"But," he roared, and as he spoke he struck the Bible repeatedly with his clenched fist, "by the Almighty, I will build a church of my own to Him! To Him! do you hear? not to your opinions of Him nor mine nor any man's! I will cut off a parcel of my farm and make a perpetual deed of it in the courts, to be held in trust forever. And while the earth stands, it shall stand, free to all Christian believers. I will build a school-house and a meeting-house, where any child may be free to learn and any man or woman free to worship."

He put the Bible back with shaking arms and turned on them again.

"As for you, my brethren," he said, his face purple and distorted with passion, "you may be saved in your crooked, narrow way, if the mercy of God is able to do it. But you are close to the jaws of Hell this day!"

He went over into a corner for his hat, took his wife by the hand and held it tightly, gathered the flock of his children

before him, and drove them out of the church. He mounted his horse, lifted his wife to her seat behind him, saw his children loaded on two other horses, and, leading the way across the creek, disappeared in the wilderness.

II

Some sixty-five years later, one hot day of midsummer in 1865 — one Saturday afternoon — a lad was cutting weeds in a woodland pasture; a big, raw-boned, demure boy of near eighteen.

He had on heavy shoes, the toes green with grass stain; the leather so seasoned by morning dews as to be like wood for hardness. These were to keep his feet protected from briers or from the bees scattered upon the wild white clover or from the terrible hidden thorns of the honey-locust. No socks. A pair of scant homespun trousers, long outgrown. A coarse clean shirt. His big shock-head thatched with yellow straw, a dilapidated sun-and-rain shed.

The lanky young giant cut and cut and cut: great purple-bodied poke, strung with crimson-juiced seed; great burdock, its green burrs a plague; great milkweed, its creamy sap gushing at every gash; great thistles, thousand-nettled; great ironweed, plumed with royal purple; now and then a straggling bramble prone with velvety berries — the outpost of a patch behind him; now and then — more carefully, lest he notch his blade — low sprouts of wild cane, survivals of the impenetrable brakes of pioneer days. All these and more, the rank, mighty measure of the soil's fertility — low down.

Measure of its fertility aloft, the tops of the trees, from which the call of the red-headed woodpecker sounded as faint as the memory of a sound and the bark of the squirrels was elfin-thin. A hot crowded land, crammed with undergrowth and overgrowth wherever a woodland stood; and around every woodland dense cornfields; or, denser still, the leagues of swaying hemp. The smell of this now lay heavy

on the air, seeming to be dragged hither and thither like a slow scum on the breeze, like a moss on a sluggish pond. A deep robust land; and among its growths he — this lad, in his way a self-unconscious human weed, the seed of his kind borne in from far some generations back, but springing out of the soil naturally now, sap of its sap, strength of its strength.

He paused by and by and passed his forefinger across his forehead, brushing the sweat away from above his quiet eyes. He moistened the tip of his thumb and slid it along the blade of his hemp hook — he was using that for lack of a scythe. Turning, he walked back to the edge of the brier thicket, sat down in the shade of a black walnut, threw off his tattered headgear, and, reaching for his bucket of water covered with poke leaves, lifted it to his lips and drank deeply, gratefully. Then he drew a whetstone from his pocket, spat on it, and fell to sharpening his blade.

The heat of his work, the stifling air, the many-toned woods, the sense of the

vast summering land — these things were not in his thoughts. Some days before, despatched from homestead to homestead, rumors had reached him away off here at work on his father's farm, of a great university to be opened the following autumn at Lexington. The like of it with its many colleges Kentucky, the South, the Mississippi valley had never seen. It had been the talk among the farming people in their harvest fields, at the cross-roads, on their porches — the one deep sensation among them since the war.

For solemn, heart-stirring as such tidings would have been at any other time, more so at this. Here, on the tableland of this unique border state, Kentucky — between the halves of the nation lately at strife — scene of their advancing and retreating armies — pit of a frenzied commonwealth — here was to arise this calm university, pledge of the new times, plea for the peace and amity of learning, fresh chance for study of the revelation of the Lord of Hosts and God of battles. The

animosities were over, the humanities rebegun.

Can you remember your youth well enough to be able to recall the time when the great things happened for which you seemed to be waiting? The boy who is to be a soldier — one day he hears a distant bugle: at once *he* knows. A second glimpses a bellying sail: straightway the ocean path beckons to him. A third discovers a college, and toward its kindly lamps of learning turns young eyes that have been kindled and will stay kindled to the end.

For some years this particular lad, this obscure item in Nature's plan which always passes understanding, had been growing more unhappy in his place in creation. By temperament he was of a type the most joyous and self-reliant — those sure signs of health; and discontent now was due to the fact that he had outgrown his place. Parentage — a farm and its tasks — a country neighborhood and its narrowness — what more are these sometimes than a

starting-point for a young life; as a flower-pot might serve to sprout an oak, and as the oak would inevitably reach the hour when it would either die or burst out, root and branch, into the whole heavens and the earth; as the shell and yolk of an egg are the starting-point for the wing and eye of the eagle. One thing only he had not outgrown, in one thing only he was not unhappy: his religious nature. This had always been in him as breath was in him, as blood was in him: it was his life. Dissatisfied now with his position in the world, it was this alone that kept him contented in himself. Often the religious are the weary; and perhaps nowhere else does a perpetual vision of Heaven so disclose itself to the weary as above lonely toiling fields. The lad had long been lifting his inner eye to this vision.

When, therefore, the tidings of the university with its Bible College reached him, whose outward mould was hardship, whose inner bliss was piety, at once they fitted his ear as the right sound, as the

gladness of long awaited intelligence. It was bugle to the soldier, sail to the sailor, lamp of learning to the innate student. At once he knew that he was going to the university — sometime, somehow — and from that moment felt no more discontent, void, restlessness, nor longing.

It was of this university, then, that he was happily day-dreaming as he whetted his hemp hook in the depths of the woods that Saturday afternoon. Sitting low amid heat and weeds and thorns, he was already as one who had climbed above the earth's eternal snow-line and sees only white peaks and pinnacles — the last sublimities.

He felt impatient for to-morrow. One of the professors of the university, of the faculty of the Bible College, had been travelling over the state during the summer, pleading its cause before the people. He had come into that neighborhood to preach and to plead. The lad would be there to hear.

The church in which the professor was

to plead for learning and religion was the one first set up in the Kentucky wilderness as a house of religious liberty; and the lad was a great-grandchild of the founder of that church, here emerging mysteriously from the deeps of life four generations down the line.

III

THE church which David's grim old Indian-fighting great-grandfather had dedicated to freedom of belief in the wilderness, cutting off a parcel of his lands as he had hotly sworn and building on it a schoolhouse also, stood some miles distant across the country. The vast estate of the pioneer had been cut to pieces for his many sons. With the next generation the law of partible inheritance had further subdivided each of these; so that in David's time a single small farm was all that had fallen to his father; and his father had never increased it. The church was situated on what had been the opposite

THAT FIRST HOUSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN THE WESTERN WILDERNESS