

"he was my friend once. Still he bears the image of my Maker, my Redeemer. This man has sinned and suffered. He has endured and labored. He has stumbled terribly, but not fallen. He is bruised and sore. My office shall succor him, and I will be his friend. Let the Levite pass on on the other side."

But the bell was now sounding for even-song, and the parson went his way, still leaving Mr. Lane by his friendly hearth. After an hour's absence he returned, and taking a Common Prayer book, opened it at the communion service, and read aloud from the rubric as follows: "If there be any who can not quiet his own conscience, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me and open his grief, that he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience and the avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness."

Closing the book, he looked earnestly at Mr. Lane, and said, "When does the school break up?"

"On the 17th."

"This is the 11th," pursued Key. "You might prepare yourself for the Sacrament of Penance before the 17th."

"Is it really a sacrament?" Mr. Lane asked.

"Assuredly."

Then Mr. Lane gently directed Key's at-

tention to a certain passage in the Church Catechism which states that there are "two sacraments only, as generally necessary to salvation."

"I did not say," added this astute theologian, "that penance was *generally* necessary. But oftentimes, I think. And always helpful in the solitude of the inner life."

Mr. Lane said nothing; so the divine resumed:

"The inner life is to many of us a dreary solitude, my friend. You have been fighting on bravely single-handed. But the enemy is legion."

"True," replied Mr. Lane, accepting Key's proffered hand, and closing his nervous fingers upon it with an iron grip—"true; but I must take time to think about it."

"Take time," the priest answered; "and pray that your judgment may be guided in this and all things. But however you decide, let you and me see much of each other in the vacation."

Then Mr. Key, having early duties on the Sunday, retired to rest. And Mr. Lane, returning without an umbrella through a pelting storm, sat down cold and wet by the dying embers of his fire. There he pondered deeply, and consumed tobacco moodily, till the dull gray Sabbath morning, ushered in with biting blasts and driving rain, dawned upon a world of conflict and controversy and remorse.

PINE-BARRENS.

ABROAD upon the Barrens, the Florida Pine-Barrens,

Where all the winds of heaven come to gambol wild and free,
With none to watch their races save the flowers whose little faces
Look up with wonder as they rush across from sea to sea.

Abroad upon the Barrens, how wide the mighty heavens!

A thousand times more sky above than hangs o'er any town,
For nothing breaks its clearness in the farness or the nearness,
From zenith to horizon line far rounding bluely down.

Abroad upon the Barrens the Southern pine-tree ripens

Its spiky cones in plummy green that swayeth soft on high;
Not closely set in vistas like its sober Northern sisters,
But each alone in feathery grace against the tropic sky.

Abroad upon the Barrens the saw-palmetto reddens

The ground with arméd ranks that firm for centuries have stood;
They kneel and pray to Heaven that their sins may be forgiven,
Their long green knives in readiness, bold outlaws of the wood.

Abroad upon the Barrens the idle water glistens

In little pools whose shallow sands shine silvery within;
O happy pools! no duty do ye know save simple beauty;
Ye care not for the harvest-time, ye neither toil nor spin.

Abroad upon the Barrens the care-worn soul awakens

From brooding on the long hard paths its weary feet have trod:
How little seem earth's sorrows, how far off the lost to-morrows,
How broad and free the Barrens lie, how very near to God!