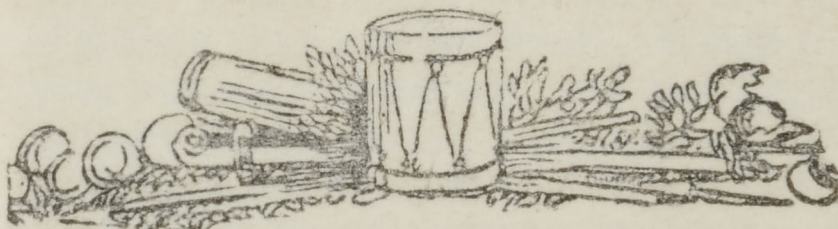


MARY JONES ;

OR,

THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER.

AN INTERESTING STORY.



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MARY JONES.

MARY JONES was the only child of a private soldier, and was accustomed to travel about with the regiment from her birth. When Mary was about the age of fifteen, her mother died. When the poor woman felt herself near her death, she left the barracks; and, taking Mary with her, went to a small cottage, near the town where the regiment was quartered. The day before she died, she called Mary to her bed-side, and said, "Mary, my dear child, I am going to leave you." "O mother," said Mary, "do not speak in this way; I am sure you will soon be better."

"No," said the poor woman, "I shall not recover; my journey is almost over; but dry your tears, and listen while I am able to speak to you. I have nothing to leave you, my child, but this book,—a greater treasure I could not give you.

This Bible has been my constant companion for many years ; it has been my comforter too. I have learned from it my own guilt and wretchedness ; but it has told me of just such a Saviour as my poor soul wants. I have learned from it, that the “Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world,” is mighty to save, freely, by his grace, all sinners who forsake their iniquities, and turn to Him. The words of this book have been my support through life ; and now, that I am dying, his precious promises afford me peace and comfort. I know that I am a sinner ; I know I deserve nothing but condemnation ; but I also know in whom I have believed ; and, trusting in Jesus, the “Friend of sinners,” I meet death with joy, as the messenger that calls me home to him, “whom, having not seen, I love.”

The next day the poor woman died, enjoying that peace, which nothing but an entire dependence on our Saviour can give.

Mary Jones grieved much for her mother, but she did not know how great a loss she had sustained. Her mother had taken the greatest pains to bring her up decently, and to preserve her from all the

evils which are found in barracks. Now, her only protector was her father, who was almost always on guard, or among the soldiers, and therefore paid but little attention to her. Mary had been accustomed to read the Bible to her mother every day. This she had always felt a troublesome task, and, therefore, soon after her mother's death, the Bible, which had only been read by constraint, was neglected; and she spent almost her whole time in idleness, even on the Sabbath days.

Three years passed on in this manner, when the regiment was ordered abroad for foreign service, and the women belonging to it were obliged to remain behind; and Mary was hired as children's maid at the house of a gentleman who lived near. In her new situation, Mary had much time for reflection. When sitting alone in the nursery, she would often speak of her mother. Many of her sayings, which she thought she had entirely forgotten, came into her mind. The tenderness and earnestness with which she had frequently urged upon her the importance of religion; and above all, their last conversation, was recollected by Mary most perfectly. "Oh!

(said she to herself,) little did my mother think, that that book, her dying legacy, which she gave me with prayers and tears, would be so neglected by me. But, if this has been ingratitude in me towards her, how offensive must it have been to God, to have made light of his word ! It is now too late for me to seek the mercy I have despised so long. I have cast God's word behind me, and he will be just in casting me from his presence at last, into everlasting fire."

Her mind was thus engaged one evening, when Anne Brown, one of her fellow-servants, with great tenderness, asked the cause of her distress. Encouraged by the kindness of her manner, Mary opened her whole heart to her. "Oh !" said she, "I have been living without God in the world, wilfully disobeying his commands, though I knew I was in the wrong. Even last Sunday, when I joined with the other servants in laughing at you, I could not help feeling that it would be better for me to be like you, than to possess the whole world."

Anne Brown.—"To be like me is a poor desire, for I am an unworthy sinner ; but since you have spoken to me, if you believe all that I shall read to you

out of your Bible, I will undertake to comfort you, and that, too, without denying or excusing your sin, or leading you to think better of yourself than you do now ; for I am persuaded you do not know all the evil of your own heart."

Mary, (giving the Bible to Anne Brown.)—" Well, I will listen to you, though I am sure you can read nothing for me but condemnation from that book." Anne opened, and read, " thou hast destroyed thyself." (Hosea xiii. 9.)



“ True,” said Mary, “ I have destroyed my soul by breaking God’s law, and by despising his gospel.”

Anne.—“ You have indeed, dear Mary; but you know I promised to comfort you, without denying your guilt. Hear what follows: ‘ In me is thine help.’ Here is a word of comfort for such as you and I, who are unable to help ourselves. ‘ Jesus is able to save them unto the uttermost who come unto God by him. This is a truth worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He receiveth sinners. His blood cleanseth from all sin; and whoso trusteth in him, shall not be confounded.’ ” Then, after having read slowly the 3d and 6th chapters of St. John’s Gospel, and the 15th chapter of St. Luke, she shut the book, and said, “ Dear Mary, do you believe what I have been reading? If you do, you must have joy and peace.”

Mary.—“ I cannot deny what you say, for it is all in the Bible; but how do I know that it is addressed to me, or suited to my case.”

Anne.—“ The gospel is addressed to ‘ EVERY CREATURE.’ (Mark xvi. 15.)

When God declares that ‘ all the world is guilty before him,’ these words of condemnation apply as much to you and I, as though we only had broken the law of God ; and when he sends a message of mercy which is good news to ‘ ALL PEOPLE,’ and declares, ‘ Whosoever believeth on the Son of God, shall not perish, but have everlasting life ;’ we are as much addressed in these words of peace, as though our very names were mentioned. Oh ! then, dear Mary, do not doubt the many gracious offers of mercy which this blessed book holds out ; but take it to yourself, and read over the passages I have mentioned to you, for I must leave you, as I have some business to attend to.”

Mary made no reply, for her heart was full. When Anne left the room, she took the Bible, and read it with great delight for some time. Never before had Mary found pleasure in prayer. Now, for the first time, she prayed to God in sincerity, through Jesus Christ, pleading his death as the only reason why God should regard her guilty soul in mercy. She lay down to rest that night happier than she had ever been in her life, and her heart being filled with

grateful joy, she said, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits!"

Mary found a faithful friend in Anne Brown. They both rose every morning an hour earlier than the rest of the servants, that they might read the Scriptures together, without neglecting their business. This they found both pleasant and profitable. A change in life and conduct was soon seen in Mary Jones. Her temper had been so bad, that Mrs. Ford, her mistress, had intended parting with her on account of it. Now, the children all grew fond of her, for she became mild and kind to them. Whenever she felt her evil passions rising, she would secretly ask the Lord to enable her to overcome them, which she now knew she could not do by her own power.

Mrs. Ford perceived the change in Mary, and though she then knew not the cause, was satisfied with it.

Some years after this, Mary received a letter from her father, telling her that his leg had been shot off in battle, and that he had, therefore, got his discharge from the army, and expected to be able to return to his native country in about three months. He desired her to look

out for a small cottage, near the place where she lived, as he should like to settle near her, but did not wish her to leave Mrs. Ford on his account.

Mary told her mistress of her intention of quitting her. Mrs. Ford pressed her much to stay, for her good conduct had rendered her deservedly a favourite; but Mary felt it her duty to live with her father. She procured from Mr. Ford a cottage and garden, at a low rent, which Mary engaged to pay, and laid out some money she had saved out of her wages, in purchasing furniture. Mrs. Ford assisted in this, and made her a present of some of the most expensive articles.

When William Jones arrived, he found his daughter ready to receive him, having every thing comfortably prepared. He was delighted with the neatness of the house, and to see Mary look so cheerful and healthy. "But, my child," said he, "you must not leave your kind mistress, and good situation, to live here with me. You know you were always fond of keeping company; you will grow quite melancholy if you have no one to speak to but me."

“Do not fear,” said Mary, smiling, “I shall not be melancholy; I have a companion who always makes me happy, and to whom, if you will allow me, I will introduce you to-morrow, when you are recovered from your fatigue. I will set up a little school, and take in plain work; I trust we shall always have enough.”

The next day, Mary came to her father. “I am going to introduce my companion to you,” said she, laying her Bible on the table before him: “it has answered a great many important questions for me in a way that has made my heart glad; it is just as ready to talk with you; and if you will allow it to converse an hour with us every evening, I will promise not to be melancholy for want of other company.”

William Jones.—“Mary, your heart seems to be set on making me happy; besides, since the time I was so near being killed in the battle, I have been thinking I ought to have attended more to the care of my soul, and not to have been living as though I expected never to die.”

“I thank God for sparing you,” said Mary. “Oh, may He make his own word profitable to us both!”

When evening came, Mary never failed to bring the Bible, and read it to her father ; nor did she cease entreating the Lord to open his mind, that he might understand and receive the glorious truths it contains. When she had an opportunity, she would, with much humility, speak a little on religious subjects ; and her conduct so strengthened her words, that her father soon began to love the Bible as much as she did, for he learned from it to rest all his hopes for eternity on that mighty Saviour, from whom Mary drew all her peace and joy.

Mary's school was soon filled with many children ; and Anne Brown came to live with her to assist her. This added greatly to Mary's happiness. But, about four years after, her joy was greatly interrupted by the illness and death of her father. Mary watched him night and day while he was sick, and at length saw him close his eyes in peace. She sorrowed for him, but "not as those who have no hope," for she looked forward to meet him with joy before the throne of God, and joining with him to sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." when the days of her mourning should also be ended.

Some time after, she married a farmer, whose property, added to her industry, often enabled her to assist the needy; and whose instructive conversation strengthened her, and her friend Anne Brown, who remained with her, in the faith and hope they had before received.

Mary lived many years, a blessing to her family and the neighbourhood. She had some trials, but her faith in Jesus, with the prospect of "an eternal weight of glory," made her count them all but "light afflictions." Through God's mercy, she endured to the end, in the ways of faith and holiness; and she died in peace, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, who hath conquered death.

DEAR READER!—Perhaps you are not possessed of a Bible. Oh, then, endeavour to obtain one. If you were condemned for some felony, how desirous would you be to hear the news of pardon. The law of God and your own conscience tell you you have sinned. Who can forgive sins, or even point out the way of pardon and peace, but the God you have offended? In his word is the message of mercy. How, then, should you desire the possession of such a treasure!

But, it may be, you have the Bible, but neglect to read and study it. Oh, why will you starve in the midst of plenty? Why “perish for lack of knowledge?” while you possess a book which is able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus?” Or are you a constant reader of God’s word? What have you learned from it? Has it taught you that you are a wretched sinner, and unable to merit mercy? Have you learned from it the sufficiency and suitableness of Jesus the Saviour, to such as you are? Has it taught you to rest all your hope for salvation on Him, who died for the ungodly? Do you look for the forgiveness of your sins, not on account of your prayers, tears, or deservings of any kind, but on account of, and “through Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God?” And does his love constrain you to keep his commandments, to “live not to yourself, but to him who died and rose again?” If this be your case, “Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood hath not revealed these things unto thee, but the Father which is in heaven.” But, if you have till now been in ignorance, living without God in the world,—to-day, if you will hear

his voice, harden not your heart, " but
hear, and your soul shall live."

Precious Bible! what a treasure
Does the word of God afford !-
All I want for life or pleasure,
FOOD and MED'GINE, SHIELD and
SWORD ;
Let the world account me poor,
Having this, I need no more.



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