

(Continued from Fourth page.)

the rooms of my desolate home, and touched reverently the common things which their dear hands had used, and found some comfort in this indulgence of my sorrow.

"But even this poor solace was taken away from me. Another fiery tempest came, sweeping away every remaining vestige of my earthly possessions, and I fled before it. On, and on, and on, still flying, still pursued, never tiring, impelled by a terror indescribable, till I know not how—I found myself in a deep gorge of a California mine. All around me lay broken fragments of rich gold-laden quartz, the very earth beneath my feet seemed formed of golden sand, and on either side of the narrow valley the mountains rose, full of treasure. But all this wealth awakened no emotion, for yonder, trickling over the rocks, was water, pure cold water! Almost frantic with joy, I rushed toward it, but fell fainting ere my lips were moistened. I did not lose consciousness, but too weak with my utmost effort to drag myself onward, there I lay, the life-giving water almost within my reach!

"At last relief came, the miners gathered to the little grass plot not far away to eat their noonday meal. They seated themselves on the grass, made tables of the broken rocks, and spread out their bountiful repast. How delicious their food looked! I had not seen so much at one time for months. How I longed for the very crumbs that fell from their hands, yet I could not ask. It was not pride, but despair. All the ungrateful past of my life seemed to come up before me, the food I had carelessly wasted, or carelessly received, unmindful of the Giver. I never was hungry till this famine began, and now it seemed impossible for me ever to be fed. "Cursed with a curse" for my ingratitude and robbery of God! Oh, the thought was agony! A deep groan escaped my lips and discovered me to the miners. One brought me a cup of water, and others gave me food. What a luxury was that cold water! How delicious was that coarse but wholesome food! I ate and drank like the famished creature that I was, till fully satisfied, and my kind friends returned to finish their own repast, leaving me lying on the soft grass with a heart full of praise and thanksgiving.

"The miners were rough men, of many nationalities. Irish, Germans, Chinese, and profane, God-defying Americans, worked side by side. And as they sat in groups, enjoying their noonday meal, I listened to their fearful profanity till my soul was sick within me. There I lay all that long summer afternoon, living over the years of my past prosperous life, bemoaning my selfishness and thinking how little I had ever done to send the gospel to such as the men in the mines.

"But all the future was dead within me. What could a poor, bereaved, famine-stricken man do, only to pay for pardon and for death?

"At last the day was ended, and two of the kind miners, half led, half carried me to their camp, shared their evening meal and their scanty tent with me. My heart was full of gratitude, and, before seeking repose, I knelt to thank Him who had given such unexpected deliverance from famine and death.

"Scarcely had I lain down, when one of the men touched me on the shoulder, saying: "Stranger, if you can pray won't you come and see a sick man just over here?"

"I rose and followed him, and there in a dirty tent, lay, and had lain, for weeks, tossing with fever and delirium, my once happy, innocent boy, my long-lost Henry. The fever had left him and now, pale and exhausted, he seemed only waiting for the last heart-throb of a wasted life. Some of you, my friends, have known of this great sorrow which has lain on my heart for years, and may imagine the meeting and the sad recital I had to make. He said little of himself till I asked him of his spiritual state—his preparation for an exchange of worlds. An expression of anguish passed over his face: 'I am not ready—not prepared,' he exclaimed, 'All is lost, lost! Don't interrupt me,' he continued, as I was about to speak. 'I know what you would say. I know the way but have lost the desire to walk there. I feel I am forever lost! Two years ago, he continued, 'there came to the mines a young Christian minister, full of life and enthusiasm, yet so gentle

and blameless, so Christ-like that we must love him. He had a wonderful power over all, even the roughest, and I loved him as a brother. He remained with us a year preaching, talking and praying till profanity was banished, and many seemed almost persuaded. His second year's labors were soon begun when news came from the Home Missionary Society, saying their treasury was empty, and they did not know how they would be before they would be able to pay what remained due on his salary, and there were so many feeble churches needing a little help, so many new settlements to be occupied, that they could not continue his commission another year. His heart was full of grief. He loved those rough men. He would have gladly worked with his hands as did Paul but had not the strength, nor could he live without the salary. The miners might have paid it, but they would not; they liked him, but he was a restraint upon them, and he left us. Father I thought of home then, of those rich farms those bountiful harvests, and those men and women professing so much love to Christ, yet neglecting to fully support their own minister, and doing nothing to give those poor miners the Bread of Life. I might have been a Christian if young Hurd had remained here but when he went away, I was angry with Christians, with God and myself. I went back to my old ways, and now I cannot repent."

"My poor boy sank back on his pillow exhausted; a deadly pallor overspread his face, his breath grew shorter and shorter, and in my agony at seeing him dying thus without hope, I uttered a deep groan and awoke.

"At first I could scarcely believe it possible that all I had passed through was but a dream, and then such a flood of contending emotions poured in upon my soul as almost overpowered me. I was indeed like one rescued from deep misery, and put in possession of every needful blessing. How happy I was, how grateful for the sparing mercy of my Heavenly Father! and never did I receive any worldly good with half the satisfaction that it gave me to know that God would accept a thank offering at my hands. I was in haste to make the offering, for I feared the old lifelong selfishness would come back to trouble me; and I could see that my wife had the same fear.

"But the offering was made, gladly and in good faith, by us both. During the few days that have intervened since then, I have thoroughly investigated the subject of tithing and it seems so reasonable, so just, indeed so very little to offer in return for our many mercies, that I only wonder I, a professedly Christian man could so long have been blind to my duty and privilege.

"Just think of it year after year, I have ploughed my field and sowed the seed, utterly powerless to make one single seed germinate. I have planted orchards, and could neither make the tree live nor the fruit grow. And every season God has given the sunshine and dew, and the copious rain. And more wonderful still, He has constantly carried on that chemical process by which each plant has appropriated to itself the elements it needed for growth and perfection. Then, when the rich harvests have been gathered in, I have not brought to God a thank-offering of even one-twentieth of the fruit of the earth—and the little which I doled out, I have called *benevolence*.

"And all these years men, like the miners in my dream, men from the corrupt nations of the Old World whom God has sent to us for light; and our people, somebody's sons, every one of them, have been going down to eternal death untaught and unwarned; while I, Cainlike, have said in my heart, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Oh my brethren! God would be entirely just if he were to visit upon me all the horrors of that fearful dream.

"Yet He is long-suffering, and abundant in mercy, and His fearful denunciation is followed by the comforting words: 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house and prove me now herewith, said the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it!' 'I cannot recall the past; I can only pray God to forgive it but most gladly for the future, do I, from the depth of a grateful heart, adopt Jacob's vow: Of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.'

A solemn hush pervaded that large assembly when Mr. Penniman ceased speaking, broken, at length, by Mr. Goodman's voice in prayer. A hymn was then sung, and the meeting closed.—Chicago Advance.

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