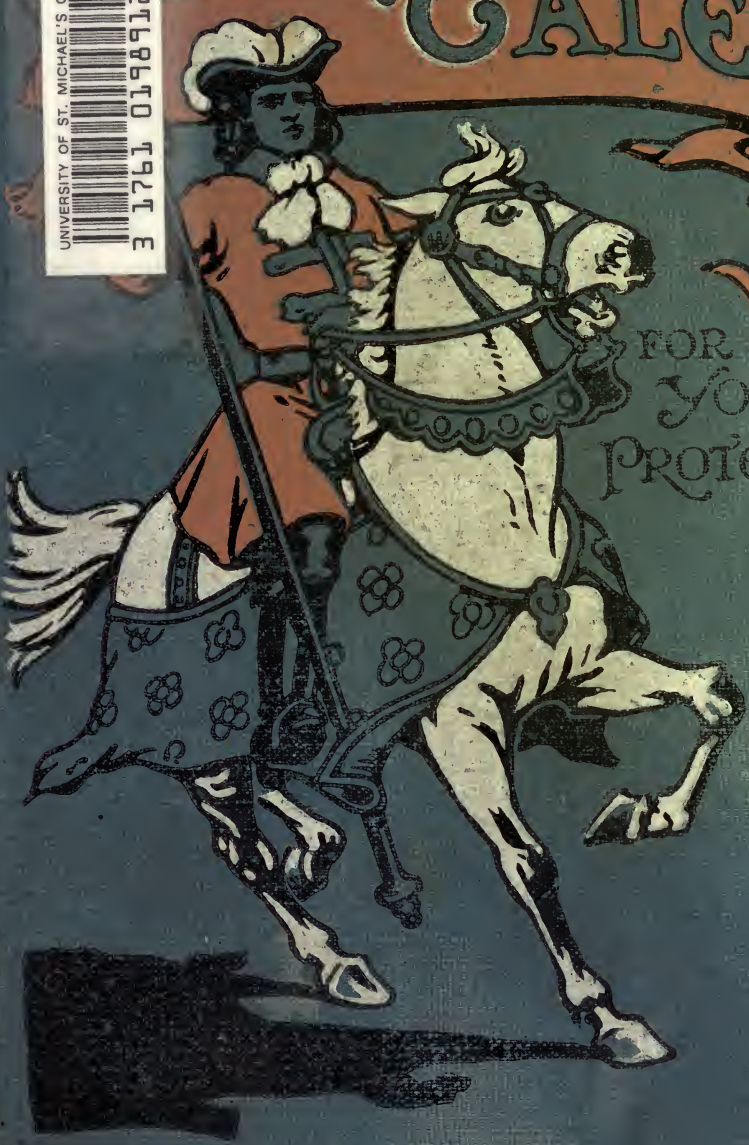
HISTORICAL TALES

FOR YOUNG PROTESTANTS



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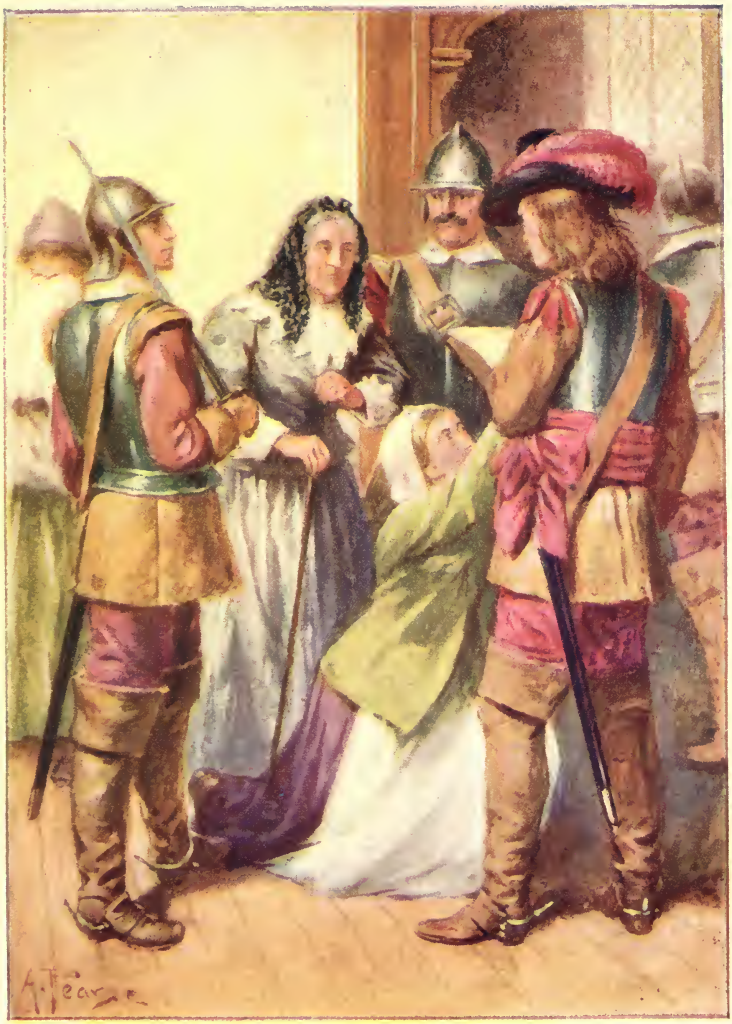

THE ARREST OF LADY ALICE LISLE.

HISTORICAL TALES

FOR

YOUNG PROTESTANTS

New and Enlarged Edition

THIRTY-FIRST IMPRESSION

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PREFACE

FACT is as attractive as fiction, and is of much higher moral value. The pages of history contain incidents which equal in thrilling interest the most successful efforts of the human imagination. From its ample records, the following short stories, connected with the rise and progress of Scriptural Protestantism, have been selected. If it has been found necessary to advert to the dark deeds of the papacy, it is from the conviction that the principles and spirit in which they originated in former ages are not extinct in the present day. In supplying books for the young, it may be well to make them the means of fortifying their minds against soul-destroying error, and of establishing them in those great doctrines in the defence of which their forefathers suffered and died.

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Historical Tales

THE MERCHANT OF LYONS

About seven hundred years ago, there lived at Lyons, in France, a wealthy merchant of the name of Peter Waldo. His house was on a tongue of land which divides the two beautiful rivers, the Rhone and the Saone. The walls of the city, even at that period, were old and grey. By gloomy gateways the traveller entered into close, narrow streets. Houses, six or seven storeys high, were ornamented with richly carved work in wood; and their overhanging roofs almost touched at the projecting parts, casting deep shadows on the pathway below.

The town had been long noted for its commerce; and the quays and wharfs on both rivers presented a busy scene. The place had then,

for more than five hundred years, been the chief seat of the silk trade in France. The clicking sound of the loom was heard in almost every house. Numerous trees had been planted without the city walls, on which silkworms were bred, whose cocoons yielded the means of industry, and were the source of wealth to the people.

Peter Waldo had lived in great reputation as a merchant. Success had attended his labours, and he was known among his fellow-citizens as a man of honour, liberality, and kindness of spirit. In the midst of his prosperity an event took place which led him to feel anxious for the salvation of his soul.

He was sitting in the company of some friends. After supper, as they were engaged in pleasant conversation, one of them fell to the ground, and when he was raised it was found that he was dead. From that time Waldo became a diligent inquirer after truth. He looked around, and saw the people carried away by sin, and then seeking to satisfy a guilty conscience with the false doctrines and vain ceremonies of the Church of Rome.

But in these peace was not to be found. The priests could not satisfy his mind as to the great question, 'How shall a man be just with God?' He knew he was a sinner; his conscience told him so. He knew he was not fit to die; and when he asked, 'What must I do to be saved?' he was not satisfied with all the answers the Romish priests gave him.

The Bible would have told him; but Waldo had not the holy book. Rich as he was, he had not that best of all treasures: the few copies which then existed were in libraries to which the common people had not access. Besides, they were all written in Latin, so that a person had to be learned in that tongue in order to read a Bible, provided he could by any means get sight of one.

Some books of piety soon afterwards fell into the hands of Peter Waldo, written by the 'early fathers,' as they are called—pious men, who lived after the apostles, and before the Christian religion was corrupted by the priests of Rome. In these books he found many passages from the New Testament, and much that brought light and comfort to his soul.

These parts only made him more anxious to secure the whole of the Bible.

After much labour, Peter Waldo was so happy as to own a copy of God's Word. It must have been a large sum of money that he gave for it; yet what a treasure it proved to him! He did not think the money misspent or the time misapplied that he gave to the study of it.

These were nothing, in comparison with the blessed truths which it made known to him. It taught him the 'new and living way' of approaching God, through Jesus Christ, the only Saviour and Mediator; it told him that a contrite and believing heart is what God requires; it was *heart service* that was the 'reasonable service.'

Before, he was perplexed and troubled; now, he was peaceful and glad. Peter Waldo felt like a new man; the burden was gone from his soul; light was there, and comfort, for he had found mercy through faith in Christ Jesus.

Waldo had been long known in the city for his kindness to all; he had freely given of his

wealth to relieve the wants of the people, but now, while he did not forget to give to those that needed of the things that perish, he was more concerned that they should seek the bread of life for their souls. The Bible had taught him how he might be saved, and he desired to tell others the good news.

He looked around, and beheld everybody groaning under the heavy loads which the priests had put upon them. He wept over their condition, and with a pious zeal he entered the houses of his friends and fellow-citizens that he might teach them about the great and precious work of Christ Jesus. He told them that God required only repentance, faith in His Son, and holy lives. He begged them to come to Jesus and have their sins washed away in His blood.

He also held many meetings with the poor in their cottages; he visited the sick and the dying; he retired to the quiet of the country and the shelter of the woods that he might guide a few earnest seekers into the way of truth: he taught them: he prayed with them; and relieved their distresses. We need not

wonder that the people loved him, since he was concerned to feed both their bodies and their souls.

There was one thing which Peter Waldo now desired more than anything else; that the Scriptures might be translated into the language of the people. The translation then in use was the *Vulgate*, so called because it was to be for 'common' use in the churches. It was in the Latin tongue; and though the languages of Europe had a mixture of Latin words in them, they were still so unlike it that the common or *vulgar* people (formerly the word vulgar was of the same sense as common) could not read it, even if they had been permitted to do so.

What should we do without the Bible in our own language? The Bible in Latin would be a useless book to most of us; and yet it was just the plan of the Romish priests to keep it in another tongue that others might be ignorant of its sacred truths. 'The people must have it in their own tongue,' said Peter Waldo, and the work was soon begun. It is not quite certain whether he translated it himself, or caused it to

be done by others. Perhaps he did a part of it, and engaged able persons to do the rest.

It was a very great labour; but having read the Bible himself, he spared neither money nor pains that it might be placed in the hands of his countrymen. At length some of the books were completed, and this was the *first* translation of the Bible into a modern language. It was done by, or at the expense of, a rich merchant. Did ever a man of wealth do a better work? What a blessed gift it was to the people of that land!

When the Bible was finished, it could not be largely circulated; for this was before the art of printing was known. Written copies had to be made with the pen, demanding long and patient labour; and when finished, a complete copy was worth a large sum of money.

The pious merchant, however, had numerous copies of the New Testament written, that they might be freely given to the people: and many had the privilege of reading it in their own language. All honour to the brave and good man who thus gave the Word of God to the men of France.

But this great service was not enough for Peter Waldo. He was not only the founder of a *Bible Society*, he began to form also a *Missionary Society*. Great numbers in the city had been brought, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to love the Saviour, and these he sent out, two by two, into all the region around. They carried their books with them into other lands. Multitudes were led to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, through the humble efforts of these 'poor men of Lyons,' as they were called.

These colporteurs, or book-hawkers, not only made their way into the homes of the lowly, but found access to the castles of the nobles. Their manner, as related by a Romish historian, was to carry a box of trinkets, or other goods, and travel the country as pedlars. When they entered the houses of the gentry, to sell some of their wares, they cautiously made known that they had other goods that were far more valuable than these—precious jewels, which they would show if they might be permitted to do so.

They would then bring from their pack or

from under their cloak, a Bible or Testament, and as they spoke of its worth they urged that this holy book might find a place in the homes and hearts of those who heard them. In this way many of the nobles and gentry were brought to possess the Word of God. A poet has described one of these hawkers displaying jewels and silks to view, and thus addressing the lady of the castle—

'"Oh, lady fair, I have yet a gem,
Which a purer lustre flings,
Than the diamond flash of the jewel'd crown
On the lofty brow of kings.
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price,
Whose virtue shall not decay;
Whose light shall be as a guide to thee,
And a blessing on thy way."

The lady glanced at the mirroring steel,
Where her form of grace was seen,
Where her eyes shone clear, and her dark locks waved
Their clasping pearls between:
"Bring forth thy pearl of exceeding worth,
Thou traveller grey and old;
And name the price of thy precious gem,
And my pages shall count thy gold."

The cloud went off from the pilgrim's brow,
As a small and meagre book,
Unchased with gold or diamond gem,
From his folding robe he took;
"Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price,
May it prove as such to thee!
Nay, keep thy gold—I ask it not,
For the word of God is free."

The hoary traveller went his way,
But the gift he left behind
Hath had its pure and perfect work
On that high-born maiden's mind;
And she hath turned from the pride of sin,
To the lowliness of truth,
And given her trustful heart to God
In its beautiful hour of youth.'

It was not to be supposed that the Pope and the priests looked quietly on the labours of Peter Waldo and his book-hawkers. The Pope anathematised him, or pronounced him accursed, and ordered the Archbishop of Lyons to proceed against him with the greatest rigour.

The archbishop was very willing to obey. 'If you teach any more,' said he to the merchant, 'I will have you condemned as a heretic and burnt.'

'How can I be silent in a matter which concerns the salvation of men?' he boldly answered. Officers were sent to secure him, but they feared the people, to whom Peter Waldo had become endeared.

During three years he was concealed by his friends. At length the merchant could stay at Lyons no longer in safety. He fled from the city, going from place to place, everywhere explaining and teaching Bible truth; and God blessed his labours.

Waldo and his missionaries were treated very badly by their enemies; they were called 'sorcerers,' 'cut-purses,' and 'tur-lupins,' or people living with wolves. They had often nowhere to lay their heads, and were forced to find refuge in the forest.

'Poor men of Lyons' became a term of reproach. It could be said of them, as of good men in Bible times, 'They wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, tormented'; and it may be truly added, 'of whom the world was not worthy' (Heb. xi. 37, 38). While burning at the stake they praised God for the

privilege of labouring and suffering for Him who had died on the cross for them. Thirty-five pious men and women were burned in one fire, and eighteen suffered martyrdom at another time.

God's blessed truth, however, cannot be burned out, or rooted out, or put out, by any way of men's devising. God Himself will take care of it. In spite of the anger of their enemies, in all the countries whither Peter Waldo and his missionaries went, the truth made its way, converting and comforting many souls.

Thus were planted the seeds, the little seeds of true *Bible* religion, which, three or four hundred years afterwards, sprang up and aided in promoting the great Protestant Reformation —that Reformation which established Bible religion again on the earth, and gave a great blow to the power of the Pope.

But what became of Peter Waldo? After doing much good, and presenting a noble example as a Christian, he went into Bohemia, where he peacefully died in the year 1179. From that time to this present day his name

is held in great respect—not because he was a great merchant or a rich man—but because he gave himself and his all to the service of our Lord; and because he was the first in Europe to give the Word of God to the common people in their own language.

Many of the followers of Peter Waldo, after long and great trial, joined the Vaudois, or Waldenses [1]—a hardy and simple-minded people, who had never submitted to the Church of Rome. They were one in faith, and they were now willing to live together as mutual helps in the gospel. Thus united, though almost unknown to the world, they were, for ages, like a 'little flock,' dwelling alone in the lovely and quiet valleys of Piedmont.

It is true, that persecutors, as fierce wolves, often broke upon the fold to worry and destroy them; but to the present day 'a remnant' has been left, who continue faithful to the truth.

As we read of those who have formed a part

[1] The Waldenses existed centuries before Waldo. The name Waldo is taken either from a Latin word, meaning one who lives in a dense valley, that is, a dalesman; or from a German word, meaning one who lives in a wood.

of the Church in other days, may we feel a concern to partake of the same faith—that faith which savingly unites the soul to Christ, and which will keep it steadfast to His cause in a sinful world. Then in the kingdom of glory we shall meet with all those, from every land, who passed through fiery trials on earth, and who, having 'washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,' shall stand before the throne of God for ever (Rev. vii. 14)

THE GOOD PARSON OF LUTTERWORTH

In the reign of Edward the Third, a crowd of the citizens of London were seen on their way to old St. Paul's. As they hurried along the narrow streets, and collected around the doors of the cathedral, their loud voices, and violent actions, showed that they were engaged in angry debate. It was evident that some unusual event had drawn them from their homes so early on that winter's morning.

A priest, named John Wycliffe, was about to appear, to answer charges that had been brought against him. As they gathered into clusters the accused arrived, dressed in a long black robe, with a small round cap on his head. His long grey beard spread over his breast. He looked calm, as though the tumult of the people awoke in him no fear. Passing through the throng, he entered a small ancient chapel,

which formed a part of the cathedral, where a bishop and the judges had already taken their seats.

The accused was not alone. Two noblemen, clothed in velvet and gold, walked by his side. One of them, the Duke of Lancaster, placed himself on his left hand; the other, Lord Percy, stood on his right. When the popish judges saw the powerful friends who had come to support his cause, they were filled with rage; and charged the two noblemen as being enemies to their religion and the king.

Provoked by these words, the duke in return threatened the bishop, and soon the whole assembly was in confusion, John Wycliffe standing all the while before his judges without speaking a word.

When the people who were at the doors heard the noise within, they cried aloud against the good priest; then running through the streets to the palace of the Duke of Lancaster, the most beautiful mansion in the kingdom, they began to pull it down. In their rage they committed murder on a person that was passing near the spot.

These ignorant people had been told by some designing priests that Wycliffe and his friends intended to destroy the religion of the land, and in their ignorance they were driven to these acts of violence. It was like the scene when the Apostle Paul was at Ephesus; 'and the whole city was filled with confusion,' because the idol-makers, who feared they should lose their gains, stirred up the people to oppose the preaching of the gospel.

Nearly twelve months passed away, and Wycliffe once more stood in the same place, and before the same judges. There was again a great crowd of people; but they were not then crying out against him, and demanding that he should be sent to prison. Since the pious priest was last there they had better understood his character, and had learned to value his preaching. He was now known to them as the 'gospel doctor.'

The people had come to support his cause. They forced their way before the court, and demanded that he 'should not be hurt.' The priests were alarmed at what they saw and

heard; and though they had hoped to have condemned him, they were glad to let him depart freely to his home.

Is it asked, 'What was the crime that brought Wycliffe into such trouble?' The answer is, the Pope of Rome had sent three letters, or 'bulls,' as they were called, to England—one to the bishops, another to the University of Oxford, and a third to the king. In them he charged the humble parson with many serious offences; and he desired that he should be seized and sent to prison, there to lie until further orders from Rome.

Was he, then, a teacher of false doctrine, a traitor, or in any other way a wicked and injurious man? No; his offence was, that he was an inquirer after truth, and sought to bring the people from under the power of the monks and friars, who led them astray; and it was because he thus felt and acted that the Pope had resolved on his overthrow.

There were at this time in England many thousands of persons called monks and friars. The *monks* were those who lived alone or separate from other people; their houses were

called monasteries, or places of retirement: the term *friars* signifies 'brothers.' Of these latter were the begging friars, who, it is said, 'swarmed throughout England' at this time. They travelled over the land, forcing their way into the houses of rich and poor, living without any cost, and taking all the money they could obtain.

Though they assumed poverty, they were not 'poor in spirit'; nor were they 'the meek of the earth.' Like the Pharisees of old, they pretended to be better and holier than others though their lives were full of evil. They 'taught for doctrine the commandments of men,' and declared that all who belonged to their order were sure of salvation.

When Wycliffe saw the conduct of the friars, his heart was much grieved. The best way to oppose them he knew would be to write a book against them; and a book was written in which he called them 'the pests of society, the enemies of religion, and the promoters of every crime.'

Angry and annoyed at the exposure, they were ready to help the Pope in the hope of

getting the writer sentenced by the judges to the dungeon or to death. Wycliffe, however, continued to write and preach against them, and with so much labour and zeal that his health began to suffer. One day, lying on his bed, and, as it was thought, nigh to his end, some of these friars made their way into his room. They rushed to his couch, began to upbraid him for what he had done, and called on him to express his sorrow before he died.

For some time he heard them in silence ; then, desiring his servants to raise him up, he cried aloud, ' I shall not die but live, and shall again declare the evil deeds of the friars.' Alarmed at his courage, they fled in haste from the room.

When Wycliffe got well, he retired to the little market-town in Leicestershire of which he was the priest. In this place he entered on his great work—that of translating the Bible into the English language as it was then spoken. To give the people the Word of God was the best way of fulfilling his threat against the friars. He knew that the Bible was God's great gift to the whole human family ; why, then, should not his countrymen possess it ?

To give it them would be something worth living for; and so he diligently set about his task.

It was a long and difficult work for one man to undertake; but faith and love carried him through it. The Word of God was precious to his own soul; and he knew that what had been a blessing to himself could be made a blessing to thousands. So onward he went in his work, with prayer and patience; and as he went along, he found instruction and comfort for himself, whilst he was providing for the spiritual good of others.

Year after year he saw the fruits of his study increase: one page and then another were done; until at length, in the year 1380, the last verse of the New Testament was translated, and the Bible completed in its English dress. We may think we see him looking upon the pile of writing he had made, then falling on his knees to give God thanks, imploring Him to bless the truth to the souls of the people.[1]

[1] Copies of the whole or separate books of Wycliffe's translation are still found in public libraries. A perfect and beautiful specimen is to be seen in the British Museum.

All books in those days were very scarce and costly, for the art of printing was not then known. Before the year 1300, the library of the University of Oxford consisted only of a few tracts, chained, or kept in chests, in the choir of St. Mary's Church. Copies of all books were made in writing; and as this was a slow and careful work, it took several months for one person to write a complete Bible. How different is it now, when a printing machine will produce fifteen to twenty copies of the Bible every hour, and thousands every year.

And then as to the cost. Richard of Bury, Chancellor of England under Edward the Third, spared no expense in collecting a library; the first, perhaps, that any private man had formed. Yet so scarce were valuable books that he gave an abbey fifty pounds weight of silver for between thirty and forty volumes. The Book of Psalms, with brief notes written in the margin, was valued at a sum equal to £7, 10s. of our present money.

A copy of the New Testament was sold for £2, 16s. 8d., a sum equal to six months' income of a tradesman, for about five pounds were con-

sidered enough to keep a farmer or trader in those times, when so few of the comforts we now enjoy were known. But costly as was the purchase, it was cheerfully paid. And great as was the danger of those who dared to read the Word of God, there were some who bravely met it.

Written copies of Wycliffe's Bible were eagerly sought after by those who could read. There in a castle some rich nobleman might have been seen with one of these written Bibles before him, 'in fair characters on vellum.' If it had been the twenty-third Psalm on which his attention was fixed, it would have presented itself with the following peculiar spelling and Saxon letters :—

'Þe title of þe xxiii. salm eẏ þe song of dauid.

'Þe lord gouerneþ me. 7 no þing schal fail to me : in þe place of pasture ẏe he haþ set me. He nurschide me on þe watir of refreischẏng : he conuertide my soule. He ledde me forþ on þe paþis of rihtfulnesse : for his name. For wiþ þouz ẏ schal go in þe mẏddis of schadewe of deeþ : ẏ schal not drede ẏuels. For þou art wiþ me. þi ȝerde and þi staff : þo han confortid me. þou hast maad redi aboord in mẏ siȝt : aȝens hem þat troblen me. þou hast maad fat mẏn

heed wiþ oẏle: and my cuppe þat filleþ me is full cleer. And þi merci schal sue me: in alle þe doies of my lẏf. And þt ẏ dwelle in þe hows of þe lord: in to ẏe lengþe of daies.'

But though a nobleman might be found who could read the Bible, yet from the want of learning, as well as books being scarce and costly, there were only a small number of the people who could possess the Word of God. Even some of the nobles and gentry could not write their names; and not many of the common people were able to read. Perhaps not more than one in a small town or village was learned enough to read and write.

We may, then, suppose what was the state of the land when the people had no gospel preached to them, and few possessed the Scriptures, or could peruse any book likely to be the means of doing good to their souls. England, indeed, had been for ages without the light that cometh from heaven. Errors and foolish rites, like dark clouds, were spread over the land.

It was at such a time that Wycliffe arose as a light in the darkness; and, like the star

that appeared over the fields of Bethlehem, he guided many souls to the Saviour. The numerous books he wrote were spread abroad in the same manner as his written Bible. He also prepared many sermons, about three hundred of which have been preserved to the present day. From these we learn what were the truths he taught the people.

The priests said that human merits and sufferings, penance and pilgrimages, would certainly entitle them to heaven ; but Wycliffe taught that sinful man could not save himself, and that mercy was only to be found through faith in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. The priests asserted that images should be honoured, and that there were many mediators ; but the bold reformer said that the worship of images was idolatry, and that saints and angels were not to be prayed to, for ' there is but one Mediator between God and men.'

He maintained that the Church of Rome is no more the head of the Churches than any other Church ; and that the Apostle Peter had no more power given him than any other apostle ; and for all his doctrines he referred

to the Word of God, maintaining that it was the only safe guide to a Christian man. In many other ways he opposed the doings and teaching of the priests of the Romish Church.

Wycliffe did not quite receive all the great Bible truths in all their fulness : it is a wonder that he knew so much at a time when all the land was sunk in ignorance and error. But he understood enough of the Word of God to know that many of the doctrines of the Romish Church could not be found there. And he preached many of the true doctrines of the Bible so well as to entitle him to the honourable name, THE MORNING STAR OF THE REFORMATION.

The ' good parson ' was much beloved in his own parish ; and many came from the villages around to his church that they might hear the gospel from his lips.[1] He was often seen, with a portion of his written Bible under his arm, and staff in hand, visiting from house to house. The mansions of the gentry, the dwell-

[1] The carved oak pulpit in which he preached, the table on which he wrote, the chair in which he died, and the velvet robe, nearly destroyed by time, which he wore, are still preserved in the vestry of Lutterworth Church.

ings of the farmers, and the cottages of the field-labourers, were favoured alike with his pastoral visits.

He was the friend of all: he was ready to teach and comfort and pray for all at all times. Thus he lived, seeking the good of souls, his enemies opposing him even to the end of his days; though God did not permit them to cast him into prison, nor to bring him to a cruel death, as they desired.

Continual labour at length broke down his health. One day, when in church, he was seized with a fatal attack of disease, and sank to the ground. He was carried into his house, where he lay in a speechless state for two days, and then died. But though he was removed, he left behind him many disciples, who carried on the good work which he had so well begun.

Though Wycliffe never left his own land, to preach the truth across the seas, it was carried into almost every country of Europe by his writings. His tracts and sermons were read by many awakened minds, and were the means of preparing them for a full knowledge of the gospel.

As his enemies could not prevail against him while he lived, they showed their hatred of his name and doctrine after his death. When his remains had lain in the grave for forty-one years, they were dug up and burned, and the ashes cast into the little river Swift, which flows near the town where he laboured. Thence, as an old writer says, they passed into the great river Severn, then in their onward course into the narrow seas, and at last into the wide ocean; and thus became the emblem of the truth which should flow from the little country town over England and the world. That it shall extend 'from the river to the ends of the earth,' we know, for the Word of God declares it.

In this simple tale we see through what struggles and dangers some have passed for the gospel's sake. The practical lesson we are taught is, to be at all times decided for the truth. By being decided we do not mean to be noisy, or forward, or stubborn.

One of the fruits of the Spirit is gentleness, which consists with the greatest firmness and decision in that which is right. We must

in meekness instruct those that oppose the Word of God (2 Tim. ii. 25). Whilst we are 'valiant for the truth upon the earth,' we are to speak that truth in love (Jer ix. 3; Eph. iv. 15). Be decided, then, for God's Word in opposition to all error.

Let us be thankful for those whom God has raised up as examples of holy decision. They laboured, and we enjoy the benefit of their labours. They planted a little sapling, which took root, and has become a great tree, under whose boughs we now sit in peace. It was through God's grace working in them that we now possess a free and full Bible. Let us, then, give heed to the truths it contains, and yield our hearts to the gracious Saviour it makes known.

THE BOHEMIAN WITNESS

In the country that once formed the kingdom of Bohemia is a wide district known as the Black Forest. Its northern parts consist of lofty mountains, whose rough ridges and peaks tower aloft to the height of five thousand feet. Some of these mountain-tops are bleak and barren, and during a great part of the year are covered with snow, which reflects a variety of colours as the frequent changes of light and shade of the sky pass over them. Others are covered with thick woods and forests of pine trees, presenting a bold, wild, and beautiful scene to the eye of the traveller. Ruins of castles, the homes of the nobles of former ages, still stand on many of these heights.

In the southern portion of this range, the forest has been long since cleared by the hand of man. On their lovely slopes are pasture grounds and cornfields, orchards and vineyards,

with farms standing here and there. Rivulets and lakes formed by the waters which flow from the mountains refresh the cultivated parts below.

It is now more than four hundred years since a people sought a refuge in the caves and solitudes of the Black Forest. They were the Waldenses, of whom we heard in a former story. Among these disciples of Christ the devoted Peter Waldo found a home and a grave.

And it was in one of their humble villages that John Huss, the Bohemian witness for the truth, was born. As a *witness* he bore testimony to the truth at the expense of his life. His history is full of interest; let us dwell upon it for a short time.

John Huss was the son of poor parents, but they managed to send him to a public school. As they could not afford to pay any money, the boy acted as servant to one of the masters, who in return kindly lent him books, and helped to advance him in his learning. He was a diligent student, and as he grew up he rose from one step to another, till at length, when only twenty-four years of age, he was made

the professor of divinity in the college of Prague. This was a high post for so young a man.

At this time he was a Romanist: but a nobleman placed in his hand some of the writings of Wycliffe, and advised him to read them. At first he thought them bold and full of danger; but the more he studied them, the more he saw that they agreed with the Word of God. They led him to the Scriptures, where he found many things different from the teachings of the Church of Rome.

One day the Archbishop of Prague ordered all the writings of Wycliffe that could be found in the district of the Black Forest to be collected, and burned in the court of his palace. This was done amidst the mockery and songs of the people, who knew that the archbishop was an ignorant man, and sought to burn what he could not refute. In one of their songs they thus derided him—

> 'He to the fire their books consigns,
> Of which he cannot read two lines.'

Huss spoke openly against the conduct of the archbishop, which led the priests to accuse him to the Pope.

A summons came for him to appear at Rome; but knowing that he could not go safely in person, he sent a friend thither to defend him. The latter was cast into prison, while Huss was declared to be a heretic. The Pope, also, put every place in which he might dwell under an interdict or a curse. But Huss was not to be easily silenced, and he went on to spread the doctrines he had learned from Wycliffe, adding, however, as such witnesses for the truth always have done, that he was ready to give up his opinions if it could be proved from the Scriptures that he was in error.

It was in the year 1412 that he made his boldest attack. The sellers of papal indulgences came to the city of Prague. They undertook to sell pardon of sin for money—a shocking delusion, which Huss exposed with great courage. On hearing of his opposition, the Pope ordered all public worship to cease so long as the reformer continued in the city of Prague.

Huss now judged it best to leave the place. But he could not refrain from witnessing against the evils of the times; and, shut out from the

city, he preached in towns and villages, in the fields, and in the forest, and with such power and success, that, as it commonly happens in such cases, the rage of his enemies helped to the spread of the gospel.

The disorders in the Romish Church grew worse. There were three persons who strove for the office of Pope. The three claimed to be infallible; each asserted that he could not in any case act wrongly, and at the same time he cursed his rivals. Indeed, the whole Church was like a diseased body.

The words of the prophet could truly be applied to it: 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, nor mollified with ointment' (Isa i. 5, 6).

It was now acknowledged by all parties that something must be done to put an end to such a disgraceful state of affairs. Accordingly, in 1414, a council was summoned by the emperor to meet at Constance. As the day

of meeting drew nigh, there had assembled one of the popes, Sigismund Emperor of Germany, thirty-four cardinals, twenty archbishops, one hundred and sixty bishops, two hundred and fifty abbots, four princes, twenty dukes, eighty counts, and more than seven hundred knights and other persons of rank. They had come from almost every known country in the world, and were persons of the greatest note in their age.

At the opening of this famous council it was soon found that the Pope and Emperor were rivals to each other. The Bible teaches us to love one another; and that 'the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, and meekness.' But between these two great ones of the earth there was a deadly hatred. The Emperor was crafty and deceitful, and the Pope was known to be one of the most openly wicked men of his times. Such were the leaders who were to settle the affairs of the Church and the world.

Before this council John Huss was called to appear. He well knew the power of his enemies, and that when once in their hands they would

not allow him to escape. He therefore did not obey the summons until the Emperor gave him a '*safe conduct*,' that is, a written promise, which was to be a pledge that he should go and return without injury. We shall see how this promise was kept.

When Huss took leave of his friends, before he departed on his journey, he thus spoke to them : 'You know that I have taught you no error ; continue in the truth, and trust in the mercy of God. Beware of false teachers. I am going to this great assembly, where the Lord will give me grace to endure trials, imprisonment, and, if it be His will, even the most dreadful death. Whatever happens our joy will be great when we meet in the everlasting mansions.'

As he went up to the council, the people of the towns and villages through which he passed came in crowds to meet him ; and in every place a loving welcome was given to him.

When he arrived at Constance, he sent a message to the Pope that he was ready to meet all charges laid against him, saying, that as he had received a *safe conduct* from the Emperor,

he hoped the head of the Church would also grant him his protection. The answer to this request was soon given; he was seized, and cast into a dark and filthy dungeon by the side of a river, under the wicked pretence that 'no faith was to be kept with heretics.'

After he had been examined by the council, he was removed to a castle, where, in the daytime, he was secured with chains in the vaults of his prison-house; and at night was fastened by a padlock to a wall. In this sad state he lay for six months.

Huss was not unprepared for this persecution; he had made up his mind to suffer for Christ's sake. But in the midst of all his trouble and bondage he found light and comfort from the presence of his Saviour. His accusers tried to raise an uproar, and poured upon him every kind of reproach. They said that he should be burned if he did not yield to the Pope, and renounce the doctrine he had preached. His only answer was, 'God will not permit me to deny His truth.'

After some time had passed, John Huss, on his forty-third birthday, stood once more before

the council, which had now been sitting for many months. The Emperor had come in great state, with his crown on his head, and his sceptre carried before him. Around him stood his princes and nobles. The cardinals, bishops, and others, too, were there to pronounce the sentence of death on the poor prisoner. They placed him on a high stage or platform, that he might be seen by the whole assembly, and a band of soldiers stood around him.

The good man felt his position to be one of great peril; and though there was no one to stand up for his cause, he knew that his God and Saviour was nigh to hear and help him. Falling on his knees, he prayed for grace that he might be faithful to the end. After his enemies had accused him of heresy, sentence was passed upon him that he should be publicly burned. His only answer was a prayer: 'O Lord God,' he cried, 'I beseech Thee, for Thy mercy's sake, to pardon all my enemies; for Thou knowest that I have been falsely accused, and unjustly condemned. But do Thou forgive them this sin.'

Again his enemies loudly accused him, calling him by the name of Judas, and in other ways casting reproach upon him. To which he meekly replied: 'I place all my confidence and hope in God my Saviour. I know He will never take from me the cup of salvation, but that by His grace I shall drink it to-day in His Kingdom.'

The hearts of these nobles and clergy were closed against all pity for their helpless prisoner. They derided him, placing on his head a paper crown, about two feet high, on which were painted three devils, and in large letters the word, 'Arch-heretic.'

On seeing it, Huss calmly said, 'My Lord Jesus bore for me, a poor sinner, a painful crown of thorns, and died the shameful death of the cross. Therefore, for His sake, I will cheerfully bear this lighter crown.' 'Now we deliver up your soul to Satan, and to hell,' cried the bishops. 'But I,' added Huss, 'commit my soul to my gracious Lord, Jesus Christ.'

In this manner he was, without any delay, led out to the place of execution, in a meadow in the midst of the gardens outside the city.

Eight hundred soldiers guarded him: a mighty host, indeed, to take charge of a poor unarmed man! The crowd of people was so great that they were obliged to shut the gates of the city, and only to let them out by companies, lest the bridge over which they passed should break down under them.

The behaviour of Huss, on his way to the place of his death, was calm and even joyful. As he passed the archbishop's palace, seeing his enemies burning his books in the great square, he smiled at their vain display of malice. On going a little farther, he cried out, 'O Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have pity upon me!' and he continued to utter similar petitions till he came to the place of execution. The people who listened to him said, 'We know not what this man has taught and preached before, but we hear nothing from him now but holy words and Christian prayers.'

When he arrived at the spot where he must die, he fell on his knees, lifting up his eyes to heaven, and praying aloud, in language taken from the thirty-first and fifty-first Psalms,

repeating very solemnly this verse: 'Into Thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.'

After a brief pause Huss began to pray again: 'Lord Jesus, I cheerfully suffer this terrible and cruel death, for the sake of Thy holy gospel, and the preaching of Thy sacred word: do Thou forgive my enemies the crimes they are committing.' On this the executioners made him cease, and compelled him to walk three times round the pile of wood. He then asked that he might speak to his jailers; and when they were come, he said—

'I thank you most sincerely for all the kindness you have shown me, for you have behaved to me more as brethren than as keepers. Know, also, that my trust in my Saviour is unshaken, for whose sake I willingly suffer this death, being assured I shall be with Him this day in Paradise.'

The executioners then took him, and bound him to a stake with wet ropes. They fixed round his neck a black rusty chain, on which he said, smiling, 'My dear Master and Saviour was bound for my sake with a harder and

heavier chain than this. Why should I, a poor sinful man, be ashamed of thus being bound for His sake?' The wood was put in order, and some bundles of light furze were placed under his feet, with heaps of straw and large wood around him up to his neck. The pile was then lighted, and the flames began to wrap round the body of the martyr.

At that moment, the voice of singing was heard. It was poor Huss in the midst of his pains praising God. Then several times the cry came from the midst of the fire, 'O Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.' But the wind soon drove the flames into his face, and stopped his voice; still, however, his head and his lips were seen to move, as if in prayer, for a short time, when the Lord ended the sufferings of His faithful servant; his body fell into the flames, life was gone, and his soul entered on its eternal rest.

The ashes of Huss were put into a cart, with the earth on which he had been executed, and the whole thrown into the Rhine, which flowed near, that not a trace of this holy witness for the truth might be left. But, as an elegy

composed at this time says: 'His ashes will be scattered over every country; no river, no banks will be able to retain them; and those whom the enemy thought to silence by death, thus sing and publish, in every place, that gospel which his persecutors thought to suppress.'

Whilst we shudder at the wickedness of men, as we read this account, let us ever keep in mind that God, who is infinite in wisdom, overlooks and controls all events. He guides and directs with an unseen hand all human affairs, and makes all things fulfil His gracious purpose. Out of persecutions and trials he has ever made good to come. The lighting the fires of the martyrs was one of the means of dispersing the darkness of the Middle Ages; and the courage of these servants of God in the midst of suffering, led the people to inquire after the truth of those principles for which they died.

THE MONK THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

In the year 1497 two boys were seen passing through a small city in Germany. They walked slowly, and at times stopped before the doors of the houses, and sang carols about the infant Jesus. It was Christmas time, and the weather was cold and frosty. The evening was drawing on; and the bright glare of the fires within the houses of that old city of Eisenach shone forth through the small windows on the hoar-frost without.

These poor lads belonged to a school kept by some monks, who gave their pupils as many blows and angry words as lessons of learning. As was the custom of the times, they had been sent to beg their bread from street to street, singing as they went along. The better to move the heart to charity they sang of Him

whose lowly birth was at that season of the year called to mind.

That day these minstrels boys had met with only frowns and repulses; and they thought of returning, cold and hungry as they were, to their home. But there was the house of Conrad Cotta nigh at hand. He was the burgomaster, or chief magistrate, of the city: perhaps if they sang before his door they might get some help, for his wife Ursula was well known for deeds of kindness. It was their last hope, and so they sang their carol in their sweetest style.

Ursula was very fond of music; and, hearing the sounds, she stood at the window till the song was finished. The singing of one boy was more musical than the other. It was the voice of young Martin Luther which fixed her attention. She had often listened to it with much delight in the great church of the city, and now, as she gazed on his pale, intelligent face, she felt the deepest pity.

A gentle, loving heart had Ursula Cotta. She had seen the boys driven from three doors, but there awaited them kind words and charity

at her dwelling. When the carol was ended, she made signs for them to approach. It was not often that they were spoken to in such a gentle manner; and when she asked Martin from whence he came, and what was his father's name, how great was her delight to find that he was a kinsman of her husband!

The boys were soon placed before a cheerful fire; and after a good supper they were ready to sing to good Ursula their most favourite carol. When that was ended, young Martin sang the forty-eighth Psalm. From that day, Martin became a frequent visitor at her house. She was as a second mother to him; and often did he seek to repay her kindness by one of his sweetest songs, or by a few strains on his flute.

Five years had passed away, and Martin had become a student in a college. He had met with many kind friends; and his father too (who had been a poor wood-cutter) by this time was able to assist him with money. This was a great comfort to the young man; he could now pursue his studies with better hope of success. In the college there was a large room,

YOUNG LUTHER SINGING BEFORE THE HOUSE OF URSULA COTTA.

where he spent every moment he could spare. This room was the library, from the shelves of which he took down book after book, and read them with profit and delight.

But there was one large, heavy volume he had never yet opened. At length he took it from its place, and found it was a Bible printed in the Latin language. He was now nearly twenty years of age, and had been brought up almost all his life in schools and colleges, and this was the first time he had met with the Holy Scriptures. It is true, he had been told there was a book called the Bible, but he had never seen a copy of it. With feelings of surprise and interest he turned over the leaves. He had not expected to find it so large a volume; and there were writers in it whose names or works he had never heard of.

Beginning at the first page, he read on till he came to the history of Hannah and the child-prophet Samuel. It was to him all new and beautiful, and full of instruction. As he left the library that night, he said to himself, 'Oh that God would give me such a book for my own!'

That old Bible became to him more precious than gold, and sweeter than honey to his taste. He turned over its pages with constant pleasure, as often as he could run into the library for a few hours. Little did he then think that his hands would give that holy volume, translated by himself into German, to millions of his countrymen, and to be a blessing for hundreds of years after he was laid in the grave.

Three more years passed, and Martin Luther became a monk in another convent. The Bible he had read in the college library had aroused serious thoughts in his mind; but like the Ethiopian treasurer, in the eighth chapter of the Acts, he needed 'some man should guide' him to understand the Scriptures. He was looking to his prayers and fastings as the sure way of gaining heaven. He saw not that a sinner can only be saved through faith in Christ Jesus. He knew not clearly of the love of God.

Every time he heard His holy name he was pale with terror. The knowledge of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and

of the grace of the Saviour, were to him hidden truths. His trust was more in saints and angels, in human merits and tears of penitence, than in the glorious work of the one Mediator.

The monks with whom Martin lived were more ignorant than himself: he could not, therefore, be taught by them; besides, they cared more about his doing the work of a servant, that they might live at ease. They made him attend the gates, sweep the church, and clean the rooms. And, as soon as the young monk had finished his labour, they would say to him, 'Go with your bag through the town'; that is, in search of food for the convent. When they found him at his books, they cried aloud, 'Come, come; it is not by study, but by begging corn, eggs, fish, and money, that you benefit the cloister.'

Poor Martin found that by entering a convent he had changed his garments, but not his heart. He found no peace there. 'Oh,' he said, 'what will deliver me from my sins, and make me holy? How shall I satisfy the justice of God? How shall I appear before Him?' He almost pined away from sorrow of heart.

God was thus trying him with small trials that he might the better hereafter bear great ones.

After Martin had been some time in this convent he again met with a copy of that precious book which formerly so astonished and delighted him when a student ; but it was chained. He could not take it to his sleeping cell to read, nor remove it from its place, so he sat by it every time he could secretly get to the room where it was fixed.

Sometimes he learned by heart long passages from that chained Bible, to repeat to himself when in his cell at night. The more he read, the more light came into his mind. He began to see the evil of sin, the wickedness of his own heart, and more than all, the rich grace and love of Jesus. He also began to detect the follies and corruptions of the Church of Rome.

Two events, at this time, led his mind into a further search after the truth. As he sat in the company of some friends, one of them was suddenly killed. He then said to himself, 'What would become of me, if I were thus suddenly called away ?' On his return from a visit to his father, the cloud covered the sky

with blackness, and a violent thunderstorm broke over his head.

As he hastened along the road to find a shelter, the lightning struck the ground near to his feet. He was startled and alarmed, but was unhurt. Stopping on his journey, he fell on his knees, and prayed to God to save him. When he arose, he said, 'I must become holy.' But he knew not of the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, leading to a life of faith and holiness.

Whatever Martin Luther did to find peace was still in vain. Those who saw his conduct said he was a devout man; but he replied, 'I am a great sinner: how is it possible for me to satisfy Divine justice?' Salvation could not be in himself; 'How then,' he thought, 'can I obtain it!' But the light of day was now dawning on his darkness. The Holy Spirit was convincing him of sin, and bringing him to feel his need of a Saviour.

About this time there came to the convent an old man named Staupitz. He saw how ill the poor young man looked; and he asked, 'Why are you so sad, Brother Martin?'

'Ah,' said Luther, 'I do not know what will become of me; it is in vain I make promises to God—sin is ever the strongest.'

'Oh, my friend,' said Staupitz, calling to mind how he had felt, 'instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, cast yourself by faith into the Redeemer's arms—look at the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood that He has shed for you. God is not angry with you, it is you who are angry with God. Listen to the Son of God; He became man to give you the promise of Divine favour. By His stripes are you healed; by His blood are your sins cleansed away. Love Him who first loved you; and in order that you may be filled with the love of what is good, you must first be filled with love for God.' What good words—what light and peace did they afford! Luther listened for his life.

There was one part of the Bible he now studied with great diligence and interest. It was the Epistle of Paul to the Romans. And in that he saw clearly the way in which God could be just and the justifier of the ungodly. From that time he found 'peace in believing.'

Then he was filled with love, and sought to obey God, not from fear, nor with the hope of getting into heaven through his own merits, but from the love which he felt as a child of God to his heavenly Father.

Years rolled on, and Luther became a preacher, the head of a college, and a doctor of divinity. As his influence became great, and still more great, he made known to others the truths he had found so precious to his own soul. He boldly exposed the vain teachings of the Romish priests, their craft and evil conduct. The fame of his labours soon spread in the land, and many came to hear the gospel from his lips. In the churches, the college halls, and the open air, he set forth the only way in which a sinner can be saved.

In one of his preaching tours, Luther came to a city in which his early friends Conrad and Ursula Cotta had found a home. They had by this time lost nearly all their property; the once rich burgomaster was now a poor man, and the troubles of life had filled his heart with sorrow. He had been told that a great preacher was on his way to the city. 'They

tell me,' said Conrad to his wife, 'that he talks bravely of free grace—that pardon for sin is to be had without money and without price.' 'That would just do for us,' replied Ursula; 'let us go to the church and hear him.'

The old church that day was well filled, for nobles and merchants, working men and maidens, had come to listen to the bold preacher. Among them sat Conrad and Ursula. Strange thoughts and feelings must have moved them as they listened to the powerful voice of the monk. But when they heard him give out a psalm to be sung—his favourite forty-sixth Psalm—

'God is our refuge,'

they called to mind that Christmas evening when the minstrel boy of Eisenach sang it by their own fireside.

The words that were preached sank deep into the heart of Ursula, and from that hour she was brought to know the only way in which she could be saved. Nor was this all; for Martin Luther was now in a condition to show his gratitude, and repay the kindness of those

who, in the days of his youth, took into their house a poor friendless boy.

The time at last came when Luther was called forth openly to enter on the blessed Reformation. The occasion was the opening of a great market by the Church of Rome. There were crowds of anxious buyers: men and women, rich and poor, old and young, flocked there to spend their money. The dealers were monks, who smiled and joked as they offered to sell their goods at the cheapest rate.

But what was it they had to sell? It was, they said, *the salvation of the soul!* These dealers passed through the country in a gay carriage: three horsemen rode by their side, and servants went before them to make known their approach. As they came near to a town, the magistrates, priests, nuns, and the trades went forth to welcome them with music, flags, and lighted tapers, amidst the ringing of bells and the shoutings of the people.

We may suppose we see them as they reach the market-place. The three monks seat themselves at a table, and raise a red flag, having on it the Pope's coat-of-arms. Before them is

a money-chest; and now one of them, named Tetzel, begins the sale. 'Come near,' he cried aloud, 'and I will give you indulgences—letters duly sealed, by which even the sins you hereafter commit shall be all forgiven you: even repentance is not necessary. But more than this; these letters will not only save the living, but also the dead. The very moment the money chinks against the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory,[1] and flies to heaven. Bring your money; bring money; bring money.'[2]

The whole account of this shameful and wicked imposture is almost too shocking for belief.

There was one whose spirit was roused, and who preached and wrote against Tetzel and his traffic. It was Martin Luther, the monk who was now prepared for the contest which he saw before him. Though he almost stood

[1] Purgatory is said by Roman Catholics to be a place of punishment, where souls are purged, or cleansed by fire, from sins. But this is a vain and wicked deceit: Scripture does not teach us anything about such a place: it tells us that 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth,' or purgeth, 'from all sin'; and this is enough; there is no need of a purgatory.

[2] Merle d'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation.*

alone, he resolved, with God's help, to witness to the truth and expose falsehood. He more than ever attacked the errors of the Church of Rome.

And what was better still, he clearly and boldly declared the two great Protestant doctrines—that the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, is the rule of our faith; and that a man can be justified—pardoned and accepted of God—only by believing in and trusting in the atonement and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. His success among the people filled his enemies with rage.

Tetzel sought to frighten the people by ordering a large fire to be lighted in the principal square of the city, declaring that he had orders from the Pope to imprison or burn all those who dared to oppose the sale of indulgences. 'Only wait,' said the priests, 'a fortnight, or at most a month, and that heretic, Luther, will be burned alive.' But God did not let him fall into their power.

The preaching of Luther soon found favour with princes, nobles, learned doctors, and

students, as well as large numbers of the common people. As the priests could not put him down, the Pope wrote against him a 'bull'—a decree by which he was given over to persecution in this world and eternal death in the next. Officers were sent to burn his writings, and to publish the bull in the town where Luther lived.

But the reformer was not less bold than the Pope. Placing himself at the head of a crowd of doctors, students, and friends, he went to the market-place. A fire was lighted, and, as the flames arose, he cast into them a copy of the laws of the Romish Church, and the Pope's bull. The spectators were filled with joy, for they had long felt the harsh and cruel power of these laws. When all was burned to ashes, Luther quietly walked to his home. By this act he made known to the world that he had for ever separated from the Pope.

Luther was now summoned to meet at a diet an assembly of princes, nobles, cardinals, and bishops, in the city of Worms, to answer all charges that might be brought against him.

'Do not go,' said his friends; 'your enemies

will seize your person, and cast you into prison.'

'Christ liveth,' replied Luther; 'and I will go to Worms, in spite of all the powers of darkness. Besides, a safe conduct is provided me.'

'But,' urged his friends, 'was not a royal letter with a promise of safe conduct given to John Huss, and yet he was betrayed and burned.'

Luther then concluded the debate by saying: 'I must make a confession of the truth before the diet. I will go, trusting in Christ. I am bound to stand up in defence of His gospel.' And he went, and before the princes and priests made a bold and brave confession of the truth.

Finding they could not prevail, they commanded him to depart at once from the town; but his friends learned that there was a plot laid to arrest him on the road, though a safe conduct had been given to him. Luther obeyed, and went forth; but as he came near to a forest, five armed men suddenly opened the door of the carriage in which he rode, pulled him out, placed him on a horse, and

riding through the forest, came at length to the Castle of Wartburg.

But this was a friendly capture. It was a plan to save him from the craft and cruelty of his ever-watchful foes. In the Castle of Wartburg, which he called his Patmos—his place of exile—he lived for ten months. He, however, though alone, was not idle here. He spent his time in writing books and tracts, and translating the New Testament into German.

Once more Luther came forth to carry on the work of God in public; and in spite of the rage of his enemies, and the threats of the Pope, the Emperor, and the diet, he openly exposed the errors of the Church of Rome, and called on all men to come out from her that they might not partake of her sins.

The writings of Luther were now spread far and wide. Three presses were fully at work in printing them. His books passed from hand to hand; they were carried into quiet valleys, and over some of the highest mountains. They were read in the palaces of princes, in places of learning, and in the homes of the

poor. Ships carried them over wide seas, and they were reprinted in Switzerland, France, England, and other lands, until thousands of people were made to rejoice in the good news of salvation. It is said that within the space of little more than four years after publication, a traveller purchased some of his works in the far-distant city of Jerusalem.

Even little children shared his love and labours. For them he wrote many sweet little hymns, which are still sung, like the Divine Songs of the good Dr. Watts in our land, by thousands of the young in Germany. Popery then received a check which it has never recovered, and a wound from the sword of God's Word of which it must die. Who can tell the full results of the labours of that bold and earnest man—

> 'The solitary monk that shook the world
> From Pagan slumber, when the gospel trump
> Thunder'd its challenge from a dauntless lip
> In peals of truth'?

There is a lesson, among many others, we may learn from the history of Luther. It is, that we may have much religious knowledge,

and yet not know Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Even those in our days who have had the Bible from their earliest youth, may yet be strangers to its blessed truths. They may 'go about to establish their own righteousness,' thinking that they can become entitled to heaven by their own worthiness. They understand not the great doctrine which Luther, after a long struggle, was led to receive, and which is revealed in the Word of God: SALVATION—SALVATION BY CHRIST—and SALVATION BY CHRIST ALONE; for, 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' (Acts iv. 12).

Have you, dear young reader, felt the evil and burden of sin? Do you look by faith to Jesus Christ that you may be saved? Are you willing to profess His name, and labour in His cause, even though you may suffer reproach and shame for His sake? Happy are they who, in the morning of their days, yield their hearts to the truth as it is in Jesus.

THE YOUTHFUL MARTYR

In the days of the young king, Edward the Sixth, a Bible was placed on a desk in every church of the land, for the use of the people. A large-print copy, bound in wooden boards, with curious iron clasps, was then seen fastened by a chain to a strong upright stand.

As 'the Word of God was precious in those days'—for it was costly and scarce, and many truly loved it—those who had a small share of learning read it aloud to those who had less ability than themselves. Thus light began to spread, when a dark cloud came over this hopeful state of things; for Queen Mary, a stern papist, ascended the throne of England, and quickly ordered the removal of the Bibles. In a few places, however, her commands were either not received or were not obeyed. Whatever was the cause, it is certain that there still lay the old Bible on a stand just inside the

porch of the little chapelry at Brentwood, in Essex.

It was in the spring of the year 1555, when a youth, named William Hunter, entered the church to read the book he loved. He was an apprentice to a London weaver, but was now on a visit to his native town. The lad was one of those who were faithful to the truth, and who would rather suffer than sin against it. As he stood reading the holy book, and lifting up his heart in prayer, a man of the name of Atwell, a summoner or officer of the popish bishop, came that way, and saw him so engaged.

'Why meddlest thou with the Bible?' said the officer, not a little angry that a boy should dare to open the Book of God. 'Knowest thou how to read? and canst thou expound the Scriptures?'

The youth modestly replied: 'Father Atwell, I take not upon me to *expound* the Scriptures; but finding the Bible here, I *read* it to my comfort.'

The officer then began to speak scornfully of the Sacred Word as a hurtful book.

'Say not so,' said William, in a kind and respectful manner, 'it is God's book, out of which every one that hath grace may learn to know what pleaseth God, and what is displeasing to Him.'

'Could we not tell formerly,' inquired Atwell, 'as well as now, how God was to be served?'

'Not so well as now,' answered William, 'if we might have His blessed word among us still, as we have had; and I pray God that we may have the blessed Bible among us continually.'

As Atwell could not prevail with the lad, he cried, 'I see you are one who dislike the Queen's laws. I have heard how you left London on that account; but if you do not turn, you, as well as many other heretics, will broil for your opinions.'

'God give me grace,' meekly replied William, 'that I may believe His word, and confess His name, whatever may come of it.'

'Confess His name!' shouted old Atwell. 'No, no; you will go to the devil, all of you.'

Atwell quickly left the chapel, and meeting a priest, returned with him to where William was reading, when the priest began to upbraid

and threaten him. The youth well knew what this meant, so he hastened to his father's house, and taking a hasty leave of his parents, fled from the town. It was a sad time when the young who loved the Lord had to leave the homes of their early days, and seek their dwelling and food wherever they could find them.

A few days after William had gone, a justice sent for the father, and ordered him to produce his son. 'What, sir,' said the parent, 'would you have me seek my son that he may be burned?'

The justice was resolute; and upon this errand the poor father was obliged to depart. He rode about for two or three days, hoping to satisfy the justice, without finding his son. The lad, however, saw his father at a distance, and went to meet him. On learning the danger of his parent, he said he would return, rather than place his father in any peril. And yet how could the aged parent secure his own safety by the surrender of his child? It was a struggle of affection: at length he yielded, and they went together into the town.

When the evening drew on, William and his father ascended the hill that leads to the little town of Brentwood. The cottagers bade them good cheer as they passed them on their way; but it was with heavy hearts and weeping eyes that they looked forward to the coming morrow. They had not, however, to wait till the morning dawn, for during the night the young Christian was seized, and hurried to the stocks. There he lay, till break of day, pained in body, but happy in mind.

Early in the morning, William was taken before a justice of the peace, who, after trying in vain to shake his faith, ordered him to be carried to the old palace in the fields of Bethnal Green — about sixteen miles away — where Bonner, the popish Bishop of London, then resided. When he stood in the hall of the palace, the bishop first spoke to him gently, then sternly, and then roughly; but still the youth would not promise to give up the Bible, and deny its truths.

'Away with him again to the stocks,' cried the bishop, and to the stocks William was again hurried. Two long days and nights he there

lay, without any food, except a crust of brown bread and a small supply of water. Poor boy, what were his thoughts in these hours of trial ?

Alone, oppressed, and with the prospect of a painful death before him, what did he suffer ? What were the prayers and cries which then went up to God from his heart ? Surely he had grace given to him to bear all with humble trust and patience ; or, like Paul and Silas, as he felt the pressure of the wood on his legs, he may have sung praises unto God. We cannot but believe that his Saviour, who tenderly feels for His suffering disciples, gave to him to taste His choicest comfort and love.

Not satisfied with this act of cruelty, his enemies proceeded to further lengths, in the hope of subduing his spirit. The bishop sent William to one of the London prisons, with strict orders to the jailer to put as many iron chains upon him as he could possibly bear. And in a dungeon he was confined for three-quarters of a year, hoping, trusting, praying always.

Bishop Bonner one day thought of the Bible-loving lad in prison, and hoping that his

long confinement, together with the natural love of liberty and home, had made him more ready to yield, sent for him to his palace. But the spirit of the young martyr was yet unbroken, and his trust in the gospel as firm as before.

'If you recant,' said the bishop, 'I will give you forty pounds, and set you up in business.' This was a large sum of money in those days, and the offer was very tempting, but it was at once rejected.

'I will make you steward of my own house,' added Bonner in a gentle and crafty manner.

'But, my lord,' was the reply, 'if you cannot persuade my conscience by Scripture, I cannot find in my heart to turn from God for the love of the world; for I count all worldly things but loss, in comparison with the love of Christ.'

Will neither threats nor promises avail? Then away with him to the fire.

When William again entered his native town, he knew it was to endure a painful death. But yet he knew what his Saviour had suffered for him. And he remembered, too, the words,

'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'

There was no prison in the little town, so the martyr youth was confined in an inn, and guarded by constables. His mother heard of his return, and with true love rushed to the place where he lay. Charity moved the hearts of the guards, and they allowed her to see him, and to sit by his side. And when she found him happy and constant, she blessed God for such a son, and the more so when he said—

'For my little pain which I shall suffer, Christ hath procured for me a crown of joy; are you not glad of that, mother?'

They then knelt down, and she prayed to God to strengthen her poor boy to the end.

At length the morning came that young William was to die. The sheriff, justices, and priests were duly in attendance, with executioners and guards, while a crowd of people had come together to the last sad scene. As the young martyr was led along from the inn, his father rushed forward towards him in an agony of parental feeling. Throwing his arms around the neck of his noble boy, he said,

with flowing tears, 'God be with thee, son William.'

The son calmly looked for the last time on his dear parent, and replied, 'God be with you, father; be of good comfort; I trust we shall meet again where we shall rejoice together.'

There were many weeping eyes on that day in the little town of Brentwood. To see one so young—a kind, gentle, pious lad—whose only offence was that he loved the gospel, dragged through the streets, to bear the scorching flames, was a sight that touched the hardest heart, and brought tears on many a manly cheek. William, as he passed along, saw his father's cottage, and cast a last look on his sorrowing sisters. He bade farewell to those who had been the playmates and friends of his earliest days.

He was now to suffer in the cause of Christ, and they saw that he feared not to die. At last the procession came to the end of the town, where the stake and chain and fagots were ready. Without loss of time he was secured by the chain, and wood was piled around. While this was being done, a pardon

was offered if he would profess himself a papist.

'No,' said William resolutely, 'I will not recant, God willing.' Then turning to the people he asked them to pray for him.

'Pray for thee?' cried a hard-hearted justice, who was looking on, 'I will no more pray for thee than I would for a dog.'

'I pray God this may not be laid to your charge at the last day,' was William's calm reply.

A priest, too, began to taunt him; until a gentleman spoke aloud, 'May God have mercy on his soul;' and the people mournfully added, 'Amen.'

The fire was now lighted, and as the flames began to rise, William, who still held in his hand a book of Psalms, threw it into the hands of his brother, who had followed him to the place of death. His brother calling to him said, 'William, think on the sufferings of Christ and be not afraid.'

'I am not afraid,' added the martyr. 'Lord, Lord, receive my spirit.' These were his last words. The fire was lighted; the dry fagots

burned briskly ; and the flames soon wrapped around his body. In a few minutes his sufferings were at an end for ever.

An old elm-tree still marks the spot near which William Hunter yielded up his life for the truth. Though three hundred years have passed since then, his name is not forgotten. His soul has joined the ' noble army of martyrs ' in heaven ; but the record of his faith and courage will long survive on earth.

Let us learn from his history :

The importance of early decision in the cause and service of Christ, as a preservative in times of error and false religion.

The need of constancy in resisting the most tempting offers to deny our Master. Like Moses, the servant of God, let us choose ' rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.'

The blessing of having pious parents. The father and mother of William could give up such a son *to* Christ and *for* Christ, encouraging him, even in the prospect of death, not to

renounce the truth. May your parents never be called to such a test of love.

The true character of Popery. Can that be the pure and holy religion of Jesus—the religion of love and mercy—which commits such dreadful deeds? Christ was kind and loving to all. He came 'not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.' When His disciples would have used the sword, and have called 'down fire from heaven,' He rebuked them. How different from His gentle and merciful spirit has been the conduct of cruel persecutors in every age!

THE MAIDEN MARTYR

More than two hundred and fifty years have passed since a Spaniard thus wrote of his native land:—'In Spain, many very learned, many very noble, and many of the highest gentry, have for this cause' (that of the reformed faith) 'been led forth to the scaffold.

'There is not a city, and, if one may so speak, there is not a village, nor a hamlet, nor a noble house in Spain, that has not had, and still has one or more that God of His infinite mercy has enlightened with the light of His gospel. Our enemies have done what they could to put out this light, and thus they have visited with loss of property, of honour, and of life, very many in Spain. And yet it is worthy of note, the more they threaten, scourge, throw into the galleys, imprison, or burn, the more they multiply.'[1]

[1] De Castro's *Spanish Protestants*.

The good work had been begun and carried on chiefly by the means of Bibles and tracts. Although the Inquisition kept strict watch and strong guard, to prevent all books from entering the land, it was so managed that they were carried from the border towns to those in the interior in bales of goods, and were gladly bought by all classes.

And thus the work of the Reformation went silently and steadily on. But cloudy days indeed have come over the country of Spain since the times of which we speak; the light has been put out, and 'gross darkness covers the people.'

One of the cities in which the gospel took the deepest root was Seville, a place of great wealth and trade, and famous for its noble palaces, beautiful churches, and ancient dwellings.

Among its other buildings there once stood a long and lofty range, whose gloomy walls and iron-barred windows marked it as a prison. The passenger, as he drew nigh to it, quickened his pace, and trembled at the thought that he might one day be shut up in its dreary cells.

This place was the court of the Inquisition, so called because it was the tribunal set up to inquire into the opinions of any who were inclined to renounce the religion of the land.

This court sent forth a class of monks as its agents, known as the inquisitors, or inquirers, to search out and punish all those who did not promptly submit to the creed of Popery. The steps of these inquisitors took hold on death. Few who went into their presence returned again to their homes. Fires were lit by them, and many faithful servants of Christ were cast into the flames. 'Others had trial of cruel mocking, and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment.'

The unhappy victim who passed the iron gate of the Inquisition was led through several halls, one opening into the other, and each increasing in darkness, until the last was shrouded in dismal shadows. A single window looked into the yard below, around which were ranged the entrances to the cells, sunk far below the surface of the ground.

The descent into these was by many winding ways, that from their depths the cries of the

prisoners might not be heard. The sweet light and pure air of heaven entered not there. All was black, and damp, and terrific. In some of these vaults human bones were spread on the ground, and the walls were covered with the names of those who had been left to perish, unpitied and unknown. There were cruel and wicked deeds done in those silent vaults, in the name of the holy and merciful Saviour, which, could we know them, would fill our hearts with shame and horror.

The assistants to the inquisitors were called *familiars*; that is, those attached to the 'family' or order of monks. In the darkness of the night these familiars suddenly stood before the door of a house, with their faces entirely covered with a hood, in which were two small holes for the eyes. No one dared to resist their power, or to assist the object of their search in his escape.

It might be that they had got a father to inform against his wife, or a mother against her son, or a brother against a sister; for all the bonds of love and duty were broken by their craft. It was enough if any one were

suspected of having read, or lent, or kept in the house a book of the reformed faith, or had a Protestant for a friend, or had tried to console and aid a prisoner in the cells.

They had now come for the unhappy person in an hour when he was at rest. The door must instantly be opened, and at once they seize him, and carry him away to their dungeons; there, perhaps, to lie for many months, in awful suspense, wearied and worn, before he knew the charge that he was called to answer.

Among those who had been seized by the familiars, and brought before the court of Inquisition, was a young Spanish lady, named Maria de Bohorques, the daughter of a gentleman of high condition in Seville, and related to several noble families. Her early youth was full of hope and promise, and her home was cheered by every earthly comfort. But she had been led by Divine grace to give her heart to Christ, and set her affections on things above.

Maria, when about twenty-one years of age, was suspected of being faithless to the Church of Rome. Her tutor, Doctor Gil, who had

been led to embrace the reformed faith, was one of the most learned men of the age. Under his care she had studied the Holy Scriptures in their original languages. A blessing had attended the reading of the Word of God; and her gifted and inquiring mind had found the only foundation on which true religion rests. She was not long in learning that the Roman Catholic religion is contrary to the truth of God, and she had courage to make known what she knew and felt.

There were times when Maria thought of the terrible Inquisition. In her hours of secret study and prayer, she had asked of God to give her strength, if the day of trial which had come to many should at last reach her. And now it had come, and she stood alone and undefended before her judges.

The maiden martyr was led by the familiars into a secret chamber, where at a table sat the inquisitors, clad in dark robes, their faces scarcely to be seen, from the position in which they sat, amid the deep gloom of the place. Before them was a small wooden cross, and a roll of paper inscribed with the charge against

the prisoner. By her side were the familiars, who acted both as guards and witnesses.

Soft words were at first spoken. They told her that they wished well to her soul; that they hoped to restore a stray sheep to the fold. As she listened to their address, Maria prayed in her heart, and strength was given her to be faithful. She boldly owned her hope in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and refused to yield to the smooth speeches or the angry threats of her judges. They then declared that, unless she submitted to the Church of Rome, she should be tried by torture.

And to awaken terror in the mind of the young Christian, there were spread out to view the engines of cruelty used in that horrid chamber. She was pointed to the pulley, by which a prisoner was raised to the roof of the dungeon, with heavy weights fastened to the feet; to the rack, on which the body was violently stretched; to the fire, over which the feet of the sufferers were hung.

The judges were concerned to know who were her companions in the faith, and called on her to make them known. But she gave no

reply. Again they directed her eyes to the instruments of torture, with a threat of their severest trial. Still she stood firmly in her resolve. The order was now given to stretch her upon the rack; and, like wolves greedy for their prey, the officers seized her, and casting her on the frame, they secured her wrists and feet to the cords. In a few minutes the slow turn of the wheel drew her tender limbs, as though they would be torn from her body.

In this position of agony Maria was again called on to confess; but the bold girl refused to renounce her own faith or betray those she loved. Another turn of the cruel wheel was made, and her joints seemed to start from their sockets. Poor lonely one! the men in whose hands she had fallen had no hearts to feel; to them mercy was unknown. Great as was her misery, and when she thought it had reached its height, it was as though it only had begun. New seats of pain were reached, and in the depth of her woe she called for pity.

Perhaps many have said to themselves, 'If we were called to be martyrs we would show our persecutors how to die.' But how little

do we know our own weakness. In the hour of her greatest pain, when scarcely sensible of what she said, poor Maria owned that her sister Juana had often spoken to her about the reformed faith, and was a secret follower of it. This confession soon cost Juana her life. To the rack she was quickly brought, and on being removed from it, she lay for a short time in the greatest agony, and then died.

But Maria—what had she done? She felt that she had been faithless to the cause she loved. She had betrayed one dearer to her than her own life. When they took her from the wheel, they carried her to a cell. It was sweet to her to lie on that cold stone floor, and feel that the wheel was no longer dragging her life away. Yet she had only gained a short release at the expense of a beloved sister.

Another day of trial was at hand. Maria was soon doomed to the flames as a heretic: but before the sentence was carried into effect, two priests were sent to her, then another two, and again two more. They went to her cell in the hope that she might yet yield, and profess her faith in the Church of Rome.

It must have been an affecting sight to have beheld that poor young creature—her limbs all bruised and full of intense pain—without any human friend—reclining on the straw of her cell, while she meekly and piously disputed with the crafty priests. She heard their words in patience, and then calmly refused to receive their doctrine. Hour after hour they tried all their art and power, but in vain. She told them of her weakness in suffering ; but yet she looked to God for grace to bear all, and to go boldly to the burning pile rather than deny the truth she loved.

On the morning of September 24, 1559, more than one fatal stake was driven in the great square of the city of Seville. A number of the reformed faith were to be burned that day. Among them was Maria de Bohorques. Early in the morning the familiars came to her cell, to carry her to the place of death, for the torture had deprived her of the power to walk. Feeble in body, she was yet strong in heart. Her inward strength was made perfect in weakness and suffering. The Lord was with her ; she 'endured, as seeing

Him who is invisible.' Her looks betrayed no fear : it was to her a day of victory and deliverance. Through the flames she knew that she should pass to glory.

There were other female Protestants burned in Seville's great square at the same time, and Maria sought to comfort her sister martyrs. She invited them to join with her in singing a hymn. And above the noise and tumult of the crowd there assembled, their sweet voices were heard sounding the praises of the Saviour. They then cheered one another as they stood ready for death.

It was usual at such a time, when the victims were bound to the stake, and the torch was about to be applied to the wood, for one more attempt to be made to lead the prisoners to confess. For this purpose several priests, out of regard to the youth, talent, and family connections of Maria, tried yet again to bring her to renounce her faith. She was asked to repeat the Creed, and this she did in a firm voice ; but, at the same time, she explained its several parts in the Protestant sense.

Finding that they gained nothing by their

attempts, the officers were ordered to strangle her. This done the pile was soon lighted, and her body was consumed. Her released spirit passed beyond the reach of her tormentors, there to receive the martyr's crown from the hands of her Lord and Saviour—a crown which He purchased with His own most precious blood, and which is the rich gift of His grace and love.

As we fondly cherish the memory of those who 'loved not their lives unto death,' we may well direct our thoughts to their happy state now in the world of glory.

'Who are they, clothed in radiant white,
That stand around yon golden throne:
Their garments of celestial light,
Pure with a lustre not their own?

These are the saints who once below
Walked in the path their Master trod;
'Midst pain, and mockery, and woe,
And scorching flames, they sought their God.

Through His dear might who once was slain,
Firm at the burning stake they stood,
And washed, from every guilty stain,
Their garments in His precious blood.

Therefore around the throne they stand,
  And in His holy temple shine;
Rich in the joy of His right hand,
  Robed in His righteousness divine.

There they can never hunger more,
  Nor ask the cooling draught in vain;
For He will living waters pour,
  And heal from every earthly pain.

In those blest realms of endless day,
  The Lamb shall all their wants supply;
And God's own hand shall wipe away
  The falling tear from every eye.'

THE PROTESTANTS

THERE have been PROTESTANTS from the first: those who have *protested* against the errors of the age. They have been mostly a 'little flock,' often driven into the caves of the mountains, or hidden in forests and sheltered valleys, yet have they not failed to bear a testimony for God and His truth.

Among those pious worthies were the Waldenses. In very early times the glad news of redeeming love was carried to them, and it took deep root in their hearts. It met a welcome, and was believed, loved, and cherished. In their lowly valleys they long 'kept the faith,' protected by their humble and obscure condition; while the nations around them were sunk in the greatest errors.

The range of mountains known as the Alps lies north of Italy and east of France. To-

wards the south side of this range is the county of Piedmont, and here, on a small tract of land, still live the 'men of the valleys,' the descendants of the early Waldenses, the 'martyr people,' as they were called—the *Protestants* of their times.

Their homes stretch up the Alps, and down into the plain below, and are formed into little hamlets and villages. Those by the plain are very pleasant, with meadows, and vineyards, wheat and rye fields, and gardens. Mulberry trees fringe the road-sides, giving food for multitudes of little silk-worms, which spin silk for the people to trade in.

Higher up, the way winds among huge, frowning cliffs, by the sides of which torrents dash down to the plain below. Here and there are little valleys open to the sun, edged by forests of firs, warm and green, where a cluster of cottages lie nestled close together, surrounded by patches of potatoes and corn, while herds of cattle and flocks of goats are grazing on the grassy spots of the mountain-side.

Still higher up, the trees dwindle to dwarfs;

deep snows cover the peaks, and masses of ice, which sometimes tumble down from the heights, destroying everything in their way. Here everything looks wild and dreary, and you wonder how any one can live there. In this diversified region of snow and sunshine, of peak and hollow, live the successors of the martyr people, numbering now, perhaps, about twenty-two thousand souls.

Away up in their mountain retreats the Waldenses never fell into the same corrupt way of thinking of the gospel as nearly all the rest of Europe had. No; they, to a great extent, *held fast to the pure Word of God.* They said, 'Men ought not to go to Rome for the pardon of their sins, nor seek to saints and relics for help.'

'The Church,' they declared, 'is founded, not on St. Peter, much less on the Pope; but upon Christ and His doctrines as taught in the Bible.' They maintained that it was wicked idolatry to worship images, or so much as to have them in the churches. Behold how they *protested* against Popery! They were real Protestants long before Luther's

reformation, or before the name 'Protestant' was given to Christians.

For several hundred years nobody thought of harming these lowly people in their mountain valleys. They had no riches to tempt the great and the warlike to invade their homes. It was almost as though they were forgotten by the rest of the world. And thus shielded from many of the evils which came upon others, they were in a great measure faithful to the truth as it is in Christ.

As they grew in love to the Saviour, they wanted others to love Him also, and to enjoy the light and comfort which He can give to the soul. So poor little Alpine churches sent missionaries out, two by two, to France, to Germany, to Italy, and all about. Is it not beautiful to see how the love of Christ moves the heart? It not only makes us desire to *be* good, but *do* good. It leads us to deny ourselves, and seek to relieve the sorrows of others.

That is just what Jesus did. He came to the world to seek and to save the lost. 'He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.'

He was as a servant for the good of others. So will His true followers, when filled with His love, strive to benefit all on whom they can exert any influence. Not only did these children of the Alps send missionaries forth, but colporteurs, or book-hawkers, also. Thus did they employ these agents more than four hundred years ago—pious pedlars, who, with their goods, carried leaves of the Bible, and written tracts—for this was before the invention of printing—and left them with those found willing to receive them.

In ways like these, Bible piety was kept alive in many hearts, and homes, and hamlets, while the darkness of Popery rested on the nominally Christian world. These Waldenses, then, were among the first Protestants in the Church.

But we will now pass to the time when the name *Protestant* was to be distinctly adopted by those who refused to submit to the Church of Rome. The case was similar to that of which we read in the New Testament, when all who were the followers of Jesus were Christians, before they were so called in the

city of Antioch (Acts xi. 26); but after that time they went forth glorying in the name of their Divine Master. So from the time of which we now speak men began to rejoice in the name of Protestants.

Spire is an ancient city on the banks of the river Rhine, in Germany. In the days of Luther it was a place of great trade and wealth. Lofty towers lined its strong walls; noble buildings adorned its streets; and pleasant walks were formed on the outside of the city. This place was selected by Charles the Fifth, the Emperor of Germany, to hold a 'diet' to consult on the state of the country and the Roman Catholic Church.

This Emperor, his brother Ferdinand, King of Spain, and the Pope, were the three great enemies of the Reformation. They were bold, rich, and powerful, and were quite resolved to put an end to the 'new doctrines,' as they called them; though, indeed, they were the old doctrines preached by the apostles. In the hope to stop their progress, they called this great assembly in this famous place of resort.

Before the day came for the diet to commence

business, the Roman Catholic princes and bishops entered the city of Spire with great pomp and military array, as if they were going to war. One or two of the princes who favoured the Reformation also drew nigh at the head of their horsemen; while others were attended with only a few learned and pious men, whose calm and cheerful looks showed that they were not ashamed of the cause they were about to plead.

Besides these, there were deputies or persons acting on the part of several of the 'free cities' of Germany. Never before was there a greater gathering for such a purpose in any country of Europe.

The Protestant princes wore these letters braided on their right sleeves, V. D. M. I. Æ., being the first letters of the Latin words *Verbum Domini manet in Æternum* ('The word of the Lord endureth for ever,' 1 Pet. i. 25). The same letters were placed over the doors of the hotels in Spire where they lodged. Thus the Bible was the ensign under which they stood arrayed.

It had been proposed that the princes of the

German Empire should be at liberty to make such reforms in their churches as they saw necessary, with the permission of the Emperor. This the Pope did not like at all. Liberty of conscience he strongly opposed.

'People *must not* think for themselves in matters of religion,' he said, 'or make what reforms they please; but they must think and act according to what the Church of Rome teaches, and *that Church alone*.'

The Romanists were resolved to put down all religious liberty. They first sent down an order that the gospel should not be preached in the city of Spire by the reformers; but the princes, on their arrival, urged their right to a place of worship for their use. Their demand was sternly denied.

The princes then ordered their preachers to conduct Divine service in the halls of their palaces and hotels; and such was the thirst of the people to hear the word, that eight thousand of them were present one Lord's Day during the morning and evening worship of the evangelical princes. While the Romish worship was carried on in the beautiful

cathedral of Spire, before a large number of people, crowds from town and country filled the places where the word of God was preached by the reformed pastors.

The princes thus boldly made known their faith. They said they would give up their kingdoms and their lives rather than submit to what they believed was wrong. 'We will,' said they, 'obey the Emperor in everything that may maintain peace and the honour of God; but we cannot submit to give up the truths of the Bible, nor the simple worship of God.'

The princes were outvoted by the diet, but not cast down. 'Let us reject the decrees which refuse us redress,' they cried; 'in matters of conscience we must endure everything, sacrifice everything—our crowns, our lives—rather than give up the Word of God.'

But they soon found that the diet spurned their claims, and would not listen to their words. Had not, then, the time come for them to make a solemn *protest* against the false and shameful conduct of their opposers? Yes; they all saw it was the hour to make a brave

stand for the truth; and hand to hand, and heart to heart, they went forward in the course of duty.

It was on April 25, 1529, that they met in a little room on the ground floor of a minister's house in St. John's Lane, in the city of Spire—a room which is still shown to the tourist. And there, with prayerful and brave hearts, and steady hands, they all stood forward. There were John the Constant of Saxony, Philip of Hesse, George of Brandenburg, and other noble princes, together with deputies from several chief cities.

One by one they signed their names to a paper in which they appealed against the violent acts and the errors of the followers of the Pope. As they placed their seals to the Protest, they said, 'We appeal, for ourselves, for our subjects, and for all who receive, or who shall hereafter receive, the Word of God.' Two lawyers of the city then added their names as witnesses, and the deed was done. They had now cut the cords that had bound them to the Church of Rome, and were free.

It has been said that the upper chamber in

Jerusalem, in which the disciples met and continued with one accord in prayer, and that lower chamber in the city of Spire, were 'the two cradles of the Church.'

The princes and other reformers returned to the diet, and John the Constant, Elector of Saxony, who had first signed the paper, stood before King Ferdinand and the bishops, with the Protest in his hand. And thus he read—

'We are resolved, with the grace of God, to maintain the pure preaching of His holy word, such as is contained in the Biblical books of the Old and New Testaments, without adding anything thereto that may be contrary to it. This word is the only truth; it is the sure rule of all doctrine and of all life, and can never fail or deceive us. He who builds on this foundation shall stand against all the powers of hell, whilst all the human vanities that are set up against it shall fall before the face of God.'

'We earnestly entreat you,' they went on to say, 'to weigh carefully our wrongs and our motives. If you do not yield to our request, we PROTEST before God, our only Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, and Saviour, and

who will one day be our Judge, as well as before all men and all creatures, that we, for us and our people, neither consent nor adhere in any manner to the proposed decree' (which had been made to deprive them of their Christian liberty) 'in anything that is contrary to God, to His holy word, to our right conscience, and to the salvation of souls.'

King Ferdinand wished to return the Protest to those who brought it; but the princes would not take it back. They placed it on the table, and then respectfully quitted the room. Thus did these bold men act and speak. They did not stand as though they were perplexed or alarmed; but with the Word of God in one hand, and the Protest in the other, they lifted up their heads in courage and hope.

This appeal they also sent to the Emperor Charles. When the messengers stood before him, he looked upon them in his pride, and speedily sent them from his presence till he should give his decision. After keeping them waiting for a month, he had them put under arrest, and threatened them with death if they left the town, or wrote to their friends at Spire.

It was soon found by the reformers that all attempts to have the free use of the Word of God and liberty of conscience were at an end; and they prepared, in prayer and faith, for the struggle they saw before them. They left the city of Spire resolved to be Protestants, and to hold fast by the Bible, and the Bible only, as their rule of faith, and their guide to heaven.

And from that day to the present the conflict has continued between truth and error—the doctrines of the gospel and the vain devices of Popery. Nor will it cease until truth shall prevail, and 'the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.' Until that happy time shall come the young must be taught against *what* they protest, and *why* they do so, that they may not bear the name of Protestant in vain.

Like the reformers at Spire, they must *Protest* against all attempts to deprive them of the free use of the Bible; because our Saviour directed the people to 'search the Scriptures' (John v. 39); and of Timothy it was said, 'From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee

wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim. iii. 15). They must be Bible Christians, in distinction from those whose faith rests on the word and traditions of men.

They must *Protest* against making the Apostle Peter the foundation of the Church (though he was one of the chief of the disciples); because it is written, 'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus' (1 Cor. iii. 11).

They must *Protest* against paying Divine worship to the Virgin Mary (though she was 'blessed among women'); because it is declared, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve' (Matt. iv. 10).

They must *Protest* against praying to saints and angels as mediators; because it is written, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous' (1 John ii. 1); and there is but 'one Mediator' (1 Tim. ii. 5).

They must *Protest* against the Romish doctrine of the mass, or the celebration of the

Lord's Supper as a sacrifice for sin, when a piece of wafer is called the host, or 'victim,' and is worshipped; because such conduct is opposed to the Scripture doctrine 'of one sacrifice for sin,' which Christ offered 'once for all' (Heb. x. 10, 12).

They must *Protest* against the priest withholding the wine from the people at the Lord's Supper; because our Lord said, 'Drink ye ALL of it' (Matt. xxvi. 27).

They must *Protest* against the Romish doctrine of human merit; because the Scriptures teach us, 'We are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (Rom. iii. 24); and 'if by grace, then it is no more of works' (Rom. xi. 6);

They must *Protest* against the vain doctrine of purgatory, or a state in another world in which the remains of sin are cleansed by fire; because it is written, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John i. 7).

They must *Protest* against these, and all other errors of the Church of Rome; because they are contrary to the Holy Scriptures,

which God has given to us to be the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice. Let the young, then, well consider why they are called Protestants; and let them be earnest to receive into their hearts those great truths which the apostles and reformers preached, and through the reception of which alone, by the grace of the Holy Spirit leading them to a true faith in Jesus Christ, they can be saved.

THE TRAGEDY OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY

KING CHARLES the Ninth of France, and his chief officers of state, were in solemn debate in the council chamber of the old palace of the Louvre. They had met on an affair of death; the death not of one, or of a few, but of thousands of the peaceable inhabitants of the land.

On the table before them lay a well-written roll of parchment. It was the register of the noblemen and gentry in France of the reformed faith. A strict inquiry had been made through the provinces, that it might contain the names of all. And now the council were planning how and when the deed should be done—a deed which was designed to root out, with unsparing hand, the hated Huguenots [1]

[1] The word Huguenot signifies 'associated' or 'united together'; it is nearly of the same meaning as 'brethren.'

from the kingdom. Time and circumstances, it was thought, were favourable. Many of the Protestants had been invited to Paris, under the pretence of being present at the marriage of King Henry of Navarre with a princess of France. Feasts and sports had been provided for them, and everything was done to lull them into a state of false security.

The young king took up a pen to sign the order for the slaughter, and casting his half-closed eyes on the ground, with struggling feelings cried, 'Since it is to be done, take care that no one escapes to reproach me.'

The time fixed on was St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1572; the hour, three o'clock in the morning, when their victims would be sleeping in their beds; the signal, the tolling of a great bell of one of the churches; the conductor of the murder, the wicked Duke of Guise. The gates were ordered to be closed, and the walls secured; lights were to be hung out from the highest points in the city, that

one of the titles of the first Christians. Some writers, however, assert that it is derived from the name of the smallest copper coin known in France in the Middle Ages, and that it was employed as a term of contempt.

the marks secretly placed on the houses of the doomed might be clearly seen.

The soldiers and others were directed to muster shortly after midnight, wearing a piece of white linen on their arms, a white cross on their caps, and the image of the Virgin Mary round their necks, lest in the confusion the assassins should be arrayed one against another. Their reward was to be the property of the slain.

The armed bands, under the darkness of the night, and with cautious steps, moved to the places assigned to them, ready for their work of blood. In the palace of the Louvre all were wakeful. The king was restless and troubled in his mind. He seemed to start back at the thought of the guilt about to fall on his soul.

The king would have recalled the order he had given ; but his mother, Queen Catherine, entered his chamber shortly after midnight, to confirm him in the horrid deed. She then led him to a window, to await the event. And there, until the city clocks struck two, stood a queen-mother, encouraging her royal son to commit a thousand murders.

The Tragedy of St. Bartholomew's Day

It was one of those calm, lovely nights, so commonly enjoyed in France in the early autumn. A gentle breeze passed over the garden of the Louvre; and the unnumbered host of stars above seemed, in their soft lustre, to speak only of peace to man. The silence of the night, however, was broken by the report of a pistol. Charles shook with terror, and cold drops stood upon his brow.

The sound was answered by the toll of the great bell, when suddenly all the rest of the bells of the churches struck out the signal. The armed men now sprang from their hiding-places, shouting as they rushed along the streets, 'Kill! kill! death to the Huguenots!' The shrill sounds of the bells, the clatter of arms, the tramp of the assassins, and the shrieks of the dying, soon mingled in one long, loud, terrific sound.

The Duke of Guise, with his party, first rushed to the house where lay Admiral Coligny, the chief and leader of the Protestants. They found him reclining on a couch, suffering from a shot in his arm, received a few days before in a base attempt to murder him. The admiral

was aroused from his slumbers by the noise made in breaking open his door. He partly arose from his couch, and committed his soul into the hands of God, when one of the soldiers, preparing to strike with his sword, cried—

'Art thou not the admiral?'

'I am,' he fearlessly replied; 'but, young man, respect these grey hairs, nor stain them with my blood.'

In another moment, regardless of the appeal, the man plunged the sword into his bosom. After receiving the greatest outrages, his body was thrown out of the window, at the feet of one of the French princes, who, spurning it, cried out—

'Courage, my friends: we have had a lucky beginning; let us finish in the same manner.' The headless trunk was then dragged through the streets of Paris, and afterwards hung up by the feet to the common gallows. The young king, as though he had now overcome all scruple and tenderness, went to feed his eyes with the sight of the body of the man who but a few days before he had called *Mon père*!—'My father!'

The admiral's son-in-law, Lord Teligni, next received his death-blow, and fell repeating with his dying lips the names of his wife and children. Other nobles and attendants, with two young children, were then slain. After having murdered every one in this house, the soldiers went forward on their dreadful purpose.

And now arose around the dreadful cry, 'Kill! kill!' The officers of the palace, as they rapidly drove through the streets, cheered on the soldiers with the cry, 'Kill every one of them; it is the order of the king!' The work of destruction was begun in many parts of the city at the same moment.

'Open by command of the king!' was the loud shout of the murderers. The unsuspecting Protestants hastened to obey, and were at once cut down. Others, as they raised their windows to see who called them at that hour of the night, were shot. While many, as it was the early morn of the Lord's Day, took the tolling of the bells as the call to early prayers. Happy were they who were surprised in their sleep, and who were smitten as they quietly reposed on their beds. Their sufferings

were short, while others had their pangs prolonged for hours.

Tumults and shrieks increased, until they deepened into one terrible groan. Pursued on all sides, they were tracked like the poor deer, or driven to the slaughter as a flock of sheep. If they sought refuge in the churches, armed men guarded the doors. If they fled to the palace, in the hope of moving the heart of the king by their piteous cry for mercy, the soldiers awaited them with their spears and guns. If they burst open the prison doors, to conceal themselves among the condemned, they were from thence drawn out to die. They fled to the banks of the river, but they were there caught by boat-hooks, and thrust into the water.

Death was everywhere—in their beds, on the housetops, on the water, and on the land—in the palace and in the humblest dwelling. Every spot was a place of slaughter. The assassins spared not the aged, nor women, nor the very babes. With savage joy they threw the bodies out of the houses, so that there was scarcely a street or lane but was strewn with the dead.

The Duke Montgomery, with about one hundred Protestant gentlemen who lodged without the walls, hearing of the murders within the city, sought to escape, half naked, on horseback; but they were overtaken, and all, except about ten of their number, cut to pieces.

Thus, from morning to night, on *the Lord's Day*, this awful slaughter continued, until darkness put an end to the work of blood. The next day it was carried on again. The soldiers were now joined by all the ruffians in the city, who, for the sake of plunder, entered every place where any Huguenot might have hidden himself; and if any one were found, he was slain, his body stripped, and then cast into the river. In this way, for five days, the slaughter went on, until thousands had fallen in Paris by the sword, the spear, and the bullet.

Messengers were quickly sent to the various provinces and towns, commanding them to follow the example of Paris, in slaying all of the reformed religion.

At the town of Angers lived a man, beloved for his virtue and learning, named Masson de

Rivers, the pastor of the Protestant church. As soon as the king's messenger arrived in the town, he hastened towards the pastor's house, and found him in the garden.

'I am come to kill thee, by the king's command,' said he, showing his letter of authority. De Rivers declared his innocence of any offence; but while he was offering a short prayer to God, he was shot through the body.

At Lyons, when the letters from the court were brought to Mandelot, the governor, he ordered, by sound of trumpet, that all Protestants should appear before him. They, without suspecting his design, obeyed the summons, when they were thrust into the city prisons. He then desired the soldiers to destroy them; but they refused to direct their arms against men bound and suppliant at their feet.

Filled with wrath, the governor hired a number of the vilest men he could find, who, with chopping-knives and butchers' axes, fell on the defenceless Huguenots, and, after first mangling their limbs for sport, put an end to their lives. It is recorded, that so great was the slaughter, that the warm blood ran from

under the gates of the prisons down the streets, until it mingled with the waters of the neighbouring river.

Among those slain in this place were an aged man, named Francis Collut, and his two sons. When Collut saw the murderers come towards him with their axes, he piously said to his children, 'Often do such sacrifices happen in Christian churches. Believers in all ages have ever been, and even to the world's end shall be, as sheep among wolves, and doves among hawks.'

Then, embracing each other, and commending their spirits to God, they submitted to the hands of the murderers. They died in each other's arms, and in this state their bodies were afterwards found.

In a few of the towns the governors refused to obey the orders of the king. One, named Ortezto, nobly replied—

'Sire, I have received your letter enjoining the inhabitants of Bayonne to a massacre of the French Huguenots. Your majesty has many faithful servants and brave soldiers in this city, but not one executioner.' The conduct

of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Bayeux deserves also an honourable record. He not only refused to partake in the slaughter, but protected and provided places of refuge for the defenceless Huguenots.

One of the officers of state, also, ordered his servants to throw open his gates, as a refuge to the Protestants. He did not long survive after this time; and his constant words were, 'After such horrors I do not wish to live.'

When the king was told what had been done, he pretended great displeasure. He invited the Protestants who had escaped to the woods and forests to return to their homes. The poor hunted creatures, hoping that pity might yet find a place in the heart of the king, obeyed the royal command. But in about two days they were seized, and the hand of murder again was raised against them. During this time King Charles was not only a witness of the sad sights from the windows of his palace, but it is said he even fired on some men who were trying to escape. The sight of blood had quenched whatever pity at first he may have felt, and aroused the worst passions of his heart.

'For thirty days together,' says an account written the year after the massacre, 'there was no end of killing, slaying, and robbing; so that at this day there are thousands of little babes and children, that were well born, now fatherless and motherless, and in beggary.' De Thou, a Romish historian, states the number slain throughout France, on this occasion, to have been thirty thousand; other accounts give from sixty thousand to one hundred thousand.

The messenger who carried the news to Rome was rewarded with a thousand crowns. And the Pope joyfully cried aloud, 'Good news! good news!' Guns were fired at the Castle of St. Angelo, and bonfires blazed in the public streets. A solemn procession was formed of the popes, cardinals, and officers of state, who, in the Church of St. Mark, wickedly offered up thanks to God for the 'uprooting of the heretics.'

To keep up the memory of the event, the Pope ordered a medal to be struck. On one side was the portrait of the Pope; on the other, a destroying angel holding a cross in one hand, and a sword in the other, with which he is slaying the Protestants; and on this

medal were the words, '*Ugonottorum strages*,' 'the slaughter of the Huguenots.' Thus has the Church of Rome preserved the evidence of its own crimes.

Whatever King Charles of France hoped to gain by destroying his Protestant subjects, he was miserably disappointed. The short remnant of his days was a fulfilment of Scripture: 'Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house' (Prov. xvii. 13). His kingdom was disturbed, the confidence of his people was lost, and his own family were in a continual state of strife.

Ever after the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day his countenance was marked with a settled gloom, or with a flush he had never before worn, arising from the hauntings of a guilty conscience within. He gradually sank under a slow internal fever, that wasted his strength. In his last hours he endured frightful agonies, and he died miserably, at the age of only twenty-four.

As we think of this unhappy prince sinking into an early grave, oppressed by the horrors of an accusing conscience, are we not reminded

of the words of Holy Scripture ? 'The wicked plotteth against the just; they have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken' (Ps. xxxvii. 12–15).

'How long shall all the workers of iniquity boast themselves ? They break in pieces Thy people, O Lord, and afflict Thine heritage. But the Lord shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness' (Ps. xciv. 4, 5, 23).

Such persecution has often been, in ages past, the lot of the true Church of God: but amidst all the cruelties that have raged against it in the world, God has ever preserved to Himself a people. Well has it been said, that 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church': it was so in France; for as these pious men were cut off, others arose in their place. Many of the people, beholding their holy lives, and the peace with which they met the most cruel deaths, were led to renounce former errors, and to inquire after the way of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE FLIGHT OF THE HUGUENOTS

About two hundred and fifty years ago, there was great joy in the dwellings of the Protestants in France. News had spread over the land that the king had, while in the city of Nantes, sent out a decree in favour of the persecuted. They had passed many long years of trouble; their places of worship had been broken down; their ministers sent out of the land, and many of their friends had been slain.

But henceforth they were to have the free exercise of their religion and the rights of citizens. Their sick poor were to be allowed to enter the public hospitals, and other privileges of the kind were to be fully enjoyed. They were a loyal and thankful people, and they welcomed these benefits with gratitude to the king, and with many praises to God.

The Protestants were now at liberty to

attend to trade, and the care of the land. Their peaceful and active habits soon made them well known. No looms made finer silk, no ploughs were more busy in the fields, and no vines were more fruitful than theirs. They soon became the best workpeople in the country. And this was as it should be; for the purest faith should always be connected with industry and attention to the duties of life.

'Henry the Good,' as the king was called, had been once a Protestant; but he changed his religion to obtain an earthly crown. Many mourned that he should have forgotten the example and counsel of a pious mother: still he did not quite neglect the friends of his early youth. He knew their worth, and did much to serve them. His merciful conduct did not please the Romanists, and one day he was stabbed by a wretched priest while riding in his carriage in the city of Paris.

The Protestants soon found that the next king who came to the throne bore no love towards them; and they had to suffer many hardships. At length, Louis the Fourteenth revoked the edict given in the city of Nantes,

although it had been declared that it should never be altered. When it suited the purpose of the Romanists, they did not scruple to break all the laws which showed any kind of favour to the Protestants, even when they had been secured to them by the most solemn oaths and pledges.

And now, instead of joy, there was only mourning and sorrow in many of the castles and cottages of France. The enemies of the truth had obtained the power they wanted, and they were at liberty to oppress as they pleased. Severe laws were passed, in the hope of rooting out the reformed religion. Heavy fines were laid upon those who did not adorn their houses on saints' days, and heavy blows if they did not kneel when a Romish procession went along the streets.

They were not allowed to be doctors, booksellers, printers, or even grocers. No apprentice could be taught a trade in their shops. If they were heard to sing hymns in public or private, they were sent to prison ; their psalm book was publicly burned ; and the Bible was taken out of their houses. Their places

of worship were again broken into and destroyed; their ministers were sent out of the land, or shut up in jail. The sick could only be attended by Romish priests; and the bodies of those who died were often torn out of their graves, and left to be devoured by wolves and vultures.

The distress of the Huguenots was at its height when they saw their dear children torn from their arms, and carried away to be brought up as papists. The joy of watching over them, of hearing their simple little prayers, and of telling them of the love of Christ in dying on the cross for sinners, was no more to be known by them. And theirs was the bitter grief of not knowing whether their beloved ones were faithful to the truth or had denied it, whether they were suffering torture in a monastery or nunnery, or laid in the quiet grave.

Times of trial show who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ. It was so now. Many who were once known as Protestants forsook the faith of their fathers. Some were gained over with titles and honours, others with promises of reward; many from fear of a dungeon and

death; and numbers were bribed with large sums.

The common people were offered a freedom from taxes for two years, besides a gift of money, if they would change their religion within one month. Those who would not turn were to pay double taxes and a fine of ten pounds—a large sum in those days. The effect was that many denied their Lord, some from terror, and others from hope of such a reward as the wicked could give. Happy did those think themselves who could make their escape to other lands, even though they left behind them all their worldly goods.

There were sad sights in those days, and those had hard hearts who did not shed tears at the sufferings of the afflicted Christians who had remained faithful in evil times. One scene was beheld in a little country town which made many weep. The good Protestant pastor was to have his limbs broken upon a wheel—one of the most painful deaths that could be endured. His enemies did not destroy life at once; they seemed to take delight in adding to his sufferings. For two days he was left

in the deepest agony on the wheel. In the midst of his pain he thus spoke to those who stood by—

'Jesus Christ has satisfied for my sins, and not only for mine, but for the sins of all those who shall go to Him by faith, as now I do. I cast myself upon the merits and death of Jesus, and cling to Him as my Saviour and Redeemer. My dear people, receive my last farewell, and know that I preached to you the pure truths of the gospel—the true way that leads to heaven.'

Among others who were faithful were a gentleman and his wife. A number of soldiers were sent to their mansion. They rudely burst open the doors, carried off some of their goods, and sold them. They then made stables of the beautiful rooms, and caused their horses to lie upon the rich beds. When the ruin of the house was at an end, the master of it went forth with his wife, leading by the hand four little children under seven years of age.

As they passed out at the doors their persecutors threw upon them from the windows pitchers of water. Wet and cold, they went

forth without a home and without food. After a short journey they came to a friend's house, where they were taken in, and in the first night of this distress the mother had another little infant born. But there was to be no shelter allowed for these pious outcasts. A band of soldiers traced them to the spot, and drove them out—with the baby, only three days old, in its mother's arms. After years of trial, this family found a happy home in England.

Many an interesting story of the flight of the Huguenots has been preserved. A family who saw that there could be no peace in their own land, planned a way for their escape. They first concealed their money, jewels, and other valuables in quilted silk petticoats, secretly worked by the lady and her daughter, and which they sent to England. The two eldest sons had already contrived to leave the country; there remained now their parents, a daughter aged sixteen, and two little boys of four and six years old.

Just as they were all ready to start, the father was betrayed and carried to prison. Those he loved hastened to visit him, when

he urged them to flee to a place of safety, in the hope that the time would come when he should be able to join them again. His wife, attended by a male servant, went in disguise to a seaport, and there arranged for a passage to England for herself and three children. She then concealed herself in a house, while the servant went back to bring the children. The eldest daughter, dressed as a peasant girl, placed her two young brothers each in a pannier, or basket, which was slung across the back of a donkey.

She then well covered over the little boys with fruits and vegetables, and on the top of all some poultry in a basket were placed. The children had been charged, whatever should happen by the way, on no account to speak or move. We shall see how bravely these little ones behaved in their trying condition. The servant, in the dress of a country farmer, rode first on horseback. He moved in advance, as if he were unknown to the girl with the donkey ; though he took care to keep in sight as she went along the road.

The young refugee daughter travelled at

night; but as time was precious, the latter part of the journey had to be taken by daylight. Mingled hope and grief filled her mind, as she either thought of going to her mother and escaping to a land of liberty, or of the sorrows of her dear father, left behind in his dreary prison. While on the road she was alarmed at the sight of a party of horse-soldiers riding towards her. They fixed their eye upon her, and then at the panniers.

'What is in those baskets?' they cried. Before she could give an answer, one of them drew his sword, and thrust it into the pannier in which the younger child was hid. No cry was heard; no resistance was made. The soldiers concluded that all was right, and turning round, galloped quickly down the road. As soon as they were out of sight the sister seized the pannier, and threw off the upper part of its contents, expecting to find her little brother killed.

As he lifted up his arms towards his terrified sister, she saw he was covered with blood from a severe cut on one of them. The child in the hour of danger, shut up in his basket-prison,

knew that if he cried his own life and the lives of his brother and sister would be lost, and he bravely bore the pain and was silent. The sister bound up the wound as best she could, and nursed him on the road with the fondest care, and had the joy of finding that his life was spared, though he carried a scar from the wound all his days.

After a perilous journey the young refugees safely reached the seaside. They secretly got on board a ship, whose sails were soon spread to the wind; and in a few days they safely landed in England. But *the father never followed them.* Year after year passed away, and there was the poor captive, though not all the time in a dungeon, yet under restraint, and unable to join those he loved. They never met again on earth: may we not believe that, through the merits of the Saviour, they all had a joyful meeting before the throne of God in heaven?

Many were the plans of the persecuted Huguenots for escaping out of their 'house of bondage,' as it was called. They dared not leave their homes dressed for a journey, as

they would be at once suspected, for they were strictly watched. Early in the morning, or late in the evening, they passed from their doors gaily dressed, with a cane in hand as if going out for a short walk, or on a visit to a friend. Some went forth as hunters, with a dog running before them, and a gun over their shoulder.

A few miles from their homes they changed their clothes—perhaps they put on the disguise of a miller, with a sack of corn on the back; or of a peasant, driving some cattle before them; or of a porter, with a loaded truck going to market.

Sometimes a nobleman exchanged clothes with his servant; the former waited at table, assisted in the kitchen, cleaned the horses, and slept in a garret, while the real serving-man lived in the best room of the house, and went to rest on its softest bed. Those who were too poor to adopt these methods, travelled at night —their food was chiefly wild berries gathered by the way; and in the day they rested in the shelter of woods and caverns, with a stone for their pillow.

The women also passed in disguise, wheeling barrows or carrying a load. On their perilous way they were exposed to rain, snow, and cold. Rivers were crossed by swimming; mountains were climbed, and miry swamps were passed, until a place of safety was reached. That refuge attained, their first act was to cast themselves upon their knees, and there to offer thanks to God for delivering them from the 'lion's mouth.'

The new home of these poor refugees was mostly across the sea, in England. As soon as they reached the coast, they sought some kind ship-captain, who hid them in his vessel under bales of goods and heaps of coal, or in empty casks, where they had only the bung-hole through which to breathe. A Protestant nobleman, with forty persons, crossed the Channel in the depth of winter, in a very small vessel, hardly large enough to hold them. They were overtaken by a storm, and were out at sea without food for days, their only support being a little melted snow, with which they tried to satisfy their burning thirst. They landed half dead on the shores of England

—a country that has ever been the refuge for the persecuted and the friendless.

A husband and his wife tried to escape. They each took a different road to avoid suspicion. The man was caught and carried to prison, but the wife reached the English shores, where she anxiously awaited her husband. To force the poor man to renounce his religion his jailers placed him in a dungeon with an iron floor, and no seat or means of support. Under this was a strong fire. The iron floor was then slowly heated, until the feet of the prisoner were so fearfully burnt as to make him a cripple for life. When they grew weary of tormenting him, the poor Huguenot was left to go about the town on crutches—a misery to himself, and an object of pity to all beholders.

Years passed away, when one day a poor aged Frenchman was seen hobbling about the streets of London. In broken English he asked the passers-by to tell him where he could find his wife. Some could not understand his words; and those who could were yet unable to aid him in his search. All he could tell

them was that he was in search of his wife—his 'Louise.'

As he crept along one afternoon, with the constant inquiry on his lips, some one directed him to a coffee-house near Soho Square, kept by a French refugee. It was the resort of the Huguenots, many of whom by this time had turned their skill to good account in busy London. To this coffee-house the poor cripple made his way; but no one there knew his wife. 'She might be alive,' said they, 'or she might be dead.' It seemed as if her name was now unknown on the earth.

In the corner sat a pedlar: he listened to what was said, but made no reply. Yet were there kindly thoughts and feelings in his heart. He had come to London to lay in a stock of goods; and as, on his return to the country, he would pass through some towns where the French had found a home, why, thought he, could he not make inquiry if any one knew of the poor cripple's wife? As he pursued his way from place to place, he ceased not to feel an interest in the sad story he had heard in that coffee-house in London.

At length he came to Canterbury, where he knew many refugees followed the trades of jewellers and wax-bleachers. He sought among them for any one who might answer to the missing wife. The strange tale soon got spread about, and it led to a delightful result. For there, indeed, lived the poor woman, getting her living by needlework. She had long given up the hope of seeing her dear husband again : surely he was a galley-slave, or in some dungeon, or dead.

But now the pedlar's story reached her ears, and she set off without delay for London. There she soon found her aged, afflicted husband, who had been reduced to the lowest poverty, and was in utter despair of finding her he had so earnestly sought. It was a meeting of mingled joy and sorrow. She rejoiced to behold again the companion of her youth, and the professor of the same faith ; but tears flowed fast as she beheld his helpless state. After a short stay, they set out for Canterbury, where the faithful wife worked hard, and nursed and cherished the crippled husband whom she had often mourned as dead.

Another Huguenot couple resolved to flee. They could disguise themselves, but what was to be done with their baby? If they were seen passing with a child through the gates of the town in which they lived, they would at once be seized. After many thoughts, their plan was to wrap the infant as a formless bundle, to one end of which they attached a string. They then took advantage of a very deep gutter, like that which runs in the middle of so many old streets in French towns.

When night came the gates of the place were, as usual, closed fast. Now was the time. The living bundle was duly placed in the gutter, near to one of the gates, with many a prayer that the sleeping draught would not be too strong, and yet so strong as to keep the child asleep.

The parents knocked at the gate, as though they wished to pass into the country. The guard came out of his little house and well surveyed them. He knew they were Huguenots; but where, thought he, is their child? Will a Huguenot mother desert her tender babe, that she may escape? Will she leave

it to be brought up as a Papist? Not she; so then the guard concluded that they were not about to flee—at least this time. He turned the heavy lock; they passed out; and now, again securing the gates, he slowly turned into his guard-room.

'Hush! quick! quick! catch the end of the string under the gate. There! it is caught. Now, gently draw it along in the shadow.' Blessed be the name of God, the babe is through. It has not cried. The sleeping draught has done its work. The infant is once again in its mother's arms; and the parents, with their dear treasure, are on their way to the sea-shore. That couple, with their babe, in a few days were safely in England, and their descendants may read this story on the page that recounts the adventures of their Huguenot forefathers.

The new home of these pure refugees, as we have said, was mostly in England. There were many of all ranks in this land who felt for their sorrows; they opened their houses to receive them, and their purses to aid them in their need. But the refugees came not to eat

the bread of idleness. They carried with them their skill and their trades. Thousands made their way to London, and formed almost a new town in the part of the outskirts known as Spitalfields, and others founded a colony at St. Giles-in-the-Fields. Some went to Norwich, Coventry, Canterbury, Edinburgh, and other places.

Among the refugees in England were a duke, a duchess, several generals, counts, marquises, viscounts, barons, judges, noble ladies, men of learning, ministers, merchants, and captains. It is pleasing to trace in their descendants some who attained to honour in the land that gave them an asylum. Among them are Sir Samuel Romilly, and his son, Sir John Romilly, both eminent lawyers; Isaac Thellusson, who was made Lord Rendlesham; William Saurin, Attorney-General for Ireland; Lord Ligonier, and Sir George Prevost; and Mr. Labouchere, one of our Secretaries of State.

There were also farmers and artisans. They brought with them the useful arts of life as well as the example of their piety. The weaving of silk was their chief employment; and soon

their busy looms were heard in many a dwelling. Even noblemen became master weavers; for though, in some instances, they had saved enough out of the wreck of their estates to provide for themselves, they engaged in trade to help their 'companions in tribulation.' Before this time, the people of England had to send abroad for many valuable articles; but now they could obtain them home-made.

The French introduced into their adopted country the art of calico-printing and wax-bleaching; the weaving of velvet, silk stockings, crapes, bombazines, gauzes, damask table-linen, cambric, and other things of the kind. Besides, they brought with them improved ways of manufacturing ribbons, tapestry, baize, sail-cloth, and sacking; new modes also of dyeing, and making hats, pins, needles, watches, lace, and looking-glasses. Some were skilful as artists, and some in science. The first person who contrived a machine in England moved by steam was Savary; the best maker of telescopes was Dollond; and the most famous biscuit-baker was Le Man,

near the Royal Exchange, London, all belonging to refugee families.

In these ways they repaid England for its protection ; and to the present day we gather the fruits of the toils, losses, and sufferings, the skill and the industry of those driven from their native land, for conscience' sake, by the base and cruel act which revoked the Edict of Nantes.

THE NUN OF JOUARRE

JOUARRE is a small town in Normandy. It once possessed a famous nunnery, which, though long since in ruins, is still remembered as the home of Charlotte de Bourbon.

Charlotte was born in the middle of the sixteenth century. Her father, the Duke of Montpensier, was of the royal house of Bourbon. As his property had become reduced, and he could not give to his daughter the fortune due to her rank, he resolved that she should enter into a nunnery.

This was a painful decision to his wife, who was a friend to the Protestant cause in France. But the duke was a stern Romanist, and was resolved that his will should be obeyed. Before the time came for Charlotte to be shut out from the world, the mother often took her into a private chamber : there they wept and prayed together. In that retreat the young maiden

was instructed in the blessed truths of the gospel—truths which were never wholly forgotten by her; and there, when a few years older, she signed, by desire of her mother, a paper, in which she protested against being forced into a nunnery, and claimed a right, when of riper years, to withdraw from it.

It was at an early age, only thirteen, that Charlotte was to be closely confined by the bolts and bars of that prison-house—the convent at Jouarre. Her young heart had its joys and hopes. She loved her home. In her esteem the world was fair and bright, and full of pleasant scenes. Her nature and temper were active and lively, and she thought there was much for her to do and enjoy. But now she was called, in the days of her girlhood, to bid farewell to those she loved, and to be doomed, as it was called, to a 'religious life.'

The Romish Church teaches that the surest way of pleasing God, and of leading a holy life, is to quit the world, and to retire to a convent. But the piety which the Bible enjoins is an active, living thing. It does not destroy the relations of life; it rather makes known the

duties of them. It nowhere declares that it is in solitude we are to exercise meekness, patience, and love, but that it is in the midst of society all the graces of the Christian life are to be exercised and seen. We are to be *in* the world, though not *of* it. We are to *use* the world, though we are not to abuse it. Our light is to shine *before* men, that they may *see* our good works, and may glorify our Father who is in heaven.[1]

Charlotte was taken by her father to the nunnery. Her flowing hair was cut away; her dress was coarse linen and haircloth; a cord was tied around her waist; and with downcast looks she trod the iron-bound cloisters by day, and rested at night on the floor of her tomb-like cell. Was she now happy? How could she be when she felt that she had been robbed of her freedom? Did she find the repose that had been promised her? No; there was sullen discontent and strife where she had thought to meet with only peace and love.

But never did she more painfully feel the

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 31; Matt. v. 19.

loss of her liberty than when her mother fell suddenly ill; for, either from the gloomy rules of the nunnery, or from the fears of her father lest her heart should be touched by the piety of the dying mother, she was not permitted to visit her. A daughter's care and love might have comforted the duchess in the hour of death; but this last service of a child's affection was denied her. Neither was the young nun allowed to be present at the funeral, nor to visit the grave.

A few years passed away, and the nun became reconciled to her state. She was told that her self-denial and sufferings were pleasing to God, and that the reward of her life would be certain glory in heaven. And so high was the character she obtained, that, though still very young, she was raised to be the principal of the convent—the lady-abbess of Jouarre.

About this time light entered the doors of the convent, in the form of Protestant tracts. The lady-abbess read them, and they recalled to mind the loving words her mother had spoken to her in the secret chamber at home. The large Bible, and the truths it contained,

the tears and prayers of her pious parent, the written protest, and her childhood's happiness, were all as fresh in her memory as though they were things of yesterday.

The Spirit of God blessed to her soul those plain words of the little tracts—they led her to the cross of Christ. As the blind man rejoices when his eyes are opened to behold the shining of the sun, so did Charlotte when the light of the gospel beamed brightly on her heart.

But could she now keep the glorious truths to herself? Was it not her duty to make them known to others? She was soon guided in the right path, and she began to teach the nuns that they must not hope, by their own merits, to win heaven, for that salvation was by grace, through faith in Christ Jesus. From this time the life of a nun only filled her with distress; it could not bring peace to her enlightened conscience. The counting of beads, and kneeling before an image of the Virgin Mary, and praying to saints, had become in her view only vanity and sin.

But what was she to do? If she went to her

father's house, he would thrust her from the door. If she fled to any other members of her family, they would despise her as one who had broken the most solemn vows. It was now that she felt her bondage. There was no one of whom she could seek advice, and in this uncertain state of mind she remained in the nunnery, guiding the minds of its inmates to a clearer knowledge of Christ.

While thus engaged, news was brought to the nunnery that war had broken out in France. The Huguenots, after suffering years of oppression, had taken up arms, and were engaged in deadly strife with the Romanists. It is sad for a land when civil war rages through its borders; and the more so, when it is a war of opposing religions. At length the conflict reached Normandy; and many were the sad scenes there beheld of misery, bloodshed, and death.

It was in the year 1572 that the noise of a battle was heard around the nunnery of Jouarre. It came nearer—to the very doors. These were soon broken open, and the nuns rushed forth to find a shelter in the woods. This was

a critical season for Charlotte de Bourbon. She was driven into the world. Was it not a time for her, thus strangely set free, to act as her conscience told her, and to embrace the liberty that was so unexpectedly given to her? Ought she any longer to hesitate in obeying the Word of God? Should she not seek some place of safety where she might openly profess the doctrines she had cherished in her soul? Yes, the time had come; but where could she find a home in France?

In such a trying hour there was not time to deliberate—she must *act*, and act without delay. Charlotte, therefore, hastily set out, passing from one place to another in disguise. There was no little danger in travelling in France in those days, when every one found on the road was suspected of being a Protestant. Yet she safely crossed the country, and after a time arrived at Heidelberg, in Germany. In that city she found many Christians ready to welcome her, and confirm her in the doctrines of the gospel.

As might be supposed, there was no small stir when her flight was known. A nun had

fled! Who could have supposed that a lady-abbess—the daughter of a duke, and of the royal family of France—would have abandoned the Romish Church, and passed over to the Protestant faith? There was dismay in the palace of the king. Confusion and debate were in the castles of the nobles, and in the convents of the land. Her father threatened that he would never forgive her. He mourned over her as one who mourns over a child that has disgraced her family; and as if to show his resentment, he rushed with greater zeal into the war with the Huguenots.

The poor fugitive had foreseen all that would occur when her flight was known. She would gladly have obeyed her father, and have rendered to him the love and honour due from a child. It was not self-will, or a stubborn spirit, that led her to brave his threats.

But how could she disobey God, or any longer deny His truth? The words of the Saviour were not forgotten by her in this hour of trial: 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me—and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after

Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it ; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.' [1]

Charlotte was now in a land where she could openly declare her faith ; and that she soon did, standing among the Protestants of Heidelberg, and upheld by their prayers and good counsels, renounced for ever the errors of the Church of Rome.

We must now turn our attention to the Low Countries, better known to many as the Netherlands. This is not one of the parts of Europe celebrated for its lofty mountains, or its lovely valleys, or its deep forest glades. It is mostly one unbroken flat, without hill or rock. But though not famous for its natural beauties, it has been long known as the land of religious freedom. Early in the sixteenth century the Protestant faith spread through all its towns and villages. The printer was set to work ; copies of the Word of God were multiplied ; and many bold reformers preached the truth to the people.

[1] Matt. x. 37–39.

The Netherlands at this time belonged to the kingdom of Spain, whose sovereigns were most violent persecutors of Protestants. Large bands of soldiers were let loose among them, and thousands were put to death. The Inquisition was set up in all its terror; multitudes were confined in its dungeons, or by it given over to the rack and burning pile.

One hundred thousand persons are said to have suffered for the truth's sake in the course of half a century. The patience of the people, however, was at length worn out. They had long suffered the greatest injustice, and they resolved to cast off the iron yoke that was upon them. They rallied under the command of William, Prince of Orange, and, after a long contest, secured their freedom.

The people of the Netherlands chose the prince as their ruler. He had been brought up in the Court of Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Spain, who was concerned that he should be educated as a strict Romanist; and the more so, as the father of the young prince was inclined to the reformed faith. He, however, when

grown to manhood, openly professed himself a Protestant.

The Prince of Orange had often heard of the piety of Charlotte de Bourbon, and the sacrifices she had made in the cause of truth. And assured that she was fitted to adorn the highest station, he sought her hand, and she became his wife. She had been willing to return to her father's house, on the condition that he would not force her to renounce the Protestant religion; but rather than agree to her wishes in this respect, he chose to give his consent to her marriage, in which case she would live at a distance from him, and not annoy him by her presence.

The nun of Jouarre was now raised, in the providence of God, to be the Princess of Orange, and the first lady of rank in the Netherlands. And well did she adorn her position. Meekness and prudence, charity and devotion, were at all times seen in her life. She was a pattern alike to the noble ladies at Court, and to the lowly mothers in their families.

But dark shadows often come over the fairest earthly scenes. Some bitter drops

mingle in the sweetest cup of worldly joy. A large reward had been offered to any one who should kill the prince, and a young Romanist had agreed to attempt the horrid deed. To prepare him for his work he was 'confessed' by a priest; and, under the influence of his wretched superstition, he knelt in prayer that God would give him success in his design.

It was the Lord's Day; the Prince and Princess of Orange had returned from Divine worship. As they were passing along the hall of their palace a shot was fired by the assassin, who had secretly obtained an entrance into the house. It entered the neck of the prince, who fell into the arms of his attendants. For some time he lay in great danger, his princess watching over him with the tenderest love. While dressing his wound, she at the same time spoke words of peace to encourage his hope in God. Her prayers were heard, and she had the delight of seeing him slowly restored to health.

There was great joy in the city of Antwerp when the prince and princess went in state to the cathedral, to return thanks for his merciful

deliverance from the hands of the assassin. Nobles and burgomasters, citizens and soldiers were there, to unite with one voice in a song of praise. The church bells rang merrily, flags were hung at the mast-head of every ship, and sounds of gladness were heard through all the land.

Not many months, however, had passed away before the health of the princess began to fail. Her tender frame had received a shock at the moment she saw her husband fall, which was further weakened by her labour and watchings, night and day, by the side of his sick-bed. Her days were now drawing to a close ; but in the midst of weariness and pain she knew in whom she had believed. Her soul and life had been given in faith to the Saviour ; she had passed through many trials, and seen many changes ; and now, relying on the merits of Christ, she looked forward to a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

At her death there was great mourning in the land, and weeping crowds followed her body to its grave in the cathedral of Antwerp.

All honour to the memory of Charlotte de

Bourbon! Yet it is not alone for her conversion to the Protestant faith, and for the sacrifices she made in its cause; nor is it only for her virtues and piety as the Princess of Orange, that we think of her with interest and respect; but we cherish kindly thoughts, as it is from her the present royal house of England traces its descent. Her daughter Louisa became the wife of Frederick the Fourth, the Elector Palatine of the Rhine, and was the grandmother of Sophia, the Duchess of Brunswick, who was the mother of George the First of England, whose great-grandson, the Duke of Kent, was the father of good Queen Victoria, who thus derived her descent from the pious NUN OF JOUARRE.[1]

[1] For fuller details of Charlotte de Bourbon, see Anderson's *Ladies of the Reformation.* First Series.

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

It was towards the end of the month of October 1605, that Lord Monteagle arrived at his country-house in the village of Hoxton, a mile or two beyond the old walls of London. King James had issued an order for the Parliament to assemble in a few days from this time; and the nobility and gentry had arrived from their more distant dwellings in the counties, to those they owned in or near the city of Westminster.

The village of Hoxton in those days was noted for the mansions of the rich and noble. Fields of corn enclosed by hawthorn hedges, and shady lanes, whose green banks were adorned in their season with the primrose and daffodil, were seen on every side. In one direction were the mansions of earls and lords, whose turrets and towers were beheld from afar. In another appeared groups of pretty

cottage-homes, where latticed porches were adorned with creeping roses, fragrant jasmine, white elder-flowers, and the trailing honeysuckle.

While adjoining the moor (now known as Moorfields) long rows of pollard and chestnut trees lined the grounds, or shooting-butts, where the London archers at the close of the day displayed their skill at the long-bow.

Lord Monteagle had invited some friends to supper on Saturday evening, October 26. As they sat together in the great oaken hall, just as the evening shades had closed around, a serving-man entered with a letter in his hand.

'From whence does it come?' inquired the lord.

The servant could not tell. All he knew was, that as he stood at the great gate of the house, a tall man, with a broad hat slouched over his face, and a cloak thrown so as to conceal his form, had suddenly come from behind a cluster of trees, and without speaking a word had placed the letter in his hand. He had then quickly withdrawn, under the shadows of the twilight.

The Lord Monteagle carelessly tossed the letter to a gentleman in his service, and desired him to read it aloud. The writing was large and cramped; it needed care to make out its contents. It spoke of some startling events about to happen.

'Think not slightly of this advertisement,' said the letter, 'but retire yourself into the country, where you may expect the event in safety; for though there be no appearance of any stir, they shall receive a terrible blow this Parliament, yet they shall not see who hurts them.'

In earnest words it proceeded: 'This council is not to be contemned, because it may do you good, and do you no harm, for the danger is passed as soon as you have burnt this letter.'

The letter had no name to it; from whom could it come? No place or date was marked upon it; where and when was it written? Its words were dark, strange, and solemn; to what could they refer? They surely meant more than they expressed, and their admonition was not to be slighted.

Early the next morning, Lord Monteagle

left Hoxton to meet the Earl of Salisbury, the Lord High Treasurer of England, to whom the letter was shown. They then went together to the king. The matter seemed of sufficient importance to lead to the calling of a council of nobles, and before them the strange lines were placed. The king argued it could not be a public outbreak that was meant, for the words were—'There shall be no appearance of any stir'; yet it was to be 'a terrible blow,' through some invisible agent, for they 'were not to see who should hurt them'; and the deed was to be quickly done.

Now the king's father, Darnley, the husband of Mary, Queen of Scots, had been destroyed by gunpowder, and it was at once concluded that an explosion of that combustible was intended by the dark words of the letter.

Let us now pass to Enfield Chase, a few miles to the north of Hoxton. The spot at this period of time was wild, lonely, and woody, and but little visited except by hunters. An old house stood near a wood, called White Webbs; and here, in a small room, had met a band of

men to agree upon a dark deed of murder. One was named Robert Catesby; his mind had formed the plot, and he was looked upon by the rest as the leader.

The others were named Winter, Digby, Tresham, Rookwood, Keys, Wright, and Percy. They were all men in the rank of gentlemen: some were rich, and all were Roman Catholics. But one of the number, Guido Vaux, or Guy Fawkes, was to be the chief agent in the design. He had been a soldier, and was calm, bold, and desperate. He had lived long in other lands, and, a bigot to his religion, he thought it a work of merit to destroy the lives of Protestants.

These men had often met before; sometimes in the fields near London, at other times in a little house on the banks of the river Thames, at Erith. Several months had passed away, and they had been waiting for a time when the nobles of the land, with the king and young princes, should meet together for business of the State. It was their horrid intention to blow up the whole into the air, and thus at a stroke to rid themselves of the

chief friends of the Protestant faith, and prepare the way for the setting up of the popish religion.

What could have brought these men to imagine and contrive so wicked a plot? Some of them had been fined and opposed for their religion; but right views of Christian liberty were not much known and understood in those days. Yet the injury they had received, however occasioned or however unjustifiable, could never warrant the dreadful revenge they were about to take. That men of fortune and education should unite in such a wicked design is truly strange; but they had long brooded over it, until the sinfulness of the deed was forgotten.

Perhaps they had been made bold to attempt it by a brief, or letter of authority, which the Pope of Rome had sent to England, in which they were told only to obey a popish king, and that it was for the honour of God and the good of their own souls to resist a Protestant sovereign. Whatever it was that had filled their hearts with thoughts of murder and treason, they now placed themselves on their

knees, and took a solemn oath not to betray or forsake one another. Gerard, a priest, performed mass, and gave them the sacrament to sustain their courage in the enterprise, and to impart to the deed the sanction of their false religion.

As some months had passed since they first conceived the wicked plot, Percy had become impatient.

'Well, gentlemen,' he said, 'shall we always talk, and never do?'

It was, however, felt by his companions that the time had not yet come. They must proceed with care, that they might the better make sure of their purpose.

They had already hired two houses, one next to the Parliament House, and another at a distance, in which they had stored barrels of gunpowder and large piles of wood. At the former place seven of these men had been digging and working in the hope of getting through the walls to form a mine. They had dug deep below the cellar, but the walls of the Parliament House were three feet thick, and resisted all their attempts.

It was hard work for those who had been brought up as gentlemen. Guy Fawkes stood at the door as sentinel. When the footsteps of a passenger in the street were heard, a signal was given, and the digging ceased until the stranger was out of sight. Thus very slowly they went on. They were all well armed, and were resolved, should they be discovered, to die rather than surrender. A store of provisions was obtained: hard eggs, dried meats, and such other food as would keep, were in the vault, that they might awaken no suspicion from the going in and out to purchase food.

Though they had toiled hard and long, the traitors made but little way. Again and again they stopped, as though it were hopeless to proceed. And then at times they were startled by a noise, as of a tolling bell, and by other strange sounds, which seemed to come out of the earth.

'Is it a warning,' they said one to another, 'that our own funeral bell will shortly toll?' But they tried to quiet their fears, and sprinkled on the wall some 'holy water,' which they

had obtained from a Romish priest. And as again and again they imagined they heard the tolling of a bell, they as often resorted to the 'holy water' for protection and help. Bold as they were, conscience often spoke, and awoke alarm in their breasts. How true it is, 'The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion' (Prov. xxviii. 1). A poet says—

'Tis conscience doth make cowards of us all.'

There can be no peace found in the way of guilt. Still, Satan and their own wicked hearts urged the plotters forward in their dreadful course.

One day, while they were working in the mine, they heard a rumbling noise above them. They were alarmed—had they been discovered? No; it was only a man named Bright, a coal-dealer, who was shovelling his coals into sacks, to carry them away, as he was about to remove from the cellar under the Parliament House to some other spot. They learned that the cellar he was leaving was to be let. How well timed it seemed, for it was

just the spot they wanted. It was exactly beneath the hall wherein the king would meet the nobility of the land.

Percy was quickly sent to hire it, under the pretence that it was to be used for storing wood and coal. Into this cellar[1] they brought in small quantities, and secretly at night, to the extent of thirty-six barrels of gunpowder. Large stones, blocks of wood, and bars of iron were also brought hither, and laid among the barrels, to give greater force to the explosion, and make it more destructive to human life. Over all was cast a covering of wood.

Everything now seemed ready for the moment. What could prevent them doing their deed? They had been all faithful one to another; they were united and resolved; no one had a suspicion of the plot; all matters hitherto seemed to be favourable to it.

The conspirators knew that there would be at the opening of the Parliament several of their own friends; could anything be done to save

[1] In laying the foundation for the New Houses of Parliament at Westminster, it was found necessary to remove this cellar, which for many ages had been associated with the dark deeds of Guy Fawkes.

them? Keys wished to give warning to one of the lords not to be present, for he had given food and shelter to his wife and children when once they were in distress. Percy sought to save an earl who was his kinsman. Tresham wanted to spare two lords who had married his sisters, and who were strong Romanists. Hence their meeting at White Webbs to decide this matter.

Catesby, however, tried to prove to them that most, or all, of the Roman Catholics would be absent. 'But with all that,' said he, 'rather than the project shall not take effect, if they were as dear to me as my own son, they also must be blown up.'

But, unknown to the rest, Tresham had already sent a letter to Lord Monteagle: it was that strange letter which we have seen delivered at the house at Hoxton by the tall stranger towards the close of the day.

The conspirators had their last meeting in a retired walk in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where they debated on the chance of the plot being known to the Government. Some by this time had become fearful, and said they were

all lost men, and had better save themselves by instant flight. Others sought to sustain the courage of their companions by assuring them that all was safe and certain, and so they parted again.

That evening the lord chamberlain, whose duty it was to see that all things were ready for the meeting of the king and his lords, came to the Parliament House along with Lord Monteagle. They appeared, as if by accident, to descend to the cellars. As they opened the doors of the one where the gunpowder was placed, they saw a tall dark man standing near to a pile of wood.

It was Guy Fawkes, whose nerve and boldness did not even then forsake him. The lord chamberlain, in an apparently careless manner, asked who he was. 'I am servant to Mr. Percy,' was the quiet answer, 'and have the care of his coals.' 'Your master,' said the chamberlain, 'has laid in a good stock of fuel.' As the visitors turned themselves to go up the stairs, Guy Fawkes in bold confidence concludes 'All is right: still undiscovered.'

The lord chamberlain reported the results

of his search to the king's council. All agreed that the quantity of fuel was much greater than could be wanted by Percy, who had not been known to reside near the spot. 'Let the cellar be searched again to-night,' was the order given; and an officer and some guards were to be ready for the purpose.

The evening before the meeting of Parliament arrived, Catesby and some of the conspirators had gone into the country to raise a rebellion as soon as the king and the Parliament were blown into the air. Others had taken their place on the lofty ground near Highgate, from which place they obtained a distant prospect of the roof of the House of Lords.

They were all ready to start at a moment's notice, to carry out their wretched design in their several ways, as had been arranged. Guy Fawkes took his place in the cellar, with calm determination. He had received mass at the hands of the priest, and doubted not of success. His dark lantern, with a light in it, was behind the door; a train of gunpowder was carefully laid from the barrels to the entrance; the slow-burning matches and the touch-wood were at

hand. He had a watch—a scarce article in those days, when it was only possessed by persons of rank and wealth—that he might know the exact moment when to light the train.

A ship lay not far off in the river, prepared to sail as soon as the deed was done, to carry him to another land. A horse was saddled to convey him to the ship; and, booted and spurred, he awaited the fatal instant when the light should be applied to the train.

The clock of Westminster Abbey struck twelve, and the morning of the 5th of November had begun. The streets were all silent. Two o'clock soon came round, and Guy Fawkes softly and slowly opened the door of the cellar, and stepped out to look about him, and to revive himself with the fresh air. But he had scarcely placed his feet in the street, when an officer made a sudden plunge, and seized him by the shoulder. He struggled for a moment to get back into the cellar, that he might apply a light to the train, and blow himself and the officers of justice into the air; but others rushed upon him and threw him to the ground. They soon bound him hand and

foot, and, after a fierce conflict, carried him away to a place of security.

The news rapidly spread through the city that King James and his Parliament had escaped from the fearful and wicked plot. Shortly after daybreak, Guy Fawkes was brought before the lords of the council, confessed to the whole deed so far as himself was concerned, and gloried in it, though he refused to tell the names of his companions.

Early in the next morning, the prisoner was conveyed to the Tower of London ; and under the gloomy arch of Traitor's Gate was conveyed to his cell. After a long trial he was condemned, and at the west end of St. Paul's Churchyard paid the penalty of his crime by the forfeit of his life.

The conspirators stood hour after hour on Highgate Hill, during the early morning of the 5th of November ; then through the day, expecting to see the dire explosion ; but a messenger brought them word that Guy Fawkes was arrested. At once they fled with terror and in confusion. Some seized horses that they found on the road, and passed from place

THE END OF THE GUNPOWDER CONSPIRACY.

to place, till they came to Holbeach, a large mansion on the borders of Staffordshire. There they made a stand, and resolved to fortify the house, and await their death. As they were getting together their means of defence, a bag of gunpowder exploded, burning several of the plotters very severely. This seemed to them a judgment from heaven for their wickedness. Catesby himself began to fear that God was angry with them, and he and others confessed that their deeds were cruel and sinful before God.

In a short time the sheriff of the county, with an armed band, reached the house, and surrounded it. In the king's name they summoned the rebels to surrender. A short fight followed, when one of them was disabled by an arrow from a cross-bow.

Two others were soon stretched on the ground in dying agony. Catesby and Percy placed themselves back to back in an attitude of defiance, when one of the sheriff's men fired at them with a doubly loaded musket, and they fell. Catesby crawled into a corner of the room, and died; the other lingered till the

next day. The rest of the party were soon overpowered, and made prisoners. They were brought to trial, and in due course were executed for their treason.

All loyal and pious hearts were filled with horror while they rejoiced at the wonderful deliverance which God had wrought. The young daughter of the king, the Princess Elizabeth, only eight years old, thus wrote to her brother, the youthful Prince of Wales—

'My dear brother, I doubt not that you have rendered thanksgiving to our gracious God for the deliverance which He has vouchsafed to us, as I have also done, and still do on my own account; but I wish to join your vows to my own, and to say with you, "If the Lord be with us, who shall be against us? While He keeps me, I will not fear what man can do."'

Such is the brief record of the Gunpowder Plot.

THE FORFEITED CROWN

On the 6th of February 1685 the heralds proclaimed before the new palace at Whitehall that James the Second had succeeded to the crown of England. Coaches, filled with noble ladies, lined the streets. Gentlemen were in groups, on foot or horseback. Flags were hung from house and steeple. Guns were fired from the Tower; the church bells rung merrily, the drum and trumpets sounded, while crowds of people shouted forth their loyalty, making one mingled din, that passed from street to street, till the whole town was in an uproar.

It was known that James was a Romanist; but then he had promised fair things; and the nation hoped that he would respect their religion and laws. 'We have the word of a king,' said the most loyal, 'and a king will not break his word.' 'We have our fears,' said others, 'but we trust all will be for the best.'

How James kept his promise, and what deeds were done by his commands, the page of history will tell us.

It is only three weeks after the king has come to the throne, and an aged man of calm and gentle looks stands before a judge, to answer a charge of sedition. It is good Richard Baxter, who has long preached Christ's gospel, and by his writings has led many souls to Christ. On the bench sits Judge Jeffreys—a base, bad man, an enemy to freedom, truth, and purity—one ever ready to carry out the designs of a tyrant king.

The prisoner has been carried from a bed of sickness to the court, and he asks for time to meet the charge. 'I will not give him a minute to save his life,' cried the judge. 'We have had to do,' adds he mockingly, 'with other sorts of persons; but now we have a saint to deal with, and I know how to deal with saints as well as sinners.'

The counsel of the prisoner rises to appeal on his behalf; and as he speaks of the peaceable spirit of Baxter, who is known to all as a well-

wisher to the royal family, the judge shouts aloud—

'He is an old blockhead—an unthankful villain—the spring of faction—a stubborn dog.' 'Hang him,' he cries, 'or let him be whipped through the streets.'

Baxter is about to speak again, when Jeffreys stops him. 'Richard! Richard! dost thou think we will hear thee poison the court? Thou hast written books enough to load a cart; and every one is full of sedition as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipped out of thy writing trade forty years ago, it had been happy. I will crush you. Now, speak up; what do you say for yourself?'

'I am ready to produce my writings,' is Baxter's answer; 'and my life and conduct are known to many in this nation.'

Fury sits in the looks of the judge, who again loads him with reproaches, while the prisoner, turning to those who stand by his side, points to some clergymen who have boldly appeared this day to speak to his loyal and holy life.

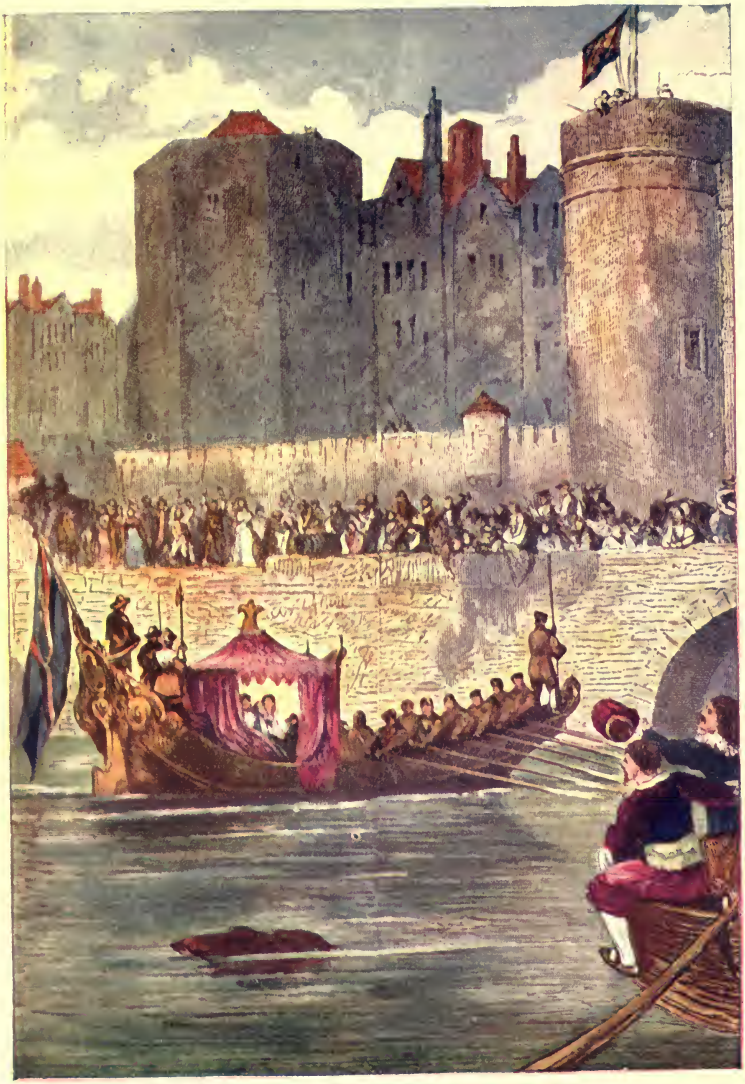
'There is not an honest man in England,'

shouts Jeffreys in a perfect rage, 'but who takes thee to be a great knave.'

The mock trial is at length over; and Baxter is sent to prison, where he must lie till happier times shall dawn upon the land.

'When I saw,' says an eye-witness, 'the meek man standing before the flaming eyes and fierce looks of this judge, I thought of Paul standing before Nero. The cruel usage he received drew plenty of tears from my eyes, as well as from others of the spectators.'

The King of England has no power to make or set aside any law but with the consent of Parliament. This did not suit the proud will of James the Second. He was resolved to favour the interests of the Roman Catholics, and issued a decree contrary to the law. This decree, or 'declaration,' the clergy were ordered to read in the churches. The Archbishop of Canterbury and six bishops hastened to the palace, and on their knees presented a petition to the king, begging him to withdraw his command. But they were rudely spurned from his presence.



THE BISHOPS SENT TO THE TOWER.

In a few days a barge was seen passing down the river Thames, in which were the seven bishops; they were on their way to prison. Around them were other boats, filled with the guards. Crowds of people were on the banks; some were kneeling, and begging a blessing from the prisoners as they moved along, while the air rang with the shouts.

The bishops were shortly brought to trial. The charge was that they had refused to obey the king. From early morning till late in the evening, the trial went on. At night the jury were locked up in darkness. Early the next day they came into court with the verdict of 'Not guilty.' And then uprose a shout of joy that made all old Westminster Hall ring again. The throng without caught the sound, and sent it rolling along the street.

A crowd of people waited to see the bishops come forth, and when they appeared another shout, louder than ever, was heard, which rose and fell like the breakers on the seashore. All London seemed to share in the joy; and as the bishops returned to their homes the people fell on their knees once more; the bells rang,

and at night bonfires were lighted in every open space.

King James was at Hounslow reviewing the troops, and, on hearing a great noise, asked—

'What was the matter?'

'Nothing but the soldiers shouting for the acquittal of the bishops.'

'Call you that nothing?' he asked; 'but never mind, it will be so much the worse for them,' he proudly added.

It was soon seen that the great aim of King James was to discourage and oppress the Protestants, and to set up the papacy as the great power in the land. On the second Sunday after he came to the throne he went in his state coach, with great pomp, to the royal chapel, and ordered the doors to be set wide open while mass was performed.

When he was crowned he took care that the communion service after a Protestant form should be omitted. Two papers in support of the doctrines of the Church of Rome were printed by his desire, and sent through the land; while, on the other hand, the bishops

and clergy were commanded not to preach against the Church of Rome. An agent was sent to the Pope, to present the homage of the king; and, in return, an ambassador came from Rome, and was received with much honour.

The highest officer in the University of Cambridge was dismissed, because he would not carry out the popish views of the king; and at Oxford many of the college tutors were deprived of their places for resisting an attempt to force on them a papist as their head. Monasteries were set up; and such numbers of priests and monks flaunted through the streets in their robes, that the king boasted he had made the towns and cities of England like those in popish lands.

Nor did the king stop here. Many officers of state, who would not change their religion, were replaced by strict Romanists—some of whom were men of low habits, and wholly unfit to serve the country. A priest and two popish noblemen became his chief advisers in every matter. He sought to compel his daughter, the Princess Anne, to join the Church

of Rome; and next to deprive his eldest daughter Mary, the wife of the Prince of Orange, of her right as heir to the throne because she was a Protestant.

At last, he carried matters to such a point, that even the Spanish Ambassador warned him of his danger. 'Does not your master consult with priests?' asked the king. 'Yes,' was the reply, 'and that is the reason why our country's affairs go on so badly.'

The heavy hand of a tyrant was felt to be on the liberties of England. The king levied taxes in his own name, and claimed a right to put aside the laws of the land by his own power. Four thousand Protestant soldiers were refused their pay, and sent to wander, hungry and half-naked, through the land. All who were thought to be unfriendly to his doings were fined, whipped, or sent to prison.

The king had not sat long on his throne when the news was spread that the Duke of Monmouth, the king's nephew, and the Earl of Argyle, had raised the flag of rebellion. But their plans were rash and badly managed.

They had no money, no arms, nor any promise of support from the people. The king's troops soon overthrew them, and the lives of these two noblemen were forfeited.

Now was a time for the king to show mercy to the followers of the rebel chiefs. By such a course he might win the hearts of many, and turn the tide in his favour. One of the prisoners was brought before him.

'You know it is in my power,' said the king, 'to pardon you.'

'Yes,' said the man, who well knew his cruel character, 'but it is not in your nature.' However unwise this answer was, its truth was soon seen.

Judge Jeffreys was sent with a troop of soldiers to punish all rebels, and every one who had shown them any favour. Among others was a pious and aged woman, Lady Alice Lisle, who was charged with hiding two men in her house. She was not aware that they had been in arms against the king; and the jury who tried her felt that there was no proof of guilt. But the king's commands must be obeyed; she must not be spared. The sentence

of death was passed, and she went forth to the block in a spirit worthy of her high Christian character.

Hundreds of unhappy prisoners, more or less guilty, were hung in a few days. 'The country for six miles between Exeter and Bristol,' says one who saw the sad scene, 'had a new and terrible sort of sign-post; the heads of the executed were placed in rows on poles by the roadside.' Other prisoners were burned alive, and some escaped by paying large bribes. The judges, and other persons in power, had many that were found guilty made over to them as gifts, that they might be sold as slaves, or ransomed at a large price by their friends.

Thousands were carried to the West India Islands to labour in slavery. Among those condemned to be sold were twenty-seven young ladies at Taunton, whose offence was that they had given a flag and a Bible to the Duke of Monmouth. They were saved from slavery by the payment of a great sum, which was divided among the queen's maids of honour as a 'Christmas box.'

For weeks Jeffreys went forward in his career

of blood. The nation looked on with horror at the terrible doings, and deep and bitter were the feelings that came over men's minds. At last the judge had done his terrible work, when he shockingly said that he had not been half severe enough. The king mocked and jested when the judge reported his 'campaign,' as he called it.

While the English people were thus borne down they heard that James had received twenty thousand pounds from Louis, King of France, to aid him in his designs. Then the news came that a pitiless war was raging against the Protestants of France, many of whom escaped to England. And as they told of their bitter trials, the people saw what they might expect should James succeed in setting up Popery in the land.

Members of the Church of England and Dissenters were alike oppressed by the king. The meeting houses of the latter were shut up, and their ministers dragged to prison. They then met in small numbers in private houses, late in the evening or early in the morning. There were friends who stood at the doors always on

the watch to give notice of danger. They made windows or holes in the walls between two houses, that the preacher's voice might be heard in more places than one. They had often secret passages and trap-doors for their escape.

In country towns and villages they went through back yards and gardens that they might not be noticed. For the same reason they never sang psalms, and the minister was placed in some inward part of the house that his voice might not be heard in the streets.

But the time came when men not only whispered, but spoke openly of their country's wrongs. Bishops, clergymen, and pastors, the officers of the army and navy, and the great body of the people groaned under their bondage. There was no law but the king's will; no justice or safety in the land. They asked if it were not right in them to maintain their religion and their laws.

'We have been trodden to the ground,' said many; 'shall we not seek to stand up as free-born Britons?'

'Yes,' said others, 'the king has stretched

the bow to such a degree that some day it will snap asunder.'

All eyes were turned to William, Prince of Orange, who had married Mary, the eldest daughter of James. He was a man of talent, of good character, and a zealous Protestant.

Near to the town of Maidenhead, on the banks of the Thames, stood a mansion known as Hurley House. It was a fine old building, around which the river flowed in its winding course, and before it spread out to view a lovely landscape. Often in the early part of the year 1688, there met, in a gloomy vault beneath this house, several noblemen and others. They spoke of the helpless and hopeless state of the country under the reign of James, and resolved, if he would not grant them redress, to apply to the Prince of Orange for aid. Seven of them signed a paper, calling on the prince to come to England and defend their cause.

While the English nobles at home got ready for the conflict, the prince fitted out his ships and collected his troops. By the end of October

the 'Protestant east wind,' as it was called, carried the fleet towards the shores of England.

There were many praying hearts in Britain and Holland that God would grant success to this enterprise. Public feeling was raised to the highest point; and soon was heard from the cliffs of Torbay a cry that the ships had reached the English coast. Seven hundred vessels bore the invading army. On the flag of the prince's ship were the words, 'I WILL MAINTAIN THE PROTESTANT RELIGION AND THE LIBERTIES OF ENGLAND.'

On the 5th of November 1688—eighty-four years after the discovery of the popish plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament, on the same day of the month—Prince William landed at Torbay amidst the shouts of the people. An officer rode at full speed, bearing the tidings to James at Whitehall. The king turned pale, a letter in his hand fell to the ground, and he stepped aside to weep.

James now found what it is to be served only from fear. In the hour of his need he was without one who truly loved him. Nobles and gentry soon joined the ranks of the Prince of

Orange; and many to whom the king had shown favour deserted him. Opposed by his own son-in-law, betrayed by his courtiers, with an army that could not be trusted, and shunned by the people, he tasted the last bitter drop in his cup of grief when he was told that his daughter, the Princess Anne, had also fled from him. Then was rung from him the bitter wail—

'Oh, help! my very children have forsaken me.'

Early in the morning of the 11th of December a common hackney coach left Whitehall. It hurried down to the river-side. Two persons stepped from it into a boat awaiting them on the Thames. As they passed by Lambeth, one of them threw a box into the water, and then landing on the opposite shore, they both hurried along the road that led to the county of Kent. In a short time the royal chamber was found empty. The king had fled. He and one of his household were the persons who had crossed the water, and in the box thrown into the stream was the Great Seal of England.

After passing from town to town, James got on board a small ship, and arrived in France. The Pope's ambassador rushed out of London in the disguise of a footman; and Judge Jeffreys was caught in the dress of a sailor, wearing an old tarred hat, at a low public-house in Wapping. A shout of joy was raised by the people when they heard of the capture of this wicked man. To save him from their fury, he was taken to the Tower of London, where he soon ended his days as a prisoner.

Thus closed the reign of James the Second. It was short, unhonoured, and is a blot on the page of English history. From first to last it was without a single event that was for the honour of the king or the happiness of his subjects. By a wise course he might have reigned over a loyal and loving people: but he sought to overthrow the Protestant religion, and to raise his own Church on its ruins. It ended in the loss of his crown.

On the flight of James, England was without a king or a ruler. The Prince of Orange soon called together the peers and those gentlemen

who had been members of the last Parliament. After solemn debate, it was declared by them that the throne was vacant, that James had forfeited the crown, and that the Prince and Princess of Orange should be king and queen.

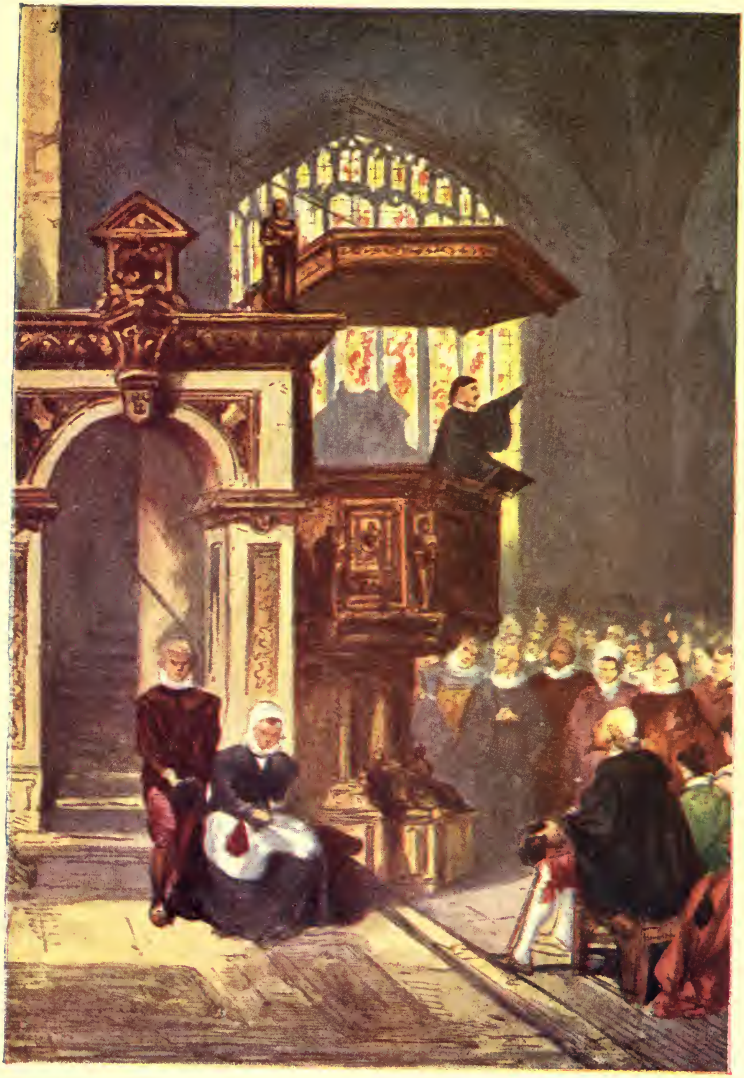
They also agreed to a ' Bill of Rights,' which set forth the great principles of the British Constitution, and secured to the people many valuable privileges, among which was a merciful and just regard to the laws of the land. The strength of the throne and the freedom of the people were thus provided for, and through the blessing of God they continue to this day. May young Protestants know how to value their civil and religious advantages, and be grateful to God that the country in which they were born was saved, in the days of James, from the craft of the Church of Rome.

THE STORY OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

THE Sabbath sun rises and sets, bringing to our hearts and homes unnumbered blessings. Then the gospel is preached to thousands; and hosts of children, in the quiet of their own dwellings, or amid the cheerful hum of the Sunday school, read the holy Book of God.

We may apply to these times the prophecy of old: 'They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid' (Mic. iv. 4). But how seldom do we remember the wearisome labours, and the long and deadly struggles of holy men in former ages, in their efforts that England might have, in all its freeness and fulness, a cheap and open Bible!

We will go back in our thoughts to other times, and, with grateful feelings, trace the steps which led to this blessed result.



A PROTESTANT SERVICE IN THE NETHERLANDS.

It was in the year 1428, or thereabouts, a man named Lawrence Coster was seen walking on the outside of the walls of the old city of Haarlem, in Holland. His pace was slow, and it was evident that his mind was engaged in deep thought. As he walked, he came to a grove, and there he cut with his knife a piece of bark from a tree. He paced up and down beneath the shade of the grove, and amused himself with carving the bark. Now and then he paused, and then again went on with his work. As he turned to go home he found he had cut the shape of a number of raised letters on the face of the bark.

That evening he sat down in his house, and carved more letters on other pieces of wood. When he had done several in this way he fastened them together by a piece of string. Some ink was then made thick, and rubbing the faces of the letters with it, he pressed a sheet of paper against them. He gazed on what he had done with surprise, and well he might. To him it was the first idea of printing. He had made the earliest attempt, in Europe at least, of impressing on paper the thoughts

of the mind. There was hope for the world in those pieces of bark tied together by a string.

A few years passed away, and another man, of the name of Gutenberg, was busy in a small workshop in the German city of Mentz, cutting letters. This time, however, they were not made of wood or bark, but of metal. Nor were several carved on one piece of wood, each was a separate type,[1] or letter. Something of a machine, too, called a press, had been formed, and with these metal types he soon set about printing books.

The volume that was printed was a Latin Bible. It was not finished, as it would be now, in a few weeks ; but nearly eight years passed before it came from the workmen's hands. Every one who saw it was astonished. Copy after copy was sent forth, all exactly alike ; it seemed as if they had been produced by miracle. Who could write them so fast ? How could they be made so rapidly ? Why was it that they all appeared alike—page for page, line for line, the same to the smallest

[1] *Type* is from a Greek word, which means to strike, to stamp, to impress

dot? Men knew but little of this infant art, nor did they foresee, in its first efforts, the earnest of the richest blessings to all mankind.

Surely it was well that the first volume thus printed was the best book—that it was God's Book. It was the pledge of the great things to be done by the discovery of the art of printing, in giving the Holy Scriptures to every nation on the earth.

Let us now trace another step in the course that led to a free and full Bible for the people.

England was to receive the benefit of the new art, in conveying to it the Scriptures in the language of the people, through the means of William Tyndale. This worthy man was born on the borders of Wales, of parents who were in a humble condition of life. How little did they think, as they looked on him in his infancy, that he would become one of the best friends of his country, and that his name would be held by many in more honour than any conqueror who ever lived!

In the course of time, William Tyndale became a poor priest of one of the colleges in

Oxford. As he sat one day with some fellow-priests, he spoke of the value of the Word of God, when they mockingly said, 'We are better without God's law than the Pope's law.' To which Tyndale replied: 'If God spare me, before many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough to know more of the Scriptures than you do.'

The young priest saw that the people were living and dying without Bible knowledge, deceived by the vain doctrines of the Church of Rome, and he quietly resolved to get the New Testament printed in English for the use of all. This was a good and great thought—a bold and daring thought—for a poor man to cherish; yet, with the help of God, he was resolved to make the attempt. He was not content to plan and arrange this important work, but with labour and patience he sought to carry it forward.

Tyndale had heard of the learning and riches of the Bishop of London, and in his simplicity he thought he would surely aid him in the pious design; but he soon found that there was 'no room in My Lord of London's palace to translate

the Word of God, nor any safe place to do it in all England.'

At this time there lived in London a pious and wealthy merchant, named Monmouth, who had been taught the truth through reading the books of the reformers in Germany. He was a kind friend to Tyndale, and gave him a room in his house, where the good priest used to sit, night and day, busy with his pen and Latin Bible. But these were times of danger to those who truly feared God. Tyndale, therefore, well supplied with money by his liberal patron, set sail over the North Sea, and went to the great city of Hamburg. Then, removing to Cologne, he went on in the translation and printing of the New Testament, until ten sheets were done.

Two pious friends, Frith and Roye,[1] assisted Tyndale in the translation. There they sate, day by day, in an old-fashioned room in an obscure street in the city of Cologne. Pens, parchment, and paper were before them; one

[1] These pious men were martyrs in the cause of truth: the first was burned in Smithfield, July 1553; the other suffered the same dreadful death in Portugal.

read the Latin Bible, a second the Greek, and the third wrote down the words of the sacred text in English. In about a year this work was finished.

Tyndale then found a printer who was willing to print it. This was a service full of danger. Popish priests were on the alert to find out any who aided the reformers in their work. But onward the printing went. In this state of things, an agent of the Inquisition found out what was going forward. He heard that a learned Englishman was in the city, and that some printers had been heard to say that soon all England would become Protestant. This man thought he would find out what all this boasting meant.

So with much craft he made friends with the printers, and invited them to his house. Here he well supplied them with wine. In the midst of their mirth they made known the secret, that some hundreds of copies of the New Testament in English were in the press, which were to be secretly carried over the seas by the merchants. The next morning the printer's house was surrounded by officers, and the

press was seized; but not before Tyndale, warned of the danger, ran to the rescue of his printed sheets, which he threw into a boat and pushed his way from the shore.

Sailing up the river Rhine he soon came to a safer place of labour. Often had the small ships of those days passed along this famous river with the wares and wealth of the merchants of Germany, but never did one carry so rich a treasure as was in the boat which conveyed Tyndale and the Bible sheets to the city of Worms. After great pains, and cost, and toil, the last sheet of the New Testament was completed. Fifteen hundred copies were printed—a large edition in those days; and now the bread of life seemed prepared for the people of his own dear native land.

English merchants took charge of the books, and carried them to England along with articles of commerce. The precious volumes were packed in bales, and sent to London, Norwich, and Oxford. There they were readily bought by the rich, but though they were sold at a cheap rate, only a few of the poor could save money enough to purchase the holy book. Soon,

however, they were found spread over the land, and many souls rejoiced in the Gospels and Epistles, which for the first time were held in their hands, and now cherished in their hearts. Some, on receiving a portion of the precious book, fell on their knees, and thanked God with tears of joy for it.

When the Romish Bishop of London was told that the printed books were coming fast to England, he was filled with alarm and anger. He soon sent out orders to make a diligent search among the merchants of London and the students of Oxford, for the forbidden work. Among the latter, some of those who were found to have it were thrust into a dungeon, where four of them soon died. Others were made to carry fagots of wood, and with them to kindle a fire, into which their own hands had to cast the books. As the flames rose into the air, the people were solemnly warned against the reading of the Word of God.

But the hope of burning the New Testament out of the land was all in vain. The printer-priest kept working off more copies, and they were taken across the seas hidden in the corn

which was carried to England, at a time when great scarcity was felt. Thus bread to feed the body, and the bread of life for the soul, came in the same ships, and were sent together through the land.

Decrees were issued against the possession of the New Testament; the seaports and ships were strictly watched; the warehouses and houses were searched; but still the blessed books arrived. Sometimes even Jews brought them over the seas. They came in pedlars' packs, and in boxes of merchandise—now in one way, and then in another.

At length the Bishop of London hit upon a clever and cunning plan, as he thought, of putting a stop to the arrival of these books. He supposed, that if every copy could be bought up in the place where they were printed, the work would soon be at an end. A London merchant was engaged to do this business.

'Do your diligence to get them,' said the bishop, 'and I will pay for them whatsoever they cost you.'

The merchant ordered his ship to be ready without delay, and crossing the seas, offered to

buy up all the stock in hand. The bargain was soon made: the bishop had the books, the merchant the thanks, and Tyndale the money.

A few days after the books were safely in the charge of the bishop, a number of people were seen making their way along Cheapside and up Ludgate Hill. It was reported that there was to be a great sentence passed, to be followed by an execution. As they came to St. Paul's Cross, a large fire was sending up clouds of smoke high above the housetops. And now the bishop's officers came with the poor prisoners—the Testaments, which were cast one by one into the flames, while a priest stood in the old stone pulpit in the open space, and loudly praised what was being done. But when all was over, many in that crowd could not but think how wicked and how shameful it was thus to burn God's holy Book.

As a further proof of their anger, the priests seized Tyndale's brother, John, and one of his friends. Then they set them on horseback, their faces turned to the tails, with bundles of New Testaments hung around them. In this manner they were made to ride through

the streets of London, and on coming to St. Paul's, to throw the books into the fire.

But—how great the dismay—New Testaments were still brought to England! The bishop soon sent for the merchant, and cried—

'How is this, sir? Did you not promise and assure me that you had bought them all?'

'Yes,' was the reply; 'I bought all that *then* were to be had, but I perceive they have made more *since*; and it will never be better so long as they have the letters and the presses; therefore it were best for your lordship to buy them too, and then you are sure.'

The bishop only smiled at this answer, for he thought that, if he parted with more money, other letters and presses would be bought with it, and he should only serve to aid the cause he wished to crush.

Finding how vain were all attempts to stop the circulation of the New Testaments, the next plan was to secure their author. Spies were sent over to decoy him to England. Though ready to suffer anything in his heavenly Master's work, he would not willingly throw

himself into danger. Craft, however, brought him into the hands of his enemies.

While quietly pursuing his labour beneath the hospitable roof of an English friend, named Poyntz, at the city of Antwerp, two wolves in sheep's clothing came to the house—one in the disguise of a merchant; the other, who was a monk, was dressed as his servant. They pretended great interest in the doctrines of the Bible Christians, and were soon welcomed to their society. But Phillips—for that was the name of the pretended merchant—came to watch Tyndale, and, if possible, to seize him.

One day, when Poyntz went some miles distant on business, a snare was laid for the noble reformer. Phillips called on Tyndale to borrow forty shillings, under the excuse that he had lost his purse on the road. They then agreed to walk out together. There was a long, narrow passage to go through, leading to the street. Phillips drew back, as if politely to allow his friend to go first, when two officers were seen standing at the door.

'Take your prisoner,' cried the pretended friend; and in a moment Tyndale was in their

grasp, while Phillips hastened to receive from the priests the reward of his treachery.

Tyndale was carried to a castle eight miles from Brussels, and placed in a close chamber. Here he remained for some time, but his faith in Christ made the gloomy prison a place of hope and of happiness to him. His way of life was so holy, that the other prisoners said—

'Well, if he is not a good Christian man, we know not in whom to trust.' Through his teaching the jailer and his daughter were converted to God.

But once in the power of his enemies, nothing could save him from their wrath. From that castle he did not come out till eighteen months had passed, and then only to die as a martyr.

At length, in October 1536, he was condemned as a heretic, and ordered to be burned. On being fastened to the stake, he raised his eyes to heaven, and cried—

'Lord, open the eyes of the King of England.' His prayer was heard; for before three years had passed away, King Henry of England gave his consent to the circulation

of the Bible, in the native tongue, throughout the kingdom. Thus perished this noble man, one of England's best reformers; as some one has said of him—

'In putting the New Testament into the hands of Englishmen, he gave them the charter of salvation, the Book of eternal life; while his own history affords a beautiful example of its purifying and saving power, under the blessing of the Holy Spirit.'

We pass on to another stage in the history of the English Bible.

King Henry the Eighth began his reign as a good friend of the Pope. After a while, a quarrel arose, and he took the religious affairs of his kingdom into his own hands. This gave rise to hope in the hearts of all Bible-readers. They now expected to enjoy the truth unmolested. The king's favourite adviser, Cromwell, Earl of Essex, was a friend to the circulation of the Scriptures, and he determined to have a complete edition printed in the English language.

For this purpose he sent Coverdale, a pious

and learned man, to the city of Paris, where the best printing was then done, to superintend the work. Although protected by the English ambassador, the Pope ordered the printers not to proceed. The agents of the Inquisition were sent to seize the work ; yet not till Coverdale, who before the storm burst on him had seen the gathering clouds, had secreted a quantity of the half-printed sheets, and conveyed them privately beyond their reach. A large portion, however, fell into their hands : some were burned, and as much as ' four great dry vats full ' were sold to a haberdasher to ' lap his caps in.'

Coverdale fled to London, where the book was again put into the press, and was, without further hindrance, ' Fynisshed Apryle, anno 1539,' and soon had an extensive sale. From its size it was called ' The Great Bible.' The clergy were then required to provide ' one boke of the whole Bible of the largest volume in English, to be set up in the churches before Christmas.'

There were not many of the common people then who knew even the use of books. Any

one who could read was deemed quite a 'clerk,' and a little crowd would gather around him, while others sat or stood listening to the blessed truths of God.

Many persons who had the money bought the book, though it cost a very large sum. As a proof of the desire to possess it, a farmer, it is said, once gave a load of hay for two or three chapters of the New Testament. Many elderly people learned to read on purpose to peruse for themselves God's holy Book; and even little children flocked among the rest to hear portions of it read. Truly, 'the word of the Lord was precious in those days.'

At the death of Henry, his son, Edward the Sixth, succeeded to the throne. He began his short reign when quite a youth; but young as he was, he gave promise of great devotedness to the interests of true religion. On his coronation day, when he beheld the three swords used on such occasions, he asked where the fourth was. His lords looked up with surprise, and asked what he meant.

'The Bible,' he answered; 'that book is the sword of the Spirit, and is to be preferred

before these swords: without that, we are nothing, we can do nothing, we have no power.'

He loved the Bible himself; he knew, from sweet experience, that its truths were precious to his soul. During his reign, which lasted only six years and a half, the press was fully employed; fifty editions of the Bible were issued; and numbers of the people were nourished by its truths.

But Mary, who next sat on the English throne, was a cruel popish bigot. One of her first laws was to stop the people from reading the Bible. She had resolved to bring the whole nation back to Popery. Then came dark days to England. Again people were called upon to choose between Bible religion and Popery; and at what a fearful risk men chose the former! It was the Bible and *death*; yet there were not only men, but delicate women and children, who counted not their lives dear to them for the steadfast love they bore to the Word of God. Good John Rogers was the first of that noble band of English martyrs who then sealed their attachment to the Saviour by their blood.

In spite of laws and spies, many a little congregation used to steal away into the thick forests, to lonely fields, to cellars and barns, to read the book of life. In Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, we have a pleasing little picture of a pious company who went to the borders of St. John's Wood, then a wild and lonely part on the north-west of London. It was the morning of May Day, and, while their neighbours were dancing around the May-pole, they were engaged in listening to the Word of God. But the constables, with staves and spears, broke in upon them as they sat under the trees, and arrested them. They were all committed to prison, and soon after, thirteen were burned for hearing the Word of God read, and believing its truths.

Everywhere the enemies of the Bible were on the watch. They cast into prison, or placed in the stocks, the faithful servants of God; many of whom refusing to return to Popery, were brought to the burning pile. Thus fell three hundred of England's best subjects—*best*, because they loved and obeyed

the Word of God—victims to the bigotry of the cruel Mary.

After an unhonoured reign, Mary died, unloved and unlamented ; and her sister Elizabeth ascended the throne. There was a custom in these times, on the coronation of a prince, to release prisoners ; when this had been done, and men long bound came forth to light and freedom, one of Elizabeth's lords said—

'There are yet four or five others to be freed.'

'Ah, who are they ?' she asked.

'Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul,' was the answer ; 'they have been long shut up, so that they could not talk to the common people, who are eager to see them abroad again.'

Elizabeth was a Protestant, and she was ready enough to let the good evangelists go free. Soon the cruel laws of her sister were repealed. and the books went out again among the people, who, as you may well suppose, received them gladly. A law was made that 'every parish church should be provided with a Bible, and

that every parson should have a Testament for his own private use.'

How curious does such a law seem to us, when no minister, we should think, would be found without a New Testament in his study. Before the close of Elizabeth's reign there were two hundred and sixteen editions of the Bible issued from the English press, a great many more than were published in all the other parts of Europe.

About one hundred years have passed away since good William Tyndale turned printer, that he might give his translation of the New Testament to his countrymen: now we come to an important period in the history of the English Bible. James the First became sovereign of England at the death of Queen Elizabeth. Shortly after the festivities attendant upon his coronation were over, a great council was held in the winter of 1604, at Hampton Court Palace, a few miles from London.

The object of this meeting was to settle some church difficulties which had sprung up

in the last reign; but it is chiefly interesting to us on account of an important measure issuing from it—a new and able *translation of the Bible*; and it is the translation then ordered to be made that is used by us at the present time, and called 'the Authorised Version.' How few of the thousands of holiday makers to Hampton Court look upon its ancient courts as the birthplace of the design which gave to them the Word of God in its present form. Should we again visit this delightful place it may be well for us, amidst our enjoyments, to remember this fact.

The great work was done by many hands. Fifty-four of the most learned and distinguished divines were selected for this important business. These were divided into six companies, to whom were assigned different portions of the sacred volume. The first met at Westminster, with the Books of Moses, and all the Jewish history to the Second Book of Kings, for their work. Dr. Andrewes, whose learning was held in high estimation all over Europe, presided over this division. The second, under the charge of Dr. Lively, met at Cambridge,

and they translated from Chronicles to Canticles. The third assembled at Oxford, under Dr. Harding; their portion was from Isaiah to Malachi. The fourth also met at Oxford, labouring upon the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation. The fifth, at Westminster, translated the Epistles. The sixth, at Cambridge, undertook the Apocrypha.

Each one of a division took the same chapter, and having translated it in his own study, they all met together and compared their work: if they did not agree, they altered it and improved it, until the best translation was agreed upon; it was then sent to the other companies for examination. After the whole was completed, it was carried to London, where some learned men from each university met and examined it anew; and these last learned doctors gave nine months' hard labour to the revision.

A great deal of care, and time, and learning, and study were thus bestowed upon this work, which have made the translation so valuable and enduring. In 1611, it was published as a noble folio Bible, which has been a fountain of

life to thousands and thousands who read the English language.

Blessed be God for a full, cheap, and free Bible. It is no longer a book shut up from the people—written on large sheets of parchment, and whose weight and size unfitted it for common use. It is not now lying only on the shelves of college libraries, covered with the dust of ages. It is not bound and sealed by the cruel laws and wicked devices of popes and kings.

We give thanks to God that the Bible is the birthright of every English child. We remember what we owe to the bold and holy men who set it at liberty, and gave it wings. We hold their memories in reverence for their courage and fidelity in the midst of toil and opposition, and with exile and martyrdom before their eyes. We see them enduring all in hope and faith, that God's Word might go free, and bless the souls of men.

'For this did many a martyr bleed,
The noble and the brave,
That truth its onward course might speed,
Men of all lands and tongues be freed,
And life eternal have.

We'll prize our English Bible then—
  What suffering it has cost!
What tears and groans of godly men,
Who won it with their mortal pain,
  That we might not be lost.

Shall we lay it on the shelf aside,
  And all its blessings spurn?
No; deep within our hearts we'll hide
Its truths, whatever may betide—
  God give us grace to learn!'

What would Peter Waldo, and Wycliffe, and Luther, and Tyndale say, could they now visit us, and see the Holy Scriptures in the hands of peers and peasants, husbandmen, tradesmen, artisans, servant-maids, and little children!

With what delight would they gaze on the poor man's *tenpenny* Bible and the Sunday scholar's *fourpenny* Testament! And with what a shout of hallelujahs and hosannas would they look on the nearly two hundred different versions of the Book of God, issued by the British and Foreign Bible Society, in various languages of the earth!

But blessed are our eyes, for they see, and our ears, for they hear, those things which

many prophets and righteous men desired to see, and have not seen them, and to hear, and have not heard them (Matt. xiii. 16, 17). We behold the Bible in the pulpit, in the family, and in the school-house. There it is for all, and within the reach of all, and making known the message of God's love to all who will hear it.

May we have grace to receive that message. It proclaims to us the delightful truth, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John iii. 16). It makes known to us that a sinner is justified only by faith in Christ Jesus whose blood cleanseth us from all sin; who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him; and who will not cast out any that do come.[1] It gives to us the promise of the Holy Spirit, whose grace and power convince us of sin, renew our heart, comfort us in distress, and make us meet for the joy and purity of heaven.[2]

Let us then read the Bible with diligence,

[1] Rom. iii. 25, 26; 1 John i. 7; Heb. vii. 25; John vi. 37.
[2] John xvi. 7, etc.

faith, and prayer, and with a sincere desire to obey all its commands. And if there be those who would seek to turn us away from this blessed book, we will say with that great and honourable man, Robert Boyle: 'The Bible is a matchless volume: it is impossible we can study it too much, or esteem it too highly.'

We will declare with the learned Sir William Jones: 'The Bible contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected from all other books that were ever composed in any age or nation.'

We will say with the poet Milton: 'There are no songs to be compared with the songs of Zion.' We will assert with that wise man, John Locke: 'The gospel has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.'

And with the renowned John Selden we will cry: 'There is no book in the world upon which we can rest our souls in a dying moment but the Bible.'

And whilst we have a free and full Bible,

and need not retire to the shelter of the forest to read its sacred pages for fear of a dungeon or a cruel death, we will think of other lands where superstition and ignorance prevail, and hope and pray for the time when God's Book shall be known through all the earth.

'Oh! send God's holy book where'er
Or winds can waft, or waters bear;
Let India's sons its page revere,
Let Afric's land the blessing share.

Send it to where, expanded wide,
The South Sea rolls its farthest tide;
To every island's distant shore,
Make known the Saviour's grace and power.

Send it to every dungeon's gloom,
Send it to every poor man's room;
Nor cease the woe-worn to befriend,
Nor cease the heavenly gift to send.

O Holy Ghost! who gave the word,
With Thine own truth Thy light afford,
Give Thou the quickening, saving power,
On all the earth Thy blessings shower.

Let grace thus turn each wanderer's eye
To Him who did for sinners die.
And sin and sorrow hence be driven,
And earth be chang'd from earth to heaven.'

THE DAYS OF THE DRAGONNADES

In the reign of Louis the Fourteenth of France the persecution of the Protestants, which for some years had been allowed to subside, broke out with renewed violence.

It was in the province of Poitou that the first experiment was made which became known by the name of *Dragonnade*. Louvois, the king's minister, wrote to the governor, Marillac, on 18th March 1681 telling him that in obedience to the king's orders he sent him a regiment of cavalry.

'His Majesty thinks fit,' wrote he, 'that the greater number of troopers and officers should be quartered on the Protestants, but they must not *all* be thus disposed of. If, on a fair estimate, the sectarians ought to have ten quartered on them, let them have twenty.'

All converts were promised exemption from

the quartering of soldiers on them for two years.

The dragoons were sent to those Poitevin towns which contained most Protestants, and they were quartered exclusively upon them, even on the very poor and widows, who had hitherto been exempt. In many boroughs the priests cheered them on with, 'Courage, sirs! it is the king's pleasure that these dogs of Huguenots should be well pillaged.' The soldiers burst into houses with drawn swords, sometimes crying, 'Kill! Kill!' to frighten the women and children.

As long as the occupants could satisfy their desires, they refrained from pillage; but directly their means fell short, when their money was exhausted, their furniture, clothes, and the ornaments of their women were sold. They employed menaces and torture to induce their conversion. Some they burnt in the hands and feet; of others they broke the ribs, arms, and legs, by beating. They seared the mouths of many with hot irons; others were thrown into damp, noisome dungeons.

After a pause in the persecution the dragon-

nades recommenced in 1684. Weiss, the historian, relates that a body of troops on the Spanish frontier was to be employed in coercing the Protestants of Béarn. Excited by fanaticism, these soldiers were much more cruel than those in Poitou had been.

One of their devices was to keep their victims from sleeping by drumming and making every conceivable noise; besides pinching, pricking, dragging them, suspending them by ropes and chains, blowing tobacco in their faces, and a hundred other cruelties.

As there were often several persons in a house, entire companies of dragoons were quartered on them, that they might have relays of tormentors to keep their miserable victims from sleeping. The women were subjected to indignities that the pen refuses to describe. The officers were as bad as the men. They spat in the women's faces, put their heads into ovens till they were nearly suffocated, and taxed their ingenuity how to inflict the most pain without absolutely killing.

In distributing their billets, care was taken

to separate the officers from the private soldiers, that the latter might be under no restraint. The principal manufactories were in the hands of the Protestants; their houses were handsomely furnished, their houses and shops full of rich merchandise. All this property was at the mercy of the dragoons, who burned and destroyed what they could not make a booty of. Some made their horses lie on fine Holland cloths; others littered them with bales of broadcloth, silk, and cotton.

On 22nd October 1685 the king signed at Fontainebleau the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Its principal provisions were these. The Protestant temples were to be demolished, and all exercise of their worship prohibited, whether in public or private, on pain of confiscation and imprisonment. Ministers refusing to abjure were to leave the kingdom in fifteen days, on pain of the galleys. The schools of the Huguenots were to be closed; their children to be baptized into the Romish faith. Four months was the term accorded to fugitives to return to France and abjure; after that time their

property was to be confiscated. Protestants were absolutely forbidden to expatriate themselves or their property, on pain of the galleys for men and imprisonment for women.

Things went on from bad to worse. The ministers were the first fugitives, being granted fifteen days. The laity were prohibited from flight, but nevertheless took to it. In vain were the frontiers guarded; in vain were examples made of those who were caught: numbers escaped disguised as pilgrims, as couriers, as hunters with their guns on their shoulders, as peasants driving cattle, as porters wheeling barrows of goods, as servants in livery, as soldiers returning to their garrisons. The rich gave in some instances large sums of money to guides who helped them to cross the frontiers. The poor took almost impracticable paths, travelled by night, and passed entire days in the forests, in caverns, in barns under heaps of hay. Women resorted to similar devices, stained their faces, assumed various disguises. Masters of English, Dutch, and French merchantmen hid them under bales

of goods, cargoes of coals, in empty hogsheads pierced with holes, etc.

The misery of this dreadful time is vividly described by a young man, Jacques Bonneval by name, the son of a prosperous silk manufacturer of Nismes. He relates his own experience of the cruelty perpetrated upon him, and his eventual escape to England concealed in a cask on board ship.

It was indeed a fine spectacle, as far as mere outward splendour went, to see a troop of cavalry in blue and burnished steel, on powerful black horses, ride proudly by, making the very earth shake under them; and many children, attracted by the sight, ran towards them, shouting and throwing up their caps. But when I looked at the ferocious faces of these men, seamed with many an ugly scar,—their lowering brows, their terrible eyes, their sour aspect,—I felt they might be as dreadful to face in peace as in war. I watched them out of sight, and then placed myself beside my uncle, who, with closed eyes and folded hands, was endeavouring to sleep. My aunt

went below to baste the pullet for his dinner. The house was very still; nothing was to be heard but the ticking of the clock.

All at once I heard heavy feet tramping towards the house, and a confused medley of rough voices. The next instant the house door was battered as if to break it in, which, being of solid oak, was no easy matter. The door being opened, I heard a faint cry of terror from my aunt, and a brawling and trampling impossible to describe.

I looked down from the stair-head and counted forty-two dragoons, coming in one after another, till, the house being of moderate size, there was hardly room for them to stand. Yet they continued to pour in, jostling, pushing, and elbowing one another, each trying to shout louder than his comrades—

'Holà! holà! House! house!—Give us to eat! Give us to drink!' with frightful oaths and curses.

'Good sirs, a moment's patience, and you shall be waited on,' cried my terrified aunt.

'To Jericho with your patience! We wait for nobody. I decide for this pullet,' said one,

taking it up hot in his hands, and bawling because they were burnt; 'dress two dozen more—cook all you have in the poultry-yard, or we will cook you.'

'I claim my share of that chicken,' says one.

'Why not have one apiece?' said another. 'Who would make two bites of a cherry? He has gnawn off all the best mouthfuls already. Come, be quick, mistress housewife! Where are the cellar keys?'

'I've mislaid them, good sirs,' said the poor, terrified woman.

'We'll kick the door open then. Here's a ham! here are two hams! Ha! ha!—ham is good—we will heat the copper and boil them.'

'No, slice them and fry them,' says another, 'they take too long to boil. Bread!—where's the bread? Where's the oven? If it were big enough, Goody, we'd put you into it.'

'Ha! ha! what have I found here!—a bag of money.'

'Divide! divide!' shouted two dozen voices.

'It's mine, I found it!' cried the first. Then they fell to blows, and some of them fell sprawling to the ground, and were kicked—the bag

was snatched from the finder, and the money scattered on the floor—then they scrambled for it, as many as could get near it, laughing and cursing ; while others ransacked drawers, cupboards, and shelves, and others broke open the cellar door and began to drink.

Terrified beyond expression, I went back to my uncle, and saw, to my surprise and relief, that he had fallen into a heavy sleep, which was a restorative he particularly needed. On looking from the window, I saw my aunt, almost incapacitated by her fears, attempting to catch the poultry, in which the dragoons alternately helped and hindered her, roaring with laughter when a hen flew shrieking over their heads, and then abusing my aunt.

The poultry were quickly caught and plucked, and set some to roast, some to broil, according to their capricious mandates ; and then, when everything was in as fair train for their disorderly feast as it well could be (two or three additional fires having been kindled), one of them said, 'Let us divert the time with a little good music ;' and began to beat a drum.

'Louder ! louder !' cried his comrades.

'Let's have a chorus of drums!' How they came to have so many, I know not, except that they were brought for the special purpose of tormenting; but they produced six or eight, slung them round their necks, and began to beat them, crying—

'Now for the tour of the house!'

I heard the dragoons come stamping upstairs, producing a muffled roll on their drums that sounded like muttering thunder. They went into one room after another, and speedily reached that of my uncle, on catching sight of whom they triumphantly exclaimed, 'Ha! ha! v'la notre ami! Here is he whom we seek, and for whom we prepare the réveillé.'

And ranging themselves round his bed in a moment of time, in spite of a warning gesture from me, it being impossible for my voice to be heard, they simultaneously beat their drums with a clangour that might have waked the dead. No wonder, therefore, that my poor uncle started from his sleep bewildered, terrified, and looking as if he believed himself in some horrid dream. In vain he moved his lips, in vain he raised his clasped hands to one and

another, as if in supplication ; the more distress he showed the more noise they made, till it seemed to me as if my ear-drums would split.

Day was far spent before I got back, my horse having gone lame. There seemed unusual disturbance in the town ; I distinguished a distant hum of many voices, and all at once a shrill cry that made me shudder, followed by the passionate wailing of children and the incessant barking of dogs. I took the back way to our house, where lay our stable, and entering the little yard, saw to my dismay six or eight cavalry horses standing in it. I sprang from my cart and hurried into the house, on the threshold of which my little brother Charles met me all in tears, and cried, ' Oh, they're burning mamma ! '

I burst into the kitchen ; there was a roaring fire on the hearth, which a dragoon was feeding with handfuls of paper torn from our great family Bible ; but there were also great billets of wood burning, which threw out intense heat, and close in front of it was placed my mother, penned in with heavy pieces of furniture, while two dragoons in front of her were thrusting

their clenched fists in her face, saying, 'Now then, you obstinate woman! will you roast like a pig, or say where he is gone?'

My mother looked immovable as stone, but directly I entered I saw her change countenance a little. My father lay on the ground, bound hand and foot, while a dragoon was preparing to beat him with a heavy bridle.

'Ah, ah, here is the young cub,' cried they as I entered; 'here is the young fellow that was attending on his uncle!' Then, with more bad language than I choose to repeat, they bade me tell where I had carried him, unless I would see my mother roasted alive.

'Out of your reach,' said I boldly, 'so now let my mother go free,' and springing towards her, I released her before they could throw themselves upon me. The next minute we were rolling on the ground, but as my mother for the moment was safe, I did not mind the blows I was getting, but returned them with a fire-iron that lay within reach. I dealt blows with such a will that for a time I had the advantage, never ceasing to shout, 'Never fear, mother! All's safe! he's on the wide sea.

Fly with the children, and leave me to deal with these gentry.'

This so enraged them that they redoubled their violence: no wonder, then, that I was got down at last, bound hand and foot, and my feet made bare to receive the bastinado. Before they laid it on they put the question to me—

'Wilt thou now, then, recant thine accursed doctrines?'

'What doctrines?' said I, to gain time.

'Those that are falsely called reformed.'

'Oh yes, all that are falsely called reformed.'

They stood at pause on this, and looked at one another.

'He gives in,' muttered one.

'Not a bit,' replied another. 'He is only lying.'

'Well but, mark you, that's no matter of ours,' said the first.

'I tell you it is!' roared the second, pushing him aside. 'Let me take him in hand. You don't know how to question him.' Then accosting me, in a defiant sort of way (he was far from sober), he said—

'Hark ye, young man. Now answer for your life. Give us no double meanings. What is your religion ? '

'That which was brought us and taught us by our Lord Jesus Christ.'

'Do you believe in St. Peter ? '

'Of course.'

'And in the Virgin Mother of God ? '

'The angel Gabriel called her blessed among women.'

'But do you worship her ? '

'I reverence her, and worship her Divine Son.'

'Do you worship her, I say ? ' threatening me with the stirrup-leather.

'Son, son,' put in my father.

'Silence, old man,' and they hit him on the mouth.

'Do you worship her ? '

'I do not.'

Then they beat the soles of my feet, till my father in anguish cried, 'Oh, I cannot bear this——' but had to bear it. And so had I ; but on their burning my soles with a red-hot iron, a merciful Providence took me out of

their hands, by bringing me insensibility. How long they pursued their barbarities after I fainted, I know not; but when I came to myself, it was in cold and darkness, lying in the open street, where I suppose they had cast me, thinking me dead.

How long a time must have passed! for the stars were shining above me. Where were my parents, my brothers and sisters? I tried to raise myself a little and look round, but was so beaten and bruised that I was in agonies of pain, and sank back on the ground. The cold made my wounded feet smart indescribably; but while, with closed eyes, I was inwardly murmuring, 'Lord, help Thy poor servant, for I cannot help myself,' something that made me wince with pain, but the next moment gave exquisite relief, was applied to the soles of my feet, and the next instant I heard the hushed voices of those who were dearest to me on earth, my mother and Madeleine.

'Can it be that we are too late?' said Madeleine. 'No, his pulse yet beats, though as feebly as possible. Oh, what he must have

suffered, and how I love him for not having given in!'

In pain though I was, a smile of joy broke over my face on this, and I opened my eyes.

'Praise the Lord, he revives!' said my mother. 'How art thou, my son?'

'I shall do well, my mother——' but I could not speak another word. I closed my eyes, and felt about to faint.

'Jacques, dear Jacques,' said Madeleine, whispering energetically and distinctly, close to my ear, 'be of good courage, and God will help thee. I have found a place of safety in the vaults of Les Arènes, whither Gabrielle has already taken the children; and now, if you can but master the pain enough to get there with such help as we can give you, before the dragoons return, we shall all be safe.'

'Oh, most certainly I will,' said I, trying to rise; but when I attempted to set my feet to the ground, I was in such anguish that I nearly fell down; but what will not 'needs must' effect? The poor galley-slaves at Marseilles and Dunkirk can tell how, when it seems impossible for them to pull another stroke, the

taskmaster's whip, mercilessly applied, proves that they not only can pull still, but pull well too.

At length we got among low dwellings, some of which had twinkling lights. We entered a dark, narrow passage, smelling powerfully of fried fish and onions. Some one from above said cautiously, 'Who goes there?'

'La Croissette.'

'Who else?'

'My brother Jean.'

'Advance, brothers La Croissette.'

We ascended a mean staircase and entered a room, where we found a man and woman standing beside a large basket.

'Now get you into this,' said La Croissette to me, 'and we will lower you from the window. Stay, I will go first; it will give you confidence.'

Twisting his long frame into the basket, he clasped his arms round his knees, and the others began to raise him by well-secured pulleys. The woman grew quite red in the face with the exertion of getting him over the window-ledge, and I own I trembled for him.

BONNEVAL'S ESCAPE FROM THE DRAGOONS.

'All is right, he is safely down,' said she at length, and helped to pull up the basket. 'Now, young man; you're not afraid?'

'Oh no; only don't let me down too fast.'

'That must depend on how heavy you are. We can't keep dangling you between sky and earth all night. Come, you are not nearly as heavy as your brother. Adieu, mon cher; bon voyage!'

'Adieu, madame; a thousand thanks.'

I thought of St. Paul in the basket, and the two Israelitish spies. La Croissette eased my descent a good deal, by steadying the basket, and helped me out of it to our mutual satisfaction. It was then swiftly drawn up, and taken in.

'Thank heaven, we are safe!' said I. 'That was very cleverly managed.'

'Do you suppose it is the first time?' said La Croissette. 'Far from it, I can tell you. Many things are done in Nismes that the authorities know nothing of, for all their vigilance. Now we are fairly outside the city, and, with ordinary good luck, shall perform our night-journey in safety.'

'With God's blessing we may,' said I.

'Make that proviso with all my heart,' said La Croissette. 'Some trust in Providence and some in luck. I have nothing to say against either. Now get into the cart.'

He led the horse a little out of the shadow as he spoke, and helped me inside the little house on wheels, where I found a mattress that proved a most acceptable rest; and then we drove slowly and quietly off, and gradually got among fields and hedges.

'How are you getting on?' said La Croissette, at length. 'Do you mind the shaking?'

'Oh,' said I, 'I have so many things on my mind that I take no thought for the body.'

'All the better; though some say that pain of the mind is the worst to bear of the two.'

'I have little doubt of it,' said I, 'though each is bad enough. But all I meant was that my mind is preoccupied and anxious, and prevents my noticing any mere discomforts; for I cannot say I am miserable.'

'Indeed I think you ought not to be, for you have had an escape from that troubled city that many would rejoice at.'

'Tell me truly; do you think I have actually escaped?'

'What know I? You have escaped from the evils behind; you may not escape from the evils before. Yesterday was cloudy, to-morrow may be rainy, the day after may be fine; none of us knows.'

We had scarcely drawn up under the trees, which were thinning of leaves, when we heard a distant hollow sound gradually growing louder as it approached. 'The dragoons,' said La Croissette in a low voice. 'I trust we shall escape their notice.'

They passed by like a whirlwind, taking the direction we had just left, and we congratulated ourselves on having quitted their path.

'These wretches, look you,' said La Croissette, 'know neither mercy nor justice; they know they are let loose on the country to do all the mischief they can, and, if they find a paradise, they leave it a howling wilderness.'

Of this we had proof next day, when we came on their track, and found wretched women and children in tears and lamentations

impossible for us to assuage: men that had been cudgelled within an inch of their lives, or hung up by their wrists or their heels till they swooned, lying on the ground uncared for and dying. Ah, what wickedness! and all under pretence of doing God service! I cannot dwell on the terrible scenes we saw in crossing the country. Sometimes La Croissette did some trifling act of kindness, but the evils demanded more potent remedies.

'Let us seek another place as soon as we can——'

'You forget; I am to be met here by an agent of my father's at La Boule d'Or.'

'Ah, well, we will go thither.'

When we drove into the inn-yard, however, we could hear unruly voices in the house, and feared we might fall into bad company. A man immediately came up to us, and said to me, in a low voice—

'Are you M. Jacques Bonneval?'

'I am. Are you Antoine Leroux?'

'Hist!—yes. There are ill-disposed people in the inn: you had better not go indoors. Can you walk a little way?'

'Yes.'

'Come with me, then.'

'I must bid my companion farewell.' Turning to La Croissette, I took his hand in both mine, and pressed it fervently, saying—

'My dear La Croissette, adieu. May God bless you in this world and the next. I wish I could make some return for your exceeding kindness, but, unfortunately, can give you nothing but my prayers.'

'Pray say nothing of it,' said he cordially. 'As for what I have done for you, why, it's nothing! I was coming this way, at any rate, and I've given you a lift; that's all.'

'You may make light of it, if you will,' said I, 'but I know you have continually run risks for me; and, depend on it, I shall never forget you. Adieu, my friend.'

'Farewell, then,' said he, 'and take my best wishes with you. I hope you will now slip safely out of the country, but a good piece of it remains before you yet. Nor are your feet in good condition for walking.'

'That has been provided for,' said Antoine. 'As soon as we get to the water-side we shall

find a boat awaiting us, which will carry us to Bordeaux.'

'But you are some way from the water.'

'Yes, but I have a cart.'

We then parted, La Croissette kissing me on both cheeks with the utmost kindness; and I turned away with Antoine.

We came up with a wagon, with the driver of which Antoine fell into conversation for some time, but what they said I could not well hear. At length we reached the water-side, at a landing-place where a boat laden with kitchen-stuff was awaiting us. Here Antoine saw me safely placed in charge of the boatman, who bade me never fear, for he would safely carry me to Bordeaux. We pushed off: the moon shone cold and bright; the air on the river felt fresh and chill. The boatman threw a warm covering on me, bade me sleep, and began a monotonous boat-song. I soon slept.

When I awoke it was late in the morning, for the bright October sun overhead was making the rapid Garonne quiver in a sheen of golden light. I was told we had made good

progress, and were not many hours from our destination.

I found it inexpressibly pleasant to float down that bright river, as it carried me to new scenes, which love, hope, and inexperience painted in pleasing colours. My feet were sufficiently painful for me to be glad to lie idly among the piles of cabbages, and while away the time in day-dreams.

'But now we come to Bordeaux,' said he, at length; and, in fact, the increase of traffic on the water was sufficient of itself to tell us that we were approaching an important commercial city, while in the distance were seen the masts of ships of many nations. Nearer at hand the richly-wooded heights were studded with the country seats of opulent merchants, many of whom either were Huguenots or had made their fortunes by Huguenots. It was to be supposed, therefore, that we had many friends here; and, indeed, many were favouring our escape as much as they could without compromising themselves; but such jealous watch was being kept on the port, that this was extremely difficult.

At length I got ashore, and found my way to the counting-house of my father's correspondent, Monsieur Bort. He was a very business-looking man, with a short, hard, dry way of speaking. I found him immersed in his books. Directly he saw me, he said abruptly—

'You are young Bonneval. You come too late. The others are gone.'

'Oh!' And I dropped into a seat quite stunned by this reverse.

'Mais que voulez-vous?' said he. 'They could not wait. The opportunity would have been lost.'

'Are they really off, and safe?'

'Off they are, but whether safe——' He shrugged his shoulders and raised his eyebrows. However, seeing my chagrin, he added, 'I imagine they are in the river Thames by this time.'

'Do you mean they are ascending the river to London?'

'Precisely. It may not be so, but we may hope the best. And you?'—eyeing me inquiringly.

'What am I to do, sir? Did my father leave me no word of direction?'

'He left you his blessing, and bade you be a good boy, and submit yourself to my direction.'

'That I will gladly do, if you will direct me.'

'Well, I am pledged to do the best I can for you. But, unhappily, the surveillance is now so strict that I know not how to smuggle you on board.'

'In a box—in a cask,' said I desperately.

'Have you really courage to be packed in that manner?'

'Yes, if there is no alternative.'

'Come, you are a brave youth! I respect you for your resolution. There is a vessel of mine being loaded now, and if you will really go on board in such a way as you propose, I think we can manage it, and your durance will not last more than a few hours.'

He went out, and left me to meditate on what lay before me. It was not pleasant, certainly; but then the incentive was so great!—to join all whom I held dear, in a

free land! The light affliction would be but for a moment.

Monsieur Bort returned. 'All is arranged,' said he complacently. 'I have taken the porter, who will roll you, into the secret. He promises to be as careful of you as he can. An officer on board is likewise in my confidence: he engages you shall be released as soon as the vessel is fairly under weigh. So take heart; it will be but a short trial compared with what many Huguenots are put to. Take this money and these papers——'

After some business directions he accompanied me to the warehouse, where the cask awaited me, with some hay to soften my journey in it.

'You are a pipe of Bordeaux, going as a present to my particular friend in London,' said he, smiling. 'Now, behave yourself as a good pipe of wine should, and don't cry out even if you are hurt. See, there are some air-holes. You won't stifle.'

'They are very small——'

'How can that be helped? Who would have doors and windows in a wine-cask? You

will get on board alive, will be released when well to sea, and must not mind a little discomfort.'

We shook hands, and I stepped in and settled myself as well as I could, with my mouth close to one of the air-holes; and the cask was closed upon me. The next minute I was rolled slowly off; and a most odd sensation it was! I advise you to try it, if you would like something perfectly new; but have bigger air-holes if you can; and even then let your experiment be short.

I verily believe the porter did his best for me; but how slowly he rolled; and even then what bumps and jolts I had when we came to uneven ground! Now and then he stopped, to wipe his face, and rest, seemingly—then on we trundled again. Meanwhile, I was getting exceedingly hot; all the blood in my body seemed mounting into my head; and unpleasant ideas of smothering obtruded themselves. The noises around me told me we were on the wharf; then the jolting and bumping became worse than before; I fancied I could tell we passed up a sloping plank and were on

shipboard. Then, without the least warning, I was rolled over and over, and then set upon my head! but a loud cry outside drowned a smothered cry within; and I was placed in a horizontal position again, with feelings impossible to describe.

I think I became sleepy after that; or else in a painless state of insensibility. When I woke I was numb all over, and had to rub my dazzled eyes as the bright daylight broke in on them.

'He seems to like his quarters so well as to have no mind to turn out,' said a rough voice.

'He wants assistance,' said some one in a kinder tone; and a handsome, frank-looking man laid hold of my arm, and helped me to rise. Above me were the sails and cordage of a ship; all around me the sparkling blue waves leaping in freedom. I clasped my hands, and raised them to heaven.

'You do well to give thanks where thanks are due,' said the mate. 'Now come into the cabin.'

Seeing me stagger, he took me by the arm, and kindly assisted me into the presence of

the captain, saying, 'Here is one of the noble army of martyrs.'

The captain gave me a most kind reception, made me dine with him, and asked me a great many questions. He then told me many moving stories of other Huguenots who had escaped or tried to escape to England; and he related such instances of the kindness of the English to the fugitives, that my heart warmed towards them with gratitude and hope.

After this I suffered much from sea-sickness, and lay two or three days in my cot, while we were buffeted of the winds, and tossed. We were chased by a strange ship, and had to put on all the sail we could to escape being overhauled; and this led to our being driven out of our course; so that what with one thing and another we did not reach Gravesend till the 8th of November. Then the captain went ashore with his ship's papers, and, after transacting business, started for London, and took me with him.

What a day it was for forming one's first impressions of that much-longed-for capital! There was a thick November fog, through

which street-lamps sent an imperfect light; and shops were lighted up with candles. Vehicles ran against one another in the streets, in spite of link-boys darting between the horses, fearless of danger, and scattering sparks from their fiery torches. The noise, the unknown language, the strange streets and lanes bewildered me. The captain called a coach, and in this we made our way to Fenchurch Street, where lived the shipping agent, Mr. Smith. We went upstairs to his counting-house, and found him talking to some one, who turned round as we entered.

I exclaimed, 'Oh, my father!' and precipitated myself into his arms. He embraced me with transport.

'Where is my mother? Where is Madeleine?'

'Safe and well at the country-house of our esteemed friend Mr. Smith. Thither I will speedily take you, my dear boy. I came here to gather tidings of you.'

'How long it seems since we lost sight of one another!'

'Long, indeed! And how much we have

to tell each other! But we are in smooth water now. In this free, happy land, people are no longer persecuted for their faith. We must begin the world again, my son; but what does that signify? You have youth and energy; I have experience and patience.'

The captain and Mr. Smith looked on with sympathy at our mutual felicitations. Soon I was with my father on our way to Walthamstow. There, in an old-fashioned red-brick mansion, I found my mother, brothers and sisters, my Madeleine, and Gabrielle. What joy! What affection!

Many of us settled without the city walls in the open ground of Spital Fields, which we gradually covered with houses and silk-factories. Here we spoke our own language, sang our own songs, had our own places of worship, and built our dwellings in the old French style, with porticoes and seats at the doors, where our old men sat and smoked on summer evenings, and conversed with one another in their own tongue.

MILON THE CRIPPLE

IN 1534 Francis the First was reigning in France — Henry the Eighth was King of England. Germany had risen up some years before at the call of Martin Luther, and, reading its new-found Bible by the dawning light of the Reformation, resolved to shake off the power of Rome. England was awakening too. And even in France there were many who loved the Word of God, and believed that there was no priest but the Lord Jesus Christ, no salvation except through faith in Him. The gospel won its way among all ranks.

The gentle queen, Margaret of Navarre, felt its power, and tried to persuade her much-loved brother Francis to listen to the good news which told of a free pardon of sin's guilt, and deliverance from its reign, free to us because Jesus paid the price. But the King of France liked the loud trumpet of martial fame and

the soft songs of pleasure far better than the still small voice of conscience and the favour of God. Glory was his idol. At its shrine he sacrificed many a Christian hero; and Paris was mute with terror as martyr after martyr, loving the truth more than life itself, passed through the flames to join the noble army above.

In a street near the centre of Paris there was a shoemaker's shop. A poor deformed young man sat near the window watching the passers-by and making remarks on their appearance. His limbs were crippled, and all his body paralysed, except his arms and tongue. This was the shoemaker's son, Berthelot Milon. He had not always been such a melancholy object. Berthelot was once the handsomest, cleverest young man in the parish. But he had been the wickedest too; the very ringleader of all the wild youths who lived near to him. He had run into every sort of excess, despised God, and laughed at pious people.

On one occasion, while in the midst of some giddy amusement, he fell and broke his ribs. Refusing to try any remedy, he gradually grew

worse. Paralysis crept over his frame; his wild, roving life was gone for ever. Sick and sorrowful, he was compelled to sit all day long in his father's shop. A very miserable object he was, unsightly in body, unhappy in mind. His temper was quite soured by his troubles, and his only pastime seemed to be insulting any of the passers-by whom he knew to be Bible-readers.

One day, seeing a pious man, he began to mock him by nicknames and taunts. The good man stopped, and, feeling deep pity for the wretched Berthelot, said gently and lovingly to him—

'Poor young man, why do you mock the passers-by? Do you not see that God has bent your body in this way in order to straighten your soul? Look at this book; a few days hence you will tell me what you think of it.'

Milon took the offered New Testament, and read it night and day. The Word of God pierced his heart. Never before had he felt that his *soul* was crooked and diseased. He was in agony. The Saviour then showed him His grace and love.

'Mercy has found me,' said Milon, 'in order that the love of God, which pardons the greatest sinners, should be placed as on a hill, and be seen by all the world.'

He now wished to share the treasure he had found in the gospel with his father, his friends, and the customers who came to the shoemaker's shop. The poor cripple had become useful and happy.

Berthelot could not be idle. The same restless activity which had formerly led him into sin was now employed in doing good. He gathered children, and taught them to write the holy words that had brought peace to his own soul. At other times he worked with his hands to earn money for the poor. He was able to engrave beautifully, and found constant employment in ornamenting knives, dagger and sword blades, or in doing curious little bits of workmanship for the goldsmiths.

His musical skill was also very great, and the fine voice which he had formerly employed in singing foolish songs was now devoted to the service of God. Great numbers of people flocked to Milon's shop to see the man so sud-

denly changed, to look at his handiwork, or to listen to his singing.

'If God has bestowed these gifts on me,' said the poor paralytic, 'it is to the end that His glory should be magnified in me.'

While things were going on thus in the shoemaker's shop, it happened that some zealous people in Paris, who had felt the power of the truth of God in making them free, resolved to publish a strong protest against the errors of Popery. This protest was printed on placards, and these papers were posted on one night, the 24th of October, in every street of the capital, as well as in many other cities of France.

When morning dawned, all Paris was in commotion; the fury of the Roman Catholics knew no bounds. Every one asked for the author of the placards, or for those who had helped to circulate them. Of course many hands had been engaged in this work; but secret work it was obliged to be while so large a number of enemies to the Reformation were abroad.

The king was very angry at this public protest against his religion, and fancied that

his majesty had been insulted. So he commanded that every one who had posted a placard should be put into prison.

'Let all be seized without distinction,' he cried, 'who are suspected of Lutheresy; I will kill them all.'

Some of the daring protesters of the night before were now silent, and hidden in cellars, garrets, and out-of-the-way corners. Among others there were heart-rending partings. Many took refuge in flight. For those who lingered a sadder fate was waiting.

Great numbers were thrown into prison. Informers were easily found; for the king allowed them to get a fourth part of the accused person's property. And these 'quadruplers,' as they were called, were very busy in hunting out victims; but, if there was one man who might be expected to escape the suspicion of having posted these hated placards, it was poor Berthelot Milon, the cripple. No matter. A cruel officer of the king found his way to the bedside of the sufferer, and, foaming with rage, told him to rise and follow him.

'Alas! sir,' said Berthelot, with a smile, 'it

requires a greater master than you to make me rise.'

'Take this fellow away,' said the unfeeling officer to his men.

The patient Milon was then flung into prison, where some of his friends were already awaiting the day of their trial.

Calmly the days passed here. Formerly a touch from the kindest hand would have made Milon cry out with pain; now the roughest handling seemed tender. God gave him patience, strength, and even joy. This helpless cripple was the support of his companions in trouble, guiding and gladdening them by his faith and hope.

The trial-day arrived. It was the 10th of November. Milon could not be accused of fastening up placards in the streets; however, some were said to have been found in his father's shop. It was enough. He and his fellow-prisoners were condemned to be burnt alive at different places, on different days. The judges hoped, by these severe measures, to spread terror over the entire city.

Three days after this sentence, one of the

gaolers entered the cell of Berthelot Milon, and, lifting him in his arms, placed him in the cart which was to carry him to execution. The procession passed the shoemaker's shop. The poor cripple saluted it smilingly. When he reached the place of death the stake was prepared, and the fagots already in a blaze.

'Lower the flames,' exclaimed the officer in command; 'the sentence orders him to be burnt at a slow fire.'

Sad news for surrounding friends. Words of praise and joy were alone heard from the lips of Berthelot; he rejoiced at being counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. His very enemies wondered and admired; and, as the blackened body of the martyr sank beneath the flames, his friends exclaimed—

'Oh, how great is the constancy of this witness to the Son of God, both in his life and in his death!'

The persecution begun in this reign was carried on with great fury through following ages. The Reformation in France was solemnly devoted to death by a king and his Parliament in 1535; and successive rulers tried to drown

it in blood, burn it at the stake, or wear it slowly out in the galleys.

Still the good seed of God's Word liveth and abideth for ever. It has already brought forth fruit in France; and if the past harvests have only yielded thirty or sixty, let us earnestly pray the Lord of harvests that those of the future may bring forth an hundredfold.

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