

CHOICE LITERATURE.

DONALD RICHIE.

HOW THE MEANEST AND MOST CONTENTIOUS MEMBER OF THE CHURCH WAS CONVERTED TO LIBERALITY AND GENTLENESS.

Donald Richie was, as his name indicates, a Scotchman, and one of that type which never assimilates with any other nationality. He was thin-faced, sharp-eyed, and cold as the snows of Ben Lomond. He was one of those contentious Scotchmen who are ever bristling up with small facts, his chief business being to pick motes out of his neighbour's eyes, and his joy seemed to be to exult in the number he extracted and their magnitude. He was one of those there-I-told-you-so-kind of men. He claimed fore-knowledge of coming events, and hind-knowledge of all past and its directions. There were the mere common-places of his every-day life. He was clear as a crystal in all his beliefs, and as cold as a diamond. Nothing would heat him but temper, of which he always had a good supply. His hair stood up like that on an irritated cat's back. He would do without his dinner, breakfast, supper, or sleep, to discuss the decrees of God. The Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church, and the legal charter of his own church, were dog-eared by the leaves turned at the places of his disputes. He would prepare for a yearly congregational meeting with as much diligence and zest as many would for a communion. And as soon as the "Amen" was out of the Moderator's lips Donald was on his feet, shrieking, "Mr. Moderator!" and then you would see a pole go into the heart of a church hornet's nest.

The minister was the object of his especial care. It was his heaven below to straighten out the minister. He would lick his thin lips, and squeeze and stroke his long, sandy beard after the motions of the hand in milking, and with a half malicious leer tell how he had tied the pastor hand and foot on the several positions of his last Sabbath's sermon.

Donald was close-fisted and hard-faced—bad companions in any life. He had the impression that a little money and his most invaluable services in keeping things in order generally more than balanced the liberality of his neighbours, who, less able financially, always gave more than he. His wife was as liberal as sunshine; but, poor thing, her husband never trusted her with more than a shilling. It was reported of Donald that one morning she was begging him for a little for the Ladies' Foreign Missionary Society when he broke out, "What did you do with that quarter I gave you last week?"

Donald, of course, was always in a pet on the money question, and between his conscience and the sharp thrusts of his brethren—who felt that here they could retaliate, and always made the best of their advantage—Donald lived in a state of chronic irritation. Everybody said he was stingy, and when his name was mentioned every member of the congregation thought of his closeness. The whole church had settled down in despair of his ever getting over it. They said it was in the bone, and at last no one ever asked him for money, and this fretted him more than ever. Donald's youngest child was a dear little girl, whose nature seemed to be a cross between her mother and Donald's best qualities. She was a charming child. Everybody in the church knew and loved little Marjory. They even hailed her father with favour when she was with him, which they would not do but for her sake. He felt it, and as he grew older it did seem to mellow him a little. She was the favourite in the infant school. Her sweet answers and songs went to the hearts of both children and teachers. She nearly lived at the minister's house, where she was a great favourite, not only on her own account, but because there were there no living children. Her devotion to the minister and his wife would lead her to rebuke her papa when he would break loose in his usual severity, and one day she cried as if her heart would break, which deeply affected her father, and for a time greatly mitigated his peevishness.

The father's devotion to his daughter was more than love—it was idolatry—and marvellous was the power of the child over his frosty nature. He found no service exacted by his child a burden. He would turn from his ledger, even if he was balancing his accounts, to mend a broken toy or tie her shoe. She could make the world, so busy to her father, stand still. He was being changed into the image of his child. People began to observe it and speak of it, and, as usual with children whose lives are as a gleam of sunshine across the world, she was full of old-fashioned religiousness—very simple, yet so constant and real that it seemed as though it were the growth of years. Heaven ripens some fruit very quickly, under the same conditions upon which others barely thrive. On the same tree, in the same sunshine, and bathed by the same dews, some become plump, tinted and ripe, ere others are half grown. Marjory was of this kind—the first bright and fragrant flower in all that garden. One day, when she was only five years old, her father was lying on the couch, suffering from nervous headache. On entering the room, the windows being all darkened, she had to feel for his presence. In doing so her hands struck her father's face, which, had it been done by any other, would have put Donald in a storm. She crept up to his bosom, and whispered in his ear, in the most loving confidence, "Papa, if it won't hurt 'oo, I want to read to 'oo." Though she did not even know her letters she opened her book and read, as if by heart, in exquisite simplicity, these words, the substance of which the minister's wife had taught her:

"And they brought young children to Jesus that He should touch them, and His disciples rebuked those that brought them; but when Jesus saw it He was displeased at the naughty people, and said unto them, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.' Papa, does 'oo like my reading?"

"Yes, darling; bless your dear tongue, papa does like it."

"Papa, I will read you more some day. Good-bye, papa. I have prayed to Jesus to make you better, and I

know He will." And she left him to his silence in tenderness and tears.

Her love to Jesus was not only an affection for one of whom she had always heard good, but it was the devotion of her whole being to one who was to her a constant presence and personal friend. She possessed neither a thought nor feeling she did not share with Him. Her toys, her dresses, doll babies, her opinions of people, all the little incidents that made up each day's life, were talked over with Him as though He were a playmate. Sometimes she stood quietly by the window, wrapt in some absorbing thought, and then after a moment would say, "Oh! mamma, I do love Jesus so much I want to give Him everything I have. Mamma, if I should die, I want you to give Him all my money and playthings, and I want you to have Him stay in my little room."

Her money, which was ever at her own disposal, was always given to those she loved. Her bank was ever on the mantel-piece, to which she never failed to call the attention of her family and friends, and she would often say, "Jesus wants you to put something in." One day her father thought the sum was too large to be given all at once. (This was a shadow of his old weakness.) He hinted as much, but Marjory, looking up in wonder, replied, "I must put it all in, papa, else Jesus will think me stingy, and He won't come into our home and make His sun shine about us."

Soon after this all was made plain. The flower had bloomed its brightest colours. Its fragrance had been diffused, and now it droops. The weak stem whereon it grew gives way. She heard the last sermon of the year. She spoke thoughtfully to her father on her way home from church of the sermon, founded on the text, "Is it well?" during the delivery of which her father wriggled about and shewed his usual impatience, for he could only tolerate the minister because his darling child loved him and was as fondly loved in return. He grew very impatient when the minister said, "Is it well with you men of wealth? Have you given during the year according to that mercy that said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive?'" Marjory, having noticed his impatience, said, "Papa, what made you look so cross when the minister was talking about giving to the heathen and the poor for Jesus' sake? Papa, I give all my money to Jesus, because He loves me. I love to do it. Don't you love Jesus too?"

On New Year's morn she could not lift her head. A beautiful sled which had been provided as a surprise was held up before her, but she only glanced at it. Her bank was shewn to her full up to its mouth, but she was too sick. At noon the dreadful disease had nearly cut off her breathing. For two dreary days all was hopeless. Her father could not leave her. Day and night his eager eyes gazed on every motion of her pain. Propped up on pillows she lay with flushed face, the thin, white fingers grasping her money bank, the only thing she had cared to see. As the breath was being cut off from her in the last throes of death her lips moved. All bent down in tears to catch the whisper of warning or love. Her father forgot the rest and eagerly listened for every loved word. She whispered:

"He is coming, papa. Dear Jesus is here. I must go, papa," and as her eyes were fixed, a half-formed smile gave its feeble light to her pain-stained face. "I shall soon be able to tell Jesus how much I loved him, and 'at 'oo loves Him too, papa; and 'at 'oo loves our minister, and 'at 'oo loves to give to the heathen and the poor; and that mamma loves him too, and brothers and sisters love Him. And now, papa, I want to kiss our dear minister, Mr. —, good-bye. He has been so kind, and has loved your little girl, and told her so many sweet stories about Jesus; and I want to kiss his wife, Mrs. —. She loved me, too. She loved me too." She still held on to her little money bank, and as the voice grew weaker and weaker, slowly and less audible, she was heard again: "Now, papa, I can't give my money any more. You please, papa. You know who I loved. You know how I loved to give it. You give it for your little darling." Her head fell upon the father's shoulder, her soft auburn hair lay in tresses over his arm, and little Marjory spoke on earth no more.

That night Donald Richie sat looking vacantly on the coloured isinglass through which the light came from the stove. His heart was humbled with grief. He felt himself accursed from God and forsaken. At first a bitter rebellion raged in his soul, but soon, like the gathering clouds by which the heavens are overcast, and the lightnings flash, and the voice of threatening mutters, all break away in the gentlest shower. Donald wept all his bitterness away in the thought of his child's love. The sweetest memory was when she came into his sick-room and said, "Papa, hear my verse, 'Suffer the little children?' Papa, don't that do you good?" He dropped from his chair on his knees and said, "Help me, as my dear babe, to receive the kingdom of God." He rose from his knees strengthened and comforted, and right bravely did Donald Richie from that time forward fight selfishness, stinginess, and ill-naturedness. To his brethren he gave up the government of the church. The old charter, the occasion of many a bitter fight, he threw away. On the day he laid away the sacred form every eye was tearful at the last act in the solemn service. When the grave had been filled, and the sexton had finished the little hillock and turned away, Donald knelt and kissed the earth, and said, "Lord, sanctify this bitter sorrow to the heart of thine unworthy servant."

The next morning he sent a note which read as follows: "Dear pastor (he had always before called him Jones), I feel that I owe you more than I can express in thanks for your patience with my waywardness. I send you a cheque for our dear little Marjory toward your inadequate salary." The cheque, for \$50, was signed "Marjory, per Donald Richie."

In a few days a cheque was sent to the Board of Foreign Missions, to which he never before would give a dollar, which read as follows:

"Pay to the Board of Foreign Missions Fifty Dollars.

"MARJORY, PER DONALD RICHIE."

His pew rent, which had never been over twenty dollars,

he increased to one hundred, and the cheque was signed, "Marjory, per Donald Richie."

The change went like a diapason through all that was good in his whole remaining life, and he became as gentle to all now as he had been exasperating before.—*The Philadelphia Presbyterian*.

JEANNE D'ARC.

France had never—has never—been so near extirpation. "The people," as the historian Martin expresses it, "were no longer bathed in their sweat, but ground in their blood, debased below the beasts of the forest, among which they wander, panic-stricken, mutilated, in quest of any asylum in the wilderness." This fervent and sympathetic girl came at length to see the desolation of her country; her own village was laid waste and plundered by a marauding band. From childhood she had been familiar with the legend: "France, lost through a maid, shall by a maid be saved."

The story of her exploits at court, in camp, in the field, is familiar to all the world. A thousand vulgar fictions obscure and degrade its essential truth. What this untalented girl did for her country was simply this: she brought to bear upon the armies of France the influence of what our own western preachers would call a "powerful revival of religion." From bands of reckless and dissolute plunderers, she made French soldiers orderly, decent, moral and devout. Hope revived. She made the king believe in himself; she made the court believe in the cause. Men of faith saw in her the expected virgin saviour; men of understanding perceived the advantage to their side of having her thus regarded. She may, too (as some of her warrior comrades testified in later years), have really possessed some military talent, as well as martial ardour and inspiration. They said of her that she had good judgment in placing artillery. Later in her short public career she shewed herself restless, rash, uncontrollable; she made mistakes; she incurred disasters. But for many months, during which France regained a place among the powers of Europe, she was a glorious presence in the army—a warrior virgin, in brilliant attire, splendidly equipped, superbly mounted, nobly attended; a leader whom all eyes followed with confiding admiration, as one who had been their deliverer and was still their chief. The lowliness of her origin was an element in her power over a people who worshipped every hour a Saviour who was cradled in a manger. We can still read over the door of an ancient inn at Rheims, the Maison Rouge, this inscription: "In the year 1429, at the coronation of Charles VII., in this tavern, then called The Zebra, the father and mother of Jeanne D'Arc lodged, at the expense of the City Council."

Her career could not be but brief. When she left home to deliver her country, she had lived, according to the most recent French authorities, seventeen years and two months. Fifteen months later, May 24th, 1430, after a series of important victories, followed by minor defeats, she was taken prisoner under the walls of Compiègne, which she was attempting to relieve. French troops, fighting on the side of the English, captured her and held her prisoner. French priests, in the metropolitan church of Notre Dame, at Paris, celebrated her capture by a "Te Deum." It is doubtful if her own king lamented her loss; for this devoted, deluded girl belonged to the order of mortals whom the powers of this world often find it as convenient to be rid of as to use. It is probable that she had expended her power to be of service, and had become unmanageable. Small, needless failures, chargeable to her own rash impetuosity, had lessened her prestige. For the fair and wanton Agnes Sorrel the idle king of France would have attempted much; but he made no serious effort to ransom or to rescue the maid to whom he owed his crown and kingdom.—*Harper's Magazine*.

SABBATH ON THE CONTINENT.

The Rev. Dr. Dexter writes to the "Congregationalist" from Venice as follows:

"I have had a great many experiences of what is familiarly known—and apparently greatly longed for by many Americans, as an improvement were it introduced in our own land—as the 'Continental Sabbath'; that is to say, the style of Sabbath which is begotten of Romanism and Nothingarianism. But I never saw any development of it much more pronounced and significant than that which was recently visible here. I cannot say at what time early mass was said and sung, but I can testify that church bells in quantities were ringing at intervals from the small hours of the morning until well on towards high noon. After their subsidence the Fourth of July itself broke loose. Gondolas trailed their dark lengths hither and thither, and the narrow lanes and bridges and quays swarmed with people. A splendid military band played in the centre of St. Mark's Square, in front of the cathedral; while down upon the *Riva degli Schiavoni*—the road along the margin of the sea connecting the Piazzetta at one end with the Public Garden—strolled immense multitudes, eating, drinking, chatting, singing, and watching the 'performances' which lined the way. There were jugglers ready every five minutes to eat swords and swallow fire, and do all sorts of tricks for the boon of the coppers thrown to them by admiring or awe-struck beholders. There were clowns dressed in *outré* costume retailing jokes (no doubt hundreds of years old) in voluble Italian. There were monkeys and performing beasts. There were manikins on springs, and a flute-player who tooted when the crank was turned, and an enormous wind-organ, with a giant's head on the top, which wept, winking and staring and grinning at the bystanders. There was a panorama of a horrible railroad accident, where smashed cars released the wild beasts of a travelling menagerie to prey upon their human fellow-passengers. There were itinerant vendors of patent medicines lecturing loud in their praise. And there—day of woman's rights realized—was a huge and gaudy carriage with liveried footmen and attendants (but even this had no horses, and was evidently an imported exotic) on the high seat of which stood an immense female who was lecturing (in an Amazonian tone)