

en-stime, and the greetings are hearty and familiar. Everybody is glad to see everybody, and after a year of separation, nobody can afford to stand on ceremony with anybody else. Morton had hardly alighted before half a dozen preachers have rushed up to him and taken him by the hand. A tall brother, with a grotesque twitch in his face, cries out:

"How do you do, Brother Goodwin! Glad to see the alligators haven't finished you!"

To which Morton returns a laughing reply; but suddenly he sees, standing back of the rest and waiting his turn, a young man with a sallow, yellow face, pinched by sickness and exposure, and bordered by the straight black hair that falls on each side of it. He wears over his clothes a blanket with arm-holes cut through, and seems to be perpetually awaiting an ague-chill. Seeing him, Morton pushed the rest aside, and catches the wan hand in both of his own with a cry: "Kike, God bless you! How are you, dear old fellow! You look sick."

Kike smiled faintly, and Morton threw his arm over his shoulder and looked in his face. "I am sick, Mort. Cast down, but not destroyed, you know. I hope I am ready to be offered up."

"Not a bit of it. You've got to get better. Offered up! Why, you aren't fit to offer to an alligator. Where are you staying?"

"Out there." Kike pointed to the tents of a camp-meeting barely visible through the trees. The people in the neighbourhood of the Hickory Ridge Church, being unable to entertain the Conference in their homes, had resorted to the device of getting up a camp-meeting. It was easier to take care of the preachers out of doors than in. Morton shook his head as he walked with Kike to the thin canvas tent under which he had been assigned to sleep. The white spot on the end of Kike's nose and the blue lines under his finger nails told plainly of the oncoming chill, and Morton hurried away to find some better shelter for him than under this thin sheet. But this was hard to do. The few brethren in the neighbourhood had already filled their cabins full of guests, mostly in firm health, and Kike, being one of the younger men, renowned only for his piety and his revivals, had not been thought of for a place elsewhere than on the camp-ground. Finding it impossible to get a more comfortable resting place for his friend, Morton turned to seek for a physician. The only doctor in the neighbourhood was a Presbyterian minister, retired from the ministry on account of his impaired health. To him Morton went to ask for medicine for Kike.

"Doctor Morgan, there is a preacher sick down at the camp-ground," said Morton, "and —"

"And you want me to see him," said the doctor, in an alert, anticipative fashion, seizing his "pill-bags" and donning his hat.

When the two rode up to the tent in which Kike was lodged they found a prayer-meeting of a very exciting kind going on in the tent adjoining. There were cries and groans and amens and halleluiahs commingled in a way quite intelligible to the experienced ear of Morton, but quite unendurable to the orderly doctor.

"A bad place for a sick man, sir,"

he said to Morton, with great positiveness.

"I know it is, doctor," said Morton; "and I've done my best to get him out of it, but I cannot. See how thin this tent-cover is."

"And the malaria of these woods is awful. Camp-meetings, sir, are always bad. And this fuss is enough to drive a patient crazy."

Morton thought the doctor prejudiced, but he said nothing. They had now reached the corner of the tent where Kike lay on a straw pallet, holding his hands to his head. The noise of the prayer-meeting was more than his weary brain would bear.

"Can you sit on my horse?" said the doctor, promptly proceeding to lift Kike without even explaining to him who he was, or where he proposed to take him.

Morton helped to place Kike in the saddle, but the poor fellow was shaking so that he could not sit there. Morton then brought out his own horse and took the slight form of Kike in his arms, he riding on the croup, and the sick man in the saddle.

"Where shall I ride to, doctor?" "To my house," said the doctor, mounting his horse, and spurring off to have a bed made ready for Kike.

And such a bed as Kike found in Dr. Morgan's house! After the rude bear-skins upon which he had languished in the back-woods cabins, after the musty feather-beds in freezing lofts, and the pallets of leaves upon which he had shivered and scorched and fought fleas and mosquitoes, this clean white bed was like a foretaste of heaven. But Kike was almost too sick to be grateful. The poor frame had been kept up by will so long, that now that he was in a good bed and had Morton, he felt that he could afford to be sick. What had been ague settled into that wearisome disease called bilious fever. Morton stayed by him nearly all of the time, looking into the Conference now and then to see the venerable Asbury in the chair, listening to a grand speech from McKendree, attending on the third day of the session, when, with the others who had been preaching two years on probation, he was called forward to answer the "Questions" always propounded to "Candidates for admission to the Conference." Kike only was missing from the list of those who were to have heard the bishop's exhortations, full of martial fire, and to have answered his questions in regard to their spiritual state. For above all gifts of speech or depths of learning, or acuteness of reasoning, the early Methodists esteemed devout affections; and no man was of account for the ministry who was not "groaning to be made perfect in this life."

The strange mystery in which appointments were involved could not but pique curiosity. Morton having had one year of mountains, and one year of cane-brakes, had come to wish for one year of a little more comfort, and a little better support. There is a romance about going threadbare and uttering in a good cause, but even the romance gets threadbare and tattered if it last too long, and one wishes for a little sober reality of warm clothes to relieve a romance, charming enough in itself, but dull when it grows monotonous.

The awful hour of appointments came on at last. The brave-hearted men sat down before the bishop, and

before God, not knowing what was to be their fate. Morton could not guess where he was going. A miasmatic cane-brake, or a deadly cypress swamp, might be his doom, or he might—but no, he would not hope that his lot might fall in Ohio. He was a young man, and a young man must take his chances. Morton found himself more anxious about Kike than about himself. Where would the bishop send the invalid? With Kike it might be a matter of life and death, and Kike would not hear to being left without work. He meant, he said, to cease at once to work and live.

The brethren, still in sublime ignorance of their destiny, sang fervently that fiery hymn of Charles Wesley's:

"Jesus, the name high over all,
In hell or earth or sky,
Angels and men before him fall,
And devils fear and fly.

"O that the world might taste and see
The riches of his grace,
The arms of love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace."

And when they reached the last stanzas there was the ring of soldiers ready for battle in their martial voices. That some of them would die from exposure, malaria, or accident during the next year was probable. Tears came to their eyes, and they involuntarily began to grasp the hands of those who stood next them as they approached the climax of the hymn, which the bishop read impressively, two lines at a time, for them to sing:

"His only righteousness I show,
His saving truth proclaim;
'Tis all my business here below
To cry, 'Behold the Lamb!'

"Happy if with my latest breath
I may but gasp his name,
Preach him to all, and cry in death,
'Behold, behold the Lamb!'"

Then, with suffused eyes, they resumed their seats, and the venerable Asbury, with calmness and with a voice faltering with age, made them a brief address; tender and sympathetic at first, earnest as he proceeded, and full of ardour and courage at the close.

"When the British Admiralty," he said, "wanted some men to take Quebec, they began with the oldest General first, asking him: 'General, will you go and take Quebec?' To which he made reply, 'It is a very difficult enterprise.' You may stand aside," they said. One after another the Generals answered that they would, in some more or less indefinite manner, until the youngest man on the list was reached. 'General Wolfe,' they said, 'will you go and take Quebec?' 'I'll do it or die,' he replied. Here the bishop paused, looked round about upon them, and added, with a voice full of emotion, "He went, and did both. We send you first to take the country allotted to you. We want only men who are determined to do it or die! Some of you, dear brethren, will do both. If you fall, let us hear that you fell like Methodist preachers at your post, face to the foe, and the shout of victory on your lips."

The effect of this speech was beyond description. There were sobs, and cries of "Amen," "God grant it," "Hallelujah!" from every part of the old log church. Every man was ready for the hardest place, if he must. Gravely, as one who trembles at his responsibility, the bishop brought out

his list. No man looked any more upon his fellow. Every one kept his eyes fixed upon the paper from which the bishop read the appointments, until his own name was reached. Some showed pleasure when their names were called, so as could not conceal a look of pain. When the reading had proceeded half way down the list, Morton heard, with a little start, the words slowly announced as the bishop's eyes fell on him:

"Jenkinsville Circuit—Morton Goodwin."

Well, at least Jenkinsville was in Ohio. But it was in the wickedest part of Ohio. Morton half suspected that he was indebted to his muscle, his courage, and his quick wit for the appointment. The rowdies of Jenkinsville Circuit were worse than the alligators of Mississippi. But he was young, hopeful and brave, and rather relished a difficult field than otherwise. He listened now for Kike's name. It came at the bottom of the list: "Pottawottomie Creek—W. T. Smith, Hezekiah Lumsden."

The bishop had not dared to entrust a circuit to a man so sick as Kike was. He had, therefore, sent him as "second man" or "junior preacher" on a circuit in the wilderness of Michigan.

The last appointment having been announced, a simple benediction closed the services, and the brethren who had foregone houses and homes and families and mothers and wives and children for the kingdom of heaven's sake, saddled their horses, called, one by one, at Dr. Morgan's to say a brotherly "God bless you!" to the sick Kike, and rode away, each in his own direction, and all with a self-immolation to the cause rarely seen since the Middle Ages.

They rode away, all but Kike, languishing yet with fever, and Morton, watching by his side.

THE PRETTY DRINKING CUP.

MILLIE has a dainty silver cup which auntie gave her. She is very proud of it, and one day when Cousin Belle was visiting her, she said:

"No one has such a pretty cup as this!"

"I saw a bird drinking from a prettier one than that one day," said papa.

"Birds don't drink from cups, do they?" asked Belle.

"Yes, sometimes. This was a leaf-cup, the cup of the pitcher plant, and it has a lid, and holds water as well as your cup."

"And do the birds really drink out of it?"

"Yes; the rain and dew gather in the cup, and by and by a thirsty bird comes along. 'Now I will have a drink,' says birdie, and he sips from the leaf-cup, and lifts up his head as it to thank God for the drink. No wonder; the heavenly Father loves and cares for the birds, as well as for the children."

GOD IS LOVE.

We cannot see God, though he is all around us; and we cannot hear his voice as we hear the voice of father or mother. How, then, are we to know what he wants us to do? If you were walking in a dark path, how glad you would be to have some one hang up a light for you! This is what God has done in giving us the Bible. It is a "lamp to our feet" and a "light to our path."