

THE PROBATIONER

ejaeulated, slapping his thigh, "she jest runs the vestry." Then, with a rueful grin that yet contained an element of pride, he told how she had driven the three probationers back to the haunts of men.

"The first," he said, "was a right smart chap—you should hev seen him spank the Bible; but Ruth took a mislikin' to his hair. Said it was too straight, an'—well, he hed to go." The student blushed as he remembered that his call had contained the rather unusual request for a photograph and a snip of his hair. "Yes," Jake repeated, "he hed to go, for Ruth raised the boys agin 'im an' made his place hotter 'n blazes. The next chap," he mused, pulling out and biting off nearly half a plug of tobacco, "was a lettle too pale in the gills for her taste—didn't care much 'bout him; but the third was a jim dandy. Licked two of the boys, an' put some backbone in the vestry. Thought we was agoin' to keep him, but"—he sighed—"man thet is born of weemen is small pertaters an' few in a hill. The derved fool hed to go an' fall in love with Ruth. Thet fixed him. She made such a show of the critter thet we fired him slick. She 'lowed," the settler finished, as the ponies pulled up in front of his door, "thet you was a likely-lookin' chap.