

Westville..... E. McGregor.
 " J. H. Moore.
 " H. Sutherland.

OUR OWN PASTOR.

YES, things in the church are dull—at a standstill. Parson Miles ought to spur a little.”

John and I were sitting in the front porch on Sabbath afternoon. I said to him :

“Well, I must say I’m getting tired of the same old thing. Now, when I was at Spencerville, where they’ve just got a new minister, there was so much going on and everything so lively ! There were all the ladies fixing up the parsonage, and everybody calling there, and presents, and the house-warming ; dear me ! It all seemed to make so much good feeling—”

“That’s it,” said John. “There’s no feeling at all here. Parson Miles is a good enough man, but he’s slow—yes, rather slow. It sometimes comes over me, Maria, that p’raps we need a change, though I wouldn’t be the one to start the idea.”

“No, indeed,” I said ; “but still he’s been here a long time.”

“Yes, and getting a little old. A younger man, now, would liven things up. We could pay him a better salary, and give him a good setting out. The church is well able to do it.”

“There’s no fault to be found with Brother Miles, though,” I said, for I couldn’t find it in my heart to hear him run down.

“Not a bit. It’s only that—well—only that, p’raps his usefulness here is at an end. What do you say, Maria, to driving over to hear Parson Tuttle this evening, just for variety ? He’s more my style—beats and whacks away, and wakes folks up.”

“What !” said I, “clear over to Radnor ?” It was ten miles and more.

“Yes,” he said ; “I’ll hitch up Prancer, and we can make it in an hour.”

I saw he was rather restless, and rather liked the idea of a ride behind the colt, so I made no objection. As we got near Radnor there were lots of folks on the way to church.

“Great many out for evening worship,” I said ; “Our folks don’t turn out so well.”

“Parson Tuttle’s a man that draws,” said John ; “keeps up the interest, you see.”

There was quite a crowd in the entry, and, as we were waiting for some one to show us to a seat, we overheard a man say :

“You’ll hear something worth hearing to-

night. Mr. (I couldn’t get hold of the name, though I tried) is going to preach.”

I was afraid John had set his heart on hearing Mr. Tuttle, but, as far as I was concerned, I didn’t mind herring a stranger.

“—He’s a strong speaker ; yes, strong—that’s just the word. We’re always glad when we get him as an exchange. Wonder is a man like him’s let stay so long in a country living. None of your hop-and-jump sort—don’t waste any force hammering out sparks, but goes at it and drives in the truth square and solid, and then clinches it—yes, sir, he just clinches it—that’s the very word.”

I could see the folks were expecting something a little more than common by the way they looked as they settled into their seats. I was looking about a little, trying to see if anybody I knew was there, and didn’t look toward the pulpit at all till I heard the minister’s voice, and then I almost jumped from my seat. Then I turned and stared at John, and he stared at me. It was Parson Miles as sure as you live !

If it hadn’t been in church I should ‘a laughed right out to see John’s blank look. But I sobered down, and then I couldn’t help seeing how those people listened. It was plain they considered Parson Miles no such small doings ; and it set me to noticing him myself a good deal sharper than I’d done of late.

Then I noticed the sprinkling of grey in his hair and beard, and somehow the tears would come into my eyes as I began thinking over the long years he’d been among us. My heart was warmed as I remembered the tender way in which he used to hold out little ones as he baptized them. I couldn’t think of a time of trouble or of joy when his face had not been good to see. I couldn’t remember a time of sickness when he hadn’t brought strength and comfort, and I could almost hear how often his voice had seemed to bring down a beam of hope and faith as we stood by an open grave.

When he came to his text John gave me a little poke, for, if you’ll believe me, it was the same we’d heard in the morning. But I had to confess to myself I hadn’t listened much, for I’d got into the way of thinking Brother Miles’ sermons didn’t edify me any longer. I thought to myself, though, that if I hadn’t listened then, I would now ; and when I saw the man we’d heard in the entry give a little nod to the other man once in a while, as much as to say, “Didn’t I tell you so ? that’s one of his clinchers,” I actually began to feel a little bit scared, wondering whether some of those Radnor folks mightn’t take a notion to give our pastor a call.

I think John, as well as I, was a little proud