

**THE DAIRYMAN'S
DAUGHTER. AN
AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE**

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The Dairyman's Daughter. An Authentic Narrative by Legh Richmond

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LEGH RICHMOND

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THE

DAIRYMAN'S DAUGHTER.

In Authentic Narrative.

BY THE

REV. LEGH RICHMOND, M.A.

RECTOR OF FURVEY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY BIRKET FOSTER AND OTHERS.



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CHAPTER I.

It is a delightful employment to discover and trace the operations of Divine grace, as they are manifested in the dispositions and lives of God's real children. It is peculiarly gratifying to observe how frequently, among the poorer classes of mankind, the sunshine of mercy beams upon the heart, and bears witness to the image of Christ which the Spirit of God has impressed thereupon. Among such, the sincerity and simplicity of the Christian character appear unencumbered by those obstacles to spirituality of mind and conversation which too often prove a great hindrance to those who live

in the higher ranks. Many are the difficulties which riches, worldly consequence, high connexions, and the luxuriant refinements of polished society, throw in the way of religious profession. Happy, indeed, it is (and some such happy instances I know) where grace has so strikingly supported its conflict with natural pride, self-importance, the allurements of luxury, ease, and worldly opinion, that the noble and mighty appear adorned with genuine poverty of spirit, self-denial, humble-mindedness, and deep spirituality of heart.

But, in general, if we want to see religion in its most simple and pure character, we must look for it among the poor of this world who are rich in faith. How often is the poor man's cottage the palace of God! Many can truly declare that they have there learned the most valuable lessons of faith and hope, and there witnessed the most striking demonstrations of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God.

The character which the present narrative is designed to introduce to the notice of my readers is given *from real life and circumstances*. I first became acquainted with her by receiving the following letter, which I transcribe from the original now before me:—

“REV. SIR,

“I take the liberty to write to you. Pray excuse me, for I have never spoken to you. But I once heard you when you preached at —— church. I believe you are a faithful preacher to warn sinners to flee from the wrath that will be revealed against all those that live in sin, and die impenitent. Pray go on in the strength of the Lord. And may he bless you, and crown your labour of love with success, and give you souls for your hire!

“The Lord has promised to be with those whom he calls and sends forth to preach his word, to the end of time, for without him we can do nothing. I was much rejoiced to hear of those marks of love and affection to that poor soldier of the S. D. militia. Surely the love of Christ sent you to that poor man: may that love ever dwell richly in you by faith! may it constrain you to seek the wandering

souls of men with the fervent desire to spend and be spent for his glory! May the unction of the Holy Spirit attend the word spoken by you with power, and convey deep conviction to the hearts of your hearers! May many of them experience the Divine change of being made new creatures in Christ!

"Sir, be fervent in prayer with God for the conversion of sinners. His power is great, and who can withstand it? He has promised to answer the prayer of faith, that is put up in his Son's name. 'Ask what ye will, it shall be granted you.' How this should strengthen our faith, when we are taught by the word and the Spirit how to pray! Oh, that sweet inspiring hope; how it lifts up the fainting spirits, when we look over the precious promises of God! What a mercy if we know Christ and the power of his resurrection in our own hearts! Through faith in Christ we rejoice in hope, and look up in expectation of that time drawing near, when all shall know and fear the Lord, and when a nation shall be born in a day.

"What a happy time, when Christ's kingdom shall come! Then shall 'his will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' Men shall be daily fed with the manna of his love, and delight themselves with the Lord all the day long. Then what a paradise below they will enjoy! How it animates and enlivens my soul with vigour to pursue the ways of God, that I may even now bear some humble part in giving glory to God and the Lamb!

"Sir, I began to write this on Sunday, being detained from attending on public worship. My dear and only sister, living as a servant with Mrs. —, was so ill, that I came here to attend in her place and on her. But now she is no more.

"I was going to entreat you to write to her in answer to this; she being convinced of the evil of her past life, and that she had not walked in the ways of God, nor sought to please him. But she earnestly desired to do so. This makes me have a comfortable hope that she is gone to glory, and that she is now joining in sweet concert with the angelic host in heaven to sing the wonders of redeeming love. I hope I may now write, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.'

"She expressed a desire to receive the Lord's supper, and commemorate his precious death and sufferings. I told her, as well as I was able, what it was to receive Christ into her heart; but as her weakness of body increased, she did not mention it again. She seemed quite resigned before she died. I do hope she is gone from a world of death and sin to be with God for ever.

"Sir, I hope you will not be offended with me, a poor ignorant person, to take such a liberty as to write to you. But I trust, as you are called to instruct sinners in the ways of God, you will bear with me, and be so kind to answer this ill-wrote letter, and give me some instruction. It is my heart's desire to have the mind that was in Christ, that when I awake up in his likeness then I may be satisfied.

"My sister expressed a wish that you might bury her. The minister of our parish, whither she will be carried, cannot come. She will lie at —. She died on Tuesday morning, and will be buried on Friday or Saturday (whichever is most convenient to you) at three o'clock in the afternoon. Please to send an answer by the bearer, to let me know whether you can comply with this request.

"From your unworthy servant,

"ELIZABETH W—."

I was much struck with the simple and earnest strain of devotion which this letter breathed. It was but indifferently written and spelt. But this the rather tended to endear the hitherto unknown writer, as it seemed characteristic of the union of humbleness of station with eminence of piety. I felt quite thankful that I was favoured with a correspondent of this description; the more so, as such characters were at that time very rare in the neighbourhood. I have often wished that epistolary intercourse of this kind were more encouraged and practised among us. I have the greatest reason to speak well of its effect both on myself and others. Communication by letter as well as by conversation with the pious poor has often been the instrument of animating and reviving my own heart in the midst of duty, and of giving me the most profitable information for the general conduct of the ministerial office.

As soon as the letter was read, I inquired who was the bearer of it.

"He is waiting at the outside of the gate, sir," was the reply.

I went out to speak to him, and saw a venerable old man, whose long hoary hair and deeply-wrinkled countenance commanded more than common respect. He was resting his arm upon the gate, and tears were streaming down his cheeks. On my approach he made a low bow, and said,

"Sir, I have brought you a letter from my daughter; but I fear you will think us very bold in asking you to take so much trouble."

"By no means," I replied; "I shall be truly glad to oblige you and any of your family in this matter, provided it be quite agreeable to the minister of your parish."

"Sir, he told me yesterday that he should be very glad if I could procure some gentleman to come and bury my poor child for him, as he lives five miles off, and has particular business on that day: so when I told my daughter, she asked me to come to you, sir, and bring that letter, which would explain the matter."

I desired him to come into the house, and then said,

"What is your occupation?"

"Sir, I have lived most of my days in a little cottage at —, six miles from here. I have rented a few acres of ground, and kept some cows, which, in addition to my day-labour, has been the means of supporting and bringing up my family."

"What family have you?"

"A wife, now getting very aged and helpless, two sons, and one daughter; for my other poor dear child is just departed out of this wicked world."

"I hope, for a better."

"I hope so, too. Poor thing! she did not use to take to such good ways as her sister; but I do believe that her sister's manner of talking with her before she died was the means of saving her soul. What a mercy it is to have such a child as mine is! I never thought about my own soul seriously till she, poor girl, begged me to flee from the wrath to come."

"How old are you?"