

Reminiscences of my Boyhood.

by Rev. John Morrison Reid

I narrowly escaped being an Irishman. My father learned his trade in ^{the fall of '87} Ironage and my mother was from Sandeage. ^{as one by} They were no sooner married than they resolved to emigrate to America, for my mother's brother ^{John Morrison} had some years before gone to New York & was fast becoming rich. ^{the same they too & their} So it was that ten children ^{of what I was deprived} were all born in the United States, all but one in the City of New York. Our ^{dear} ~~dear~~ ^{dear} sister Mary Ann was a native of Ohio where our parents spent a couple of years ^{pioneering} on a quarter section of land ~~bought with the~~ ^{hope & then returned to New York} ~~where my father~~ ^{at his trade.}

~~and~~ ^{and} ~~but~~ ^{but} for what seemed the merest trifle I might never have been a Methodist but a high Churchman ^{or an infidel.} My father came to Ohio County, a high Churchman and on the first sabbath he went out to find a church & came to the door of old Trinity

at the head of Water St where the previous
Service is and was shown into a dark &
dingy pew under the front gallery marked
"for strangers". He was dressed in old country
style and ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~way~~ ^{way} one that came
in ~~was~~ staring at him. He felt sad and
lonesome, had no heart for the service & left
the church at noon resolved never again
to enter it. The next Sunday he started out
to ~~attend~~ ^{not} for worship but ^{for} a walk. ~~On~~
strolling through Broadway he came to John
street and saw a crowd of people ~~going~~
passing down it, many of them old country
people dressed like himself & thought he
would follow them & see where they were
going. They turned into the old John St.
Church, ^{& he went in too.} The pulpit ~~was~~ between the
doors & he got into the very front seat instead
of the rear one & enjoyed the service as
well as could be expected in the absence of
the prayer book & organ. At the close of
the service as he came to go out the old

gentleman sitting next to him took his
hand & shaking it heartily said "glad to
see you here, friend, come again, our seats
are all free". He revolved in a moment
"I will", and so he did ^{continued to do} and I was
baptized at the altar of that old sanctuary
and the family became Methodists. There
has been a little backsliding since, but
although that old broken deed is known
it is that morning ~~shook generations~~
when he shook the hand of that
young Irishman, into the generations he
shook whole generations into the Meth-
odist Church, men & women into its min-
istry & dollars thousands into its coffers.
The moral is let Methodists always be
sociable.

It must have been soon after 1830
that my father moved to Greenwicks Village
then a rural hamlet ~~from where a~~ A line
of stages ^{by the way} ~~ran~~ ^{ran} ~~about~~ ^{ran} the village way, little ~~was~~
by the drive blowing his train how to gath-
er passengers to carry them to the city for

I think ~~it~~ was five cents a piece. A rapidly increasing family demanded more money than a journeyman baker could earn & so he rented a frame house ^{on a spacious lot} on Leominster Street (now Bleeker), just north of the present Grove street, built an oven & started business for himself. The ~~the~~ children were taken to the Old Bedford Street Church and its Sunday School, and there I ^{I remained} spent until I had ^{nearly} reached the station of manhood. ~~Through my father's removal~~ ^{the family migration was} to 94 Charles St just west of Bleeker street, ^{my father's house} had purchased & filled it a little ^{apartment house} ~~apartment house~~ ^{apartment} & store. The Old ^{Bedford St} Church is fadeless in my memory. It was without architectural beauty, a mere oblong covered with shingles, ^{painted yellow,} and with its ^{front} gable end toward Bedford St. ~~Below~~ ^{large} around it was a small cemetery, with ^{large} ~~new~~ & simple headstones. Its interior ~~was~~ ^{is} equally ineffaceable from my mind & heart. Nothing could be planned. ^{When my wife} ~~fallen~~ ^{fallen} is

three sides, and a high pulpit closely
 panelled up in front & all painted white.
 The walls were ^{all} white & without counter
 pieces or cornices. But ^{an} every service it was
 crowded ^{seats all front men & women sitting apart,} ~~and~~ every Sunday night the
 altar was full inside with men sing-
 ing shouting, whistling, and rarely was the
 outside without "mourners" and it was
 also often filled ^{sometimes} to overflowing. I wish
 I could photograph for you one of these
 old prayer meetings with Hadden, Ston-
 ish, the McCleams. Ireland, Merritt
 the Bushes.

one on the altar. I wish I could
 photograph for you the mighty volume
 of song that ~~was~~ went up from that
 vast congregation as they sang the words
 of the old hymn book & it would show
 from your admiration the kind of
 diddle music ^{& poetry now so fashionable} ~~now so frequent~~
 The ceiling of the basement as

I recollect it was about even with
 the surface of the ground and its rooms
 were gloomy, but with but narrow hall
 way ^{of 20 feet} long, ^{and} utilized for class
 rooms a lecture room, ^{the latter being also} ~~used~~
 the Sunday School room. Here goodly
 men gave me my first lessons ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ ^{Christianity} ~~in~~
 and for several years marched me up
^{with hundreds of others} into the gallery when the Sunday School sat
 together, boys in one gallery & girls separate
 to them ^{with others}, the teachers tried to keep us
 away & have us listen to the preachers
 whose very names I now revere

The influences about me filled me
~~with a~~ ^{with} ~~thought~~ I was but a ^{young} ^{12 years} ~~bad~~ ^{boy}
 with pungent sense of sinfulness, an awful
 dread of death, an irresistible envy of
 anyone I really believed to be a Christian
 I prayed in secret & sometimes turned up
 my pillow in agony but I shut myself ~~up~~
 adhered to my ^{godless} way ^{thought} In the Spring I
^{was} ~~not~~ a bad boy.

of 1833 Rev. J. B. Green became our
pastor, and ~~that~~ number of awakenings
& conversions under the power of his pathos
& tenderness became ever greater than
usual. He had a son Nelson about
my own age & we became cronies so
that exalted hours, as I felt it to be, of
familiarity in the pastor's household became

One Sunday night as Mr Green ~~was~~ ^{came} ~~was~~ ^{was}
passing down the aisle, ^{as was his custom during my prayer meetings} he came to me
~~setting~~ ^{who was occupied} ~~the~~ ^{the} outer seat of
the pew, and taking my hand, ^{most affectionately} said "now
John you come with me to the altar"
But broken hearted as I was I declined
He pressed the case but I absolutely
refused. Mr Green had scarcely left
me before I was sorry. Oh! how sorry, ^{that} I
had not gone. This feeling was increased
by an old lady who sat next to me &
said "My son you ought to have gone
Perhaps Jesus would have saved you." As

Mr Green passed back down the
aisle he stopped ^{just} a second & said to
me "John do come" and I put my hand
in his & went with him & knelt at that
old Altar in that old Church and
settled by that step all my life & all
my Eternity. No wonder it is precious
to me. I did not find Christ ^{the night} but
began an open & avowed Christian life
I became a probationer ^{on the 25th day of April 1834} and was
assigned to the Class of Philanthropists
which I attended regularly & he was
me a ~~place~~ ^{Months passed & you did not know many things to please} spiritual guide indeed. A
^{penitent in the last part of 1834} little note among my papers. In fact
(p. 1834) about the 6th or 8th day I don't
recall exactly the Lord gave me a
bright Evidence of my sons forgiveness. For
months I had felt that I ^{had} forsaken
the devil & was on the Lords side
& ^{but I was} ~~had been~~ agonizing in prayer
for that beaifying witness of the

spirit of which I ^{collected} heard so much
and I was at this time a clerk with
Jno. Park a commission merchant of
45 South Street. On that day a ^{friend}
whom I had ^{impacted to my imagination} returned to the back part of the
store where we had ^{stowed} piled up a cargo
of molasses ^{in kegs} and I was
in prayer that he would condescend to uncur
his face and let me see him ^{in my state of} smile
his forgiveness. He did it then & there
and to all these scenes of years and
amid all this life of wandering I
have never doubted the completeness
of Christ's reconciliation ^{to even me}
If he blessed me I ^{kingd} by wife blessing ^{any other that come}
I have always felt that for the joys of
that home all my powers & all my
possessions were but a meager offering
^{dear as the first} cry of my heart, bounding with
the first love of pardon ^{even the}
away its ^{own} just utterance ^{and}

was ^{out 10} If all the world but Jesus Christ
all the world would love him too

In a word I wanted to preach the bless-
ed gospel, and I wanted education
to that end and I sought & found a
society ^{concerned to these things} ~~to that end~~. At this crisis a
my life my father removed to ²⁷⁴ King
street and I fell among youth
of ^{Green street} ^{charges} of like taste & aspiration ^{with myself}

I transferred my church membership
there, the Green's next appointment was Middle
bury ^{and I went up there to confirm & the evening}
before I left the ~~church~~ ^{church}
it had been enlarged. As I recollect

the south side was extended some
20 or 25 feet, ^{maybe more} the ^{roof} ^{remained} as
it had been ^{to make it} ^{higher} ^{with} ^{timber}

All the ^{old} ^{simplicity} of architecture
was retained and the glory of the
Stekmat was not diminished
~~but~~ continued to have on its altar
as from the beginning

As I have not space to tell
other things, ~~helped me~~ ~~in~~ ~~my~~ ~~course~~ ~~to~~
the accomplishment of my desires and ~~all~~ ~~done~~
in 1836 I entered N.Y. University the last term
of Freshman year I graduated in 1839. My
~~My parents removed to 21st Street 3^d~~
My parents during the time had removed to
21st East of 3^d St & my Church membe
ship was transferred to Harlem Mission, N.Y.
~~Church~~ I became Secretary of Rose Hill S.
I entered upon the activities. In Jan
1838 ~~the~~ ~~meeting~~ at the recommendation
of Rose Hill leaders meeting Bro Daniel
Dorman gave me license to preach. In
July 1839, the Quarterly Conference con
vened at the house of James Amstutz
in Rose Hill licensed me to preach. ~~Financial~~
~~difficulties~~ reasons delayed my ^{joining} Conference till 1844
when I was sent to Wolcottville and began
my career that was ^{my} directed by the behest
of last General Conference.

I was also present at the laying
 of the corner stone of the present
 edifice. In two points ^{the erection} it did vio-
 lence to my heart. First that it former
 destroyed the grass & trees & groves
 that seemed to me like a ^{rich, ornamented} ~~frame~~ of
 gold to a picture. ^{that I dearly loved} Second, that it
 should ^{be} turned its front to Martin St.
^{for I would be of no use if it told the world was burned up}
 I can't help our feelings. Can be.

These are not judgements. The
 corner stone ^{of the corner} was laid on this the
 day of ~~June~~ ^{June} 1840. The foundation
 of the Church ^{but no beams were yet of} was ^{completely} ~~completed~~
 the speaker & his hearers were asse-
 bled in what is now the cellar of
 the Church. ^{Rev. Rufus Austin} One of the greatest orators
 of the English Wesleyan pulpit was
^{at the address} ~~present~~ on this occasion, and
 he had represented the great Wesleyan

12 ~~Connecticut~~ ^{Connecticut}
connection at our own General Conference
which two ~~days~~ ^{days} before this occa-
sion had adjourned in the city of
Baltimore. ~~Deciding~~ It was
a great card for Prof. St
At me so eminent could serve
the ~~at this time~~ ^{at this time} occasion. He was a great
man and several great sermons I heard
from his lips. Let Prof. Shattuck always
I ~~copy~~ ^{copy} ~~him~~ ^{him} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~story~~ ^{story} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~my~~ ^{my} ~~life~~ ^{life}
look at the fine portraits of him that
with the wide ~~for~~ ^{for} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~dear~~ ^{dear} ~~dear~~ ^{dear} ~~dear~~ ^{dear}
Dr. H. Jeffrey gave the Missionary
Society & the ~~hamp~~ ^{hamp} in the Board
Room. Let a ~~shut~~ ^{shut} stand on this
spot while the world lasts for his
holy ground.