

She had therefore picked up a very curious language, never correct in its grammatical forms, but expressive and high sounding. It would have formed an unique vocabulary, her words well collected and arranged *à la* Todd's Johnson.

I had long wished for a sketch of her life, but never dared to ask for it, for I knew it had been composed of such varying elements, that I feared it would be painful for her to touch upon it; but still I always hoped some fortunate turn might lead her to unfold it to me. And this day proved propitious to my wishes. I had mentioned a marriage which had recently taken place in the metropolis, in the very first circle of fashion. As I spoke of it I observed the old lady's eyes to light up with more than usual interest.

"Ah! I hope she will do well," she said, as I paused, "if she is like her mother—I knew her so well—long before she was married, and she was lovely beyond expression. I could tell you all about her early history——" She looked up, and I suppose caught the smile lurking around my mouth. "Ah! you laugh to think such a poor miserable thing as I seem to you now, should ever have known such a woman as she is; but I once moved in the same circle, was the welcome inmate in her house; many are the reverses of life, and few have known more of its shifting scenes."

"I have always known, Mrs. Richie," I gathered courage to say, "that you had seen much of life, and many, many changes. If not too painful to you, I wish you would tell me about them."

"Ah! my dear young lady, I do not often now look back to the far past; I am content with the present. God has given me good friends; I have all my bodily wants cared for, and, by the trials I have had, I have learned I have a soul and a Heavenly Father." She paused a little while with a saddened air. Then bursting into a merry laugh, in her own quiet style, which it would be in vain for me to attempt to preserve, she gave me the following sketch of her varied life:

"I am of a mongrel race," she said; "my father was English, my mother Irish, and I came into the world bound with a triple cord, for two others were ushered into existence at the same time; my father, in Scripture zeal, with the hope, I suppose, of preserving us from the fiery trials and temptations of life, insisted that the three blessings with which his wife had presented him, should be named after the world-wide famed children of Israel, Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego. My sex was an unfortunate one for the carrying out of his plan, and Mary had to be substituted for the Meshech, and my poor father's wishes were in part, at least, fulfilled, for Shadrach

and Abednego were indeed saved the fiery trials of this life, for they were laid in an early grave, while I, the puniest of the three, was left to struggle on through a long and weary pilgrimage.

"When I was about six years old my mother died, and my father removed to the United States of America, then a new wild country. My mother had a sister married and comfortably settled in Pennsylvania, and through her persuasions he purchased a farm and established himself there; but the change of climate and life did not agree with him, and in a few years he too died, leaving me in the care of my aunt. Unfortunate me! better had it been for me had I been soaring with Shadrach and Abednego in the spirit land, than to be left to the tender mercies of my relative. She was an Irish woman, and a firm catholic, whilst I had imbibed a wholesome horror of both these things. I had a childish aversion, which I had learned among my little companions in England, at being supposed to have any Irish blood in me, and I would pout and make faces at the catholic cross, not knowing or understanding then the deep and holy feelings which should cluster about that blessed symbol of our Redeemer's life and death. These untoward dispositions soon manifested themselves, and my aunt felt bound to exorcise the evil spirit; threats, scoldings and all the paraphernalia of domestic authority were resorted to, but in vain. I was perfectly wild and untameable, and though so very small, that I seemed much younger than I really was, I completely baffled her; but I could not have succeeded in this had it not been for my cousin Jack, who always took my part, and helped me to elude many a punishment which hung threateningly over me; he loved me with all the devotion of a brother, and would shield me as far as possible from his mother's displeasure; he was a wild, thoughtless, romantic fellow, his head full of chivalric feelings, and he seemed to feel himself called upon to remove me, if possible, from the annoyances to which I was subjected.

"He would often talk to me in a way I did not understand, for I was as childlike in mind as in person, and really cared for nothing. But one day Jack told me he was going away, and should not be at home for years. I looked at him in amazement, and perfectly sobered from the game of romps I had but a moment before been wildly engaged in. I could not realize it was a possible thing for me to lose Jack; it did not seem to me it would be living at all without him. Who would protect me when Jack was gone? The first serious cloud seemed gathering and darkening above me. I burst into tears, and throwing myself into his arms, said: