

the lad's imagination like a vision out of the New Testament,—his first supper in the bare dining room of that dormitory: the single long, rough table; the coarse, frugal food; the shadows of the evening hour; at every chair a form reverently standing; the saying of the brief grace—ah, that first supper with the disciples!

Among the things he had to describe in his letter to his father and mother, this scene came last; and his final words to them were a blessing that they had made him one of this company of young men.

## VI

THE lad could not study eternally. The change from a toiling body and idle mind to an idle body and toiling mind requires time to make the latter condition unirksome. Happily there was small need to delve at learning. His brain was like that of a healthy wild animal freshly captured from nature. And as such an

animal learns to snap at flung bits of food, springing to meet them and sinking back on his haunches keen-eyed for more; so mentally he caught at the lessons prepared for him by his professors: every faculty asked only to be fed—and remained hungry after the feeding.

Of afternoons, therefore, when recitations were over and his muscles ached for exercise, he donned his old farm hat and went, stepping in his high, awkward, investigating way around the town—unaware of himself, unaware of the light-minded who often turned to smile at that great gawk in grotesque garments, with his face full of beatitudes and his pockets full of apples. For apples were beginning to come in from the frosty orchards; and the fruit dealers along the streets piled them into pyramids of temptation. It seemed a hardship to him to have to spend priceless money for a thing like apples, which had always been as cheap and plentiful as spring water. But those evening suppers in the dormitory with the disci-



ples! Even when he was filled (which was not often) he was never comforted; and one day happening upon one of those pomological pyramids, he paused, yearned, and bought the apex. It was harder not to buy than to buy. After that he fell into this fruitful vice almost diurnally; and with mortifying worldly-mindedness he would sometimes find his thoughts straying applewards while his professors were personally conducting him through Canaan or leading him dry-shod across the Red Sea. The little dealer soon learned to anticipate his approach; and as he drew up would have the requisite number ready and slide them into his pockets without a word — and without the chance of inspection. A man's candy famine attacked him also. He usually bought some intractable, resisting medium: it left him rather tired of pleasure.

So during those crude days he went strolling solemnly about the town, eating, exploring, filling with sweetmeats and filled with wonder. It was the first city

he had ever seen, the chief interior city of the state. From childhood he had longed to visit it. The thronged streets, the curious stores, the splendid residences, the flashing equipages — what a new world it was to him! But the first place he inquired his way to was the factory where he had sold his hemp. Awhile he watched the men at work, wondering whether they might not then be handling some that he had broken.

At an early date also he went to look up his dear old neighborhood schoolfellows who two years before had left him, to enter another college of the University. By inquiry he found out where they lived — in a big, handsome boarding-house on a fashionable street. He thought he had never even dreamed of anything so fine as was this house — nor had he. As he sat in the rich parlors, waiting to learn whether his friends were at home, he glanced uneasily at his shoes to see whether they might not be soiling the carpet; and he vigorously dusted himself with his breath



and hands — thus depositing on the furniture whatever dust there was to transfer.

Having been invited to come up to his friends' room, he mounted and found one of them waiting at the head of the stairs in his shirt sleeves, smoking. His greeting was hearty in its way yet betokened some surprise, a little uneasiness, condescension. David followed his host into a magnificent room with enormous windows, now raised and opening upon a veranda. Below was a garden full of old vines black with grapes and pear trees bent down with pears and beds bright with cool autumn flowers. (The lad made a note of how much money he would save on apples if he could only live in reach of those pear trees.) There was a big rumpled bed in the room; and stretched across this bed on his stomach lay a student studying and waving his heels slowly in the air. A table stood in the middle of the room: the books and papers had been scraped off to the floor; four students were seated at it playing cards and smoking. Among

them his other friend, who rose and gave him a hearty grip and resuming his seat asked what was trumps. A voice he had heard before called out to him from the table: —

"Hello, preachy! Did you find your way to the Bible College?"

Whereupon the student on the bed rolled heavily over, sat up dejectedly, and ogled him with red eyes and a sagging jaw.

"Have you matriculated?" he asked.

David did not think of the cards, and he liked the greeting of the two strangers who guyed him better than the welcome of his old friends. That hurt: he had never supposed there was anything just like it in the nature of man. But during the years since he had seen them, old times were gone, old manners changed. And was it not in the hemp fields of the father of one of them that he had meantime worked with the negroes? And is there any other country in the world where the clean laborer is so theoretically



honored and so practically despised as by the American snob of each sex?

One afternoon he went over to the courthouse and got the county clerk to show him the entry where his great-grandfather had had the deed to his church recorded. There it all was!—all written down to hold good while the world lasted: that perpetual grant of part and parcel of his land, for the use of a free school and a free church. The lad went reverently over the plain, rough speech of the mighty old pioneer, as he spoke out his purpose.

During those early days also he sought out the different churches, scrutinizing respectfully their exteriors. How many they were, and how grand nearly all! Beyond anything he had imagined. He reasoned that if the buildings were so fine, how fine must be the singing and the sermons! The unconscious assumption, the false logic here, was creditable to his heart at least—to that green trust of the young in things as they should be which becomes in time the best seasoned staff of age. He

hunted out especially the Catholic Church. His great-grandfather had founded his as free for Catholics as Protestants, but he recalled the fact that no priest had ever preached there. He felt very curious to see a priest. A synagogue in the town he could not find. He was sorry. He had a great desire to lay eyes on a synagogue—temple of that ancient faith which had flowed on its deep way across the centuries without a ripple of disturbance from the Christ. He had made up his mind that when he began to preach he would often preach especially to the Jews: the time perhaps had come when the Father, *their* Father, would reveal his Son to them also. Thus he promptly fixed in mind the sites of all the churches, because he intended in time to go to them all.

Meantime he attended his own, the size and elegance of which were a marvel; and in it especially the red velvet pulpit and the vast chandelier (he had never seen a chandelier before), blazing with stars (he had never seen illuminating gas). It



was under this chandelier that he himself soon found a seat. All the Bible students sat there who could get there, that being the choir of male voices; and before a month passed he had been taken into this choir: for a storm-like bass rolled out of him as easily as thunder out of a June cloud. Thus uneventful flowed the tenor of his student life during those several initiatory weeks: then something occurred that began to make grave history for him.

The pastor announced at service one morning that he would that day begin a series of sermons on errors in the faith and practice of the different Protestant sects; though he would also consider in time the cases of the Catholics and Jews: it would scarcely be necessary to speak of the Mohammedans and such others. He was driven to do this, he declared, and was anxious to do it, as part of the work of his brethren all over the country; which was the restoration of Apostolic Christianity to the world. He asked the espe-

cial attention of the Bible students of the University to these sermons: the first of which he then proceeded to preach.

That night the lad was absent from his place: he was seated in the church which had been riddled with logic in the morning. Just why it would be hard to say. Perhaps his motive resembled that which prompts us to visit a battle-field and count the slain. Only, not a soul of those people seemed even to have been wounded. They sang, prayed, preached, demeaned themselves generally as those who believed that *they* were the express chosen of the Lord, and greatly enjoyed the notorious fact.

The series of sermons went on: every night the lad was missing from his place—gone to see for himself and to learn more about those worldly churches which had departed from the faith once delivered to the saints, and if saved at all, then by the mercy of God and much of it.

In the history of any human soul it is impossible to grasp the first event that starts up a revolution. But perhaps the



troubles of the lad began here. His absences from Sunday night service of course attracted notice under the chandelier. His bass was missed. Another student was glad to take his place. His roommate and the several other dormitory students who had become his acquaintances, discussed with him the impropriety of these absences: they agreed that he would better stick to his own church. He gave reasons why he should follow up the pastor's demonstrations with actual visits to the others: he contended that the pastor established the fact of the errors; but that the best way to *understand* any error was to study the erring. This was all new to him, however. He had not supposed that in educating himself to preach the simple Gospel, to the end that the world might believe in Christ, he must also preach against those who believed in Christ already. Besides, no one seemed to be convinced by the pastor but those who agreed with him in advance: the other churches flourished quite the same.

He cited a sermon he had heard in one, which, to the satisfaction of all present, had riddled his own church, every word of the proof being based on Scripture: so there you were!

A little cloud came that instant between David and the students to whom he expressed these views. Some rejoined hotly at once; some maintained the cold silence which intends to speak in its own time. The next thing the lad knew was that a professor requested him to remain after class one day; and speaking with grave kindness, advised him to go regularly to his own church thereafter. The lad entered ardently into the reasons why he had gone to the others. The professor heard him through and without comment repeated his grave, kind advice.

Thereafter the lad was regularly in his own seat there — but with a certain mysterious, beautiful feeling gone. He could not have said what this feeling was, did not himself know. Only, a slight film seemed to pass before his eyes when he



looked at his professor, so that he saw him less clearly and as more remote.

One morning there was a sermon on the Catholics. David went dutifully to his professor. He said he had never been to a Catholic Church and would like to go. His professor assented cordially, evincing his pleasure in the lad's frankness. But the next Sunday morning he was in the Catholic Church again, thus for the first time missing the communion in his own. Of all the congregations of Christian believers that the lad had now visited, the Catholic impressed him as being the most solemn, reverent, and best mannered. In his own church the place did not seem to become the house of God till services began; and one morning in particular, two old farmers in the pew behind him talked in smothered tones of stock and crops, till it fairly made him homesick. The sermon of the priest, too, filled him with amazement. It weighed the claims of various Protestant sects to be reckoned as parts of the one true historic church of God. In passing,

he barely referred to the most modern of these self-constituted Protestant bodies—David's own church—and dismissed it with one blast of scorn, which seemed to strike the lad's face like a hot wind: it left it burning. But to the Episcopal Church the priest dispensed the most vitriolic criticism. And that night, carried away by the old impulse, which had grown now almost into a habit, David went to the Episcopal Church: went to number the slain. The Bishop of the diocese, as it happened, was preaching that night—preaching on the union of Christian believers. He showed how ready the Episcopal Church was for such a union if the rest would only consent: but no other church, he averred, must expect the Episcopal Church ever to surrender *one* article of its creed, namely: that it alone was descended not by historical continuity simply, but by Divine succession from the Apostles themselves. The lad walked slowly back to the dormitory that night with knit brows and a heavy heart.



A great change was coming over him. His old religious peace had been unexpectedly disturbed. He found himself in the thick of the wars of dogmatic theology. At that time and in that part of the United States these were impassioned and rancorous to a degree which even now, less than half a century later, can scarce be understood; so rapidly has developed meantime that modern spirit which is for us the tolerant transition to a yet broader future. Had Kentucky been peopled by her same people several generations earlier, the land would have run red with the blood of religious persecutions, as never were England and Scotland at their worst. So that this lad, brought in from his solemn, cloistered fields and introduced to wrangling, sarcastic, envious creeds, had already begun to feel doubtful and distressed, not knowing what to believe nor whom to follow. He had commenced by being so plastic a medium for faith, that he had tried to believe them all. Now he was in the intermediate state

of trying to ascertain which. From that state there are two and two only final ones to emerge: "I shall among them believe this one only;" or, "I shall among them believe—none." The constant discussion of *some* dogma and disproof of *some* dogma inevitably begets in a certain order of mind the temper to discuss and distrust *all* dogma.

Not over their theologies alone were the churches wrangling before the lad's distracted thoughts. If the theologies were rending religion, politics was rending the theologies. The war just ended had not brought, as the summer sermon of the Bible College professor had stated, breadth of mind for narrowness, calm for passion. Not while men are fighting their wars of conscience do they hate most, but after they have fought; and Southern and Union now hated to the bottom and nowhere else as at their prayers. David found a Presbyterian Church on one street called "Southern" and one a few blocks away called "Northern": how those breth-