

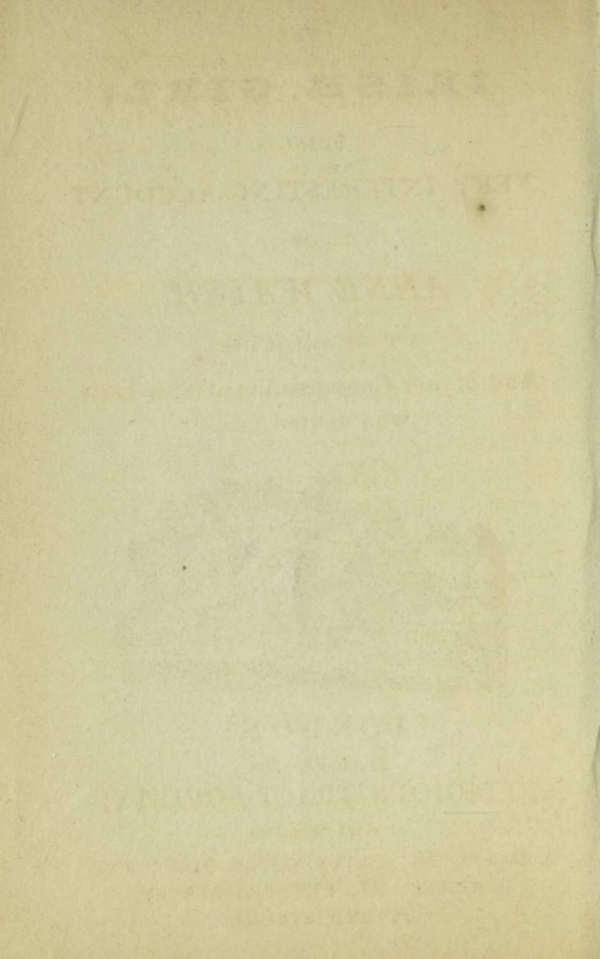
THE
IRISH GIRL;
BEING A
Very Interesting Account
OF
ANN WALSH
A Poor Irish Girl.



LONDON :

Printed for the
Religious Tract Society,
And sold by
J. DAVIS, No. 56, Paternoster Row,
and J. NISBET, 21, Berners-st
Oxford Street.

Price One Penny.



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IRISH GIRL;

BEING A
VERY INTERESTING ACCOUNT

OF
ANNE WALSH,

A POOR IRISH GIRL,
And of her Conversation with a Lady
who visited her.



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ANNE WALSH;

A Narrative founded on Fact.

*Affording Hints and Encouragement
for Ladies who visit the Sick.*

IN one of the country parts of Ireland, there lately lived a very poor family, of the name of Walsh. The chief support of the mother and daughter was the labour of Michael Walsh and his son Thomas.

These four persons, who composed the family, lived pretty comfortably till the young man was taken ill of a fever, of which he died. Immediately after his death, his sister Anne, a girl of about nineteen, sickened. The loss of their son's labour, with the expenses of his illness, reduced the poor people to great distress, and they were often obliged to send Anne to the people of the neighbourhood for milk, or other necessaries.

She used often to go to a gentleman's house about a quarter of a mile from her cabin, and was met there one day on the steps of the hall-door by a lady, a visitor at the house, who was struck by her looks of extreme sickness and

want, and made some inquiries about her illness.

Having got some articles of clothing, which the poor girl greatly needed, the lady called at the cabin in a few days with them, and then her chief motive in the visit being to serve her eternal interests, she took the opportunity of putting some questions to Anne on this most important subject; but she, by her answers, proved herself to be wretchedly ignorant indeed.

Upon her saying she could not read, the lady proposed calling sometimes, to read a portion of the Scriptures to her. Anne said, she would be glad to hear it, and the lady continued to visit her frequently

Mrs. Nickson (for that was the lady's name) was at first much discouraged in her attempts at instructing Anne Walsh. Her dullness of comprehension was very great; yet her desire to learn, and her apparently approaching end, along with the thoughts that God often revealeth those truths to "babes," which are "hid from the wise and prudent," prevented Mrs. Nickson from desisting. She would often say to herself, "The Lord has always found me slow to learn, and often rebellious under his teaching,

yet he has never cast me off. I will endeavour to imitate his dealing towards me in mine to this poor girl; and if he is pleased to bless my poor attempts, I shall not labour in vain."

Mrs. Nickson then, instead of being weary of the work, only endeavoured to make her meaning more plain, by using the simplest language in her power. One day, when reading in St Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter vii. verse 22, concerning Christ as a Surety, she asked Anne, if she knew what was meant by it. She confessed her ignorance, and begged an explanation. Mrs. Nickson replied:—Suppose you owed a great debt to your landlord, and had nothing to pay him with, he would be just in casting you into prison. If I was to hear of your distress, and was to take your debt on myself, and pay it for you, I would, in that case, be your *surety*, and you would be free through what I have done for you.—Thus Jesus was the Surety for his people, paying their debt to God. Now all who believe on him are free from condemnation *through him*."

Anne.—“ Oh, now I understand you, ma'am. But do you mean to show that we are in debt to God? How can that be?”

Mrs. Nickson.—“ Indeed, I do intend to show it, Anne, and I will explain to you what I mean. God has given a holy law, which it is the duty of all mankind to obey. This law, the substance of which is in the Ten Commandments, is approved by the conscience of every man; and even those who have never heard it, have it written in their hearts, so that they know what is right and wrong.”

Anne.—“ But is it true that God will punish all that break this law ? ”

Mrs. Nickson.—“ God said, ‘ Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.’—‘ The soul that sinneth, it shall die.’ ”

Anne.—“ I am afraid I have broken it. You know you read the Ten Commandments to me yesterday, and my heart told me I had done many things contrary to them.”

Mrs. Nickson.—“ Indeed, I am very sure you have. You, and I, and all the world have sinned against God’s laws. It is written in the Scriptures, ‘ All the world is become guilty before God ;’ and this state of guilt which we are all under by nature, is what I meant by saying that we are all in debt to God.”

Anne.— “ But if I do not break the

law any more, surely God will forgive me."

Mrs. Nickson.—"Would your not running in debt any more to your landlord, pay that which you already owed?"

Anne.—"Oh no; he would still reckon with me for that which was past."

Mrs. Nickson.—"Why, then, do you suppose that any future obedience of your's can make up for your past rebellion against God? Besides, if it would answer, you could not even now fully obey the law; for it is perfectly holy, and you are a sinful creature."

Anne.—"But why did God give a law which we cannot obey?"

Mrs. Nickson.—"Attend while I answer your question. God is the Creator, and consequently the Governor of all men. It was necessary for him to give his creatures a law by which they should be governed; and a perfect Being could give none other than a perfect law. God created man upright, and capable of doing all that his law requires; but man fell by his disobedience to God in the garden of Eden; and since his fall, all mankind, being born into the world with the sinful nature of their fallen parents, none are now capable of doing as the law re

quires. Yet God cannot accept any thing short of what he first required; for it is impossible for him to change, whatever changes may take place in his creatures. Thus, Anne, you may see why God gave a law; why that law requires perfect obedience; and also that it is the fault of our own wicked nature that we cannot obey it."

Arne.—"But is it not unjust and unreasonable in God to condemn men for breaking his law?"

Mrs. Nickson.—"Can you recollect any of God's commandments which you think are unjust or unreasonable?"

Anne. (*After a silence of some minutes.*) "You have read them so often to me, that I have them by heart, and yet I cannot think of one that is not good and reasonable."

Mrs. Nickson.—"Well then, if you allow God's commandments to be just and reasonable, why do you say that he will be unjust and unreasonable in punishing those who disobey them? But tell me, Anne, why do you want to prove that God will be unjust in punishing those who break his law?"

Anne.—"Oh, because I have broken it myself; but now I see my objections are all in vain. I have deserved that God should send me to hell; and if he

does I shall have no one but myself to blame for it. I am thankful to you for all you have done for me, but I am sorry you spoke to me about God; now, I am more afraid to die than ever, and yet all the neighbours say that I shall never get over this sickness, any more than poor Thomas. Oh, will you pray God to have mercy on me; perhaps he will hear you."

Mrs. Nickson.—"I am a sinner as well as you, and my prayers have no merit in themselves: but I am afraid, from the way you speak, that you have forgot all I ever told you about Christ the Saviour of sinners. Do you not remember what I have been just explaining to you about him as the Surety for the guilty?"

Anne.—"Indeed, I did not hear you before, but now I begin to understand you. Our sins are the debt you speak of. But do you say that Christ can get mercy for us?"

Mrs. Nickson.—"My dear Anne, not I, but God, that God against whom we have sinned, has said,—'THROUGH CHRIST is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and BY HIM all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law.'—'This is a truth worthy of all acceptation, (that is, worthy to be

received by all men,) that Christ came into the world to save sinners.' ”

Anne.—“ Indeed, since every one is a sinner, every one should be glad to hear of Christ. But you say I am a sinful creature, and I am sure it is very true. What claim then can I have on God's mercy? How can I merit that Christ should save me? ”

Mrs. Nickson.—“ You can indeed have no claim on God's mercy, neither are you able to merit any favour from God, much less the greatest of all his mercies, salvation by his Son. But sinners are saved freely by God's grace, not of works, lest any man should boast. Jesus came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And he has said, ‘ Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.’ ”

The poor girl's countenance showed that Mrs. Nickson's words gave her much pleasure. She wished to have talked longer on the subject, but Mrs. Nickson was obliged to return home. Upon her calling the next day, Anne said to her, “ I have been thinking of all you said to me yesterday; and a great many passages which you have read to me out of the Bible came into my mind, that had just the same meaning of what you said about our being sinners, and Christ the Saviour. You

have proved me from the Scripture to be a sinner unable to help myself, but you have told me that Christ is able to save even me. I will not despair of mercy, but will trust in him. I am not sorry now that you have spoke to me about God, but am thankful to you for it."

Mrs. Nickson's eyes filled with tears of joy and gratitude while she spoke. She took the poor girl's hand, and said, "Give the praise to God alone; I am your fellow-sinner, and have nothing to hope in, but the Saviour I have pointed out to you. But God in his free mercy having shown me something of his salvation, it is my delight to tell my perishing fellow-sinners of the all-sufficient remedy which infinite wisdom has provided for such."

From this time Mrs. Nickson found it very pleasant to visit Anne, whose mind seemed every day opening more and more to the glorious truths which are written in the word of God. It was a grief to her that she could not read it herself, and she would have attempted to learn, but that she knew her death was near.

One day, upon coming to the cabin, Mrs. Nickson found Anne at her wheel. Upon her asking her if she was better, that she could bear to sit at it, Anne

replied,—“ I am not better, but I thought I would try if I could spin at all. So I took it down from the place where it has lain ever since poor Thomas died, and I find I can do a little at a time. If I could spin but a cut a day it would be a help to my poor mother, and you know, ma'am, you have told me, that the meanest who believes the doctrine of God our Saviour, may adorn it, so even I would try to do so.” Mrs. Nickson commended her intention, and encouraged her to persist, which she was enabled to do. Her hopes of mercy were all built on Christ Jesus, but it was her constant endeavour to prove her love to him by keeping his commandments; and in very many instances she showed her faith by her works. A farmer who lived near was heard to say, “ I do not know what religion the lady has been teaching Anne Walsh, but I never saw so altered a girl in my life. She who used to be so slovenly and idle, now keeps her cabin neat, and strives to help her poor parents. I wish my idle daughters had a little of it.” Anne was now declining visibly, and suffered much from a pain in her side. Yet she was never heard to murmur, but would say, “ The Lord is laying his hand gently on me.”

But her severest trials were yet to

come. One evening Mrs. Nickson came to the cabin with tears in her eyes, and said, "Anne, I have bad news for you, I am going to leave you." "Are you going away?" said Anne. "Oh no, surely you will not. You know you promised to stay in the country till the Lord had taken me away from this world."

Mrs. Nickson.—"I did promise this to you, Anne, but I did not then foresee the call which I now have from this. My husband's regiment has returned to Ireland; he will be in Dublin in a week, and I must be there to meet him." Anne could not refrain from tears, and exclaimed, "If you go, who will be with me to comfort me in death, to tell me again of Jesus the Saviour of sinners?"

Mrs. Nickson.—"The Lord will be with you, he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do you not remember what David says in the 23d Psalm? 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for *thou art with me!*'"

Mrs. Nickson called in two days after, to bid her farewell. Anne was more calm, but her tears flowed fast when she said, "This is the last time I shall see you here. How pleasant have your kind visits been to me. It

was the Lord who put it into your heart to come and tell me of his precious Gospel ; and now he takes you from me. Yet I hope I say from my heart, " His will be done."

Mrs. Nickson.—" I am glad to see you thus enabled to submit to the will of our Heavenly Father ; and now that we are met together for the last time on earth, answer me from your heart this question ; what is your hope before God ? What is it that gives you confidence in the prospect of death and judgment ?

Anne, with a firm voice replied, " Jesus is all my hope ; I know he is a sure foundation. I trust he has a robe of righteousness for me, and that though I deserve hell, I may be accepted at the last for HIS SAKE."

Mrs. Nickson was satisfied with her answer ; she commended her to the Lord in prayer, and then parted, not without many tears, yet with a joyful hope of meeting again at the throne of God, to join together in his praise for ever and ever.

Anne lingered for about three months longer, and then died. Mrs. Nickson never heard the particulars of her death, but from the love which she was informed Anne had to the last, for nearing the word of God read, she

had good reason to hope that she was enabled to hold “the beginning of her confidence stedfast unto the end.”

May the readers of this little narrative be led, like her, to see themselves as they really are; guilty before God, and unable to merit his favour in any way; and may they, like her, be enabled to place all their hope on Him, who came into the world to save sinners; who died, the just for the unjust. So shall they be justified by his blood; and saved from wrath through Him. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that who soever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.”



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MAY the grace of Christ our Saviour,
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favour,
Rest upon us from above :

Thus may we abide in union
With each other and the Lord ;
And possess in sweet communion,
Joys which earth cannot afford.