

AN INTERESTING CONVERSION.*

The following story is told by Miss Lowe of one who went into St. James's Hall, London, to look at the roof, and who found everlasting life.

"On April 29th, 1860, a widow lady, aged about thirty, entered St. James's Hall half an hour before the time appointed for the evening meeting. Her wish was to look at the roof, which she had heard resembled that of some building in Pisa. Her whole family were Romanists, and she herself desired to attain the highest pitch of sanctity; and for this purpose, according to her own account, accused herself sometimes to her confessor of faults of which she had not been guilty, in order to go through more severe penances, and thereby obtain a higher degree of merit. She never spoke to a Protestant unless from necessity or with a view to their conversion; and by means of presents to the sick, and especially to poor women in their confinements, she had persuaded many to put their names on the priest's lists. After her husband's death she desired to enter a convent, but some delay in the settlement of her property intervened. The confessor gave her liberty to spend a fortnight just as she pleased. The pleasures of this world had long been, she said, as a bunch of withered flowers to her; but she had a strong desire to see the roof of St. James's Hall. She considered herself too strictly bound by conventual rules (altho not yet an inmate of a convent) to enter the building on any night of worldly amusement, therefore she chose the Lord's day evening, hoping to enter and leave the building before the congregation fully assembled. It was about the time when the Lord was answering many prayers for an outpouring of the Spirit, and the eagerness to hear the Word of God was shown by the crowds that filled the hall as soon as the doors were opened. Women with children in their arms bore the fatigue of standing during the whole service; every seat and corner were occupied; and Mrs. W——, finding it impossible to make her way out, most unwillingly sat down, not intending to hear a word.

"While the hymns were sung she gazed on the crowds, and pictured to herself their unhappy souls, with the flames rolling over them; but when the preacher, Reginald Radcliffe, spoke of the possibility of any poor outcast entering the hall, and that altho sunk in the depths of sin he might, if he believed the Word, leave that hall a child of God, a voice seemed to say within her, 'This is the truth—truth, whether you will believe it or not.' She felt, 'Oh, what a sin it is for me, a Catholic, to listen to those words!' and contrived to push her way out, she knew not how, and found herself in Piccadilly. Then she felt she must go back again to hear more; and she did, and remained till the preaching was over.

"Many anxious souls remained behind. I cannot call them inquirers, for they were too deeply burdened to speak or lift their heads; 'the slain of the Lord were many.' One who sat next to Mrs. W—— during the service heard her say, 'I never heard anything like this before; and he seems so sure of what he says.' When Mr. Radcliffe spoke to her, she said, 'How did you come to know so much about Jesus as you do?' He said, 'Are you a Unitarian?' She said, 'I am a Catholic, and you have made me miserable; but I must hear more.'

"Mr. Radcliffe called me to come to a Roman Catholic lady in great

* From "Recollections of Reginald Radcliffe," pp. 131-36.