

POLLY BANYARD'S EXPERIENCE.

“AN OWRE TRUE TALE.”

I said to myself, one Sunday, said I,
“ They talk a great deal of Dissenters ;
'Tis a long way to church, and the meeting's close by,
So to-day I will go to the Ranters.

“ My currants are off, and my gooseberries done,
And now there's the pears and the apples ;
The boys will be here, if they know I am gone ;
But they don't keep you long at the chapels.

“ It really is hard that I cannot go out,
But the boys will get into my garden ;
And Sunday's the worst, there's so many about.
If I catch them, not one will I pardon.

“ The preacher's gone by ten minutes or more,
So I sha'nt have a long time to wait ;
And I'll seat myself soon as I get in the door,
And just keep an eye on my gate.”

Well, I went to the Ranters, they preached and they prayed,
And they asked me to join their connexion ;
But I found for all this they expect to be paid,
As afterwards came the collection.

So there went a penny, for what could I do ?
As they don't hold the plate at the door ;
No ! they bring it before you, right into the pew ;
But, however, I'll go there no more.

The Wesleyans next Sunday came into my head,
So I went, for the sake of variety ;
And they were collecting, the Gospel to spread,
By means of the Bible Society.

The preacher was loud against lovers of pelf,
And wearers of brooches and lockets ;
“ I well know your meaning,” said I to myself ;
“ Here's another attack on the pockets.”

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He spoke of the heathen on some foreign shore—
How they lived and they died without hope ;
So a penny went there, and a penny before,
Enough for a half-pound of soap.

I said, "They shall draw no more coppers from me ;"
So next Sunday I went to Mill Lane.
"Independents," they call themselves ; how can that be,
When there they were begging again ?

Well, I gave them a penny, and felt fit to fall,
For the plate put me all in a flutter.
That made three-pence I'd given for nothing at all—
The price of a quartern of butter.

Why not give at home, if you've got it to spare,
Not send to Fejee or Finland ;
But they're always a-cadging for goodness knows where,
For India, China, or Greenland.

We've a lack of instruction at home, I dare say,
And heathens enough of our own ;
Then why gather our money, and send it away
Where "never no body worn't known ?"

I'll go to the church, where my father and mother
In youth always trained me to go ;
Here they're always collecting for something or other,
But at church they don't do so, I know.

To go on with my tale, as in days heretofore,
The next Sunday I dressed myself neatly ;
No boys were about, when I locked up my door,
And the bells were a-chiming most sweetly.

I put on my best gown that I keep in the hutch ;
Mrs. Green was the woman who made it ;
I hardly thought she'd have asked me so much,
But two shillings she charged, and I paid it.

And eight-pence a yard, no doubt you will say,
Was a great deal of money to give ;
But Hockley, he had such a wheedling way,
But 'twill last me as long as I live.

It's rather too short, and the skirt is too scant,
But still 'tis a beautiful gown ;
The sleeves are old-fashioned, but all they now want
Is just to be turned upside down.

Such fashions, O lord ! as they wear now-a-days,
I'm sick of their finiking pride ;
Their long-waisted bodies, and bustles and stays,
And shoes that lace up at the side.

Their waists must nip in, and their hips must stick out,
And tuckers all up to the neck,
And filigree aprons all garnished about,
But mine is a double-width check.

Then I wore that new shawl that last summer I bought
(Dress hath cost me the wealth of the mines) ;
If that's not a good one, you'll say that it ought,
I gave twenty-pence for it to Hinds.

Bet Turner has one the same pattern as mine,
Bought at Seaber's when he made a clearance ;
But, bless you, it is not so large nor so fine,
And has not that silky appearance.

The parson, thought I, as I got o'er the stile,
At New Year's may send me a gift ;
You may go to the meeting a precious long while
Ere they'll give you a blanket or shift.

If you've got a few halfpence, they'll take them away
For missions, or Bibles, or schools ;
If you sit in a pew, they expect you to pay ;
If not, you may sit on the stools.

Since I'd been to church a new gravestone was down,
And I wished to know what there was on it ;
And Miss Modish was home from her visit to town,
And I wanted to see her new bonnet.

Well, I went by the foot-path, the ground being soft,
And the bell it was just tolling in,
When who should I meet, coming over the croft,
But my silly old cousin, George Shinn.

"Why, Polly," said he, "how smart you appear,
Your gown and your shawl are real nice ones ;
I took you, at first, for a lady down here,
Who is visiting at Mrs. Fyson's.

"You bring to my mind the time long-gone by,
When I was a youth and went wooing."
"Go along with your lumber and nonsense," said I,
"And think about where you are going."

He always throws off some nonsensical joke.
Why the things that I wear are my own.
Last winter, he said, when I wore my red cloak,
That I looked like a poppy, full blown.

They may say what they like, it is warm and it's good,
They won't make me cast it aside ;
They may laugh at its shape, with its collar and hood,
I won't cut it, nor yet have it dyed.

As I entered the church they were singing the psalm,
And the text was, " Our works will not save us."
Then I soon fell asleep, as the weather was warm,
But a beautiful sermon he gave us.

We moved slowly out, and I could not tell why,
So I whispered, and asked Nancy Morgan.
" A collection," said she ; " a collection ?" said I.
" Yes," said she, " for to buy a new organ."