

THE TURNING POINT.

R. WINE.

WO little you in a room alone,
Going to rest for the long, lone night;
Their caps and coats are carelessly thrown
With restless haste to the left and right,
Alas! then the one with a merry leap,
Is hunched in comforts soft and warm,
While his comrade sits in study deep,
With beating heart and trembling form.

A Christian chafed away from his home,
He struggles with self, and his needless
fears,
Longing to pray, yet afraid to come,
Dreaming his comrade's heedless jeers,
But he for himself must now decide,
The future man from the boy is made,
He dare not drift on a godless tide,
And so he knelt at the bed and prayed.

No word of scorn from the other came,
He fell asleep in a thoughtful mood,
And Robert's need was a vital flame,
A course made clear and a conscience good.
The after trials were sternly met,
The Christian boy was a man at last,
And still the boy's soul was set,
His faith to promise anchored fast.

PIONEER METHODISM.

BY THE REV. EDWARD EGLESTON, D. D.

CHAPTER III.

MORTON GOODWIN'S CONVERSION.

MORTON GOODWIN was returning to the Hiawatch Settlement after a prolonged absence. After riding twenty miles, he emerged from the wilderness into a clearing just as the sun was setting. It happened that the house where he found a hospitable supper and lodging was already set apart for Methodist preaching that evening. After supper the shuck-bottom chairs and rude benches were arranged about the walls, and the intermediate space was left to be filled by seats which should be brought in by friendly neighbours. Morton gathered from the conversation that the preacher was none other than the celebrated Valentine Cook, who was held in such esteem that it was even believed that he had a prophetic inspiration and a miraculous gift of healing. This "class" had been founded by his preaching, in the days of his vigour. He had long since given up "traveling," on account of his health. He was now a teacher in Kentucky, being, by all odds, the most scholarly of the Western itinerants. He had set out on a journey among the Churches with whom he had laboured, seeking to strengthen the hands of the brethren, who were like a few sheep in the wilderness. The old Levantine Churches did not more heartily welcome the final visit of Paul the Aged than did the backwoods Churches this farewell tour of Valentine Cook.

Finding himself thus fairly entrapped again by a Methodist meeting, Morton felt no little agitation. His mother had heard Cook in his younger days, in Pennsylvania, and he was thus familiar with his fame as a man and as a preacher.

After supper Goodwin strolled out through the trees trying to collect his thoughts; determined at one moment to become a Methodist and end his struggles, seeking, the next, to build a breastwork of resistance against the sermon that he must hear. Having walked some distance from the house into the bushes, he came suddenly upon the preacher himself, kneeling in earnest audible prayer. So rapt was the old man in his devotion that he did not note the approach of Goodwin,

until the latter, awed at sight of a man talking face to face with God, stopped, trembling, where he stood. Cook then saw him, and, arising, reached out his hand to the young man, saying, in a voice tremulous with emotion: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Morton endeavoured, in a few stammering words, to explain his accidental intrusion, but the venerable man seemed almost at once to have forgotten his presence, for he had taken his seat upon a log and appeared absorbed in thought. Morton retreated just in time to secure a place in the cabin, now almost full. The members of the Church, men and women, as they entered, knelt in silent prayer before taking their seats. Hardly silent either, for the old-fashioned Methodist could do nothing without noise, and even while he knelt in what he considered silent prayer, he burst forth continually in audible ejaculations and groaning expressions of his inward wrestling. With most, this was the simple habit of an uncultivated and unreserved nature.

But now the room is full. People are crowding the doorways. The good old class-leader has shut his eyes and turned his face heavenward. Presently he strikes up lustily, leading the congregation in singing:

"How tedious and tasteless the hours
When Jesus no longer I see!"

When he reached the stanza that declares,

"While blest with the sense of his love
A palace a toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove,
If Jesus would dwell with me there,"

there were shouts of "Hallelujah!" "Praise the Lord!" and so forth. At the last quatrain, which runs,—

"O! drive these dark clouds from my sky!
Thy soul-cheering presence restore;
Or take me to Thee up on high,
Where winter and clouds are no more!"

there were the heartiest "Amen's."

The preacher, in his meditations, had forgotten his congregation—a very common bit of absent-mindedness with Valentine Cook; and so, when this hymn was finished, a sister, with a rich but uncultivated soprano, started that inspiring song which begins:

"Come on, my partners in distress,
My comrades in this wilderness,
Who still your bodies feel;
Awhile forget your griefs and fears,
Look forward through this vale of tears,
To that celestial hill."

The hymn was long, and by the time it was completed the preacher, having suddenly come to himself, entered hurriedly, and pushed forward to the place arranged for him. The festoons of dried pumpkin hanging from the joists reached nearly to his head; a tallow dip, sitting in the window, shed a feeble light upon his face as he stood there, tall, gaunt, awkward, weather-beaten, with deep-sunken, weird, hazel eyes, a low forehead, a prominent nose, coarse black hair resisting yet the approach of age, and a *tout ensemble* unpromising, but peculiar. He began immediately to repeat his hymn:

"I saw one hanging on a tree
In agony and blood;
He fixed his languid eye on me,
As near the cross I stood."

His tone was monotonous, his eyes seemed to have a fascination, and the

pathos of his voice, quivering with suppressed emotion, was indescribable. Before his prayer was concluded the enthusiastic Morton felt that he could follow such a leader to the world's end.

He repeated his text: "*Behold the day cometh,*" and launched at once into a strongly impressive introduction about the all-pervading presence of God, until the whole house seemed full of God, and Morton found himself breathing fearfully, with a sense of God's presence and ineffable holiness. Then he took up that never-failing theme of the pioneer preacher—the sinfulness of sin—and there were suppressed cries of anguish over the whole house. Morton could hardly feel more contempt for himself than he did, but when the preacher advanced to his climax of the Atonement and the Forgiveness of Sins, Goodwin felt himself carried away as with a flood. In that hour, with God around, above, beneath, without and within—with a feeling that since his escape he held his life by a sort of reprieve—with the inspiring and persuasive accents of this weird prophet ringing in his ears, he cast behind him all human loves, all ambitious purposes, all recollections of theological puzzles, and set himself to a self-denying life. He would do right at all hazards.

Morton never had other conversion than this. He could not tell of such a struggle as Kike's. All he knew was that there had been conflict. When once he decided, there was harmony and peace. When Valentine Cook had concluded his rapt peroration, setting the whole house ablaze with feeling, and then proceeded to "open the doors of the Church" by singing,

"Am I a soldier of the Cross,
A follower of the Lamb,
And shall I fear to own his cause,
Or blush to speak his name!"

it was with a sort of military exaltation—a defiance of the world, the flesh, and the devil—that Morton went forward and took the hand of the preacher, as a sign that he solemnly enrolled himself among those who meant to

"—conquer though they die."

He was accustomed to say in after years, using the Methodist phraseology, that "God spoke peace to his soul the moment he made up his mind to give up all." One of the old brethren who crowded round him that night and questioned him about his experience was "afraid it warn't a rare deep conversion. They wuzn't wras'lin' and strugglin' enough." But the wise Valentine Cook said, when he took Morton's hand to say good-bye, and looked into his clear blue eye, "Hold fast the beginning of thy confidence, brother."

Vacillation was over. Morton was ready to fight, to sacrifice, to die, for a good cause. It had been the dream of his boyhood; it had been the longing of his youth, marred and disfigured by irregularities as his youth had been. In the early twilight of the winter morning he rode bravely towards his first battle-field, and, as was his wont in moments of cheerfulness, he sang, "But not now the 'Highland Mary,' or 'Oa' the yowes to the knowes," but a hymn of Charles Wesley's he had heard Cook sing the night before, some stanzas of which had strongly impressed him and accorded exactly with

his new mood, and his anticipation of trouble from his religious life:

"In hope of that immortal crown
I now the Cross sustain,
And gladly wander up and down,
And smile at toil and pain;
I suffer out my threescore years,
Till my Deliverer come
And wipe away his servant's tears,
And take his exile home.

"O, what are all my sufferings here
If, Lord, Thou count me meet
With that enraptured host to appear
And worship at thy feet!
Give joy or grief, give ease or pain,
Take life or friends away,
I come, to find them all again
In that eternal day."

GET A LIBRARY OF YOUR OWN.

It should be the ambition of every young man and woman to have a good library. For youthful readers who are beginning the collection of books a few rules will not be amiss:

1. Set apart a regular weekly or monthly sum for books, and spend that, and that only.
2. Devote a portion of your money to books of reference.
3. Never purchase a worthless book, nor an infidel work, nor a poor edition.
4. Buy the best. Putarch says: "We ought to regard books as we do sweetmeats, not wholly to aim at the pleasantest, but chiefly to respect the wholesomest."
5. Where there is a choice, buy small books rather than large ones. "Books that you can carry to the fire and hold readily in hand are the most useful, after all," was the conclusion of Samuel Johnson.
6. Do not buy too many books of one class.
7. Do not buy sets of an author until you have a fair library and plenty of money.
8. Take one monthly magazine and one or two weekly religious papers.
9. Make a catalogue of your books.
10. In each book write your name, the date of the purchase, and the price paid.
11. Have a blank-book in which to put all particulars in reference to loans.
12. "Read what you buy, and buy only what you will read."—*Selected.*

LEFT TO HIMSELF.

JUDGE S— gave his son a thousand dollars, telling him to go to college and graduate. The son returned at the end of the freshman year without a dollar, and with several ugly habits. At the close of the vacation the judge said:

"Well, William, are you going to college this year?"

"I have no money, father."

"But I gave you a thousand dollars to graduate."

"It's all gone, father."

"Very well, my son, it was all I could give you; you can't stay here, you must pay your own way in the world."

A light broke in upon the vision of the astonished young man. He accommodated himself to the situation, left home, commenced work in hard earnest, made his way to college, graduated at the head of his class, studied law, became Governor of the State of New York, entered the Cabinet of the President of the United States, and has made a record for himself that will not soon die, he being no other than Wm. H. Seward.—*Selected.*