

SECOND PART
OF THE
SHEPHERD
OF
SALISBURY-PLAIN.



DUBLIN:

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T H E

Shepherd of Salisbury Plain.

P A R T II.

I AM willing to hope that my readers will not be sorry to hear some farther particulars of their old acquaintance *the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*. They will call to mind that at the end of the first part, he was returning home full of gratitude for the favours he had received from Mr. Johnson, whom we left pursuing his journey, after having promised to make a visit to the Shepherd's Cottage.

Mr. Johnson, after having passed some time with his friend, sat out on his return to Salisbury, and on the Saturday evening reached a very small inn, a mile or two distant from the Shepherd's Village; for he never travelled on a Sunday. He went the next morning to the Church nearest the house where he had passed the night; and after taking such refreshment as he could get at that house, he walked on to find out the Shepherd's cottage. His reason for visiting him on a Sunday was chiefly, because he supposed it to be the only day which the Shepherd's employment allowed him to pass at home with his family, and as Mr. Johnson had been struck with his talk, he thought it

would be neither unpleasant nor unprofitable to observe how a Man who carried such an appearance of piety, spent his Sunday; for though he was so low in the world, this Gentleman was not above entering very closely into his character, of which he thought he should be able to form a better judgment, by seeing whether his practice at home kept pace with his professions abroad. For it is not so much by observing how people talk, as how they live, that we ought to judge of their characters.

After a pleasant walk Mr. Johnson got within sight of the cottage, to which he was directed by the clump of hawthorns and the broken chimney. He wished to take the family by surprise; and walking gently up to the house, he stood awhile to listen. The door being half open, he saw the Shepherd, (who looked so respectable in his Sunday Coat that he should hardly have known him) his Wife, and their numerous young family, drawing round their little table, which was covered with a clean though very coarse cloth. There stood on it a large dish of potatoes, a brown pitcher, and a piece of a coarse loaf. The wife and children stood in silent attention, while the Shepherd with uplifted hands and eyes, devoutly begged the blessing of heaven on their homely fare. Mr. Johnson could not help sighing to reflect that he had sometimes seen better dinners eaten with less appearance of thankfulness.

The Shepherd and his wife then sat down with great seeming cheerfulness, but the children flood; and while the mother was helping them, little fresh coloured Molly who had picked the wool from the bushes with so much delight, cried out, "Father, I wish I was big enough to say grace, I am sure I should say it very heartily to day, for I was thinking what must *poor* people do who have no salt to their potatoes, and do but look, our dish is quite so!"—"That is the true way of thinking, Molly," said the Father; "in whatever concerns bodily wants and bodily comforts, it is our duty to compare our own lot with the lot of those who are worse off, and this will keep us thankful; On the other hand, whenever we are tempted to set up our own wisdom or goodness, we must compare ourselves with those who are wiser and better, and that will keep us humble." Molly was now so hungry, and found the potatoes so good, that she had no time to make any more remarks; but was devouring her dinner very heartily, when the barking of the great dog drew her attention from her trencher to the door, and spying the stranger, she cried out, "look father, see here, if yonder is not the good Gentleman." Mr. Johnson finding himself discovered, immediately walked in, and was heartily welcomed by the honest Shepherd, who told his wife that this was the Gentleman to whom they were so much obliged.

The good Woman began, as some very neat people are rather too apt to do, with making many apologies that her house was not cleaner, and that things were not in fitter order to receive such a gentleman. Mr. Johnson however, on looking round, could discover nothing but the most perfect neatness. The trenchers on which they were eating were almost as white as their linen; and notwithstanding the number and smallness of the children, there was not the least appearance of dirt or litter. The furniture was very simple and poor, hardly indeed amounting to bare necessaries. It consisted of four brown wooden chairs, which, by constant rubbing were become as bright as a looking glass; an iron pot and kettle; a poor old grate which scarcely held a handful of coals, and out of which the little fire that had been in it appeared to have been taken, as soon as it had answered the end for which it had been lighted, that of boiling their potatoes. Over the chimney stood an old fashioned broad bright candlestick, and a still brighter spit; it was pretty clear that this last was kept rather for ornament than use. An old carved elbow chair, and a chest of the same date which stood in the corner, were considered the most valuable part of the Shepherd's goods, having been in the family for three generations. But all these were lightly esteemed by him in comparison of another possession, which added to the above made up the whole of what he

he had inherited from his father ; and which last he would not have parted with, if no other could have been had, for a king's ransom: this was a large old Bible, which lay on the window seat, neatly covered with brown cloth, variously patched. This sacred book was most reverently preserved from dog's ears, dirt, and every other injury, but such as time and much use had made it suffer in spite of care. On the clean white walls was pasted, a hymn on the Crucifixion of our Saviour, a print of the Prodigal Son, the Shepherd's Hymn, and a *New History of a true Book*.

After the first salutations were over, Mr. Johnson said, that if they would go on quietly with their dinner he would sit down. Though a good deal ashamed, they thought it more respectful to obey the Gentleman, who having cast his eyes on their slender provisions, gently rebuked the Shepherd for not having indulged himself, as it was Sunday, with a morsel of Bacon to relish his Potatoes. The Shepherd said nothing, but poor Mary coloured and hung down her head, saying, "indeed, sir, it is not my fault, I did beg my husband to allow himself a bit of meat to day out of your honour's bounty ; but he was too good to do it, and it is all for my sake." The Shepherd seemed unwilling to come to an explanation, but Mr. Johnson desired Mary to go on. So she continued, "you must know Sir, that both of us next to a sin, dread a debt, and indeed in some cases a debt

is a sin ; but with all our care and pains we have never been able quite to pay off the Doctor's bill, for that bad fit of the Rheumatism which I had last winter. Now when you were pleased to give my husband that kind present the other day, I heartily desired him to buy a bit of meat for Sunday, as I said before, that he might have a little refreshment for himself out of your kindness. But answered he, Mary, it is never out of my mind long together that we still owe a few shillings to the Doctor, (and thank God it is all we did owe in the world.) Now if I carry him this money directly it will not only shew him our honesty and our good will ; but it will be an encouragement to him to come to you another time in case you should be taken once more in such a bad fit ; for I must own, added my poor husband, that the thought of your being so terribly ill without any help, is the only misfortune that I want courage to face."

Here the grateful woman's tears ran down so fast that she could not go on. She wiped them with the corner of her apron, and humbly begged pardon for making so free. " Indeed Sir, " said the Shepherd, " though my wife is full as unwilling to be in debt as myself, yet I could hardly prevail on her to consent to my paying this money just then, because she said it was hard I should not have a taste of the Gentleman's bounty myself. But for once, Sir, I would have my own way. For

For you must know, as I pass best part of my time alone, tending my sheep, 'tis a great point with me, Sir, to get comfortable matter for my own thoughts; so that 'tis rather self interest in me to allow myself in no pleasures and no practices that won't bear thinking on over and over. For when one is a good deal alone you know, Sir, all one's bad deeds do rush in upon one, as I may say, and so torment one, that there is no true comfort to be had but in keeping clear of wrong doings, and false pleasures; and that I suppose may be one reason why so many folks hate to stay a bit by themselves.—But as I was saying—when I came to think the matter over on the hill yonder, said I to myself, a good dinner is a good thing I grant, and yet it will be but cold comfort to me a week after, to be able to say—to be sure I had a nice shoulder of mutton last Sunday for dinner, thanks to the good Gentleman, but then I am in debt.—I *had* a rare dinner, that's certain, but the pleasure of that has long been over, and the debt still remains. I have spent the crown, and now if my poor wife should be taken in one of those fits again, die she must, unless God work a miracle to prevent it, for I can get no help for her. This thought settled all; and I set off directly and paid the crown to the Doctor with as much cheerfulness as I should have felt on sitting down to the fattest shoulder of mutton that ever was roasted. And if I was contented at the time, think how

much more happy I have been at the remembrance! O Sir, there are no pleasures worth the name but such as bring no plague or penitence after them."

Mr. Johnson was satisfied with the Shepherd's reasons; and agreed that though a good dinner was not to be despised, yet it was not worthy to be compared with a *contented Mind which* (as the Bible truly says) *is a continual feast.* "But come, said the good Gentleman, what have you got in this brown mug?" "As good water, said the Shepherd, as any in the king's dominions. I have heard of countries beyond sea in which there is no wholesome water; nay, I have been myself in a great town not far off where they are obliged to buy all the water they get, while a good Providence sends to my very door a spring as fine and clear as Jacob's well. When I am tempted to repine that I have often no other drink, I call to mind, that it was nothing better than a cup of cold water which the woman of Samaria drew for the greatest guest that ever visited this world."

"Very well, replied Mr. Johnson; but as your honesty has made you prefer a poor meal to being in debt, I will at least send and get something for you to drink. I saw a little public house just by the church, as I came along. Let that little rosy faced fellow fetch a mug of beer." So saying, he looked full at the Boy who did not offer to stir, but cast an eye at his father to know what he was to do.

"Sir,

“ Sir, said the Shepherd, I hope we shall not appear ungrateful, if we seem to refuse your favour ; my little boy would, I am sure, fly to serve you on any other occasion. But, good Sir, it is Sunday, and should any of my family be seen at a Public house on a Sabbath day, it would be a much greater grief to me than to drink water all my life. I am often talking against these doings to others, and if I should say one thing and do another, you can't think what an advantage it would give many of my neighbours over me, who would be glad enough to report that they caught the Shepherd's Son at the Ale-house, without explaining how it happened. Christians you know, Sir, must be doubly watchful, or they will not only bring disgrace on themselves, but what is much worse, on that holy name by which they are called.”

“ Are you not a little too cautious, my honest friend,” said Mr. Johnson. “ I humbly ask your pardon, Sir, replied the Shepherd, if I think that is impossible. In my poor notion I no more understand how a man can be too cautious, than how he can be too strong or too healthy.”

“ You are right indeed, said Mr. Johnson, as a general principle, but this struck me as a very small thing.” Sir, said the Shepherd, I am afraid you will think me very bold, but you encourage me to speak out.”—“ 'Tis what I wish, said the Gentleman.” “ Then, Sir, resumed the Shepherd, I doubt, if where
there

there is a temptation to do wrong, any thing can be called small; that is, in short, if there is any such thing as a small wilful sin. A poor man like me is seldom called out to do great things, so that tis not by a few great deeds his character can be judged by his neighbours, but by the little round of daily customs he allows himself in.—While they were thus talking, the children who had stood very quietly behind, and had not stirred a foot, now began to scamper about all at once, and in a moment ran to the window-seat to pick up their little old hats. Mr. Johnson looked surpris'd at this disturbance; the Shepherd asked his pardon, telling him it was the sound of the Church Bell which had been the cause of their rudeness; for their Mother had brought them up with such a fear of being too late for Church, that it was but who could catch the first stroke of the bell, and be first ready. He had always taught them to think that nothing was more indecent than to get into Church after it was begun; for as the service opened with an exhortation to repentance, and a confession of sin, it looked very presumptuous not to be ready to join in it; it looked as if people did not feel themselves to be sinners. And though such as lived at a great distance might plead difference of clocks as an excuse, yet those who lived within the sound of the bell, could neither pretend ignorance nor mistake."

Mary and her children set forward. Mr. Johnson and the Shepherd followed, taking care

care to talk the whole way on such subjects as might fit them for the solemn duties of the place to which they were going. " I have often been sorry to observe, said Mr. Johnson, that many who are reckoned decent, good kind of people, and who would on no account neglect going to church, yet seem to care but little in what frame or temper of mind they go thither. They will talk of their worldly concerns till they get within the door, and then take them up again the very minute the sermon is over, which makes me ready to fear they lay too much stress on the mere form of going to a place of worship. Now for my part, I always find that it requires a little time to bring my mind into a state fit to do any *common* business well, much more this great and most necessary business of all." " Yes Sir, said the Shepherd, and then I think too how busy I should be in preparing my mind, if I was going into the presence of a great gentleman, or a lord, or the King; and shall the king of kings be treated with less respect? Besides one likes to see people feel as if going to Church was a thing of choice and pleasure, as well as a duty, and that they were as desirous not to be the last there, as they would be if they were going to a feast or a fair."

After service, Mr. Jenkins the Clergyman, who was well acquainted with the character of Mr. Johnson, and had a great respect for him, accosted him with much civility; expressing

pressing his concern that he could not enjoy just now so much of his conversation as he wished, as he was obliged to visit a sick person at a distance, but hoped to have a little talk with him before he left the village. As they walked along together, Mr. Johnson made such enquiries about the Shepherd, as served to confirm him in the high opinion he entertained of his piety, good sense, industry and self-denial. They parted, the Clergyman promising to call in at the Cottage in his way home.

The Shepherd, who took it for granted that Mr. Johnson was gone to the Parsonage, walked home with his wife, and children, and was beginning in his usual way to catechize and instruct his family, when Mr. Johnson came in, and insisted that the Shepherd should go on with his instructions, just as if he were not there. This Gentleman who was very desirous of being useful to his own Servants and work-men in the way of religious instruction, was sometimes sorry to find that though he took a good deal of pains, they did not now and then quite understand him, for though his meaning was very good, his language was not always very plain; and though the *things* he said were not hard to be understood, yet the *words* were, especially to such as were very ignorant. And he now began to find out that if people were ever so wise and good, yet if they had not a simple, agreeable and familiar way of expressing them-

themselves, some of their plain hearers would not be much the better for them. For this reason he was not above listening to the plain, humble way in which this honest man taught his family, for though he knew that he himself had many advantages over the Shepherd, had more learning and could teach him many things, yet he was not too proud to learn even of so poor a man, in any point where he thought the Shepherd might have the advantage of him.

This Gentleman was much pleased with the knowledge and piety he discovered in the answers of the children; and desired the Shepherd to tell him how he contrived to keep up a sense of divine things in his own mind and in that of his family with so little leisure and so little reading. "O as to that, Sir, said the Shepherd, we do not read much except in one book to be sure; but by hearty prayer for God's blessing on the use of that book, what little knowledge is needful seems to come of course, as it were. And my chief study has been to bring the fruits of the Sunday reading into the week's business, and to keep up the same sense of God in the heart, when the Bible is in the cupboard as when it is in the hand. In short, to apply what I read in the books to what I meet with in the Field."

"I don't quite understand you, said Mr. Johnson." "Sir, replied the Shepherd, I have but a poor gift at conveying these things

to others, though I have much comfort from them in my own mind; but I am sure that the most ignorant and hard working people, who are in earnest about their salvation, may help to keep up devout thoughts and good affections during the week, though they have hardly any time to look at a book.—And it will help them to keep out bad thoughts too which is no small matter. But then they must know the Bible; they must have read the word of God; that is a kind of stock in trade for a Christian to set up with; and it is this which makes me so diligent in teaching it to my children; and even in so storing their memories with Psalms and Chapters. This is a great help to a poor hard working Man, who will hardly meet with any thing but what he may turn to some good account. If one lives in the fear and love of God, almost every thing one sees abroad will teach one to adore his power and goodness, and bring to mind some texts of Scripture, which shall fill the heart with thankfulness, and the mouth with praise. When I look upwards *the Heavens declare the glory of God*; and shall I be silent and ungrateful? if I look round and see the Vallies standing thick with Corn, how can I help blessing that power who *giveth me all things richly to enjoy*? I may learn gratitude from the beasts of the Field, for *the Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib*, and shall a Christian not know, shall a Christian not consider what great things

GOD

God has done for him? I, who am a Shepherd, endeavour to fill my soul with a constant remembrance of that good Shepherd, who *feedeth me in green pastures, and maketh me to lie down beside the still waters, and whose rod and staff comfort me.*

“ You are happy, said Mr. Johnson, in this retired life by which you escape the corruptions of the world.” “ Sir, said the Shepherd, I do not escape the corruptions of my own evil nature. Even there on that wild solitary hill, I can find out that my heart is prone to evil thoughts. I suppose, Sir, that different states have different temptations. You great folks that live in the world, perhaps are exposed to some, of which such a poor man as I am, know nothing. But to one who leads a lonely life like me, evil thoughts are a chief besetting Sin; and I can no more withstand these without the grace of God, than a rich Gentleman can withstand the snares of evil company, without the same grace. And I feel that I stand in need of God’s help continually, and if he should give me up to my own heart I should be lost.

Mr. Johnson approved of the Shepherd’s sincerity, for he had always observed that where there was no humility, and no watchfulness against Sin, there was no religion, and he said that the Man who did not feel himself to be a sinner, in his opinion, could not be a christian.

Just as they were in this part of their discourse, Mr. Jenkins, the Clergyman, came in. After the usual salutations, he said, "Well Shepherd, I wish you joy; I know you will be sorry to gain any advantages by the death of a neighbour; but old Wilson my Clerk, was so infirm, and I trust so well prepared, that there is no reason to be sorry for his death. I have been to pray by him, but he died while I staid. I have always intended you should succeed to his place; 'tis no great matter, but every little is something."

"No great matter, Sir, cried the Shepherd, indeed it is a great thing to Me; it will more than pay my rent. Blessed be God for all his goodness." Mary said nothing, but lifted up her eyes full of tears in silent gratitude.

"I am glad of this little circumstance, said Mr. Jenkins, not only for your sake, but for the office itself. I so heartily reverence every religious institution, that I would never have even the *Amen* added to the excellent prayers of our Church, by vain or profane lips; and if it depended on me, there should be no such thing in the land as an idle, drunken, or irreligious Parish-Clerk. Sorry I am to say that this matter is not always sufficiently attended to, and that I know some of a very indifferent character.

Mr. Johnson now inquired of the clergyman whether there were many children in the Parish. "More than you would expect, replied he, from the seeming smallness of it, but there
are

are some little Hamlets which you do not see.”
 “ I think, returned Mr. Johnson, I recollect that in the conversation I had with the Shepherd on the hill yonder, he told me you had no Sunday School.” “ I am sorry to say we have none, said the Minister; I do what I can to remedy this misfortune by public catechising; but having two or three Churches to serve, I cannot give so much time as I wish, to private instruction; and having a large family of my own, and no assistance from others, I have never been able to establish a School.”

“ There is an excellent institution in London, said Mr. Johnson, called the Sunday-School Society, which kindly gives books and other helps, on the application of such pious Ministers as stand in need of their aid, and which I am sure would have assisted you; but I think we shall be able to do something ourselves.—Shepherd continued he, if I was a King, and had it in my power to make you a rich and a great Man, with a word speaking, I would not do it. Those who are raised by some sudden stroke, much above the station in which divine providence had placed them, seldom turn out very good, or very happy. I have never had any great things in my power, but as far as I have been able, I have been always glad to assist the worthy. I have however never attempted or desired to set any poor Man much above his natural condition, but it is a pleasure to me to lend him such assistance,

assistance, as may make that condition more easy to himself, and to put him in a way which shall call him to the performance of more duties than perhaps he could have performed without my help, and of performing them in a better manner. What Rent do you pay for this Cottage?

“ Fifty Shillings a Year, Sir.”

It is in a sad tattered condition, is there not a better to be had in the Village.”

“ That in which the poor Clerk lived, said the Clergyman, is not only more tight and whole, but has two decent chambers, and a very large light kitchen.”—“ That will be very convenient, replied Mr. Johnson, pray what is the rent?” I think, said the Shepherd, poor neighbour Wilson gave somewhat about four pounds a year, or it might be guineas.”—“ Very well, said Mr. Johnson, and what will the Clerk’s place be worth, think you?” “ About three pounds,” was the answer.

“ Now, continued Mr. Johnson, my plan is, that the Shepherd should take that house immediately; for as the poor man is dead, there will be no need of waiting till quarter day, if I make up the difference.” “ True Sir, said Mr. Jenkins, and I am sure my Wife’s Father, whom I expect to-morrow, will willingly assist a little towards buying some of the Clerk’s old goods. And the sooner they remove the better, for poor Mary caught that bad rheumatism by sleeping under a leaky

a leaky thatch." The Shepherd was too much moved to speak, and Mary could hardly sob out, "oh Sir, you are too good, indeed this house will do very well." "It may do very well for you and your children Mary, said Mr. Johnson, gravely, but it will not do for a School; the kitchen is neither large nor light enough. Shepherd, continued he, with your good Minister's leave, and kind assistance, I propose to set up in this parish a Sunday School, and to make you the Master. It will not at all interfere with your weekly calling, and its the only lawful way in which you could turn the Sabbath into a day of some little profit to your family, by doing, as I hope, a great deal of good to the Souls of others. The rest of the week you will work as usual. The difference of rent between this house and the Clerk's I shall pay myself, for to put you into a better house at your own expence would be no great act of kindness.— As for honest Mary, who is not fit for hard labour, or any out of door work, I propose to endow a small weekly school, of which she shall be the Mistress, and employ her notable turn to good account, by teaching ten or a dozen girls to knit, sew, spin, card, or any other useful way of getting their bread; for all this I shall only pay her the usual price, for I am not going to make you rich, but useful."

"Not rich, Sir?" cried the Shepherd. How can I ever be thankful enough for such blessings?

blessings? And will my poor Mary have a dry thatch over her head? and shall I be able to send for a doctor when I am like to loose her? Indeed my cup runs over with blessings, I hope God will give me humility." Here he and Mary looked at each other and burst into tears. The Gentlemen saw their distress and kindly walked out upon the little green before the door, that these honest people might give vent to their feelings. As soon as they were alone they crept into one corner of the room, where they could not be seen and fell on their knees, devoutly praising God for his mercies. Never were heartier prayers presented, than this grateful couple offered up to their benefactors. The warmth of their gratitude could only be equalled by the earnestness with which they besought the blessing of God on the work in which they were going to engage.

The two Gentlemen now left this happy family, and walked to the parsonage, where the evening was spent in a manner very edifying to Mr. Johnson, who the next day took all proper measures for putting the Shepherd in immediate possession of his now comfortable habitation. Mr. Jenkins's father-in-law, the worthy Gentleman who gave the Shepherd's Wife the blankets, in the first part of this history, arrived at the Parsonage before Mr. Johnson left it, and assisted in fitting up the Clerk's Cottage.

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Mr. Johnson took his leave, promising to call on the worthy Minister and his new Clerk once a year, in his Summer's journey over the Plain, as long as it should please God to spare his life.—We hope he will never fail to give us an account of these visits which we shall be glad to lay before our readers, if they should contain instruction or amusement.

F I N I S.

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