

great university of the Established Church, with its host of clerical professors and vast endowments, had been exhausted, knew more than fragmentary snatches of the order of prayer.

When Lawrence entered the shanty, therefore, he was met by Dennis with the startling information that he must preach to them, and that his congregation was all ready. Indeed nearly half of the company present, most of them in the expectation of having some fun at the expense of the boy, as they called him, had gathered in one end of the large room and were lounging on benches or tables or reclining in the bunks. It was a rough-looking group—red-shirted almost to a man, be-patched, unshaven, and almost as shaggy and unkempt in appearance as the bear which had so unceremoniously entered the camp a few nights before. A couple of Indians stood in the background, silent and stoical, smoking their pipes. In other parts of the room were men playing cards, talking or smoking, one making an axe helve, another repairing a snow-shoe, and a third cleaning a gun.

Lawrence had never studied rhetoric, but he began with a good rhetorical stroke.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I never attempted to preach in my life, and I don't think I could if I tried; but, if you wish it, I will be happy to read you a sermon a great deal better than any I could make."

The modesty of the lad pleased the fellows, but especially the complimentary title by which he addressed them. He had called them gentlemen, rough and ragged as they were, and they felt that they must not belie the character he had given them. There was therefore a murmur of applause, and he went to bring from his little kit his Bible, hymn-book, and an odd volume of Wesley's works containing half-a-dozen of his sermons. He opened by accident at the hymn, or was it accident?—it seemed so strikingly appropriate to the soul-wants of his audience:—

"O all that pass by, to Jesus draw near;
He utters his cry, ye sinners give ear;
From hell to retrieve you, he spreads out
his hands;
Now, now to receive you He graciously
stands.

"If any man thirst, and happy would be,
The vilest and worst may come unto me;
May drink of my spirit, excepted is none,
Lay claim to my merit, and take for his
own."

The hymn was sung to a fervid lilting tune, and before it was through everybody in the group was singing, and several from the other end of the room had joined the company.

Lawrence then said simply, "Let us pray," and kneeling down, he fervently uttered the common needs of all human souls to the common Saviour of mankind. He seemed to forget where he was, and talked with God, not as to a Being afar off in the sky, but as to

one near at hand, who would hear and answer his petition.

They then sang again, and Lawrence quietly read Mr. Wesley's grand sermon on Salvation by Faith. When he had got through, Evans, who during one of the intervals of singing had examined the book, said,—

"It's all right, boys. That's sound doctrine. That old don was a clergyman of the Church of England, and a Fellow of Oxford University, and he must have been a pretty good scholar to have been that. See, here he is, gown and bands and all the rest of it," and he held up the historic portrait that has been familiar to successive generations of Methodists throughout the world.

"He mought ha' ben a great scholar," said Jim Dowler, a raw Canadian youth, "but he talks jist as plain as Parson Turner, the Methody preacher, up to our village, and he never wuz to no 'varsity 'cept Backwoods College, as I knows on."

"What for is a man a scholar," asked Dennis O'Neal, very naturally, "unless to make hard things plain to unlearned folk?"

"Wal, I've seed college-larnt men that talked as if they'd swallered the dictionary an' it didn't agree with 'em—'t was so hard to get the hang o' their lingo," said our Canadian lad, who evidently had not acquired his vernacular from the dictionary.

"Did you know Mr. Turner," asked Lawrence?

"Wal, yaas," said Dowler. "Ther wuzn't many folks in our parts as didn't know him. Mighty peart preacher, he wuz, I 'low. Had a great pertracted meeting up to Brian's Corners, and Jim Collins and Jack Scoresby, they fit to see which on 'em 'd go hum with Samantha Cummins, old Widder Cummins' darter. An' 'tworn't three nights 'fore both on 'em got converted, they did, an' 'stead o' fightin' 'bout Samantha Cummins they wouldn't nuther on 'em go with her 'cause she wore artificials and went to dancin' school. Did you know him?"

"Yes," said Lawrence, "he was on the Thornville Circuit last year."

"Blest if these Methodists aint everywhere," said Evans.

"Wal, yaas," said Jim, "I've bin whar ye couldn't see no housen in five miles, 'way up the Otonabee River. Thar's whar I first seed Parson Turner: com'd all the way from the Bay o' Quinty, roads so bad coulqn't ride, had to walk good part o' the way. I've know'd people walk five miles bar'foot to hear 'im preach, and bring their own candles, too; an' he never wuz to no college, nuther," he concluded triumphantly, as though he thought having been to college was in some respect a disqualification for ministerial work.

"Let us 'ave some more de musique," said Baptiste, whose fine tenor voice was heard to advantage in the singing,

"or I vil ave to gif vous de 'Roubant ma boule."

Lawrence now gave out in succession several of Charles Wesley's matchless lyrics, whose warmth of sentiment, vivid imagery, and hearty music, strangely captivated the taste of these rude men. In this pleasant and profitable manner a portion of each Sunday and sometimes of a week evening was spent in the lumber camp.

As the stock of sermons in his precious volume became nearly exhausted Lawrence felt a good deal exercised in mind as to what he should do when he had gone through them all. This feeling was increased by the remark volunteered one Sunday by Dennis:

"That readin' 's all very well when ye can't get anythin' better; but couldn't ye jist tip us a serment o' yer own, wunst in a while by way of a change?"

"Yaas," said Dowler. "It don't seem to come hum to a feller like what it doos when ye speak it right outen your head, ye know. I see a college-larnt feller couldn't preach a sarmin no ways without his writin' afore 'im. Couldn't even say his prayers 'cep he 'read 'em outen a book. Guess he found it a hard sight preachin' at the camp-meeting at the Beech Woods, on the Otonabee Circuit. Old Elder Case wuz thar, his white hair a-streamin' in the wind while he exhorted the sinners—powerful hand to exhort, he wuz—an' a-half-a-dozen prayin' at wunst, an' as many more shoutin' 'Halleluyer!' and 'Hosanner,' an' p'raps a dozen fellers laughin', mockin' an' crackin' their whips among the trees. Takes a pretty peart preacher to keep his head in a meetin' like that.

"But Elder Case, h kep' 'em well in hand. He'd run a camp-meetin' jes as easy as I'd drive a yoke o' breechy steers, an' I don't know but a great sight easier. I see him wunst, when Jim Crowther and them fellers from Cavan, 'Cavan Blazers,' they used to call 'em, an' pretty rough fellers they wuz, swore they'd break up the camp-meetin'. Well, Jim Crowther, he wuz the ring-leader, an' he was a-cussin' an' a-swearin', an' he says, 'Wait, boys, till I giv' the word an' then make a rush for the stand an' we'll clar the ranch o' 'em white-chokered fellers.' An' the old Elder, he kep' his eye on 'em, an' he jes kep' on a-prayin'; an' he ast the Lord to smite them that troubled Izrel, and Jim Crowther, he began to tremble, an' soon he fell right down, an' the Elder came an' prayed for 'im an' talked with 'im, an' what d'ye think? that Jim Crowther that used to bully the hull neighbourhood, he got converted, an' he used to pray an sing hymns as loud in meetin' as ever he swore an' sang songs at the old Dog an' Gun tavern at Slocum's Corners."

"Oui, oui," said Baptiste La Tour, "ze preaching all vere well, but me like zo muzique."

"Ye'd oughter heered the singin' at the Beech Woods camp-meetin'," continued Dowler, to whom his experience on that occasion had been one of the chief events of his life. "When the meetin' got so noisy he couldn't exhort no longer, then old Elder Case, he'd stop, an' a powerful sweet singer he wuz, too. An' ther wuz a band o' Christian Injuns used to come to the meetin', an' it wuz the touchin'est thing to hear those poor creeters a-singin'—couldn't tell a word they said, ye know, but the tunes wuz the same, an' their voices wuz that sweet—well, I never heered nuthin' like it.

"Mighty solemn, the singin' wuz, too, sometimes; made yer feel wuss nor the preachin'. I member one night ther'd ben a drestle powerful sarmin by a tall, dark man, Elder Metcalf wuz his name. P'raps some on ye know'd 'im. It 'ud 'een almost make yer hair stan' on end to listen to 'im. Then they sung in a wailin' sort o' tune,—

Oh there'll be mournin', mournin', mournin',
mournin',
Oh there'll be mournin' at the Judgment-seat
o' Christ.

"I never felt so bad as I did that night. I wanted as much as cot' 'em to go forrad to the penitent bench; but Bill Slocum he wouldn't, an' he made me come away, an' the road through the woods wuz awful dark, black as a wolf's jaws; wuzn't no housen for two miles, an' far behind us the bright lights wuz a-shinin' in the trees; it seemed like heaven a-most, an' we seemed in the outer darkness, where there's a wailin' an' gnashin' o' teeth, an' we could hear a-sinkin' an' a-swellin' in the distance, as the night wind blowed an' moaned like evil spirits through the tops o' the pines, them awful words o' that hymn,—

Oh! there'll be mournin' at the Judgment-seat
o' Christ.

"I niver wuz so skeart in all my born days. But Bill Slocum, he coaxed me inter the tavern, an' he drank, an' he made me drink, an' I got drunk for the first time in my life. It 'pears ever since then that preachin' don't have no effect on me; got past feelin', kinder, I 'low. Many's the time I've wisht I'd gone to the penitent bench that night. But now I'm afear'd it's too late, even if I had a chance," and the poor boy heaved a deep and troubled sigh.

Lawrence tried to encourage the poor fellow with the promises of Scripture, but nothing seemed to give him so much comfort as singing the hymn,—

"Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love and power."

"That's one o' the hymns they used to sing at camp-meetin'," said Dowler. "It 'ud be nice now if I could only believe that 'ar. Wish to goodness I could, but 'pears I can't believe in nuthin' no more."

(To be continued.)