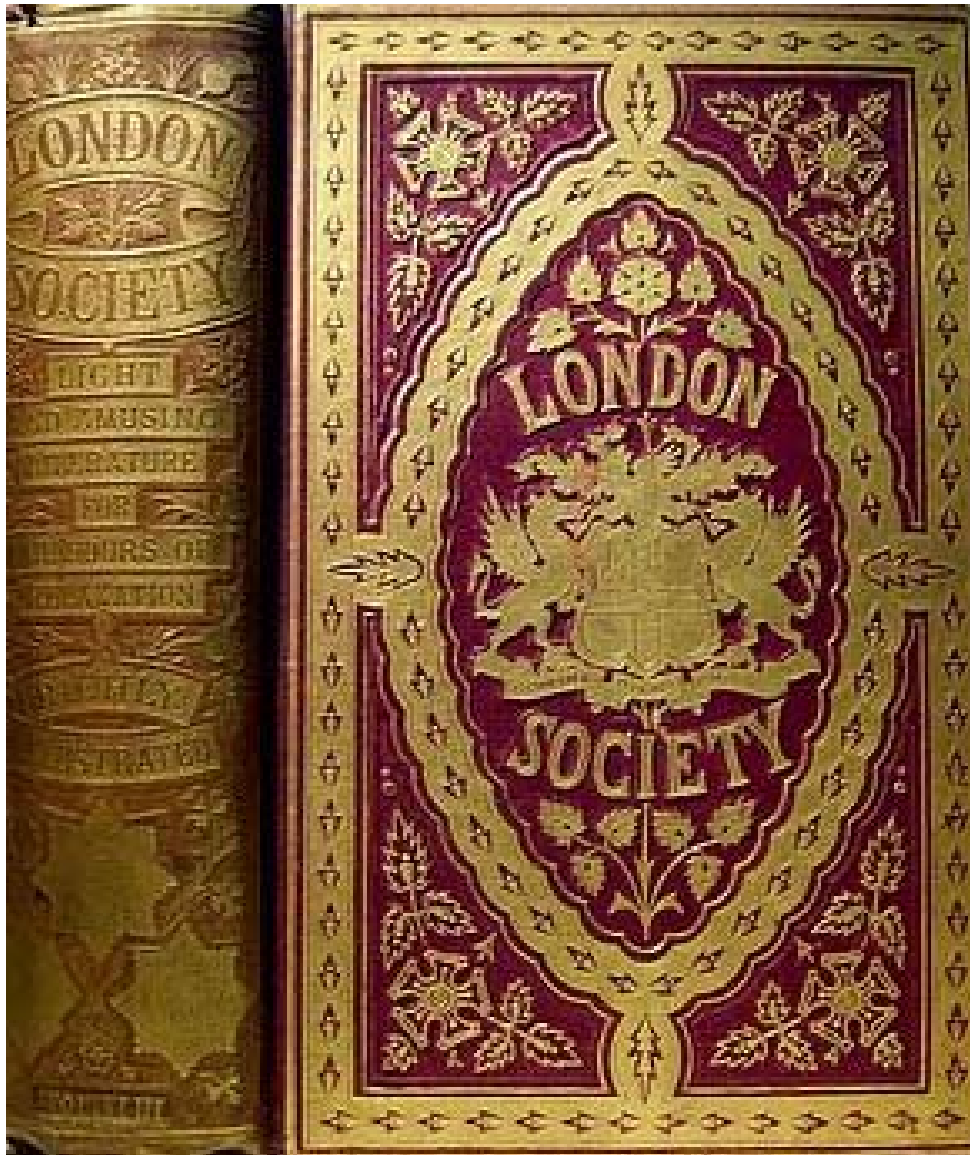


The Parson of Jackman's Gulch

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THE PARSON OF JACKMAN'S GULCH

He was known in the Gulch as the Reverend Elias B. Hopkins, but it was generally understood that the title was an honorary one, extorted by his many eminent qualities, and not borne out by any legal claim which he could adduce.

"The Parson" was another of his sobriquets, which was sufficiently distinctive in a land where the flock was scattered and the shepherds few. To do him justice, he never pretended to have received any preliminary training for the ministry, or any orthodox qualification to practise it. "We're all working in the claim of the Lord," he remarked one day, "and it don't matter a cent whether we're hired for the job or whether we waltzes in on our own account," a piece of rough imagery which appealed directly to the instincts of Jackman's Gulch.

It is quite certain that during the first few months his presence had a marked effect in diminishing the excessive use both of strong drinks and of stronger adjectives which had been characteristic of the little mining settlement.

Under his tuition, men began to understand that the resources of their native language were less limited than they had supposed, and that it was possible to convey their impressions with accuracy without the aid of a gaudy halo of profanity.

We were certainly in need of a regenerator at Jackman's Gulch about the beginning of '53. Times were flush then over the whole colony, but nowhere flusher than there. Our material prosperity had had a bad effect upon our morals.

The camp was a small one, lying rather better than a hundred and twenty miles to the north of Ballarat, at a spot where a mountain torrent finds its way down a rugged ravine on its way to join the Arrowsmith River. History does not relate who the original Jackman may have been, but at the time I speak of the camp it contained a hundred or so adults, many of whom were men who had sought an asylum there after making more civilised mining centres too hot to

hold them. They were a rough, murderous crew, hardly leavened by the few respectable members of society who were scattered among them.

Communication between Jackman's Gulch and the outside world was difficult and uncertain. A portion of the bush between it and Ballarat was infested by a redoubtable outlaw named Conky Jim, who, with a small band as desperate as himself, made travelling a dangerous matter.

It was customary, therefore, at the Gulch, to store up the dust and nuggets obtained from the mines in a special store, each man's share being placed in a separate bag on which his name was marked. A trusty man, named Woburn, was deputed to watch over this primitive bank.

When the amount deposited became considerable, a waggon was hired, and the whole treasure was conveyed to Ballarat, guarded by the police and by a certain number of miners, who took it in turn to perform the office. Once in Ballarat, it was forwarded on to Melbourne by the regular gold waggons.

By this plan the gold was often kept for months in the Gulch before being despatched, but Conky Jim was effectually checkmated, as the escort party were far too strong for him and his gang. He appeared, at the time of which I write, to have forsaken his haunts in disgust, and the road could be traversed by small parties with impunity.

Comparative order used to reign during the daytime at Jackman's Gulch, for the majority of the inhabitants were out with crowbar and pick among the quartz ledges, or washing clay and sand in their cradles by the banks of the little stream. As the sun sank down, however, the claims were gradually deserted, and their unkempt owners, clay-bespattered and shaggy, came lounging into camp, ripe for any form of mischief.

Their first visit was to Woburn's gold store, where their clean-up of the day was duly deposited, the amount being entered in the storekeeper's book, and each miner retaining enough to cover his evening's expenses. After that, all restraint was at an end, and each set to

work to get rid of his surplus dust with the greatest rapidity possible. The focus of dissipation was the rough bar, formed by a couple of hogsheads spanned by planks, which was dignified by the name of the "Britannia Drinking Saloon."

Here Nat Adams, the burly bar-keeper, dispensed bad whisky at the rate of two shillings a noggin, or a guinea a bottle, while his brother Ben acted as croupier in a rude wooden shanty behind, which had been converted into a gambling hell, and was crowded every night. There had been a third brother, but an unfortunate misunderstanding with a customer had shortened his existence.

"He was too soft to live long," his brother Nathaniel feelingly observed, on the occasion of his funeral. "Many's the time I've said to him, 'If you're arguin' a pint with a stranger, you should always draw first, then argue, and then shoot, if you judge that he's on the shoot.' Bill was too purlite.

He must needs argue first and draw after, when he might just as well have kivered his man before talkin' it over with him. This amiable weakness of the deceased Bill was a blow to the firm of Adams, which became so short-handed that the concern could hardly be worked without the admission of a partner, which would mean a considerable decrease in the profits.

Nat Adams had had a roadside shanty in the Gulch before the discovery of gold, and might, therefore, claim to be the oldest inhabitant.

These keepers of shanties were a peculiar race, and at the cost of a digression it may be interesting to explain how they managed to amass considerable sums of money in a land where travellers were few and far between. It was the custom of the "bushmen," i.e., bullock-drivers, sheep tenders, and the other white hands who worked on the sheep-runs up country, to sign articles by which they agreed to serve their master for one, two, or three years at so much per year and certain daily rations.

Liquor was never included in this agreement, and the men remained, per force, total abstainers during the whole time. The money was paid in a lump sum at the end of the

engagement. When that day came round, Jimmy, the stockman, would come slouching into his master's office, cabbage-tree hat in hand.

"Morning, master!" Jimmy would say. "My time's up. I guess I'll draw my cheque and ride down to town."

"You'll come back, Jimmy?"

"Yes, I'll come back. Maybe I'll be away three weeks, maybe a month. I want some clothes, master, and my bloomin' boots are well-nigh off my feet."

"How much, Jimmy?" asks his master, taking up his pen.

"There's sixty pound screw," Jimmy answers thoughtfully; "and you mind, master, last March, when the brindled bull broke out o' the paddock. Two pound you promised me then. And a pound at the dipping. And a pound when Millar's sheep got mixed with ourn;" and so he goes on, for bushmen can seldom write, but they have memories which nothing escapes.

His master writes the cheque and hands it across the table. "Don't get on the drink, Jimmy," he says.

"No fear of that, master," and the stockman slips the cheque into his leather pouch, and within an hour he is ambling off upon his long-limbed horse on his hundred-mile journey to town.

Now Jimmy has to pass some six or eight of the above-mentioned roadside shanties in his day's ride, and experience has taught him that if he once breaks his accustomed total abstinence, the unwonted stimulant has an overpowering effect upon his brain.

Jimmy shakes his head warily as he determines that no earthly consideration will induce him to partake of any liquor until his business is over. His only chance is to avoid temptation; so, knowing that there is the first of these houses some half-mile ahead, he plunges into a byepath through the bush which will lead him out at the other side.

Jimmy is riding resolutely along this narrow path, congratulating himself upon a danger escaped, when he becomes aware of a sunburned, black-bearded man who is leaning unconcernedly against a tree beside the track.

This is none other than the shanty-keeper, who, having observed Jimmy's manoeuvre in the distance, has taken a short cut through the bush in order to intercept him.

"Morning, Jimmy!" he cries, as the horseman comes up to him.

"Morning, mate; morning!"

"Where are ye off to to-day then?"

"Off to town," says Jimmy sturdily.

"No, now—are you though? You'll have bully times down there for a bit. Come round and have a drink at my place. Just by way of luck."

"No," says Jimmy, "I don't want a drink."

"Just a little damp."

"I tell ye I don't want one," says the stockman angrily.

"Well, ye needn't be so darned short about it. It's nothin' to me whether you drinks or not. Good mornin'."

"Good mornin'," says Jimmy, and has ridden on about twenty yards when he hears the other calling on him to stop.

"See here, Jimmy!" he says, overtaking him again. "If you'll do me a kindness when you're up in town I'd be obliged."

"What is it?"

"It's a letter, Jim, as I wants posted. It's an important one too, an' I wouldn't trust it with every one; but I knows you, and if you'll take charge on it it'll be a powerful weight off my mind."

"Give it here," Jimmy says laconically.

"I hain't got it here. It's round in my caboose. Come round for it with me. It ain't more'n quarter of a mile."

Jimmy consents reluctantly. When they reach the tumble-down hut the keeper asks him cheerily to dismount and to come in.

"Give me the letter," says Jimmy.

"It ain't altogether wrote yet, but you sit down here for a minute and it'll be right," and so the stockman is beguiled into the shanty.

At last the letter is ready and handed over. "Now, Jimmy," says the keeper, "one drink at my expense before you go."

"Not a taste," says Jimmy.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" the other says in an aggrieved tone. "You're too damned proud to drink with a poor cove like me. Here—give us

back that letter. I'm cursed if I'll accept a favour from a man whose too almighty big to have a drink with me."

"Well, well, mate, don't turn rusty," says Jim. "Give us one drink an' I'm off."

The keeper pours out about half a pannikin of raw rum and hands it to the bushman. The moment he smells the old familiar smell his longing for it returns, and he swigs it off at a gulp. His eyes shine more brightly and his face becomes flushed. The keeper watches him narrowly. "You can go now, Jim," he says.

"Steady, mate, steady," says the bushman. "I'm as good a man as you. If you stand a drink I can stand one too, I suppose." So the pannikin is replenished, and Jimmy's eyes shine brighter still.

"Now, Jimmy, one last drink for the good of the house," says the keeper, "and then it's time you were off." The stockman has a third gulp from the pannikin, and with it all his scruples and good resolutions vanish for ever.

"Look here," he says somewhat huskily, taking his cheque out of his pouch. "You take this, mate. Whoever comes along this road, ask 'em what they'll have, and tell them it's my shout. Let me know when the money's done."

So Jimmy abandons the idea of ever getting to town, and for three weeks or a month he lies about the shanty in a state of extreme drunkenness, and reduces every wayfarer upon the road to the same condition. At last one fine morning the keeper comes to him.

"The coin's done, Jimmy," he says; "it's about time you made some more." So Jimmy has a good wash to sober him, straps his blanket and his billy to his back, and rides off through the bush to the sheeprun, where he has another year of sobriety, terminating in another month of intoxication.

All this, though typical of the happy-go-lucky manners of the inhabitants, has no direct bearing upon Jackman's Gulch, so we must return to that Arcadian settlement.

Additions to the population there were not numerous, and such as came about the time of which I speak were even rougher and fiercer than the original inhabitants. In particular, there came a brace of ruffians named Phillips and

Maule, who rode into camp one day, and started a claim upon the other side of the stream. They outgulched the Gulch in the virulence and fluency of their blasphemy, in the truculence of their speech and manner, and in their reckless disregard of all social laws.

They claimed to have come from Bendigo, and there were some amongst us who wished that the redoubted Conky Jim was on the track once more, as long as he would close it to such visitors as these. After their arrival the nightly proceedings at the Britannia bar and at the gambling hell behind it became more riotous than ever.

Violent quarrels, frequently ending in bloodshed, were of constant occurrence. The more peaceable frequenters of the bar began to talk seriously of lynching the two strangers who were the principal promoters of disorder. Things were in this unsatisfactory condition when our evangelist, Elias B. Hopkins, came limping into the camp, travel-stained and footsore, with his spade strapped across his back, and his Bible in the pocket of his moleskin jacket.

His presence was hardly noticed at first, so insignificant was the man. His manner was quiet and unobtrusive, his face pale, and his figure fragile. On better acquaintance, however, there was a squareness and firmness about his clean-shaven lower jaw, and an intelligence in his widely-opened blue eyes, which marked him as a man of character.

He erected a small hut for himself, and started a claim close to that occupied by the two strangers who had preceded him. This claim was chosen with a ludicrous disregard for all practical laws of mining, and at once stamped the newcomer as being a green hand at his work.

It was piteous to observe him every morning as we passed to our work, digging and delving with the greatest industry, but, as we knew well, without the smallest possibility of any result.

He would pause for a moment as we went by, wipe his pale face with his bandanna handkerchief, and shout out to us a cordial morning greeting, and then fall to again with redoubled energy. By degrees we got into the way of making a half-pitying, half-contemptuous

inquiry as to how he got on. "I hain't struck it yet, boys," he would answer cheerily, leaning on his spade, "but the bedrock lies deep just hereabouts, and I reckon we'll get among the pay gravel to-day." Day after day he returned the same reply with unvarying confidence and cheerfulness.

It was not long before he began to show us the stuff that was in him. One night the proceedings were unusually violent at the drinking saloon. A rich pocket had been struck during the day, and the striker was standing treat in a lavish and promiscuous fashion which had reduced three parts of the settlement to a state of wild intoxication.

A crowd of drunken idlers stood or lay about the bar, cursing, swearing, shouting, dancing, and here and there firing their pistols into the air out of pure wantonness. From the interior of the shanty behind there came a similar chorus. Maule, Phillips, and the roughs who followed them were in the ascendant, and all order and decency was swept away.

Suddenly, amid this tumult of oaths and drunken cries, men became conscious of a quiet monotone which underlay all other sounds and obtruded itself at every pause in the uproar.

Gradually first one man and then another paused to listen, until there was a general cessation of the hubbub, and every eye was turned in the direction whence this quiet stream of words flowed. There, mounted upon a barrel, was Elias B. Hopkins, the newest of the inhabitants of Jackman's Gulch, with a good-humoured smile upon his resolute face.

He held an open Bible in his hand, and was reading aloud a passage taken at random—an extract from the Apocalypse, if I remember right. The words were entirely irrelevant and without the smallest bearing upon the scene before him, but he plodded on with great unction, waving his left hand slowly to the cadence of his words.

There was a general shout of laughter and applause at this apparition, and Jackman's Gulch gathered round the barrel approvingly, under the impression that this was some ornate joke, and that they were about to be treated to some mock sermon or parody of the chapter

read. When, however, the reader, having finished the chapter, placidly commenced another, and having finished that rippled on into another one, the revellers came to the conclusion that the joke was somewhat too long-winded.

The commencement of yet another chapter confirmed this opinion, and an angry chorus of shouts and cries, with suggestions as to gagging the reader or knocking him off the barrel, rose from every side. In spite of roars and hoots, however, Elias B. Hopkins plodded away at the Apocalypse with the same serene countenance, looking as ineffably contented as though the babel around him were the most gratifying applause.

Before long an occasional boot pattered against the barrel or whistled past our parson's head; but here some of the more orderly of the inhabitants interfered in favour of peace and order, aided curiously enough by the aforementioned Maule and Phillips, who warmly espoused the cause of the little Scripture reader.

"The little cus has got grit in him," the latter explained, rearing his bulky red-shirted form between the crowd and the object of its anger. "His ways ain't our ways, and we're all welcome to our opinions, and to sling them round from barrels or otherwise if so minded. What I says and Bill says is, that when it comes to slingin' boots instead o' words it's too steep by half, an' if this man's wronged we'll chip in an' see him righted." This oratorical effort had the effect of checking the more active signs of disapproval, and the party of disorder attempted to settle down once more to their carouse, and to ignore the shower of Scripture which was poured upon them. The attempt was hopeless. The drunken portion fell asleep under the drowsy refrain, and the others, with many a sullen glance at the imperturbable reader, slouched off to their huts, leaving him still perched upon the barrel. Finding himself alone with the more orderly of the spectators, the little man rose, closed his book, after methodically marking with a lead pencil the exact spot at which he stopped, and descended from his perch. "To-morrow night, boys," he remarked in his quiet voice, "the reading will commence at the 9th verse of the

15th chapter of the Apocalypse," with which piece of information, disregarding our congratulations, he walked away with the air of a man who has performed an obvious duty.

We found that his parting words were no empty threat. Hardly had the crowd begun to assemble next night before he appeared once more upon the barrel and began to read with the same monotonous vigour, tripping over words! muddling up sentences, but still boring along through chapter after chapter.

Laughter, threats, chaff—every weapon short of actual violence—was used to deter him, but all with the same want of success. Soon it was found that there was a method in his proceedings. When silence reigned, or when the conversation was of an innocent nature, the reading ceased.

A single word of blasphemy, however, set it going again, and it would ramble on for a quarter of an hour or so, when it stopped, only to be renewed upon similar provocation. The reading was pretty continuous during that second night, for the language of the opposition was still considerably free. At least it was an improvement upon the night before.

For more than a month Elias B. Hopkins carried on this campaign. There he would sit, night after night, with the open book upon his knee, and at the slightest provocation off he would go, like a musical box when the spring is touched.

The monotonous drawl became unendurable, but it could only be avoided by conforming to the parson's code. A chronic swearer came to be looked upon with disfavour by the community, since the punishment of his transgression fell upon all. At the end of a fortnight the reader was silent more than half the time, and at the end of the month his position was a sinecure.

Never was a moral revolution brought about more rapidly and more completely. Our parson carried his principle into private life. I have seen him, on hearing an unguarded word from some worker in the gulches, rush across,

Bible in hand, and perching himself upon the heap of red clay which surmounted the offender's claim, drawl through the genealogical

tree at the commencement of the New Testament in a most earnest and impressive manner, as though it were especially appropriate to the occasion.

In time, an oath became a rare thing amongst us. Drunkenness was on the wane too. Casual travellers passing through the Gulch used to marvel at our state of grace, and rumours of it went as far as Ballarat, and excited much comment therein.

There were points about our evangelist which made him especially fitted for the work which he had undertaken. A man entirely without redeeming vices would have had no common basis on which to work, and no means of gaining the sympathy of his flock.

As we came to know Elias B. Hopkins better, we discovered that in spite of his piety there was a leaven of old Adam in him, and that he had certainly known unregenerate days. He was no teetotaler. On the contrary, he could choose his liquor with discrimination, and lower it in an able manner. He played a masterly hand at poker, and there were few who could touch him at "cut-throat euchre."

He and the two ex-ruffians, Phillips and Maule, used to play for hours in perfect harmony, except when the fall of the cards elicited an oath from one of his companions. At the first of these offences the parson would put on a pained smile, and gaze reproachfully at the culprit.

At the second he would reach for his Bible, and the game was over for the evening. He showed us he was a good revolver shot too, for when we were practising at an empty brandy bottle outside Adams' bar, he took up a friend's pistol and hit it plumb in the centre at twenty-four paces. There were few things he took up that he could not make a show at apparently, except gold-digging, and at that he was the veriest duffer alive.

It was pitiful to see the little canvas bag, with his name printed across it, lying placid and empty upon the shelf at Woburn's store, while all the other bags were increasing daily, and some had assumed quite a portly rotundity of form, for the weeks were slipping by, and it was almost time for the gold-train to start off for

Ballarat. We reckoned that the amount which we had stored at the time represented the greatest sum which had ever been taken by a single convoy out of Jackman's Gulch.

Although Elias B. Hopkins appeared to derive a certain quiet satisfaction from the wonderful change which he had effected in the camp, his joy was not yet rounded and complete. There was one thing for which he still yearned. He opened his heart to us about it one evening.

"We'd have a blessing on the camp, boys," he said, "if we only had a service o' some sort on the Lord's day. It's a temptin' o' Providence to go on in this way without takin' any notice of it, except that maybe there's more whisky drunk and more card playin' than on any other day."

"We hain't got no parson," objected one of the crowd.

"Ye fool!" growled another, "hain't we got a man as is worth any three parsons, and can splash texts around like clay out o' a cradle. What more d'ye want?"

"We hain't got no church!" urged the same dissident.

"Have it in the open air," one suggested.

"Or in Woburn's store," said another.

"Or in Adams' saloon."

The last proposal was received with a buzz of approval, which showed that it was considered the most appropriate locality.

Adams' saloon was a substantial wooden building in the rear of the bar, which was used partly for storing liquor and partly for a gambling saloon. It was strongly built of rough-hewn logs, the proprietor rightly judging, in the unregenerate days of Jackman's Gulch, that hogsheads of brandy and rum were commodities which had best be secured under lock and key.

A strong door opened into each end of the saloon, and the interior was spacious enough, when the table and lumber were cleared away, to accommodate the whole population. The spirit barrels were heaped together at one end by their owner, so as to make a very fair imitation of a pulpit.

At first the Gulch took but a mild interest in the proceedings, but when it became known that Elias B. Hopkins intended, after

reading the service, to address the audience, the settlement began to warm up to the occasion. A real sermon was a novelty to all of them, and one coming from their own parson was additionally so. Rumour announced that it would be interspersed with local hits, and that the moral would be pointed by pungent personalities.

Men began to fear that they would be unable to gain seats, and many applications were made to the brothers Adams. It was only when conclusively shown that the saloon could contain them all with a margin that the camp settled down into calm expectancy.

It was as well that the building was of such a size, for the assembly upon the Sunday morning was the largest which had ever occurred in the annals of Jackman's Gulch. At first it was thought that the whole population was present, but a little reflection showed that this was not so.

Maule and Phillips had gone on a prospecting journey among the hills, and had not returned as yet, and Woburn, the gold-keeper, was unable to leave his store. Having a very large quantity of the precious metal under his charge, he stuck to his post, feeling that the responsibility was too great to trifle with.

With these three exceptions the whole of the Gulch, with clean red shirts, and such other additions to their toilet as the occasion demanded, sauntered in a straggling line along the clayey pathway which led up to the saloon.

The interior of the building had been provided with rough benches, and the parson, with his quiet good-humoured smile, was standing at the door to welcome them. "Good morning, boys," he cried cheerily, as each group came lounging up. "Pass in; pass in. You'll find this is as good a morning's work as any you've done. Leave your pistols in this barrel outside the door as you pass; you can pick them out as you come out again, but it isn't the thing to carry weapons into the house of peace."

His request was good-humouredly complied with, and before the last of the congregation filed in, there was a strange assortment of knives and firearms in this depository. When all had assembled, the doors were shut, and the service began—the first and

the last which was ever performed at Jackman's Gulch.

The weather was sultry and the room close, yet the miners listened with exemplary patience. There was a sense of novelty in the situation which had its attractions. To some it was entirely new, others were wafted back by it to another land and other days. Beyond a disposition which was exhibited by the uninitiated to applaud at the end of certain prayers, by way of showing that they sympathised with the sentiments expressed, no audience could have behaved better. There was a murmur of interest, however, when Elias B. Hopkins, looking down on the congregation from his rostrum of casks, began his address.

He had attired himself with care in honour of the occasion. He wore a velveteen tunic, girt round the waist with a sash of china silk, a pair of moleskin trousers, and held his cabbage-tree hat in his left hand.

He began speaking in a low tone, and it was noticed at the time that he frequently glanced through the small aperture which served for a window which was placed above the heads of those who sat beneath him.

"I've put you straight now," he said, in the course of his address; "I've got you in the right rut if you will but stick in it." Here he looked very hard out of the window for some seconds.

"You've learned soberness and industry, and with those things you can always make up any loss you may sustain. I guess there isn't one of ye that won't remember my visit to this camp."

He paused for a moment, and three revolver shots rang out upon the quiet summer air. "Keep your seats, damn ye!" roared our preacher, as his audience rose in excitement. "If a man of ye moves down he goes! The door's locked on the outside, so ye can't get out anyhow. Your seats, ye canting, chuckle-headed fools! Down with ye, ye dogs, or I'll fire among ye!"

Astonishment and fear brought us back into our seats, and we sat staring blankly at our pastor and each other. Elias B. Hopkins, whose whole face and even figure appeared to have undergone an extraordinary alteration, looked

fiercely down on us from his commanding position, with a contemptuous smile on his stern face.

"I have your lives in my hands," he remarked; and we noticed as he spoke that he held a heavy revolver in his hand, and that the butt of another one protruded from his sash. "I am armed and you are not. If one of you moves or speaks he is a dead man. If not, I shall not harm you. You must wait here for an hour. Why, you FOOLS" (this with a hiss of contempt which rang in our ears for many a long day), "do you know who it is that has stuck you up? Do you know who it is that has been playing it upon you for months as a parson and a saint?"

"Conky Jim, the bushranger, ye apes. And Phillips and Maule were my two right-hand men. They're off into the hills with your gold—Hal would ye?" This to some restive member of the audience, who quieted down instantly before the fierce eye and the ready weapon of the bushranger. "In an hour they will be clear of any pursuit, and I advise you to make the best of it, and not to follow, or you may lose more than your money. My horse is tethered outside this door behind me. When the time is up I shall pass through it, lock it on the outside, and be off. Then you may break your way out as best you can. I have no more to say to you, except that ye are the most cursed set of asses that ever trod in boot-leather."

We had time to endorse mentally this outspoken opinion during the long sixty minutes which followed; we were powerless before the resolute desperado.

It is true that if we made a simultaneous rush we might bear him down at the cost of eight or ten of our number. But how could such a rush be organised without speaking, and who would attempt it without a previous agreement that he would be supported? There was nothing for it but submission.

It seemed three hours at the least before the ranger snapped up his watch, stepped down from the barrel, walked backwards, still covering us with his weapon, to the door behind him, and then passed rapidly through it. We heard the creaking of the rusty lock, and the clatter of his horse's hoofs, as he galloped away.

It has been remarked that an oath had, for the last few weeks, been a rare thing in the camp. We made up for our temporary abstention during the next half-hour. Never was heard such symmetrical and heartfelt blasphemy.

When at last we succeeded in getting the door off its hinges all sight of both rangers and treasure had disappeared, nor have we ever caught sight of either the one or the other since. Poor Woburn, true to his trust, lay shot through the head across the threshold of his empty store.

The villains, Maule and Phillips, had descended upon the camp the instant that we had been enticed into the trap, murdered the keeper, loaded up a small cart with the booty, and got safe away to some wild fastness among the mountains, where they were joined by their wily leader.

Jackman's Gulch recovered from this blow, and is now a flourishing township. Social reformers are not in request there, however, and morality is at a discount.

It is said that an inquest has been held lately upon an unoffending stranger who chanced to remark that in so large a place it would be advisable to have some form of Sunday service. The memory of their one and only pastor is still green among the inhabitants, and will be for many a long year to come.