little incidents of the lad's life to show that this was what he was always meant to be. She loosened from her throat the breast-pin containing the hair of the three heads braided together, and drew her husband's attention to it with a smile. He, too, disregarding his disparagement of the few minutes previous, now began to admit with warmth how good a mind David had always had. He prophesied that at college he would outstrip the other boys from that neighborhood. This, in its way, was also fresh happiness to him; for, smarting under his poverty among rich neighbors, and fallen from the social rank to which he was actually entitled, he now welcomed the secondary joy which originates in the revenge men take upon each other through the superiority of their children.

One thing both agreed in: that this explained their son. He had certainly always needed an explanation. But no wonder; he was to be a minister. And who had a right to understand a minister? He was entitled to be peculiar.

When David came in to supper that night and took his seat, shame-faced, frowning and blinking at the candle-light, his father began to talk to him as he had never believed possible; and his mother, placing his coffee before him, let her hand rest on his shoulder.

He, long ahungered for their affection and finding it now when least expected, filled to the brim, choked at every morsel, got away as soon as he could into the sacred joy of the night. Ah, those thrilling hours when the young disciple, having for the first time confessed openly his love of the Divine, feels that the Divine returns his love and accepts his service!

IV

Autumn came, the university opened wide its harmonious doors, welcoming Youth and Peace.

All that day a lad, alone at his field work away off on the edge of the blue-grass lands, toiled as one listening to a

sublime sound in the distance — the tramping, tramping, tramping of the students as they assembled from the farms of the state and from other states. Some boys out of his own neighborhood had started that morning, old schoolfellows. He had gone to say good-by; had sat on the bed and watched them pack their fine new trunks — cramming these with fond maternal gifts and the thoughtless affluence of necessary and unnecessary things; had heard all the wonderful talk about classes and professors and societies; had wrung their hands at last with eyes turned away, that none might see the look in them — the immortal hunger.

How empty now the whole land without those two or three boys! Not far away across the fields, soft-white in the clear sunshine, stood the home of one of them — the green shutters of a single upper room tightly closed. His heart-strings were twisted tight and wrung sore this day; and more than once he stopped short in his work (the cutting of briers

along a fence), arrested by the temptation to throw down his hook and go. The sacred arguments were on his side. Without choice or search of his they clamored and battered at his inner ear — those commands of the Gospels, the long reverberations of that absolute Voice, bidding irresolute workaday disciples leave the plough in the furrow, leave whatsoever task was impending or duty uppermost to the living or the dead, and follow, — "Follow Me!"

Arguments, verily, had he in plenty; but raiment — no; nor scrip. And knew he ever so little of the world, sure he felt of this: that for young Elijahs at the university there were no ravens; nor wild honey for St. John; nor Galilean basketfuls left over by hungry fisherfolk, fishers of men.

So back to his briers. And back to the autumn soil, days of hard drudging, days of hard thinking. The chief problem for the nigh future being, how soonest to provide the raiment, fill the scrip; and so with time enough to find out

what, on its first appearance, is so terrible a discovery to the young, straining against restraint: that just the lack of a coarse garment or two — of a little money for a little plain food — of a few candles and a few coverlets for light and warmth with a book or two thrown in — that a need so poor, paltry as this, may keep mind and heart back for years. Ah, happy ye! with whom this last not too long — or for always!

Yet happy ye, whether the waiting be for short time or long time, if only it bring on meanwhile, as it brought on with him, the struggle! One sure reward ye have, then, as he had, though there may be none other — just the struggle: the marshalling to the front of rightful forces — will, effort, endurance, devotion; the putting resolutely back of forces wrongful; the hardening of all that is soft within, the softening of all that is hard: until out of the hardening and the softening results the better tempering of the soul's metal, and higher development of those two qualities which are best in man and best in his ideal of his Maker — strength and kindness, power and mercy. With an added reward also, if the struggle lead you to perceive (what he did not perceive), as the light of your darkness, the sweet of bitter, that real struggling is itself real living, and that no ennobling thing of this earth is ever to be had by man on any other terms: so teaching him, none too soon, that any divine end is to be reached but through divine means, that a great work requires a great preparation.

Of the lad's desperate experience henceforth in mere outward matters the recital may be suppressed: the struggle of the earth's poor has grown too common to make fresh reading. He toiled direfully, economized direfully, to get to his college, but in this showed only the heroism too ordinary among American boys to be marvelled at more. One fact may be set down, as limning some true figure of him on the landscape of those years in that peculiar country.

The war had just closed. The farmers, recollecting the fortunes made in hemp before, had hurried to the fields. All the more as the long interruption of agriculture in the South had resulted in scarcity of cotton; so that the earnest cry came to Kentucky for hemp at once to take many of its places. But meantime the slaves had been set free: where before ordered, they must now be hired. A difficult agreement to effect at all times, because will and word and bond were of no account. Most difficult when the breaking of hemp was to be bargained for; since the laborer is kept all day in the winter fields, away from the fireside, and must toil solitary at his brake, cut off from the talk and laughter which lighten work among that race. So that wages rose steadily, and the cost of hemp with them.

The lad saw in this demand for the lowest work at the highest prices his golden opportunity — and seized it. When the hemp-breaking season opened that winter, he made his appearance on the

farm of a rich farmer near by, taking his place with the negroes.

There is little art in breaking hemp. He soon had the knack of that: his muscles were toughened already. He learned what it was sometimes to eat his dinner in the fields, warming it, maybe, on the coals of a stump set on fire near his brake; to bale his hemp at nightfall and follow the slide or wagon to the barn; there to wait with the negroes till it was weighed on the steelyards; and at last, with muscles stiff and sore, throat husky with dust, to stride away rapidly over the bitter darkening land to other work awaiting him at home.

Had there been call to do this before the war, it might not have been done. But now men young and old, who had never known what work was, were replacing their former slaves. The preëxisting order had indeed rolled away like a scroll; and there was the strange fresh universal stir of humanity over the land like the stir of nature in a boundless wood under a new

spring firmament. He was one of a multitude of new toilers; but the first in his neighborhood, and alone in his grim choice of work.

So dragged that winter through. When spring returned, he did better. With his father's approval, he put in some acres for himself — sowed it, watched it, prayed for it; in summer cut it; with hired help stacked it in autumn; broke it himself the winter following; sold it the next spring; and so found in his pocket the sorely coveted money.

This was increased that summer from the sale of cord wood, through driblets saved by his father and mother; and when autumn once more advanced with her days of shadow and thoughtfulness — two years having now passed — he was in possession of his meagre fortune, wrung out of earth, out of sweat and strength and devotion.

Only a few days remained now before his leaving for the university — very solemn tender days about the house with his father and mother.

And now for the lad's own sake, as for the clearer guidance of those who may care to understand what so incredibly befell him afterward, an attempt must be made to reveal somewhat of his spiritual life during those two years. It was this, not hard work, that writ his history.

As soon as he had made up his mind to study for the ministry, he had begun to read his Bible absorbingly, sweeping through that primitive dawn of life among the Hebrews and that second, brilliant one of the Christian era. He had few other books, none important; he knew nothing of modern theology or modern science. Thus he was brought wholly under the influence of that view of Man's place in Nature which was held by the earliest Biblical writers, has imposed itself upon countless millions of minds since then, and will continue to impose itself — how much longer?

As regarded, then, his place in Nature, this boy became a contemporary of the Psalmist; looked out upon the physical

universe with the eye of Job; placed himself back beside that simple, audacious, sublime child — Man but awakening from his cradle of faith in the morning of civilization. The meaning of all which to him was this: that the most important among the worlds swung in space was the Earth, on account of a single inhabitant — Man. Its shape had been moulded, its surface fitted up, as the dwelling-place of Man. Land, ocean, mountain-range, desert, valley — these were designed alike for Man. The sun — it was for him; and the moon; and the stars, hung about the earth as its lights — guides to the mariner, reminders to the landsman of the Eye that never slumbered. The clouds — shade and shower — they were mercifully for Man. Nothing had meaning, possessed value, save as it derived meaning and value from him. The great laws of Nature — they, too, were ordered for Man's service, like the ox and the ass; and as he drove his ox and his ass whither he would, caused

them to move forward or to stop at the word of command, so Man had only to speak properly (in prayer) and these laws would move faster or less fast, stop still, turn to the right or the left side of the road that he desired to travel. Always Man, Man, Man, nothing but Man! To himself measure of the universe as to himself a little boy is sole reason for the food and furnishings of his nursery.

This conception of Man's place in Nature has perhaps furnished a very large part of the history of the world. Even at this close of the nineteenth century, it is still, in all probability, the most important fact in the faith and conduct of the race, running with endless applications throughout the spheres of practical life and vibrating away to the extremities of the imagination. In the case of this poor, devout, high-minded Kentucky boy, at work on a farm in the years 1866 and 1867, saving his earnings and reading his Bible as the twofold preparation for his entrance into the Christian

ministry, this belief took on one of its purest shapes and wrought out in him some of its loftiest results.

Let it be remembered that he lived in a temperate, beautiful, bountiful country; that his work was done mostly in the fields, with the aspects of land and sky ever before him; that he was much alone; that his thinking was nearly always of his Bible and his Bible college. Let it be remembered that he had an eye which was not merely an opening and closing but a seeing eye — full of health and of enjoyment of the pageantry of things; and that behind this eye, looking through it as through its window, stood the dim soul of the lad, itself in a temple of perpetual worship: these are some of the conditions which yielded him during these two years the intense, exalted realities of his inner life.

When of morning he stepped out of the plain farm-house with its rotting doors and leaking roof and started off joyously to his day's work, at the sight of the great

sun just rising above the low dew-wet hills, his soul would go soaring away to heaven's gate. Sometimes he would be abroad late at night, summoning the doctor for his father or returning from a visit to another neighborhood. In every farm-house that he passed on the country road the people were asleep — over all the shadowy land they were asleep. And everywhere, guardian in the darkness, watched the moon, pouring its searching beams upon every roof, around every entrance, on kennel and fold, sty and barn — with light not enough to awaken but enough to protect: how he worshipped toward that lamp tended by the Sleepless! There were summer noons when he would be lying under a solitary tree in a field — in the edge of its shade, resting; his face turned toward the sky. This would be one over-bending vault of serenest blue, save for a distant flight of snow-white clouds, making him think of some earthward-wandering company of angels. He would lie motionless, scarce breathing, in that peace of the earth, that

smile of the Father. Or if this same vault remained serene too long; if the soil of the fields became dusty to his boots and his young grain began to wither, when at last, in response to his prayer, the clouds were brought directly over them and emptied down, as he stepped forth into the cooled, dripping, soaking green, how his heart blessed the Power that reigned above and did all things well!

It was always praise, gratitude, thanksgiving, whatever happened. If he prayed for rain for his crops and none was sent, then he thought his prayer lacked faith or was unwise, he knew not how; if too much rain fell, so that his grain rotted, this again was from some fault of his or for his good; or perhaps it was the evil work of the prince of the powers of the air — by permission of the Omnipotent. In the case of one crop all the labor of nearly a year went for nothing: he explained this as a reminder that he must be chastened.

Come good, come ill, then, crops or no crops, increase or decrease, it was all the

same to him: he traced the cause of all plenty as of all disappointment and disaster reaching him through the laws of nature to some benevolent purpose of the Ruler. And ever before his eyes also he kept that spotless Figure which once walked among men on earth — that Saviour of the world whose service he was soon to enter, whose words of everlasting life he was to preach: his father's farm became as the vineyard of the parables in the Gospels, he a laborer in it.

Thus this lad was nearer the first century and yet earlier ages than the nineteenth. He knew more of prophets and apostles than modern doctors of divinity. When the long-looked-for day arrived for him to throw his arms around his father and mother and bid them good-by, he should have mounted a camel, like a youth of the Holy Land of old, and taken his solemn, tender way across the country toward Jerusalem.