

**LIFE'S BYE-WAYS, AND
WHAT I FOUND IN
THEM, BEING NARRATIVES
FROM REAL LIFE**

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Life's Bye-Ways, and What I Found in Them, Being Narratives from Real Life by A. Fergusson
& C. H. Spurgeon

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A. FERGUSSON & C. H. SPURGEON

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"ITS NO 00 — NO BROWNS"

SEE PAGE 4.

LIFE'S BYE-WAYS,
AND
WHAT I FOUND IN THEM,
BRING
NARRATIVES FROM REAL LIFE.

BY
A. FERGUSSON,
One of the Tutors of the Rev. C. H. SPURGEON'S College, Metropolitan
Tabernacle, Newington, London.

WITH A
PREFACE BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"Truth is stranger than fiction."

LONDON:
PASSMORE AND ALABASTER, 23, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1863.

250. M. 4³

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]



TO

MR. FRANCIS ASHBY,

IN HONOR OF A PROMISE MADE YEARS AGO, IN

GRATITUDE FOR AN UNINTERRUPTED FRIENDSHIP EXTENDING

OVER SEVERAL YEARS, AND AS A SIMPLE TRIBUTE OF RESPECT FOR

HIM AS A MAN, A GENTLEMAN, AND A CHRISTIAN,

THIS LITTLE WORK IS DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.



MASS of musty old rags may be seen under a glass case in the palace at Amsterdam. No Jew would make half so high a bid for the lot as he would offer for the cast-offs of a pauper. Yet the value of these relics it were difficult to calculate, for they are the hallowed memorials of the Netherlanders' patience and courage, the tokens of his triumph over the half-demon Spaniard, and the altogether demon Inquisition. Hail to you spirits gone to your rest who snatched the proud banner from the standard and made its remnants the witness of your prowess. But what have Dutch, and Spaniards, and moth-eaten flags to do with these Stories of "Life's Bye-Ways?" Well—the connection is not to be found in the fact that these sketches tell of rags and troops whose tatters are the banners of their clan; but we claim a comparison, because they are the records of moral conflicts, and the relics saved from spiritual contests. You will like these fragments none the less, O most enlightened friend, because they smell of powder, and bear evidence of having seen the thick of battle, where blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke, or other stern and unfastidious influences have dyed

them through and through. Soldiers do not wash the stains from their standards, or mend the shot-holes, but they hang up the old flags just as they come from the dust of the battle. Refinement may suggest polished and elegant language, but *finè* phrases would be out of place in this record of a rough hand-to-hand struggle. Delicate silks and snow-white muslins are to be flaunted in the pageant of a tournament; lily hands and perfumed locks belong to carpet-knights, but the rough jerkin, and the bespattered gabardine are the insignia of real men-at-arms.

MR. FERGUSSON has not disdained to be the patron of the Pariah, and the tutor of the thief. He is one of those who are willing to thrust down their arms up to the very elbows in the mire that they may rescue the fallen from the slough of depravity and despond. He has met with strange adventures in queer corners, and he does well to inform us of them, that we may sympathise the better with God's workers, and pray the more earnestly for the degraded ones among whom they labour. What marvellous things the moon sees! What tragedies and comedies are witnessed by the stars when they peer between the tiles which but half cover the garret of poverty! The world is growing very common-place to some people; the days of stirring incident and romantic enterprise dawn not upon their jaded souls; they blame their stars for their *ennui*, and scold the dull age because it gives no scope for their energies;

and offers no stimulus to their mental powers. Alas ye little men, it is indeed a dwarfish age and ye make it so! But when or where was there a glorious era for a lazy man? Who makes discoveries while lolling on his couch? How can surprises happen to those who cross not their own threshold? There are few adventures in a life spent in luxury, and romantic incident never intrudes itself into the serenity of pompous respectability. You may lounge in drawing rooms, and dally in parlours for half a century, and never get so much as a peep at the glorious drama which is being enacted on the stage of this year of grace, 1863; the place for sight-seeing is in the pit of hard work among the toiling crowd, up in the gallery of crime where thieves do congregate, or away there in the solitary boxes where sickness and penury moan to each other. If we would take a walk in the "guilt gardens" of our huge city, and stoop over the young plants, we should see that our moral *fauna* has specimens as rare as any period can offer. Read the annals of the slums, and you will never complain of the tameness of current history. The courts, alleys, and crowded houses of London, contain unwritten novels, far more healthy in matter, and not less thrilling than the sensation rubbish which robs so many of their time. Come off from the gravel path of respectable society into the middle of the road with the struggling street-trader, or tarry awhile under the hedge with the gipsy or the tramp, and you shall