

walked up to the post office, store, and principal buildings generally of the little village of Centreville, though it was not very apparent of what it was the centre. The speaker was dressed in gray homespun trousers, which looked very warm for the season, a gray flannel shirt, coarse hat, and a broad-brimmed straw hat, with ample means for ventilation in its crown. A fringe of sandy hair surrounded his broad, honest face as he beamed welcome on the new comer.

"Oim the circuit steward," he went on, when Lawrence owned the soft impeachment. "Jes come along with me. We wuz expectin' of yet. Jes let me have yer baggage. I see the black dress a been givin' yet a Muskoka welcome," calling Lawrence's attention to the fact that the blood was streaming down his neck from their bites, a circumstance of which he had not been aware soon, however, he was very painfully reminded of it, for the bites began to swell, and to become exceedingly inflamed.

"They alier do take to strangers," said the circuit official. "Yer'll hev to get some ole, and smear your face with it—fish ile's the best."

"Are they so bad as that?" inquired Lawrence, in some trepidation, for he had a constitutional aversion to the touch of any kind of oil.

"Well, they do say they killed a man out north here; but I guess that wuz a kind o' drawin' a long bow. Somethin' like the story 'bout our nusketeers. Yer know, they say many on 'em will weigh a pound."

"They don't say how many, though," said Lawrence, who saw through the joke.

"Yer'll do for Mu koka, I reckon, if yer alier as cute as that," said the steward admiringly. "We want a pretty peart man in here, I till yet. 'Amos anybody'll do for outside, but it takes a man to get along in here—it doos."

"Excuse me, Mr. Steward; I have not the pleasure of knowing your name yet," said Lawrence.

"Hophni Perkins at yer service," replied that functionary, with a galvanic attempt at a bow.

"Hophni! What a singular name! I never heard it out of the Bible before."

"Well, yer see," explained Mr. Perkins, "father and mother, they wuz old-fashioned Methodists out to the front, and they wuz great on Scriptooral names. So they called my twin broth'r Phineas—he lives jes' over the swale yonder—and they had to call me Hophni, to keep up the balance, I s'pose. They mought a' chosen more respectable namesakes for us, though. Hows'ever, that don't make no odds. It's somethin' like original sin, I low. A man ain't jedged for the name he bears, an' I won't be punished for Hophni's sins, but fer my own, unless they is washed away in the blood o' the Lamb. An', praise the Lord, mine is. I've got the assurance every day. But here we are," he continued, as they reached a small log-cabin standing near the roadside. The chimney was built of sticks and clay; but the evening meal was being cooked out-of-doors—gipsy-fashion—as was the general custom in hot weather.

"Jerushy, here's the noo preacher," he said to a toil worn, weary-looking woman in a woolsey petticoat and linen upper-garment of no distinctive name.

"Yer welcome, shure," she said, rising from the frying-pan, where she was cooking a savoury meal, a kindly smile illuminating her plain features.

"Yer to make this yer home till quarterly meetin'," said Mr. Perkins, "then they'll arrange where yer to go. It'll be month about, I guess, beginnin' at Brother Plin's, over there. We call him that fer short, yer know. Yer may find some places better'n this, but yer'll find more wuss. Set

down, set down. Yer must be hungry. Jerushy, what have yer got? Where's the chudder?"

"Tom caught some bass in the lake," said that woman, of few words, but of kind heart and acts. The children—brown as young Indians, and tanned as fawns, were hiding around the corner of the house, reconnoitering the new comer; but the attractions of the supper brought them one by one to the table.

As this was the new preacher's first meal, a tablecloth, clean but coarse, was spread—a luxury not always thought necessary on subsequent occasions. The fish was delicious. The same could hardly be said of the chips of pork floating in a cold fat. The butter and milk were fresh and rich, but the tea was not of the finest aroma. The wild strawberries and cream, however, were "fit for a king," said Lawrence.

After prayers with this kind family, hospitable to the extent of their means—and a king could be no more—Lawrence was shown to his sleeping apartment. It was a loft under the roof, to which access was had by means of a rude ladder in the corner.

"We go to roost with the fowls and get up with the fowls here," said Mr. Perkins.

"Look out for yer head," he added, just *after* Lawrence had brought that important part in contact with the low rafter. A faint light came through a small four-pane window, which was open for ventilation. The furniture of the loft consisted of a flock bed, a spinning-wheel, a quantity of wool—which had a strong, greasy smell—tied up in a blanket, and a quantity of last year's corn in the cob, lying on the floor.

Lawrence slept the sleep of youth, of peace of mind, and of a weary body. He awoke early, but found that the household were stirring before him, for want of other means of making his ablutions, he washed in a tin basin set on the end of the large trough out of doors, although it was raining slightly, and dried his hands and face on a roller towel behind the door. Having forgotten to provide himself with a comb and brush, which useful articles he procured on his first visit to the store, he tried to arrange his dishevelled locks with a lead-pencil—not, however, with a very high degree of success. Looking-glass—that luxury of civilization—there was none, except a small disc, not much larger than a watch, hanging on the wall, before which Mr. Perkins performed his weekly shaving operation. To get a view of his broad face in its small surface, he was obliged to twist his features as though he were making faces for a wager, and to squint sideways in a manner that threatened permanent strabismus. Notwithstanding these efforts, or perhaps in consequence of them, he sometimes nicked his features in a manner by no means ornamental, especially as he employed as a styptic a film of cobweb which contrasted strongly with his ruddy countenance and snowy but unstarched expansive shirt collar.

Next day Mr. Perkins accompanied Lawrence "cross lots" to introduce him to Jeremiah Hawkins, or "Jerry Hawkins," as he was generally called, the class-leader of the Centreville appointment. They found him ploughing in a field, with a lean horse and a cow yoked together. He was a little, meagre old man, with bright eyes like a ferret.

"Brother Hawkins, this is the noo preacher," said Mr. Perkins, making the introduction with the very essence of true politeness, though without some of its outward forms.

The old man took from his head a well-worn musk-rat fur cap, in places rubbed bare, which, notwithstanding the intense heat of the weather, he wore, and pulling his iron-gray forelock, made

what might be described as a strongly accented bow.

"Put on your cap, Father Hawkins," said Lawrence, warmly shaking his head, "I never like an old man to uncover to me. I feel that I ought rather to take off my hat to him."

"An' thoo be the noo preacher, bless the Lord!" said Father Hawkins, leaning against his plough-handle. "O! wor feared the Conference would send us none—we've raised so little for the last. But we've did what we've could—didnt us, Hophni?"

"Yes, but the times wuz bad. We'll do better to year," said that hopeful individual.

"Oh! the Conference will not throw you over because you're poor," said Lawrence cheerily, "and the Missionary Board will do what they can. That's what the Missionary Society is for—to help those that can't help themselves."

"It would al-to-break we're hearts to have no preachin' nor ordinances, wouldn't it, Hophni?" said the old man.

"That it would," said Mr. Perkins. "When I com'd in here, and my little Isaac wuz born, ther wuzn't no preacher to baptize him, an' when he died ther wuzn't none within forty miles to bury him. An' my Jerushy, she took on so 'cause the poor child had never been christened. She wuz 'Piscopalian, yer know, an' they makes great account o' that. But we digged a grave in the corner o' the lot; an' Father Hawkins here, he said a prayer, an' exhorted a bit over the little coffin, an' then we carried him out and buried him; an' I believe the angels watch his sleep jes' as much as though it wuz in ever so consecrated groun'."

"Not a doubt of it," said Lawrence; "their angels do always behold the face of our Father in heaven."

"You're from Devonshire?" he continued to Father Hawkins, knowing that one can always draw people out by speaking of their native place.

"Yes. Be thoo?" said the old man, brightening up. "But thoo hast na gotten they spaiich."

"No," said Lawrence, with a patriotic emotion; "I'm from a better place—I'm a Canadian."

"Na, na, lad, thoo canst na be frae a better place, though we've na runnin' doon Canada. But thoo've never seen they green lanes of Devon, an' they orchards, an' they hop-fields, an' they rich lush pastur', an' they Devonshire cream. Hev' 'em, Hophni?" and the old man sighed as he contrasted the rich culture of that garden county of the old land with the raw newness of the rocky region to which in his old age he was transplanted, like one of the hop-vines of his native shire, torn up by the roots and planted on a rock.

"Canada's not such a bad place to be born in, after all," said Mr. Perkins.

"The best in the world," interjected Lawrence.

"When father com'd to York township, on the front, fifty year ago, there wuz no roads no more'n here; an' the mud was that bad, cattle got mired every spring. An' now we'll soon have the railroad an' steamboats an' the market brought to our very doors."

Father Hawkins proceeded to give Lawrence a list of the names and residences of the members of the Centreville class, which he kept in his head, because, poor man, he couldn't "read writing, or reading either, for that matter." It was for this purpose, indeed, that the latter called upon him.

There was old "Widdah Beddoes," up the river; and her son and his wife—they lived on the lake road; and Squire Hill, "kep the store and Post Office;" and Brother Jones, the local-preacher, lived above the Big Falls.

"Good fishin' up thar ef yer that ways inclined," remarked Mr. Perkins.