

—exact whereabouts on the night in question. They were together in his office until two, when he went to the tavern and went to bed.

Squire Hawkins, having adjusted his teeth, his wig, and his glass eye, thanked Dr. Small for a suggestion so valuable, and thought best to put John Pearson under arrest before proceeding further. Mr. Pearson was therefore arrested, and was heard to mutter something about a "passel of thieves," when the court warned him to be quiet.

Walter Johnson was then called. But before giving his testimony, I must crave the reader's patience while I go back to some things which happened nearly a week before and which will serve to make it intelligible.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### "BROTHER SODOM."

IN order to explain Walter Johnson's testimony and his state of mind, I must carry the reader back nearly a week. The scene was Dr. Small's office. Bud and Walter Johnson had been having some confidential conversation that evening, and Bud had got more out of his companion than that exquisite but weak young man had intended. He looked round in a frightened way.

"You see," said Walter, "if Small knew I had told you that, I'd get a bullet some night from somebody. But when you're initiated it'll be all right. Sometimes I wish I was out of it. But, you know, Small's this kind of a man. He sees through you. He can look through a door"—and there he shivered, and his voice broke down into a whisper. But Bud was perfectly cool, and doubtless it was the strong coolness of Bud that made Walter, who shuddered at a shadow, come to him for sympathy and unbosom himself of one of his guilty secrets.



"Let's go and hear Brother Sodom preach to-night," said Bud.

"No, I don't like to."

"He don't scare you?" There was just a touch of ridicule in Bud's voice. He knew Walter, and he had not counted amiss when he used this little goad to prick a skin so sensitive. "Brother Sodom" was the nickname given by scoffers to the preacher—Mr. Soden—whose manner of preaching had so aroused Bud's combativeness, and whose saddle-stirrups Bud had helped to amputate. For reasons of his own, Bud thought best to subject young Johnson to the heat of Mr. Soden's furnace.

Peter Cartwright boasts that, on a certain occasion, he "shook his brimstone wallet" over the people. Mr. Soden could never preach without his brimstone wallet. There are those of refinement so attenuated that they will not admit that fear can have any place in religion. But a religion without fear could never have evangelized or civilized the West, which at one time bade fair to become a perdition as bad as any that Brother Sodom ever depicted. And against these on the one side, and the Brother Sodoms on the other, I shall interrupt my story to put this chapter under shelter of that wise remark of the great Dr. Adam Clark, who says "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, the

terror of God confounds the soul;" and that other saying of his: "With the *fear* of God the love of God is ever consistent; but where the *terror* of the Lord reigns, there can neither be *fear*, *faith*, nor *love*; nay, nor *hope* either." And yet I am not sure that even the Brother Sodoms were made in vain.

On this evening Mr. Soden was as terrible as usual. Bud heard him without flinching. Small, who sat farther forward, listened with pious approval. Mr. Soden, out of distorted figures pieced together from different passages of Scripture, built a hell, not quite Miltonic, nor yet Dantean, but as Miltonic and Dantean as his unrefined imagination could make it. As he rose toward his climax of hideous description, Walter Johnson trembled from head to foot and sat close to Bud. Then, as burly Mr. Soden, with great gusto, depicted materialistic tortures that startled the nerves of everybody except Bud, Walter wanted to leave, but Bud would not let him. For some reason he wished to keep his companion in the crucible as long as possible.

"Young man!" cried Mr. Soden, and the explosive voice seemed to come from the hell that he had created—"young man! you who have followed the counsel of evil companions"—here he paused and looked about, as if trying to find the man he wanted,



while Walter crept up close to Bud and shaded his face—"I mean you who have chosen evil pursuits and who can not get free from bad habits and associations that are dragging you down to hell! You are standing on the very crumbling brink of hell to-night. The smell of the brimstone is on your garments; the hot breath of hell is in your face! The devils are waiting for you! Delay and you are damned! You may die before daylight! You may never get out that door! The awful angel of death is just ready to strike you down!" Here some shrieked with terror, others sobbed, and Brother Sodom looked with approval on the storm he had awakened. The very harshness of his tone, his lofty egotism of manner, that which had roused all Bud's combativeness, shook poor Walter as a wind would shake a reed. In the midst of the general excitement he seized his hat and hastened out the door. Bud followed, while Soden shot his lightnings after them, declaring that "young men who ran away from the truth would dwell in torments forever."

Bud had not counted amiss when he thought that Mr. Soden's preaching would be likely to arouse so mean-spirited a fellow as Walter. So vivid was the impression that Johnson begged Bud to return to the office with him. He felt sick, and

was afraid that he should die before morning. He insisted that Bud should stay with him all night. To this Means readily consented, and by morning he had heard all that the frightened Walter had to tell.

And now let us return to the trial, where Ralph sits waiting the testimony of Walter Johnson, which is to prove his statement false.