

**GOLDENROD.**

Like tattered tents the cornstalks idly flap  
As on the hills the golden legions blaze  
In the soft radiance of the autumn days;  
A glowing tunic doth each stalk enwrap  
As if with Fortunatus' magic cap  
The heights were crowded the wand'rer  
to amaze;  
The bright battalions shine in sunset's  
rays,  
The while one lists the coy woodpecker's  
tap.  
O Goldenrod! with garden flowers you  
vie,  
Although with rose nor lily you com-  
pare;  
Your blossoms through the wildwood  
thickly lie  
As you give forth your golden beauty  
where  
No gaudy sisterhood of flowers is nigh—  
You gild waste places and adorn the pas-  
tures bare!  
—Dexter Smith, in Boston Transcript.

**Muscular Christianity**

By John Smith Tassin.

Copyrighted, 1908, by The Authors Pub. Co.

"Brethren," began the preacher, when all had been assembled, "I feel like Jacob did after he had wrestled all night with an angel for a sight of the Almighty."

"Amen!" bawled the blacksmith at the head of the congregation, and his eyes roved ceaselessly as if in quest of someone.

"Only my fight has been with the powers of darkness; and I bear about me the stains of the soot, and the scars of the fire and the brimstone of that terrible place."

"Amen!" bellowed the lusty fellow in a louder voice, and his eyes continued their fruitless search.

"Brethren, let us pray and thank the Lord for the victory He hath granted over Satan in this benighted spot."

And the blacksmith prayed with all the fervor of a convert on the mourners' bench. His voice was like the echo of thunder in the mountains, peal redoubling upon peal, and crash after crash deflected from the many hills, until the little building fairly shook with its reverberations. Meanwhile he craned his neck and almost stood up in vain endeavor to single out somebody.

"Guess, yo're lookin' fo' de docto', ain't yo'?" gibed an irreverent youth behind him.

The man glared at him but did not answer.

Doctor Ben was there. He chuckled despite the sanctity of the place, and there was a mischievous twinkle in his eyes and a sly smile about the corners of his mouth. His face was as a mask, behind which all manner of droll thought held high carnival. Bill Jenkins caught sight of him, whereupon the doctor made the sage reflection that it would be best for him to have his horse shod by another blacksmith for some time to come. At this his face fell, for the prospect was not inviting. Bill Jenkins being acknowledged the best horseshoer within miles of the neighborhood.

The doctor's irresistible longing for little fun was responsible for the blacksmith's discomfiture. This is the way it came about:

"No preacher-man ain't agoin' t' preach in dis 'ere town; no, siree, not ef I knows m'self."

The group about the anvil stood stock still, and burly Bill Jenkins straightened himself to his full height. The "help" paused with the horse's hoof still in the lap of his leathern apron.

Standing with folded arms and with his back to the table, on which were his artisan's tools, was a figure so quizzically queer that it was sure to set you laughing. It was Doctor Ben; short and thin, with red hair, red beard, and red spots on his face which some would call freckles. He was stoop-shouldered and hollow-chested, and had a cast of countenance so comical that you could think of him only as a king's jester.

The blacksmith was so angry that he fairly bit his words.

"See 'ere, doc," he cried, and his forearm sawed the air, "we ha' spliced ou' young uns, an' buried ou' dead in



"No preacher-man ain't agoin' t' preach in dis 'ere town."

dese 'ere cross-roads fo' nigh on to thirty years withouten interfe'ence o' no pa'son-man; an' we ain't agoin' t' pay no fees now fo' w'at de good Gawd grants free."

"Oh, I dunno as to that," said the little doctor. "I hearn our pa'son 'low that he intended holdin' a prey'r-meetin' here to-night."

"Dang yo' pa'son!" replied the other. And he bared his arm, on which the muscles stood out like cords of steel.

The bellows heaved; the fire leaped up; the iron became a cherry red; then white scales formed upon it; the anvil rang, and a shower of sparks fell about the place.

The little doctor chuckled knowingly. It was a way he had whenever highly amused, which must have been most of the time, for his thoughts were a perennial fountain of fun, bubbling up within him.

It is not to be concealed that Doctor Ben—a recent convert, by the way, and one whose motives were not always easy to fathom—had been at the parsonage that very morning.

He found his friend expatiating on the glory of such as were called upon to contend with the heathen in foreign parts, thereby securing for themselves the crown of martyrdom; while he bitterly lamented the fact that his own ministry lay in a civilized land, where nothing ever happened, and the only distinction possible was that of patience and long suffering.

"Oh, I dunno as to that," remarked the little doctor smiling blandly. "Now there is Rowden cross-roads, for instance, which, while not exactly pagan, is about as tough a place as one would wish to run gainst. They ain't had a pa'son there inside of thirty years; not since the last one was stoned out of the settlement. It ought to be a purty good field fo' the sowing



The spectators gathered around of the Gospel, seein' 's how the land has lain fallow so long."

"Enough!" cried the parson, smiling. "I shall preach there this very night."

The doctor stopped again at the parsonage on his way home, after his visit to the blacksmith shop. He found the preacher, like another Paul, working in his garden, that he might not be a burden to his charge. He leaned on his hoe and mopped his perspiring face with a colored cotton handkerchief as the doctor came up.

"Hello, pa'son! still bent on preachin' at Rowden to-night?"

"If the Lord spare me, brother, I shall most assuredly try to do His work 't that part of His vineyard."

"Wa'al, it looks as if you might find opposition."

"We have to expect to wrestle with Sataa sometimes, brother."

"Yes, but it looks as if Sataa do be powerful strong in this instance."

"How so? Was it himself you saw in the flesh?"

"It was himself that I saw in the flesh of Bill Jenkins, the blacksmith at Rowden. He's a heap sight heavier man 'n you be, pa'son, an' he says that you'll have him to lick before you preach in Rowden to-night. So long, pa'son."

The little doctor chuckled. He knew his men and that they were game. "Goin' to be a little affair down to Rowden to-night; better be there about sundown," he shouted to more than one acquaintance as he drove past.

True to his word, Parson Jones rode into Rowden about dusk and hitched his horse at the rack near the smithy, which at that hour resembled a fiery pit. The interior was lit up by the sullen glow of the forge as with an evil eye, and without was the gathering gloom.

The preacher was long and lank, and in his clerical clothes was a sight to see. They hung about him as loosely as the limp rags flap about a scarecrow in the fields.

The blacksmith came out muttering inaudibly.

"Are you he who would dare interfere with the preaching of the Word of God in this place?" asked the parson, as he calmly removed his coat.

"No preacher-man ain't agoin' t' preach in dis 'ere town," sputtered the blacksmith, drawing off his leathern apron and wiping his hands upon it.

"No, siree! not ef I—"

The preacher's hand descended upon his mouth, cutting short the sentence.

Then ensued a lively scuffle, during which the spectators hastily gathered around the two combatants. The blacksmith directed a well-aimed blow with all his force; but the wiry parson simply turned sideways, and it went past him like a blade, which unexpected ruse sent his heavy antagonist sprawling face foremost, in the dust. He soon had him covered and was pounding vigorously.

"I am going to preach in this town to-night."

"Not ef I—"

Again the blows hailed thick and fast.

"Let up, there! Enough! Stop, stop!"

"I am going to preach and want you to attend in the front pew and to lead in all the responses."

"I will, I will! Oh! Oh! Stop!" pleaded the blacksmith.

Somebody handed the minister his coat, and he brushed the dust from his trousers as well as possible. And straight from the field of battle all marched to the little town meeting-house, where we find them at the opening of this story.

**THE MIDLAND CONCERT COMPANY**

**AT PILGER'S OPERA HOUSE**

**SATURDAY JANUARY 16**

Northern Milling Company  
D. C. GROW, Manager.  
South Side Public Square,  
LOUP CITY, NEBRASKA.  
We keep the best flour on the market, exchange flour and feed for wheat, handle buckwheat flour, keep a good supply of ground feed and give all customers a square deal. Come and see us for business that carries with it Satisfaction.

**JANUARY CLEARING SALE**

We have a few Odd Suits, Overcoats and Ladies Jackets, one or two of each size left from the regular stock. These Suits and Overcoats are in our way and we have decided to let them go at very low prices.

Also fifty pair of Heavy Winter Pants, Heavy Underwear; Flannel Shirts, Caps, Duck Coats, Mittens, Overshoes and Felt Boots.

We've got to get room for our Spring Stock, so now is your time, don't miss it. If you do it's your fault, not ours.

Respectfully,  
**Johnson, Lorentz, & Co.**  
LOUP CITY, NEB.

**Grand Island GRANITE AND MARBLE WORKS.**

IRA T. PAINE & CO.  
**MONUMENTS.**

MARBLE GRANITE AND ALL KINDS OF CEMETERY WORK.

BEST OF MATERIAL. LOWEST PRICES FOR GOOD work. See us or write to us before giving an order.  
GRAND ISLAND, NEB.

**25 CENTS.**

—WILL BUY THE—  
**Weekly State Journal**  
**ONE YEAR**

The Weekly Journal has no equal in the west as a reliable newspaper.

TELEGRAPHIC NEWS OF THE WORLD AND NEBRASKA IN PARTICULAR.....

**RELIABLE MARKET PAGE.**

Send twenty-five cents in stamps and try it for one year, 52 issues

**WEEKLY STATE JOURNAL**  
Lincoln, Nebraska.