

In one of the midland counties of England, there is a town which formerly possessed considerable reputation, but has now sunk into comparative insignificance. It was first built by the Romans, and still bears the name they gave it. At the period my story commences, the moral and spiritual condition of this town was very much degraded.

To this spot it pleased our Heavenly Father to direct the labors of one of His devoted servants. Even here, were a few of that little flock for whom is reserved that kingdom which cannot be moved, though they were scattered as sheep having no shepherd. To gather in these wanderers; to add to their numbers; to lead them to the fountains of salvation, now became the pleasing task of my reverend friend and father. Neither was he permitted to labor in vain. He who "despiseth not the day of small things," gave a rich blessing to his endeavors, and many names were added to the books of that church, who will, I trust, be found on the record of the Book of Life. Many of those who were the terror of the neighborhood, became as lambs, and meekly received the words of redemption; and many, many more, were edified and built up in their most holy faith.

But, to my story. Mary Ann D—, was the daughter of a noted poacher, in the vicinity of this little town. Her father was decidedly the greatest desperado in that part of the country; and his hovel was the resort of the most abandoned characters. The pathway of my beloved parent led close by this hovel, and many were the threats D— uttered against him. Again and again was my father entreated to change his route; but he remained inflexible, and continued his weekly journeys as at the commencement of his pastorate.

One Sabbath morning, as he was passing the miserable cabin, he was accosted by D—, who, in a respectful tone, requested him to walk in and see his daughter, who was very ill. My father entered, uncertain whether it was merely a snare to entrap him, or a scene of real distress he was about to witness. He soon found Mary Anne's illness was not exaggerated—she lay on a low, dirty bedstead, with scarcely bed or bedding. Her mother was bending over her, and conversed kindly with them, for some time; promised them some medicine; prayed with them, and left the house. On his arrival at the town, he mentioned the circumstance to a lady, who was a member of his church. She, with the promptitude of woman's kindness, hastened to send some nourishing things, for her immediate necessities. The next Sabbath morning found my beloved father beside the sick girl's couch, with sundry little delicacies, suited for her weak condition, and the promised medical assistance. During this visit he spoke earnestly to Mary Ann, of the importance of eternal things. He found her extremely ignorant, but docile, and willing to listen to all he advanced. For many Sabbaths he continued his visits; nor were they unavailing. The Eternal Spirit enlightened the understanding of this poor outcast to understand, and opened her heart to receive the precious truths so earnestly, yet simply advanced by my reverend parent.

About this time the typhus fever broke out in the family of D—. One child died, but the rest, with the exception of Mary Ann, recovered; her frame, enfeebled by the previous sickness, never recovered from the prostrating effects of the fever. But, the sun of righteousness had arisen on her pathway, illumining the dark vale of death. The peace which passeth understanding had filled her bosom; she had felt the burden of sin; she threw herself in childlike simplicity on the monument of calvary; and Christ became to her the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, as the covert from the tempest, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. And truly she needed such a shelter, for the storm of indignation which burst on her head was fierce and terrible. Day after day she lay on her lonely couch, were her ears assailed by her father's horrid blasphemies and cruel upbraidings. Yet she was enabled to hear all with patience and meekness, considering Him who endured contradiction of sinners against Himself. As her case became known, it excited much sympathy, and through the efforts of various friends, she enjoyed many additional comforts, and the cabin was kept in more order.

Spring came, bringing renewed life and beauty to all but poor Mary Ann. On her, death had set his seal, and the warm, genial rays, which called forth the sweet birds and blossoms from their wintry toms, only accelerated her progress to her last resting place. As her strength declined, her courage increased—the fear of man was removed, and she conversed long and earnestly with her father. She extracted a promise from him to attend my father's ministry; and also, that the children should be sent to the Sabbath school. Of my beloved parent's kindness, she retained the liveliest sense; and in her last interview with him, lamented she could make him no return—she had nothing to give, not even a simple flower. "Yet," after some moments of deep thought, she exclaimed, "mother, when I am gone, will you look about the yard and see if that root of Carnation in the old tin pan is dead—if not, take care of it, and when it is fit to be moved, let it be taken to Mrs. W—, perhaps she will accept it and think of Mary Ann D—." My father prayed with her and left the house. It was their last interview.

During the week preceding her death, several members of the church called on her—to all she spoke of my father's kindness; and at length fell asleep in Jesus, expressing a firm, yet humble assurance of eternal life; and invoking richest blessings on him who had led her to the fount of salvation.

But the good ceased not here. The Sabbath after the interment of poor Mary Ann, the whole family appeared at chapel, attired in decent mourning. The father procured honest employment for himself and boys—the mother, from being one of the most untidy women in the vicinity, became neat, clean, and industrious. The plot of ground which had remained uncultivated, was dug up, and a neat garden planted. The old Tin pan containing the Carnation, was found; the root was alive, and was planted in the new garden. Nor was this all. It began to be whispered that D— was learning to read; and soon after came the exclamation, "Behold he prayeth!" Neither was the reformation transitory. D— persevered till he could read but slightly. I have before said he was a resolute character; and now that the strength of his mind had received a right bias, he was equally unbending in good, as he had been in evil. Truly the desert literally blossomed as the rose.

The garden flourished; and we had the satisfaction of receiving half the Carnation root which occupied the last thoughts of poor Mary Ann. It proved to be of a rare double kind, and it flourished in our distant home; nay, for aught I know, it flourishes there still, for the last object I looked on in that sweet sylvan spot was the Carnation of poor Mary Ann.

Reader, do you not perceive a striking resemblance between my type and antitype? Truly, poor Mary Ann departed from earth looking as the Carnation does in the cold, early days of spring—but, when we meet again, she shall be blooming as the rich flower in the bright hours of mid-summer. No worm shall gnaw the root of the delicate blossom; no chilling breeze mar its beauty; for she hath entered that enclosure which is securely hedged from every foe—there may we meet her; where every trace of mortal anxiety shall have passed from each countenance; and where love shall spread his dove-like pinions for ever.

Reader, has my story interested you? Remember the admonition. "Go work to-day in my vineyard." So shall you prove the truth of the promise, "He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

MARY ELIZA.

Hamilton, March 14, 1848.

DIFFICULTIES.—The greatest difficulties are always found where we are not looking for them.

A SAGE was once asked why God had so highly blessed him in this life? "Because I have performed the smallest duties as carefully as the greatest;" answered he: "therefore has God blessed me."