

**THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL MAN OF
THE SOUTH: A SKETCH OF THE
LIFE AND LABORS OF THE REV.
JOHN MCCULLAGH, PP. 15-189**

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JOSEPH H. MCCULLAGH

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John D. Fulling

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL MAN OF THE SOUTH.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE.

MANY years ago, a little boy in Scotland lay suffering with brain fever. His mother was a widow, and he was now her only son. Thrice already had she been called to mourn, like "Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." According to the custom of that time, the physician was bleeding the little sufferer, to reduce the fever; and while feeling the pulse, which was beating weaker and weaker, his face was grave and troubled. The mother was looking on with anguish and despair.

"John," said the physician, "has the pain left you?"

"Yes, sir; the moment you spoke it stopped."

"Thank God, you will recover. The crisis is past."

These words from the doctor brought sunshine to the mother's heart and face. This boy, whose life had been quivering in a balance, was John McCullagh.

He was born near Glasgow, Scotland, October 31, 1811, being the youngest of four children. His brother Joseph, and two sisters, died quite early in life. His father died when John was very young. It was with joy like unto that of the Shunammite woman, whose son was raised from the dead by Elisha, that this afflicted Scottish mother heard her son would recover.

She was a woman of great strength of character and of deep religious convictions. When her son was restored to health, she bent all her energies to train him in a godly and pious manner. The Bible, the Confession of Faith and Shorter Catechism were her text-books. Faith, prayer and holy living were her methods of teaching. The pupil was an apt scholar, having a bright mind and a remarkable memory. Chapter after chapter from God's word was

thoroughly learned. The Psalms of David in metre, such as are used in the Scottish churches, were memorized. These he never forgot; and when over seventy years of age he could sit and repeat by the hour, with all the quaint sweetness of the Scotch brogue, these beautiful Psalms and truths of God which he had learned at his mother's knee.

While the boy was quite young, the noted Rev. Dr. Thomas Chalmers came to Glasgow, as pastor of the Tron Church, and commenced his wonderful work of Sabbath-school and church extension in the destitute portions of that city. John McCullagh attended Dr. Chalmers' Sabbath-school in Glasgow, and afterwards in Edinburgh. He was a faithful and diligent scholar, and often spoke of the day when Dr. Chalmers took him by the hand and led him out before the Sunday-school and praised him for memorizing Bible verses. The love and admiration which John McCullagh had for Dr. Thomas Chalmers became one of the controlling influences of his life. It was from Chalmers' work that he grasped the idea, in after years, that Sabbath-school work among

the poor and destitute was the greatest door open for Christian activity; Chalmers having said, "I see more good results from my Sabbath-school in Kilmany than from all my other work." It would be an interesting study to trace out the power and influence of Dr. Chalmers' example on the life of John McCullagh. The same fire that burned in the heart of the Nestor of Scotch preachers was communicated to the breast of his Sabbath-school scholar, and borne by him through the forests of America.

When a young man, he entered the University of Glasgow. Geometry and the higher mathematics had especial attractions for him. Surveying, civil engineering and astronomy were also favorite studies. Owing to failing health, he was compelled to suspend his studies for several years. During this time he was connected with a commission house, and travelled for it through the north of Ireland and west of Scotland. This active life having benefited him, he returned to the university to complete his education.

About this time his mother died. His affectionate, tender heart always treasured her

precious memory as sacred; and even during his last days, when speaking of her, there was a peculiar tenderness and pathos in his tone.

Just before completing his theological studies, another trial of a different nature befell him. He had inherited quite a handsome property, but had been induced to indorse for some friends; their enterprise failed and he had to pay the notes. This swept away his fortune in one day.

He now resolved to leave Scotland and go to America. His plan had been to devote himself to Sunday-school work in Great Britain, and he had organized Sabbath-schools among the colliers and fishermen in Scotland, and the Irish in Connaught; but America seemed to be the more promising field.

His family were all dead, and his fortune gone. He wished to leave the place of so many sorrowful and unpleasant associations, and go to a new world, and devote his life to the great work of training the young for Christ.

Before leaving Great Britain, he visited the Giant's Causeway and the Irish coast. One day, on this visit, he secured a gig to drive

along the beautiful coast. Night overtook him before he returned. The way was lonesome, and there was no one in the vehicle except himself and the driver. Suddenly two men, armed with clubs, rushed out of the bushes and seized the horse by the bridle. "Highwaymen," said McCullagh to himself, "and I am unarmed!" But his courage did not fail; and rising, he shouted in a loud voice, "Let go that horse, or I will make you!" At the same time he snapped the spring of his umbrella twice, sharply. The larger man cried to his companion, "Run, Mike! that fellow has a pistol." In an instant they were gone, and he returned safely; but the adventure terminated the trip for sight-seeing.