

duty, keep that before your mind, do your best and fear nothing."

This totally unlooked for speech from Mrs. Purdee, astonished her husband more than it surprised Tom, but it so aroused his enthusiasm that after a little pause, as though waiting further comment, he answered.

"So I will, and may God help me to do what is my duty! and if the preacher does not come to-night I'll take it as a call in that direction."

Mr. Purdee put on an over coat, preparatory for their walk, and Spot who had hitherto been lying on the hearth, got up and shook himself evidently expecting to keep them company. Mr. Purdee thought Spot had better stop at home, but might come to meet them about nine o'clock.

Mrs. Purdee said she would send him about half past eight, and if he should happen to be early he would wait at the door. The dog seemed to know what was said, for he quietly resumed his place in front of the fender, but taking care to watch every movement, and no doubt listening to all that passed. The meeting to which they were going was of the kind called *house preaching*, which for a long time was a necessity among the dissenting portion of the population. In these out of the way valleys the attendance was usually limited to a few neighbours numbering perhaps twenty, but even in such places, on special occasions, the congregation would often be such that instead of the great kitchen the barn would be required to hold the assembly.

At these preachings the speaker was commonly of the class known as local preachers, but occasionally one of the regular stationed or itinerant preachers, would fill an appointment. On this occasion they were expecting a preacher from a town seven miles away, and when Mr. Purdee and Tom got there the house was full, many of those present having come miles to hear the simple truths of the gospel delivered in an earnest, energetic, extempore manner; totally different from the insipid, lifeless prelections of their parish churches.

Mr. Purdee was himself a lay preacher, a most fearless and uncompromising one

too, where principles, whether of christian liberty or doctrine, were in question.

After waiting for a short time he opened the meeting by singing and prayer, and proposed to the audience, that they should hear a few words from a man, who a short time before had never thought of attending such a meeting, much less of addressing them.

"Friends, I call upon Thomas Snarr, to give out a hymn, and then say a few words in honour of his master, in whose school for some months he has been studying a new language, and very different manners."

Thus introduced, Tom with trembling voice read from that beautiful production of one of the finest christian poets, "Let all men rejoice, by Jesus restored, &c." They sang four verses and Tom opened his remarks by saying, "I can personally vouch for the truth of what we have been singing. I have had no experience in schooling or book learning beyond plain reading and a very little writing, but by God's mercy I have been admitted, as a very unworthy pupil, into the school of religious experience, and I feel it an honour to be permitted before you, thus to testify that Christ has been a gracious master."

Tom's words were plain; his dialect was broad; but what he lacked in correctness of speech, he atoned for in earnestness; deficient indeed in doctrinal theories, but rich in experimental acquaintance, he told his hearers what his own experience justified, in homely but forcible language, which went home, like the well directed trust, or blow of the gladiator. He had warmed to his work, encouraged by the hearty sympathetic responses of some of his hearers. There was no want of energy in voice or in manner; his descriptive power, so far as his limited vocabulary permitted, was good; while his simple sincerity of manner carried conviction.

Mr. Purdee listened to his remarks with evident pleasure, his judgment of Tom's character was correct. "There is more in that man, than he knows himself."

Tom was about concluding his remarks when he was slightly interrupted by the