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Title: The Woman At the Well

Date of first publication: 1848

Author: Favell Lee Mortimer (1802-1878)

Date first posted: July 19 2012

Date last updated: July 19 2012

Faded Page eBook #20120720

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No. 18.

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WOMAN AT THE WELL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PEEP OF DAY."

LONDON:
JOHN HATCHARD AND SON.

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THE WOMAN AT THE WELL.

Did you ever take a journey, and how did you travel? The quickest way of travelling is by the train. You may go in that way twenty-five miles in one hour. Another way of travelling is in a coach or omnibus. But poor people often go in a van, or a waggon, while others go on foot—that is a very slow way indeed. Twenty miles in a day is a good journey for a man, and as for a child, I do not think he could walk ten without being very much tired.

I am now going to tell you of a poor man who travelled on foot. Where was he going? Was it to his home? He had none. He was always going from place to place to teach people about God. This poor man was a very good man; he would often preach while people stood round and listened. I hope you never laugh at any poor man you see preaching in the streets. This poor man did not travel alone; there were twelve other poor men who went with him; they were his friends; they liked to be with him, and to hear what he said about God and heaven.

One day this poor man was making a journey with his friends. It was very hot, and about the middle of the day; he was tired, and hungry, and thirsty; he saw a well of water just under a hill, and he sat down by it to rest himself. There was a town a little way off, and his friends went to the town to buy some food, so the poor man was all alone by the side of the well; but though he was thirsty, he could not drink, for the well was deep, and there was no bucket there. Very soon a woman came to the well with a jug to fetch water; then the poor man said to her, "Give me to drink." He always spoke kindly, yet this woman behaved very rudely to him. She saw that this poor man was a Jew, and she did not like Jews. I hope *you* do, for God loves the poor Jews. The woman would not give the thirsty traveller any water, because he was a Jew. Was the poor man angry? Oh, no; he was a meek, gentle, and patient man; he only answered the woman, "If you had asked me for some water, I would have given you running spring water." The woman was surprised to hear this. "How could you give me water," she said, "when you have no jug or bucket, and the well is deep?" Then she began to say what good water there was in the well, and that she was sure the poor man could not give her any better water. But the poor man told her that he could give her better water than that; "for," said he, "any one who drinks this water is soon thirsty again, but if any one drink of the water I give, he is never thirsty any more." Then the woman thought she would like such water as that, for she could not bear the trouble of coming to the well every day to fill her jug; so she said, "*Sir*" (for she was more civil now than she was at first), "do give me some of this water, that I may never thirst, or come here to fetch water." But instead of giving her any water, the poor man began to talk to her about her sins, for he knew she was a wicked woman, and had done many wrong things. She was quite surprised to find that the stranger knew all about her—knew things which other people did not know. At last she said, "I see you are a prophet," and so he was—the woman was right in thinking the poor man was a prophet. But still she did not guess who he was. At last he told her; and who do you think that poor man was? The Son of God! Oh, wonderful! The Son of the great God—a poor man sitting by a well! It is wonderful, yet it is true.

When the woman knew that it was Jesus Christ who was talking to her, she left her jug and ran very quickly into the town. What for? To call the people to see the Lord Jesus Christ. She said to them, "Come and see a man who has told me everything I have done." The people of the town went back with the woman to the well. Would you have gone back with the woman? I think you would. The poor man was still sitting by the well, and his twelve friends were with him. But he had not eaten any dinner—he could not, for he was so glad about this woman and about the people of the town, for he was going to teach them, and to save their souls from going to hell. He liked saving souls. It was his delight. He had come down from heaven on purpose to save us.

The people from the town begged him not to go on his journey, but to stay with them; and so he went to the town and stayed there two days. How much he talked to the people while he was there! He told them about God his Father, and about sin, and Satan, and hell, and how he was coming to save them by dying for them. A great many of the people believed what he said and loved him. Some had not believed when the woman said, "He has told me all I ever did." But they did believe when they heard him speak themselves. "*Now*," they said, "we do believe that this is the Saviour of this world."

Did the poor man give water to the people? Yes, he gave them water from heaven. What do I mean by "water?" "The Holy Spirit of God." When people have the Holy Spirit in their hearts, they are happy, for then they love God. People who do not love God are not happy; they are always trying to be happy, but they *cannot* be happy. Can money make people happy? No; can cakes and fruit? Can new coats and frocks? Can picture-books? Can fine sights? None of these things can make you happy *always*. They please for a little while, but the pleasure is soon over. But if you love God you

will always be happy—you will thirst no more.

Should you like to be happy? I know you would. Then go to Jesus. He is not sitting by a well now, yet you may find him, though you cannot see him. He is sitting on a throne in heaven. If you were to speak to him he would hear you. Say to him, "O Lord Jesus, make me happy. Give me thy Holy Spirit. I want to live with God, and not to go to hell." Jesus knows all the naughty things we have done. If he were to come into this room, he could tell you a great deal that I do not know. He saw one child go to the cupboard when its mother's back was turned and steal sugar. He heard another tell a lie—nobody found him out, but God knew it. He observes the spiteful pinch, he knows when big girls shake the little ones, he hears wicked children when they call their parents bad names—such names as I would not like to repeat—and he hears, too, when they speak any bad word—all, all is written down in God's book—nothing is forgotten, and all will be read out one day. But if you ask God *now*, he will forgive you *all*. Oh, ask him—ask him; he has promised to forgive you if you ask, because Jesus died for you. He forgave the woman at the well, though she was a very naughty woman.

Read John iv. 6–43.

'Tis religion that can give
Sweetest pleasures while we live;
'Tis religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die.

After death its joys will be
Lasting as eternity.
Be the living God my friend
Then my bliss shall never end.

THE END.

Macintosh, Printer, Great New-street, London.

PRAYER.

O Father in Heaven,
Thou hast made all things;
The sun, moon, and stars, the land and sea.
Thou hast made me.
Thou hast taken care of me.
I thank Thee for all thy kindness.

Great God, Thou art in every place;
Thou seest in the dark,
As well as in the light;
Thou knowest all the naughty things
That I have done, and said, and thought.

O Merciful Lord, pardon my sins,
Because Jesus Christ, thy dear Son,
Died upon the cross for sinners.
Give me thy Holy Spirit,
That I may love Thee, and obey thy laws.
Keep me from minding Satan,
And save me from going to hell:
And whenever I die,
O take my soul to Heaven.

When Jesus comes with clouds,
And with the holy angels,
May I be glad to see Him.
May my dear parents, and brothers, and sisters,
Be happy with Thee for ever and ever.
May all people love Thee,
And speak of thy goodness.
Hear me for Christ's sake. Amen.

Transcriber's Note

- Obvious punctuation errors repaired.