

## Miscellaneous.

### PHILIP SHARKEY, THE CONVERTED BLACKSMITH.

Philip Sharkey, the subject of the following narrative, was a blacksmith at Kilmarnock. He had been brought up a Roman Catholic, but had long abandoned the creed of his early days. He had become infidel in his opinions, and profligate in his habits. Moreover, with a vigorous but undisciplined mind, and warm affections, Philip was one of those who are naturally fitted for being ring-leaders in their little circles. His influence in this way was accordingly very great. To use his own words, he had been "for three and fifty years the devil's honest servant." His reputation among his comrades may be judged of from what one of them said to me. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I see through you; you want to *convart* me. But try your hand on Sharkey; he's a merry one, and you won't go without your answer from Phil."

Our intercourse, which continued for two or three years, was barely tolerated on his part. He would gladly have dropped it; but poor Philip's kindness of heart did not permit him to be rude, and he never took any step more decided than quietly to slip the bar in the door when he saw me coming. My one object, never lost sight of, was, in the gentlest way to awaken his conscience, while at the same time I kept ever before him Jesus as God's gift to him, and as available for him *now*, and *here*, just as *he was*. His one object was to keep these subjects far away, and to waste time on unprofitable topics; or, worse still, to pick out little holes, as he thought, in the Scripture story. But though he struggled hard to resist the truth, it was, as the sword of the Spirit, "quick and powerful."

"Man," said he one day, "you make me miserable. You don't speak to ither folk that way, do you?"

The eye of God had been following all the windings of this poor wanderer, and the set time for his recovery was now come. *God himself did it all*. It was something to hear the story, the second morning after his conversion occurred, from his own lips, trembling with emotion, while the tears trickled down his blackened cheeks; but it is comparatively nothing to read it here on paper, without the feeling and without the tears. I will try, however, to give it as nearly as possible in his own way.

"Who was speaking to you, Philip?" I asked him one morning in his little workshop, where I had found him, with open mouth and enlarged heart, praising the Saviour.

"There was naeboddy speakin to me at this time; but I'll tell you't a.' On Tuesday morning, after my breakfast, I took my Bible, and read a wee bittie o' the third o' John. Weel, as I was reading, there was an awfu' thoct took a haud o' me; it stanged me jist like a bee, an' put me that I couldna read ony mair."

"What was that thought, Philip?"

"Weel, it began wi' this. I saw that Nicodemus was a guid man, a saint beside me, and yet even he couldna be saved, unless he was born again; and my conscience said to me, 'What 'll come o' a dyvour (a worthless fellow) like you?' I kened I had tried to be guid; and, though I hadna managed it yet, I expected to manage it sometime; but to be *born again*, borne *owre* again, I had ne'er tried that. I had ne'er thoct o' that ava' (at all), an' didna understan hoo it was to be dune; and yet unless I was born *owre* again, I couldna see the kingdom o' God. I was dumbfounded, an' ha'ena mind whether I let the book fa', or flung it frae me; but I got rid o't and gaed out to shake aff the fear and trouble that it had brocht on me. But it wadna shake aff. 'Hoots,' said I, 'it is a' nonsense.' But something in my heart said, 'It's no nonsense, but it's a' true.' I gaed into the smiddy, and began to work, and tried to forget it; but no, it grew waur and waur, till I cauldna bear 't. I never was in such a state in my life. If ever onybody had a taste o' hell, it was me on Tuesday, staunin' wi' the hammer in my haun' before the studdy there, an' the sweat breaking on me in perfect horror. There was hell opening its very mouth before me, an'