home, and try to like us and our ways. They ain't very fine; but we mean what we say."

"In what way is John such a bad fellow?" Paul ventured to inquire, by way of setting himself at ease with that young man, who looked at the certain degree of suspicion, as one of his natural enemies.

Whereupon John's mother made sorrowful confession of his tricky propensities, of his dislike to church, of his fondness for other boys just like him; and Miranda completed the display of John's utter depravity by relating the incident of the cat.

At which the Reverend Paul laughed so heartily that even glum John ventured on a smile, and Miranda had her fun all over again.

When dinner was over, and while the old folks smoked their pipes, Paul persuaded John to show him over the farm. The consequence of which showing was that John turned to Miranda with a puzzled look, and the remark that "that there minister wasn't a bit like any other he ever saw. Why Sir," said the poor fellow, "he laughs just like other people; and made me tell him about everything on the place. And he likes fishing, and I'm going to show him the creek. And he didn't know what a harrow was till I told him;" added John with a chuckle, "and I'm to show him how to plow."

"So you think he'll do?" queried Miranda, quietly.

"I dunno yet," said John, resuming his cautious look; "I dunno yet—but I fink."

Having won over John, Paul's fame soon went through all the country-side; and as he proved himself a tolerable shot, a good fisherman, and sensible fellow generally, "the boys," who had been so long the plague of Shottover meeting house, presently made him their honored captain, without whose presence or countenance no full crowd prosper, while they delighted to be for him a guard, often more zealous than wise.

But what avails to rebound at length the peaceful triumphs of the Reverend Clifton.—His first victory decided the campaign; and he surprised the brethren at the next annual Conference meeting by requesting (unless some one else wished the place) to be "continued" in Shottover another year.

What Paul Clifton could have found in Shottover but a question which puzzled every body but Clifton himself, till this day—

—Fair, and gentle, and dearly beloved reader, you guessed it long ago, didn't you? And I am not such an ungrateful boot as to disappoint you—till one day the bishop was invited to dedicate a new meeting house in Shottover; and this done, was requested "to unite in the holy bands of matrimony" (which binds they were tightly to this day)

THE REVEREND PAUL CLIFTON
AND
MISS MIRANDA LEIGHTON

John was present, in a great state of mind and shirt collar, and after the ceremony was over, and the company had adjourned, privately bestowed his blessing on Miranda, declaring that "she'd got the best feller for a husband—ef he was a preacher."

APPROPRIATE PRAYER.—It is customary in Maine to open the term of our Superior Court with prayer, and the sheriff usually selects some one of our residing clergymen to officiate on such occasions. Once a year a "full court," as it is called, is held by all the judges, to hear and decide questions of law. A year ago last summer the judges assembled at the appointed time, and the "minister" selected (a very worthy man, by the way, of the Methodist persuasion) was on hand. At the time appointed, amidst the most profound stillness of the bar and spectators, he began to pray; and after returning thanks for our many blessings, religious and political, and praying for our Governments and institutions generally, State and National, he besought the favor of Providence for the judges then assembled. "O Lord," said he, "look with favor upon Thy servants the judges of this court, endow them with wisdom, and overrule all their decisions for the good of the parties!" Joe M—, who had only a few days before received decisions of the court against him in two important cases that he had argued the term before, and who is a bit of a wag, turned round to a brother lawyer, and, without moving a muscle except round the eyes, whispered, so as to be heard by all the bar, "Anen! for self and clients."

—Several days since, while traveling on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, when the cars stopped at Prince's Tank, we overheard the following conversation between a young gent from Georgia, who was on the train, and a small boy on the road.

Passenger—"What did the cars stop for?"
Boy—"To take in water."
Passenger—"What river is that?"—pointing to the water in the ditch.
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They need not strain their eyes to see him. He was no dim religious light, such as some of our city churches affect, and which is so admirable an annoyance that I don't wonder why Wall Street cultivates it. The broad pleasant sunshine pours in boldly through that part of the open and curtainless windows not obstructed by the opaque bodies of Sundry Hoosier lads who preferred a seat in the window ledges—a luxury refused them on week days, when subsided Jehoram Baker, the Yankee pedagogue, here taught the young idea how to shoot.

And now as Miranda, her face composed, and her hand holding her brother's arm, marched the reluctant youth up the aisle, her dress caught one of the intellectual poggons which lay at random about the floor; whereat a small boy, coming behind with his mother, gave an anxious glance, then dove down desperately into the crowd, crying out in his shrill treble, "Dog on it, that's my speller!" Then brandished aloft the precious dog eared volume he had rescued, and was incontinently suppressed by his irate mother, who looked maternal thunders at the unluckyurchin who had dared to "holler out in meetin'!"

Paul smiled as his eyes took in the scene, who grotesque humor relieved him for a moment from his load of anxiety. A man who has really a laugh in him never carries it nearer the surface than when he is thoroughly wretched. And now the service began.

If you think I am going to give you the sermon—or any part of it—you are mistaken. A mere sermon don't often convert anybody not even the preacher. Old John Wesley argued badly of the man who told him that he (Wesley) had converted him; and begged him to pray the Lord to do it over. Webster defines a sermon to be a pious and instructive discourse. Now, it can't be pious without being instructive; and moreover, Dr. Webster's definition excludes a considerable class of sermons, which are neither pious nor instructive, but only logical, or theological, which is worse. For I believe, with one of our greatest preachers, that all theology comes of the devil; and when a man gets into his pulpit and begins to lay out the Christian doctrine to me by rule of thumb, or by any other rule but that golden one of which Christ said that he who keeps this fulfills all the law and the prophets—then I try very hard to run my thoughts off on some little side track of my own, where they may quietly take another train and go to a quite different place from the preacher's.

When Paul rose he read aloud those beautiful promises of Christ on the Mount. And as he read, his heart, so long dumb with fear before this strange people, grew strong and full with the dear love which speaks in every line of those blessed words. It is not so much words a speaker needs as thoughts; and so much thoughts as the one great inspiring thought which shall bind his audience to him, and make him and them from that time kindred and of one spirit. In this sign we conquer. And this sign? I'll call it sympathy. He called it love. In what manner should he speak? How should he manage to please them? Had been Paul's troubled thought.—But now they were no longer they. No longer farmers, uncouth, peculiar, different—but men and brethren, of the same thoughts, the same hopes, the same fears, the same heaven-born aspirations. Not strangers but kindred, saved by the same blood, reaping the same promises tempted in all things, even as was He who suffered all that we might follow him. "Be you all things to all men," said the Apostle; to whom this command was doubtless plainer than to some of his successors.

Do you think words fail the man whose heart is full to bursting? Words these were of Paul's, neither brilliant, nor fine, nor profound, nor trashy; but very simple indeed.—And though this young man had satisfactorily displayed his talents before divers cultivated city congregations, this was in truth the first sermon of his which went to his own heart.—Do you know what Christ meant when he said to them: "Go and preach this gospel to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem?" Jehoram Baker, the callous Yankee pedagogue, who could stand more hard preaching than any man I ever knew, was cheated of his customary nap that morning. The people were very much surprised. They didn't quite understand it. That is to say—they did.—When Paul came among them after service it was not as "the new minister," but as an old friend. He needed no introduction to men and women whose hearts he had touched so nearly. He was one themselves. No fine city gentleman came to teach rough Hoosiers what they knew perhaps better than he. Nor any rude soldier of the Cross, so overwhelming them by the thunder of his gospel artillery as to leave no hearing for the soft loving voice of the great Captain of our salvation, who will not the death of sinners (and surely never wished to see them damned before they were dead.) Nor, lastly, was he, to their conception, any theological mummy, stiff with the wrappings of formulas, and with dry husks where live men keep their hearts.

Only a gentleman.

I hope nobody will ask me to say "Christain gentleman;" because then I shall think my

corrector does not know what it is to be a gentleman.

And do you think a gentleman cannot prevail with such plain folks as these without bluster, and casting away his own true nature? Does not the greater contain the less? And who told you that this old Hoosier farmer, in cowhide boots and homespun clothes, slow of speech and awkward in manner, is not the truest gentleman God ever made?

"Father says you must come home with us," said Miranda Leighton, pointing to where "Father" stood before the meeting-house door holding the mare, who was restive for her dinner. There were a plenty of invitations to "come and stay with us;" but Squire Leighton" carried the day, bore off Paul, who found himself presently in a comfortable farm house, where his host presented him in farmer fashion: "This is the old lady; this is Miranda; and this is John, my boy; I wish he wasn't such a bad boy. Make yourself at home, and try to like us and our ways. They ain't very fine; but we mean what we say."

"In what way is John such a bad fellow?" Paul ventured to inquire, by way of setting himself at ease with that young man, who looked at the certain degree of suspicion, as one of his natural enemies.

Whereupon John's mother made sorrowful confession of his tricky propensities, of his dislike to church, of his fondness for other boys just like him; and Miranda completed the display of John's utter depravity by relating the incident of the cat.

At which the Reverend Paul laughed so heartily that even glum John ventured on a smile, and Miranda had her fun all over again.

When dinner was over, and while the old folks smoked their pipes, Paul persuaded John to show him over the farm. The consequence of which showing was that John turned to Miranda with a puzzled look, and the remark that "that there minister wasn't a bit like any other he ever saw. Why Sir," said the poor fellow, "he laughs just like other people; and made me tell him about everything on the place. And he likes fishing, and I'm going to show him the creek. And he didn't know what a harrow was till I told him;" added John with a chuckle, "and I'm to show him how to plow."

"So you think he'll do?" queried Miranda, quietly.

"I dunno yet," said John, resuming his cautious look; "I dunno yet—but I fink."

Having won over John, Paul's fame soon went through all the country-side; and as he proved himself a tolerable shot, a good fisherman, and sensible fellow generally, "the boys," who had been so long the plague of Shottover meeting house, presently made him their honored captain, without whose presence or countenance no full crowd prosper, while they delighted to be for him a guard, often more zealous than wise.

But what avails to rebound at length the peaceful triumphs of the Reverend Clifton.—His first victory decided the campaign; and he surprised the brethren at the next annual Conference meeting by requesting (unless some one else wished the place) to be "continued" in Shottover another year.

What Paul Clifton could have found in Shottover but a question which puzzled every body but Clifton himself, till this day—

—Fair, and gentle, and dearly beloved reader, you guessed it long ago, didn't you? And I am not such an ungrateful boot as to disappoint you—till one day the bishop was invited to dedicate a new meeting house in Shottover; and this done, was requested "to unite in the holy bands of matrimony" (which binds they were tightly to this day)

THE REVEREND PAUL CLIFTON
AND
MISS MIRANDA LEIGHTON

John was present, in a great state of mind and shirt collar, and after the ceremony was over, and the company had adjourned, privately bestowed his blessing on Miranda, declaring that "she'd got the best feller for a husband—ef he was a preacher."

APPROPRIATE PRAYER.—It is customary in Maine to open the term of our Superior Court with prayer, and the sheriff usually selects some one of our residing clergymen to officiate on such occasions. Once a year a "full court," as it is called, is held by all the judges, to hear and decide questions of law. A year ago last summer the judges assembled at the appointed time, and the "minister" selected (a very worthy man, by the way, of the Methodist persuasion) was on hand. At the time appointed, amidst the most profound stillness of the bar and spectators, he began to pray; and after returning thanks for our many blessings, religious and political, and praying for our Governments and institutions generally, State and National, he besought the favor of Providence for the judges then assembled. "O Lord," said he, "look with favor upon Thy servants the judges of this court, endow them with wisdom, and overrule all their decisions for the good of the parties!" Joe M—, who had only a few days before received decisions of the court against him in two important cases that he had argued the term before, and who is a bit of a wag, turned round to a brother lawyer, and, without moving a muscle except round the eyes, whispered, so as to be heard by all the bar, "Anen! for self and clients."

—Several days since, while traveling on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, when the cars stopped at Prince's Tank, we overheard the following conversation between a young gent from Georgia, who was on the train, and a small boy on the road.

Passenger—"What did the cars stop for?"
Boy—"To take in water."
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