

where a dozen men were waiting for supper. An Egyptian mummy would have unbent to James Morrow had the preacher's hand been extended with his winning, childlike smile. Man, even in his primitive state, is a social animal, and these rude men took to the genial stranger at once. Mrs. Hanson brought in the pork and beans and rye bread, with coffee that exhaled a grateful odor to the hungry young man. The pine table was clean and white, though guiltless of linen, and the seats were benches drawn up on each side, the host occupying a chair at the head of the board. The supper did not quite suit the refined taste of the young man, but he was so determined to please he ate as if at a banquet.

"I'll set up drinks fur our new boarder," said Bill Hawkins after supper. He was foreman of the lumber-camp, and would take his gang to the woods when snow fell. Now the men were floating logs, to get them down before frost locked the stream. "But fust, stranger, what might yer business be in these diggins? Ye air too white-livered an' spindlin' fur the bush. Ye might be an insurance agent. We give folks a ride by rail when they don't suit us."

"I am something you cannot afford to part with, boys," answered Mr. Morrow, laughing. "I am a Methodist preacher."

At this the men roared and clapped their hands and shouted, "Hear, hear!" and words that would not bear repeating.

"We've had the court-house squatted here, when we could hold the law down with our fists an' powder, but we ain't goin' to have religion put upon us," said Bill. "We'll take our blamed chances in this world and the next," and Bill brought down his fist on the bar with an oath that made the young man shudder and lay his hand upon the rough one of the woodsman.

"Of course, you did not know such words were painful to me or you would not have used them since I am your friend now," answered Mr. Morrow. "Yes, each one of us has a right to spend eternity where he chooses. I decided for myself, and you shall do the same, but I am going to build a church here. The women and children need it, and it will help the growth of the town, and I shall depend upon you to help me."

"I like your blank nerve," cried Bill. "He shall stay, fellows, an' strike his claim if he'll let us take our way, too," and this was the formal acceptance of the new appointment by the people of Shilo,

through their leading citizen, Bill Hawkins. The matter of a place to preach and a visible means of support was left to the discretion of the minister himself.

Mr. Morrow refused the liquor and tobacco in such a friendly way the men made no objections. Rough as they were, they respected him because he was not of their kind. After trying his stuffy room, with its smoky lamp, he went out under the stars for his evening. He had never seen these sentinel lights so bright, gleaming like torches in the pure, cold atmosphere. The northern lights hung above the horizon in a luminous cloud, darting up now and then in faintly colored waves of light, almost to the zenith.

As he came back from the river the minister had to pass the row of saloons from which came sounds of rude merriment and occasionally tones of discord. At one door he saw a pretty child enter, and, without knowing why, he followed her. The child went up timidly to one of the men and said, pleadingly:

"Come home, daddy. Mother is awful sick. She is screaming, she hurts so. Come, daddy."

"Mary, I'll learn you how to pester me when I'm with the men," cried the irate father, aiming a heavy blow at the child. It would have felled her to the earth had not the minister rushed forward and received the blow in his own face. The men sprang to their feet, crying,

"Hit 'im back, stranger. We'll see fair play."

"No, boys, not this time. He is going home with Mary and me," replied the minister coolly, though his face was stinging and his blood boiling for a fight.

"Come, my friend, your wife might die while we are waiting here."

This sobered the drunken man, for he loved his wife when he was not in liquor, and he blubbered an apology as the minister led him away, while Mary clung to her father, as if he had been the best man in the world.

They found the woman in real danger, and Mr. Morrow hastened for the doctor, leaving Mary to help her father, now seemingly himself.

When the minister bade the child good-night, she whispered,

"I like you. It wasn't so much takin' the lickin', but saving mother."

"It's all right, Mary. We must get your father to give up whiskey. If you want to repay me, get all your little