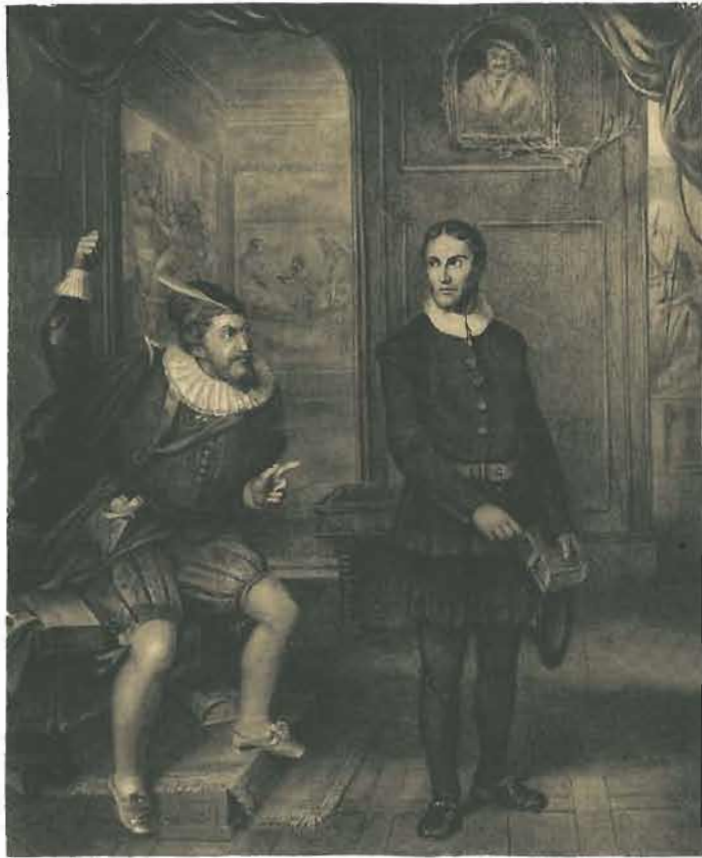


BARTHOLOMEW LEGATE
THE LAST SMITHFIELD MARTYR

ILLUSTRATED





Dawson, P. 32

Legate's interview with King James. (see p 237)

BARTHOLOMEW LEGATE

THE LAST SMITHFIELD MARTYR.

BY
FLORENCE GREGG.



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P R E F A C E .

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IN the humble hope that I may thereby assist in rescuing from oblivion the name of a noble, heroic man, and as a protest against bigotry and intolerance, whether manifested by Roman Catholic or Protestant, I send forth this my story of "Bartholomew Legate, the last Smithfield martyr," a man concerning whom history has been strangely silent, and whose name does not appear on the roll of that "noble army of martyrs" who yielded up their lives in Smithfield, in whose honour a stately church was erected not many years since, though whether the omission was due to want of knowledge, or prejudice, it would be hard to say; but the record closes with the name of Roger Holland, burned there June 27th, 1558; and the Rev. Oswald Sharpe, Vicar of the Church, in his pamphlet on "The Smithfield Martyrs," implies that none after him suffered in that place.

It is true that no account of Bartholomew Legate's trial has yet come to light, although at the time it seems to have created considerable stir; but the king's signature to the warrant for his execution may still be seen at the



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Record Office; and not only from the pen of Thomas Fuller, in his "Church History of Britain," but also from the letters of Archbishop Abbott and Sir John Chamberlain, both contemporary with Legate, we learn how he was tried for heresy, stood firmly to his faith, and, for conscience' sake, was burned in Smithfield on March 18th, 1611.

BARTHOLOMEW LEGATE.

CHAPTER I.

"**E**H dear! but it's a sad life at the best; the good are taken, and them as only cumpers the ground is left behind. God help the poor master!" And thus soliloquising, Job Markham pulled the heavy gate quietly behind him, and having cast a glance upwards at the windows of the farmhouse, turned and plodded down the lane with drooping head and heavy dragging step. It was a bright October evening in the year 1586, the close of one of those lovely autumn days when it seems as if the departed summer had returned for a brief visit ere she said farewell for ever. The rays of the setting sun were shedding a glory over the stubble fields and the green, marshy meadow lands, and on the hedgerows festooned with delicate bindweed and decked with clusters of black and scarlet berries, and were sparkling like jewels in the wayside pond and in the diamond panes of the farmhouse windows, and peace and beauty brooded over all the wide landscape, in the midst of which, nestling among sheltering trees, was the little village of Rumwell in Essex, where lay the humble home of Job Markham. But all the calm beauty of the evening was lost upon him, as he stumped heavily along; nor did the sight of his wife's buxom form, standing at their cottage door, and shading her eyes with her hand to catch the first glimpse of that small, spare figure, avail to arouse him from his dejection.

"Why, what ails thee, man?" she said, as her husband entered the kitchen without his customary salutation, and sank down on the settle. "What ails thee—art sick?"

"Thee must go up to the house at once, Moll," he replied, quite disregarding her question. "Kate Alison bade me say the mistress will scarce last the night, and she needs thy help."

"God save us!" said the good woman, as with trembling haste she placed his evening meal before her husband, and proceeded to envelop herself in her large cloak. "When was she taken worse?"

"I' the morn, but the change came upon her about an hour since; the poor master's heart is well-nigh broke. But don't 'ee wait now, Moll; thee'll hear all about it soon enough."

"Ay, sure," she answered, and with one housewifely glance around her little home, crossed the threshold, and was soon making her way along in the direction whence her husband had come.

The light was fading now, and as the good woman approached the farmhouse, its white facings and fantastic gables overshadowed by two fine elms, gave it a very weird and ghostly appearance, and it was small matter for wonder if a shudder passed through her frame. The watch-dog barked loudly as she entered at the gate, but the sound of her familiar voice quieted him, and he retreated to his shelter. Ere she reached the door it was opened by a tall, gaunt woman, who without speaking beckoned her into the kitchen: a large, low, black-raftered room, the walls bright with shining pewter, and the ceiling hung with fitches of home-cured bacon and toothsome hams. Two or three spinning wheels were there, but they were standing idle, while the maidens, fearless of reproof, sat with tearful eyes around the wood fire, only speaking sometimes to each other in low whispers.

"How is she now, Mistress Alison?" asked Moll Markham of the tall woman.

"Dying," was the reply, in a voice whose tremor gave the lie to the calm, impassive expression of the countenance. "Sit ye down by the fire; we shall be needed presently," she added, motioning the other to a seat, and resuming her own at the foot of the steep flight of stairs, whence any sound would be audible from the room above, where the beloved mistress of the household lay waiting for the opening of the golden gate.

Dame Markham sat for some minutes in silence, looking from one to the other, then addressing one of the girls, she asked, "Who is with Mistress Legate, Anna?"

"Only the master and Barty," she replied, raising her tear-stained face. "She wished to be left alone with them now. Before the sun went down she sent for all of us, and bade us farewell, and to be good, and meet her in heaven. And, oh my dear mistress, no one will ever speak so kind to me again." And the poor girl hid her face in her apron and sobbed piteously.

"She was like a mother to us all," said the other girl, her eyes filling as she spoke. "I mind me when father lay so long ill, how she would come and bring him medicine and good things to eat, and talk, so kindly, and read to him out of her Bible; and how she got my brother Jocelyn to quit the bad company he was keeping and be an honest man, and there he is serving the queen in Ireland to-day instead of being hanged on the gallows for stealing deer like James Hepburn. She was good to every one, she was."

"Ay, indeed, was she," replied Moll Markham; "and thee, Anna, and thee, Esther, must mind all that she has ever told you, and be good wenches, and go on after she has gone just as if she still were here." And the good woman wiped her eyes, and the whole party relapsed again into silence.

Meanwhile, in the room above, Stephen Legate and his son were keeping mournful vigil by the dying bed of her who was to both of them more than all the world beside: the faithful, loving wife, the wise, tender, affectionate mother.

A rushlight glimmered on the table, and a wood fire blazed on the hearth, throwing occasional gleams on the quaintly carved furniture, and lighting up the pale face of the sufferer, and the thin hands holding in their feeble clasp those of husband and son.

"Barty," said the dying woman at length, after some minutes of silence, "Barty, darling, mother must leave you now."

The boy looked at her with his earnest, dark eyes, but answered not, and his mother continued, "You have always been a good boy, and never given me a moment's sorrow. God bless you for it, and keep you good; but, my child, you have had few temptations yet; you will meet them as you grow older, and you must

promise me to be brave and true—true to yourself, and above all, true to God; and if ever an hour of trial should come to you, He will help you through, even though it should be a fiery trial such as befel your Uncle Abraham, Barty.”

“I will, dear mother! God helping me I will live to be worthy of Uncle Abraham and worthy of you,” answered the boy fervently, as he kissed his mother’s wasted cheek.

A faint smile illumined the countenance of the dying woman.

“And, Barty, I give you my Bible—read in it often, and think of what you read, and try to understand. And one thing more, my darling—your father—he will miss me when I am gone, and you must comfort him, and try to fill my place to him, and always be a good, true, loving son.”

“I will, mother; I promise you I will.”

“God bless my boy,” she answered, laying her hand caressingly on his dark, clustering locks. Then turning to him by whose side she had trod the pathway of life for nearly twenty years, she said, “Husband, dear, we have been so very happy together that I would fain have stayed a little longer here, but God has willed it otherwise, and His way is best. Fret not, dear love, we shall soon meet again where there is no pain and no parting, and there shall we be happier even than we have been here. But our boy—he is so young and tender—you must be mother as well as father to him now.”

The strong man struggled with his emotions ere he answered, “Ay, dear heart, I will.” And drawing the weeping lad towards him he folded him in a close embrace.

Then the dying woman took a hand of each beloved one in her feeble grasp, and having gazed long and lovingly upon them both, closed her eyes and lay as if asleep, while her husband and son sat quietly by, fearing lest by the slightest movement they might disturb her slumber.

Presently Kate Alison, alarmed at the continued stillness, stole softly up the stairs and entered the room. Taking the rushlight in her hand she approached the bed: a single glance sufficed to assure her that the tender wife and mother, the good kind mistress, was sleeping the sleep that knows no waking.

CHAPTER II.

“I’LL tell him thee hast been, Master Churchill, and if he wants to see thee, I dare say he’ll send; but I wouldn’t disturb him now,—no, not for the queen herself. It’s little enough sleep he’s had for a week past, and there’s plenty of time for him to wake up to trouble and sorrow without being called down only to see a parson.”

In Mistress Alison’s manner and tone there was an air of defiance, if not of contempt, as she stood in the doorway with her arms akimbo, effectually barring it against all intruders, which both perplexed and irritated the personage she was addressing: a short, stout, red-faced man clad in rusty black.

“Woman!” he angrily exclaimed, “as a minister of God, I demand admittance to this house of mourning, and thou hast neither right nor power to refuse it. Nay, I warn thee, that if it was through thy wiles the departed was left in her last moments without the consolation of religion, a terrible crime rests upon thy soul, and even shouldst thou escape punishment upon earth, that of Heaven will surely fall upon thee.”

“As to punishment, Master Churchill,” she replied with provoking coolness, “I hope I shall be able to bear all I get or deserve. But in this matter, I’d have you know I am my master’s servant, and if he had ordered me to fetch thee, or any one else, I’d have done it, though it had been sore against my will. And as to the consolations of religion! if that sweet saint, my mistress, had them not, none ever had; she died as she had lived, and one who was an angel upon earth needed no parson to show her the way to heaven. It was enough for her that those she loved best, her husband and her child, were at her side when the Lord called her to pass through the dark valley.”

As she uttered these last words, Kate Alison’s voice trembled a little, and she brushed her hand quickly across her eyes.

Master Churchill deigned no reply, but saying somewhat pompously, "Tell Stephen Legate I shall not come down again; if he wants to see me, he must send," turned on his heel and strode away.

The old servant, with an expression of angry scorn on her countenance, stood at the door and watched his retreating form till it was out of sight, then returning to the kitchen, began to busy herself with her usual domestic duties.

Meantime, in the room above, young Bartholomew Legate knelt by the bed on which lay all that remained of her whose tender love had made earth a heaven to him, trying to realize this strange and mournful experience of his young life, and the new path of duty which it had opened out before him. The first paroxysm of grief had subsided, and he was able now to recall his mother's last words, and to ponder their full meaning—to be "brave and true" like that good uncle of his mother's, who, when Mary was queen, as he had often been told, had for the truth's sake cheerfully borne the baptism of fire, walking to the stake as though it had been a throne. Yes, God helping him, he too would be faithful and strong in the cause of truth, no matter where it should lead; and then—his father, how could he best fulfil the sacred trust committed to his charge, to be a comfort and help to him? Bowing his head upon his hands the boy poured forth, as he had been taught, his simple supplication for help and strength; then, rising from his knees, he laid back the sheet, and gazed long and lovingly on the still features of his dead mother, and having tenderly kissed the marble brow, he replaced the covering and quitted the chamber.

How strange it all seemed as he descended the stairs and the familiar household sounds met his ear; it was almost as if the events of the past night had been a frightful dream, but for that still form upon the bed, and the dull sense of vacancy and loss that oppressed his heart.

Kate Alison met him as he entered the kitchen, and kissing him as she had been used to do when he was quite a little child, led him to the table prepared for the morning meal.

"Is thy father coming down, Barty?" she inquired, as she heaped his plate, and filled his cup with ale.

"He was still sleeping when I left him," the boy replied. "Is he wanted for aught?"

"Nay, all is going on right about the farm; Job Markham is seeing after the men; it's only that Parson Churchill has been. I doubt me, though, 'twill be no great loss to the master to have missed seeing him."

"My father likes him not," said Barty; "but it may be he will want to see him about the——" funeral, he would have said, but his voice faltered, and he could not finish the sentence. Kate understood him, however.

"Well, if he does, one of the lads can go round, that's easy enough done,—but thou'rt not eating, child, and if thou doesn't eat, thou'lt be ill, and what'll thy father do?"

This reminder of his father was enough for Barty, and with a vigorous effort he forced down the food. His old nurse stood watching him until the last morsel had disappeared, then quitted the kitchen to superintend the dairy work, while Bartholomew crept quietly upstairs to sit by his father until he should awaken.

The day of the funeral arrived at last, cheerless and gloomy, with occasional showers of sleety rain; and with heavy hearts and tearful eyes the dwellers in the little hamlet assembled to see the remains of her, who had ever been a kind and sympathetic friend to the poor and suffering, laid in the quiet churchyard; and as the mournful procession moved slowly along, many rough but kindly glances of sympathy were directed towards Stephen Legate and his young son.

It was indeed touching to see how bowed and aged the strong man had suddenly become; it seemed as if more than half his life was being laid away in that quiet grave, while the boy appeared to have put off at once his own great grief and his dependent childhood and risen to the stature of a man; his tall, slight form was erect, and his countenance, though pale, bore no traces of violent sorrow.

All wondered to see him so calm, but to Bartholomew Legate the trust reposed in him by his beloved mother was too sacred to admit of indulgence in selfish grief. Henceforth his life must be devoted to his father and to God! And so, when all was over, he drew the broken-hearted mourner away from the grave and

led him home, and there, with gentle thoughtfulness, fulfilled the little offices of love his mother had been wont to perform, endeavouring, meanwhile, to cheer his father and prevent his mind from dwelling too much upon his loss.

The sad day was over at length, but ere they retired to rest, Stephen Legate assembled his little household and bade Barty get his mother's Bible and read therefrom those words which have been the solace of so many sorrowing souls. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

With kind farewells they separated for the night; and through the dark and clouded sky the stars shone out one by one, shedding their soft light upon the earth like messengers of God's peace to the troubled hearts of men.

CHAPTER III.

TEN years have elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter, ten long years, freighted with weighty import for the nation and the world, but passing with their quiet alternations of seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, almost unnoticed over placid Rumwell.

To be sure, some changes had taken place. Children had grown into men and women, and the graves in the little church-yard lay closer together than formerly. But the storms that had shaken the political world, the Popish plots, the long continued struggle for liberty in the Netherlands, nay, even the threatened Spanish invasion, had scarcely caused a surface ripple on the still life of the little hamlet.

During the last few months, however, two events had occurred fraught with absorbing interest to the inhabitants of Rumwell. The first was the departure in the early spring of the younger Legate on a visit to Holland, whither he had gone to settle the affairs of a relative of his mother's, who had recently died there; and this had naturally occasioned no little stir among the quiet, stay-at-home folks of his native village, to whom the very names of foreign countries were shrouded in mystery, and who were disposed to regard Bartholomew's journey as likely to prove a perpetual banishment from his home and friends, speaking of it always in a mournful tone, and with an ominous shake of the head.

But scarcely had the excitement occasioned by this break in the monotony of Rumwell existence had time to subside, when fresh subject-matter for gossip and conjecture was afforded by the settlement in the neighbourhood of a family, who had come, no one knew whence, and taken possession of a long untenanted mansion standing on the outskirts of the village, and bearing a somewhat ghostly reputation. For a short time after their arrival, many and various speculations were rife as to the reasons which

could have induced a cultured, courtly gentleman, with his still young and handsome wife and four children, to settle down in such a lonely spot, as remote, apparently, from any other centre of attraction as from the gay capital itself. But as no satisfactory conclusion could possibly be arrived at, speculation gradually ceased, and the presence in the village of the mysterious strangers, who were seldom seen beyond the limits of their own domains, and never inside the church either on Sundays or festivals, began to be accepted as a matter of course.

It was now late in the autumn; the last of the harvest had been gathered in, the orchards had yielded up their fruits, and the trees, under the combined influences of hoarfrost and a blustering north-east wind, were being rapidly denuded of their leaves.

Stephen Legate stood at the gate of his farm, his face turned towards the western sky, but with a far-off look in his eyes which clearly indicated that he saw nothing of the gold and crimson splendour in which the sun was retiring to his rest; and was as unconscious of the chilling breeze as of the kindly "Good-even, neighbour," which had been repeated more than once.

A gentle pull at his sleeve succeeded at length in arresting his attention, and his face lighted up with a pleased smile as his eye fell upon the singular looking figure standing before him. It was that of a man about fifty years of age, very short of stature, but broad-shouldered and long-armed, with a countenance rugged but pleasing, and iron-grey hair reaching down to his shoulders.

"Good-even, neighbour," he repeated, as their hands met in a cordial grasp. "I was just thinking of going home again, as you seemed to have taken a journey into Cloudland. In Holland, with Barty, I doubt not?" he added, with a smile that lit up his features like a ray of sunshine.

"You are right, Master Harper, I was with him, though I know not if it was in Holland. I am very lonely without my boy; it seems a weary while since he went away, and it's so long since I heard from him. Sometimes I think I shall never see him more; and then again I find myself here at the gate looking up the road, and fancying he will presently come riding along."

"And so you will see him, Legate, and ere many weeks are

out, take my word for that; and when you are sitting by the fire, and listening to Barty telling of his adventures, you will forget all these dreary thoughts, and feel yourself grown young again," said the little man in a cheery tone, though his eyes, meanwhile, scrutinized his friend's countenance anxiously, as a half-defined fear crossed his mind.

Legate looked down with an answering smile into the shrewd, kindly face, and returned the warm pressure of the hand; then, as a rude gust of wind swept by them, he said,—

"But I must not keep you here in the cold; you can stay awhile and have a chat over a cup of wine?"

"Ay, surely, I came on purpose, for when my tongue would fain be wagging I like not my own company; and as my crony, Barty, is away, I thought to make his father bear the burden of my gossiping humour."

"Most gladly will I bear so pleasant a burden," answered Legate, as he led the way into the house, through the kitchen and up a few steep, narrow stairs, into the room which served him as study and counting-house; and having called to Kate Alison to bring some wine, he seated his guest in a quaintly carved high-backed chair in a corner of the ample fireplace. A bright wood fire was burning on the hearth, and the crackling flames threw a cheerful glow upon the panelled walls and massive furniture.

"This is comfort," said Harper, stretching out his hands to the cheerful warmth, and adding after a few moments: "I bethink me sometimes, Friend Legate, of those fires that have been kindled with human fagots, and wonder if such a day will ever again arise for this England of ours."

"God forbid!" replied Legate, with earnestness. "But what could have put such a notion into your head, Master Harper? Surely you don't think——"

The entrance of the old servant with the wine interrupted him, but when they were alone again Legate repeated his question; and drawing a chair close to his friend, anxiously awaited his reply.

The little man sipped his wine for some moments in silence, then leisurely drawing from his pocket a folded paper, he handed

it to Legate, saying, "Read that, and then tell me what you think of it."

It was a closely written document, consisting of a letter to Harper from a friend in London, with the copy of an Act of Parliament attached, and its perusal occupied the worthy yeoman for some time. When at length he raised his eyes, he met those of his friend steadily fixed upon him.

"Well," he said, "what think you now?"

"I scarce can tell," answered Legate. "These new laws truly seem somewhat hard and cruel; but then we Protestants have suffered so much at the hands of the Papists, that if——"

"Is not the spirit of persecution the same everywhere, and at all times?" interrupted Harper, in a stern voice. "Shall we, in the name of our Master, Christ, who bade us love our enemies, persecute the Papists because they have persecuted us? Shall we, in His name, who came to bring peace and goodwill upon the earth, hang and burn our fellow-men because God has seen fit to cause them to think differently from ourselves? Besides," he continued, in a calmer tone, taking the letter in his hand, "this act is framed not against Popish recusants alone, but against all who conform not, outwardly at least, to the teaching and worship of the Church, as by law established. It seems to me, Legate, we have but changed the name of our foster parent, instead of emancipating ourselves once and for all from childish thralldom, as is befitting grown men: our present mother would fain do all our thinking for us, and take our consciences as safely into her own keeping as ever did she of Rome."

"I fear you may be right," answered Legate, "though I understand little about these things, having scarce given thought thereto. I have gone to church because I would fain keep the law, and set an example therein to my household; but I wearied oft-times of the prayers, and I liked not Master Churchill's preaching; it savours not to me of heavenly things; and partly therefor, partly because of weakness of body, I have of late seldom gone."

"And I," said Harper, "like not Master Churchill's preaching better than I like the man, nor care I for the services of the Church: yet I too conform, and for the same reasons as your-

self; but at times I doubt if I am true to myself in so doing; it may be that the cause of religion demands——"

"Hush!" said Legate, bending forward in a listening attitude. "What is that?"

"Horses' hoofs, if I mistake not," answered the other. "Who can it be at this late hour?"

"Some traveller, doubtless, who has lost his way," answered Legate. "I must go and see."

As he opened the door, a startled cry from Kate Alison broke upon his ear, and he hastened down the stairs, closely followed by Harper, wondering what had occurred. On entering the kitchen, they found the servants in a state of wild delight, and Kate holding by both hands a tall, handsome young man.

"Here's Barty, master!" she exclaimed, and in a moment father and son were locked in a close embrace.

"You have grown such a great man, Barty, you will scarce even deign to look down upon an old friend," said Harper, in a feigned grumbling tone, when Stephen Legate had at length released his son from his loving grasp.

"My dear, dear old master!" exclaimed the young man, seizing him by the hand with an affectionate warmth. "Forgive me for not seeing you, but I had no eyes for any one but father just at first."

"Quite right, too; who has a better claim to the chief place in your thoughts? But who is with you?" he continued, looking to where, in the shadow of the doorway, stood a man clad in travelling garb, and holding in his arms something carefully wrapped in a cloak.

"Father," said Bartholomew, leading the stranger forward, "an old friend has come to see you. You remember Master Lingard?"

"What! Simon Lingard!" cried Legate in astonishment, cordially grasping the stranger's outstretched hand. "This is indeed a pleasure; you must forgive me for not remembering you."

"My dear Legate," replied Lingard, "it is no wonder you had forgotten me, for Time has wrought changes in us both, though it is plain he has left your heart as warm as ever to welcome an old friend. But for your son, I should scarce have had courage to take you thus by storm. Yet, I need not have feared."

Legate pressed his hand again warmly, and, drawing the settle near the fire, said, "Sit ye down and warm yourself; and Kate, let us have some supper at once. But what have you here?" he continued, placing his hand on the burden his friend yet held carefully in his arms.

Lingard laid back the cloak, and exposed to view a lovely child of some five years, reposing on his arm in a warm and rosy sleep. "My only little one, he said; "my Margaret's precious gift—she died two months ago." His voice trembled as he spoke, and he turned away his head to hide the emotion he could not well suppress.

Legate answered not, but laid his hand affectionately on his friend's shoulder, and bending over the little sleeper, kissed the brown clustering curls.

"Father," said Bartholomew, coming up at this moment, "where is Master Harper? he seemed to vanish in a moment; I see no trace of him anywhere."

"He's gone home," replied Kate, who, with her younger assistant, had been busy preparing the meal. "He bade me say he'd be here again to-morrow. I expect he thought we should be wanting to do nought but look at you."

"Then he was a wise man to flee in time from so tedious an occupation," answered Bartholomew, laughing; "but I would fain he had stayed. However, here is some one better worth looking at than I am. Let Kate take your little Maysie, Master Lingard. And tenderly lifting the still sleeping child, he placed her in the arms of his old nurse, who received this new charge at the hands of her favourite with a pleased pride, and soon carried her up to bed.

It was a happy party which gathered that evening around the social board. Stephen Legate's face had lost the worn, weary expression which had characterized it of late, and beamed with unutterable happiness as he met the loving gaze of his son, who sat by with a quiet gladness shining in his dark eyes; while the cloud of melancholy which had brooded over their guest seemed to disperse in the pleasant atmosphere of social chat, in which old memories were revived, and old times lived o'er again.

Ere they retired for the night, Bartholomew read, at his father's

request, from the Bible one of the joy-breathing Psalms that have voiced the thanksgivings of so many human hearts for ages past; and then Stephen Legate, in a voice broken with emotion, poured forth his gratitude to the Divine Being for the safe return of his dear son, in which all fervently joined. And so, with loving wishes, they separated, and peace with her quiet wing brooded over the little household.

CHAPTER IV.

“COME back, Maysie; come back, my pet! I never see the like o’ that child; she’s after Barty everywhere; but you must run and bring her back, Anna; he’s half a mile away by now; and if she gets outside the gate she’ll lose herself.” And Kate returned to her task of bread-making, which had been disturbed in so unwonted a manner, while Anna, a buxom young woman of some five and twenty years, went to bring back the truant, soon returning with Maysie struggling in her arms.

“You naughty——”

“I Barty’s little wife; I want go wis Barty,” exclaimed the little maiden, with a comical endeavour to look indignant, as she shook her tangled brown curls and small fist at the amused Anna.

“Barty can’t take Maysie with him to-day; he’s gone too far; she must be a good girl, and stay indoors now, and by-and-by she shall go with me to see the pigs and cows and feed the chickens,” said Kate, as she wiped the flour from her hands.

“Give her an apple, Anna,” she continued, “and take her upstairs with you until I’ve finished down here.”

Maysie’s was a happy, contented disposition, in spite of the inordinate amount of petting she had received throughout her little life, and she submitted without further protest to this arrangement, graciously accepting the apple as a peace-offering, and stumbled merrily up the steep stairs to the room above, whence soon issued the sound of her ringing laughter, as she hindered, under pretence of helping, Anna in her work.

Presently, however, the little brown head popped in again at the kitchen door.

“Is Barty tum bat?”

“Not yet, Maysie.”

“Oh dear! Oh dear! What s’all I do? I’ve nobody to p’ay wis me.”

“Go back to Anna, dear, till I’m ready to take you out.”

“Anna don’t want me; s’e won’t let me sweep.”

And Maysie sat down disconsolately upon the stairs, and resting her elbows upon her knees, dropped her chubby face into her dimpled hands with an air of deep dejection.

Kate’s kind heart was quite touched at the sight of her pet’s despondency, but ere she could resolve upon some new amusement for her, the little maid was off again, soon returning with her lap full of kittens, while the mother cat walked by her side with an air of some anxiety.

“These are my chil’ren,” she announced to Kate; “and dis one is doin’ away in a s’ip to brin’ home dold and silver and tates, and all sorts o’ nice sin’s; and dis one is doin’ to fight the Span’ards. Tate,” she continued, after a pause, “what is Span’ards? and why do fo’ts want to fight ‘em?”

“They are bad people, dear; and that’s the reason why.”

“Oh,” said Maysie, thoughtfully, “but what do zey do?”

As Kate’s knowledge of political matters was exceedingly limited, she wisely turned the conversation by suggesting that as she was now ready to go out, Maysie had better restore her family to their accustomed resting-place, and put on her little hood and cloak to accompany her.

This was soon accomplished, and the little maiden trotted along merrily by Kate’s side, bearing proudly in her chubby hands the basket of meal for the chickens, which she was to have the pleasure of distributing to them herself.

In the midst of this interesting occupation, however, the basket went suddenly tumbling to the ground, and Maysie started off at a brisk run.

Kate looked round in amazement, but was soon made aware of the cause of the phenomenon, as she espied the tall figure of Bartholomew coming down the road. Directly afterwards he entered the farmyard with the little girl perched upon his shoulder.

“Well, Kate,” he said, as she hastened forward to meet them, “Master Harper will be here this evening, so you must prepare us a good supper; it’s the last time our friend will sup with us for a long while to come.”

"Then they do leave to-morrow, Barty?"

"Yes; Master Lingard can spare no more time from his business. I would he could have stayed longer for my father's sake."

"Yes, and I would we could keep the child; it will be very lonely without her; bless her dear heart!"

"So it will, Kate; but I doubt her father could ill spare her, even if she were willing to remain. Wouldst stay with us, little one?"

"Ess, wiv fa'ver," she answered.

"And father can't; so we must e'en part with Maysie; but she must come again soon," he added, as he noticed a cloud gathering over the rosy face; "she must come when the flowers are blooming and the birds are singing, and help us make the hay, and stay with us for a long, long time."

At the prospect of such pleasures to come Maysie's countenance quickly brightened, and she willingly yielded to Barty's suggestion that she should go and assist Kate in making the needful preparations for to-morrow's journey.

On this evening the best parlour, seldom used since Mistress Legate's death, was brought into requisition, its handsomely carved cabinets and chairs being uncovered and rubbed bright by Kate Alison's own hands; and as the logs blazed and crackled upon the ample hearth, the friends gathered round with that sense of comfort and enjoyment always afforded by a good fire and cheerful surroundings, especially when these are contrasted with cold and darkness without.

Beside Master Harper, two other guests—Henry Fisher, a sturdy English yeoman, living about three miles distant, and his buxom, comely new wife. The four elder gentlemen were soon deeply engrossed in talk on politics, the weather, and farming matters; while Mistress Fisher, upon whose lap Maysie had snugly ensconced herself, turned to Bartholomew with many questions about his travels in foreign lands.

"And I suppose," she said, "you will be going back again ere long?"

"Nay," he answered, shaking his head, "there is no further need for me to go, and I would not willingly leave father again;

he needs me now. If he were taken from me, I know not what I might then do. I admire and love the people, and one seems to breathe freely there; the very air is filled with that freedom for which they have struggled so nobly and so long."

"Well, I am very glad you'll be staying amongst us, for we've so few neighbours; and I can't see, Master Legate, what more freedom you can want than you have already here in England; it's not because I'm a woman, for my husband often says the same when he's been talking with Master Harper. But tell me now if it's true that the States have forbidden the ladies of Holland to use starch in their ruffs. You can't call that freedom."

Bartholomew laughed.

"Nay, Mistress Fisher," he said, "that would truly not be freedom, and I fear such a proceeding would carry danger with it. Yet it may be that the husbands of the ladies sometimes forbid them, for the States have laid a somewhat heavy tax on starch; but that it is still used I can affirm, for a friend of mine in Amsterdam sells no less than four hundred bushels every week."

"Four hundred bushels!" she exclaimed; "Heaven preserve us, they must eat it. But tell me now, do they dress as we do? and are the children like ours?"

"As to the dress of the ladies," replied the young man, "I fear I must confess to some ignorance—I never could fathom the mysteries of ruffs and farthingales. But I think the children are not unlike our English little ones; they are, however, far better educated—they all attend school, and learn at least one language beside their own."

"Well," she said, in a tone that seemed to imply she considered an invidious comparison had been drawn between her own country and Holland, "I know not that they are any better for that; folks may learn too much, and I am sure one tongue is enough for any child."

Bartholomew maintained a discreet silence, feeling it not worth while to argue the question with the lady; and in the pause that ensued, Harper's voice was heard in vigorous denunciation.

"I told you so," he was saying; "it is a wicked and iniquitous act, and must have been framed by the father of evil himself. Our boasted freedom is a wretched mockery. What matters

if whether the fetters are wrought by Protestant or Papist, when such a worm as Churchill may threaten an honest man like our friend Legate here, and even have power to throw him into gaol?"

"What is all this about, Master Harper?" asked Bartholomew, hastening forward, as the last words fell upon his ear.

Fisher hastened to reply. "I was giving your father a word of warning. Master Churchill has marked his absence from church, and I overheard him hinting that it was a case in which the new act might be brought into force. I know not why, but he seems to have small kindness for your father."

"But to threaten him! how dares he?" exclaimed the young man, with glowing cheeks and flashing eyes.

"Heed it not, Barty," said his father, rising from his seat, and laying his hand affectionately on his son's shoulder. "I fear nought from Master Churchill, or any one else; if he chooses to come to me, I am ready to give him good reasons for what I do."

"Nevertheless, friend Legate," said Lingard, who had hitherto sat by only as a listener, "since it behoves us all to have some care of our persons, think you it is worth while to run your neck into a noose, when you might so easily keep it free by going sometimes to the church, since that church is by law established, and thereby prove yourself in the eyes of all men to be what you are indeed, a loyal subject of her Majesty?"

"I trust I am ever that," answered Legate, with a quiet smile; "but in this matter of religion not the queen herself must come between me and my conscience!"

"Nor in any other matter!" cried Harper, with vehemence; "better disloyalty to the queen than disloyalty to the conscience."

"Very fine talking," said Fisher, in a vexed tone, "but I agree with Master Lingard, and I would that Stephen Legate would suffer himself to be ruled by us, and not, for his over-squeamishness, rush headlong into the very grip of the law. Can you not persuade him, Bartholomew?"

"Nay, Master Fisher," answered the young man, looking with reverential affection at his father; "nor would I if I could, for I know my father is right."

"Well spoken, Barty," broke in Harper. "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Fisher seemed about to utter an angry reply, but ere he could do so, Bartholomew spoke again.

"I know you love my father well, good Master Fisher, and all that you and Master Lingard have said you have spoken out of your kind friendship for him; but say now, could you honour him as you do if you believed it possible for him to act contrariwise to what he believes to be true, even were it to save his life?"

Fisher sat for a minute rubbing his forehead ere he replied. "Of course, one would fain have one's friends honest and outspoken, but in this matter of truth, can you tell me what it is, for I can't find out? One man believes one thing, and another something quite different, and each thinks he has the truth; yet they cannot both have it."

A somewhat troubled expression passed over the young man's countenance as he said: "But think you not, Master Fisher, that when a man believes he has the truth, it is the truth for him, and he is bound to abide by it?"

"Ay, surely, if it bring him not to the gaol or the scaffold," answered Fisher drily, with a glance at Harper, who had, however, fallen into a reverie, and heeded him not.

At this juncture the entrance of Kate Alison, who had come to carry Maysie off to bed, interrupted the conversation, and also suggested to Mistress Fisher that it was time for the departure of herself and her spouse.

"Not till we've shaken hands once more over a friendly stoup of wine," said their host, as he refilled the goblets, and bade them drink to the safe journey of their friend and his little daughter on the morrow, and to more happy meetings. The toast was received by all with hearty good-will, and no further allusion made to the subject of their differences. But after their guests had departed, and his father and Simon Lingard had retired to rest, Bartholomew sat down by the dying embers, and pondered the question which had been so unwittingly forced upon him by Fisher, "What is truth?"

Hitherto, he had given comparatively little thought to those things which concern the inmost soul, his mind had been so filled with the interests attaching to the active duties of his daily life ; but now the problems of existence, and the meaning of those familiar words, God, Saviour, Heaven, Hell, were continually coming up before him, and claiming to be answered.

He rose at length, and kindling the lamp, took down from its shelf his mother's Bible, and was soon absorbed in its perusal. How long he had sat thus he knew not, when he was suddenly startled by a strange sound, a low knocking at the door. He listened for a few moments, but the knocking continuing, he got up and drew back the heavy bolts. There in the doorway stood a closely muffled figure. "Give me shelter, for God's sake," said the stranger in an agitated whisper.

"Who are you?" asked the young man, laying his hand firmly upon his shoulder, and drawing him into the kitchen.

"A persecuted servant of Christ," answered the mysterious visitor. "Even now the bloodhounds are on my track, and as a man and a Christian, I implore you to save me from them."

As the lamplight fell on his countenance its intense pallor and fear-stricken expression confirmed the truth of his words ; and Bartholomew hastened to secure the fastenings of the door, and then, as silently as he could, to fetch some wine, for the stranger had sunk down on the settle apparently exhausted. He drank eagerly, and seemed somewhat revived, and the next question to be decided was where he could be bestowed for the night, so that his presence might remain unknown to the rest of the household. Bartholomew sat down again by the fire to think the matter over, while his guest, who had thrown off his heavy cloak, revealing the tonsured head and peculiar dress of a Romish priest, sank upon his knees and began telling his beads in an agitated manner.

From the first the young man had entertained suspicions as to the calling of his unbidden guest, and was anxious no one should share the risk he well knew he ran in assisting in his concealment ; so he resolved at length to lodge the fugitive in a closet leading out of his own room, where he was wont to keep his few books and other treasures peculiar to himself. It was

entered by a sliding panel which closed with a spring, and would form a good hiding-place. Thither, accordingly, he conducted the still trembling man, and having made him as comfortable as he was able, he laid himself down upon his own bed and tried to sleep ; but it was long ere he lapsed into unconsciousness, and when at length his eyes did close, uneasy dreams, in which his mysterious visitor played no unimportant part, disturbed the soundness of his slumbers.

CHAPTER V.

FARLEIGH PLACE, the mansion I have already indicated as the only dwelling of importance in the vicinity of Legate's Farm, stood in its own grounds just on the outskirts of the village. It had formerly been in the occupation of a noble family, the last scion of which, having squandered his character and fortune in a career of vice and dissipation, had ended his life abroad, leaving behind him only his ancestral mansion and a load of debt. For some years the house had remained altogether unoccupied, unless the rumours rife in the village as to certain ghostly tenants could be credited, until a few months before the events recorded in the last chapter, when it had been purchased, and soon after occupied by Richard White, Esq., gentleman; and after the long reign of silence, the patter of little feet sounded again upon the old staircase, and the wainscoted walls echoed back once more the ring of childish voices and the ripple of merry laughter. But on this evening no laughter was heard, and the children's voices sounded but in whispers, as they clustered together at the upper end of the long, low dining-hall, lit only by the fitful blaze of the logs upon the hearth, which cast fantastic shadows around, and seemed to endue with life the portrait of the grim old baron frowning down upon them from the panelled wall.

Without, the wind moaned and raged like an unquiet spirit, driving the storm clouds across the sky with merciless haste, and the children often cast furtive frightened glances around, as it stirred the tapestry hangings, or tapped against the windows with an ivy spray.

"It did walk last night; nurse said so, and I'm sure I heard it too," said Harry, the second boy, breaking a long silence; "it rattled a chain, and seemed to go downstairs where there is no staircase."

His sister Barbara made the sign of the cross, and drew the youngest, little Alice, closer to her; but John, the elder brother, replied,—

"That was no ghost, Harry; it was Father Palmer. You know," he continued, speaking in a low, cautious tone, "that after we had gone to bed last night some men came to take him—and he got away while they were here,—that was what you heard."

"And is he safe?" asked Barbara, anxiously.

"Nay, that I cannot tell," returned her brother; "but the night was so dark I think they would scarcely find him."

The children sat in silence again for some minutes, then Harry asked, "What did father mean about being in danger, and having to go away?"

"I don't quite know; but I heard him saying something to mother about a new law against Roman Catholics, and he thinks he shall get into trouble through having Father Palmer living here."

"But what could they do to him?" asked Barbara, her blue eyes filling with tears.

"Put him in prison, and perhaps in the pillory, and make him pay a great deal of money, and——"

The sound of horses' hoofs in the courtyard, followed almost immediately by a confusion of voices in the outer hall, interrupted the lad, and he ran out to see what was the matter, his brother and sisters quickly following.

The master of the house had just come out of his study, attracted by the same commotion, and found himself at once in the midst of a group of soldiers. He was a tall man of middle age, slightly built, with light brown hair plentifully mingled with grey, a high, narrow forehead, kindly grey eyes, and a mouth and chin in which firmness and indecision strove strangely for mastery. He stood there now, pale but calm, and listened while the officer of the little band of soldiers read aloud the warrant for his apprehension: "Richard White, Esq., gentleman, of Farleigh Place, Rumwell, in the county of Essex," he said, "I arrest you in the name of her most gracious Majesty for having unlawfully concealed in your house a Romish priest known as Father Palmer, and for having further unlawfully aided

and abetted the said Father Palmer in escaping from justice. There is no error, I believe," he continued. "You are the person here named."

"I am, and the only error in the charge is, that I did not assist the reverend father in escaping. I knew nought about his flight until his room was found to be empty."

"Well," returned the other, "that is no business of mine; it will be for you to prove before the court. I must trouble you now to come with us without delay."

At these words, Barbara, who, with the other children, had been standing as if transfixed, darted forward and threw her arms around her father.

"Oh, sir!" she sobbed, looking piteously at the officer, "do not take away our father from us, for indeed he has done nought amiss."

The man turned away his head, muttering something about being her Majesty's servant, and forced to do her commands, while the father, bending over the weeping girl, said: "Barbara, dear child, try to be a woman; I *must* go away, and you and John will have to take care of your mother and the children; do not add to my distress by your tears, but be brave and strong for their sakes; and John," he continued, addressing his eldest son, "you must tell your mother what has happened; she is sleeping now; I will not awaken her to say farewell; let her sleep as long as she can, it is better so. As soon as I am able I will send to her."

The boy's lip quivered, but he answered quietly, "Yes, father;" and Richard White, having once more kissed his terrified children, turned to the men and announced his readiness to accompany them, and was soon being borne away from his home, through the storm and darkness, a prisoner, knowing not what might be the doom awaiting him.

The children remained standing until the last echoes of the horses' hoofs had died away, unmindful of the half-curious, half-pitying glances of the servants who loitered around, uncertain what would happen next. John was the first to recover his composure. Turning to the domestics, and speaking in a quiet, authoritative tone, he said,—

"You can go now; there is nothing you can do. Barbara, you had better take Alice to bed, and see whether mother is still sleeping. And Harry, you can come in here and help me put father's books and papers away."

Barbara lifted her little sister in her arms, and bore her up the great oaken staircase, striving as she went to soothe and calm her; while her brothers entered the study, and John, having collected and securely locked up such of their father's papers as seemed of importance, took possession of the key, and sending Harry to bed, stationed himself at the door of his mother's chamber, to keep watch until she should awake, in which vigil he was presently joined by Barbara.

Cheerlessly within and without morning broke upon the sorrowful household. Mistress White had, indeed, recovered in some measure from the paroxysm of grief into which the news of her husband's arrest had thrown her, and notwithstanding her feeble health, had insisted upon rising at her accustomed hour, and performing her usual morning duties; but she was pale and anxious, and trembled at every sound, longing for, yet dreading the arrival of news; and her two elder children were too well aware of the danger of their father's position not to share in her apprehensions.

The morning meal, usually a gay and cheerful repast, was partaken of almost in silence, and was scarcely ended, when a servant announced that a young man wished to speak with Mistress White.

"I cannot see strangers, Jocelyn," said the poor lady. "Ask him to send up his business by you."

"But, madam," said the man hesitatingly, "I did so, and he says he hath somewhat he must deliver into your own hands. I think he is Stephen Legate's son from the farm."

"I know him not, yet I suppose I must see him. Show him up."

Jocelyn left the room, and returning immediately, ushered in Bartholomew Legate. With a courteous gesture, the young man handed to Mistress White a folded paper, saying: "Pardon me, madam, for intruding upon you at such a time, but I was under a promise to deliver this only into your own hands."

She took the paper, and glanced hastily over its contents.

"And the good father is safe?" she said, as she completed its perusal.

"I trust so, madam; he should be out at sea by now."

"Thank God! and thanks to you, too, for the help you have given."

"I have but done my duty as a man and a Christian, dear lady, it is not worthy of thanks," the young man replied, as he raised to his lips and kissed respectfully the hand she held out to him.

"But how few remember that duty! and you do not belong to our Church?"

"I belong to the Church of God, and count all men as my brethren in Christ," he answered, with a quiet smile.

Mistress White looked wonderingly at him, and was silent for a few moments, then she asked: "Have you any further message for me?"

"Nay, madam; only—if I can serve you in any way at this time, I pray you to command me; I would so gladly do aught in my power to relieve your anxiety, or aid you in any way."

She looked up into the frank, honest, manly face. "Thank you, Master Legate; you are very, very kind, but there is nought I want, save tidings of my dear husband. I know not whither he has been taken, or what will be his fate." And Mistress White's forced composure gave way; she sank down upon a seat, and her tears broke out afresh.

"Comfort yourself, dear madam," said Bartholomew soothingly; "I will obtain tidings of Master White, and bring you word ere to-morrow eve."

"God bless you for your kindness!" she faltered; adding, after a moment's pause, "but I ought not to let you be concerned in this matter; it is not only trouble—it is risk also, and you have a father, too: if aught of harm befel you, it would surely break his heart; you must think of him."

A light kindled in Bartholomew's dark eyes as he answered, with a smile, "Set your mind at ease, dear lady, the risk is small; but were it otherwise, the thought of my dear father would, I trust, but strengthen me to do my duty; he would be rightly ashamed of me else. But I must delay no longer. Farewell, madam; I

trust to be able to bring you tidings to-morrow." And with a courteous bow, Bartholomew Legate took his leave; and was soon after journeying on his way to London, whither, as he rightly conjectured, Master White had been carried on the previous day.

CHAPTER VI.

“NO, Barty, it's not for myself; I'm an old woman, and my life can't last much longer, so it's of little consequence whether it's cut off at once, or whether the last few years are spent in prison or out of it. It's not for myself I care; it's for the master and for thee. My boy! my boy! how could I bear to see thee in the hangman's hands!”

Though grieved at Kate's very real distress, Bartholomew could not repress a smile at the dismal picture her imagination had conjured up; but he said kindly: “I know it, Kate; I know your deep, true, honest love; but believe me, there is no cause for fear; the worst they could do would be to impose a fine or imprisonment; it is not likely further search will be made this day, and the poor lady and her children will be got away from here as soon as it is dark.”

“Well, I wish they were safe out at sea.”

“So do I, Kate; and, please God, they shall be by to-morrow.”

“And she will meet her husband at the ship?”

“I trust so. And, Kate, if Master Churchill should——”

“He had best not show his face here—the hypocrite!”

“Nay, Kate, call him no ill names; but if he comes, keep him from my father; he doth but worry and annoy him; say I shall be home to-morrow or the day after, and if he wants me I will go to him.”

“Trust me for that, Barty; he shall not set foot within these doors, as my name's Kate Alison.”

“Thanks, Kate, I know I can leave that matter safely in thy hands; and now I will go round to Master Harper, and ask him to come and stay with my father to-night.”

“Ay, do, Barty; he'll keep the master from feeling lonesome. And mind,” she continued, “that thou'rt back in time for thy supper; I've got some fine fat pullets roasting, and thee might'st as well have them while they're hot.”

Her last words were, however, uttered in vain, for the object of her solicitude was already some distance from the house. Kate stood for a few minutes watching his retreating form with pride and affection in her eyes; then returned to the kitchen, to superintend the preparation of the meal which was to fortify the travellers for their journey, pausing from time to time in the midst of her housewifely cares to reprimand Anna for her frightened looks whenever any unusual sound reached them from without, though it was noticeable that Mistress Alison herself cast frequent glances at an old matchlock on the wall, with much the same expression as that with which the Hebrew heroine of old must have regarded the tent-peg, which was to prove so formidable a weapon in her hands.

Meanwhile, Mistress White was anxiously awaiting in the upper room, with her children, the moment of their departure. The last few weeks had been fraught with terrible excitement and anxiety, not unattended with danger to herself. There had been first her husband's arrest, his trial, and sentence of banishment; then further suspicion had fallen upon Farleigh Place, as a harbour of refuge for outlawed priests; and lastly, dark rumours had been sent abroad of the complicity of its mistress in certain Popish plots, which, though entirely without foundation, had obliged her to flee with her children from her home, and seek shelter and protection from those whom she had hitherto regarded as heretics and infidels, but was now compelled to acknowledge as true followers of the Master in His life of self-forgetting love. For three days they had lain concealed at the farmhouse, while Bartholomew was making the necessary arrangements for them to quit the country unobserved; and now that the moment of departure was at hand, the fortitude which had hitherto sustained the poor lady seemed on the point of giving way; it was with difficulty she could repress her tears, and nerve herself to the necessary effort.

Stephen Legate was in the room with his guests, assisting the ever-helpful John with the necessary preparations for their journey, speaking words of cheer to Barbara, and striving, in his quiet, kindly way, to divert and soothe the half-frightened younger children.

“It's all ready now,” said John at length; “and its getting dark, too.”

Their host went to the window, and peered anxiously out into the dusk. "Here is Barty," he exclaimed at length, in a tone of relief; and a few moments afterwards his son entered the room.

"Everything is ready, madam," he said, "and Humphrey will be here with the horses in less than an hour."

Mistress White rose from her seat and advanced towards him, saying, in a voice broken with emotion: "Heaven bless and reward you for all your kindness to my children and me—and your good father, too!" she added; "but for you, where should we have been now?"

Bartholomew took her hands kindly in his own, and led her back to her chair, while Stephen Legate replied: "Say no more, dear lady; my son is always glad to be of service to any one, wherever and whenever he can; and as for me, anything I may have been able to do to help you and yours has been a real pleasure—I sorrow only that I could do no more. And now we had better go down to supper, for you will need something to sustain you on your journey. Ay, little ones," he added, turning to Alice and Harry, who were standing shyly by, "be happy in the thought that your dear father will share your next meal with you."

"The holy Virgin grant he may!" replied their mother, crossing herself; "but my heart misgives me at times, Master Legate, when I look at these helpless children, and think of the perils yet to be passed through."

"Dear lady," answered Stephen, "why vex yourself with imagined evils? The Lord's arm is not shortened that He cannot continue to sustain you and yours, as He hath hitherto done."

Mistress White was about to reply, when a somewhat impatient summons from Kate compelled them to go down to supper; though, as far as the elders were concerned, it was a mere formality, their hearts being too full to enable them to do justice to the good things provided.

At length the sound of horses' hoofs was heard, and Bartholomew cautiously opened the door and looked out. All was right, however; and the last farewells having been quickly said, the little cavalcade was formed and ready for the start: Mistress White

and Barbara on one horse, Bartholomew with the two younger children on another, and John and Humphrey on the third.

With a last pressure of his father's hand, and a last cheery farewell to Kate, Bartholomew gave his horse the rein, and led the way through the darkness, the rest of the party following closely.

Ere, however, they had proceeded far, he was startled by feeling a hand laid upon his horse's neck, and hearing a deep voice say, "Lose not a moment, and keep to the bridle-paths till you reach Branwell; you know the way, and the darkness will be in your favour."

"Thanks, Master Harper," replied Bartholomew, "we will take your advice; but do you think," he added, in a lower tone, "that we are pursued?"

"I fear you will be," was the answer; "so delay not a moment; if you reach Harwich before daybreak, you are safe." And with a kindly "Good-night, and God bless you," the little man hurried away.

It was indeed a difficult as well as a somewhat dangerous journey, for the path was hard to find and keep, and the horses stumbled occasionally over loose stones. To add to their discomfort, a chilly rain was falling, and the children soon grew very weary. Bartholomew had wrapped his cloak around little Alice, and she had fallen asleep on his arm; but he had to exert himself to the utmost to cheer Harry and soothe his fears, as well as those of Mistress White and Barbara, to whom every blast of the moaning wind, and every murmur of running water, was magnified into the shouts of pursuing enemies, and the distant tramp of their horses' feet.

Branwell was reached at last; and here they were forced to tarry for some minutes to rest and water their tired steeds. The remainder of the way was now along a comparatively easy road, though much more open to observation; but this was a matter of less importance, as they were unknown in that district, and owing to the darkness, few people were astir, besides which they had by this time put a considerable distance between themselves and Rumwell.

Streaks of dawn were already appearing in the sky when they

entered the little seaport town, and signs of activity were everywhere becoming visible as they rode on through the narrow, irregular street, and up to the little inn door. The landlord, a fat, good-humoured looking man, came out in a leisurely manner to assist them to alight, and readily promised rooms and beds for the lady and her children to lie down and rest ere they started on their longer journey. Bartholomew went in with them, and having seen them provided with refreshments, and comfortably settled for repose, he gave orders that they were on no account to be disturbed, and sallied forth in quest of Master White, whom he had agreed to meet in the nearer neighbourhood of the harbour.

So intent was he on his own thoughts as he walked along, that on turning the corner of the street he ran up against a dark-bearded man in a seaman's dress. With an apology for his heedlessness, he was hurrying on, when the man laid his hand upon his arm, saying,—

“Surely I am not mistaken, it is young Master Legate?”

Bartholomew started back in astonishment, vainly endeavouring to remember when and where he had seen that face before, ere he answered,—

“The same, sir, at your service.”

“My wife and children,” said the stranger in an agitated tone; are they safe?”

“Master White himself! Yes, they are quite safe, and here close by at the Anchor Inn,” answered Bartholomew, warmly clasping the other's extended hand.

“The holy Virgin and the saints be praised! And how can I ever thank you, my good, kind friend? what should I or my poor helpless ones have done without your aid?”

Bartholomew answered only with a pressure of the hand; then he said,

“You will be glad to see them; will you come now, or wait till they meet you on board?”

“I long to look on their dear faces, yet it will be better to wait; we are scarce safe from spies on land, and the *Aurora* will start at noon. I will meet them on board.”

They parted, and Bartholomew, having secured the services of

a boatman to row them to the ship, returned to the inn to cheer Mistress White with news of her husband, and complete the necessary arrangements for the voyage, as he was anxious they should get on board as quickly as possible.

Hope and courage had returned to the hearts of the fugitives; the children were quite gleeful, and looking forward with delight to the sea voyage; even their mother was quietly happy, and Bartholomew, though he could not rid himself entirely of some apprehensions on their behalf, rejoiced in their joy. He only breathed quite freely, however, when the boat had fairly pushed off from shore.

It was a happy meeting, though the children scarcely recognised their father at first through his disguise. Past sorrows, and dangers present, or to come, were alike forgotten in the joy of reunion; and in witnessing their happiness, Bartholomew felt himself more than repaid for all the trouble and anxiety undergone on their account.

He stayed with them till the moment of sailing, and as he dropped into the boat that would convey him ashore, followed by the blessings of those to whom he had indeed proved a true friend in need, he saw that Mistress White had fallen on her knees, and knew that a prayer was being offered up for him, none the less effectual because offered by Papist lips, since it was the sincere utterance of a grateful, loving heart.

On returning to the inn, Bartholomew found Humphrey awaiting him there with the horses. They started at once, and reached home before the darkness had quite closed in. Kate Alison greeted her young master with a grim smile of satisfaction.

“Parson's been, Barty,” she said.

“Well, and what didst answer him, Kate?”

“That thee hadst gone to Harwich to meet a friend.”

“You told him so?” said Bartholomew, with a look of surprise.

“Ay, it was true enough. ‘And so,’ quoth he, ‘hath he gone alone?’ ‘If thee must be asking about what is no business of thine,’ says I, ‘he took Humphrey with him to help guard a treasure he was beating to his friend.’ And then he grunted, and went off as sour as may be.”

Bartholomew laughed. "You have managed cleverly, Kate; I shall never fear to trust you with a secret."

"I am glad to see thee safe back, my boy. Are the poor lady and her children safe?" said his father who had just entered.

"Yes; they had sailed before I left Harwich."

"God be thanked! and Master White was with them?"

"Yes; they met him on the ship."

"You have done a good work, my boy," said Stephen Legate, looking proudly at his son.

"To be sure he has," said Harper, whose grey head just emerged from the doorway; "he lives to do good work, and if he did not, I should disown him."

CHAPTER VII.

FOR some months now the little household at the farm had settled quietly down to its ordinary even tenor of existence; they had received no direct news of the fugitives, but had heard of the safe arrival of the *Aurora*, and therefore hoped for the best; while as to the part they had taken in aiding their escape, if any suspicion attached to them, no further action was taken, and it seemed as if Master Churchill, who had been the chief mover in the Papist hunt, had resolved to ignore the existence of the Legates.

Bartholomew had received an invitation from Simon Lingard to spend some weeks with him in London, but an increasing feebleness in his father's health had made him unwilling to leave his home, and he occupied much of the leisure afforded him by the long winter in reading and study, partly by himself, and partly in company with his old preceptor, Master Harper, who loved nothing better than to read over again with his former pupil some favourite author, and descant at length upon its beauties. One evening, when they had been thus engaged over a new play by an almost unknown author, Master William Shakespeare, Harper said, as he laid the volume down:

"Doth it not seem to you, Barty, that this man's religion, if 'tis religion that inspires him, is somewhat better than Christianity?" Bartholomew and his father looked up in amazement, but Harper continued: "Methinks he places man in a higher station, gives him better motives to work from, makes his ill-doing bring with it to the inner soul of the man himself a punishment greater than that of hell fire, and his well-doing to give him happiness exceeding that of heaven; and so I say," continued the little man with energy, "his religion is better than Christianity!"

"Nay," answered Bartholomew, "but it is Christianity, only not as it is taught in the churches by the priests——"

"And understood by the people," interrupted Harper; "until the soul of religion is dead in our midst, and nothing is left but a shrivelled corpse, which they deck out in gorgeous trappings, juggle into a semblance of life, and set forth before the ignorant as religion, having first sprinkled it well with incense to conceal its evil odour. Pah! it makes me sick to think of it!"

"But that is not the fault of Christianity," replied Bartholomew; "it is the fault only of those who wilfully or ignorantly misinterpret it to the people, or of those who, taking upon themselves the name, act contrary to the spirit of the Master."

"Suppose an it were so, how would you think to mend the matter, and make Christianity to appear in its true colours, so that it may commend itself to the earnest minded?"

"By having it taught in the pulpits of the land, and lived in the lives of the pastors, so that their flocks may see the beauty of holiness, and be led to walk therein."

Harper smiled. "Ah, Barty, I doubt me that will scarce come to pass in my time or in thine, save thou wert to turn pastor, and set the example; 'tis easier far to preach than to practise. Well, I must be going, or Joan will think I am lost."

This was the last of their conversations for the present, for the lengthening days and fine spring weather engaged Bartholomew's attention with the farm-work; but the chord struck on that evening had gone on vibrating, and he often pondered in his own mind the questions then raised.

"How should the people know unless they were taught? and who was to teach them?"

It seemed to him that another prophet such as those of old was needed with his "Thus saith the Lord," to rebuke the wrong and exhort to the right.

"Barty," said Kate one day, "if thee hast time, thee might go and see Job Markham; his good woman came up this morn to say he's been ill at ease since yesterday."

"Job Markham? Nay, that grieves me sore. I missed him, but thought he had stayed at home to tend his own bit of garden, as I bade him do some days since."

"It's a touch of the shaking sickness; I gave Moll some bark for him, and a bit of the capon that was left from yesterday."

"That was right, Kate; and I will take him some wine."

"Ay, do, Barty, though the sight of thyself will do him the most good."

As soon as the midday meal was ended, he set off for the village, and quickly reached Markham's cottage. He tapped lightly at the door, but no answer being returned, he lifted the latch and went in.

The clean, bright little keeping room was empty, and as the sound of a strange voice reached him from the room above, Bartholomew sat down on the snowy settle to wait until the visitor should have taken his leave. As he sat thus, he heard the voice distinctly; it was somewhat harsh, but the words were those of affectionate exhortation.

"Fear not," the stranger was saying, "only believe; for God loves you, Jesus loves you, and though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Delay not, then, to come to Him, O brother and sister! for Jesus is standing, yea, watching at the door, to welcome the contrite sinners home. 'Surely,'" he continued in a gentler tone, "'He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed.' Harken also unto these words, 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' These words are for you, and for me, and for all contrite sinners; but they mean nought to those who sit in high places, and scoff at the things that be of God; they mean nought to those whose hearts are set on this world's goods, which moth and rust shall corrupt. 'Therefore come ye out from among them, O brother and sister! Set not your feet within their temple of Baal, and hearken not unto their lying words, for they cry, Peace! peace! when there is no peace. Flee from them, then, even as Lot fled from Sodom and Gomorrah, lest the judgment of the Lord overtake you also.' Let us pray."

And then the stranger poured forth an impassioned appeal on behalf of the saints of God, and a vigorous denunciation of their enemies, ending with a touching supplication for present help and comfort, and for strength to resist temptation, which brought the tears to Bartholomew's eyes as he sat thus spell-bound. True, the familiarity of his tone in addressing the

Almighty was somewhat repugnant to the young man's feelings, accustomed as he was to the formal ritual of the Church of the land, but his evident earnestness and living faith made ample amends for this, as well as for his fanaticism, which reminded his hearer strongly of the religious enthusiasts he had met with in his sojourn abroad.

As the voice ceased, Bartholomew began to ascend the ladder leading to the room above, and found himself face to face with a man about the middle height, clad in sober grey; his form was attenuated, and his deep-set dark eyes seemed unnaturally large and brilliant. As his eye fell on Bartholomew, he turned towards him with an expression like that of a hunted animal, which changed immediately, however, at sight and sound of the kindly smile and friendly greeting with which the young man met him; and as he returned the greeting, and took the proffered hand, he asked eagerly,—

“Art thou one of the elect?”

“Nay, sir; this is young Master Legate, of the Elm Farm,” put in Moll Markham.

The stranger smiled. “Yet, I trust he is also one of the elect.”

“I scarce know what that may mean,” replied Bartholomew; “but I fain would be one of God's servants.”

“The Lord guide thee in the way of truth,” said the stranger, as he turned to follow Dame Markham who had preceded him down the ladder.

“Amen,” returned Bartholomew earnestly.

“It's very kind in thee to come and see me, Master Barty,” said poor Job, a smile lighting up his worn and wrinkled face, as his young master took his seat by the bedside, and pressed kindly his toil-hardened hand.

“I was sore grieved to hear of thy sickness, and it would have vexed me not to come. Art thou easier yet?”

“Yes, since the morn, thanks to Mistress Alison for the healing potion she sent me, though I feel tired like now; but, please God, I shall be up at the farm again ere the week is out.”

“Nay, Job, thee must not be in too great haste to be at work again; thee must stay at home and rest till thou art hale and strong; my father would be grieved else; he bade me tell thee

so. And now, thou must drink some of this wine, and then try to sleep, for I see thou art weary.”

Job gratefully accepted the proffered draught, and Bartholomew, having settled him comfortably, went down to the dame, of whom he inquired concerning their visitor.

“His name,” she said, “is Ephraim Postlethwaite, and he comes from some place a long way from here, though he mostly goes about the country preaching. We saw him for the first time last Michaelmas. I mind me it was then, because the red-cheeked apples were ripe, and the wind and rain had blown a many down, so I was rubbing them dry to keep for the winter, when there came a knock to the door, and when my good man opened it, there was he a standing outside, all wet and shaking with the cold, and he asked, would we shelter him for an hour or so. Then we bade him come in, and sat him down by the fire, and dried his wet clothes, and the big book that he carried. Then, quoth he, ‘Good people, do your hearts incline to hear the word of God?’ So we thanked him kindly, and he read to us for maybe an hour or more, and then he went away. Next time he came was at Yuletide, when the snow was on the ground, and the men were perforce at their homes, so we called them in with their wives, and then he read again, and prayed, and preached, and all so plain and simple like—quite different from what they do in the church, just fit for us poor folks. Thee think'st no harm of it, Master Barty?” she added, somewhat wistfully.

“Nay, indeed; he seems a truly earnest man; and whether I could approve his doctrines or not, it would ill bescem me to judge him,” answered Bartholomew. “I am truly glad to have seen him, and shall hope to meet him again, and learn more concerning his teaching,” he added; then bidding her a kind “Farewell,” and promising to call again, if possible, on the morrow, to see poor Job, he quitted the cottage, and went on his homeward way, his thoughts busied with the strange preacher, whose doctrine, notwithstanding a certain grotesqueness of expression, had such evident power with the ignorant and suffering,—whose fervent words had so strangely stirred the inner depths of his own soul.

It was a lovely afternoon, mild and balmy, a prophecy of

summer days to come, and over all the land the spring was singing her joyous resurrection-song in the unfolding leaves and springing flowers, and the glad voices of the tuneful birds, and it seemed to Bartholomew as if the deep, strong love of God, of which the preacher had spoken, and which, alas! he had limited to the few, was welling up in its infinite care and tenderness, through all visible nature, and repeating the sweet assurance given by the Master of old, that He who clothes the lilies and feeds the sparrows, will also guard and guide all His human children. And so, with these thoughts in his mind, filling it with an unspeakable peace, he reached his home, and was met by his father at the gate.

"How is poor Job?" asked the latter.

"Better, his good wife says, but he seemeth yet very weak."

"I fear me, Barty, he is no longer able for work, though his will is aye good thereto."

"You are right, father, but what can be done?"

"I wished to speak with you, my son, concerning this and other matters. Come in with me now; this is as good a season therefore as any."

And so saying, Stephen Legate led the way into the house, and up into his own room, where, having seated himself, he desired Bartholomew to take down from a recess in the wall a small chest, and give it to him. The young man obeyed wonderingly, and his father, having unfastened the massive locks, turned to him, saying: "Job Markham, my son, has served me and mine well and long, and now that his strength faileth, I would fain that he be kept from want and care, and the need for labour; therefore I will that the house he lives in shall be his, and his wife's to the end of their days, and that two shillings be paid to them each week out of the income of the farm, with as much wood as they shall need for kindling. You will see that this is done, Barty? I have put it in my will, but it is best it should be arranged quickly, for poor Job's needs brook no delay."

"I will see to it as soon as you desire, father," replied his son.

"To Kate Alison," continued Stephen Legate, "I have left a few pounds, but you must provide for her, and see to her comfort; and if you should leave the farm and go away, see to it

that she wants not a home; for she has loved us well, and been aye good to you and me and her that is gone."

"Ay, indeed hath she! I should be an ingrate could I e'er forget. I promise thee, father, if God spareth me, to care for and protect her all my life."

"I knew you would, Barty, and was but reminding you. What else I have to say concerneth yourself."

"But, dear father, why speak of these things now?"

"Because," answered Stephen Legate, looking steadily and affectionately at his son, "I know not how short the measure of my life may be, and would fain be ready when the call does come. But look not so sad, Barty," he continued in a cheerful tone. "You could not surely grieve, if God sent for me to join your sainted mother a little before He sends for you."

Bartholomew could not reply, but bending down over his father, he kissed his withered cheek. A look of love passed between them, and Stephen Legate turned again to the chest, and drawing thence a parchment roll, said: "Here are the title-deeds of the farm, wherein thou mayest read how the estate was made over to thy grandfather, for the use of him and his heirs for ever. Read them, Barty, and then we will put them back; you will know where to find them; my will is in Friend Harper's keeping. And if, when I am gone, you should want to let the farm (as I think you will), I doubt not Henry Fisher would gladly take it, for it is a better one than his, and he is a safe and honourable man to have dealings with. And now, my boy, cheer up! I meant not to make you sad, but death must come to all, and it will not come the sooner because we are ready for it."

"Nay, dear father, it will not, and it is foolish in me to allow myself to be thus cast down," answered Bartholomew. "I will vex you no longer thereby. Shall I put this chest back in its place?"

"Ay, do, lad, and then we will go for a walk together ere the sun has quite gone down. I would fain see if the flowers be springing yet."

Stephen Legate linked his arm in his son's, and they went forth beneath the glow of the setting sun, passing down the lane for some distance, and then striking into a footpath which led across

fields, to where, in the midst of the peaceful God's Acre, stood the village church, made their way at once to the quiet nook, where, overshadowed by a graceful willow, and covered with golden primroses and sweet-scented violets, lay the grave of Joan Legate, "the deare wife of Stephen Legate of the Elme Farm, Rumwell, who dy^d Oct. xxv. MDLXXXVI.," as the headstone simply expressed it. Father and son stood for some minutes in silence; then the latter stooped down to remove the weeds and faded blossoms. As he rose up, he observed that his father had turned round, and was looking in mute astonishment at a man, who, his back toward them, bareheaded, and with arms outstretched, was gazing at the western sky, whence the sunset hues were fast fading. Evidently unconscious of their presence, he suddenly exclaimed in a loud voice, "Thus perisheth every earthly thing, and nought but the word of the Lord abideth, Yea! the grass withereth and the flower fadeth, but the word of our God abideth for ever!"

As he spoke, Bartholomew recognised the voice as that of the strange preacher, and going up to him, gave him kindly greeting and introduced his father.

"I stayed here but to rest awhile," he replied, in answer to their questions; "it is not the Lord's will that I should tarry long in any place."

"But it is wearing late," said Stephen Legate; "I pray you to stay this night at my house, and continue your journey in the morning."

"I thank you for your kindness, friend, but I must be at Branwell ere the early morn. The Lord hath sent me to warn His people to flee from the wrath to come, and I dare not delay."

And saying thus, he took up the pack, containing his Bible and a few other books, fastened it on his shoulders, and with a "God save ye," went on his solitary way.

As they returned, Bartholomew related to his father how he had met the stranger at Job Markham's, and of what the dame had told concerning him.

"And what is your opinion of him, my son?"

"I am scarce able to tell. He is very earnest, and must have wonderful power to touch the hearts of the people; yet, while he

speaks of the great love of God, he makes it not to touch any but the elect, as he calls them, and that, to my mind, savoureth not of the Master's teaching; but I may not have understood him aright; and he is, at all events, doing a good work, even though he be, as I think, not quite free from error."

They had by this time reached the house, and Stephen Legate, complaining of weariness, went at once to his own room, whither his son quickly followed him.

"Read to me, Barty, if thou wilt," he said, leaning back in his chair.

"From the Bible, father?"

"Ay, from the old book. I mind me, when thou wert a babe, and I used to come in tired from the field, thy mother was wont to read to me out of that very book, and it rested me as nought else could."

Bartholomew read for some time aloud, then, seeing that his father's eyes had closed, and that he had fallen into an attitude of repose, he read on to himself, until so long a time had elapsed that he resolved to awaken the sleeper; he spoke, but receiving no reply, rose and touched his hand—it was so chill that a shudder ran through his own frame. With trembling haste he drew the lamp nearer, and as its light fell on the marble countenance, Bartholomew Legate knew that he had no longer a father on earth, for the call had come, and the husband had gone to join his wife in the happier land of heaven!

CHAPTER VIII.

IN the reign of good Queen Bess of glorious memory, rural sports and pastimes played no unimportant part in the lives of all her faithful subjects, and more especially those of the humbler ones, to whom the accidents of birth and position had denied those intellectual enjoyments permitted to the more favoured of Fortune. And thus it came to pass that not only the red-letter days of the Church, but other festivals handed down from Pagan ancestors, were observed with a zeal worthy sometimes of a better cause. Among these, that dedicated of old to Flora, the goddess of flowers, and now to May, the month of flowers, was deservedly popular. Innocent enough was the dance around the May-pole, whatever that symbol might have signified in ages past; and charming was the mimic court in which the one-day queen held her unchallenged sway; and though, alas! the simple pleasures of the day might be sometimes marred at its close by excess and debauchery, yet on the whole the holiday was productive to the simple folk of far more good than harm.

In the observance of this festival Rumwell was by no means behind its neighbours, and the May-day of 1597 was no exception to the rule. From early dawn the lads and lasses of the village had been merrily astir, ransacking meadow and hedgerow, field and wood, for wild flowers for their garlands, and the rising sun saw every humble cottage turned into a fragrant bower, where hawthorn and lilac, and sweet, wild honeysuckle mingled in luxuriant profusion. Next came the task of decking the May-pole with gaily coloured ribbons and wreaths of flowers, and preparing the throne for her May-day majesty, who stood shyly meanwhile amid the throng of spectators, looking like a daisy, with her sweet young face, crowned with golden hair, and surrounded by the white lace ruff. Next to her, and presenting, with his bent form and wrinkled face, a strange contrast to her youth and beauty,

stood Job Markham, resting on a stick and on the still strong arm of his wife, who, in her neat stuff dress, and with her rosy, good-humoured face surrounded by a clean white coif, was as pleasant a picture as any maiden there. And now resounded a jocund cheer, as lithe young Martin Shorter climbed the May-pole like a squirrel, and fastened the bunch of ribbons at the top, not unconscious meanwhile of the openly expressed admiration of the maidens, and the ill-concealed envy of the men. His triumph was of short duration, however, for disdaining in his pride necessary caution, down he came, and lay ignominiously stretched upon the grass, amid the derisive cheers of his companions. No harm was done, fortunately, but ere he could rise to his feet, Luke Carroll had taken one end of the garland between his teeth, and was making his way rapidly up the tall pole, looking, with his long legs and arms, like a gigantic spider. And so, amid merry laughter and frequent jokes, the work went on to its completion; and the little queen, surrounded by her maids of honour, was led blushing to the throne, whence she would look on at the sports and trials of skill and agility, and afterwards distribute the prizes to the successful competitors.

By aid of stakes and ropes a place had been cleared in front of the throne, into which now stepped a stalwart young fellow, stripped of his jerkin, and prepared to do battle in a wrestling match with any one willing to compete with him, for the smile of the May-day queen and the prize from her fair hand.

"Who wrestles with him?" was the question put by the bystanders; and immediately a cry was raised of—"Humphrey Day; where is Humphrey Day?" succeeded at once by—"Here he is; haste thee, Humphrey!" as our friend Humphrey, from the Elm Farm, appeared, accompanied by the buxom Anna, looking as fresh and bright as the day itself.

"I thought thee'dst never come," said Moll Markham, in a tone of reproach, as the latter took her place by her side; "the sports tarried for Humphrey."

"He would not come without me," replied Anna; "and Mistress Alison would fain have kept me at home, but Master Legate bade her let me go."

"He will not be here?" questioned the good wife.

"Nay, the sickness hath scarce left him yet; but were it otherwise, I doubt me he is too heavy of heart himself to look on at the sports, though he wills that others should be glad—he is ever kind."

At this moment a loud cheer directed their attention to the wrestling, which was just beginning in good earnest, amid the almost breathless anxiety of the friends of both the combatants, who seemed almost equally matched.

At length a louder cheer rang out, mingled with laughter, and Humphrey Day was seen lying stretched on the grass.

"Thou need'st not mind, Anna; if Giles can beat him in sports, he'll ne'er beat him in work or in honesty," said the old dame, as the vanquished hero rose, without having apparently gained much strength from his contact with mother earth, though he was certainly none the worse for it.

Another champion now appearing to take his place, Humphrey retired to Anna's side, and was rewarded for his failure by a kindly smile, and a tender inquiry as to whether he was hurt.

"The sports be'ant as good as they used to be years ago," said old Job, addressing no one in particular. "I mind me when I was a boy how Master Legate, the father of the good old master just gone, threw six o' the strongest men in Rumwell one after the other."

"We've not seen all that Giles can do yet," answered Humphrey, with generous appreciation of the ability of his successful opponent, as he looked down good-humouredly on the little wizened man beside him; "he hath surely thrown one o' the strongest men in Rumwell already, save my head doth deceive me," he continued, rubbing that member with his hand.

"Ay, Job, I mind that well about Hugh Legate," said another old man, who had just tottered towards them from his seat on a bench at the inn door; "Peter Fletcher never walked again for a year after that. There be'ant as sturdy a man in England this day as old Hugh Legate were; Master Stephen were as nought to him, though he could throw his man fairly once on a time." And the old man chuckled merrily over the reminiscences of years gone by.

Another cheer announced a second victory on the part of

Giles; and a third champion having been similarly disposed of, the wrestling came to end, and was succeeded by running, jumping, and sack races, climbing the greasy pole, and other feats of a like nature. Then came the distribution of the prizes to the fortunate winners, who went up one by one, looking sheepishly happy as they received the ribbon, or the crook, or some other simple token, from the hand of the pretty, blushing queen.

At this juncture some unexpected visitors arrived on the scene, and all eyes were turned towards the handsome gentleman on the richly caparisoned horse, and the gaily attired youth by his side, whose white pony bore its young master with such evident pride, as they rode up to the scene of the revels, checking their steeds only when they reached the outskirts of the throng.

They were Sir Rupert Carey, a knight who owned an estate in the neighbourhood, but living chiefly in London, was almost unknown to the villagers, and his son, a lad of fifteen, lately appointed a page in the royal household. Accompanying them, also on horseback, was Master Churchill, his attention ludicrously divided between keeping his seat with due dignity and acting as cicerone to his companions.

"Make way! make way, good people!" he exclaimed, in a fussily important tone, "and let the noble gentlemen look on at the sports."

"The noble gentlemen may look on at the sports, an they will, so they stand not in our way, Parson," answered a sturdy rustic, whose potations had been sufficient in number and strength to render him oblivious both of social distinctions and his own customary deference thereto.

"Dost know to whom thou art talking, fellow! thou art drunk," retorted Churchill.

"Like enough, Parson; I be but following in thy wake," replied the man.

A peal of laughter followed this sally, and Churchill's face grew redder still with passion; he raised his cane, and would have struck the offender had not Sir Rupert interposed. "I leave him alone, Churchill," he said; "it's holiday time, and they must have some liberty; I warrant he'll make amends for his fault before the week is out."

Churchill dropped his hand, and made a vigorous effort to conceal, if not to subdue his anger, for he wished to stand well with the knight; and Sir Rupert continued: "And now, tell me who is yet at the Elm Farm, for I see nought but the common folk here, and if I remember me aright, the Legates had dwelt there for more than a hundred years; and though they carried themselves somewhat high, yet they were liked by the people, and held not aloof from them on holidays."

"Stephen Legate died nigh two months since," replied Churchill, "though his son Bartholomew lives there yet; but I doubt me he is a schismatic, and no loyal subject to his queen nor friend to his country. He hath not put foot within the church this many a day; and he did surely aid Richard White's Papist wife to escape from justice, if not also that son of the scarlet woman known as Father Palmer."

"You know the law can compel him to attend the church, and his household likewise," answered Sir Rupert, ignoring the latter part of the accusation against Bartholomew, perhaps because his own religious convictions tended strongly towards Romanism. "Why do you not see that law put into force?"

Churchill muttered some unintelligible reply, not liking to acknowledge that his own unpopularity among the villagers would at this time have rendered such a proceeding particularly impolitic, since Bartholomew was an almost universal favourite; and he welcomed gladly the interruption to their conversation caused by young Walter Carey, who, with an exclamation of—"See, father, they are going to dance! I must join them," threw his rein to Churchill, and leaping from his pony, was soon doing his utmost to turn the heads of the village lasses, and fill with jealousy the hearts of their rustic suitors, as they became painfully conscious of the contrast between their own rough, clumsy, ill-fitting garments and the elegant get-up of the young courtier, with his silk and satin, his slashed sleeves and dainty hose; between their uncouth Terpsichorean efforts and his graceful, gliding movements; and it was a moment of savage joy to them, though of great regret to the maidens, when, after about an hour, Sir Rupert summoned his son to leave the revellers, and return home with them. With expressions of well feigned sorrow, a

salute to his latest partner, and a low bow to the rest of the dancers, the youthful gallant took his leave, remounted his pony, and was soon cantering along by his father's side, Churchill following a little moodily in the rear.

When they were fairly out of sight, the good humour of the men returned, and the dancing was renewed with vigour, only interrupted by the necessity for the occasional refreshment afforded by draughts of ale, and the demolition of piles of cake, or for giving a few moments of sorely needed rest to the hardly worked fiddler. It was during one of these pauses in the late afternoon, when the elder folk had seated themselves on the benches around the inn door, to gossip over bygone days, and the young ones had paired off to tell to each other, amid the pleasant sunshine and sweet scents of the flowers, the old, old story, that the figure of a man, leaning on a staff and bending beneath a burden on his shoulders, was seen slowly advancing along the high road. As he drew nearer, many eyes were turned upon him, and murmurs of—"The strange preacher," and "Master Postlethwaite," were heard, in various tones of pleasure and disapproval. Yes, there was no doubt about it;—the attenuated form and sallow face, with the bright eyes shining like lanterns beneath the overhanging brow, and the thin, black hair, streaked with grey and reaching to his shoulders, were all his. He looked weary, and passed on with languid steps among the little groups of holiday makers, apparently seeing no one, and giving no heed to the salutations that greeted him, until he reached a felled tree, which had been serving as a seat, and here, loosing his burden from his shoulders, he sank down, resting his head upon his hands. He had sat thus for some minutes, no one caring to speak to him, for all the rustics felt a kind of awe of the "strange preacher," when the fiddler, now well fortified with copious draughts of ale and cider, struck up anew a lively air, which was the immediate signal for the return of the dancers to the green. Hardly, however, had they taken their places, when Ephraim Postlethwaite sprang from his seat, and striding hastily forward, leaped on to the floral throne prepared for the May-queen, exclaiming, in his harsh voice, and with much gesticulation, "The day of the Lord is at hand! the day of His vengeance! when He will break in

pieces the idols, and utterly confound those that serve them ! Wherefore, then, raise ye your altars to Baal, and serve the gods of this world ? Turn ye from them, and serve the living God !” And as he spoke he tore down from the May-pole one of the garlands, and flung it on the ground.

He had so taken his audience by surprise, that up to the present they had only stood and listened, with eyes and mouths wide open ; but now signs of anger became apparent, and some of the young men, rushing forward, would have laid rough hands upon him had it not been for the timely interference of the jolly, good-humoured innkeeper, who, stepping quickly up, and placing his portly form between the preacher and his would-be assailants, said, “Nay, lads, let’s speak him fair first.” And then, turning to the former, and laying one great hand upon his shoulder, he addressed him in a kindly tone : “Come now, Master Postletery, don’t thee meddle with the young folks’ sports ; thee know’st ’tis a holiday ; let them enjoy it, an they will ; but come thou with me, and I’ll gi’e thee a cup o’ sack that’ll put fresh life into thee, and make thee ready to dance thine own self. Come now,” he urged.

But Ephraim Postlethwaite, shaking himself free, turned fiercely upon his would-be friend. “Get thee behind me, Satan !” he cried ; “for thou savourest not of the things that be of God. This is a sinful generation, and as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be with them ;—they shall be eating and drinking, and taking their pleasure, and the judgment of God shall come upon them like a thief in the night !” he continued, in a threatening tone.

This reception of his well meant efforts on behalf of the fanatical preacher was more than Boniface could bear. “The devil go with thee, then, and thy crack pate take care of itself !” he angrily exclaimed, as he made his way back to the shelter of his own dwelling ; “I’ll ne’er meddle for thee again.”

Meantime, Ephraim Postlethwaite had been dragged from the mound, and, amidst hooting and yelling, was being hurried along, whither, no one had determined ; until a whispered suggestion, originating from that bench by the inn door where the vindictive eyes of Master Churchill gleamed with malicious satisfaction over

his cup of wine, was caught up and re-echoed by nearly every voice among the unreasoning throng—furious at the interruption of their amusements ; and, without a moment’s further delay, they seized upon their victim, and dragging him along, flung him into the large horse-pond, and were commencing to pelt him with stones, when suddenly a deep, clear voice exclaimed, in tones that thrilled them all, “Men ! men ! what is it that ye do—would ye have the crime of murder on your souls ! Shame on ye all !”

With one accord they fell back to make room for the man, who, bareheaded, his pale cheeks flushed, his eyes flashing with indignation, and his whole form quivering with excitement, pushed his way among them, and plunging into the water, caught the unfortunate preacher by the hair, as he rose for the second time, and dragged him, unaided, to the bank, where, weak from recent illness, and exhausted by the effort, Bartholomew Legate sank down, powerless to do more.

There was a look of shame and confusion on every face, and many slunk away, as if from before the eyes of the accusing angel ; but a few remained lingering about the spot, where Moll Markham and some of the elder women were endeavouring to restore the half-drowned victim to consciousness. Among these was Humphrey Day, who, taking courage at length, went up to his master, saying in a deprecating tone, “I’d nought to do with it, Master Barty ; I never laid hand on him, nor threw one single stone.”

“But thou didst nought to hinder those whose hands were laid upon him,” returned Bartholomew sternly ; “I had not thought it of thee, Humphrey.”

“Master, Master, forgive me,” cried the poor man. “I did not think till it was too late ; I never thought of what they would do.”

“Ay, thou didst not think, Humphrey, nor did they,” answered Bartholomew, in a tone of sorrowful reproach ; “but would that have availed aught to comfort, had the poor man died ? Nay, it is not mine to forgive ; it is God’s and his. Help me to rise ; I am somewhat stiff, and would fain be going home now.”

Humphrey obeyed, observing meanwhile, with anxiety, the pallor that had succeeded on his young master’s countenance to

the flush of excitement and indignation; while Bartholomew, having glanced at the unfortunate preacher, and seen that though still very exhausted he had partially recovered, desired the two or three men standing by to place him on a hurdle, and bring him at once to the Elm Farm; then, leaning upon Humphrey, he made his way home.

Kate Alison was waiting for them at the gate; she had heard from Anna, who had already been in some time, an account of what had occurred, and had been watching with the greatest anxiety for Bartholomew's return. As they came up, she took his hand and led him into the kitchen. "There, don't thee speak," she said; "thou'rt shaking like a leaf, thou must off with thy wet clothes and to bed as quickly as possible, and I'll bring thee a warm drink, or we'll be having thee sick again. Nay, thee must not stay a moment."

"But, Kate," he pleaded, sinking down on the settle, "that poor preacher, they have much mishandled him, and I have told them to bring him here."

"I'll not lay a finger to help him till thou'rt in bed, Barty," she responded in a very decided tone; "so the sooner thou'rt gone, the better for him."

As there was nothing left for Bartholomew but to obey, he did so, and the more readily that, as he began to ascend the stairs, he saw the form of his old schoolmaster entering at the door, and knew that in him able and willing assistance would be at hand or the poor sufferer, when he should be brought in; for, in addition to several other branches of knowledge, Master Harper possessed not a little skill in the healing art. Ere he fell asleep, his old friend came in to tell him that he had carefully examined the unfortunate man, and found that, although he was terribly cut and bruised, no bones were broken; but as there were signs of fever, it would probably be some days before he was fit to be removed; he had bled him, however, and hoped he would sleep. "And now, dear lad," continued Harper, "you must try to rest, and trouble yourself no more about him. Let it be enough for you, that, by the blessing of God, you have prevented murder this day. May He keep you now and ever!" Then he added, "I shall not be going home this night, Barty; if you want me I shall

be in the next room, and shall hear if you call." And with an affectionate pressure of the young man's hand, he stole softly away, and Bartholomew soon fell asleep.

Two or three days of careful nursing sufficed to place the young master of Elm Farm once again fairly on the high road to convalescence; but it was as many weeks ere Ephraim Postlethwaite was able to leave his bed; his restless, irritable disposition, which rendered him impatient of confinement, constantly aggravating the fever and retarding his recovery. He was angry with himself for his slow progress, and angry with his nurses for not pronouncing him sufficiently recovered to set out again upon his wanderings.

"It's not my own; it's the Lord's work I have to do!" he exclaimed impatiently one day when Master Harper, having felt the rapid boundings of his pulse, had commanded him to lie quietly in bed instead of getting up, as he had strongly desired to do.

"The Lord's work will not stand still because you are not doing it," returned Harper drily; "and it may be you are lying here now to learn a bit of patience, and some other things that will be useful to you by-and-by, and help you to do the Lord's work better. You may, perchance, have to go to school again, and sit among the least."

His patient looked up with a half-puzzled expression, but made no response; he never could quite understand the little man, and was, indeed, half afraid of him, or would on more than one occasion have inquired the meaning of his quaint remarks.

A few days after this the invalid was able, assisted by Barty, to get downstairs and out into the rose-covered porch, where he sat for some time enjoying the sweet country sights and sounds. From a distant field, where early hay-making had commenced, was borne upon the breeze the sound of happy voices and merry laughter, and, spite of the gloomy doctrines he held, Ephraim was compelled to feel that the world was not, after all, so dismal an abode as he was in the habit of describing it. And then his young host, whose kind voice and pleasant face greeted him from time to time as he sat there, what of him? He was certainly not a Christian, according to the type he had imagined and approved;

he seemed quite unconcerned about his own salvation, talked little of the devil, and less of hell. And yet there was about him that which seemed to bring out the good in others, and make them ashamed of vice and meanness; the little children clung to him, the young people went to him for counsel and sympathy, and the old for comfort. Wherein lay the secret of all this? "It was a sad pity he was not a Christian." This was the conclusion of Master Postlethwaite's reasoning on the matter, though he was painfully conscious of a want of continuity in the chain leading thereto.

A few days later he took leave of the little household, where for five long weeks he had been so kindly nursed and tended, and set out once more on his weary wanderings. He bade farewell to all with regret when the moment of parting came; but his voice trembled, and the tears stood in his eyes, as he took Bartholomew's hand, and said: "Thou wouldst have laid down thy life for me. The Lord reward thee for it; I cannot. May He lead thee into the way of His truth!"

"And may He protect thee, wherever thou goest, and bless thy work," answered his young host.

And so he went his way.

"He promises to come again soon," said Kate; "but 'twill be better for him and us too that he should stay away, save he can keep his tongue quiet."

"But," replied her young master, "he feels called to the work by the Holy Spirit of God; what is he then to do? He may not neglect that call."

To this Mistress Alison made no reply, and Bartholomew, with a very serious, thoughtful expression on his countenance, went out into the hayfield.

CHAPTER IX.

"THAT wench is never in the way now; it's here with Humphrey, and there with Humphrey from morn till night; it tries my patience sore; here's this yarn not spun yet, and the cakes all burnt yesterday. In my young days maids were not wont so to make sport of their time; they stay'd i' the house, and made the butter, and mended their kirtles, and let the men be."

Bartholomew looked up from his account books with merrily twinkling eyes.

"That was very praiseworthy of them, Kate; but methought Anna was here not an hour since; and it was my fault yesterday, not hers, that the cakes did suffer. I called her to bind up Rover's paw the while I held him, for he was frightened, and would not be still."

"Oh, the cakes mattered not; but the wench's head is for aye running on Humphrey, and she can think of nought besides; I see no good that's to come of it." And Mistress Alison set her wheel so vigorously in motion that the thread was broken at once. As she looked up with a gesture of vexation, she saw Bartholomew looking at her with an amused smile, and her ill-humour straightway began to vanish, and she said, half apologetically, "What vexeth me, Barty, is that the maid hath lived here this twelve year, and understands the ways of the place as well as I do myself, and it'll be ill work having a stranger in."

"There's time enough to think of that, Kate; so take not trouble by the forelock. Anna will not leave us till Humphrey has a home to take her to, and that will scarce be for months to come."

And Bartholomew returned to his account books for a while longer; then closing them with a sigh of relief, he went up to his old nurse and said:

"Dost remember this is St. John's Eve, Kate; all the lads and

lasses will be out, so leave your wheel, and come out with *your* lad to see the bonfires."

Mistress Alison, though secretly well pleased with the suggestion, alleged sundry excuses for remaining at home; but these having been without much difficulty overcome, she set off by her young master's side in excellent spirits.

As Bartholomew had surmised, all the village was out on this sweet summer evening, and youths and maidens were looking through their garlands at the blazing bonfires, or secretly trying the spells which should reveal to them their future, while a few of the more courageous, old and young, were wending their way to the churchyard, there to spend a good part of the night in expectation of seeing the forms of those who should die during the year, for superstition was rife in Runwell. And somehow Bartholomew was saddened by it as he had never been before; the thought that men and women, made in the image of God, should yet have a greater faith in the power of evil than in the power of good, and strive, vainly though it must be, to lift the veil of the future, rather than look with earnest eyes into the present, and seek their duty there, resting only for guidance upon the Divine love and power, filled him with a sorrow which increased as he reflected that this superstition was fostered rather than corrected by the Church, whose province it surely was to instruct the ignorant and lead the erring into ways of righteousness.

"Art tired, Barty?" asked Kate, looking into his face with some anxiety.

"Only tired of spirit," he replied; "shall we go home now?"

"If thou wilt, Barty; I am ready."

Homewards, accordingly, they turned their steps; but ere they had gone far, their attention was arrested by a little crowd, chiefly composed of the village youngsters, gathered around a poor old woman bent nearly double, who, shrieking and gesticulating, was endeavouring to free herself from the grasp of two of their number, who were holding her firmly, while a third proceeded to thrust a pin into the bare arm of the poor helpless creature. Without speaking a word, Bartholomew dashed in among them, and seizing the youthful would-be executioner, flung him aside, and then commanded the other two to loose their hold of the poor creature, and let her go.

"She be a witch, Master Legate; she witched our baby, and it's had fits ever since!" exclaimed one.

"She witched our cow," cried another, "and it died. And hark to her now!"

And, indeed, the poor thing in her impotent rage was uttering curses and imprecations terrible to hear, shaking her stick meanwhile at her accusers, while the tears coursed down her withered cheeks.

"Hush, mother; hush thee!" said Bartholomew; and then, turning to her tormentors, he sternly bade them desist. "How can ye, for shame, thus cruelly misuse a poor old woman, who could not, if she would, do ye aught of harm? Is it not enough that she is afflicted of God, but that ye must call her ill names, and put her to torture?"

"Thee hadst best mind thyself, though, Barty, or she may cast the evil eye upon thee," anxiously whispered Kate, who, though less superstitious than most of her neighbours, was unable entirely to shake off her old belief in witchcraft. But even she quailed before Bartholomew's half reproachful, half contemptuous glance, as without seeming to hear her he bade her go home, promising to follow shortly. Then, without another word to those around, he gently took the poor, trembling old creature by the arm and led her away, not withdrawing his protection until she was safe within the shelter of her own mean hut, where he left her, followed by her heartfelt blessings, and sought for a short time the restful quiet of the wood in order to regain his composure of mind.

It was late when he arrived home, but Kate was sitting up busy with her needle, while the table was spread with the remains of a pasty and some cider for his refreshment.

"That is kind of you, Kate; when a man comes home at this hour he should be sent to bed hungry. Have you had your own supper?"

"Long since, Barty, with Anna and Humphrey."

"Then wait not for me," said her young master, as he made a vigorous onslaught on the pasty; "you must be tired and needing rest."

"Nay, I am not tired; and I want to finish this ere I go."

Mistress Alison stitched away industriously and in silence for some time ; at length, looking up and observing that Bartholomew had pushed away his platter, and was only engaged in caressing Bess, his favourite hound, she addressed him in a very grave and serious tone :

"Barty, dost thou not fear to be tempting Providence?"

He looked up with a puzzled smile. "I tempt Providence! what do you mean?"

"Thee must know what I mean ; for every one in Rumwell doth take Goody Stiles for a witch ; she hath been heard holding converse with some one when no human being hath entered her dwelling ; many a night a black cat hath appeared on her roof, and I did myself see her amid the tombstones in the churchyard one night when I was belated——"

"And Goody Stiles was belated also," interrupted Bartholomew.

"Nay, but I tell thee she was among the graves, and doubtless engaged in unholy work ; and thou knowest thyself how she did use threats to the lads this day, and did call upon the name of her master, Satan ; and yet thou didst allow her to look upon thee, and didst go with her to her home, even at the time that she was pouring forth her wickedness. And I say to thee, Barty, thou art tempting Providence."

"Why, Kate, I have ever known thee as a sensible woman, and cannot believe that by reason Goody Stiles hath been heard talking to herself, and that her cat, like many another, doth oft-times disport itself upon the roof ; and that she, like thyself, being belated, did stop to rest in the churchyard, thou canst think that a poor, helpless creature such as she can have power to do aught of ill to the meanest living creature."

"Not of herself, but of her master, the devil, hath she the power, nor doth she deny it."

"I grant thee, Kate, that because of the opinion of her neighbours, the poor soul doth at times conceive herself that which they take her to be ; but nevertheless I hold it to be impossible, save we imagine the power of witchcraft to be of God, or that the devil hath the stronger sway in this world of ours, and that I would not willingly believe."

"I know nought about that, Barty ; but thy Bible tells thee of

witches, and it saith also, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live!'"

And with this parting shot Mistress Alison put away her work and proceeded to clear the table ; then bidding her young master 'good-night,' went up to bed.

Bartholomew remained for some time longer pondering the question thus raised by Kate. Hitherto, the Bible had been for him an unquestioned authority, from the time when he had first begun to spell out its teachings at his mother's knee, and his confidence in that authority had suddenly received a rude shock. He must of course have read the words quoted by his old nurse again and again ; but as they had touched no chord in his inmost soul, he had never reflected on their meaning ; indeed, the whole of the book in which they were contained had had comparatively little interest for him. Now, however, he took the Bible down from its place and read the passage with its context very carefully. There could be no doubt about its meaning ; there stood the words in their cruel, calm simplicity : "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Could this be so? Was it possible that a God of infinite goodness, having created a man or woman in His own image, could so give them into the power of the evil one that they should be compelled to work out his iniquitous behests, and then, for this terrible calamity which had befallen them, command them to be put to death by their fellow-men. It was monstrous! No, whatever the Bible might say, he could not believe it ; he could not believe in a God of infinite power who was not also a God of infinite love and infinite pity. And yet, if he allowed even one verse to go, what of the rest? How was he to assure himself that anything would be left on which to rely for counsel and guidance, not only for this life, but for the life to come? The foundations were shaking : could it be that he had built upon the sand, and not upon the solid rock?

Bartholomew Legate closed the book, and sinking upon his knees sought for light from the great Sun of Righteousness. He rose at length somewhat comforted, though the clouds of doubt still overshadowed his soul, and ascended to his room to obtain an hour or two of needed repose ere the rising sun should summon him to labour.

The manifold occupations of the day, with their attendant cares and anxieties, prevented Bartholomew from dwelling upon the difficulties that had so beset and troubled him; indeed, they scarcely recurred to his mind until the evening, when he resolved to go and talk them over with his good old friend, Master Harper. So calling Bess to accompany him, and bidding Kate not to sit up should he be late, he took his way in the pleasant sunshine, tempered by a gentle breeze, across the fields amid the sweet scent of the new mown hay, and the blithe music of the birds. On reaching the house, a quaint little wooden dwelling, nearly hidden by climbing plants, he learned from the old house-keeper, to his great disappointment, that Master Harper had been suddenly called away that morning by the dangerous illness of his only sister, and was not expected to return for some days.

"He was grieved to go without seeing thee, Master Legate, he bade me say, but the message was very urgent, and he had not a moment to spare; he hopes to be home again by Wednesday or Thursday," said the good woman. "Wilt thou not come in and rest?" she added.

"I thank you kindly, Mistress Joan, but it is a rare evening for a walk, and I am not weary. I pray you tell Master Harper, that if I see him not before, I will come again to-morrow se'nnight."

And bidding her farewell, Bartholomew and his dumb companion set off to make their way home by a circuit leading by a piece of waste ground known as Hooper's End, and a long, winding lane back to Rumwell. It was a very lonely walk; they had not met a soul since leaving Master Harper's House; but as they skirted the edge of the common, something was seen moving among the bracken. Bess ran a little way, barked, and returned to her master, evidently satisfied, and the latter soon recognised in the moving object the bent form of Goody Stiles, hobbling along on her stick, and holding a bunch of simples in her hand.

Startled by Bess, she was glancing around her suspiciously, but on seeing who it was with the dog, she looked relieved, and bade him "Good even," in a cheerful tone.

"Good even, mother," Bartholomew replied; "you have wandered a long way from home."

"Ay, it is a weary walk for a poor cripple like me, young Master Legate; but I find this herb nowhere else, and it must be gathered as the sun goes down; it's good for curing the fever, and when the folks are down with *that*, they are aye ready to send for the old witch wife," she added with considerable bitterness.

"Have you no one belonging to you, mother?" asked Bartholomew, as he walked along by the old woman's side, endeavouring by his strong arm to aid her feeble steps.

"Nay, they are all gone, dead and gone; good man and children: two went with the fever that left me as you see me now; and my youngest, my Reuben, was hanged on the gallows for stealing a piece of bread to keep his mother from starving!—hanged on the gallows, and no one to speak a word for him!" The poor old creature paused, her voice choked with the tears she strove in vain to repress. After a few moments, however, she continued: "Then all turned agen me, and I thought God had turned agen me too; and they called me a witch, and did speak much evil of me, and would no longer suffer me to stay i' the house where my good man and I had dwelt together, and where our babes were born. Then came I hither, but even here did every finger point at me, and every tongue whisper, 'witch'; till my old heart hardened at last, and I was glad when I saw the folk shrink with fear from old Goody Stiles, for then methought they would let me alone; and so they do mostly; but when they fain would meddle, I frighten them again." And she laughed a hideous laugh; but looking up, and seeing the young man's eyes shining down upon her pityingly through their tears, she went on in a softened tone: "Thou art the only one that hath spoken a kind word, or done a good deed for me this six-and-twenty year; and if the blessing of a sinful old woman can do thee good, thou hast it, for thou makest me to know there is yet a God in heaven."

"Ne'er doubt that, good mother, or that He loves and cares for thee," he answered; "but forgive me that I sought not earlier to learn of thy needs that I might have relieved them. Can I do aught for thee now?"

"Nay; my wants are few, and there is nought I crave save to hearken sometimes to thy pleasant voice, and see thee smile upon me, if thou fearest not to come once in a while within the old witch wife's door."

"Why, what cause have I for fear? I will gladly come when I can spare an hour, if it will please thee; but do not, I pray, call thyself by that name; it means nought but a lie to thee and me."

"If it vexeth thee," she said, "I will do so no more, but all the folks call me so; and I oft think they must be right, and that an evil spirit hath truly made its abode within this mis-shapen body, for when they mock at me with their cruel words, I cannot hold my peace; and were I able, I would strike them dead! Surely God hath forgotten me!"

Bartholomew scarce knew how to answer her, for he felt how forlorn and pitiable was the condition of the poor old creature, thus, because of her affliction rendered an outcast among her kind. He tried, however, to soothe and comfort her with kind and gentle words.

"Nay, but God cannot forget thee," he said, "any more than thou couldst forget one of the children thou didst love so well. He is tender and compassionate, and ever ready to forgive, even when we sin against Him, because He seeth farther than we can see, and knoweth all things far better than we can know. See, mother," he continued, "how blithesome and careless are yonder birds; and dost thou not remember how our Lord said, 'Not one of them can fall to the ground without your Father; fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows?'"

"Yea," she said; "and I do believe it now, for thou hast been good to me."

He parted from her with the promise that he would see her again within a few days, and went home, wondering that amid his own doubts and fears he should have dared to speak with such assurance.

The following day was Sunday, and according to custom the young master of Elm Farm assembled his little household in the early morning, read to them from the Bible, and offered up a simple, earnest thanksgiving, and a petition for light and guidance.

After breakfast came an hour's quiet meditation in his own room, and then an unwonted walk across the dewy fields to the church, induced by a vague hope that something in service or sermon might tend to lift and dispel the clouds that dimmed his spiritual horizon. But alas! in vain. The service was rendered in a manner that seemed to him both irreverent and heartless; while the sermon, a commonplace homily on the duty of the poor to the rich; and of both to the sovereign and the state, was delivered in a tone and manner that attested neither the sincerity or earnestness of the preacher.

Bartholomew left the church with the saddening thought that he was but one of many, who, hungering for the Bread of Life, had been set down to a meal of stones. It was a relief to get out again into the open air, and as he had no desire to find himself among the gambollers on the village green, he struck off across the fields in an opposite direction. He walked leisurely along, so as to enjoy to the full the brilliant summer day, and could not but remark the number of people who came up with, and passed him in the way; for it was ordinarily a path little frequented.

As he gained a slight eminence, he could see others coming from various directions, but all tending towards the same point, which appeared to be a wood, then about half a mile distant. His curiosity was aroused, and prompted him to wend his way thither also, and when within a few yards, the music of a psalm sung by many voices broke upon his ear. Following the sound, he reached a glade in the interior of the wood, and there found an assembly of people of all ages, and mostly of the poorer class, seated or standing on the grass; and in their midst a tall, thin man, whom Bartholomew at once recognised as Ephraim Postlethwaite. The psalm had just ceased, and he, with closed eyes, and hands outstretched towards heaven, began to pour forth an earnest supplication for the Church of Christ, the chosen few who were striving to worship God in sincerity and truth; he prayed for the down-trodden and persecuted among the saints, that they might be lifted up and comforted; for the waverers, that they might be strengthened; and Bartholomew's heart answered with a fervent "Amen." But as he went on to denounce the unbelievers, and to call down God's vengeance on the enemies of the

saints, the young man felt a thrill of horror, that not even the truly touching appeal for the Divine blessing on their efforts that day, with which the prayer concluded, was able to dispel. Another psalm having been sung, the preacher began his sermon, taking for his text the passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Drawing first a vivid picture of the hopelessly lost condition of all mankind, owing to their exceeding sinfulness, which had brought upon them the penalty of never ending torment in hell-fire, a penalty necessary for the satisfaction of the Divine justice, and therefore one which all efforts of their own must be powerless to avert, the preacher went on to dwell upon the deep, strong love of God, who, moved to pity by the sight of His suffering children, destined to so terrible a doom, resolved to save a few; and as nothing but an infinite sacrifice could atone for an infinite guilt, Himself came down from heaven as God the Son, took upon Him the sins of the world, and died upon the cross, His holy heart breaking beneath the load thus laid upon Him, that those whom God the Father had fore-ordained, believing on Him, might live and not die.

"Yea, He died for you, O my brothers and sisters, for you and for me! The great God of men and of angels did come down upon the earth, and die a shameful death that you and I might live! Then, turn ye not away from this salvation, but take it from the Lord's hand. Delay not! Now is the accepted time; for the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night; and woe unto those whose loins are not girded, nor lamps burning when He doth appear the second time without sin unto salvation! Woe unto them!"

Then turning round with an impassioned gesture, he suddenly exclaimed, "Ask ye what must ye do to be saved? Repent and believe the gospel, this glorious gospel of salvation! Harken to the voice of the Lord, O my brothers and sisters; for He calleth unto you now, even now, this day, this hour! Come ye then, and be baptized into His holy name; and let it be for a sign unto you, that even as the water hath cleansed and purified your bodies, so hath the blood of Christ cleansed and purified your

souls, and made you to cease from dead work, and to serve the living God!"

Bartholomew had listened up to the present with mingled emotions; the fervid earnestness of the preacher, as he depicted the infinite pitying love of God, had stirred the inmost depths of his affections, while, as he proceeded, his whole soul had revolted at the idea so boldly and nakedly expressed, of the Creator of the universe, the all Holy and Eternal, coming down to earth, and being put to death by the hands of finite and sinful men. God dying on the cross! it was too awful; nay, was it not blasphemous?

But as he looked around, it was evident this thought of his had not been shared by the rest of the hearers, probably because they were more accustomed to feel than to think. Tears stood in the eyes of many, and all were listening with a grave and serious attention.

As the preacher uttered those last words, he beckoned with his hand, and led the way, followed by the little congregation, including Bartholomew, down a narrow path between the trees to where, at the edge of the wood, the river flowed placidly along; and there, standing upon the bank, he offered up a prayer for those who should that day, by the act of baptism, openly attest before men their repentance for past sins, and acceptance of the salvation offered to them as members of the Church of Christ.

Then, wading into the stream until the water reached his waist, he received, one by one, some ten or twelve men and women, and plunging them beneath the tide, hailed them again as they rose, as brethren in Christ, giving them, as a token, the kiss of peace.

Just as the last of the immersions was taking place, Bartholomew became suddenly aware of something like a panic in the little assembly, and, turning round, caught sight of a bullet-headed man in a buff jerkin, holding a paper in his hand, and followed by two other strong fellows armed with bludgeons. Ere he could speak a word, the first of these, laying his hand on the preacher's shoulder as he came up out of the water, said: "Ephraim Postlethwaite, I arrest thee in the name of her Majesty the Queen!"

"Where is your warrant, and what accusation do you bring against this good man?" demanded Bartholomew sternly.

"Here is my warrant, Master Legate," replied the constable; "and the accusation sets forth that this same Ephraim Postlethwaite is a disorderly person, who, by his seditious teaching and preaching, inciteth her Majesty's subjects to riotousness and rebellion, so, if thou carest for thy skin, thou hadst best not meddle in the matter."

And, indeed, as Bartholomew well knew, the constable was only doing his duty, and interference would be worse than useless; so slipping a gratuity into the man's hand, and praying him to use no unnecessary severity, he bade farewell to the poor preacher, promised to see him at the gaol, and, if possible, to intercede with the magistrate on his behalf; then set off on his return home with a very heavy heart, for even the air seemed loaded with spiritual oppression. If he were to give voice to one tithe of the doubts and difficulties now besetting his soul, would he not be made to share the gaol with Ephraim Postlethwaite? How could he be faithful to his mother's dying behest, when the search for truth was rendered impossible by the laws under which he lived? The time had surely come when he must choose between liberty of conscience and his native land; between freedom to worship God according to the dictates of his own heart, and the home of his childhood, the grave of his parents,—nay, his many duties, and possibilities of usefulness to his poorer neighbours. And still pondering the matter, he reached his home.

CHAPTER X.

ABOUT four miles westward from Rumwell, on slightly rising ground, and surrounded by a magnificently wooded park, stood Thurston Hall, the residence of Hugh Thurston, Esquire, Gentleman, and one of the magistrates of the county. It was a fine mansion, built by its present owner on the site of an old castle, which, with its adjoining lands, had been, in the rough and ready manner then in vogue, snatched from the noble family by whom they had been held for centuries, and for some real or supposed service to the crown, handed over to the grandfather of Hugh Thurston, the gentleman who, on that pleasant June morning, was seated with such a discontented expression in his own handsome hall. He was a portly man, rather past the prime of life, with a countenance indicating the love of good cheer, and was clad in a handsome crimson satin doublet and trunk hose, with a broad ruff encircling his rubicund cheeks; a long rapier hung by his side from a belt studded with jewels, and enormous buckles adorned his shoes. Prosperity shone in himself and his surroundings; yet it was evident it had not brought contentment to the master of Thurston Hall. But then, he had had things to vex him that morning. The breakfast was ill-served, and his favourite horse had fallen lame; added to which, a boy had been brought before him, charged with stealing turnips out of one of his own fields; and when he sentenced him to be kept in gaol for a year therefore, the young rascal's mother had sobbed and cried, and reviled the justice himself in such manner that he had perforce to send her to prison also. So there he sat in his carved chair on the raised dais, inwardly fretting and fuming, as from time to time he consulted a curiously wrought watch, replacing it in his pouch with a gesture of impatience at the slow movement of the hand upon the dial, which indicated the length of time that must elapse before the arrival of the dinner hour, that

should console him for all the troubles and annoyances he had undergone.

As he sat thus, a servant entered, and with a deferential obeisance, informed his master that a young man desired to see him.

"Who is it, Richard? and what's his business?" asked the justice peevishly.

"His name is Legate, your worship; he's from Rumwell; and he says his business is with your worship alone."

"Then tell him he must come again to-morrow; dinner will be on the board in half an hour, and I've no time to see him now."

The man left the apartment, but returned again immediately, saying: "He declareth he must see your worship, and at once, and that his business need not take much time."

"I marvel what he can want—no good, I fear me. There, show him up, Richard; and see you go not far away—I may need you," said the worthy magistrate, in a tone betraying anxiety, if not apprehension.

There was nothing, however, in the countenance or bearing of Bartholomew Legate, as he entered the hall, to excite alarm even in the most timid breast; and Justice Thurston felt his subside as he gazed on the well-knit, manly figure, clad in sober grey, and the grave, handsome face, with the kind dark eyes.

"I crave your worship's pardon for thus intruding upon you at an unseasonable hour," said the young man, with a courteous gesture; "but I would fain learn somewhat concerning one Ephraim Postlethwaite, who was arrested on Sunday last on a warrant under thy hand."

"What! the mad preacher, Ephraim Postlethwaite!" exclaimed the justice. "Why should you seek to know further of him? he is in gaol; and well were it for the country if all such rogues and vagabonds were in as safe keeping. He hath been spreading his pestilential opinions up and down the country for these six months past; and besides enticing the ignorant folk to break the law by staying away from the church, he hath been setting up the poor against the rich, and causing much mischief thereby. Do you know him, young man?" continued the justice, glancing suspiciously under his eyebrows at his visitor. "Is he a friend of yours?"

"Nay, I can scarce call him a friend," answered Bartholomew; then he added firmly: "but I know him as a good man, and one who strives to be faithful in his duty towards God and his fellow-men; nor can I think he doth ever, out of knowledge and wilfulness, teach aught that is contrary to the welfare of her Majesty and the peace of the realm. Yet came I not," he continued, observing that the worthy justice showed signs of impatience, "to speak of these things; but to pray your worship, if it lieth within your power, to show clemency on his behalf; and also I would inquire at what time the good man will be tried, that I may procure an advocate to plead for him."

"Master Legate," returned the justice, in a pompous tone, "you are a young man, and have had small experience: if you would be guided by me, you will have nought to do with this sedition-monger, but will keep out of his way, and of all such as he, and not suffer yourself to be misled by them. Let me tell you that a good man is not one who acts according to his own foolish and ignorant opinions, but one who obeys the laws of the land in all things, both spiritual and temporal, and is by virtue thereof a loyal subject to the queen, and a strength to the state, and may pass his life peaceably and without fear."

Bartholomew could scarce forbear a smile at this definition of a good man, but he answered respectfully and with dignity, "I know that this man doth act according to his conscience, and, therefore, I esteem him; he hath also eaten of my bread, and slept beneath my roof, and I could not forsake him in his adversity; I pray you, therefore, of your courtesy, to tell me when he will be tried."

The worthy magistrate seemed somewhat chagrined at this decided though courteous rejection of his well meant advice, and he replied curtly that he could not tell. The assizes would begin the following week, but whether the case of Ephraim Postlethwaite would come on at that sitting, or be left for the Lent assizes, would depend on the number to be tried; he thought it most probable it would be left for Lent.

Bartholomew was dismayed at the prospect of the poor preacher, with his already weak and exhausted frame, having to pass seven or eight months in the deadly atmosphere of the prison, and

prayed the worthy magistrate in that case to let him out on bail, offering to stand surety for him, and to obtain additional security should it be required.

But this Justice Thurston was slow to promise. Dissent was to him among the deadly sins; and he regarded the preacher as a more dangerous personage than a highwayman. It was, therefore, only after much persuasion that he could be induced to promise to take the matter into his consideration, and give Bartholomew an answer when he should see him at the assize town.

"But I warn thee, young man," he said, "that you are placing yourself in peril by your overmuch care for this brawling vagabond; it cannot be but that you thereby will draw suspicion upon yourself; and that were a pity, for you are a likely man, and might do better service to your queen and country than by spending your time in gaol."

Bartholomew thanked him for his caution, and took his leave, not altogether dissatisfied with the result of his interview.

His next step was to pay a visit to Ephraim Postlethwaite in the gaol where he was confined. He found the poor man still undaunted in spirit, although already suffering severely in his physical frame from the effects of privation, as well as from the filth and stench induced by overcrowding. As far as his strength permitted, he was spending his time in preaching to, and exhorting his fellow-prisoners, no whit disheartened or discouraged by the ridicule and scoffing of some, and the despairing indifference of others.

"Our Lord descended into hell," he said to Bartholomew, "to carry the blessed gospel of salvation to the lost souls there; and shall I, who am one of the meanest of His servants, hold back when He calls me to labour in this hell upon earth? Nay, rather will I answer, 'Yea, Lord, I come with joy to do Thy will!'"

Then, thanking his friend for his kind efforts to serve him, he prayed him to promise not to risk anything on his behalf, as no amount of punishment, not even death itself, should induce him to cease from preaching Christ and Him crucified! And, indeed, like Paul of old, he seemed to glory in his sufferings, and to count them as nothing, endured for his Master's sake; and Bartholomew

took leave of him, filled with admiration for the heroic spirit that had its home within that frail and feeble body. Then, after an interview with the gaoler, with whom he made such arrangements as might tend in some degree to mitigate the lot of the poor enthusiast, he set off on his homeward journey, thankful, after that one short hour in the foul atmosphere, and amid the debasing sights and sounds of the prison, to breathe again the free, fresh air, laden with the sweet perfume of flowers, and vocal with the song of birds.

Master Samuel Harper had just reached his house. He was some days later than he had expected, but was cheerful by reason that he had left his sister in a fair way of recovery, and had had a pleasant journey home, travelling by short stages, thus avoiding fatigue, and finding opportunity for visiting two or three old friends by the way.

"Is there aught of news stirring?" he asked of his house-keeper, as he seated himself in his accustomed chair in the chimney-corner: for, summer or winter, Master Harper loved the fireside.

"Nay, I have heard nought; Master Legate hath been twice or thrice: he came, indeed, but yesterday, and was disappointed not to see thee."

"Ay, poor lad; I will go to him after supper, it will be light for some hours yet, and it's lonesome for him now. How looked he, Joan?"

"Just as ever; but far too grave for a young man."

"Ay, he hath over many cares," replied Harper. "Hasten the supper that I may have an hour or two with him."

But even as they spoke, a knock came to the door, and Bartholomew Legate himself appeared.

"I heard you had come home," he said, greeting his old master affectionately; "Job Markham's little grandson saw you on the road this afternoon, and came to tell me the good news."

Then, sitting down, he listened with sympathetic interest to all Harper had to tell of the incidents of his travels, and of the old acquaintances he had met, making many inquiries as to this one and that, who were well known to him by name.

"I, too, am meditating a journey," he said, as Harper concluded the narration of his adventures.

"You, Barty! and whither are you going—to London?"

"Nay, to Leyden first; but whether I remain there will depend on circumstances. I have resolved on this step somewhat suddenly at last; but my mind hath for a long time been dwelling on removal from here, and a letter I received yesterday hath decided me."

And taking a rather formidable looking missive from his breast, he handed it to Harper, who perused it in silence, then gave it back saying: "I like not the thought of parting with you, Barty."

"Nor I from you, dear, kind friend; it will be the hardest wrench of all; but I cannot remain here. My dear father's death hath left me very lonely; but that is not the worst: everywhere around me I see cruelty and oppression walking triumphant through the land, beneath the shadow and protection of a so-called justice; wherefore none may lift a hand to stay their wicked work. Reason and conscience are fettered in the name of religion by the iron bands of the law, and falsehood and indifference stand in the pulpits, and admonish the people; while my own mind is filled with doubts and misgivings to which I may not give utterance. Perhaps I am a craven, Master Harper, sometimes I fear it must be so; but I long to get away from here, and allow my soul for a short space to breathe the air of spiritual freedom."

And then he related to his friend concerning Ephraim Postlethwaite and the circumstances leading to his arrest, and of his own visit to the magistrate and the gaol. "He is a true, brave man," he said in conclusion; "and though I like not his preaching, because it seems to me too terrible; yet he is so earnest, and doth so stir the people, he must do good; and it grieves me sore he should be so persecuted."

"And has Justice Thurston accepted your surety?"

"Yes, for he saw the poor man would die, did he remain in prison, and he has promised to refrain from preaching publicly before the trial. I have told Master Thurston of my intent to go abroad, and promised to leave the twenty pounds with you, to

be paid into court, should Ephraim Postlethwaite not appear to answer to his summons. I doubt not that he will, if his life is spared; and I was sure you would do this kindness for me."

"That will I, Barty, and willingly, since you must go, and indeed, I believe it is best you should, the change will be good for you. But what of the farm?"

"Henry Fisher has agreed to take it; and his good wife will also make a home there for Kate, if she will; or if she likes better, she shall have the cottage next to Job Markham's, and I will settle a yearly sum upon her. If you are able, Master Harper, will you come down to-morrow, and help me arrange some of these matters?"

"Surely, Barty; and so arrange that when you come back in a year's time everything will fall into its old order."

The young man smiled and shook his head. "A year will not see me back again, nor two, I think, if all goes well with me in Holland. You must come and dwell with me there."

"Nay, I will not promise, but I may even do that," replied Harper. "But sit down now, and let us make the most of the time that yet remains for us to be together. What has been your latest study? tell me."

"The Bible, chiefly," answered Bartholomew; then looking up, he said half doubtingly, "you do not believe in witchcraft, Master Harper?"

"Nay, indeed, although there have been some," he continued with a smile, "who would willingly have forced that title upon myself, by virtue, I suppose, of the smallness of my stature, and the largeness of my wisdom. It is a remnant of barbarism—what people cannot comprehend, they wonder at, and wonder begets fear, while fear oftentimes tends to worship: and as the savage bends before the crooked stick, or ill-shaped stone, that the demon therein enclosed may be pacified and do him no ill, so the more civilized man doth bow down before the mis-shapen body, and strives either to pacify with presents, or to cast out by force the demon dwelling therein."

"But what of that passage in the Bible, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'?" said Bartholomew; "dost believe that the

inspired writer could have ignorantly thought thus, even while the Divine hand was guiding his pen ? ”

“Yea, why not? he was but a babe in understanding, it was the best he knew.” Bartholomew was puzzled.

“But was it not wicked to write such a command, and as if it came from God? for if there were no witches, it meant nought else but the cruel murder of innocent men and women.”

“It would be wicked for you or for me, but not for that writer; he believed what he wrote.”

“I must think about it,” said Bartholomew, as he rose to go. “Farewell, Master Harper, and many thanks for your kindness.”

“Farewell, Barty; I shall be at the farm by noon to-morrow.”

The sun was setting, but it was still light, as he set off across the fields, his thoughts busied with the contemplation of the difficult and painful task now before him, that of making known to his old nurse his intention of going abroad. He had hinted at such a possibility more than once, but she had always seemed to disregard it. He knew that under the most favourable circumstances she would feel very keenly the separation from himself, but hoped she might be induced to accept Mistress Fisher’s offer, and remain in her old home at the farm, where she would be sure to meet with kindness and consideration.

As he was crossing the last field a joyous bark greeted him, and Bess bounded up, expressing in every possible way her delight at seeing her master, for he had been out since morning. “Another faithful friend, Bess,” he said, caressing his favourite; “I ought to be a happy man!”

Mistress Alison was seated alone in the kitchen when he entered, having, as usual, everything prepared for the comfort of her young master.

“Thee art late, Barty,” she said.

“Yes, I have been to Master Harper’s. But what is the matter, Kate?” he asked kindly, observing that her face wore an unusually troubled expression.

“Oh, it’s what I’ve been expecting this long time, and it’s come at last. Humphrey says he’ll wait no longer, and so Anna says she must leave here at Michaelmas. That’s all, but I like not to have a stranger about me.”

“I trust they will be happy,” he answered. “But Anna’s going away will not concern us much. I am giving up the farm, and leaving Rumwell.”

“And where dost thou mean we shall be going?”

“I’m going to Leyden, Kate,” he answered. “Master Fisher will take the farm, and Mistress Fisher says if you will remain here she will——”

“Who’s going with thee?” she asked sharply.

“No one. I shall find friends when I get there.”

“Barty,” she said, with a strange pathos in her tone, “I nursed thee in my arms when thou wast a helpless baby; I’ve tended thee in all thy sickness, and stood by thee in thy sorrows; and dost think I shall leave thee now?”

He rose, and going to her, kissed her tenderly. “Think not, dear Kate,” he said, “that I can ever forget all thy kindness; thou hast been as another mother to me, and I had trusted that nought but death should part us. But I can remain here no longer, or my heart would break, and I cannot ask thee to leave thy friends and country, and all that is dear to thee, and go with me to a foreign land, where the ways of the people, and even their speech, will be strange, and everything different from what thou hast been used to. I could not ask thee to make so great a sacrifice.”

“And who says it would be a sacrifice?” she asked. “Not I; there’s nought left to me as dear as thou art, Barty, and it’s my heart would break were I left behind. As to foreign lands—dost not think the old woman may like to see them as well as the young ones? Nay, lad, if that’s all, I go with thee, whate’er thou may’st say.”

“But, Kate,” he urged, “there is the journey, the voyage across the sea. I fear me that would be ill for you to bear.”

“If thou dost not want me,” she said, in an aggrieved tone, “I am strong yet, and can work for my bread, and I’ve saved enough to pay for the journey. I shall only ask to see thee sometimes, and know how thou farest. Thou shalt have no more trouble with me.”

“Nay, Kate, do not mistake me. It would be far happier for me to have thee by, but I feared it might be otherwise for thee;

yet, if thou dost will it for thyself, then do I also will it with all my heart, and we will go together," answered Bartholomew, taking her toil-hardened hands in his, and smiling on her through his tears.

And thus it was arranged that Kate should accompany her young master in his voluntary exile, and if, as the time of leaving drew near, the faithful soul did feel some pangs of regret at parting from people and places endeared to her by old associations and happy memories, she never allowed him even to grieve thereat.

The preparations for their departure kept Bartholomew fully occupied for the next few weeks, for besides the business connected with the transfer of the farm, he was desirous of making such provision for some old dependants of the family as would, in case of his death, secure them from want, and in this he received much and able assistance from Master Harper, who willingly consented to act as his trustee, promising also to visit poor Goody Stiles, and give her from time to time, on behalf of his friend, such assistance as should seem necessary.

A day or two before their final departure, Bartholomew rode up to London to bid farewell to Master Lingard and little Maysie. The latter looked at him shyly through her brown curls, but the former welcomed him very warmly.

"I trust you have come to stay a long time with us," he said.

"Nay, I have but come to say farewell. I leave for Leyden on Thursday."

"For Leyden! How long will you stay?"

"I cannot say for certain; most likely for some years."

"For some years! Come upstairs, and tell me all about it."

And calling to his two apprentices to look after the customers, and not stand gossiping together, he caught Maysie in his arms, and led the way to the room above.

"And what will you do in Leyden?" he asked, when he had seated his guest, and placed a cup of wine before him.

"Trade, I hope, Master Lingard. A good offer has been made me by one Mynheer van der Broek, a merchant with whom I made acquaintance last year. His brother hath until now aided him in his business, but he is gone with a company of

brave men to seek the new way to the kingdom of Cathay, and as he himself doth oftentimes travel abroad, he needs some one in the business whom he can trust, and doth me the honour to take me for that man."

"Nor errs he therein, though I would you could have stayed in old England. But I wish you well, wherever you may be, Barty, for the sake of my old friendship with your father as well as for your own. I mind me now, you showed too great a liking for the Hollanders, but I ne'er thought it would come to your leaving your poor old country, and going to live among them." And Simon Lingard shook his head regretfully.

"To speak truly, Master Lingard," answered Bartholomew, "my old country doth prove but a sorry stepmother to me of late. She hath placed my mind in a prison, and constraineth me to look on unresisting, the while she doth those things my conscience cannot approve, and as I have not strength to withstand her, it is surely best I should quit her roof."

"You talk in riddles, Barty, and a plain man can scarce understand your meaning. To me it hath ever sufficed to attend to my business, keep the laws as they are made, and leave all disputations about religion and such things to learned doctors and professors, and I have prospered as you see."

Bartholomew made no reply, for he saw how impossible it was to make himself understood by one whose mind, like that of Master Lingard's, had always run in a conventional groove, and never been troubled with doubts and misgivings; and the latter was glad to give the conversation another turn by inquiring about the disposal of the farm. Then followed talk about olden times, and reminiscences of the days when Stephen Legate and Simon Lingard were boys together, to all of which Bartholomew listened with interest; and thus it had grown quite late ere he took leave of his kind-hearted host, and gave a last kiss to little Maysie before setting out for the hostel where he was to pass the night, in readiness for his homeward journey on the following morning.

Other leave-takings followed, but the most sorrowful one was that with Master Harper, who had insisted on accompanying them to Harwich.

“I shall scarce see thee again, dear lad,” he said, as their hands met in the last loving grasp, “for I am an old man, and my years can be but few; but my heart will be with thee, wherever thou art—and my prayers too,” he added in a lower tone.

And his face was the last Bartholomew looked upon as his native shore receded from his sight.

CHAPTER XI.

THE twenty-three years that had elapsed since the siege of Leyden, and its world-renowned heroic defence, had amply sufficed to remove from that beautiful and prosperous city all traces of the ravages made, and the sufferings undergone, in those terrible months, though the memory of that fearful time yet dwelt in the hearts of many of her citizens whose hair was not yet grey; and the stately university reared its head, a worthy monument to the patriotic zeal and fervent devotion to the cause of religious freedom which had inspired her brave burghers in the defence of their ancient city, and enabled them to hold out so stoutly against their Spanish invaders, aided as these were by grim pestilence and famine.

But now her canals were again full of shipping, her streets thronged with a busy multitude, buying and selling, and living happy, useful lives; her pleasant houses resounded with the music of children’s voices, and her schools and university were filled with her studious youth, some of whom should leave their mark on the world’s history.

The terrors of war were happily past for Leyden, and though its distant sounds might sometimes reach the ears of her busy, peaceful citizens, they heeded them not. What to them were the bickerings of France and England, while their merchant ships could go hither and thither, bearing the spoils of the earth in safety? And, with brave young Prince Maurice achieving his splendid victories, what had they to fear from the futile menaces of the Spanish foe? Their chief aim now, was to build up a solid structure of good citizenship on the firm foundations of truth and freedom, and to that end their energies were devoted with the same steady persistency that had marked their resistance to Philip’s armies twenty-three years ago.

It was a beautiful, bright September morning, and the market-place of the city was filled with a busy throng of buyers and sellers. The farmers' wives from all the country round had come in their gay attire, laden with their fresh eggs and golden butter peeping temptingly from its wrappings of green leaves, their round, rosy faces smiling pleasant greetings beneath their white coifs with their gold ornaments; piles of ripe fruit and fresh vegetables made a tempting show, while the crowds gathered around the stalls set out with articles of apparel, proved their attractions to be quite irresistible to the fair inhabitants of Leyden. There was much good-humoured banter on the part both of buyers and sellers, and much innocent merriment excited by trifles, as when some wealthy burgher's wife, in all the glory of farthingale, ruff, and stomacher, having cheapened an unfortunate fowl, a contest would forthwith ensue between the victim and its new owner, always ending in the former being securely tucked beneath the lady's massive arm, and still struggling and protesting, borne off in triumph.

Among the multitude in the market-place this morning was one person whose appearance and dress singled her out at once from all the rest: she was a tall, gaunt woman of, perhaps, some sixty years; her attire, compared to that of the Dutch vrows, very plain and sombre, and with a countenance in which just then decision and perplexity were strangely mingled, as she stood with a roll of butter taken from a market-woman's basket in one hand, and in the other a coin with which she vainly endeavoured to satisfy the claims of the seller, who in her turn was striving by signs and gesticulations to make the other understand the price required. Just at this moment a lad who, with satchel on his arm, had been leisurely threading his way along, suddenly burst through the busy crowd, and making his way to the side of the would-be purchaser, seized the hand containing the coin, exclaiming in good English: "Why, it is Mistress Kate; I knew it must be. Mother will be glad!"

Down went the butter, and Mistress Kate Alison, for it was no other than she, put her arm round the boy's neck, kissed him on the spot, regardless of the amused bystanders, and cried: "Why, Master John, who would have thought of seeing thee here?"

"Nay," he replied, "it is rather, who would have thought of seeing thee? Is good Master Legate here also?"

"Master Barty is here; but my good master, his father, died last March; we came a month ago, but till a week since we were staying at Mynheer Van der Broek's the while our house was getting ready. This is the first day I've come along to the market, and not a word can I make out of their outlandish speech; if thou canst, ask what she'll take for this butter."

John readily complied, and the bargain, with his assistance, being satisfactorily completed, he continued his way to school, having first learned their address, and Kate returned to her new home, delighted at the thought that English friends were in the neighbourhood; for in her present somewhat lonely position her heart warmed towards Mistress White and her children. It was, too, a pleasant piece of news for Bartholomew, although at first he could scarcely believe the report, for he knew the intention of the exiled family had been to settle at Amsterdam. The same evening, however, brought both Master and Mistress White, eager to give an early welcome, and to proffer their hospitality to one to whom they owed so much, and long and pleasant was their chat over a cup of wine from Mynheer Van der Broek's own cellar, a cask of which he had forced upon Bartholomew's acceptance.

It soon appeared that the stay of the family in Amsterdam had been but short, as owing to the assistance of an acquaintance learned in the law, Master White had been enabled to scrape together the scattered remnants of his fortune, and purchase therewith a farm about a mile from Leyden, thereby securing greater educational advantages for his sons than could have been the case elsewhere, and at the same time providing congenial and profitable occupation for himself.

Of Father Palmer they had heard nothing, and conjectured he might have found his way to Spain, as he had oftentimes expressed a desire to go thither.

The while such topics as these engaged the attention of Master White and Bartholomew, Mistress White and Kate had been busy exchanging notes regarding the relative merits of the old and new countries; the former, thankful for her release from the bondage of fear, being disposed to look upon all things connected with the

land of her adoption in the most favourable light; the latter, while acknowledging the beauty of the city in which her new home was placed, and the superior cleanliness and order prevalent among its inhabitants, appearing to regard their use of a language other than her own native tongue almost as a crime.

"I could do with them well enough but for their outlandish speech," she said; "but that doth trouble me sore. I cannot even go to the market to buy an egg or a capon save Barty is with me. Only this morn did I try, and but for thy son John I could have bought nothing, as he will have told thee. It doth puzzle me why they cannot speak good plain English."

"Master Legate doth speak the language well, and you, too, will soon learn, Mistress Alison," said Mistress White in an encouraging tone.

"Nay, I am too old; and there is no one to teach me but Barty, and he is out and busy all the day. I oft scarce see him from morn till night."

"Then you must come and see us," answered the gentle lady, "and let me and the children teach you, if it were but a few words, so that you may not feel quite at a loss when you are out alone."

To this proposition Kate gratefully assented, and it was agreed she should pay her first visit on the following day, the evening of which Bartholomew had arranged to spend at the Van der Broeks'.

And thus a frequent and pleasant intercourse was established between the two houses; the young people with their parents delighting in Bartholomew's society, and Mistress White especially finding great pleasure and comfort in the visits of Kate Alison, whose excellent common sense, long experience, and helpful disposition rendered her an invaluable counsellor to the mother of a family, and the mistress of a household; while in their turn Bartholomew and Kate found the visits of their English friends to them; and their own occasional afternoons at the pleasant farmhouse in the midst of the quiet country, where, in spite of some necessary differences, owing to the peculiar character of the soil, there was so much to remind them of their old home, very agreeable breaks in the monotony of their busy city life.

They had been now about six months in Leyden, and had

already grown tolerably accustomed to the changed conditions of their lives. People and places were no longer strange; they had learned in great measure to conform to the habits and customs of their adopted country; and Bartholomew, with his spiritual nature rejoicing in its new found freedom, oftentimes felt with deep thankfulness that his lines had indeed been cast in pleasant places.

With Kate Alison it had, of course, been a more difficult matter for the old order at once to give place to the new; but she was learning to love her foreign home, and the many kind acquaintances who were fast becoming friends, and was above all things happy in not suffering separation from Bartholomew.

One calm Sunday evening in the early spring, going for a stroll along the quiet canal banks, after attending service in the great church, and talking as they walked of old times and old friends, they were startled by a sudden tumult and confusion, the sound of a Babel of angry voices. The door of an adjacent tavern swung wide open, and a crowd of half-drunken seamen, partially armed, some of whose voices betrayed them as English, issued forth, quarrelling and fighting, and uttering volleys of frightful oaths. They were such a savage, lawless set, and rendered still more dangerous by the maddening influence of strong drink, that other passers-by fled in terror, and Bartholomew hastened with all speed to place Kate Alison in safety; then returning to the spot, lent his aid to assist two or three honest burghers in quelling the riot, which was effected at last, though not before two of the combatants had been so severely handled as to render their recovery doubtful, while others were more or less injured. Bartholomew did what he was able to ameliorate the condition of the wounded men, and returned home not a little saddened by his evening's experience.

On the following morning, when one of their ships should have set sail, several of the men failed to answer to their names, which caused some two hours' delay, while others were sought to take their places. On making further inquiries, Bartholomew was not surprised to find that the absence of the men from their post of duty was a consequence of the fray of the previous evening. The matter would, under any circumstances, have caused him great

concern, but this was increased by the knowledge that it was their own men who had thus transgressed, and he resolved to bring it before his friend Van der Broek at the earliest opportunity, which soon occurred.

The worthy merchant was seated, his day's duty done, in his own pleasant sitting-room overlooking the canal, a leathern jack of ale by his side, and a pipe between his lips filled with the fragrant weed his own ships had brought from the New World. His eyes were fixed with calm attention on Bartholomew, who, with great earnestness, related the events of the Sunday evening with his own comments thereon. When he had finished, Jan Van der Broek removed his pipe, and emitting a huge volume of smoke, said quietly :

"Well, and what can you expect? When a ship hath been unladen, and the new cargo is not yet ready, how can the men fill up their time but by drinking in the taverns, and when they drink, their tongues grow loose; and so they get to quarrelling, and then perforce to fighting; it hath ever been so; what can you expect?"

"Nay, but I would not have it so," returned Bartholomew. "They are our servants, and if they cannot find better employ for their spare hours, surely we should find it for them, else we are scarce free from blame."

The worthy merchant shrugged his shoulders, and puffed away meditatively for a few moments ere he replied: "You take this too seriously, my friend. What further have we to do with these men when they have finished our work and we have paid them their wages? Nothing! we cannot talk with them, they would not understand; should we give them books, they cannot read, they are so ignorant, they are mostly English or French or German, and they have not been taught. Let them be, they wish not for better things."

The philosophical calmness with which the honest burgher regarded the degraded condition of the poor ignorant foreigners in his employ was rather provoking to Bartholomew, to whom the well being of his fellow-creatures, whatever their rank or position, was always a matter of the deepest interest. But it convinced him that it was useless to expect assistance on their

behalf from that quarter, and that whatever was done to ameliorate their condition, must be the result of his own unaided exertions. And since the antiquity of an abuse was to him no argument for its continuance, he resolved that something must be done and at once; and for some days his mind was occupied with the endeavour to devise some plan for the rescue of these unfortunate sailors from the sad results of enforced idleness of body and mind.

Bartholomew's first step in this direction was, to Kate's alarm and horror, to pay nightly visits to the taverns where these rough sons of Neptune mostly resorted, so as to become personally acquainted with them. This was no easy task, since they were mostly a wild lawless set, unaccustomed to, and by no means desirous of, making acquaintance with the society of law-abiding, peaceful folk. At first, therefore, he met with but little encouragement, even among the men who were actually connected with him by the ties of service; but by degrees, as one who, though strict in exacting the performance of duty, was always just and reasonable in his demands, and kind and considerate in his dealings with them, they learned to love and trust him, and ere long, to welcome his presence among them, even in the tavern, although there it necessarily proved some check upon their excesses. It was a new and very pleasant experience for these rough mariners to find a man with wisdom and knowledge which to them in their ignorance seemed almost superhuman, and who, though a foreigner, stood, as they well knew, so high in the esteem of the good citizens of Leyden, evincing so great an interest in their welfare, sympathising with them in their troubles and sorrows, suggesting and joining with them in innocent amusements, and ever ready with words of kindly encouragement and advice, and more substantial aid when it was required; and they were not slow in showing their appreciation of his kindness, while in his turn, Bartholomew felt that this work had given him a new interest in life, and he was always glad when any opportunity arose for him to be of some real service to one of his humble friends.

His faithful Kate had at first exhibited strong disapproval of these efforts on behalf of such a set of savages, regarding them as of little more use than the casting of pearls before swine; but

after a time her kindlier nature gained the ascendancy, and she surprised Bartholomew one day by insisting on going herself, to take some nourishment she had been preparing by his directions, to a poor English sailor detained on shore by a severe accident.

"I've more time to spare than thou hast, Barty; thou'lt be working thyself to death," she said, evidently feeling it necessary to give some reason for her determination.

She went accordingly, and if the poor sufferer had reason to quail before the sharpness of his countrywoman's tongue, when the pain drew forth from him some virtuperative, or even merely impatient expression, he experienced also unspeakable comfort from her helpful presence and skilful tending.

"It was like having my old mother with me again," he said to Bartholomew when he went to see him later on. "She made me so comfortable, and scolded me just as the good old woman was used to do."

Bartholomew smiled, and blessed Kate Alison in his heart. From that time he had a most able and willing seconder in his labour of love.

For the last few months he had resumed the practice formed in his old home of holding early on Sunday mornings a service for his little household, consisting of Kate, the girl who assisted her, and a man and lad employed in the business. He commonly read from the English Bible, making necessary comments upon it as he proceeded, offered up a prayer in the Dutch language, and sometimes concluded the little service with a few words of simple earnest exhortation.

It was after one of these little gatherings, when they had just separated with mutual expressions of kindness and good-will, that Kate remarked :

"It seems to me, Barty, 'twould be well for some of those poor sailor folk if thou wouldst read and talk to them as thou dost to us."

"Nay, Kate," he answered; "I fear me they would not listen; they too much incline to make ridicule of religion, and like nought that is serious."

"They would scarce make ridicule of thee," she replied, "if they do of the priests and the mummeries of Rome; they are

bad enough to need to have good preached to them by some one."

"You are right, Kate, they do need it; and I have erred in delaying so long to hold up the banner of God's truth before them. I thank you heartily for thus reminding me of the duty I owe to my Lord and Master!"

The same day he went out on the quays, and invited some ten or twelve of his poor friends to meet that afternoon at his house, and join together in a short religious service, and was surprised at the readiness with which they acceded to his suggestion.

It was somewhat of a trial to Kate to have her neat, clean precincts invaded by such a horde of rough, unkempt fellows, but she bore it bravely in the earnestness of her desire that they should receive the benefit of good instruction, and gave to each, as he arrived, abrupt, but kindly greeting.

Bartholomew began rather nervously, speaking in the Dutch language as that which would be best understood by all, while his audience, though by no means irreverent, were at first somewhat listless; but when he laid aside the book, and began to speak out of the fulness of his own heart, of the love and goodness of God,—when in earnest and simple language he told them how the great Creator of the world—He who held the sea in the hollow of His hand, yet cared for the humblest of His creatures; that the tiny sparrow could not fall, nor the sea-bird drop in the angry wave, without His will; that the sailor on the ocean waste, and the babe upon its mother's breast, were alike enfolded in His loving arm: then, the light of intelligence dawned upon their faces, tears glistened in the eyes of some, and all leaned forward in almost breathless eagerness to drink in this message of good tidings which should be to all people; while the young preacher went on with increased vigour:—"Yea, my brothers, we are all His children, and He our tender, merciful Father. He regardeth not our estate; but high and low, rich and poor, the king upon his throne, and the beggar on his bed of straw,—ay, the saint and the sinner, are equally the objects of His care; for His long-suffering, forgiving love is high as heaven, and as deep as hell. Come ye, then, and listen to His voice, for He is calling you to live for Him and in His service. He asks no sacrifice at

your hands, but the sacrifice of a holy, devoted life. Ye hearken to your captains, and haste to obey their commands. Hearken now to this word of God in your inmost heart, bidding you to cease from evil and do righteously, to be honest and true in all your dealings, and live like men, and the sons of God. Are ye not made in His image, and will ye deface it by drunkenness, and strife and debauchery? I pray you grieve not so the Holy Spirit of our Father. Neither take ye His holy name in vain. Remember how our Master said, 'Swear not at all;' wherefore let your words be few, and your lips clean, that your innermost souls be not defiled; for ye are not your own, but God's, and He hath called you to a high inheritance. Live worthily of this high calling, then; be watchful and earnest, in all things asking first, What is God's will? and living ever in the remembrance of His presence and love. But an if ye have gone astray, and lived according to your sinful lusts, let not the fear of His anger hold you back from returning to your Heavenly Father; for He is ever waiting, standing at the door, ready to receive and pardon His penitent child, and take him back to His home and His love; but come now to Him and say, 'O my Father, I am very weak and sinful, and have gone astray from Thee, and done that which is evil in Thy sight; but I am Thy child, and know that Thou lovest me, and I pray Thee to forgive me, and make my sick soul whole.' And ye, who with your lives in your hands, think with heavy hearts of the dear ones from whom ye are far away,—the tender wife and the helpless child,—cast your cares from you, for they, too, rest in the shelter of the Almighty love, against which death itself may not prevail; for life, and death, and all things are in the hands of God!"

Thus ended Bartholomew Legate's first sermon, which was listened to by the little congregation with considerable emotion, due, probably, as much to his manner as to his words. A few words of prayer concluded the service, and the men left with simple and touching expressions of gratitude.

This was only the first of many such meetings; and ere long, Bartholomew's own house not containing a room large enough to accommodate all who desired to attend, he hired one in a tavern wherein to conduct his services, choosing a secluded quarter of

the town, as being more likely to attract those he especially desired to influence, never imagining the possibility of others than his own rough mariner friends taking part in the simple worship.

One day, however, as he finished his address, he became conscious of the presence of Mynheer Van der Broek, who, seated in a corner of the room, was listening with grave interest. When the rest had departed, he went up to Bartholomew, and taking his hand, said heartily, "Thanks for thy words; they have done my heart more good than aught I have ever listened to in church; but thou shouldst not have kept thy talent so long hidden; there are many would be as glad to hear thee as these men."

"Nay, but I am no preacher, and can but speak in a simple way to simple folk."

"We are all but simple folk, and need to be told the truth in a simple way," persisted Van der Broek; "you must not shut us out because we live in houses on land; we need such words as thine, and surely thou wilt not withhold them."

"Well, I will think about it," said Bartholomew, at length; "but as yet I scarce feel able for such a task."

CHAPTER XII.

NOTWITHSTANDING Van der Broek's pressing entreaties that Bartholomew would include within the sphere of his teaching the opulent burgher class, and his own promise to take the matter into consideration, it was a long time ere he could feel justified in venturing on such a step. Not only was he without the training generally considered a necessary qualification for the post of a religious teacher; but his mind was still in too unsettled a condition to admit of his imparting to others anything more than the most elementary religious instruction, although of this little he gave willingly to his poor, unlettered brethren—yet humbly, as one seeking his own way to the light. He certainly had not now to complain of the listlessness and indifference in matters pertaining to religion that had so grieved him in England; but he found the tenets of Roman Catholicism on the one hand, and those of the rigid Calvinism so dear to the hearts of the majority of the Netherlanders on the other, equally distasteful, and difficult of acceptance; while his own Biblical researches had as yet availed him little in coming to a decision; but he strove on manfully, and waited, hoping for the dawning of a clearer day for his soul's life.

It chanced on an evening in September, after one of the meetings of the sailor folk, where he had given a short address, that he stood for a little while on the quay, conversing with two or three of the men on the topic of the discourse ere they went on board their ship for the night; they had just spoken their farewell greetings, and he was turning to go home, when he was startled by the apparition of a tall man wrapped in a cloak, emerging from the concealment of a doorway, whence he must have overheard their conversation. His first notion was that he might be a spy, expecting, perhaps, in that manner to ferret out

State secrets; but in another moment he was half ashamed of himself to have given place to so ungenerous, though not unnatural, a thought: for without the slightest embarrassment or hesitation the stranger approached him, saying in a friendly tone:

"Surely, you must be the Master Legate of whom I have so often heard."

"My name is Legate," Bartholomew answered wonderingly; then added with a smile, "but I knew not my fame had extended beyond my own little circle of friends. May I ask your name?"

"Truly you may, though 'tis nought of which to boast. I am Rudolph Gessler, a poor professor of mathematics at the University, and very much at your service, my chief desire for full two months past having been to make your acquaintance."

"I am proud to be thus honoured by your esteem, yet fear I have done little to deserve it," replied Bartholomew, not a little amused with his new acquaintance.

"Nay, the honour is mine; and if you would add further to it, come now to my lodgings—they are near by—and let us pledge each other in a cup of Rhenish wine; for I know well thou art a man after mine own heart. Nay, it is not late; there'll be plenty of time for a gossip, and then to return home by a reasonable hour," he added, seeing the other's hesitation.

So finding resistance useless, Bartholomew consented to accept the invitation on condition of his visit being for that time of short duration; and the professor led the way gaily to his domicile. It was a large upper room into which he ushered his guest, and well furnished; but so littered with books, charts, and mathematical instruments, that it would have proved a heart-breaking spectacle to any orderly housewife. Having kindled a lamp, and cleared a chair for his visitor by the simple expedient of sliding all that it contained on to the floor, he divested himself of his cloak, and sitting down opposite him, regarded him attentively for some moments, and with evident satisfaction; for having completed his survey he rose, and shaking him warmly by the hand, exclaimed, "Let us be friends!"

"With all my heart," said Bartholomew, returning the other's cordial grasp.

It was a short acquaintance, truly, on which to found a friendship; but there was something about the honest, manly, though by no means handsome face, that had an irresistible attraction for him; he felt that here was a man he could trust, and his heart warmed towards him accordingly.

Gessler, having filled some cups with wine for his guest and himself, now resumed his seat, and said with a smile: "Will it surprise you when I say I have heard you often, though I have scarce seen your features until to-night?"

"Yea, indeed; for I am no public speaker as you."

"It is true, nevertheless; I own without shame to eaves-dropping. You must know I like well to talk with the brave sea captains, and hearken to their stirring tales; wherefore at the close of day I oftentimes repair to the taverns where they resort, and from them I learned of thy work among their men, which they esteem highly; and thus, hearing of thy religious meetings, I, not desiring to disturb you by entering, did prevail on my good hostess of the 'Prince of Nassau' to grant me leave to smoke my pipe in an adjoining room, where, by aid of an opening in the wall, I could listen unseen to your instructions. Nay, blame not the good woman, for the fault was mine; and be not angry with me, for I do assure you your exhortations have done me good."

And, indeed, it would have been impossible for any one to be angry with him; and Bartholomew only laughed as he said, "I fear you took much trouble for very little gain."

"Nay, I do assure you," answered Gessler gravely, "that it was great gain for me. I ever hearken gladly to those who put me in remembrance of my duty to God without dealing with the incomprehensible and, I must think, mischievous doctrines of predestination and eternal torments; for I am no disciple of our good Francis Junius, as he well knoweth, and he oftentimes doth me the honour to charge me with heresy, and doubtless adjudgeth me as worthy to suffer a martyr's death as that Servetus, whom his master Calvin erewhile did roast, as a warning to the good people of Geneva."

"Is not this same Francis Junius professor of theology in the University here?" asked Bartholomew.

"He is; and spite of the differences in our opinions, I am con-

strained to acknowledge him a learned man, only methinks his learning doth tend too much to one-sidedness."

"Doth he number many of the students among his disciples?"

"Indeed doth he; for he hath great repute. He it is who hath revised the 'Belgic Confession,' on which so many of our brave Netherlanders found their faith. You know that same confession?"

"Yes, I know it well, but cannot hold with it; the doctrines therein enforced are too arbitrary and cruel," answered Bartholomew.

"You say so?" said Gessler, eyeing him narrowly; "are you, then, a disciple of Sebastian Castellio's, that doughty opponent of the great Calvin, who fought with him even to the death?"

"Nay, I have not even heard of him. Was he a divine?"

"Yea, and a convert from Romanism; but he died before you were born. You must read his book on 'Predestination'; I will lend it you if I can find it among all this lumber. Methinks you will see in it much that accords with your own ideas, and perhaps, also, somewhat to awaken new thought."

And thus saying, the learned professor went down on hands and knees, and began to search diligently among the hopelessly chaotic-looking mass.

"I pray you not to take such pains on my account," said Bartholomew; "you are sure to discover it within a few days, and I can have it then."

"No time like the present, my friend; I must find it now, for each day will but serve to bury it deeper. I teach of rule and order, but, alas! I practise them not. Ah, here it is. Nay,—but it will please you to read, though 'tis not Castellio's; it is a work by James Arminius, a good and learned man, who will make his mark ere long. Ah, here it is at last—that 'Dialogue'—at the bottom of the heap; and I trust both will afford you pleasure and profit. Let me know what you think of them when you have done." And Gessler rose to his feet, flushed with his exertions, and placed the volumes in Bartholomew's hands, adding, "I see you are not one of those who fear to go in search of truth, lest they should discover that she dwells beyond the narrow boundaries they have themselves assigned to her."

"Nay, indeed," he answered. "What cause is there for fear, save it were possible to go beyond the realms of God? and truth, it seems to me, hath so many sides, it were scarcely possible for man, in the brief space of his mortal life, to learn all concerning her."

"You are right," rejoined Gessler; "yet many, being too purblind to see more than one of her sides, declare that alone to be truth; while others, alas! having made unto themselves an image, baptize it by her name, and prepare to do battle against all who refuse to render it due allegiance, having long since laid sweet Charity in her grave."

"Let us beware that we aid them not in the performance of that funeral rite," said Bartholomew, with a smile, as he rose to go. "The disciples of the Master must be 'wise as serpents'; but they must also be 'harmless as doves.' We need not fear for Truth; she is strong, and will stand her ground, though all the world were arrayed against her. Farewell, good Master Gessler. Many thanks for your kindness in lending me these books; they will be of real service to me."

And so, with mutual expressions of good-will, they separated; and Bartholomew wended his way home through the moonlit streets.

On his arrival there, he found Kate Alison waiting up for him in a very anxious frame of mind.

"I thought thou hadst fallen into the canal, or been robbed and murdered, or taken prisoner," she said.

"Nay, Kate, 'twas not so bad as that," he answered; "I have but been making a friend; but it is late, and I am truly sorry to have caused thee anxiety."

"So thou'rt safe, Barty, it matters not; but who is this thou hast met with—an English friend?"

"Nay, not an Englishman, but in truth I know not what country gave him birth; he is a professor at the University."

"Ah, then he is a learned man, and his conversation will suit thee well," said Mistress Alison, in a tone of satisfaction, for she entertained very high ideas of her young master's erudition.

Bartholomew smiled. "I am very glad the acquaintance

meets with your approval, Kate, and hope you will like Master Gessler as well as I do when you see him. Has any one been since I left home?"

"Only Mynheer Van der Broek; he has heard some disquieting news about the Spanish army under the Arragon general, and wanted to talk to thee about it; he fears it may make it dangerous for the ships."

"I have heard of it, but scarce think it will interfere with the merchant vessels; and should the Spaniards venture on a serious attack, our brave Prince Maurice would soon put them to the route."

"That's what I told him, but he only shook his head, and said I knew not what the Spaniards were. Well, I think I'll go to bed, Barty, and do not thee sit up long," she added, glancing significantly at the two books which he had laid upon the table.

"I promise not to sit up very long, Kate," he said, with a smile, "but I must take a peep into these." And having bidden her "good-night," he stirred the logs together on the hearth, and settled himself to the perusal of the seductive volumes, taking up first that by Arminius. His heart warmed, as he read, towards the kindly spirit of its author, although the conclusions drawn did not all find their echo in his own mind, yet it seemed to him that the views therein put forth were immeasurably more in accord with the teachings of the Master than the stern doctrines of Calvinism; and he read and re-read, until the fire burned out, and the cold of the autumn night began to remind him of his promise to Kate.

As soon as day dawned on the following morning he rose and prepared himself to attack with vigour Castellio's quaint "Dialogue on Predestination," finding it, as he had expected, replete with interest, and none the less so for the militant spirit that prevailed throughout. In addition, there was very much that accorded with the views he had himself formed, from the study of Scripture and the experiences of his own soul, of the Divine government and of man's relation to his Creator, so that the little book gave him a sense of sympathising companionship. He took up his Bible, and compared the teachings of the Master with those of

this disciple. Yes, surely, he would have said of him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven." Sinking upon his knees, he offered up his heartfelt thanks to the Father of all for this new help vouchsafed to him, prayed humbly for further light and guidance, and then, refreshed and strengthened, went forth to his labours.

As usual, a busy day was before him. Owing to the rumour as to the movements of the Spanish army, a little panic had arisen among the merchants, some of whom had insisted on withdrawing their portions of cargo from the vessel Van der Broek was fitting out, thus causing considerable trouble and vexation, which was scarcely lessened by the re-embarkation of the goods, when the rumour proved unfounded. Amid the trouble and annoyance thus occasioned, Bartholomew alone, of all those concerned, retained his calm, unruffled demeanour, and worked away with a cheerful zeal, until happily by degrees he infected those about him, the first instance of which found expression in a half grumbling desire on the part of Van der Broek that he would either get out of temper himself, or teach the secret of his patience.

"It doth vex me to see you so calm, when I could storm like a winter tempest," he said, half earnestly and half in jest.

"Think you," answered Bartholomew, "it is worth while to trouble our minds about such small annoyances, when all the work does but come in as part of our day's duty in the Providence of God. Methinks our fretting may well be spared for faults and failings of our own, and then allowed only in moderation."

"But meanest thou, Legate, that God takes care for our ships and cargoes, and such small things?"

"Yea, even these, for I can think of naught that is either too small or too great to be out of His control."

"What! not even Spanish victories and the Inquisition?" asked Van der Broek, with the air of a man who is satisfied that he has propounded a really difficult question.

"Not even these would I place outside of the Providence of God," answered Bartholomew quietly, but firmly; "since neither death nor suffering can touch the soul, save to purify and chasten;

and as the Spaniards also are God's children, though doubtless erring ones, we should strive to have patience with them, even as He hath patience with them and with us."

At this moment a messenger from the ship came up to claim Bartholomew's attention on behalf of a merchant who was desirous of sending off some goods which the skipper regarded as certain to be quite unsalable at Spanish ports, and their conversation was accordingly brought to an abrupt termination; but as they parted, Van der Broek said: "I must talk with you again on these matters."

That evening, when Bartholomew went to his home, Kate greeted him at the door with an air of delight and mystery:

"There's something come for thee, Barty," she said; "a bit of a note, and a live creature."

"Oh, from Master White, I suppose; did he —" But he had not time to finish his sentence, for with the first sound of his voice, a loud scramble was heard, succeeded by a joyous bark, and Bess, his favourite Bess, was at her master's side, jumping upon him, licking his hands, and in every possible way showing her delight at being with him again.

"Why, Bess, dear, good old Bess," he said, caressing the faithful creature affectionately, "how did you come here?"

"A sailor brought her," replied Kate, "and he bade me give thee this; he will come again to-morrow to see thee, if there is no meeting to-night."

Bartholomew took the packet from her, and opened it eagerly; it was a long letter in Harper's handwriting, full of items of news from the old home, telling how Master Fisher continued well satisfied with the farm, as also with Humphrey's able assistance, and how the latter had lately been presented by his wife with a fine boy; of the re-occupation of Farleigh Place by a distant branch of the old family; of the continued welfare of Job Markham and his good wife; and finally, of the happy, peaceful death of poor old Goody Stiles. The letter then went on to tell how Master Harper, while staying with a friend living at a distance, had met with a sailor, home for a few days from sea, son to a servant of the family, and entering into conversation with him, found to his great delight that he not only knew, but was enthu-

siastic about Bartholomew, who had, he said, showed him much kindness.

“And so,” continued Harper, “finding that he was both willing and anxious to do aught in his power to serve you and me, I took occasion to send you your faithful Bess, who hath never ceased to mourn her separation from you, notwithstanding my good Joan and I have striven hard to make her happy and forgetful of her loss. I doubt not you will welcome her gladly, for such friendship as hers is rare, and I admire her constancy too well to be jealous of you for her sake.

“This is a long letter, dear lad; but ere 'tis ended, I must tell you with what joy I heard of your kind, brotherly labours on behalf of the poor sailors of Leyden: may God grant you strength and courage to continue them; and I pray you also not to let the distrust of your own powers keep you back from speaking the words of His truth when he hath put them into your mouth, for it is borne in upon me that there is a work for you to do among your fellows upon the earth, and that you may do it as few besides could do. I know you will bear with your old tutor kindly for thus ordering your conduct; and as he holds you in most loving remembrance, so you will ever hold your sincerely affectionate friend, Samuel Harper.”

Bartholomew read and re-read the letter, especially the latter part, with interest and emotion; it was almost like having his old friend at his side again, and he hesitated no longer about the course he ought to pursue. He did feel that he had a message from God; and should he allow his own unwillingness to speak before the people to hold him back from the performance of his duty? That same evening he went to Van der Broek, and told him that if any really desired to hear him on religious subjects, he was ready to speak.

His friend received the proposition joyfully, and it was arranged that the opening meeting should be held on the following Sunday, in a room to be engaged for the purpose by Van der Broek, who entered into the matter with great enthusiasm. Bartholomew, although dreading the ordeal of facing a large number of people, somewhat in the character of a minister, was still more confirmed in the righteousness of his resolution by further conversation

with the sailor, who had seen Master Harper, and who, strengthened by his words, the impression made by the letter.

Sunday came at last, and it was wonderful, when the time had come, and Bartholomew, having ascended the raised dais, gave out the hymn with which the service was to commence, how entirely his nervous apprehensions quitted him, and how oblivious he became of everything but the message he had to deliver. Even the entrance of Professor Gessler was unnoticed by him, and he went on speaking, pleading with his hearers to open their hearts to the love and mercy of God, and to trust His loving kindness, even in their darkest hours; while at the same time he reminded them forcibly of the duties and responsibilities which their position as God's children involved. Then, speaking of the doubts and difficulties which at times beset every thoughtful mind, he besought his hearers not to give way to despondency, but to live their lives courageously, following the dictates of their consciences as the voice of God, and thus in His own good time His light would break into their souls.

When Bartholomew had ended, many hands sought his, and many voices spoke kindly words of thankfulness and encouragement, not the least warm among which were those of Kate Alison, Gessler, and Van der Broek.

CHAPTER XIII.

A GAIN we must overleap the boundaries of time and space to find ourselves in London on a gloomy day in November in the year 1605. A murky vapour hung over the city like a pall, making its dark, narrow streets yet darker, and rendering so dangerous the highway of the river, that the waterman's occupation was at a standstill, save for the occasional advent of some reckless individual who preferred risking the chance of a collision upon the mist-hidden waters to waiting for the remote possibility of the clearing away of the fog, while the progress of foot-passengers was rendered even more difficult than usual, owing to the thick, slippery mud which covered the narrow streets.

Yet, notwithstanding these drawbacks to locomotion, it seemed as if most of the worthy citizens must be abroad, judging from the many groups gathered in the aisles of the cathedral engaged in eager, whispered converse, and the crowd that had collected round St. Paul's Cross to listen to the vehement excited harangue of a thin elderly man in sad-coloured garb, and with long grey hair straggling over his shoulders; to say nothing of the busy thoroughfare of the West Chepe, where the tide of human life was flowing with even more than its ordinary swiftness. Above and beyond all this, there was an air of excitement, not unmingled with apprehension, visible in the demeanour of folks generally, that seemed indicative of some unusual disturbance in the social hive, and which evinced itself in a wise shaking of heads, and a disposition to gather together in small whispering knots at shop doors and street corners; while any individual, differing in dress or manner from the ordinary citizens, was followed by looks of suspicion and distrust, if not by the open designation of "Papist."

In the West Chepe, and not far from Paul's Cross, stood the house of Simon Lingard, and there in his doorway was the worthy hosier himself gazing up and down with a perturbed air, and from

time to time giving contradictory orders to his apprentices, as if his mind was anywhere but in his business. The flight of years had made but little change in him, save that his form was somewhat more burly, and his grey locks scantier than of yore; but his voice, when he replied to the salutations of passers-by, was as hearty as ever in its tone; nor had his manner lost any of its old geniality, as was evident from the kindly smile with which he greeted the young man, whose question brought down his thoughts from the clouds where they had been soaring, and fixed them again upon the earth beneath.

"Yes, I am Simon Lingard," he replied; "and you?" he added, gazing with close scrutiny at the stranger.

"My name is John White, and I have been charged by Master Legate to deliver this letter to you."

"Bartholomew Legate!" said Lingard in a tone of astonishment, as he took the missive from the young man's hand. "Bartholomew Legate! Why, is he not in Holland?"

John White smiled as he replied. "Yes, I left him in Leyden little more than a week since, and he bade me assure you of his affectionate remembrance. He had hoped to have visited England himself this year, but could not leave his people."

"It would have rejoiced my heart to see him once again," exclaimed Simon, as he broke the seal and hastily glanced at the contents of the letter; then, as he finished its perusal, he turned to the young man and shook both his hands warmly, saying, "And so, you are a friend of Barty's; you are doubly welcome, then! Come in, and tell me how he looks, and all about him." And thus saying, he led the way to the room above, his guest following. As they ascended the stairs the sound of girlish voices and a peal of rippling laughter greeted their ears.

"My Maysie and a young friend," said Simon, by way of explanation, as he opened the door of the room.

Two girls rose from a low seat as they entered, and stood somewhat abashed on perceiving Lingard's companion.

"Come hither, Maysie," he said, drawing towards him the younger of the two, a bright, dark-eyed maiden of some fourteen years, with brown curls clustering over her head, and a countenance at once demure and roguish. "This is Master John

White, a friend of Bartholomew Legate's, and but just arrived from Holland."

"I have oftentimes heard of Mistress Maysie," replied the young man, taking the little brown hand extended to him, "and am charged with kindest messages to her, both from Master Legate and Mistress Alison."

Maysie only blushed, and murmured that "they were very kind."

"She will be ready enough with questions about her friend Barty, presently," remarked her father with a laugh, as the little maid slipped back into her corner; then, taking the hand of the other girl, he said: "And this is Alice Capel, my little daughter's friend, as Alice's father is mine, and Alice herself," he added kindly, drawing her nearer to him in a fatherly, protecting manner, which the young girl acknowledged with such a smile of trust and affection that John White, as he looked at the sweet, serious face framed in its golden hair, and the slight, graceful form, set off by the garb of sober grey, felt something like envy of Master Lingard.

Perhaps his thoughts were in a measure divined by the maiden, for with a blush she disengaged herself from Simon's detaining hand, and resumed her seat by Maysie; while John, at his host's desire, placed himself in a chair by the ample hearth, and was soon deep in conversation with the worthy citizen.

"Hath aught unusual occurred in the city?" inquired the young man, when Lingard had at length exhausted his string of questions concerning Bartholomew, and the state of trade in Holland.

"Unusual? What! hast thou not heard?"

"Nay, I have heard nothing; but it seemed to me there was much stir and commotion among the folks as I passed, and I even thought they threw some suspicious glances upon myself."

"Not unlikely," replied Lingard; "for there is somewhat foreign about your dress and bearing; but I marvel you have not heard how the Papists nearly succeeded last night in blowing up with gunpowder the Parliament houses, with our good king and commons, to say nought of many innocent folk besides. I can scarce yet bear to think of the wicked, cruel intent."

"Wicked and cruel indeed," replied the young man; "but is it certainly known to be the work of Papists? Have they discovered the perpetrators?"

"Yea, one at least is in safe custody; but I know not if more have been taken. This chief actor in the conspiracy, one Guy Fawkes, openly avows their intention; and he would seem to be a brave man, and one who values not his own life; for had the plan succeeded, he must have been blown up with the rest. The worst is, we know not how widespread may be the plot. These Papists are a dangerous folk, and, so that they gain their ends, care not what means they use."

"But I do assure you," replied his guest earnestly, "it is not so with all. My father and mother are Papists, and they were ever loyal subjects to Queen Elizabeth, spite of the cruel edicts that drove them to seek freedom for worship, and shelter from persecution, in a foreign land. I, too, belonged to the Romish Church until Bartholomew Legate, by his teaching some three or four years since, showed me a purer doctrine."

"I crave your pardon, young sir," said Simon, extending his hand to the young man, who grasped it warmly. "Had I known that I would not have spoken my mind so freely; but you must forgive an old man who has kept all his life in the same ways, has always been a good citizen and loyal churchman, and had the misfortune only to know the worst among Papists and other seceders."

Their conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Maysie, who with her friend had left the room some minutes before, and who now announced that dinner was ready and "Aunt" waiting.

"My sister, who keeps house for me," said Simon, as he conducted his guest downstairs to a large, low room behind the shop, where the table was spread for the noonday meal, and where, beside Alice Capel, they found Mistress Lingard, a tall, middle-aged spinster in ruff and farthingale, and with a manner kindly, though stiff. She greeted John courteously, and they took their seats, Simon at the head of the table, with Maysie and Alice on either side, while Mistress Lingard sat opposite their guest, and the two apprentices and the serving-maid took their places

below the salt. The fare was plain, but plentiful and good, and the meal enlivened by cheerful conversation, in which, however, John White took little part, being almost wholly engrossed in watching the sweet, fair face of Alice Capel and listening to the soft tones of her voice, as she replied from time to time to the remarks of their host and his sister. So intent was he on this occupation, that he did not observe the entrance of another visitor, an elderly man with stern features and close cut grey hair; and was only apprised of this addition to their company by Lingard's rising suddenly from his seat, and exclaiming:

"Why, Hugh Capel! How is it with you, man? and why came you not ere the dinner was cold?"

"Nay, I have eaten, I thank you, and but called on my way to fetch Alice. Go and make yourself ready, child," he continued, turning to the young girl; "for it is growing darker with the fog, and there are disorderly folks abroad."

She rose instantly, and left the room, accompanied by Maysie; while Simon, having filled some goblets with wine for his guests, inquired of the new-comer if he had heard anything further concerning the Papist conspiracy.

"Nay; nor have I sought to hear. It is a judgment from God upon a corrupt ruler and a wicked land. From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot all is rottenness and uncleanness, and therefore are the vials of the Lord's wrath poured out upon it, and will be continually poured out, until England shall turn again unto the Lord, and cry upon her God."

"Nay, Hugh, nay, things are not so bad as that," said Simon, in a soothing tone, such as one might use towards a peevish child; but his friend continued, without apparently heeding him, and raising his voice to a high pitch:

"Why did the Lord deliver up His people Israel unto their enemies? Why? but because of the wickedness in high places; because of the wantonness, and gluttony, and drunkenness; because of the vanity of the women, and the lust-love of the men; because of the falsehood and covetousness of the priests! For these things did the Lord deliver up His people of old unto the will of their enemies; and for these things will He deliver up His people to-day!"

"Hush! Hugh Capel, hush!" said Simon, looking anxiously around; "we know not who may be within earshot; and if you regard not your own safety, at least regard that of mine and my household." Then, hoping to turn his friend's thoughts into another channel, he asked, "Have you heard aught of Ralph lately?"

"Name him not to me!" replied Hugh Capel, fiercely; "henceforth he is no son of mine; he hath of his own perverse will cast in his lot with the sons of Belial, and as he hath sown, so must he reap; but I will have none of him; he shall not darken my doors again!"

"Nay, Hugh, be not so hard upon the lad; we were all young once, and loved to sport and junket with the best of them; and who should blame Ralph because Dame Fortune hath found him favour among the high ones of the land? Many a father would be the more ready to welcome him for that same cause; and the more so that his own wit and cleverness hath helped him thereunto."

"You doubtless mean well, Simon Lingard," answered Capel sternly; "but nought you can say will avail to change my purpose; for you reason as the worldly-wise, and heed not the Scripture command—that if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, thou shalt cut it off and cast it from thee, lest thou lose thy own soul in hell. Yea, a servant of the Holy One of Israel may make no terms with Satan, even though his own flesh and blood be ambassadors thereto!"

Simon attempted no reply, for the two girls had just entered; and it was evident from Alice's countenance that she had heard sufficient of their conversation to be deeply pained on her brother's account. He, therefore, only whispered to her to be of good cheer, for that her father would certainly forgive Ralph ere long. The poor girl, however, only smiled a piteous smile, and shook her head: she knew her stern father too well to indulge in hopes of his relenting; especially when, as in this case, his strict notions of righteousness in conduct and earnestness in religious profession had been outraged by one so near to him.

When the father and daughter had departed, Simon turned to his remaining guest, and, with a long drawn sigh said: "A good

man and a true; but overmuch religion, I fear me, hath crazed his brain, and made him believe he is doing God service, when he is but rending his own soul, and hastening his only son along the very road to ruin. If the poor lad's mother were alive, 'twould grieve her sore."

"Has the youth been guilty of crime, or is he simply a roysterer, that his father thus withholds his countenance from him?" asked John.

"Nay, save some wild pranks, I believe he hath done nought that savours of law-breaking; but a year or two since he found a place at Court, by favour of one of his Majesty's pages; and as he is well-favoured, and of lively disposition, his company is much sought after by the young gallants; and he has learned their manners, and copied their dress, and become as one of them. His father liked it not from the first, for he is of a grave and serious nature, and aught that savours of merry-making or frivolity is an offence; and thus he was for ever giving harsh reproof to the lad when he came to his home; and Ralph, being quick-tempered, bore it not quietly, but made hot reply; and so it has come about that his father hath cast him off, and forbidden him the house, or even to speak to his sister."

"That is very sad for her," said John, before whose mental vision yet floated the sweet, though mournful, Madonna-like countenance.

"Ay, it hath nearly broken the poor child's heart, for she loved her brother; and he was as affectionately disposed to her as he could be towards any one," answered Simon, as he pressed his own little daughter closely to his heart.

They stayed talking some time longer; and when at length the young man rose to go, Simon insisted that Will Shaw, one of the apprentices, should guide him to his lodgings, as the night was dark.

"Nor are our streets too safe at night for strangers," he added, as John protested against taking away the youth from his business; "and how should I answer for it to my friend Barty if ill befel you here? Farewell. Come again as soon and as often as you can while you are in London."

John thanked his kind host warmly, and with another cordial

grasp of the hand, they parted; and the young man sallied forth into the darkness, illumined only by the faint glimmer of Will Shaw's lantern; for owing to the fog, most of the shops were already closed.

"Mind your footing, Master White," said the apprentice, when they were some distance from the house; "the road is very uneven here,—and mind your head, too," he added, as, with shrieks of boisterous laughter and snatches of ribald songs, a party of young men burst forth from a doorway as they passed, and quickly surrounded them.

"Who goes there?" exclaimed one, unceremoniously possessing himself of Will's lantern. "Why, it's honest Will Shaw, Master Lingard's pretty apprentice! How fare you, sweet Will? and how fares your sweet Molly?—my eyes yearn to feast upon her beauty once again."

"Enough of that, Master Capel; let me go, please," replied the apprentice angrily, as he vainly endeavoured to regain possession of the lantern; but his tormentor dexterously warded him off. "Nay, honest Will, we cannot suffer you to depart until you have made known to us your friend," he said, throwing the light full upon John. "Is he also a measurer of silks and woollens?"

"Nay," said another, "it seems to me his clothes are of a foreign cut; perchance he can inform us concerning the gun-powder found at Westminster?"

"Gentlemen," remonstrated John, "I beg you will let us go at once; it is carrying your pleasantry too far to detain us thus on the highway at so late an hour of the evening; we will not meddle with you, and desire only that you should leave us undisturbed."

"Yes, let him go, Capel," said another of the party; "he's one of the praying, preaching sort, and not worth the trouble of plaguing."

With a mock bow the young gallant surrendered the lantern to Will Shaw, and he and his companion were suffered to depart without further molestation.

"Can that young man be the son of the Master Capel I met to-day?" asked John, as the increasing faintness of the laughter indicated that they had left the roysterers some distance behind.

"Yes, and a wild spirit he is, too; my master knows not half

of his doings ; he and his fellows are a terror to honest people, But here is the 'Black Lion,' Master White ; and good even to you."

"Good even to you, Master Shaw," John replied, as he shook the young man by the hand, "and thank you kindly ; I know not how I should have found my way alone, nor how I should have fared without your protection," he added ; and with another "Good even" his late companion departed ; and John retired to his chamber and his bed, though not for some time to sleep, for the events of the day kept crowding into his mind, and busying it with thoughts of the present, and dreams of the future. His meeting with Alice Capel and her stern old father ; his after meeting with her scapegrace brother—to what would it all tend ? Who could tell ?

An entirely new interest had sprung up in his already busy, happy life ; and he now rejoiced at what had been to him only in the morning a matter of regret—that he would be compelled to spend at least some months in London.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOHN WHITE did not fail to avail himself with tolerable frequency of Simon Lingard's hospitable invitation, which was the more welcome as his stay in London became indefinitely prolonged ; and the genial warmth of the little family circle, of which he soon felt himself a recognised member, helped in some degree to overcome that yearning for home which would otherwise have rendered his exile, voluntary though it was, almost insupportable. Generally once or twice a week, and almost always on Sundays, would he wend his steps thither, certain of meeting with a kind reception not only from Simon Lingard, his sister, and Maysie, but also from Alice Capel, who was likewise a frequent visitor at the house in the West Chepe. Many were the cosy chats they had around the winter fire, many the stories of past days Simon was beguiled into telling, while the younger members of the party roasted apples or burned their fingers with hot chestnuts, and Mistress Lingard nodded in her corner. Sometimes John would read aloud, from some old ballad or romance, a tender love song or stirring tale of heroism, while the rest, and especially the two girls, listened with sympathetic interest. Occasionally, although but seldom, Hugh Capel would join their party, and then the conversation would take a graver turn, or lead to political debate, an exercise in which the stout old Puritan took a special delight, although the vehement manner in which he ever inveighed against existing institutions, whether ecclesiastical or temporal, always caused no little alarm to his friend, Simon Lingard, whose more cautious temperament prompted him to endure with tolerable patience what he was unable to resist.

And so the winter passed away agreeably enough for John White, who had the satisfaction of finding the business that had brought him to London prospering in his hand, while the friendships he had formed since his arrival continued ever growing and deepening.

As spring came on, the social fireside gatherings began to give place on Sunday afternoons to rambles in the open air, when Simon and the three younger people would leave behind them the busy city and wander into the green fields or through country lanes, finding ever fresh delight in watching the opening buds and seeking the hiding-places of the newborn flowers. To the young man these expeditions were a source of special pleasure, not so much, perhaps, on account of his sympathy with Nature as for the opportunity it gave him of enjoying Alice Capel's companionship undisturbed; for Maysie, to whom her father was ever her best playmate, generally took entire possession of him, and would skip on in front, holding his hand, and sharing with him her exuberant joy, as she stooped to pluck a half-hidden wild flower, or sought from its note to track some wild bird's haunt; while John and Alice followed at a little distance, sometimes talking, but oftener walking together in silence as those who know each other too well to need to give outward expression to their thoughts. And this arrangement seemed so perfectly natural to all concerned that Simon Lingard was quite startled when, one evening, after their return from such a ramble, John and Alice having left, and Maysie gone to bed, his sister suddenly asked him:

"Think you, brother, it is wisely done to leave those young folks so much to themselves?"

"What young folks, Esther? What mean you?"

"Who should I mean, Simon, but John White and Alice Capel? You cannot surely have been so blind as not to see the liking they have formed for each other; and yet, I have remarked of late, that in your walks they have always been together, both going out and coming in; and you, with Maysie by your side, taking no more notice than if they were brother and sister."

"Nay, Esther, Alice is but a child; and as to John——"

"I have not a word to say against him; his conduct and bearing show him to be a good and honourable young man; but Alice is no longer a child; she is seventeen years of age; and since her father entrusts her to our care, it is for us to see that she enters into no connections without his knowledge and consent."

Simon stood for a moment gazing at his sister with an expression of bewilderment; then he said, in a meditative tone:

"Well, perhaps you are right, Esther; I will speak to the young man next time he comes. Methinks, however, Hugh Capel likes him well, and would scarce be displeased to have him for a son; it might even make some amends to him for his trouble over that scapegrace Ralph. Yes, I'll speak to John next time he comes, so you need fear no more on that account, Esther, but may sleep till morn without an uneasy thought." And with an affectionate embrace, Simon dismissed his sister to her chamber, while he sat down by the fire to think over this opening chapter of the ever old and ever new romance of life.

But he did not forget his promise, and when, a few days after, John White paid his accustomed visit, Simon took him aside and plainly questioned him concerning his intentions with regard to Alice Capel. Without the slightest hesitation, and looking straight into the old man's face, John replied:

"I love her, Master Lingard; and if her father saith not 'Nay,' I mean to make her my wife."

"Well answered, John; 'tis as I thought," answered Lingard, regarding him kindly; "but hark ye, lad, you must hear what her father says ere you walk with her again. Nay, she is not here to-night—you need not hasten away."

"I am going now to Master Capel's," returned the young man.

"Off with you then, and good speed," answered Simon, with a smile. "Time was, lad, I was eager as you, when I was wooing my Mary," he added, with a sigh.

As Simon had anticipated, Hugh Capel was by no means averse to accepting John White as his son-in-law. From the first, the young man's seriousness of disposition and quiet, respectful demeanour had impressed him very favourably; and although, on account of Alice's youth, he insisted that the marriage should not take place for two or three years, he willingly agreed to their immediate betrothal, the more so that he felt if he were taken from her his child would not now be left without a protector.

And so, in the presence of the grey-haired puritan father, and consecrated by his blessing, John White and Alice Capel plighted their troth with few and simple words, but with hearts full of earnest, faithful purpose and true and tender love, resolved to live, and if God willed it, to die together.

A few weeks after this important epoch in his life, John received a letter from his friend Bartholomew, in the course of which he said: "Believe, dear lad, I do rejoice most heartily with you in your joy. Of late, when reading your letters, I have thought, from the way in which you have spoken of the maiden Alice Capel, that such a thing might come to pass, and now that it has, I wish you and her all the happiness I verily believe you both deserve. You say three years seem a long time, and doubtless they do to impatient youth; but young as you both are, and secure in each other's love, you may well afford to wait. Did not Jacob serve fourteen years for Rachel? Three years will soon pass, John, and looking back on them you will wonder how short they have been. I hold it very kind of you, in the midst of your happiness, still to keep your old friend Bartholomew in such loving remembrance, and to say, as you do, that you fain would I could see and know the maiden of your choice. God willing, I hope to do so ere long. My people desire to send me to carry their messages of good-will and encouragement to some of their brethren in England, and they will let me away from them for three months. I therefore expect to leave here in June, sail for Harwich, and make my way from there to my old home, where I shall spend some two or three weeks, and then to London, where I trust to meet you and my other good friends, to whom give my kindest greetings, and especially to Master Lingard, his worthy sister, and my little friend Mistress Maysie; and with every loving wish for yourself, believe me your true friend, BARTHOLOMEW LEGATE."

The contents of this letter gave great satisfaction to all, and especially to the Lingards, by all of whom Bartholomew was held in very warm esteem, and his arrival amongst them was looked forward to with eagerness. Meantime, however, an event occurred, which, though unimportant in its immediate consequences, created at the time no small anxiety to Simon Lingard and his sister, as well as distress to Maysie. It happened in this wise: They were returning one Sunday afternoon from their accustomed ramble, when they encountered a crowd of people engaged in witnessing the grotesque gestures and antics of some fantastically attired young men, who were thus amusing themselves, and

diverting the populace; and in the confusion Maysie became accidentally separated from her father. He, supposing she had joined Alice and John, leisurely wended his way home alone; but to his alarm she was not with them when they returned, and they had seen no trace of her. Accompanied by John, Simon set out instantly in search of the missing girl; and they traversed again with care the way they had come till they reached the spot where she had been parted from him. No crowd was there now; it was growing dusk, and the streets were almost deserted. Hither and thither they went, up one narrow crooked turning and down another, questioning this one and that, until the poor father was almost frantic with fear and excitement. At length, after some three hours of fruitless wandering, John suggested that his wearied companion should go home and see if perchance Maysie had returned thither, while he would remain out a little longer to continue the search. To this, after some hesitation, Simon agreed, promising moreover, not to come out again until John's return. Left to himself the latter set off once more; this time in the direction of the river, having first called at his lodgings for a lantern. Guided by its feeble glimmer, he made his way to a row of small houses, the backs of which abutted on the river. A few boatmen and others were yet lingering about their doorways; and in answer to John's question as to whether they had seen a girl answering to Maysie's description, an old man replied: "There be always ill work doing at Mat Stebbins, at the 'Ferry Boat,' round the corner; if you've a good stick and a stout heart, like enough you might find the girl there." Thanking him for his suggestion, John proceeded in the direction indicated, and soon found the "Ferry Boat," a low hostel, mostly frequented by loafers on the river side, and persons of questionable character generally, and as the young man approached, his ears were greeted by sounds of disorderly merriment, peals of boisterous laughter, followed immediately by volleys of oaths; then ensued a scuffling as if fighting was going forward, and as he stood hesitating whether to venture in or not, a female shriek fell upon his ear. The voice was Maysie's. He rushed into the house, and heedless of the protests of the ill-looking host and his subordinates, mounted the stairs, and burst open the door of the room

whence the sound had proceeded. It was a small squalid apartment, the low ceiling festooned with the cobwebs of ages, and the floor reeking with accumulations of filth. The lamplight revealed the dirty board strewn with the remains of a repast. In one corner of the room two young men, richly attired, were engaged in a hand to hand struggle with sword and dagger on the floor, while in another a third young gallant was holding Maysie in his arms, endeavouring with a scarf to stifle her terrified cries.

John's entrance was so sudden and unexpected that Maysie's tormentor had not time to ward off the blow that felled him to the ground, and released his captive, who with a cry of "John, dear John!" fell fainting into the arms of her rescuer; but ere the latter could bear away his burden, the landlord and his followers entered, and had it not been for the confusion consequent on the half-drunken condition of nearly all the party, and the excitement caused by the murderous character of the fray between the two boon companions, escape would have been well-nigh impossible. As it was, John only effected his retreat at the cost of much struggling, and a dagger cut on his arm, of which, however, he took little heed, so thankful was he to be once more in the free air; though he almost feared whether the fright might not have killed Maysie, she lay so still and motionless in his arms.

Slowly, and with ever-increasing difficulty, for fatigue and loss of blood had already weakened him, he made his way through tortuous lanes and bye-ways into the West Chepe, heeding not the astonished exclamations or sympathising questionings of the few people he met; intent only on the endeavour to restore Maysie to her father's arms, ere the faintness against which he felt himself struggling almost in vain, should completely overcome him, and compel him to drop his burden. At length, however, as in a dream, the face and form of Simon Lingard loomed mistily through the darkness; a confusion of voices followed, and he felt himself relieved of Maysie's weight. Then he knew no more until, after a blank that might have lasted a minute or a year, he heard a strange voice say, "Keep him quiet for a day or two, and there'll be nought to fear." And opening his eyes, saw by the feeble glimmer of a rushlight that he was in bed in an unaccustomed

room. He was conscious also of a smarting pain in his arm, but was too dazed and weary to be able to account for that or his surroundings.

Presently some one bent over him, and raising his head, gave him some drink, and he wondered dreamily who it might be, then lapsed again into unconsciousness.

When he next opened his eyes, the sun was shining, and at his bedside stood Simon Lingard gazing upon him with an anxious countenance.

"How is it with thee, dear lad?" he asked affectionately.

"Well, I think, good Master Lingard, but I scarce can tell. Why am I here? Ah! I remember now. How is Maysie? Is she safe?"

"Safe and well, thanks to God and your stout heart, my brave good John. May He bless you for the part you took, for I can ne'er repay you. But there, I promised not to talk myself, or let you talk; so lie still, and I'll go down and let Esther know thou'rt waking." And with an affectionate pressure of the hand, Simon went downstairs to yield the post of nursing to his sister.

As the surgeon had promised, a few days of rest and careful attention sufficed to restore John almost to his usual state of health, although some time passed ere he was permitted by his grateful friends to return to his lodgings.

"Nay, nay, we must be sure you are well again, and able to use your arm, and do as you ever did before ere we can let you go from us," said Simon in answer to John's protestations against trespassing longer on their kindness; "and then we shall be loth to part with you," he added.

And so the young man had to submit, nor it must be confessed did he find the kindly tyranny of Mistress Lingard and her brother otherwise than pleasant, especially as it included the frequent companionship of Alice, who came chiefly on Maysie's account, almost daily; for although the latter had recovered from the first effects of her excitement and alarm, yet she remained nervous and timid, dreading to be alone, and starting at every sound, and the society of her calm quiet-natured friend had a beneficial soothing influence upon her. She seldom, however, referred in Alice's presence to the circumstances attending her

kidnapping, and seemed desirous to banish the recollection of it from her mind; but her father knew that it was Ralph Capel who had been the chief instigator in the wicked attempt, and that it was necessary for him to guard his treasure with even greater care than heretofore.

CHAPTER XV.

PERHAPS there are few stranger experiences in life than that of returning after a prolonged absence to scenes once more familiar to us, the haunts of our childhood or youth; to note with what a gentle touch the fingers of time have passed over the face of nature, and to feel how deep have been their tracings upon ourselves. The hill, the stream,—nay, the very trees and flowers, look upon us in the old familiar way; while we are changed, so changed, we can scarce recognise as ours the portraits hung on memory's walls, the rosy-cheeked boy, the eager impetuous youth.

It was with some such thoughts as these that Bartholomew Legate sat in the early morning by the open window of his bed-chamber, and looked out on the fair landscape. Under a clear blue sky and lighted by brilliant sunshine, the fresh, green, dewy fields stretched far away into the distance, while the birds sang blithely in the orchard, and the flowers, their sweet faces smiling as if through tears, looked up gratefully to the bounteous heavens.

Never, it seemed to Bartholomew, had his childhood's home looked more beautiful than now, on this summer morning, as he viewed it again after his long absence. And all, too, was so unchanged: everything about the homestead wore its old well-remembered aspect; and as he listened to the familiar sounds that came up from below, it seemed to him as if the past nine years might well be but a dream from which he was just awaking to his old life.

A summons to the morning meal interrupted his reflections, and he descended to the kitchen where Mistress Fisher and her husband were awaiting their guest.

"And how fares it with thee, lad?" said the latter, as he shook him heartily by the hand. "Eh, but thou'rt looking bravely, though thou'rt much changed too; something older, and broader in the shoulders."

"I see no change in him but for the better," said Mistress Fisher, gazing with admiration at Bartholomew's tall, well-knit form and handsome, intelligent face with the kindly dark eyes now turned laughingly upon her as he replied :

"One must needs change somewhat in nine years, though I rejoice to find so little in good Master Fisher and yourself : I trust it may be the same with all my other friends."

"I fear me thou'lt not find it so with Master Harper," said the honest yeoman, as he took his seat at the board, and motioned to his guest to do the same ; "he hath been but sadly of late : I once thought thou wouldst scarce have looked on him again, but he hath mended somewhat since the summer came."

"Say you so?" said Bartholomew in a tone of deep concern ; "but that grieves me indeed ; and I knew nought of it, for in his letters he hath never mentioned failing health. I must go and see him at once."

"Ay, do, Barty ; I warrant me thou'lt be the best physic he can have," said Mistress Fisher. "'Twas but the other day, Mistress Joan was saying how the poor man pined for a sight of thee ; but he would not thou shouldst be told."

Breakfast over, they departed ; Master Fisher to return to his farm labours and his spouse to her housewifery, while Bartholomew set off across the dewy fields to pay his longed-for visit to his dear old friend. The air was sweet with perfume, and vocal with the song of birds ; but so busied was he with his thoughts that he scarcely heeded anything besides, and his name was spoken two or three times before he was conscious of any one being near.

He turned at length, and saw at his side a thin, grey-haired man, much bent, and leaning upon a staff ; his clothes were threadbare, and he looked dusty and wayworn.

"I crave your pardon," said the stranger with a disappointed air ; "I see you have forgotten me ;" and, as Bartholomew stood gazing on him with kind but wondering eyes, he continued : "but no wonder, for time and care have wrought sore change in me. Yet I owe you so much—my freedom, even my life ; I could not let you pass by without telling you how I felt all your kindness,—how I feel it still."

As he ceased speaking, a sudden light dawned upon the other

"Ephraim Postlethwaite !" he exclaimed, seizing the old man's hands in a cordial grasp : "How I rejoice to see thee, another of my old friends ! art staying in these parts ?"

"Nay, I am as ever, a wanderer, and shall wander on until my Lord comes, or until He sees fit in His mercy to call me home. I rested last night with some brethren about ten miles from here, and by to-morrow eve I must be in London : the Lord hath need of workers in that mighty Babylon, that stronghold of Satan !"

"I doubt it not," answered Bartholomew : "He hath need of workers everywhere, and chiefly of such as will show forth the doctrine in their lives as well as preach it with their lips."

"Yea, verily," said the old man, looking curiously at his companion, but the doctrine must needs be sound, else it will avail nought."

"And who is to judge of the soundness of the doctrine, save each man for himself, and God our Father for all ?"

"Nay, but 'twere ill-advised, indeed, to turn to our own perverted judgment for a true interpretation of God's will as revealed in His holy word."

"Then," asked Bartholomew, "why saith the Scripture, 'The commandment which I command thee this day is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, neither is it beyond the sea, but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it' ? What meaneth it save that God, in His infinite love and pity, hath not granted the custody of His truth to one book, or one Church, or one order of men, but hath given to each of us the word of truth within himself as a guide and consolation ?"

"To His elect, maybe," returned Ephraim Postlethwaite ; "but 'twere presumption to suppose He hath granted it to all alike. The children of the devil can have no part with the children of the kingdom !"

"But surely, good Master Postlethwaite," said Bartholomew earnestly, "all alike are God's children ; and though some, alas ! are but erring ones, yet were it not equal presumption to say that He withhold His pity and loving-kindness, yea His word of truth, even from these ; for did not our Lord and Master command us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us,

and to pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us, that we may be the children of our Father which is in heaven? and dare we think that He is less merciful, less loving, than He desires His children to be?"

"Beware of over-confidence," said the old man solemnly, "lest thou fall into a snare set by Satan for thee, for is it not the Apostle Paul himself who saith that God hath given to the non-elect the spirit of slumber—eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear until this day, and warns his disciples, therefore, not to be high-minded, but to fear?"

Bartholomew made no reply, but presently, pausing as they walked, he drew his companion's attention to an ant-hill, about which the little folk were busily hurrying to and fro. "See," he said, "how wonderfully God hath provided even for these, giving unto them skill and forethought to enable them to lay by for a time of need the food He so bountifully supplies; and look at yon bee—who but the Father of all hath taught it to seek for honey in the fragrant flowers? and who but He hath placed within the human father's breast that deep, strong love for his little child that sweetens and blesses all labour and toil for its sake?" He looked to where, in a corner of the field they were just quitting, a rough labourer had paused in his work to clasp in his arms and cover with caresses the little child, just brought him by the sunburnt mother.

The eyes of the old man followed his until they lighted upon the group; then he said in a low tone:

"Thou art not far from the kingdom of God; I do but bid thee beware of over-confidence." Then, taking Bartholomew's hand, he continued: "Farewell, my son; our paths divide now; God grant they meet again here or in the better world."

"Farewell, Master Postlethwaite; God speed thee on thy way, and bless thee wherever thou goest," he answered, with a kindly grasp of the enthusiast's hand. Then, after standing a few moments to watch the bent form of his late companion, as he toiled along the path that would presently bring him in the direction of the noisy bustling capital, Bartholomew turned aside into the grateful shade of the leafy lane leading straight to Master Harper's cottage, musing as he went on the strange inequalities

of the human lot, over all of which brooded yet the great un-failing love of the universal Father.

Joan, the old housekeeper, met him at the door with outstretched hands of welcome. "And thou'st come at last!" she exclaimed; "but the master 'll be glad, to be sure. Eh, but he hath longed for a sight o' thee. And thou'rt looking hale and strong, though thou'rt a bit older, too," she continued, scrutinizing him closely.

"That, without doubt, Mistress Joan," he replied, smiling; "but tell me, how is Master Harper?"

"Very sadly; he's not yet risen from his bed, poor man; but there, he's heard thy voice, thou must go to him. 'Coming, master!'" and motioning to her visitor to follow, she led the way up the narrow staircase to the sunny chamber, with its scanty furniture, where, on a narrow pallet bed, lay his good old friend and tutor. At sight of Bartholomew, his wan face brightened with a smile of pleasure.

"Barty, dear lad!" he exclaimed, extending his thin hands; "I have been looking and longing for thee ever since thy letter came, and yet it seems scarce true that thou'rt here at last. When didst thou reach old England?"

"But yesterday; I came on straight to Rumwell, and got to the old home at sundown, and Master Fisher would have me stay there," said Bartholomew, as he bent down and kissed the pallid brow with filial affection, making a strong effort to conceal the shock which his old friend's altered appearance had caused him.

"There, sit down where I can see you," said Harper, motioning him to a seat; "and tell all that has happened in these long years; and first, how is good Mistress Kate?"

"Very well in health, and scarce grown older, I think. I would fain have brought her with me to see her old friends in England once more, but she cared not to undertake the journey; and moreover, Mistress White was but weakly, and as her eldest daughter hath lately married and gone away, Kate thought she would do most good in staying with her until my return. She is as ever, good and thoughtful for others."

"Yes," answered Harper, with a smile; "like some fruits—

very sweet within, though the outer rind is oftentimes rough and bitter. I would fain have seen her again, the good old woman. And now, tell me all about yourself and your doings ever since you left England, and just as if I never had a letter from you."

So Bartholomew began, and told all the history of his nine years of absence, and especially of the changes in his religious opinions, of the doubts that had troubled his mind even before his departure from England, and of the light that had at length dawned upon him, partly through the books lent him by his good friend, the professor, and partly through a wider knowledge of mankind, their strength and weaknesses, their hopes and fears, their longings and aspirations; and how, as the truth unfolded itself in all its beauty, he felt it to be that for which men were hungering and thirsting, and, impelled by this conviction, began to preach it, at first to a very few humble folk; but how, little by little, the circle of his hearers enlarged, until at length he felt himself as if called by God to give up all else to labour in the ministry of His gospel.

Briefly and modestly he told it all, while Harper lay and listened with a happy smile on his wan face, without once interrupting; but when the narrative was ended, he said: "It is but what I expected, dear lad, even before you went away. May God bless and prosper you and your work in the land of your adoption. That is, indeed, a happy country where each man is free to worship God as his own heart doth direct. May the day soon come when it shall be so in this land of ours,—for come it will, Barty,—and though I shall not live to see it, you may, and every true word of yours will help to hasten its coming."

Bartholomew shook his head a little sadly. "Dear master," he said, "I would fain believe so too, but fear me the signs of the times point not that way. Men desire freedom for themselves, but scarce for others; they desire freedom to worship God after the manner they esteem most right, yet would torture to death their brother for being likewise true to his conscience. Alas! that man should be so slow to understand our Lord's commands: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself.'"

"Perhaps," said Harper, with something of his old dryness of manner, "they find it hard to decide who is their neighbour, and mistake him to be none other than the man who sits next them in the church or conventicle." Then, after a pause, he added: "I own, Barty, there is too much of truth in what you have said; but, nevertheless, I hold firmly to my faith that the day of religious freedom will yet dawn for England. Ay, and not only every true word and brave deed, but every persecution nobly borne, every suffering for conscience' sake, will hasten the dawning of that blessed day!"

He had raised himself on the bed as he spoke, his eyes flashing with their old fire, and his voice ringing out full and clear, as he uttered the words, which to Bartholomew had a prophetic sound.

"You are right, dear master," he said, "and I take shame to myself for thus giving way to despairing thoughts, when the part of a true servant is but to do his Lord's will, and trust to Him for what may come."

"Ay, Barty, that's the lesson we have all to learn sooner or later—to labour and to wait, to strew that other men may gather, and sow that they may reap. But see, the sun hath already reached the corner of yon meadow; how thy converse hath beguiled the time. I should have risen long since. Shall I appoint thee my tiring man?"

"Most willingly," replied Bartholomew, and with gentle, loving care he assisted his old master to dress, and descend the stairs to the well known room, the scene of his own studious hours in days of yore, and having placed him in a chair by the window, seated himself on a stool by his side.

"Why, this is like old times, Barty," said Harper, looking at him with a happy smile; "I shall be calling on you to translate a page of Virgil or Cæsar."

"And I will do that if you will it," answered Bartholomew gaily; "I can prove that I have not forgotten all my Latin."

"I will not put you to so severe a test at present; there is something else I would fain have you read; give me that packet from the bookshelf."

Bartholomew obeyed, and Harper, having taken therefrom a couple of pamphlets, handed them to him, saying,—

"Read these, my son, and then say if the spirit of freedom is dead in our land, or if it is not rather just awaking into life?"

They were tracts of a kind which, spite of Royal displeasure and consequent official vigilance, found for those days a tolerably large circulation among certain classes of the English people. They were generally satirical in tone, and their professed aim was the denunciation of abuses, and the advocacy of liberty of speech and thought, but too often they seemed rather an outlet for personal rancour on the part of the author. Several of these tracts had found their way to Holland, and Bartholomew was, therefore, not unfamiliar with this class of literature. These were among the most favourable specimens, however, and he perused them with interest. As he laid them down, Harper asked:

"Well, how think you now, are these not prophecies of a better day?"

Bartholomew looked up with a smile. "They do truly show that men are waxing discontented; yet, though I would not judge these writers uncharitably, to me it seems they care more for their own opinions and the fulfilment of their own pet schemes than for truth for its own sake, and the weal of the nation."

"Perhaps so, Barty; yet their thoughts and words may perchance be truer, and reach farther than they imagine or intend. But now about yourself; are you not going to preach the while you are here? There are many old friends would be glad to hear you; and it's little enough of spiritual food they get save when Master Churchill has happened to be away, when, as I am told, some good and earnest men have preached in his place; and the poor hungry folk have not been better satisfied with their meal of stones for having had one of bread. You must speak to them, and, please God, I will hear you too."

"I will do so willingly, if you think my poor words will be of service to them, and when I have found the fittest time and place I will come and tell you. Farewell for the present, dear master; I must back to the farm now, but will come up again ere sundown."

"Farewell, dear lad; I shall watch for thee until thou'rt come," replied Harper, but in a cheerful tone, and with the old bright smile on his face.

"Thou'rt the best medicine he's had this many a long day," said old Joan, as the young man took his leave.

On his return Bartholomew mentioned to his host, not without some misgiving as to the view he might take of such a proceeding, his promise to Master Harper to hold a public service, and to preach in the home of his youth. To his surprise, however, the proposition was hailed with delight.

"Wife and I were but just now saying it was scarce fair thou shouldst give of thy best to strangers, and leave those thou wert brought up amongst wanting," said the good man. "Let it be next Sunday eve, Barty; and there's a barn standing empty just by Neville's cottage. The men will soon put some forms and stools into it, and 'twill be better under cover than standing out in the open if rain should come."

"You are very kind, Master Fisher," said Bartholomew; "and I thank you heartily for your offer, though I fear to accept it; for I would be loth you should get into trouble on my account, as might happen if Master Churchill or any one else saw fit to interrupt the meeting."

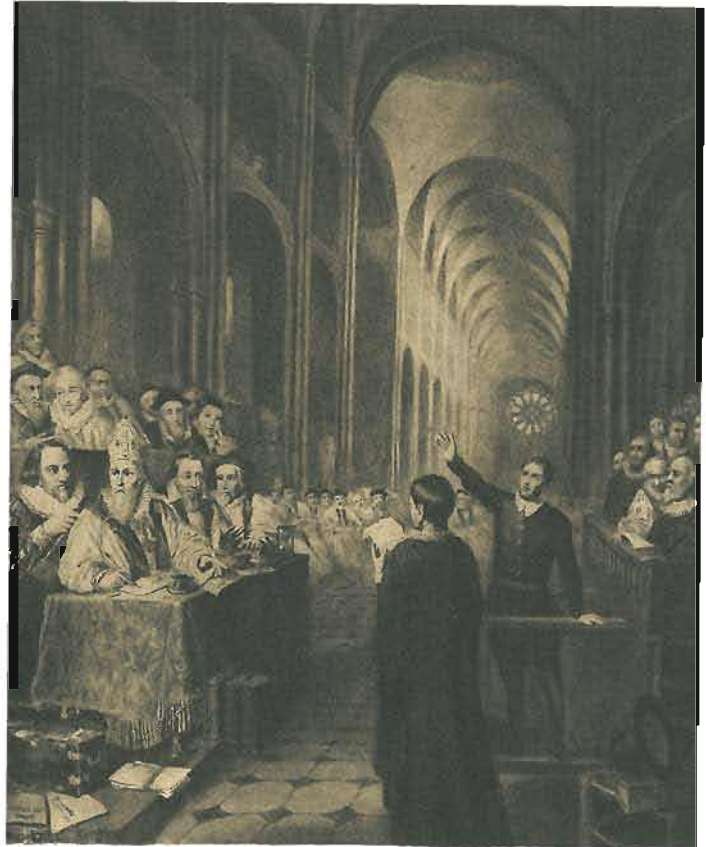
"Take no trouble on that score, Barty. I do not believe any will interfere, but if they should they will find Henry Fisher is not to be trifled with. I have learned," he continued, as if guessing Bartholomew's thoughts, "to think differently about many things to what I did in the old days, when I used to think Master Harper a fool and your father little else. I know now who was the fool not to see that outspoken truth was far better than aught else could be. I don't often talk about these things, but they come into one's head once in a while, and then I'm glad to speak of them. It sometimes seems almost as if I'd be glad to bear something for the sake of truth."

Bartholomew went up that evening to his old tutor, and told him of the arrangements made by Master Fisher for the following Sunday, which gave Master Harper entire satisfaction, as the barn was sufficiently near his own dwelling to give him a good hope of being able to be present on the occasion.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE eventful Sunday came quickly round, a sweet, bright summer day—one of those Sabbaths which Nature seems to proclaim were made for man. Since early morning Bartholomew had been with his good old friend, and a quiet happy time they had spent together, reading or talking in the cool shady study, or walking in the garden among the bright perfumed flowers; while Joan, in her Sunday gown and kerchief, sat in the porch conning her old black-letter Bible, and looking up now and again to note with quiet joy some signs of returning health and vigour in her beloved master.

At last, as the lengthening shadows told of the approach of the appointed hour, they set out, Harper leaning upon Bartholomew, and Joan following at a little distance with one of her cronies, and soon reached the barn, which they found converted by Master Fisher's exertions into a fairly comfortable meeting-house; the floor was strewn with clean rushes, and seats of various kinds extemporized, while the light that shone in through the chinks revealed many a familiar face; for although it yet wanted a quarter of an hour of the time, many people had already assembled and the barn was nearly full, so that as Bartholomew made his way to the platform prepared for him at the further end of the building, it was through rows of outstretched hands, and 'mid a chorus of kindly greetings. There was good old Dame Markham in her widow's garb, less upright and more wrinkled than of yore, but active and cheery still; there was Humphrey Day, with his rosy-cheeked, comely wife, and their three chubby, flaxen-haired children; and many more who had come from all the little hamlets round to see good Master Legate and touch his hand, and hear him preach; old men and women who had known him as a little child, others in the prime and vigour of manhood, with whom he had played as a boy on the village green, or sat side by



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The Trial before the Consistory Court. (see p. 256)

side on the school-house bench. And when at length he rose to commence the service, all those faces were turned with half-curious anticipation to the tall erect figure on the platform, in the plain close-fitting suit of sober grey, and the dark but handsome countenance with the earnest loving eyes. It was a trying moment for Bartholomew, and his voice trembled a little as he gave out the well-known psalm, beginning—

“Clothed with state, and girt with might,
Monarch-like Jehovah reigns ;
He who earth’s foundation pight (pitched),
Pight at first, and yet sustains.”

But as the jubilant strains burst forth from every throat, until the old black rafters rang with the notes of praise, he forgot all else in the emotions of love and thankfulness which filled his soul. The psalm ended, he read some passages of Scripture in clear and steady tones, then after a few simple words of heartfelt prayer, commenced his sermon, the whole of the little congregation seeming to listen with eyes and ears.

But now, Bartholomew thought no longer of those to whom he was speaking, save as children with him of the Father in heaven. His whole soul was filled with the message he felt himself called on to deliver, the message of God’s tender, pitying love and care for His human family, of His long-suffering patience and great mercy even for the most sinful and degraded. With glowing cheek and sparkling eye he exhorted his hearers to live worthy of their high calling as sons and daughters of God, who, though He was King, Creator, the Most High, was no less our Father and Friend, a very present Help and Comforter, one to whom they need not fear to go in their troubles and distresses, ay, even in their weaknesses and sins ; because He cared for them and loved them far more than they could think or comprehend—more than the lover for the maiden of his choice, or the mother for the babe at her breast : cared for and loved them so that they needed no priest to offer sacrifice on their behalf, no mediator to intercede for them, not even Jesus, their elder Brother ; for the Father Himself loved them. Nor did He require any sacrifice at their hands, save the sacrifice of a humble and lowly spirit ; no offer

ing but the offerings of glad and thankful hearts, of earnest and devoted lives, consecrated to the service of God and of their fellow-men. Nor was there need to quit the world to devote themselves to a religious life, for it was God who had placed them just where they were, in the midst of their daily work, and it was to that their religion must be brought, that the commonest task might be glorified, and the humblest work rendered holy thereby.

So absorbed was Bartholomew in his favourite theme, so warmed by the manifest sympathy of his listeners, that he concluded his address ere he became aware of a stir near the door, and sounds of angry disputing, but in the hush that followed his closing words the voice of his friend and host became distinctly audible :

"And I say ye're trespassing ; the land is mine as well as the barn, and if ye go not away instantly, I'll have a warrant out against the pair of you by to-morrow morn, as sure as my name's Henry Fisher."

"But the law——" said another voice in a half-deprecating tone.

"The law's as good for one man as another, or ought to be ; so both of you get quit of this field, or I'll send some of my men to turn you out neck and crop."

"I suppose you know, Master Fisher, that all will come out in evidence against you before the justice," said another speaker in a sneering tone that Bartholomew remembered well ; "and then we'll see who has the law on his side. Officers, do your duty ; disperse this disorderly assembly, and make prisoners of that vagabond preacher and this insolent scoundrel."

While this little scene was being enacted outside the barn, there had been considerable confusion within ; some of the women were weeping with terror, others endeavouring to make their escape unobserved, while not a few sturdy fellows led on by Humphrey Day were for defying the law and defending their liberties by main force. And it would, doubtless, have gone hard with the constables had not Bartholomew come to the front as Churchill ceased speaking, just in time to prevent the knotted stick which the incensed Fisher held in his hand from descending

on the shoulders of the hated parish priest, saying as he gently pushed the cudgel aside :

"Nay, let us not use violence ; rather leave such an one to the punishment of his own conscience and the judgment of his God."

Churchill glowered with rage and indignation at these words, but evidently considered it prudent to remove to a little distance from the stout yeoman, who was almost ready to turn upon Bartholomew for interfering with his chastisement of the insulting informer.

Without apparently observing his displeasure the young man addressed the constables, asking if they had a warrant to apprehend any person ?

"Yes, Master Legate, against yourself," answered one of the men ; "and I would it had been any one else, for I'm loth to put your father's son into gaol, and for such a cause too."

"I am willing to go with you," said Bartholomew ; "only let all these innocent folk disperse quietly to their homes." Then turning to Harper, who sat looking very weary and troubled, he bade him be of good cheer, for that he had confidence he should soon be released ; then having said an affectionate farewell, and asked Master Fisher to see the old man to his home in safety, he announced his readiness to accompany the constables.

"Nay, there is no need for those," he said, as they produced some fetters ; "I shall not attempt to escape you."

Without another word the man returned them to his pouch, and their prisoner was permitted to walk as a free man to the gaol when he would be confined at least for that night.

It was a very sad ending to the pleasant meeting, and perhaps no one was more despondent than Henry Fisher, who could not help a suspicion that by losing his temper he might have helped to make matters worse.

"I wonder," he said gloomily, as he supported Harper's feeble footsteps along the road to his home, "if Barty would say that God's love was in all this, and that it was a good thing he should be taken to prison, and that miserable worm, Churchill, get the better of him at every turn ?"

"I think he would," replied his companion, looking up with a

quiet smile ; "for he preaches what he believes, and the spite of evil men and the reproaches of the world are not the worst things that can happen ; they do no harm to the man himself, if he only remains true to the best within him."

"I daresay you are right, Master Harper," answered Fisher ; "but I'm not clever or good enough to follow you altogether. I wish Barty well out of it, poor lad, though ; and if there's any lawyer to be got hold of who can help in the matter, it's not the cost shall stand in the way. I'll see to it to-morrow, first thing."

They had by this time reached Harper's dwelling, and Fisher, having seen him safely upstairs to his chamber, wished him a kindly "Good-night," and bidding Joan take care of her master, set off for his own home feeling much more depressed and anxious than he would have cared to acknowledge.

Meantime, Bartholomew Legate was being marched along between the two warders, who maintained a sullen silence, as if half-ashamed of their task, only replying in answer to his question as to the reason of his arrest, that he would "hear all about that anon." They reached the gaol in due course ; the same in which Bartholomew had visited Ephraim Postlethwaite nine years before. It might have been only yesterday, so little apparent change was there in the aspect of the miserable den, and the condition of the poor wretches confined there, some of whom might, indeed, have been the same. At sight of the new prisoner many of these began to clamour loudly for money to buy food, some in a half-threatening tone, others with the whine of hopeless misery ; while a few, and those the most hopeless looking, sat in stony silence, unmoved by aught that was passing around them. Sick at heart, Bartholomew gave what he could spare to relieve their too obvious distress ; then sitting down on his heap of straw, tried to reconcile himself to his fate, which might be, he well knew, detention in that noisome den for an unlimited period ; but the thought was almost maddening, and he dared not dwell upon it. But as he reflected that although this was his first taste of persecution, it was of the same kind, and no worse, than that Ephraim Postlethwaite had borne so bravely, he felt ashamed of his weakness. Should he prove himself less able and willing than that servant of Christ to endure for conscience' sake, less ready to

accept the cup at the Father's hand, because it was somewhat bitter ? And might it not be that God had work for him even here ? Shaking off his dejection with a resolute will, he rose and looked around him on the companions of his imprisonment.

Comparative quiet was reigning now, for the poor wretches were engaged in devouring the food his bounty had procured for them, though more like dogs than men. Three only were not joining in the repast ; two lay apparently asleep on their straw, while a third sat apart, his head bowed upon his hands, and his whole attitude bespeaking hopeless misery. Him Bartholomew now approached, and kneeling on the straw by his side, broke the loaf he had reserved for himself, saying gently :

"Brother, will you not share my bread with me ?"

The haggard face was lifted for a moment, a thin hand brushed the bread rudely aside, and then the head sank into its old position. But Bartholomew was not to be thus repelled ; he waited a minute or two, then addressed him again in kind tones :

"My poor brother, will you not let me help you ?"

The answer came now fierce and impatient : "No one can help me ; let me alone !"

But even as he spoke, the miserable man, raising his eyes, met those of the other fixed upon him with infinite love and pity shining in their dark depths, and he added far less roughly :

"You had better go away ; if you knew what I am, you wouldn't call me brother, you'd shun me as the others do. I'm a thief and a murderer, and I'm to be hanged in the morn and then will come hell, but it can't be much worse than this !"

Bartholomew shuddered and involuntarily drew back a little, less, perhaps, on account of the terrible revelation itself than the air of defiance with which it was made. The other saw it and smiled a ghastly smile, saying bitterly :

"You'll leave me alone now, as all the rest do ; kind words are not for the like of me ; I was shut out of all that long ago ; they all forsook me, even God, if there be a God !"

Bartholomew's eyes filled with tears ; he had never beheld such misery before.

"My poor brother," he entreated, "say not so ; God never forsakes His children, not even the most sinful ; it is they who

by their sinfulness shut out the light of His mercy from their souls, and when they repent and turn to Him, He is ever ready to forgive and receive them back into the bosom of His love."

The man looked up for a moment with a gleam of hope in his wild eye, but again relapsed into his former attitude, murmuring :

"Too late, too late ! there's nothing for me but hell ; to burn in the fire for ever."

"Nay," answered Bartholomew, "it is never too late for God, nor do I believe He will punish any of His children for ever."

The face was lifted again.

"But what place would there be in heaven for such as me ? Why, the angels and white-robed saints would shrink away from me, saying, 'This is a thief and a murderer, and came straight from the gallows here.' No, no ; it will be hell for me !"

"Brother," said Bartholomew ; "dare we think that God's love is less than that of our earthly fathers ? and as they punish their children for their correction, and because they love them, must we not believe that in like manner God punishes His erring children, not to satisfy His vengeance, but that they may be purified from their sins, and made fit to dwell with the blessed and holy in His heavenly home ? and believing this, shall we not willingly accept the punishment at His hand, however painful it may be, and whether it come to us here or there, as the healing draught that alone can make the sick soul whole."

The man answered not with words, but bowed his head in assent, while his hand sought that of the friend who had come to make his departure into the unknown world not quite so terrible as it had otherwise been.

And thus, for the best part of the night, Bartholomew remained at the side of the poor wretch, praying with, and strengthening him with words of hope and comfort, regardless of the taunts and jeers with which he was frequently assailed, and intent only on what he felt to be his God-given mission to the poor sinful soul. Some rays of daylight were already making their way into the dismal prison ere the doomed man fell into a quiet sleep, which lasted until the ghastly summons arrived ; when, with tolerable calmness, he bade a grateful farewell to Bartholomew, and passed away to meet his death on the scaffold.

Wearied with want of rest, and sick with the noisome atmosphere of the dismal den, besides being mentally overwrought, Bartholomew sank down on the straw in a state of depression that he found quite impossible to shake off. Some breakfast was brought to him, but he was unable to touch it ; there was some consolation, however, in watching the avidity with which it was devoured by two of his hapless fellow-prisoners ; and he was beginning to wonder how much it would cost to give a good meal to the poorer ones among the rest, and whether the slender means with which he was at present provided would suffice therefor. But while he was yet engaged in considering the matter, one of the gaolers entered, and touching him on the shoulder, bade him follow him to the governor's apartments. Wondering what this summons might mean, Bartholomew obeyed. The heavy door closed behind him, the strong key turned in the lock ; and to his unspeakable relief, he breathed once more the pure air of heaven as it entered through the apertures by which light was admitted to the long narrow passage leading to that part of the prison occupied by the governor.

His companion led the way in silence through another door, which he carefully unlocked and locked behind them, then up a steep flight of stairs, and through another passage to a room at the end, into which he unceremoniously pushed his charge, with the brief introduction of "Here's the prisoner" ; and Bartholomew found himself in the presence of a short, thickset man, of somewhat ferocious aspect, who greeted him with the abrupt intimation that the magistrate would try his case at once ; and that he had therefore better pay for his lodging and board, as he would probably be sent to another gaol, and naming at the same time the sum required, which, considering the character of the accommodation was, to say the least, somewhat high, and would leave but a few small coins in his late prisoner's possession. There was no help for it, however, as Bartholomew well knew, so he satisfied the extortionate demands of his inhospitable host, and prepared to accompany the warders who were to conduct him to the Justice Room at Thurston Hall.

It was somewhat early when they arrived, and the worthy magistrate had not yet taken his seat, but several persons were already

there, among whom Bartholomew recognised, with pleasure and a sense of kind companionship, the honest sunburnt countenance of Henry Fisher turned towards him with a friendly smile of welcome. A less agreeable spectacle was afforded by Master Churchill's rubicund visage, over which hovered a smile of malignant triumph, as from time to time he glanced towards Bartholomew, as he stood between the two warders. And now there was a stir among the bystanders: a door was thrown open at the lower end of the hall, a servitor with great show of pomp and solemnity cleared the way, and the magistrate, attended by his clerk, made his way with what dignity he might to his seat on the raised dais. Then the clerk called out in a loud voice: "Let the prisoner come forward." And with a courteous obeisance, Bartholomew advanced and stood, still attended by the warders, at the foot of the dais and before the magisterial chair. The worthy justice, who was a little altered since we saw him last, scanned him from head to foot, then, turning to his clerk, inquired with what crime the prisoner was charged?

"With assembling a number of persons together for unlawful purposes, and preaching in the said assembly doctrines contrary to those of the Church as by law established," was the answer.

"And who accuses him?" was the next question.

"I do," said Churchill, bustling up the hall.

"Well, and what have you got to say?" asked the magistrate coldly.

"This: that I had heard a meeting of some kind was to be held in a barn belonging to Henry Fisher of the Elm Farm. I went thither last evening with two constables, and the prisoner, Bartholomew Legate, was there, conducting what he called a religious service, and preaching against the doctrines of the Trinity and Eternal Punishment, contrary to the Church and to Holy Scripture."

"And that was yestereven," interrupted the magistrate angrily, "and you got that warrant from me before the man had committed the offence. Why were you not doing your duty at your own church, instead of prying about other people's business?"

A laugh ran round the hall, and Churchill turned very red. "We had no service," he said; "the people do not care to come

while the weather is hot; I thought my duty was to look after my people, and see they are taught no false doctrines."

"Hold your tongue, sirrah," said the justice; then turning to Bartholomew he asked, "And what have you to say to the charge?"

"It is in part true," he replied; "I did certainly preach last evening to a number of those among whom I was born and brought up, and to whom I was fain to speak the words of truth; but I spoke only that which was profitable for the building up of the soul's life, and nought that was anti-scriptural."

"You do believe then in God?"

"Most assuredly. I believe that He is sole Creator and Governor of the universe, and the Father of mankind."

"And you believe Jesus Christ to be also God?"

"As an anointed God, but not otherwise."

The worthy magistrate was evidently puzzled, and remained for some time in silence; then looking up he said:

"I believe you to be an honest man, Bartholomew Legate, and therefore gladly discharge you; but take from me this word of warning: it will be safer for you to hold no such meetings, nor to preach at all save in a lawful church, while you remain in England, for I understand you are but on a visit here. You go hence a free man. And you," he continued, turning to Churchill, "will do better for the future to take more care of your church, and the poor of your parish, than to be meddling in things that concern you not. You may leave, Master Legate. Bring in the next prisoner!"

With expressions of grateful thanks to the magistrate who had so unexpectedly befriended him, Bartholomew retired from the hall, and was received outside with hearty welcome and congratulations by Fisher and some others.

"But you are looking as pale as my white cow," said the former; "you must come home with me at once, and let my good wife take you in hand."

"Indeed, there is nought amiss with me," replied Bartholomew; "and I must see Master Harper first, he is sure to be anxious."

"I will go and tell him the news, and who knows but I may bring him back with me?" returned Fisher.

So there was no alternative but to submit, and although Bartholomew protested against being considered an invalid, he found the petting and repose, and demolition of good things insisted on by Mistress Fisher, far from undesirable in his somewhat exhausted condition.

In the afternoon a great delight awaited him in the arrival of his old tutor, whom Fisher had persuaded to mount a quiet horse, led by himself, and so brought him thither from his home.

"I could hardly have dared to hope for this pleasure, dear lad," said Harper. "God has been very good to you."

"Yes, He opened my prison doors, He has work yet for me to do," answered Bartholomew with a grateful smile.

CHAPTER XVII.

"COME, lads! Will! Steve! what are you about? There's that cloth not measured off yet, and my lord of Suffolk's man was to come for it at three."

"Ay, ay, master," they answered, "assuming as they spoke a show of alacrity that lasted full two minutes, at the end of which time they relapsed into the lolling and gossiping which their master had just reprov'd. Some excuse might be found for them, however, for it was a sultry July afternoon that would have been oppressive in green fields and shady lanes, but was doubly so in the dark close shop of the city street, and doubtless that was the reason Simon Lingard was indisposed to be very severe on his apprentice lads for their idleness, and kept his head bent so assiduously over his ledger, not again to interrupt their chat save to remark, "If Master Carey wants more of those silken hose, he's not to have them till he's paid for the last; mind that, lads." Then he was again busied with his figures, nor did he look up until the sound of his own name, uttered in a tone strange yet familiar, attracted his attention, and turning round he saw that a stranger had just entered the shop, a tall, dark, handsome man.

"What may be your pleasure, sir?" he inquired, stepping forward.

"To get speech of Master Lingard," was the answer, accompanied by a merry twinkling of the eye.

"I am he," said Simon, striving to recollect where and when he had seen that face before.

"And have you not a word of welcome for Bartholomew Legate?" asked the stranger, holding out his hand, which Simon grasped warmly, as he exclaimed:

"To be sure! so it is! But how was I to know you, when you've altered so; and your clothes of such a foreign cut? Why, you're as broad again in the shoulders as you were; and, yes, I

must say too, you've grown older, though you're looking as well as can be."

"I doubt not you are right," answered Bartholomew with a smile; "I have not, like you, learned the secret of perpetual youth. But how are Mistress Lingard, and little Maysie, and my friend John?"

"All quite well, and longing to see you. Come upstairs, you'll find the women-folk there, and John will be in this evening;" and closing his ledger with an evident air of relief, Simon conducted his visitor to the sitting-room, where they found Mistress Lingard enjoying her siesta, while Maysie and Alice Capel were seated at the window plying their needles and tongues with equal facility.

"Here's Bartholomew Legate, my dears," was his brief introduction. The girls rose from their seats, and Mistress Lingard sat up very straight and settled her coif, trying to look as if she had not been sleeping. "You'll scarce know this little maid again!" said her fond father, drawing towards him the blushing Maysie, and laying his hand on her curly locks.

"She has changed greatly, yet I still see some likeness to my old playfellow," was Bartholomew's reply as he took the little hand and touched it with his lips.

"You remember my sister," continued Simon; "and this is Alice Capel, of whom John will have told you much in his letters."

It was Alice's turn to blush now, and she did so with becoming grace; while Bartholomew, having courteously acknowledged Mistress Lingard's compliments, greeted the girl kindly, and delivered the affectionate messages with which he had been charged by John's family in such an elder-brotherly fashion, that she was soon at her ease.

"And now sit ye down," said Simon, "and tell us about yourself—when you reached England, and where you've been, and how all the good friends are? But first, where is your baggage?"

"At the 'White Heart' with my horse," was Bartholomew's reply.

"Then I'll send one of the lads for it at once."

"Nay, but I have taken a bed there," protested his guest.

"Then your horse may occupy it, for I have no room for him," answered Simon with a laugh, as he bustled from the room.

He was soon back again, however, and having bidden Maysie to bring a stoup of wine, sat down by Bartholomew and began to question him concerning Master Harper and his state of health; and the old farm and its present occupants, and about his own doings while there, which led to Bartholomew being obliged to relate the circumstances of his arrest and imprisonment.

"That comes of your over zeal," said Simon, shaking his head; "it's sure to bring you into trouble sooner or later. Why, it was only by a lucky chance you did not get shut up in gaol for a year or two."

"Nay, rather by the blessing of God, and because He had work still in store for me," replied Bartholomew with quiet earnestness.

"Well, well, call it what you will. I never did, and never can see the use of running into danger with your eyes wide open. But, there, I know it's no good talking to you any more than it was to your poor father. If you think your duty lies in any particular direction, you'd go there though twenty lions stood in the path. Not but what I like you the better for it, only I'm not made of that kind of stuff."

"But you will surely not think of preaching there again while you are in England," said Mistress Lingard, who had been an attentive listener to the conversation.

"I scarce know yet, madam; I do not willingly infringe the law of the land, but where that clashes with the higher law within, there is no choice left to me," answered Bartholomew; and as he spoke his eyes met Maysie's fixed upon him with an expression of silent approval. Her father saw it and smiled.

"You have Maysie on your side, and Alice too, I think; so we old people may as well keep silence. What's the matter now?" This was to his apprentice, Stephen Garton, who had just put his head in at the door.

"It's Master Fuller, the lawyer, and he says he won't be served by any one but yourself, though I told him you were busy."

"I'll be down directly," said Lingard. "That's always the way," he added, with a good-humoured smile, as he rose to obey

the summons; "they never leave one in peace even for half an hour."

He was some time gone, and on his return looked not a little anxious.

"Alice, my child," he said, drawing her aside, "I have bad news for you. Master Fuller came to tell me of Ralph; he got into trouble last night and killed a man, though I believe in fair fight, and has had to take sanctuary in the Temple, where he now lies badly wounded. He wants to see you. You will not mind going when John comes?"

But Alice did not answer; she had turned very white, a mist came over her blue eyes, and she would have fallen but for Lingard's supporting arm.

"Esther! Maysie!" he exclaimed, "she is fainting, bring some water!"

He laid her upon the settle, and it was not long before the skilful tending of Mistress Lingard and the loving ministrations of Maysie had their due effect; but as consciousness returned and she was able to realize what had happened to her brother, a piteous expression came into her face, an expression of utter misery.

"Oh, Maysie," she moaned, "my brother is a murderer."

"But perhaps he only did it in self-defence, and then it would not be murder," suggested Maysie, anxious to impart any comfort to her friend, although in reality unable to discern much difference between killing and murder, and feeling Ralph capable of the worst. Meanwhile Simon in a few words had explained the matter to Bartholomew.

"It's a bad case, I fear," he said; "the lad's a wild young reprobate, and I owe him a score on my own account, but if it's true that he's dying, one would not willingly deny him his wish to look upon his sweet young sister again. But we must hear what John says; we can't say aught to her father, he's so bitter against him for all he's his only son."

It was not long ere John White appeared, and great was his surprise and delight at seeing Bartholomew, chiefly on his own account, but also because he was the bearer of latest news from his dear home circle, regarding whose welfare he began to put

eager questions; but in the midst of them he observed Alice's pallor and evident depression of spirits, and on ascertaining the cause, suggested that if she felt equal to the exertion they ought to go to the Temple without loss of time. This was just what Alice desired, and she declared herself quite ready to start; but Simon insisted they should have some supper first, and added, "Think you not it might be well to take one of the lads with you? You know not what may happen, and Will is a steady fellow and not without mettle."

"Thank you kindly, Master Lingard, but I think not. Will is hot, and might easily be enticed into a brawl, and I should have to look after him as well as Alice."

"Could I be of service if I went with you?" suggested Bartholomew. John looked up gratefully. He dreaded the ordeal both for his betrothed and himself, and the presence of this known tried friend could not fail to be a help and strength, whatever might occur.

"It would be a comfort to have you with us," he said; "but I ought not to ask it, you must be tired after travelling so far to day."

"Not at all, and I shall be glad to go."

"And I shall be happier to know you are with them," said Simon heartily.

Supper was despatched somewhat hastily, and as soon as it was over they set out. It was still quite light, and there were fewer disorderly folks about than there would be later on, so that they made their way with ease along the Chepe, and under the shadow of the Cathedral. But on entering the precincts of the Temple they seemed to have bidden farewell to law and order, and Alice shrank from the evidences of depravity that met them on every side—the bold, unwomanly women, the swaggering, dissipated men; and as they threaded the narrow dirty streets, she drew her veil closer about her face, and clung nervously to John's arm, notwithstanding his assurances that with Bartholomew Legate following so close behind there was no cause for fear. And indeed there was little doubt that more than one who might have offered rudeness to the fair girl was deterred by the near presence of the tall dignified figure, whose piercing eyes seemed to read

the inmost thoughts ere they had time to shape themselves in words.

"We must be somewhere near the place," said John at length, when they had wandered about for some time within a very limited area in vain quest of a house of sufficient importance to bespeak it as the abode of a respectable physician, for such he presumed to be the professional standing of the Doctor Dare to whom he had been directed.

"Will it not be better to inquire?" suggested Bartholomew; and suiting the action to the word, he hailed a lad who was passing, and put the question to him, with the result that the boy hurried on as if he had heard nothing. Bartholomew was too quick for him, however, and taking a stride or two forward, laid his hand on his shoulder with a firm grip, and repeated the question.

"What do you want with Doctor Dare?" asked his captive sullenly.

"We want to see the young gentleman who was taken into his house last night badly wounded; take us there at once, and we will reward you," replied Bartholomew, drawing a coin from his pocket as evidence of his good faith. Without another word, the boy, beckoning them to follow, ran down a narrow court, and seemed to vanish from their sight in the shadow of a doorway. For a moment the hearts of all three misgave them, lest it might mean some treachery on the part of their guide—a plan to lure them into a den of thieves or even of murderers. But when they reached the doorway, the boy was there and alone, although from within came sounds of boisterous revelry that made Alice tremble.

Laying his finger on his lips to enforce silence, he led the way along a dark passage through the house into a court, beyond where was another small dwelling standing alone, at the door of which he tapped lightly.

"Who's there?" was asked in a sharp, suspicious tone.

"Some friends of the young gentleman that came last night, master," replied the boy, in a voice scarcely raised above a whisper.

Then followed the drawing back of heavy bolts, the door was

partially opened, and a weird figure made visible. It was that of a man of some seventy years or more, tall, though bent, and very spare, with skin as yellow as an old parchment, and well inscribed with Time's indelible characters; while beneath his overhanging brow, his eyes gleamed like lanterns through the large horn-rimmed spectacles, as he closely scrutinized the little group, questioning them meanwhile as to the nature of their business with his patient. Having apparently satisfied himself with their answers, he opened the door wider, and admitted them into a small incommensurable apartment, surrounded with shelves crowded with a miscellaneous collection of old books, phials, crucibles, and surgical instruments, crowned with a couple of grinning human skulls. The furniture consisted of two stools, an oaken chest, and a small board on trestles, which occupied the room from end to end, and covered with books, parchments, and writing materials; while an old time-worn tome, lying open before a lamp, indicated the latest occupation of its owner, the Doctor Dare whom they had been seeking.

The boy, having received his gratuity and been dismissed, the old man carefully locked and bolted the door; then, having bidden Alice to be seated, he made his way up the narrow winding staircase that led direct from this room to the chamber above, whence they had observed to come the sound of voices, and from time to time a half-stifled groan. After the lapse of some minutes, Doctor Dare reappeared, followed by a man of some five and twenty years, dressed in the height of fashion in a coat of ruby-coloured velvet, slashed with amber-coloured satin, and trunk hose of the same; his broad-brimmed hat adorned with a large drooping feather, fastened by a brooch of emeralds and rubies. He saluted the little party with courtly grace, and after a few whispered words with the doctor, left the house.

Bartholomew fancied he had seen the face before, and asked the old man the young gallant's name.

"You must seek to learn that in the outer world," was the stern reply: "I have simply to do with the healing art, and know nought but what pertains thereto. Follow me."

With some little difficulty they groped their way after him up the steep, narrow stair, and found themselves in a room some-

what larger than that they had just quitted, where, on a mean, narrow bed, lay the young man, his countenance deathly white, and his head enveloped in blood-stained bandages.

"Don't let him talk too much, and come down when you are ready; you'll find me below;" and so saying, the old man turned to go down the stairs, leaving them alone with the invalid.

He lay quite still for some moments, then murmured faintly: "Give me some drink."

There was a cup by the bedside, and Bartholomew, having satisfied himself as to its contents, gently raised the sufferer, and held it to his lips. He took a long draught, then opened his eyes wide, and looked around him.

"Who are you?" he asked, as Bartholomew laid him down again on the pillow.

"A friend of your sister's," he replied, beckoning Alice to come forward.

She did so, but with evident reluctance; the thought of her brother's blood-guiltiness made her shrink from him, now that she was actually in his presence. But as he murmured her name in the old well-remembered tone, some of her sisterly affection seemed to return, and she took his nerveless hand in her warm clasp, and touched his lips with hers. A faint smile stole over his features, but changed almost immediately to an expression of terror.

"Am I going to die, Alice?" he asked.

"I don't know, Ralph," she answered in a low, half-frightened tone.

"But I can't die!" he almost shrieked; "I can't die! God would only send me to hell, to burn there for ever—and I have not been as wicked as many others, yet they go on living. Oh! but He is cruel; if He would only let me live, I would spend my time in doing good. I would build a church, and give alms to the poor. Surely He won't let me die yet. It would be better to have sold one's self to the devil, as they say old Dare has done! And I will, too; it can't be worse!" he added, with an imprecation.

"Ralph! Ralph!" implored Alice, in an agonized tone; "do not say such dreadful things. If you were to be taken at your word!"

"Little sister," said Bartholomew soothingly, and taking both her trembling hands in his; "can you not trust the infinite love of the infinite God more than to believe He would give up one of His children, however degraded, into the power of the evil one? But this is no fit scene for you; go downstairs, and leave your brother to me. Take her away, John; if he becomes calmer, you can return to bid him farewell."

John obeyed, and Bartholomew, turning to the sufferer, who was now lying exhausted by his excitement, gave him some drink, and having readjusted his pillows, sat down by the bedside, and began repeating in low, soothing tones, comforting passages from the Book of books. Then he spoke simply and earnestly out of his own heart of God's love to His children, of His forgiving mercy to the penitent, and of the blessedness of a life lived in His service; and was presently rewarded by seeing the flush of excitement die away on his patient's countenance, and the eyes, out of which the fiery light had gone, fixed peacefully upon his own. For some time he lay quite silent, but said at length in an imploring tone:

"Perhaps God will let me live after all; don't you think so?"

"It is not for me to say," replied Bartholomew gravely; "but if He does, you must remember that He gives you back your life to be lived for Him, and not for yourself."

To this Ralph made no answer, but presently exclaimed, half petulantly: "Oh, I wish He would take away this pain!"

"When it is good and right He will do so, but until then you must try to bear it with patience, and even thankfulness, as part of the good Father's remedy for your sick soul."

Ralph listened with attention, but that his mind was totally unable to grasp the true import of the words, was shown by his exclaiming:

"But I don't know why I should have to bear it all! Carey and the others urged me on; so it was as much their fault as mine, and they ought to suffer as well; and I should not have drawn at Gershom had he not first called me a cheat and a liar."

Bartholomew sighed as he felt how impossible it was at present to convince Ralph that it was sin itself that was to be feared, and not its inevitable punishment. He only said: "The

sins of others are not an excuse for our own, and except we learn to withstand temptation we shall never gain strength." Then bidding him farewell and promising to see him again, he went downstairs to send up Alice and John, and in a few minutes more they were on their way home, all saddened by the spectacle they had witnessed of the young life thus being recklessly thrown away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"YES, Master Legate, you mean it for the best, I know; and I own it's kind in you to take so much interest in my affairs; but you may really spare yourself further trouble in this matter; my father and I never did and never could agree—his ways and mine are quite different; we never thought alike about any one thing; and it would be only vexing the twain of us to bring us together. Of course, I shouldn't have liked to die without seeing the old man once more, but I'm not likely to quit the world just now; I'm getting all right again, and as soon as that wretched business has blown over, shall be back at Court; so you must see it's better to leave things alone, and let us go on each in his own way, as we have done for the last seven years." And having thus spoken in a tone of careless indifference, Ralph Capel threw himself back on his pallet with the air of one who, having settled the matter in his own mind, wishes it not to be again referred to.

Bartholomew stood for a few moments regarding him with mingled disappointment and pity; then he answered sorrowfully: "I have no wish, Ralph, to meddle with matters that concern me not, nor am I given thereto; but it was at your own desire, remember, that I first tried to mediate between your father and yourself, although truly I undertook the task nothing loth, believing, as I did, that your wish to be reconciled to him was the fruit of a true sorrow for a misspent life."

"Yes, Master Legate, I know," answered Ralph somewhat impatiently; "but that's all past now. I'm not going to die yet; and no good would come of my seeing my father. I know well enough what his opinions are, and what he would have me do; but his kind of life wouldn't suit me at all; I shall not give up my pleasures yet for him or any one else."

"But think you, Ralph, your life was given you for no higher

purpose than that of finding your pleasures? Have you already forgotten how wretched and pitiable those pleasures looked when you thought you were about to stand before your Judge, and had nought but those, and the sins they had led to, to present before Him? Have you forgotten your oft-repeated promises of amendment if God should grant you your life again?" asked Bartholomew sternly.

Ralph quailed visibly before his piercing glance, but he nevertheless answered with assumed carelessness: "Of course things look very bad to a man when he thinks he's going to die, and he's ready to promise anything; but I do really mean in a few more years to give up my place at Court, and the gay life there, and settle down quietly to something or other; but I'm young yet—there's plenty of time for me."

Bartholomew was about to reply, when a quick step was heard on the stairs; the door was flung open, and a young man entered—the same he had seen on the occasion of his first visit. He greeted his intimate with cordial familiarity, and looking inquiringly at Bartholomew, who had risen from his seat, remarked, "I think I have seen this gentleman before?"

Ralph introduced them briefly: "Master Bartholomew Legate, Master Carey."

"Bartholomew Legate!" repeated the latter; "did you not live at Rumwell?"

"Yes, for the first four and twenty years of my life," was the answer.

"Ah, I was sure I had seen you before, and heard of you, too," returned the other, with something of rudeness in his tone, as he walked to the window and looked out, with the evident intention of avoiding further acquaintance; while Ralph sat silent, as if the presence of the new-comer had deprived him of the power of speech.

It was evident to Bartholomew that it was useless for him to prolong his visit; and he took his leave almost immediately, with a depressing sense of the failure of his earnest efforts to bring back this wandering soul into the paths of righteousness, the end to which he had devoted so much loving labour, and sacrificed so much precious time. The enticements of sensual pleasures, the

influences of his boon companions, were too surely resuming their old sway over Ralph Capel's weak, volatile nature, and banishing thence all desires for better things; indeed, he now seemed ashamed of ever having yielded to such, and bade a cool farewell to the man who had inspired them within him, as if relieved to be rid of his presence.

With a heavy heart Bartholomew descended the stairs, and quitted the house; but ere he had gone many yards, found himself confronted by the bent, spare form of Doctor Dare. He gave him courteous greeting, and would have passed on, but the old man detained him.

"You have come from him?" he said.

Bartholomew assented.

"And you have proved the truth of king Solomon's saying, that 'all is vanity'! Nay, but I grieve for your sake that the youth was not better worth your pains; there are those on whom they would have been more profitably bestowed. You have fought well, but you are no match for the enemy: they have made the poison sweet, and the fool will not relinquish the cup they have given him till he has drained it to the dregs. I have seen many such."

"Nay, but I trust he may see his error ere it is too late," replied Bartholomew.

"Bah! not he; he knows not his friends from foes. Like the moth around the flame, such as he flutter and flutter about the light of pleasure, until at length their gay wings are scorched and shrivelled, and they fall to the ground, helpless and despised," continued the old doctor. Then he added, with a touch of bitterness in his tone, "Ah, they mock at the old witch-doctor, and make sport of his poverty and his loneliness, but they know not how soon they may be brought low, even as he has been, and become in their turn marks of scorn and derision for others. Ay, and it's only justice, justice;—I verily believe the world is governed by the devil."

"Nay," answered Bartholomew gravely, "no power of evil, but a God of almighty wisdom and goodness rules the world; and if He sometimes permits a seeming evil, it is but that He may bring out good therefrom."

"Yes, it's easy for you to believe thus," said the old man, "because you know not yet what it is to lose all that makes life worth living; you know nought of the bitterness of remorse, nor of what it means to be scorned and hunted down like a wild beast, till you're fain to seek refuge where you may, e'en though it should be in such a hell upon earth as this. But there, why should I talk thus to a stranger? you're nought to me, nor I to you," he exclaimed, almost fiercely.

"We are brothers in God's sight," answered Bartholomew, gently taking the wrinkled hands in his own, and looking down into the old man's face with a smile that seemed at once to calm his passionate excitement; and he said quietly:

"It is long, indeed, since any called me by that name, but I thank you for the word—it makes me feel not quite so desolate. Pardon my vehemence just now; it is seldom, indeed, that I speak of my past life to any, yet I feel I may trust you. Farewell! I must back to my den; but you will come and see me ere long?"

And almost before his companion had time to reply, Doctor Dare had vanished from sight within the precincts of his dwelling, and Bartholomew, finding himself becoming an object of interest to a gathering group of idle loafers, deemed it prudent to beat a hasty retreat.

It was already dusk when he reached Simon Lingard's house, where he had promised to spend the evening; but even had the feeble rays of the oil lamps not illumined the shop, he might easily have been guided thereto by the jocund peals of laughter which could have emanated from none but the worthy hosier himself, supplemented though they were by those of his two assistants; and on entering, he found Simon seated upon his counter in the inner part of the shop, and holding his stout sides while he gave vent to his uncontrollable mirth, the cause of which seem centred in a lank, light-haired, thin-visaged personage, with a preternaturally solemn countenance, who was holding forth with a grave earnestness that presented a ludicrous contrast to his listener's merriment.

"I do assure you, Master Lingard, that it is all quite true; my wife's sister knows the wench that's servant to Mistress Griffiths,

and she has seen the blessed father's face itself, and she says there's no mistaking it. She remembers John Wilkinson bringing the straw to her mistress, with the spot of blood upon it, last May, and how the crystal case was made to keep it safe; and she says the face appeared on the outside of a leaf which covered a grain within it, just a week ago this very day; and they are going to send it to the Pope, and they say he will make him a saint. Indeed, Master Lingard, 'tis no laughing matter; a wonder like that must mean something, and I much fear me it bodes no good to us all."

"Yes, yes, Tony, so it must," replied Simon, with a good-humoured smile, as he brought his hand down heavily upon the other's shoulder; "and if nought else, it means that there are plenty of fools in the world, if only folks will take the pains to find them out. Ah, Barty!" he continued, for the first time catching sight of the latter, "here at last; and just in time for this wonderful story, that should make your flesh creep and your hair stand on end. Here's a miracle been wrought in this year 1606, and within this very city of ours. Tell him all about it, Tony."

And thus adjured, the solemn individual related for the second time, slowly and circumstantially, the history of the blood-besprinkled straw with an ear at the end, that had fallen out of the basket in which Father Garnet's head dropped after his execution, at the feet of one John Wilkinson; and being conveyed by him for safe keeping to the house of Hugh Griffiths, a tailor, and placed by Mistress Griffiths in a crystal case made on purpose for it, was found some four months after to exhibit on the outside of a leaf enclosing one of the grains, an exact representation of the face of the Jesuit father.

"Well, what think you, Barty?" asked Simon as the narrative concluded. "For my part, I am thankful that the rascally priest only popped his head up out of the straw, and not the whole of his body. But is it not wonderful that folks can be found to believe such a tale, even a wise head like my friend, Tony, here?"

"It would be; only that we have all more or less the power to see that which we greatly desire to see, our imagination supplying what is needed to complete the picture. And as I doubt not Father Garnet's friends entertained a very real affection for him,

and many looked upon him as a martyr rather than a malefactor, it was not unnatural for some to fancy they could trace a resemblance to him, even in the lines on the shrivelled surface of a leaf, and one or two, having noted this marvellous effect, others would easily be persuaded to discover the same."

"That's a good explanation, Barty," said Simon, "and may be the true one, though, to be sure, I was for writing down all the folks who spread such tales abroad as fools or liars." Then, turning to the reporter of the wonder, he asked merrily:

"Well, Tony, what think you now? Are you satisfied that the world is not coming to an end at once, just because one straw is not exactly like another?"

"I don't know what you mean, Master Lingard," replied Tony, more than half offended; "I told you just what I heard, and something may yet happen."

"So it may, my friend, so it may; but as something is always happening, it will not make much difference to you or me."

This enigmatical remark, accompanied as it was by another of Simon's hearty laughs, proved altogether too perplexing for Tony, who somewhat sulkily took his leave.

"Straws show which way the wind blows," remarked Simon, when his solemn visitor had departed. "It's a queer tale, yet it's evident the poor lad believes it; but he would swallow anything that's offered him—he's none too wise, despite his owlish looks. But come upstairs, Barty, and let us have our crack together; we shall not have many more. Shut up the shop, lads; and if you go out, mind you're in betimes."

It was somewhat of a relief to Bartholomew, as he followed his host to the cheerful sitting-room, not to find Alice there, for after his very unsatisfactory interview with her brother, he rather dreaded having to answer any questions of hers concerning him. He received the customary warm welcome from Mistress Lingard and Maysie, and then took his seat on the settle by Simon's side; while the elder lady resumed her spinning, and the younger one, kneeling by the hearth, pored over Spenser's "Faery Queene" by the light of the wood fire which burned with a pleasant brightness, for the evening was chill although it was scarcely past the middle of September.

"Do you know aught of that acquaintance of young Capel's, Master Carey?" asked Bartholomew of Simon, as they sat thus, enjoying the warmth.

"Yes, that he owes me a hundred and eighty crowns which I can't get from him," was the answer; "but I should have thought you had known him, for he comes from your part of the country; his father has an estate not far from Rumwell."

"Then that accounts for his recognising my name. I remember his father, but do not think I have seen him before."

"No great loss to you, Barty," said Lingard; "for he's a wild young fellow, and cares for nought under the sun. He's a favourite of the king's favourite, and it was through him Ralph got his place at Court; he has great power over the foolish lad, and it's my opinion he makes him oftentimes burn his fingers for him."

"I feared as much," said Bartholomew, with a sigh.

"If you'll take my advice," continued Simon, "you will not give yourself another moment's trouble about Ralph or any of his set; they are all bad together, and they revel in their wickedness; it's their meat and drink, their very life."

"But that makes it so much the worse," returned Bartholomew, "and is the greater reason why we should spare no pains to turn them from their errors and lead them into the right way."

"Ay, and it makes it the more difficult, too. I much fear, Barty, the world is too bad to be easily mended by you or me, at least here in London. I sometimes think Hugh Capel may be right, and that there'll be a great day of reckoning for us all ere long. But a truce to this dismal talk,—tell me when you last heard from Master Harper."

"Not for a week past, but then he sent me a very cheery letter by the hand of a servant of Justice Thurston's, who had come to London on his master's business: I trust to spend a few days with him ere I set sail."

"Justice Thurston! Was not that the magistrate before whom you were taken for preaching?"

"Yes, and he showed himself then, as once before, very kindly disposed and willing to show me favour."

"That was well, but I would not, were I you, try him too often; perchance next time he might not be in so good a humour,"

said Simon with a smile. "And now let us have some music ere you go—one of those madrigals you and Maysie sang three evenings since; I like well to hear you sing together. Come, my daughter!"

Maysie blushed as she rose and took her place by Bartholomew's side, and her voice trembled a little at first, but soon it rang out sweet and clear as it mingled with his deeper tones in the favourite old airs her father loved so well. And he meanwhile looked and listened with delight, thinking what a pleasant picture they made as they stood side by side, and how it might be that their lives would harmonize as sweetly as did their voices now.

And thus the evening passed, the last, as it proved, that Bartholomew was destined for a long time to spend beneath Simon Lingard's roof; for on the following day he received a communication from Holland which desired him to return to his congregation without delay, and he therefore resolved to leave London at once, that he might spend at least one day with his dear old tutor and friend ere he embarked for Leyden.

There was short time for leave-takings; but he, nevertheless, made his way once more to Doctor Dare's wretched dwelling, hoping for a last word with Ralph Capel; but it was too late, the bird had flown, and his late host could give no clue to his whereabouts.

"He left an hour or two after you were here," said the old man; "and would not say whither he went, lest any should follow him. And are you going away so soon?" he continued. "I am loth to say farewell, for you are the only one who has spoken kind words to me for this many a long year, and I am sad to think I shall not look upon your face again; but you will not forget Eustace Dare. May God bless you!" and with a warm grasp of his hand he hurried within his dwelling and closed the door.

Early on the following morning Bartholomew set off on his journey, accompanied as far as the first halting-place by John White, who was too full of hope and bright anticipations for the future to be dispirited at the prospect of parting with his friend. Indeed, he evidently regarded the separation as of a temporary nature, and bade him quite a cheerful farewell, telling him that he

and Alice would have a room for him in their own house in the following summer, and entrusting him with all kinds of loving messages to his father and mother, whom he hoped to see ere long; then he turned back, leaving Bartholomew to pursue his journey alone in the pleasant autumn morning. Just before noon he arrived at the Elm Farm, his unexpected appearance causing no small astonishment to worthy Master Fisher and his good wife, who gave him, nevertheless, a very hearty welcome, although their pleasure was somewhat damped on learning of the short duration of his visit.

"I had not thought you would be leaving England so soon," said the latter.

"Nor I," was the answer; "but there has arisen some disquiet in my church, and if I return not quickly mischief may ensue; and I know you will forgive me if I spend my few remaining hours in England with my dear old master. It can scarcely be that I shall see him again."

"To be sure, to be sure, Barty; who else has a better right to you now? You shall go as soon as ever you've had a bite and a sup; we were just about to sit down," said Mistress Fisher, as she bustled about to hasten the preparing of the noon-day meal.

"Yes, and I'll walk across with you afterwards," added her husband, taking his seat at the board, and bidding his guest do the same. "It may be as well to let Master Harper know that you're coming; he gets shaken like when anything comes on him suddenly."

It was a kind precaution, but as it proved, scarcely necessary, for as they entered the lane leading up to Harper's house they met the old man walking slowly towards them.

"I've been looking for you, Barty, for the last few days," he said, grasping his old pupil's hand; "I thought you would come soon. And how are you, Master Fisher?" he continued; "and how's the good wife?"

"We've nought to complain of, thanks, Master Harper; and I'm right glad to see you out of doors again."

"Yes, I'm making the most of the sunshine. But you're not going yet?—you'll come indoors for a bit?"

"Not now. I'll come when you've no one else with you. At

this season I'm bound to be looking after the men, else the work would stand still;" and with a cheerful smile and nod Fisher turned away, and was soon out of sight.

"It's very kind of him to leave us now; he knows I would fain be alone with you," said Harper, laying his hand affectionately on Bartholomew's arm, and drawing him towards the house, where they were met with unfeigned astonishment by Joan.

"You see I was right," said her master, smiling, "I told you he would come."

"And when are you going back again?" he asked, when they were once more seated in the old familiar room. "I know the time must be drawing very near."

"Indeed it is; I set sail to-morrow evening," was the somewhat reluctant answer.

"So soon? Well, it matters little; we'll make the most of each other's company while we may. Next time we meet there will be no need to talk of parting; so be not sad, Barty. Come and tell me of your doings in London, and of the friends there."

He was so bright and cheerful, that Bartholomew could not but make an effort to shake off his own depression, and thus in pleasant chat, and some more serious talk, they passed the few remaining hours of the glorious autumn day; and when the time came to bid the last farewells, Harper said:

"Let ours be no sorrowful leave-taking, Barty; there is great joy in store for me, and I shall see thy father ere we meet again. God bless and prosper thy work, and keep thee true and faithful to the end, my dear, dear lad!"

Bartholomew dared not trust himself to speak. Taking the thin, worn hands in his, he imprinted a long, loving kiss on the wrinkled brow, and tore himself away.

CHAPTER XIX.

BARTHOLOMEW'S anxiety concerning the welfare of his church, which the tediousness of the voyage had much augmented, was happily soon relieved, his presence and his quiet assumption of authority having the immediate effect of putting a stop to the arrogant claims of a few among his flock to a superior knowledge of spiritual things by virtue of which they felt justified in laying on their brethren burdens of ceremonies and dues too heavy for them to bear; and although the prompt decisive action of the pastor led to the withdrawal of one or two from the little community, it restored tranquillity and confidence to the rest, and afforded scope for the free growth of that true religious spirit, the fruit of which is righteousness and peace and joy eternal. For two years longer did Bartholomew continue to labour in the beloved land of his adoption, with the ever increasing satisfaction of seeing his little church becoming a power for good, as well among the wealthy and learned of the city as the poor and humble, whose lives were rendered brighter and happier thereby.

But even as to the apostle of old the cry from Macedonia came with such irresistible importunity, so came also to Bartholomew at this period an appeal for aid from his native land that he might not put aside, although to yield thereto was like rending his heart-strings from their hold. But his resolution once taken, all attempts to dissuade him from the sacrifice were vain, and a few weeks saw his preparations for departure almost completed. It was his last evening in Leyden, and he and his friend Gessler were putting together in his now dismantled home the remainder of the books that should accompany him to England, when the latter suddenly exclaimed:

"I vow it is the greatest sacrifice ever made at the altar of friendship, and I marvel at myself for making it. To help send

away the only friend one has to speak with in the world—what hero, living or dead, has done as much?”

“Take care, good Gessler, or you will be making a hecatomb of your friend’s belongings,” said Bartholomew, laughing, as he extinguished a spark that had fallen from the professor’s pipe into a box of books.

“True, and the heroism of such an act might be open to question,” returned Gessler, gravely contemplating the threatened pile. “But seriously, Legate,” he continued in a half-earnest, half-playful tone, “how am I to live without you, when you have become as necessary to my existence as the light and air? To whom am I to rehearse my lectures and bring my grumbles when you are gone? Who is there to walk and talk with me now, and demolish all my pet arguments, and confute my finest theories? Why, not even Joseph Scaliger, clever man and good companion as he is, can do this. Nay, old friend, I like it not, this parting; and despite what you say about returning in five years’ time, I have a strange foreboding that we part for ever.”

“Why, Gessler, dear old friend, you are surely not well; I never before knew you take a gloomy view of anything,” said Bartholomew, as, struck by the mournful tone in which the last words were uttered, he looked into the other’s face and saw there an unmistakable expression of trouble and anxiety.

“Nor do I usually,” returned Gessler; “yet somehow I cannot now shake off the feeling. It has been oppressing me all day, but I must not let it oppress you too on our last night together. Give me your hand, Legate, and forget my croakings. Have you anything more to do?”

“No, there are only these chests to send on board. Everything else is packed, and we sleep to night at the Whites’; they would have nothing else. Kate has already gone on there; she was quite worn out with fatigue.”

“The good old woman! it is seldom one meets with such devotion as hers.”

“Seldom, indeed. I could not tell you what I owe to her; she oftentimes shames me with her unselfishness. I feared the toils of this journey might prove too much for her, for she is no longer strong and able as she once was; and since most of her

old friends in England have passed away, it will be small joy to her to return thither, but she would not hear of my going alone; and indeed I should have been loth to leave her behind.”

At this moment a quick step was heard upon the stairs, and a fine stalwart young man entered the room, who having greeted courteously both its occupants, asked in a brisk voice:

“Am I too late with the proffer of my services, Master Legate, or is there aught I can yet do? I had hoped to be here sooner.”

“No, thank you, Harry; we have just finished, and I am only waiting for these chests to be fetched away to avail myself of the kind hospitality of your father and mother, and Master Gessler is keeping me company as you see.”

“Yes, and I take it he likes your going from us no better than I do; we shall all miss you sadly.”

“Enough, Harry, my dear lad,” said Bartholomew with a smile. “We have just resolved to allow no more regrettings. Please God, I shall return to live among you some five years hence, for by that time we may fairly expect that our poor little churches in England will be well set upon their feet; but if I do not then return, it will be because God wills it otherwise. Ah, here are Van der Broek’s men, and our vigil is ended. Come, Jan,” he continued, turning to the elder of the two men who had just entered, “these are the last of our goods; you will see them placed where they will be protected from the weather?”

“All right, sir; trust to me. Is there anything else I can do?”

“No, thank you, Jan; you have been very kind and helpful to me, and so has Carl, and I am grateful to you both, but there is nothing now remaining to be done. I shall see you in the morning, so we will not say good-bye. Tell Mynheer Van der Broek I shall be down at the vessel by nine o’clock.”

“All right, sir. Good-night.”

“Good-night, Jan; good-night, Carl!” and Bartholomew having lighted them downstairs, and locked up the rooms he had lately called his own, descended to the street with the professor and Harry White.

“You will come home with us, Master Gessler,” said the latter, when on reaching the University gate the professor paused as if

to enter. "Father and mother will be disappointed not to see you, and Master Legate I know wishes your company."

"Very likely he may, but he is tired out, and ought to rest as soon as he can; and I am not in spirits, and should only mar the cheerfulness of your home circle. I will come some other time, thank you, Hal. God bless you, my dear old friend! We must say farewell, and it is best said at once. You will write to me sometimes?"

"That will I, and as often as I am able; there is no need that distance should sever our hearts. God bless you, dear Gessler, and keep you in all your ways until we meet again."

And then with a last loving look, the two friends parted, as one of them at least felt, for ever.

It was late when Bartholomew and Harry arrived at the farm, and they found that Kate Alison had already, at Mistress White's persuasion, retired to rest, an example Bartholomew was not loth to follow as soon as supper was over: for now that all was ready for their journey, he began to feel the effects of the fatigue and excitement of the last few weeks, and was truly grateful to his kind host and hostess for insisting that he should be left in quiet, and not persuaded to talk by the younger members of the family. It was indeed a trying ordeal he had been called on to undergo. To leave the people among whom he had dwelt in love and harmony for so many years; to exchange the land where religious freedom had at length found a resting-place, for one where intolerance and bigotry still reigned, and where, to some extent at least, difficulty and persecution must be his lot: only the strongest sense of duty could have impelled him to such a step, especially as it involved sacrifice for others as well as for himself. But he had felt when the call for aid came that it was from on High, and there was therefore no alternative for him but to obey at whatever cost. Supper over, Master White himself conducted their guest to his bed-chamber, and wishing him a kindly "good-night," left him to seek the much-needed repose; and spite of the confused thoughts hurrying involuntarily through his brain, Bartholomew soon fell asleep, nor did he awake until it was already broad day, and the sound of voices and the busy stir about the house warned him that he had slept late. On descend-

ing to the kitchen he found Kate Alison already there, and busily engaged assisting in the preparations for breakfast. The years that had passed since we first saw her had truly left their mark behind, but in spite of her advanced age, her form was still upright, her step active, and her eye almost as bright as of yore.

"Nay, it's not Kate Alison that can sit still when there's work to be done," she was saying in answer to Mistress White's gentle remonstrance as to her self-imposed task. "When that time comes, Bartholomew may put me in a box and get me under ground as quickly as possible, for it'll be ill work for me staying here. Ah! there he is," she continued, turning at the sound of the well-known step; "and how is it with thee this morning, lad?"

"Much better, thanks to a good night's sleep; and thou, too, hast rested well, I trust, and art ready for the long journey that lies before us. And how are you, Mistress White? I fear you have risen earlier than your wont on our account."

"Nay, rather on my own," she replied; "since I am so soon to lose my friends, I would fain see as much of them as I can. Are you sure the vessel will leave to-day, Master Legate?"

"There is little doubt of it, I think; as the wind seems favourable and the weather is so fine, we should have a good voyage," said Bartholomew, as he walked to the window and looked out. "But here come Master White and Harry; they make me ashamed of my idleness."

The father and son soon entered, and having exchanged kindly salutations with their visitors, all sat down to the morning meal, which passed over more silently than usual, Master White in particular seeming grave and pre-occupied. When breakfast was over he drew Bartholomew into the recess of a window overlooking the neat, trim garden and the flat meadow land beyond, and said earnestly:

"I like not your going, friend Legate; not only because it will be sad to miss you and good Mistress Alison from amongst us, but because my heart misgives me that in your new charge you will find yourself beset with difficulties and dangers you know nought of here. You are so outspoken, and would never stop to consider the consequences of your utterances—and the King of

England is none too well disposed towards those who differ from the State religion."

"Truly, it may be as you say, Master White," answered Bartholomew cheerily; "but the results are in God's hands, not in mine; where He wills I should do His work, thither must I go, and the message He delivers unto me, that must I speak, whate'er betide; else were I not only a faithless servant, but an arrant coward also; and that, I am well sure, you would not have me be. I do own, however, to some concern on Kate's account. It truly doth seem hard that at her time of life she should be taken away from friends she has learned to know and love, and exiled to a land where the lapse of years will have made all comparative strangers;" and as he spoke Bartholomew's face grew very grave.

"I thought we had agreed there were to be no more repinings and regrettings, once we had settled to go," said a sharp voice from the far end of the kitchen, where Kate Alison sat with Mistress White diligently sewing until it should be time to start. "Surely there's trouble enough in the world without making a lot of it for yourself. If I hear any more of that sort o' thing, Barty, I'll go and drown this old body of mine at the nearest flood-gates, and then there'll be no need for you to fret yourself about Kate." And with a look of grim determination the old woman bent again over her work.

"You shall have your way, Kate, and I will be no murmurer," said Bartholomew, though in somewhat tremulous tones, as he went up to his old nurse, took her withered hands in his, and looked down into her face with the affectionate smile that always gladdened her heart.

"'Twould be a new part for you, Barty, and you'd play it but ill; so 'twere best to let it alone," she replied, with an answering smile.

"The horses will be here in ten minutes," said Harry, whose curly head at that moment appeared within the door; "and I think you will have no time to spare. Can I do aught to help you?"

"No, thank you, we are quite ready, I believe; and all our baggage has gone down to the ship, so we have nothing to carry

save the little package your mother is sending to John. You are surely not coming with us, Master White?"

"Yes, Harry and I will see the last of you, and I trust it will not be long ere we have the joy of welcoming you back again."

"Or I that of welcoming you to England," said Bartholomew, with an attempt at cheerfulness that was not very successful.

"Nay, that will never be. The journey is too great for a short sojourn, and I am too old to begin life over again, even were I assured of safety and freedom over there. You and our boy may come hither—and I trust you will—but I shall never set foot on England's shore again. So you must kiss our grandchild for us, Mistress Alison; I know not if we shall ever see him," he continued, turning to Kate, who, contrary to her usual independent habits, was allowing herself passively to be attired by Mistress White and her daughter in cloak and hood.

"I'll do that, Master White, you may be sure," she replied; "but you'll see him and all the rest of them—it's only an old woman like me need talk of parting for ever, and I may come back if Barty should take to himself a wife, and not want me any longer."

"I fear, for our sakes, that is scarce likely to be," returned Mistress White, trying to smile; "he will always want you with him."

"I hope so; it would break my heart to leave him. But there are the horses. Good-bye, and God bless you all;" and having hurriedly embraced Mistress White and Alice, Kate Alison hastened to the door without another word, and stood there silently waiting for Bartholomew, while he too bade farewell, which he did with an affectionate solemnity that left behind feelings of both joy and sadness in his friends' hearts.

Another moment and he had mounted one of the horses; Kate was lifted on to a pillion behind him, and they were soon journeying in company with their host and his son towards the port whence the *Good Fortune* would sail. Happily for them, the boat was already waiting to convey them to the ship, and they were thereby spared the pain of renewed farewells to the many friends who had come to see them depart. One loving look and smile around, one warm grasp of the hands of Master

White and Harry, and Bartholomew took his seat by the side of his faithful companion in the little skiff, and was soon being rowed swiftly away from the land where for so many years he had found a happy home and congenial work.

"One more of life's voyages ended for us, and another begun," he remarked, as he assisted Kate on to the deck of the vessel. "God grant this may be no less prosperous than the last."

"Amen to that, Barty!" she replied, in an earnest tone.

The *Good Fortune* did not belie her name, yet it was several days—although neither storm nor calm retarded their progress—ere the white cliffs of England came in sight. To Bartholomew, wearied as he was with the fatigue and excitement of the last few weeks, this period of rest and tranquillity was very grateful, and he could almost have desired to prolong the voyage; but Kate, whose activity of body and mind were but slightly diminished by her advanced years, found the enforced idleness irksome in the extreme, and it was with a sense of unmixed pleasure that she responded to Bartholomew's invitation to come and look at the splendid palace of Greenwich, lying close to the river bank, surrounded by its goodly gardens, with the beautiful wooded hills of Kent forming a charming background to the picture.

"Yes, it's a pleasant place enough, though over grand for me. I like better to see the houses clustering yonder; we're getting nigh London, are we not?"

"Very near, Kate; the skipper says we shall be in ere sunset."

"That's the best news I've heard for many a day, Barty. I'm ain to be on dry land once more; I scarce know if my legs are my own, and my hands are fairly tired with doing of nought. I'll go down at once and get our things together. Nay, thou canst look an thou wilt, I've seen enough," she added, as Bartholomew would have endeavoured to detain her. So with a smile at her eagerness to get on shore, and the corresponding alacrity with which she descended to the cabin to commence the preparations for landing, he presently followed her to render what assistance she would permit. On their return to the deck, he found the skipper already giving orders to drop anchor, and get the ship's boats ready, while from the shore other boats were seen approaching, in one of which Bartholomew and Kate recognised

with joy the well-known form of John White. Another moment, and he was on the deck, and smiling the welcome his heart was too full to speak.

"Why, John, this is kind of you," said Bartholomew; "it makes it feel like coming home!"

"You don't know how good it is to see you again," he replied, as soon as he was able to speak. "You will come back with me; Alice and I have been longing to have you with us in our home. We told Simon Lingard it was our turn."

"I should like it, and so, I am sure, would Kate, for a few days, if you are sure it will not weary your wife overmuch."

"Nay, she wishes it, and bade me say you must come."

"Then we will, and thank you both for your hospitality."

And so it was decided, and John White carried Kate Alison back with him in triumph, leaving Bartholomew to follow as soon as he should have arranged about the disposal of their baggage.

CHAPTER XX.

WHEN Bartholomew arrived at length at the pleasant little house close to the Bishops-gate, whither John White had taken his young wife after their marriage, he found Kate Alison already quite at home amid her new surroundings: the baby had, of course, served at once as a bond of mutual attraction and interest between her and its mother, and now lay peacefully slumbering upon her lap, while the latter was busied with her duties of hospitality, not failing, however, to pay attention in the intervals of her more active labours to the words of counsel out of the old woman's stores of wisdom and experience regarding the management of her child and household matters in general.

"And this is your boy!" said Bartholomew, as having greeted Alice in his kind elder brotherly fashion, he stood gazing upon the tiny specimen of humanity lying in its rosy sleep on his old nurse's lap.

"Yes; is he not a fine fellow?" said the proud young father; "and he seems to understand what is said to him already. Alice will have it he is like me, but I scarce think so; he is more like to her," he continued, placing his arm round his wife and drawing her gently towards him.

Alice looked at her husband with an affectionate smile, which soon gave place to a graver expression as she remarked,—

"Father said the other day that Ralph was just such a baby; but oh! it surely cannot be so;—he could never grow up to care for nought that is good, and give to John and me the sorrow Ralph has caused to father!"

The tears stood in her blue eyes, and Bartholomew, taking the sleeping infant in his arms, said tenderly,—

"Nay, Alice; of such as he is the kingdom of heaven; and if you and John will but faithfully guard this treasure God has committed to your care; if you will remember always that it is not

your own to do with what you will, but His, to be trained for His service, both body and soul; if you will surround him, as I believe you will, with sweet and holy influences, and guide him with a wise and tender love, you need not fear for the future. God bless and keep him and you for ever!"

And having pressed his lips with reverent earnestness to the tiny brow, Bartholomew laid the child lovingly in its mother's arms, who received it with a sense of new consecration, while John, looking gratefully into his friend's face, said,—

"Thanks for thy helpful words; we will try to be worthy of our trust. But come now, let me show you to your room; you must be tired, and Alice will have some supper ready by the time you come down."

Bartholomew gladly accepted the invitation, and desirous as he was of seeing the Lingards, did not go out again that evening; but on the following morning, as soon as breakfast was over, he set forth for the West Chepe by way of the pleasant gardens and open spaces that led thither from Bishops-gate. On entering the Chepe, his ears were greeted by sounds of boisterous merriment, and he came suddenly upon a party of young gallants richly attired and walking abreast so as materially to interfere with the comfort and convenience of other pedestrians, whom they saluted with gibes and jeers.

"Ah, here comes a Puritan!" cried one, as Bartholomew approached.

"And a Hollander into the bargain," said another; "I know him by his jerkin."

"Let us beseech him that he go no farther, but return to his own country without loss of time," added a third, raising his arm as he spoke so as to obstruct the passage between himself and the wall.

"I pray you, gentlemen, allow me to pass," said Bartholomew, with quiet dignity.

"And we pray you to return the way you came," was the mocking reply.

"Gentlemen," he answered, "your jesting is ill-timed, and if you give not way of your own courtesy, I must force you to do so."

And suiting the action to the word, he gently, but firmly, pushed aside the young man who stood nearest the wall, and would have passed on without heeding the cry of "Insolent varlet!" that assailed his ears, when he felt himself suddenly and rudely seized, and saw a naked dagger menacing his breast; but scarce was there time to realize his danger, when the weapon was struck down by one of the companions of his assailant, with the exclamation,—

"Nay, Lester! that were a coward's act; don't you see the man is unarmed?"

Then turning to Bartholomew, he added, with a courteous, but haughty manner,—

"Pass on, sir; we will not molest you further."

And seizing the truculent Lester by the arm, he walked quickly away, leaving Bartholomew to wonder where he had seen that face and heard that voice before.

Street brawls were too common for this to have excited any great attention on the part of passers-by, and Bartholomew continued his way without further hindrance to Simon Lingard's. The latter, who was serving a customer when he entered, looked up in amazement at seeing him, and extending his hand across the counter, with a smile of welcome, exclaimed,—

"Why, Barty, when did you arrive? I had not thought to see you in London for a week to come."

"Only yesterday; we made a very good passage, and John White met us and carried us off to his home."

"And I had made up my mind you would stay with us. Well, he's got the advantage of me this time, and will think he deserves it for his greater wisdom; for I mind me he said you'd get here by now. But sit ye down; I shall be ready directly; or go upstairs and find the women, if you'd rather."

"Nay, I will wait for you."

And Bartholomew seated himself until the customer, who seemed rather difficult to please, should be served. This was accomplished at last, however, and Simon led his guest upstairs to the familiar little room, where they found Mistress Lingard industriously plying her needle.

"Here's an old friend come to see you, Esther," said her brother. "Where's the little wench?"

"Upstairs, I believe," she replied, rising from her seat and greeting Bartholomew in her usual quiet, kindly way.

"Ah! about her household duties, I suppose; I'll call her down. Why, here she is. Nay, Maysie, come in; Master Legate will not be affrighted at your housewife tire."

And taking the blushing girl by the hand, Simon drew her into the room with an air of fatherly pride by no means unjustifiable, for a prettier picture than she made, as she stood by his side in her simple morning gown, with her brown curls just escaping from beneath the modest coif, could scarcely be imagined. Bartholomew was, indeed, almost startled at the change the two years had wrought in the maiden, and as he bent down to kiss her cheek and listened to her words of welcome, he was conscious of a strange emotion he had not known before.

"Is good Mistress Alison with you?" she asked timidly, after a little pause.

"Yes; I left her in Alice's kind care, for John met us at the ship last night, and would nought else but that we should take up our quarters with them. She would fain have come with me even now, but that she was somewhat wearied with the journey. She has never forgotten her little pet of thirteen years ago, and is very desirous to see her."

"The good old woman!" said Simon; "you must go to her, Maysie, and if your aunt cares not to walk so far, I doubt not Barty will see you safely there and back after dinner; I can't spare him just yet."

"It will be a great pleasure to me," replied Bartholomew, "if Mistress Maysie will be pleased to accept my escort."

The girl only blushed; but her aunt, looking up from her work, said:

"Thank you kindly, Master Legate; I am somewhat ill at ease to-day, and care not to quit the house; yet I would that Maysie should not miss her walk, and she will be quite safe with you."

"Then that's settled," said Simon, with an air of relief. "Now go and finish thy household tasks, child, while Barty and I have a crack together."

He followed his daughter's retreating form with a loving glance; then turning to his guest said, in a tone full of emotion: "She's

as good as she is beautiful; ay, she is as good as gold. He'll be a happy man who makes her his wife. But come, sit ye down here in the window, lad," he continued, "and tell me first of all how goes it with good Master Harper?"

Bartholomew's countenance grew sad.

"Did you not hear?" he said; "he passed away a year ago—very peacefully and happily, I was told, and can well believe, for but the day before the great change came, he, knowing it was at hand, wrote me a beautiful letter, full of wise, tender counsel, and sweet, holy thoughts. He was so glad to go, and his weakness had caused him so much suffering; it seems scarce right to grieve at his departure; but oh, I miss him sore, even though we met so seldom of late; his death has made a great blank in my life!"

Bartholomew's voice faltered, and he relapsed into silence, while Lingard, taking his hand, said kindly,—

"I do grieve to hear this, Barty, for he was a good man, and you, as I well know, looked upon him almost as another father. It is a sad loss for you; but these losses will come with the years."

"That is true, Master Lingard, and since it is in the order of God's good providence, it is best it should be so; nevertheless, we, in our weakness, find it hard to part from those by whose side we have walked from childhood's years, and are sometimes apt to forget, in our grief for the loss of these blessings, how many yet remain for which we have great cause for thankfulness."

"You may well say that, Barty. When our boy died—that was five years before Maysie was born, and he was two years old—I grieved very sore, and it seemed to me as if life were scarce worth living without him; but now, when I see how vexed and troubled is poor Hugh Capel with the wild doings of that son of his, and think, too, what is to become of Ralph himself if he still continue in his wickedness, I am bound to be thankful that my boy was taken away while he was young and innocent, and that I have yet left to me so good a child as Maysie."

"Doth Ralph Capel continue then so wild?" asked Bartholomew.

"Worse than ever, I fear me; he hangs on now to the skirts of one Master Robert Carr, whom the king has picked up no one

knows where, and taken into highest favour; and wherein Ralph was before wanting in the way of wickedness, that gentleman is well able to teach him. But, hush! that is Hugh Capel, if I err not."

There was the sound of a heavy footstep on the stairs, and in another moment the old Puritan entered. He looked surprised at seeing Bartholomew, but greeted him cordially, ere he replied to the question of his old friend, "What hath brought you back so soon?"

"My business was done, and there was nought else to remain for. Some of my old friends are dead, and others changed; I felt with them as a stranger in a strange land, and was glad to return as soon as might be."

"Have you seen Alice yet?"

"Nay, I did but arrive last evening, and it was too late then to go; besides, she and John have each other, and need me not."

"You are scarce doing the young folks justice, Hugh; they are always glad to see us elders among them, happy though they be in each other's company. But tell us now what news you found stirring in Canterbury."

"Nought of importance: the chief interest of folks, it seems to me, centres around this new translation of the Bible, which has been so long promised to us; some profess to think it will cause a great awakening in the Church, and that the priests, finding her doctrines established by authority, and their hands thereby strengthened, may be the better enabled to edify the people. I doubt me, however, those faithless shepherds will scarce so easily be brought to cease from their sloth and wickedness, and turn to minding their duty and the welfare of their flocks."

"To my poor understanding," said Simon, "it seemeth these wise men are so long over their work, we shall scarce see the end of it in this generation. Why, already some of the translators have died in the midst of their labours, if I mistake not."

"Yes, one to my knowledge," answered Bartholomew; "and he not the least able of them all—Dr. Reynolds; he died full two years since; but let us trust God will raise up other labourers in the place of those He calls away; for the task must needs be a lengthy one, and requiring much care and patience as well as

learning, else might errors easily creep in. Truly, such workers as Dr. Reynolds can ill be spared, for he was, I verily believe, an honest man, and one not obstinately wedded to his own opinion if he found it did not bear the test of truth. Have you heard of the curious contention betwixt him and his brother William?"

"Nay; what was it about?" asked Simon, evidently interested.

"It took place when they were young men," answered Bartholomew. "John was Papist, and William Protestant; and each, becoming anxious about the safety of the other's soul, strove earnestly to convert his brother, and with such success, that John forthwith turned Protestant, and William Papist."

"Truly, that was a strange ending to their contention, and a rare one, I warrant me," said Simon. "Did each continue to maintain his new opinion?"

"Yes, to the end of their days, as I have heard; both were firmly convinced."

"But it must have lain heavily on John Reynolds' conscience," broke in Hugh Capel abruptly, "that he had been the instrument of Satan in delivering over his brother's soul to the scarlet woman. I mind me, though, he has done good service against her in combating that son and servant of hers, Robert Bellarmine."

"Yes, he was, indeed, an able as well a learned man," replied Bartholomew; "and as to his conversion of his brother, Master Capel, since he strove in good faith, I see not that he need have felt himself to blame: a man can only walk by the measure of truth he has."

"Yea, by the measure of *truth*; but, an he believe in a lie, and seek to spread that, what then?" cried Hugh Capel, with some warmth, "will you say still, he is not to blame?"

"Yes, even then," said Bartholomew firmly, "if he in his heart believe the lie to be truth, because, as it seems to me, truth for us mortal men must needs be but relative, since our knowledge even of the commonest things is so limited."

"Nay, nay, that is but trifling talk, and tends not to edifying," replied Capel, in an impatient tone; and taking a well-worn Bible from his pouch—"God's truth lies *here*, for any to read whose eyes are not blinded by the fashions of this world, or their own conceit."

"But may it not be variously interpreted, according to the temper of men's minds?" suggested Bartholomew.

"Why should it—seeing that they alone who are led thereto by the Spirit of God can interpret it aright?" replied the old man vehemently.

"Yet, will you not allow that truth may be many-sided——?"

"I crave your mercy, Barty," interrupted Simon; "get not Hugh upon this track, or there will be no end to the disputation. And here comes Maysie, to summon us to dinner—a much more profitable occupation for all, I take it. Nonsense, you will stay and eat with us!" he added, as his old friend seemed to hesitate; "and afterwards, if you will, you can walk with Barty and Maysie to see Alice; not that I wish to be rid of your company."

"Nay, but I have business of importance soon after mid-day; if that detain me not too long, I may look in to see Alice this evening."

"Well, come now, and let Maysie's pasty and my good ale help to strengthen you for that business, whatever it may be." And so saying, Simon led the way downstairs, and was soon hospitably engaged in supplying the wants of his guests, the while he kept up a flow of lively talk on various subjects with his daughter and Bartholomew, in which, although Hugh Capel did not join, he seemed to manifest a sort of grim interest. The meal ended, he took his departure, Mistress Lingard retired to her own apartment, and Maysie to prepare for her walk, leaving Bartholomew and Simon Lingard sole occupants of the dining-room.

"I am not always quite easy about Maysie," said the latter, when they were alone together. "Sometimes I have cause to fear that young villain, Ralph Capel, has designs upon her, and I bethink me if I were taken away, it might go very hard with her, poor child, young and innocent as she is; he has no sense of honour, save that base coin which goes by the name among his boon companions." He sighed heavily, and Bartholomew asked,—

"Have you reason to think he hath sought to entrap her in any way?"

"Nay, save from what has gone before, and hints received in

various quarters ; but 'tis enough, and I dare not let her walk out alone now."

"That is wise in any case, for the streets appear to me scarce as orderly as they formerly were ; yet I trust the danger may not be so great as you fear. Ralph must know you will do all in your power for the protection of Maysie, and he is scarce the man, I take it, to endanger himself in the pursuit of his designs, however pleasing they may be."

"He has powerful friends, Barty, and high interest at Court ; while I am only a poor city tradesman, with no interest anywhere, save among my fellows and the 'prentice lads."

"And they would form a pretty strong army," said Bartholomew, with a smile ; "but I hope, dear friend," he continued, in a graver tone, "you will not fail to count upon me also whenever I can be of service to you or Maysie, and in any way ; it will always be a pleasure to me."

"I know it, I know it, dear lad," replied Simon, laying his hand affectionately on Bartholomew's arm ; "and there is no one to whose protection I would sooner trust my Maysie than yourself ; but a father must needs be anxious about his one little ewe lamb ; nevertheless, I will try not to fret myself without cause. What meant you by saying you thought the streets scarce so orderly as formerly ?"

Bartholomew thereupon related his own encounter of the morning with the young gallants ; and when he had ended, Simon said, —

"Yes, that is the way many of our so-called gentlemen delight to amuse their leisure. I trust, however, you have not made yourself an enemy by your conduct ?"

"Nay, I think there is no danger of that," said Bartholomew, with a smile ; "one only showed himself aggrieved at my treatment of his insolence, and his friend took not his part, but, contrariwise, was civil and respectful to me."

Maysie now made her appearance, and she and Bartholomew were soon threading their way through the busy streets, the latter enjoying the fresh delight of his companion at each object of interest—the passers-by, the wares in the shop windows, and last but not least, the occasional views of fields and meadows, hills

and trees, that met their eyes when they had passed through the Bishops-gate.

Alice received Maysie with a warm welcome, and led her up to Mistress Alison, whose delight at seeing once more her little pet of former days, albeit she found it difficult to recognise her in the tall, blooming maiden now before her, was almost unbounded.

"But thou hast grown a fine wench !" she said, as she held Maysie at arm's length, and surveyed her from head to foot. "Dost mind what thou wert wont to call thyself ? Barty's little wife ! Ay, and he might do worse now, and so mightst thou, my maid ; for he's a good, true man, and would make any woman happy."

Maysie's cheeks were suffused with blushes, and Alice, pitying her embarrassment, came and carried her off to look at the baby lying asleep. On their return to the room, they found Bartholomew there writing letters, while Kate was busied with her spinning-wheel. Perhaps she was aware of the confusion her outspokenness had caused to Maysie, for she did not again refer to the subject ; but instead, questioned her kindly concerning her father and aunt ; and then chatted away in her quaint, homely fashion about Holland, and the manners and customs of its people, until the young girl was thoroughly interested, and Alice brought her baby and sat down also to listen. While thus engaged, there was a sudden commotion in the street below, and John, coming upstairs, bade them look from the window at the Morris-dancers, some eight or ten young men, fantastically attired, and well masked.

"Just see," he said, "what grotesque figures they have made of themselves ; it's a queer amusement ! One wonders they cannot better occupy their time."

"I am glad I am not in the street," said Maysie, as she watched the antics of the dancers ; "I should be afraid of them. See, they have made that poor girl cry !"

"Come away from the window, Maysie !"

It was John's voice that spoke, and at the same moment, Bartholomew observed the gaze of one of the dancers fixed upon the maiden, the while he threw himself on one knee on the ground in an attitude of mock supplication. Maysie crimsoned, then

turned very pale, and withdrew immediately; while John said, in a low voice, to Bartholomew,—

“It is Ralph! I would he had not seen Maysie; I fear me he hath evil designs upon her, and will some day contrive to carry them out.”

“Nay, John,” was the answer, “that he shall never do; though I would fain hope he hath yet some good feeling left, and would hesitate to sacrifice a pure-souled maiden to his selfish desires; but come what may, if we who love her are loyal and true, no harm can reach Maysie.”

CHAPTER XXI.

“**W**HY not go in and woo her for yourself fairly and openly, Capel? I would if I were you. Depend upon it, whatever he may say, her father would be glad enough to have his pretty daughter married to a man with your prospects, for who knows what may be in store for you in the way of places and preferments? Or shall I woo her for you? You know I would do aught to serve a friend, though truly it might be a dangerous experiment. I own I am getting to be sweet upon her myself, and if she were to prefer me to you?—there are differences of opinion even in respect of beauty.”

The speaker, a short thick-set, fresh-coloured young man, with a countenance resembling that of a bull-terrier, leered impudently, as he concluded, into his companion's face, and nudged him familiarly in the side. Ralph Capel drew back with an indignant gesture, saying in a petulant tone, as he walked to the window:

“Don't be a fool, Lester; I have told you her father hates me like poison, and would sooner see his daughter in her grave than married to me. He's as proud, too, as Lucifer, and thinks a city tradesman better than a lord. It would be as much use trying to speak him fair as to silence you when you are drunk.”

“Keep your insolence to yourself, Capel,” returned the other growing very red, and laying his hand on the hilt of his sword. “I'm no more of a chatterer than you are, nor a fool either; and not so much of a coward, as I am ready to prove.”

“Take back that word, Lester, or you shall repent it,” said Ralph, striding towards him with his hand upon his dagger.

“If you gentlemen have a mind to quarrel and fight, methinks it were more seemly to go out of doors and not to brawl so near his Majesty's apartments, remarked a third speaker, in a quiet though somewhat sarcastic tone, and without raising his eyes from his book. His words, however, had the desired effect, for the

disputants ceased their jarring. Ralph returned to the window and stood looking out idly on the river, while Lester somewhat sulkily seated himself on a stool, and pulling his sword from its sheath, began examining the blade.

"Is it rusting for want of use, my doughty little warrior?" said the reader, looking up at length from his book, and exhibiting a countenance of almost effeminate beauty, with its delicate complexion and finely-cut features set off by the long waving chestnut hair, though its charm was considerably marred by the scornful curl of the lip and the coldness of the steel-blue eyes.

"It will soon, if I remain here much longer," answered Lester moodily. "I'm downright tired of this kind of life, hanging about from morning till night with nothing to do. I wish his Highness would send me abroad, or even to Ireland. I wouldn't care where."

"Probably others may wish so too," was the quiet reply.

Lester looked up quickly, but his wit was scarcely sharp enough to detect with certainty the covert satire, and his companion's bland smile laid to rest immediately any suspicion his words might have awakened, and he continued in an earnest tone,—

"It is very well for you and Capel; you are born courtiers, and 'tis an easy matter for you to kick your heels about in the king's lobby, or dangle after the women when they go walking or hawking; but with me the thing is different, I have been a soldier ever since I was fourteen, and used to camps and not to courts, and that is the life most meet for me, especially when there is plenty of fighting to be done."

"And the rewards of valour to be obtained,—that can I well believe, and save that his Majesty would be deprived of your valued attentions to his sacred person, and we of your pleasant company, it were surely a pity not to resume so congenial an occupation without delay. Say you not so, Capel?"

"I have nought to say, for I have paid no heed to your chattering," replied Ralph somewhat sullenly, and without looking round.

"It matters not, dear gossip, since that is your agreeable humour; but lest I should further disturb your meditative mood, I will e'en walk abroad for awhile. Methinks the outer air is

freer from storm than that within. Farewell, my esteemed cronies!"

"Nay, if you are going out, Carey, I will come too," exclaimed Lester, rising from his seat, and hastily thrusting his sword back into its scabbard. "His Highness will not be out of his chamber for these two hours, and Capel is none such pleasant company when he takes to sulking; not a word good or bad will he speak."

"That is no failing of yours, Lester; lay the comfort to your soul. Methinks your tongue would wag were your head off your shoulders. But come, an you will, only I crave you of your mercy, begin not brawling with the first man who claims his just share of the right of way. It is an ill habit, and will surely some time lead to mischief; besides, it is unseemly, and may bring discredit on your friends as well as upon yourself." And having thus spoken with the air of a mentor, Carey drew on his gloves, took his plumed hat in his hand, and sauntered leisurely from the room, followed by Lester, who had received the admonitions of his friend with the most exemplary patience, without even attempting a reply.

Ralph still remained after their departure, standing moodily by the window. Before his eyes lay the river sparkling in the September sunshine, and reflecting in its clear depths the blue sky, the green banks, and the white sails of the little craft moving on its calm bosom. From time to time sounds of voices and peals of merry laughter were borne upwards on the breeze, as some gaily painted barge with its freight of noble ladies and courtly gallants floated by, and the whole air seemed filled with joyousness and delight. But it was all lost upon him as he stood there, his eyes fixed upon vacancy, and his fingers idly toying with the hilt of his dagger. Ralph Capel's thoughts were far away from Whitehall and the river, and all the pleasant sights and sounds of this pleasant autumn morning. Back into the past they had wandered, to hours of happy and innocent childhood, when his mother's loving smile had been his heaven, and her gentle influence always at hand to restrain his sometime wayward will, and soften the terror of his father's sternness. He remembered her affectionate pride in him, her only son, and the hopes she fondly cherished for his future, this lovely, loving Puritan mother.

What would she think of him now? How would his gay, careless, pleasure-seeking life appear to her clear holy gaze? Would she not be ashamed of him; nay, might not she even disown him as her son? He remembered, too, with unspeakable sadness the charge she had committed to him on her death-bed—to love and cherish and protect his young sister, to shield her from harm, and by his brotherly affection make her life bright and happy: for, alas! how had he fulfilled the trust which should have been held so sacred? It was true that Alice had grown up good and pure as even her mother could have desired, but what had he to do with that? what example had he set her but that of selfish wilfulness and disregard of nearly every law human or Divine? It was true that she was happy now in the love of her husband and little child, and the cheerful fulfilment of the duties of her quiet lot; but, alas! he knew too well how her girlhood had been saddened by his perverse rebelliousness, and repeated quarrels with his father, ending at last in their total estrangement. Looking back over the past, what had he to show for his life but folly, wickedness, and an empty counterfeit of honours, with scarcely one unselfish thought, one disinterested deed of kindness, one earnest desire for better things in himself or others to redeem its worthlessness? And what was to be the end of it all, the end that must inevitably come? So ran involuntarily the current of Ralph's thoughts, turned into that channel by the events of yesterday, when clad in his mumming garb he had caught sight, not only of the sweet fair faces of his sister and Maysie Lingard, so innocent and happy in the quiet simplicity of their lot, but also of that of Bartholomew Legate, with its grave yet kindly smile, and the calm dark eyes, whose piercing glance had fallen upon his soul like that of the accusing angel, revealing to him the sad contrast between what he was and what he might have been. Oh! if two years ago he had accepted the counsel and followed the guidance of that true, strong friend, if he had but yielded to the strivings of the better spirit within him, how different might he not have been by now! But was it yet too late? He would seek Master Legate, would confide in him, and ask his help. Then arose the thought how would he receive him? Ralph hesitated, remembering, with something approaching shame, the

cold ingratitude with which he had repaid the unremitting care, the kindly solicitude that had watched over him in his sickness with more than a brother's tenderness, and pride forbade his risking a possible repulse, even while his heart yearned for the strength and sympathy he felt sure would not be denied to him. He was still busied with these reflections when the tones of a quick clear voice fell upon his ear, startling him from his reverie.

"Sdeath! Capel, man; you must be distraught or dreaming. I called you three times, and you answered not a word. Then I sent young Phil Holt, and the boy came back looking as fearsome as he had seen a ghost, and saying you would pay no heed to him. What ails you? Are you sick, or were your potations perchance too deep last night?" And the speaker, a tall man of five and twenty, with sparkling blue eyes, hair and pointed beard of an auburn hue, and well cut features lighted by an animated smile, and as to his person dressed in the height of fashion, laid his hand on Ralph's shoulder with a half friendly, half patronising air.

"Nought ails me, Master Carr," replied the latter; "I was but thinking."

"And that is none so common an employ with you, methinks. Surely it must have been a weighty matter to have thus held your attention."

"It was truly of some import. I was considering whether I should not quit the Court and return to my father."

"Quit the Court! By'r Lady, Capel, I do verily believe some madness hath possessed your brain. Would you bury yourself alive, or is it that you hope so to gain your pretty mistress? Nay, Ralph, be not a fool; stay where you are, and take my word for it the damsel will soon yield herself to your advances. But come now, his Highness would have you carry a letter for him to the Dutch ambassador, and deliver it into his own hands, though beshrew me if its purport is like to be of much concern to either state," he added with a laugh.

"Is the king yet in his chamber?" asked Ralph.

"Indeed is he, and pen-scratching all the morn. He hath been too busied with his writing even to put off his night-cap, though by my faith he must have worn it for this year past without letting it see the wash tub; and I mind me that is an ill

omen, and betokeneth a peevish humour when none of his fancies must be crossed, so 'twere best to attend on him without longer delay ; but I pray you not a word of this nonsense to his Highness about quitting the Court, lest he take you too seriously and give you instant dismissal, and that were a thousand pities seeing how well you stand with him now, besides that I would be loth to lose my sweet gossip." He added these last words in a tone of pleasant flattery that had its due effect upon Ralph, who readily promised obedience to his patron's desire, and without more ado followed him to the royal bed-chamber, where at a table covered with writing materials and a confused pile of papers, sat in very dirty dishabille, with pen in hand, the king of England. He raised his head as they entered, and, in querulous tone and broad Scotch accent, demanded to know why they had delayed so long attending to his behest.

"Craving your Highness's pardon, 'tis not the time that hath been long, but rather your Highness's lack of patience that made it appear so," said Ralph's companion with an air of great coolness and unconcern.

"The deil tak ye, Robert, for your insolence," returned his Highness. "Our lack of patience forsooth ! Dinna ye ken that the king is the Lord's anointed, and no to be thocht of as anither mon?"

"Even so, your Highness," replied the favourite in a tone of insolent familiarity, indicating a tolerably close acquaintance with his royal master's idiosyncrasies ; "and therefore the king's subjects may well expect to find in him more astounding proofs of virtue than in one of themselves."

"God save us, mon ; you are aye unco ready with an answer for gude or ill, but you maun keep silence noo. Our business is with your friend and not yourself. Come hither, Ralph Capel !"

Ralph advanced with a low obeisance, and having received the missive from the king with the injunction to be sure to deliver it into his Excellency's own hand, and promised obedience thereto, he quitted the apartment with the same deferential manner, much to the king's satisfaction, as was evidenced by his remarking to Robert Carr, who had stood looking on with a half-contemptuous, half-amused smile,—

"That is a verra discreet and well-mannered young man, Robbic, 'twere a pity if you took not example by him."

Ralph meanwhile was making the best of his way to the flight of steps leading from the palace grounds down to the river. He passed along quickly so as to escape recognition by any of his intimates, for he was still troubled with his thoughts, and anxious to be alone. A boat was waiting at the steps, and he was soon rowed to within a short distance of his destination, and had the good fortune to accomplish his mission without delay ; for his Excellency being on the point of going out, access to him was easily obtained.

The interview was, however, short, the ambassador intimating that a reply would be sent to the king in due course, and Ralph accordingly took his leave, and was proceeding in the direction of the river with the intention of returning to Whitehall by the way he had come, when he suddenly felt a hand upon his shoulder, and Carey's voice exclaimed,—

"The man I was seeking ! but what are you doing here ?"

"I have been on the king's business," returned Ralph somewhat stiffly.

"And I on that of the queen, which I doubt not is of as grave a nature as her consort's. She hath bidden me to discover two or three well-favoured youths to take part as mermen, or sea-gods, in the grand new masque to be played a se'nnight hence ; and as I know no prettier man than yourself, I would fain you should come with me at once to Denmark House and set her Majesty's mind somewhat at ease."

This adroit piece of flattery and the accompanying friendliness of manner were not without influence upon Ralph, who already felt his love of pleasure and impatience of moral restraint regaining their old sway, and with very little more persuasion he yielded to his friend's desire, and together they turned their steps towards Denmark House.

It was nearly mid-day, and the pleasant thoroughfare of the Strand presented quite a lively aspect from the crowds of people that were abroad, among whom were several who gave courteous greeting to Carey and his companion, as they walked leisurely along. Suddenly the former came to a standstill, and looking

back, asked of Ralph, as he pointed to a tall figure fast receding in the distance,—

“Did you notice who passed us?”

“No; who was it?”

“The man who tended you during your sickness in the Temple. I forget his name, but he was a preacher if I mistake not; and pity it is he should be such a fanatic, for he hath a handsome face and a goodly presence. Do you ever see aught of him now?”

“Nay, I scarce knew he was in England until yesterday,” answered Ralph, a little uneasily; for the bare thought of Bartholomew Legate seemed sufficient to bring back the self-searching, self-accusing spirit, with which he had striven so painfully but a few hours since. Carey noticed the gathering gloom on his friend’s countenance, and in his light easy way dashed into a voluble flow of talk on different subjects with wonderful rapidity, and by the time they reached the queen’s palace, Ralph’s manner had resumed something of its wonted gaiety, and he was able to enter with sufficient zest into the manifold and elaborate arrangements necessary for presenting the masque with due effect to satisfy even the queen and her ladies. Yet ever and anon his thoughts would revert to the house by the Bishops-gate, and the faces that had looked upon him from its windows, and he would find himself contrasting the fresh girlish beauty of Maysie in all its innocent simplicity with the affected manners and showy charms, aided by the accessories of art, of the ladies of the Court.

And meanwhile, Maysie was sitting where he had last seen her with Alice by her side, and Alice’s baby on her lap, while with downcast eyes and a warm flush in her cheeks she confided to her bosom-friend some of the secrets of her heart.

“But you must never, never tell him, or any one else, Alice,” she said in earnest tones. “I should die if I thought he knew.”

“Trust me, sweet,” answered Alice; “your secret is safe in my keeping, though indeed to love a good man is nought to be ashamed of, and I am sure it would gladden Master Legate to know, and our good Kate also; but fear not, I will say nought to any until you give me leave.

CHAPTER XXII.

IT was a chill evening in October, for although the light of the setting sun yet tinged with a rosy hue the towers and steeples of the many churches which adorned the fair city of London, the north-west wind blew with a keenness that felt like a foretaste of the coming winter, and caused the solitary watcher in the silent God’s acre to draw his cloak more closely around him, and pace to and fro with a quicker step. It was now about four weeks since Bartholomew arrived in England, and he and Kate had been settled for the last fortnight in lodgings in a house in Iremonger Lane, a street leading directly out of the busy thoroughfare of the West Chepe, and therefore in close proximity to the Lingards, with the traditional distinction of being close to, if not the actual site of the birthplace of Thomas à Becket, and the additional advantage of being very quiet and secluded, and well-suited to the needs of the student of men and books. True, it was inconveniently narrow, the upper storeys of the opposite houses almost meeting overhead, but about the centre of the street, both light and air were afforded by the churchyards, almost adjoining, of the churches of two parishes distant less than a stone’s-throw from each other; and Bartholomew, who was already finding in his new charge much to trouble and perplex him, would often turn with a grateful sense of relief out of the noise and bustle of the main thoroughfare into this quiet, peaceful retreat, where it was, at least, possible to think and plan without fear of interruption, for the inhabitants were orderly, stay-at-home folks, whose chief interest was centred in their business or families. Not unfrequently too, as on this evening, he would betake himself to the churchyard, where, with no companionship save that of the quiet dead, he could think out, undisturbed, how best to cope with the constantly recurring difficulties in his congregation, or the subject of his next sermon, or perchance, some

even pleasanter topic chiefly concerning himself. This evening, however, it was no pleasant thought that occupied his mind. On the contrary, it was considerably troubled about some dissensions from within his little flock, arising out of the jealousies that had sprung up years ago between the Londoners proper and the foreigners resident in the English capital, relative to certain trade privileges which many of the former persisted in believing the latter still to possess, although in reality they had been withdrawn from them long since. Among the members of his congregation, he numbered some from both these classes, and it was no small pain to him to note the cold averted glances, and occasionally more strongly marked evidences of ill-will on the part of each towards the other, so sadly at variance with their mutual professions of Christianity. To-day he had visited some of these offenders, and remonstrated with them on account of their unworthy conduct, not withholding stern reproof, yet without, as he feared, effecting much good in the direction he so earnestly desired, while he had certainly risked giving dire offence. But Bartholomew was no faint-hearted pastor, who feared to speak the truth lest displeasure should fall upon himself. The work to which he had devoted his life was none of his own, but God's, and it behoved him therefore to fulfil his duty to the utmost of his power, undeterred by fear of consequences; and he resolved by the Divine blessing, that come what might, his people should learn to live worthy of their calling as disciples of the Prince of peace, as children of Him who makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Filled with these thoughts, he continued to pace to and fro, as heedless of the darkness that had fallen around him as of the increasing chill of the night wind, when he was suddenly startled by a voice from above:

"Barty, dost know it's nigh upon eight o' the clock? and thou hast had nor bit nor sup since the forenoon; come in, I pray thee, now, and get thy supper, or thou'lt surely be sick."

He looked up with a smile, and seeing by the light from the open casement the well-known mutch leaning out therefrom, answered cheerily: "No fear of that, Kate; but I'll come; and passing out of the churchyard, he entered the house at its corner,

mounted the steep narrow stairs, and made his way into a fairly sized, but low-ceiled room, where his old nurse stood waiting to receive him with a smile of pleasure.

"Well, this is comfort!" he exclaimed, as having surveyed the brightly blazing hearth, and the board covered with the whitest of napery and spread with a substantial repast, he seated himself in the high-backed chair by the fire, and spread out his hands to the grateful warmth. "I know not what I should do without thee, good mother Kate."

"Thou must learn to," she answered somewhat grimly; "for I can scarce be with thee much longer now,—not but what thou'lt do well enough when thou hast thy wife, though I'm thinking there'll be times when she'll have her hands full, and be glad to come to old Kate to learn how to make thee do what's good for thee."

Bartholomew rose, and taking both her hands in his, said with an affectionate smile: "There is no likelihood, dear Kate, of my taking a wife, and I trust God will spare thee to me for many years to come."

"Nay, but I would that thou shouldst marry; and it matters not that she be young, for she's a good wench and will grow old soon enough; and her aunt has brought her up to be house-wifely, and not to eat the bread of idleness."

"I know not of whom thou art talking," answered Bartholomew in a bewildered tone, and half in fear lest Kate had taken leave of her senses.

"Of whom should I speak but of Maysie Lingard?" she replied; "it needs no witch to tell that her heart is given to thee, though she be too modest to show it, as some girls would; and she's a comely maiden too, Barty, that might win any man's love."

"I know it, Kate, and she would be worthy of the best she could win; but I do not think she cares for me in that way at all. I would it were so, but I am old enough to be her father, and it would seem scarce fair to tie her bright young life down to such as mine, though God knows she is very, very dear to me."

"Do thou but try her, Barty," returned Kate, as she proceeded to carve the pullet and pour out the ale; "if she should say thee nay, I'll ne'er have faith in maid again, if I live to a hundred."

Bartholomew smiled as he drew his chair to the table. It was

a pleasant thought, but he could scarce believe in the possibility of its realization, notwithstanding Kate's assurance of his success, and therefore turned the conversation into other channels, feeling it safest not to let his mind dwell on the improbable, however agreeable it might be.

As soon as supper was over, the old woman retired to rest, and Bartholomew having re-trimmed the lamp and placed another log on the fire, sat down for an hour's quiet study of the Greek Testament, one of his favourite relaxations, and was soon lost to all besides. How long he had sat thus poring over the crabbed characters he knew not; but he was suddenly aroused by a violent gust of wind which shook the insecure fastening of the casement and forced it open, extinguishing the lamp at the same moment, and thus plunging the room into almost total darkness, for the fire had nearly burnt itself out. Bartholomew hastened to assure himself of the safety of his treasured book, the leaves of which yet fluttered in the half-spent gale, and then proceeded to close the casement. As he leaned out for this purpose, the unusual sound, for that time of night, of voices in the churchyard below fell upon his ear. It was too dark to see anything; but as he felt about for the refractory fastening, a low laugh reached him, and then the words, "Little Maysie," and "Old Simon." He was listening now intently, and although he could hear nothing but fragments of sentences, caught enough of the conversation to understand that a plot was on foot for the forcible abduction of Maysie Lingard; but of the manner thereof, and the time at which it was to be put into execution, he was yet in ignorance. But as he strained his ear to listen, he heard with tolerable distinctness, "half-past seven to-morrow"; and then the footsteps receded in the distance. His first impulse was to rush out and endeavour to overtake and capture the would-be abductors, and he had nearly reached the street door with that intent; but a moment's reflection convinced him that such a course would be anything but prudent, seeing that he was alone and unarmed, and might therefore be easily overpowered and kept out of the way until the wicked deed was done. He accordingly returned to the room and looked out again, but all was quiet now in the churchyard, and having closed the casement, he went to bed, though not

to sleep, for his mind was terribly perplexed as to the best course to take in order to shield Maysie from the impending danger. Whether to tell her father and John White, or whether to keep the secret to himself until he could gain some other clue: which would be the wisest plan? Unfortunately, he had been unable to recognise the voices of the speakers, and could therefore only surmise as to who they might be, and mere conjecture was scarcely safe to act upon. It was highly probable that Ralph Capel was the chief mover in the wicked business, but not quite certain, and moreover, he would be sure not to act alone. At length, after much deliberation, his mind was made up: he would keep his own counsel, at all events until the next evening, when if he had entirely failed in obtaining further information, Simon Lingard should be made acquainted with what he had heard, and Maysie having been placed in safety, they two would await together the attempt to carry out the villainous scheme. And having formed this resolution, he fell asleep for the two or three hours that remained ere it was broad day, but his dreams were confused, and he awoke not much refreshed, and feeling quite unfit for his usual duties.

"Barty," said Kate, as he took his seat at the breakfast table, "thou shouldst have a better care over thyself, and not sit up so late o' nights. It puzzles my head to think what need thou hast to be poring over thy books, just as if thou wert not as learned as any need to be. In my time folks were not wont so to turn night into day, and they were far stronger and had a better colour in their faces than thou hast in thine this morn."

"True, Kate, I did transgress last night, but the books were not all to blame; and as to my colour, perchance I am missing the fresh air we were wont to enjoy. If there's nought to hinder, what say you to a boat to Lambeth and an hour's stroll in the green fields this fine sunshiny morning?"

"Thou wilt have no time, Barty; and there the dinner to see to," she replied in a tone he well understood to mean she would like it very much.

"I have time for nought else this morning, and as to the dinner we will find that when the appetite for it has come; so get ready, and we will go at once."

Indeed, Bartholomew did feel too troubled and anxious to be able to settle down to his usual routine; and had besides a vague sort of notion that down by the river he might chance to hear or see what would give a clue to the real authors of the plot against Maysie,—truly a most unlikely thing to occur, as he told himself over and over again, but nevertheless the conviction of its improbability was insufficient to drive it from his mind.

Kate was soon ready, and together they went forth in the pleasant autumn morning. The air was fresh and invigorating, and Bartholomew quickly found his spirits reviving beneath the kindly influences of the sun and breeze, and chatted cheerfully to his companion, as they made their way along the noisy Chepe, and through the narrow tortuous by-ways leading down to the river, while she in her turn talked and listened, and enjoyed to the full the rare happiness of holiday-making with her dear master. There was no difficulty at that hour of the day in securing a boat, and they were soon enjoying its easy motion over the slightly rippled surface of the clear and sparkling river, and the goodly views the banks afforded of stately houses surrounded by their pleasure gardens, of leafy trees and green hills stretching far away into the distance. Just before arriving at the archbishop's palace at Lambeth, they disembarked, and walked up to and around the stately edifice; then, turning off into the country, strolled along the pleasant lanes and peaceful green meadows, until Kate was weary, when they entered a little roadside inn for rest and refreshment ere they returned home. It was a very humble place; yet two gaily caparisoned horses were standing at the door in charge of a rough unkempt lad, and in the guest-room they found two fashionably attired gallants engaged in reckoning with the host. The apartment was somewhat dark, and the men took their departure almost immediately, so that Bartholomew had no opportunity of seeing their faces; but as they were leaving, one remarked to the other, as he pulled a watch from his pouch, "There is no need for such haste, Jack; half-past seven is the hour, and the wench is certain not to be beforehand. She likes not her job too well, I take it; it would scarce surprise me if she failed us."

There was something strangely familiar in the tone of the voice,

and in the present condition of Bartholomew's mind the words seemed as if they might have some bearing on the plot against Maysie. He was hastening out in the hope of discovering who the strangers were, when the entrance of the landlord delayed him for a moment, and he reached the porch just in time to see Ralph Capel and his companion set spur to their horses and gallop away. It was hopeless to attempt to follow them on foot, even could any good end be gained thereby; so returning into the house he ordered refreshment to be produced immediately, that they might lose no time in getting back to London.

"I know not what has come to thee this day, Barty," Kate said, observing that he ate scarcely anything; "thou art not wont to quarrel with thy victuals. Hath aught happened to vex thee?"

"In truth, good Kate, I am somewhat troubled," he answered. "Perchance to-morrow I may be able to tell thee the cause."

She inquired no further, but left him to his own reflections, until, having finished her meal, she was able to announce her readiness to depart. As they started on their homeward journey, the sun no longer shone as in the morning; the sky was grey and lowering, and the wind blew chill upon the river. Bartholomew took off his cloak and wrapped it around Kate in spite of her protestations; for himself he seemed hardly conscious of the cold or cheerlessness in his anxiety to reach the Lingards', and assure himself of Maysie's safety. Suppose he should be too late after all, that her pursuers should have changed their plans, or her father, for want of being forewarned, have let her go out without sufficient protection! He dared not trust himself to think about it, but having left Kate safe at their own door, hastened back into the Chepe, and was soon standing beneath the creaking sign-board of the "Golden Fleece," which showed but dimly by the light of the swinging oil lamp. Simon was alone in the shop bending over his ledger. He looked up with a pleased smile as Bartholomew entered, and held out his hand.

"I scarce thought to have seen you this evening," he said, "though you are none the less welcome, for I am wearied with the sight of debts that may never be paid. But there is nought

wrong, I hope," he continued, scanning his visitor's countenance narrowly through his large horn-rimmed spectacles.

"Oh, no! not with me," was the reply; "but how is Maysie? Is she at home? is she safe?"

Bartholomew uttered these words almost breathlessly, and Simon answered, regarding him meanwhile with unfeigned astonishment,—

"To be sure, Maysie is well enough, and at home, and safe; why do you ask?"

As briefly and clearly as he could, Bartholomew related what he had seen and heard on the previous evening and that afternoon, together with his own conclusions thereon. As he listened to the narration, Simon's brow darkened.

"The villains!" he exclaimed. "Will nought satisfy them but to plot against an innocent girl and rob her of her happiness and honour, and her father of the only treasure that makes life worth living? But they shall never have their will. If they lay their wicked hands on Maysie, it must be across my dead body!"

Simon closed his ledger and walked up and down the shop in a state of feverish excitement.

"What are we to do, Barty?" he said at length, pausing in his walk, and looking anxiously towards his companion.

"I see nought to be done, save to keep Maysie well guarded, and await what may happen next; we shall not have to tarry long. It is close on the hour named."

"You are right, lad; I will have the shop shut at once, and set the lads to keep guard, and I warrant it will be ill work for any who try to break in."

"I scarce think they will use violent means," suggested Bartholomew.

"Perhaps not, but we shall see. You go up to the women, and I will come as soon as I have seen all safe. There is no need to tell them what you have heard, they would only be affrighted."

"No, indeed, 'twere a pity to do so; and it may mean nought after all."

Maysie and her aunt were together in the sitting-room when Bartholomew entered; the latter dozing in her chair, the former

poring over a book by the flickering light of the blazing logs. She looked up and flushed with pleasure at seeing who it was. Mistress Lingard was still sleeping.

"Putting out your eyes, Maysie?" he said with a smile, as he took her proffered hand.

"Nay, I can see well enough," she answered, shaking back her brown curls; "and I could not bear to leave poor Una in her troubles."

"The old favourite!" he remarked, taking the volume from her hand, and glancing at the open page. "How often have you read the 'Faery Queene,' Maysie?"

"This is the third time, I think," she replied, "but it is ever new to me, and I oft find myself half fancying it must be true."

"And it is true, Maysie," replied Bartholomew in a gentle earnest tone that at once commanded her attention. "It is true that innocence and purity are a shield unto themselves, and the things that would seem to threaten them with danger do even become their protection." And as he spoke he wondered at himself for his gloomy apprehensions as to the safety of this little Una, whose eyes were turned upon him now, half in surprise and half in admiration. Perhaps she would have questioned him further as to his meaning, but that her father entered the room, and her aunt awoke from her nap, thus causing the conversation to become more general in its character.

Half-past seven came, and eight, without anything unusual occurring, and Simon had begun to breathe more freely; but a few minutes after, a message was brought upstairs by one of the apprentices that a person who had formerly lived with them as servant, and been summarily dismissed for serious misconduct by Mistress Lingard, was waiting below, and most anxiously desired to speak with Mistress Maysie.

"Bid her tell you what she wants, and go about her business," said Simon in a vexed tone.

"Nay, father," pleaded Maysie; "let me go to the poor girl. Perchance she is in some trouble, and would not care to speak of it save to me or aunt. I know she was sore grieved for her fault before she went away, and I found her ever kind to me. Do let me go."

"Well, well, child; go then, but speak to her within the shop, and get rid of her as quickly as you may. I doubt me she is after no good."

Maysie did not need a second bidding, but was out of the room in a moment, and quick as thought Bartholomew followed.

The woman, who looked pale and troubled, stood waiting with downcast eyes, which she did not raise even when the young girl approached, and asked kindly,—

"What can I do for you, Jane?"

"O Mistress Maysie!" she answered, "I am a miserable woman,—but send *them* away, or I cannot tell you aught."

Maysie bade the apprentices go below, and Jane beckoned her nearer to the door.

At that moment, Bartholomew, who had hitherto remained unseen, suddenly strode forward, and placing himself between the two, exclaimed,—

"Wretched woman, would you add to your sins that of cruel treachery towards one from whom you have received nought but kindness? Where are they who have allured you on to such wickedness?"

The poor creature stood for a moment as if petrified, then dropping on her knees she cried, with clasped hands and streaming eyes,—

"O sir! O mistress! forgive me! They said it was no harm, and they promised me money; and it is so hard to live when one's character is gone. I thought not of the wrong."

"Forgiveness is not ours to bestow!" said Bartholomew, solemnly; "it rests between yourself and God. But where are the villains who sent you on this cruel errand?"

"Just outside, sir, waiting for the door to be opened."

"Open the door, then, and let me speak with them. But first," he said, turning to Maysie, who stood looking on frightened and amazed, "you go upstairs, my child, and tell your father he had best not come down. Will! Steve! I may need you. Now open the door."

"But, sir, they will murder me when they know I have told."

"They shall not hurt you, only do my bidding"

She rose from her knees, and with trembling hand undid the

heavy bolts, opened the door, and having peered out into the darkness, said in a distinct low tone,—

"Just for a minute, Mistress Maysie."

It was evidently the preconcerted signal, for there appeared at once in the doorway a muffled figure. Bartholomew stepped quickly forward, and seizing the mysterious visitor in his powerful grasp, dragged him into the shop, and closed the door; then without relaxing his hold demanded,—

"What is your business here?"

"Unhand me, Master Legate," was the reply; "I answer not to you."

Bartholomew's suspicions were confirmed, the voice was Ralph Capel's.

"I know your errand, Ralph," he said sternly, "and it grieves me sore, as much for your sake as for that of her whom you would so basely and treacherously have lured to her destruction; you could not have touched her pure innocent soul, but your own you are steeping in guilt to its utter undoing."

"I want not your preaching, Master Legate; let me go; or I will draw upon you."

"Think not, Ralph Capel," said Bartholomew with quiet firmness, "that threats or struggles will avail you aught. I have other help at hand if there is need for it, and save you give me your word of honour to remain quietly here until you have received permission to depart, I must e'en detain you by force."

Sulkily enough, Ralph gave the required pledge, and his captor having quitted his hold, bade Steve call his master, who quickly appeared.

"Now," said Bartholomew, turning to the woman who stood by trembling with fear; "tell Master Lingard all you know about this wretched business; only speak the truth, and no harm shall come to you."

With a glance towards Ralph, who, however, kept his eyes steadily turned from her, the poor creature obeyed, and in a voice broken by tears and sobs, told what she knew of the plot that had been so happily frustrated, and of the way in which her own poverty and misery had induced her to take part in it. It was a sad story enough, and at its close even Simon felt himself more moved by

pity than anger towards this poor dupe of her unprincipled employers.

"Thank God, woman," he said, "that He has saved you from burdening your conscience with this sin. For you, Ralph Capel," he continued, turning to the young man who waited there, angry and defiant: "this is the second time you have tried to rob me of my child, and were it not that your father is one of my oldest friends, and your sister almost as dear to me as my own daughter, I would move heaven and earth to have you punished as you deserve; for their sakes I let you this time go free, but beware for the future. I show no mercy again. Now go."

Ralph remained standing for a moment in silence, then he hissed out, "You shall rue this, both you and yon canting hypocrite," and made towards the door, throwing as he went a look of mingled rage and hate on Simon and Bartholomew, and passed out into the darkness. As the latter was closing the door, the woman came timidly up to him. "What am I to do, sir?" she asked.

"Go home now, and come to me in the morning, if I can do aught for you, I will." And telling her where he was to be found, he bade her a kind "Good-night," and she too went out, and he and Simon were left alone. Then the latter turned to him,— "Barty," he said, with visible emotion, "You have saved my child; how can I ever repay thee?"

"By giving me leave to cherish and protect her all my life," was the answer.

Simon pressed his hand. "Ask Maysie yourself, Barty," he replied; "there is nought would make me happier in this world."

A more anxious, troubled half-hour than that spent by Maysie, after her abruptly terminated interview with their former servant, can scarcely be imagined. That she had narrowly escaped becoming the victim of some infamous plot, she could not doubt, and that her present safety was owing to the prompt interference of Bartholomew Legate was also certain; but of the precise nature of the plot, and who were its authors, she was in ignorance, as she was also of the way in which Bartholomew had learned of its existence, and her fears rose accordingly. Often had she heard

terrible tales of men being carried off under cover of darkness, and foully murdered, the perpetrators of the deed remaining undiscovered and unpunished. Suppose that her father or Bartholomew should have fallen into the hands of the villains whom they had baulked of their prey, what might not happen to them? Every sound increased these nervous apprehensions, which she too plainly saw, by her aunt's countenance, were shared by her; and suspense became at length so intolerable, that she resolved, notwithstanding her father's express desire to the contrary, to venture down to the shop, and ascertain for herself his safety and that of Bartholomew. As she opened the door, however, their well-known voices fell upon her ear, and the next moment she was folded in her father's arms.

"Thank God, my little wench is safe," he exclaimed in a voice broken with emotion, as he embraced her fondly, then, laying her hand in Bartholomew's, crossed the room to his sister's side.

"Maysie," said the strong man, looking lovingly down on the blushing girl, "will you fulfil your child promise, and be my little wife?"

She drew nearer to him, and with tears shining in her dark eyes, answered softly, "Yes, Barty."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"HOLD your peace, you dunderhead, or get out of my sight; when I am in need of your counsel I will ask for it."

"And you will ask me in vain for that or aught else you want, as my name is George Lester. 'Sdeath, I would not bear from my own brother the affronts I have borne from you, Ralph Capel, let alone the ingratitude; but I will no more of it, and henceforth you may fight your own battles, and do your own foul work, I aid you not."

"Wait till you are asked to do so, Lester; and meantime get you gone. I am in no humour to list to your foolish prating, and if you go not at once I shall turn you out as I would a troublesome cur."

"A murrain on you for your insolence, Capel. Had another man spoken so to me, it would have been the last time, as I am a gentleman and a soldier. 'By'r Lady,' he continued, his red face growing redder as his choler rose; "when you are in your peevish tempers, one may scarce call his name his own. Methinks it would be no small service to your health to let some of the mad blood out of you," and suiting the action to the word, he clapped his hand to his dagger's hilt. At the same moment Ralph sprang to his feet with an angry gesture, and likewise seized his weapon. They were both in so quarrelsome a mood that mischief would undoubtedly have been wrought, had not the door suddenly opened, and Walter Carey made his appearance.

"Why, what is all this about?" he exclaimed, laying a hand on the shoulder of either combatant. "Are you practising against your next campaign, my doughty little warrior, or in readiness for some forthcoming masque? I pray you in that case to have a care of Ralph's pretty face, it were a pity to spoil it by an unlucky scratch."

"Let me alone, Carey," cried Lester, struggling to free himself; "he insulted me!"

"And he threatened me," retorted Ralph fiercely; "I will bear that from no man."

"Put up your knives, my children," Carey continued, with imperturbable coolness, "remember you are in the precincts of the royal palace, and his Highness likes not such playthings; put them up, and I will listen to the *casus belli*, and decide between you if either is in the right, which I much doubt."

The belligerents obeyed, though with rather bad grace, but it was next to impossible to refuse anything to handsome, good-tempered Walter Carey, who was a general favourite, despite the biting sarcasm in which he occasionally indulged.

"Now sit ye down, sweet gossips," he continued, "and forsooth look not so askance upon each other, as if ye had been sworn enemies from your cradles, instead of the most loving of friends."

"A truce to this nonsense, Carey," said Ralph impatiently; "when Lester knows how to concern himself with his own affairs, and not to play the fool with those of others, he will find his company better liked than at present."

"By my troth, if this is not intolerable," exclaimed Lester, "as though it had not been himself who besought me to lend him my aid in carrying off his mistress; and forsooth, because his plan failed, I may not open my lips on the matter; if that be loving friendship, no more of it for George Lester."

"Nay, sweetheart, but friendship means a great deal—forbearance amongst other virtues, and I pray you, therefore, to exercise some patience with our good Ralph, seeing he laboureth under so grievous a disappointment at the present. Bethink you, likewise, it might be your own lot were you ever to fall in love."

"I hope I should know better in the like case than to show myself such an ass," was the polite rejoinder, as Lester rose and quitted the apartment, with as much dignity as his short legs encased in the trunk hose and gorgeous stockings would enable him to assume.

Carey looked after him with a smile. "He will have for-

gotten his ill-humour by when next we meet," he said; "his hot blood soon cools."

"I care not a groat whether his blood is hot or cold," muttered Ralph sullenly.

His companion paid no heed to this ungracious remark, but having drawn his stool nearer to Capel's, and seated himself upon it in an attitude of attention, he asked, in a serious tone: "How was it your plan failed? it was well laid."

"It was that man's doings—the preacher, Legate," Ralph hissed out between his teeth. "How he got wind of our intent I know not. Perchance the woman played us false; he may have bribed her to do so. But there, he was in the house,—got me inside by a trick, and preached at me till I was tired; then he called the old man down to give me some of his insolence. I believe he wants the girl himself; but I'll be revenged on him, that I will."

"Craving your mercy, dear gossip, I see not this matter quite with your vision; to me it seemeth but as an untoward freak of that fickle fortune, such as we must all at times submit to, willy nilly. Your intent, my good Ralph, was, I take it, had not your scheme miscarried, to have outwitted both the good hosier and his preaching friend; but the fates were on their side, and they have outwitted you. What then? is it worth breaking your heart about? or were it not better a hundred times to summon fresh courage to your aid, and make another venture? Peradventure the maiden's heart may have softened towards you meanwhile, and then of what avail will be any attempt on the part of father or friend to keep their pretty bird in a cage? You will win her without a struggle. Let that be your part, dear gossip; but as to revenge, it hath an ugly sound, and I would none of it. Moreover, to speak truly, I see not that the man has injured you."

"You know nought of the matter, Carey, or you would discourse to a different measure. I tell you that not only hath he stolen the damsel's affection, but he hath also insulted me in such manner as no gentleman could brook."

"In that case, bid him with all due courtesy grant you the satisfaction of measuring swords with him."

"That were too great an honour for such an one, and I have heard, likewise, that he doth steadfastly refuse to handle sword or dagger."

"Then betake yourself to him, and say that if he meets you not in fair fight, he is an arrant coward, and will be so thought of by all men."

"'Tis said that he careth nought for what folks think or talk about him."

"Verily, I do incline to the opinion that this same Master Legate is a wiser man than the most of his generation, and my further counsel to you, good gossip, will be to leave him alone."

"You may keep your counsel to yourself, Carey; I shall find some means of repaying him for his insults, doubt it not." And having thus given vent to his spleen, Ralph turned away, walked to the window, and stood looking out with a countenance as gloomy as the grey and clouded sky.

Carey meanwhile remained seated, and seemed busily occupied in making a minute inspection of the rosettes on his shoes the while he hummed a pensive air. Presently he looked up, and with far more earnestness of manner than was usual to him, said,—

"I scarce known wherefore, Ralph, but my mind is somewhat exercised concerning this same Bartholomew Legate, and it would truly vex me were you to do him an ill turn on account of this business; not that I hold him in any especial regard, but his name hath been familiar to me from my childhood, and I never yet heard aught of him that would have disgraced a gentleman, save perhaps his descent (and some of us would fail to claim a better) and his fanatical opinions in the matter of religion; and even in the part he hath taken against you in this affair, as a friend of the damsel's father, his conduct hath been that of an honest man, and one not lacking courage. You must confess so much, and to talk of revenge in such a case savours surely too much of petty spite."

He ceased speaking, and looked towards Ralph, who, however, continued to gaze from the window, paying as little heed to his friend as if he had not heard a word. Carey waited a few moments, then, as the silence remained still unbroken, he rose from his seat, saying, with a slight curl of the lip,—

"If that is your mood, sweet gossip, I will burden you no longer with my company, but e'en leave you to the enjoyment of your own, so fare you well until our next meeting."

And having thus delivered himself, he turned on his heel and quitted the room, leaving Ralph to brood in solitude over his disappointed expectations, and to nurse his misdirected wrath. As is the case with other ill-disciplined natures, his seemed incapable of attributing its misfortunes and vexations to their true source, viz., its own utter disregard of natural or moral laws, but instead laid the blame of their existence upon persons and circumstances outside of itself, and thus it had come to pass that the demons of envy and hatred had taken possession of Ralph's soul, and chased from their temporary abode all the better spirits. Having persuaded himself into the belief that to Bartholomew Legate was due not only the failure of his plan for the forcible abduction of Maysie, but also the dislike and repugnance she had manifested to all his advances, his one overpowering desire was now for revenge, and he could think of nought besides. Even Carey's well meant defence of his supposed enemy, instead of lessening, seemed rather to have had the effect of stimulating his vindictiveness, and his whole mind was bent on the devising of some plan by which his purpose might be accomplished. At length, as he still stood moodily by the window, a thought seemed to strike him, and hastily quitting the room, he made his way to Robert Carr's apartments. The king's favourite was, however, not to be found, and a page, on being questioned, believed he had accompanied his Majesty to Greenwich; so there was no chance of seeing him that day, and Ralph, vexed and disappointed, returned to his chamber, donned hat and cloak, and sallied forth, without any very definite aim. If he could have walked away from himself, it would doubtless have been a relief, for his reflections were by no means of an enviable character; but as that might not be, he plunged as quickly as possible into the surging sea of human life that ebbed and flowed in and near the great city, and strove thus to divert his mind from dwelling upon itself, but without much success, though he walked till he was tired, and pausing at length near Paul's Cross, leaned against a wall to rest, the while he idly

watched a crowd of simple folks gathered in open-mouthed astonishment around a mountebank, who was holding forth in grotesque imitation of a popular preacher of the day. As he stood thus, a familiar voice hailed him, and Carey's hand was laid upon his shoulder.

"Well met, honest Ralph," he said, "but who would have thought to find you here, hearkening to that noisy fellow, though, by my troth, his sermon hath more wit in it than many that be preached in the churches, and I would be loth his eloquence should be rewarded by the pillory, as I fear may be the case if he continue long in his calling. But which way lies your road?" he continued, "I have lost my most excellent gossip, George Lester, since we chanced upon a couple of knaves, striving each to batter the other out of all semblance of humanity. The warrior remained to watch the fray, and I was fain, not caring for such spectacles, to continue my course alone, and must so continue, save you will grant me your sweet company."

"My intent was to have returned to Whitehall, but I care not whither I go," replied Ralph, not altogether sorry for the prospect of a companion, now that a part of his ill-humour had spent itself.

"Well answered, worthy Capel. Let us then repair to a certain snug little inn I wot of near the Bishops-gate, and solace ourselves with a stoup of wine and a mouthful of the venison pasty for which mine hostess of the Swan is so justly famed."

His companion having assented to this proposition, they made their way through the busy Chepe, and the scarce less busy poultry market, and soon reached the hotel, where from the alacrity with which host and hostess, man and maid, attended to, and even anticipated his wishes, it was evident that the sprightly young gallant was neither an infrequent nor unwelcome guest. The fare, as he had promised, was excellent, and although the room was certainly close and smoky, yet Ralph found it not otherwise than agreeable to escape for a while from the chill autumn breezes, and to rest his tired limbs.

"Now, my bully host," said Carey, as the landlord brought a second stoup of wine and refilled their goblets, "what is there in the way of tourney or joust or other sport you can commend

for our present diversion? our latest pastime was a sermon, which verily tended much to the edifying of our minds and spirits."

"Nay, if you incline to list to sermons, gentle sirs," replied their host, with a seriousness of manner that contrasted strangely with Carey's bantering tone, "you could scarce do better than go to a meeting-place, for 'tis no church, but a few doors from here, in this very street. By my soul, I shall never forget the sermon I hearkened to there a se'nnight since, not if I live to a hundred. The man spoke, sirs, as if there had been sent him a message straight from heaven, and he was fain to give it to all the world."

"Ah, mine host, mine host!" said Carey, shaking his head with mock gravity, "know you not that the frequenting of conventicles is against the law of this land, and how then dare you confess to so serious a breach thereof?"

"There be many that do likewise, Master Carey, and I have no fear that you would betray me, even did I go oftener than now."

"You are right, good Swan; it behoves me to keep your counsel, even as I verily believe you keep mine; but what is the name of this prince of preachers?"

"Nay, that I know not, or have forgotten; but he is truly a marvellous speaker, and it would please you to list to him for an hour."

"What say you, Capel, shall we go? 'twill be a change from the vanity of our everyday lives, and perchance prove not more tedious than her Majesty's masques of late."

"As you will," returned Ralph, on whose temper the generous wine was already producing a beneficial effect; "I would as fain hear a good sermon as a good catch, and they are neither of them too common."

"So I would have judged from your conversation, sweet gossip," returned Carey; "and now, mine host," he continued, "let us have the reckoning; an it be not too long, I will swear that the last notes of this swan are sweet indeed."

A little more good-humoured banter followed, and the reckoning having at last been settled, the two young men took their departure.

Darkness was already falling, and it was, therefore, with some difficulty that they found their way to the house indicated by the innkeeper, a low, gable-roofed building, lying a little back from the street; its open doorway guided them at last, and passing through a narrow passage illumined by the dim light of a single lamp, they found themselves in a fairly spacious, though low roofed apartment with no furniture save a rude kind of pulpit and some rough benches; but it was well filled with people, both men and women, all in reverential attitudes, for prayer was being offered; and the young men, almost involuntarily, hushed the sound of their footsteps, and stood with bowed heads, waiting till it should be ended: for this was no ordinary petition for temporal blessings, but living, loving communion with the Divine Being, causing all who heard to feel that the God they worshipped was not a God afar off, but a very present tender and merciful heavenly Father; and on Carey at least it produced an impression not to be easily effaced. At its close, he took the seat pointed out to him, and waited expectantly for what should come next, Ralph regarding him meanwhile with an expression of surprise, not unmingled with contempt. But it was now his turn to be startled: the low pleading tones of the prayer he had scarcely heard, much less heeded; and owing to the dimness of the light, he had been unable to discern the features of the preacher; but as his voice rang out full and clear in the prophetic words, "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off! Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord," he recognised him at once as Bartholomew Legate. His first impulse was to have quitted the building, and he would certainly have obeyed it, but that he did not care to leave without Carey, who, it was evident, was too interested not to wish to remain; and Ralph also was soon compelled, in spite of himself, to listen, as in glowing words the preacher followed up his text with an earnest appeal to his hearers to keep always before them the thought of the constant presence with them of the living God, the Creator of the world, the universal Father; not as the God of this nation, or of that,—of the Christians or of the Jews,—not as though He were an eastern potentate, requiring to be propitiated by costly presents, and the

incense of praise and flattery. Nor must they think of Him as a complicated being made up of divers natures, each with its different offices and different requirements, for this was contrary to reason and the Holy Scriptures, but they must think of Him as the God of all mankind, the God revealed by Jesus Christ, the all-holy, all-wise heavenly Father; just indeed, yet tender and merciful withal, not overlooking or condoning sin, but forgiving it when forgiveness had been won by true penitence, and the sinner had returned into the way of righteousness. For they must remember also that as children of this gracious heavenly Father, and as brethren of Jesus Christ, not only great privileges but great duties were theirs, and must walk therefore as children of the light, avoiding everything base or mean, or that might prove a hindrance to good living in themselves or others, and uphold in word and deed the standard of truth and holiness, fearing nought, though all the world were arrayed against them, because truth and holiness are of God, and are eternal; and though all else perish, they will endure,—the form perchance may change, but the living Spirit remains the same for ever and ever,—and thus the Samaritan may worship on Mount Gerizim, the Jew at Jerusalem, and the Christian in the goodly church, or humble meeting-house; yet all, if upright of soul, will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Let this, then, be the aim of their lives—to press forward toward the mark of their high calling in Christ Jesus, fearless of slanders, of revilings, of persecutions, yea, even of death itself, knowing that the God of truth in whom they trust is a God near at hand and not afar off, a God whose presence fills heaven and earth, and from whom no secret thing is hid, and that resting on Him no harm can befall them, since life and death and all things are in His hand.

Ralph seemed constrained to listen, though as the sermon continued he was seized with a strange fear of this God from whose presence he could not escape, and to whom every folly, every wickedness of his misspent life was known. Was it too late for him to repent and turn again to righteousness? Could he give up all those pleasures that had become so necessary a part of his existence, and was it worth the cost? Should he go up to Bartholomew Legate and ask his counsel? He was just resolving to do

so when the congregation rose to sing the concluding psalm. At its close they began to disperse, and he observed a girl who had been sitting not far from him make her way towards the pulpit. He could not be mistaken, it was Maysie, and as Bartholomew met her with a welcoming smile, the demon of jealousy drove out every other emotion from Ralph's soul.

"Did you see that?" he said fiercely to Carey; but Carey only answered in an absent manner, and linking his arm in Ralph's walked away in silence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"NAY, Barty, not at Yule-tide. I like not to refuse you aught, but I must keep my maid with me till that be past. Say Easter, an you will; 'tis not so long to wait, and she is very young; besides, that will give time for her and Esther to see to the clothes and housewifery. It will content you so, will it not?"

"Yes, Master Lingard, I will bide your time; in truth, I know it must be hard for you to part with Maysie, e'en though she goes not far away; and I promise you not to be too selfish in my enjoyment of her company even when we are married. Her father hath his rights no less than her husband," replied Bartholomew, an affectionate smile chasing the slight cloud of disappointment that had gathered on his brow.

"Then, good son Barty, it is settled," said Simon in a tone of relief, and holding out his hand which the other grasped warmly. "But you are not going already?" he added.

"Yes, I must; I have my lambs to tend to-day. Perchance, if you grant me leave, I may come in later on."

"Ay, do; and bid your good Kate to come likewise; Esther doth ever delight in a crack with her, and I myself am nothing loth thereto."

"Thanks, Master Lingard; I make no doubt Kate will be glad to come as I shall be glad to bring her," answered Bartholomew, as with another smile and nod he quitted the shop and proceeded on his way towards the preaching room, to meet, as was his wont twice in the week, for religious instruction the younger members of his flock, to whom these gatherings afforded great pleasure.

It was a raw, cheerless afternoon in November, and the large room looked dreary enough in spite of the wood fire crackling upon the hearth; but when the children with their bright happy faces began to assemble, and after greeting their pastor affection-

ately took their places on the rude benches, it soon assumed quite a different aspect. A gesture from Bartholomew hushed in a moment the busy hum of voices, and after a few simple words of prayer, he seated himself on a stool in front of his little disciples, and having taken one of the smallest of them on his knee, began as usual by questioning them about what they had learned at their last meeting.

"You told us about Jesus going up to Jerusalem, Master Legate," said a bright lad of some twelve years; "and how a lawyer met Him on the way and began to talk to Him, and wanted Him to say how he was to get to heaven; and when Jesus told him to keep the commandments, to love God and to love his neighbour, he wanted to know who was his neighbour; but I doubt me if he cared much about it, or he would have found it out for himself."

"Could you have done so, Frank?" asked Bartholomew quietly.

The boy hesitated a moment, then answered candidly, "I trow not, sir; but I am only a boy, and the lawyer was a learned man."

The pastor smiled, and turning to a gentle-faced girl asked, "Can you tell us, Mary, what answer the Master gave to that question?"

"He told him the story of the man who was journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho, and was fallen upon by thieves, who used him very cruelly, and when they had nearly killed him, robbed him of everything he had and went away."

"And a priest came by," interrupted a little yellow-haired boy, "and did not help the poor man, because he was afraid."

"And then the Levite came, and he was afraid, and would not stay," said another eager voice.

"Then what became of the poor man? Did he lie there and die?"

"No, for the Samaritan, whose enemy he was, came and helped him," answered Mary.

"And gave him wine to drink," cried another of the children.

"And bound up his wounds," said another, "and took him to the inn and stayed with him all that night, and was very good to him."

Thus, by one and another of the little scholars, the whole of

the beautiful parable was retold; and then Bartholomew endeavoured to draw from them its lesson of helpfulness and forgiving kindness, even to enemies, and to show how it applied even to their lives, children though they were. So intent was he upon this labour of love, that he did not observe the entrance of a stranger,—an old man, somewhat bent, and leaning upon a staff, who came in very quietly, and seating himself near the door, remained in a listening attitude until the instruction was over, and the children had sung a psalm and bowed their young heads beneath the Benediction. Then, as the little folks, having bidden loving farewells to their pastor, trooped merrily out, he advanced slowly up the room, and taking Bartholomew by the hand, said:

“Peace be with you and yours, my brother!”

“And with you, good Master Postlethwaite,” replied the latter with genuine warmth, as soon as he had recovered from his surprise at seeing this unexpected visitor. “But, indeed, this is an unlooked-for happiness; I knew not you were in London.”

“I am here but for a short season,” returned the old man, “and it is the Lord who hath directed my steps hither; until this morn I knew not you were ministering here, and now, alas! He hath made me the messenger of evil tidings. I come to warn you of danger that you may escape the pursuer while there is yet time.”

“What danger? What mean you?” asked Bartholomew, half in fear lest under the pressure of continued fastings and fatigue the old man’s mind should at last be giving way.

“Lose no time, I beseech you,” answered Ephraim Postlethwaite in an agitated tone; “the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord; the prince of this world persecuted Him, and now will also do likewise to you; therefore, take heed to His words, and when they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another, for it can scarce be that your work here is already accomplished.”

“I pray you, speak plainly, good friend,” said Bartholomew, greatly perplexed; “I understand not your meaning.”

“Know then,” was the answer, “that you have given offence to some who sit in high places, and the pursuer is even now upon your track. The Lord directed me that I should gain knowledge

of this, for even this morn, as I sat weary by the Cross in the Strand, I heard your name spoken once and again, and looking up, beheld two young men, well-favoured, but whose attire and behaviour, methought, did bespeak them worshippers of the god of this world; and they, thinking nought of the poor stranger at their side, spoke together freely of you, and in tones of displeasure, and one at length said to the other, that ere to-morrow eve you would be safe lodged in Newgate Gaol. Thereat came I away and sought you out; so now, I pray you, flee while there is yet time.”

Bartholomew listened, the while the old man spoke, with a grave yet calm countenance; then he answered: “I thank you, Master Postlethwaite, with my whole heart for your anxious thoughtfulness on my behalf, and will take counsel on the matter with the elders of my people; though truly I cannot bring to mind aught I have done to merit imprisonment, save indeed,” he added, with a quiet smile, “some might think speaking the word of truth were a crime against the majesty of the law; and even were that so, I would not willingly play the part of the cowardly hireling, and when the wolf appears, seek safety in flight, leaving my sheep to his tender mercies. I think, too, you would scarce set me an example of that sort.”

A grim smile played over Ephraim’s countenance as he replied: “You may be right, my brother, but some men are born to suffer, and others to labour, in the Master’s cause. Besides, my strength is small, and my sands nearly run out; while there should be years of usefulness before you, when God shall have guided you into His whole truth!”

“Let his will be done!” replied Bartholomew; “I would not willingly run into danger, yet still less would I be faithless to the work He has given me to do. Once more, my kind friend, I thank you for your care of my safety, and promise not to be altogether heedless of your warning. And now, will you not return home with me, and let us break bread together?”

“Nay, I thank you, for I have promised to meet some of the brethren to-night, and to-morrow I wander forth again, so we must e’en say farewell. Perchance we shall meet here again, but God only knows! His blessing be with you.”

"And with you," Bartholomew responded, grasping warmly the proffered hand.

And then the old man turned away, and in another minute was gone, leaving Bartholomew wondering at this meteor-like apparition that had so often flashed suddenly across his path, and as suddenly disappeared; wondering, too, at the strange and unexpected tidings he had brought, and endeavouring to determine within himself as to the best line of conduct for him to pursue. He was, of course, aware that the little congregation of men and women gathering around him, week by week, to seek that spiritual food they were unable to find in the established churches, might indeed be regarded as an unlawful assembly, and he, as their pastor, rendered liable to fine and imprisonment; but as their meetings had existed for some considerable time without notice or sign of hindrance from any authority, such an event had come to be regarded as in the highest degree improbable, and no kind of precaution had therefore been considered necessary. He was unwilling to create needless alarm in the minds of any of his flock, yet felt that some measures should be taken to guard against surprise, and was still deliberating anxiously on the matter in the growing dusk, when the creaking of the heavy door upon its hinges startled him, and he sprang forward, calling out, "Who's there?"

"It is I, Master Legate," replied a voice which he gladly recognised as that of John White. "I marvelled to find the door open as I passed, and in sooth thought it had been left so by mischance, for truly I expected not to see you here at so unwonted an hour. Yet it is good hap for me, if I hinder you not: I have news from home this day that I would fain share with you. Have you aught to occupy you longer here?"

"Nay; I should have left here a full half-hour since but for hearing that which hath somewhat disquieted me. If you are not pressed for time, I would fain seek counsel of you ere we go hence."

"I trust there is nought gravely amiss, Master Legate," said John White in an anxious tone, as, having carefully scrutinized the entry, and closed the door, he came up to Bartholomew, who was replacing the books he had been using in the iron-bound chest that contained most of the valuables of the little Church.

"That is more than I can tell," was the reply. "Likely enough 'tis but an idle threat, yet it may have serious import, even for the Church. But you shall hear as it was told to me, and then, perchance, you will be able to advise." And Bartholomew related what he had heard from Ephraim Postlethwaite, of the threatened danger to himself, and, as he feared, his congregation likewise.

The young man listened quietly till the narrative was concluded; then he exclaimed with vehemence: "He is right! you should leave here at once! and why not to-night? We are sending goods by a ship that leaves for Antwerp as soon as the tide serves; there is plenty of time for you to get on board, and then you are safe."

"Nay, John," said Bartholomew, with a kindly smile, "that is scarce spoken like yourself; you would not surely have me such a coward as to flee at the first sound of 'danger,' without even seeking to know whether it really hath existence? Counsel me rather what to do to keep my poor folk from harm. I am half minded to hold our meeting elsewhere to-morrow eve, were it possible to find in so short space a room that would contain us all, and not be too open to observation," he added in a musing tone.

"But, indeed, dear Master Legate," persisted John, "it doth behove you, even for our sakes, to consult first your own safety; were that assured, I doubt not a place might be found in which to hold our meeting without aught of suspicion being aroused. There is a goodly shed down by the riverside belonging to Jan Osterveld, which he would of a surety gladly hire to us, for it hath lain empty these six months. If you will it so, I can go and speak with him at once, and let you know later on how I have succeeded."

"Thanks, good John, and should he consent, then must we take means to send word to all our people. Perchance you would afterwards see Master Cox, and when he is made aware, he and his lads will soon make the matter known. You must say if I crave too much of your kindness."

"That were scarce possible, Master Legate," responded John, drawing back, as he spoke, the heavy bolts of the door.

"Thanks, ever kind and helpful friend," said Bartholomew, with

a warm grasp of the young man's hand ; "and I will now to the Elwyns and hear what they have to say. Farewell for the present ; should you not find me at Iremonger Lane, you will seek me in the Chepc."

"Without doubt ; and you *will* take care of yourself ?" he added, as they passed out together into the chill evening air.

"Assuredly I will, dear lad : fear nought on that point."

They parted, John going down towards the river, and Bartholomew making his way at once to a house in Leadenhall Street, where Joseph Elwyn and his brother, both members of his congregation, carried on business as printers. They were elderly men, much esteemed by the small circle of their intimate acquaintances, as well for their shrewd common sense as for their kindness of disposition, and Bartholomew felt that in the present crisis their counsel would be invaluable. But as he entered the shop and heard the press noisily at work, and saw the two brothers busily engaged in examining the wet sheets as they were lifted out one by one, he began to fear he should find no opportunity of a quiet chat with either. After a minute or two, however, Joseph Elwyn looked up through his large spectacles, and seeing their visitor, rose from his seat with a smile of welcome. "Why, Master Legate, who would have thought to see you at this hour ?" he said ; "but sit ye down, we shall have finished work in a few minutes more."

Bartholomew obeyed, and sat watching, with a curious interest, considering the anxiety he was feeling, the sheets of blank paper going into the press in rapid succession, and coming out ready to bear through the known world the thoughts of men's minds. At length the busy movements ceased, the workmen proceeded to don their caps and jerkins preparatory to departure, and the brothers Elwyn came forward simultaneously to greet their guest.

On learning the object of his visit, however, both looked very grave.

"It is what I thought would come to pass," said Matthew, the younger ; "for all his fine promises when he came to the throne, the king is a bigot at heart, and would give freedom of thought and worship to none save himself. I fear me troublous times are

in store for us ; 'tis a good thought to hold our meetings elsewhere for the present, but it is of your own person you must have an especial care, Master Legate. I would you could quit England for a while that your safety might be assured."

"You are all very kind, Master Elwyn, to take such concern for me ; but methinks 'twould be little short of cowardice to seek my own safety while our Church remaineth in danger, even could I do so with good conscience. But my errand was not to speak of myself ; rather came I hither to learn if you approve our plan, and to crave your assistance in the matter of removing the chest of books and the benches."

"Take no trouble on that score, Master Legate," said Joseph Elwyn kindly ; "they shall be got away at daybreak to-morrow, if our good friend John White hath succeeded in his undertaking. Matthew and I will to his house to-night and learn the conclusion thereof."

"Yes, yes," said Matthew ; "leave it to us, we will see to that ; only take heed to thy own safety. The Church were nought without its head."

Bartholomew thanked both the brothers for their sympathy and proffered help, and having taken leave, turned his steps homewards.

"Why, Barty, thee art late," said Kate as she met him at the door ; "supper has been waiting for thee this hour past."

"And Master Lingard would that you and I should sup with them to-night, Kate ; I fear me it is now too late. What think you ?"

"That thee hadst best get a bite of something, and a cup of warm wine, and get thee to the Lingards afterwards. Maysie will be scared else, for thou art pale as a ghost. Thou hast overwrought thyself this day."

"As you will, Kate," replied Bartholomew, as, yielding to her suggestion, he seated himself in his chair by the hearth, and watched the crackling logs, the while the old woman heated the wine, and brought forth a nicely roasted capon.

"There," she said with a complacent smile ; "thou'st not tasted a finer than that since we left Rumwell, I warrant me. Goodman Stevens sent it thee from his farm at Islington, and

says he will bring another next week ; for he can ne'er forget thy kindness to his wife and him when their little wench died, not if he lives to a hundred, and he bade the messenger tell thee so."

"It is kind indeed of him to rate so high my poor services. I did nought for him more than any man with a human heart would have done in like case : such as he make one ashamed of the poverty of one's labours."

"That is like thee, Barty," returned Kate in a tone of vexation ; "thou wilt ever be making little of what thou hast done. But there, 'tis of no use talking to thee, as none have a better right to know than I have ; but set to at thy supper, lad, or 'twill be too late to go anywhere when it is finished." She seated herself opposite to him, her quick eyes watching his every movement with evident dissatisfaction. At length she exclaimed sharply : "Thou art eating scarce at all, Barty ; is there aught wrong with thee, or is it with the bird ?"

"Certainly not with the bird, Kate, nor with aught else on the board ; but I own I am weary, and have had, besides, somewhat to trouble me, yet I would not that it troubled thee also, perchance by to-morrow I shall have forgotten it as though it had not been."

He smiled as he spoke, and Kate questioned no further, though her anxiety on his account had by no means abated. After a few minutes more he pushed away his plate, rose from the table, and asked cheerfully :

"Wilt go with me to the Chepe now ?"

"Nay, indeed, Barty, it is too late for me," she replied ; "and thee hadst best be quick, or thou wilt be keeping the good folks out o' their beds."

"I will not stay long, Kate, I promise thee ; but if I go not, they will marvel what hath befallen us."

"I will get thee thy lantern then," she said, "and thee hadst best take a stout cudgel likewise ; there be evil-minded folk abroad o' dark nights, as I have heard tell."

"But thou wouldst surely not have me a fighter," he said merrily.

"If need were : thee hadst best use a cudgel on some one else than have them use it on thee," was her answer, as she pro-

ceeded to trim the wick of the little lamp, while Bartholomew stood by and waited with what patience he might.

"Who can that be ?" he exclaimed, as a loud knocking was suddenly heard from below. "Nay, I will go, Kate ; doubtless 'tis I that am wanted."

He descended the stairs, and on opening the door leading into the street, found himself confronted by three men in the garb of soldiers.

"What is your business ?" he asked in some surprise.

"We want Bartholomew Legate," was the answer.

"I am he ; what do you desire with me ?"

"You must come with us," said the foremost of the group ; "here is the warrant for your arrest, and 'twere best to yield quietly."

"For my arrest ! on what charge ?"

"You are charged with frequenting conventicles, and poisoning the minds of the king's subjects by the preaching of false and heretical doctrines. You can read it for yourself, an you will," he added, producing as he spoke a written document, as to the validity of which Bartholomew knew there could be no question.

"The accusation is unjust," he said, "but that is no fault of yours. I will come with you."

"What is it, Barty ? What have those men to do with thee ?" exclaimed Kate, who was now seen descending the stairs in trembling haste.

"They have a warrant for my arrest," he replied, advancing to meet her ; "but fret not thyself, dear Kate ; I doubt not two or three days will see me freed again," he added, trying to smile cheerfully.

"Nay, but they shall not take thee, Barty," she exclaimed, placing herself between him and his captors ; "thee hast ne'er done aught to merit a prison."

"Hush ! dear Kate, they but do their duty. I must e'en go with them," he replied, disengaging himself with gentle firmness from her grasp ; "and I pray you, do this for me to-morrow morn : go to Master Lingard, and tell him what hath befallen me, and then to John White, and tell him also. They will take counsel what to do on my behalf. Thou knowest to what this

key belongs, and wilt find there enough for thy present needs. Farewell, dear Kate! think I shall soon be with thee again, and tell Maysie I ever think of her with tender love."

"My boy! my boy! I cannot part with thee so," she cried, in agonized tones, and throwing her arms about his neck, while the tears filled her eyes.

"Come, mistress," said the soldier who held the warrant; "thee must let him go; but take heart, perchance he will soon be with thee again. And we must do our duty, though it be sore against our will," and he brushed his hand across his eyes and turned away.

"Farewell, dear Kate!" said Bartholomew again; and having kissed his old nurse affectionately, he put her gently from him, and announced his readiness to depart.

In another minute the door had closed behind him and his warders, and Kate Alison was alone in her now desolate home.

CHAPTER XXV.

"WHY, Mistress Alison! who would have thought to see you at this early hour?" exclaimed Simon Lingard in his heartiest tones; then adding, as he remarked how worn and anxious she looked, "But is there aught amiss? is Bartholomew ill? I feared it was so when he came not last night."

"Nay 'tis not illness, Master Lingard," she answered; "but they have put him in prison, God knoweth wherefore, for he is as innocent of guile as an angel from heaven."

Simon stood aghast. "Put him in prison, say you? that is ill news, indeed. I fear me 'tis his preaching hath given offence; he is ever so bold in his outspokenness, and not enough fearful of the consequences."

"Ay, that is he," said Kate proudly; "no evil would go unreproved by Barty, though it were wrought by the greatest in the land."

"And that is the worst on't," grumbled Simon in a tone of mingled vexation and trouble. "When did this hap?" he continued.

"Last night," she replied; "the soldiers seized him even as he made ready to come hither."

"Had he time for speech? did he charge thee with aught of a message?"

"Nay, save to bid me tell thee and John White."

"Dost know whither they have taken him?"

"To Newgate, if I mistake not; but my poor head was so bewildered I scarce knew what they said."

"Ay, and no marvel, poor thing," said Simon with a sympathising sigh. "But 'tis no use grieving; hath John White heard yet the ill news?"

"Nay, I go now to him."

"Let me do that errand in thy stead, good Mistress Alison;

and you come in and stay the rest of this day with Esther and Maysie. Poor little maid ! this will be a sore trial for her."

"It will indeed ; thee must break it to her very gently. Thank you kindly, Master Lingard, but if you will go to Master White's for me, I would fain bid me home now, and bide there till I hear news of Barty ; some other time it will please me well to come and see Mistress Lingard and Maysie, but my heart is too heavy this day ; I should but add to their sorrow. I mind me now," she added, pausing on the threshold, "Barty bade me give her assurance of his love ; thee will tell her, Master Lingard." And having thus said, she left the shop with a weary, dispirited tread that made her seem to have grown years older in that one sad night.

Simon followed her compassionately with his eyes until she was out of sight ; then having called to his apprentices to look after the business, he went upstairs to perform his dreaded task of imparting the painful tidings to Maysie, fearing to delay lest his courage should fail him altogether. And indeed, as he listened to her blithe voice carolling so merrily as she went about her household duties, and when, in answer to his call, she came to meet him with the happy smile on her sweet young face, he felt as if it were almost a sin to cloud her brightness with the slightest shade of sorrow. Kissing her lovingly, and looking at her so gravely and tenderly that she divined something was amiss even before he spoke, he said :

"Maysie, my child, thou hast had little of trouble in thy life, and had it been possible I would have shielded thee still ; but thou must be brave to bear it now : last night Bartholomew was cast into prison."

She turned very pale, and her father felt her hands tremble within his grasp ; but, to his surprise, she asked quite calmly, though with unwonted abruptness, "Who did it?"

"Nay, child, that I cannot tell ; poor Mistress Alison hath but just brought the tidings. It may be he hath paid too little heed to the law of the land, or perchance it is the work of an enemy."

"It is Ralph Capel, father ; none else could be so wicked."

"If he had the will, Maysie, I think he would scarce have

power so to do ; but we cannot know yet. I must now to John White and try if together we may discover aught of the cause of the imprisonment, and what may be done that will avail to set him free."

He placed his arm around her as he spoke, and drawing her to his bosom, pressed his lips to her brown curls. To his relief the tears came, and she sobbed out :

"What, think you, will they do to him, father ; they cannot kill him, can they?"

"Surely not, child ! banish such fancies from thy foolish head with what speed thou mayest. They may perchance keep him in prison for a while, or lay a heavy fine upon him ; but, in good sooth, I could not say for certain till I know with what offence he is charged."

"But who would dare to charge Bartholomew with offence ? he hath never done aught of wrong !" exclaimed the girl indignantly, and raising her face, on which a burning flush had succeeded to the pallor, to her father's : "even Ralph Capel could not accuse him thereof."

"True, Maysie, true," replied Simon, shaking his head sadly "yet where there is the will to injure, the way is not far to seek. But I must be gone. Tell the tidings to your aunt, sweetheart ; and fret not yourself sick, for Barty's sake as well as your old father's."

He kissed her once again, then hurried downstairs, and was soon on his way to the Bishops-gate with more than his accustomed speed. John White, who was alone in his counting-house, greeted this early appearance of the worthy hosier with unfeigned astonishment, which soon gave place to the extreme of anxiety as he learned the cause of his visit.

"It is even as that fanatical preacher did predict," he said ; "would that Master Legate had been guided by his counsel, and taken immediate thought for his own safety ; he might have been almost to sea by now." Then seeing Simon's evident perplexity, he related what had occurred on the previous afternoon. "But regrets are of no avail," he continued at the conclusion of his narrative ; "it will profit more to consider what may be done for him in his present strait."

"If it were possible to see and speak with him?" suggested the elder man in a half-doubtful tone.

John White seized upon the idea with alacrity: "Nought could be better, Master Lingard; let us go at once," and suiting the action to the word, he hastily donned hat and cloak, and ere the astonished Simon had time to realize his intent, took him by the arm, and led him forth at a rapid pace along the busy streets.

"But, John," gasped Simon, when a concourse of people at a street corner effectually barred their progress for a minute, "how knowest thou we can gain admittance to him? Were it not better to have spoken first with the brothers Elwyn? they are men of worth, and have far more knowledge of civic concerns than we."

"That is true, Master Lingard, and they must know ere long; but I would fain that we lost no time in seeing Master Legate; perchance we may be able to do some service for him," replied John. Then, as if struck by a sudden thought, he added: "But it may be you would rather not pay a visit to the prison now; in that case, I will go alone and tell you what hath befallen on my return."

"Nay, John, nay," said Simon after a pause, and with the air of one who had made up his mind; "I am no coward, though perchance somewhat more cautious than you hot-blooded youngsters are wont to be. If you go, I go too; Bartholomew Legate is as dear to me as though he were already my son, and I would fain see for myself how he fares, come what may."

John's only reply was an affectionate pressure of his old friend's arm, and they walked on again, and soon reached the gloomy gateway stretching across the street, within whose ancient, mouldering walls so many human beings had languished out their lives, or but quitted the narrow precincts of their prison cell for the burning fagots or the headsman's axe. Simon raised his eyes to the tall, loopholed turrets on either side, and thence to the battlemented parapet, till they rested at length on the niches above the low arch, whence three statues, blackened with age, looked down upon the street below.

"If those dumb lips could but speak," he said, shaking his

head mournfully, "what tales of dread might they not unfold! God grant our good Barty may soon be free again!"

"Nay, doubt not but he will, Master Lingard," replied John, as they approached the low doorway at the foot of the southern turret, where they were met on the threshold by a warder, who surlily inquired their business.

"We desire to see Bartholomew Legate, the prisoner brought in last night," replied Simon, with as much calmness of manner as he could assume.

The man muttered something quite unintelligible about "prisoners" and "rules," then bade them enter, and having closed the door behind them and turned the massive key, took his departure, leaving the visitors alone in the cell-like apartment, which not even the crackling logs on the hearth could render cheerful. In a few minutes, however, he reappeared, and, beckoning them to follow, led the way up a steep winding stair, scarcely lighted by the apertures in the walls, until they reached the fourth storey, where he paused, and having unlocked the heavy door, ushered them without ceremony into a small, low, oblong chamber, so dark that they could scarcely make out who or what it contained, and the atmosphere was close and oppressive.

"Friends, prisoner; twenty minutes' leave," said the warder gruffly, as he closed the door behind him and again turned the key in the lock.

It was so strange a situation for both Simon Lingard and John that they were almost startled, even while they expected to see the tall form of Bartholomew Legate loom through the darkness, and to hear the familiar tones of his voice.

"Dear friends!" he said, pressing their hands affectionately; "but this is kind! I had not thought to see any one so soon."

"I would our meeting had been in other wise, son Barty," returned Simon mournfully; "but we were fain to know how it fared with you in this wretched place."

"I do own your love and sympathy are very sweet to me in my present straits, but pray you nevertheless not to be too much troubled on my behalf, dear Master Lingard; for truly I fare not so ill," answered Bartholomew cheerfully; "and if you can presently assure me of the safety of my people, and that this light

punishment hath fallen upon me alone, I can well bear it for a time." Then after a pause he added, with a slight tremor in his tone: "How fares my little Maysie—hath she heard of this?—and Kate,—my good, faithful, loving Kate,—did you see her?"

"Yes, it was she brought word what had happened," said Simon, replying to the second question first. "Poor woman! it is a grievous blow for her, but she strives to bear it bravely; yet I would we could prevail on her to come and stay with us the while you are here; the house will be sadly lonesome."

"Indeed it will; pray her for my sake to take your kind offer, for, indeed, it is not fit she should dwell alone. And now tell me of Maysie—is she well?"

"Yes, save for her grief at hearing what had befallen you; I had but told her as I came away, and she was much cast down thereby, poor little maid! yet, truly, how could it be otherwise?" said Simon dejectedly.

"God bless her!" ejaculated Bartholomew fervently; then he continued: "But, Master Lingard, let her not look upon the darker side; rather bid her take heart and be of good cheer; for if God wills it so, we shall soon meet again outside these walls, and our happiness will be none the less for this present trial; and I would not have her saddened by needless fears on my account, therefore assure her, I pray you, with my love, that I am not ill-lodged, and have been dealt with very courteously since I came. You will tell her this?"

"Yes, I will tell her; and I would I could feel it in my heart," replied Simon.

"Have you yet heard with what you are charged?" asked John.

"With the preaching and teaching of heresy, if I understood aright; but the accusation was somewhat hurriedly read, and I was too much astonished at the mode and suddenness of my arrest to pay due heed to what was said; though truly I should not have been taken by surprise after the warning given me by good Master Postlethwaite."

"What will you do?" asked John after a pause; "would it not be well to seek counsel of some able lawyer?"

"I would rather wait awhile, and see how events do shape

themselves; it may be that hereafter such a course will seem desirable, but I would fain avoid it, if possible; it is scarce seemly, methinks, to drag into the noise and heat of conflict those things which belong to the soul's life, and can only be known to it and God."

"Doubtless you are right in that matter," answered John with a sigh; "yet I cannot think it behoves you to yield without a struggle, seeing that not only is your imprisonment unjust, but that it must bring much suffering and loss to our poor little Church: for if long deprived of its head, what may not befall it?"

"Nought of evil, let us trust, good John, if its members do but continue steadfast and faithful; for God lives, and be thou assured He will not let His work die. In truth it may well be that if I were taken from your midst, one worthier and more able than I would rise up to fill my place, and the Church thereby become a gainer."

"Nay, that were impossible," returned the young man with vehemence, while Simon gave vent to a sort of dissatisfied grunt.

Bartholomew smiled. "Nought is impossible with God," he answered; "nevertheless, if He wills it so, I would fain continue in charge of my little flock, and you may rest confident that so far as conscience permits I will withstand injustice, and seek to regain my freedom. As for my people, I pray you exhort them, one and all, to be zealous for God, fearless in the cause of truth, and loving to each other, and none need then fear for the welfare of the Church,—though humbled even to the dust, the Divine life within shall give it a glorious resurrection in God's own good time, only let us have patience to abide that hour."

"Talk not to me of patience, Barty," replied Simon somewhat testily; "I see no merit in bearing with patience punishment that is not deserved. 'Twere better truly not to have risked giving offence, but since 'tis done, 'tis done, and my counsel is, that we seek some able lawyer, and learn from him how best to act."

"Let things be for this day at least, dear Master Lingard; I shall surely ere its close hear more concerning my arrest, and if when we have learned the grounds thereof, and through whom the information was laid, it still seemeth needful to you to seek

advice of a lawyer, I promise not too obstinately to oppose your wishes," answered Bartholomew in a firm though affectionate tone, that convinced Simon of the uselessness of further argument.

"You must e'en have it your way, Barty," he said; "but I would fain have seen you outside of these grim walls ere this day was done, and were it possible would move heaven and earth to bring that to pass. I am older than you, lad," he continued gravely, "and perchance more fearsome of danger because I have seen more of it, and know the shapes it takes. Save I reckon much amiss, this imprisonment is of far weightier import than that you last endured."

"That may well be, good friend," answered Bartholomew; "but surely, God's servant must hold himself ever ready to meet danger with a brave countenance, and not to shrink therefrom when he is about his Master's business; say you not so, John?"

"Doubtless you are right, Master Legate; but 'tis a hard doctrine for those who love you well, and feel as if their own lives were bound up in yours," replied the young man in a dejected tone.

"I pray you hearken to me, good John, and kind Father Lingard also: if my labours have not been in vain, their fruits will now be shown in the courage and constancy of my people in this their hour of trial; and for the love of God, and the sake of the truth I have striven to set before them, they will banish all faithless fears for themselves or their pastor, and endeavour to strengthen and uphold each other in the ways of righteousness and in such zeal for good works as shall make them an ensample to all around. Ah, you will have to go now," he continued, as the harsh grating of the bolt followed by the gruff voice of the gaoler gave intimation that the time for their visit had expired. "Farewell; if I receive not my liberty within the next few days you will come and see me again?"

"Ay, surely we will," answered Simon and John as with one voice.

"Farewell, once again, dear friends, and God bless you. Bid my people, I pray you, to hold me in affectionate remembrance, as I do them; and let not Maysie fret, Master Lingard; we shall

soon meet again, if the Lord wills it so. And you will see too that my good Kate wants for nought: there is money in the oaken chest that stands by my books; bid her take what she needs, she has the key."

The gaoler here abruptly interrupted their conversation, and in another moment the massive door interposed between the prisoner and his friends.

"God help poor Barty!" said Simon with a mournful shake of the head, as they turned from the gloomy prison into the busy street. "I fear the worst; the power is on the side of his enemies, and he will ne'er consent to meet their cunning with cunning, though all other weapons be of no avail."

"Nay, indeed," returned John; "he is far too noble, and were it otherwise, methinks we should truly have cause for sorrow. Dost mind, Master Lingard, how but last Sunday he spake with such power from those words, 'He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it'?"

"Ay, I mind it well; we little thought then how soon he was to be tried."

"He will not fail," said John proudly. Then he added in a thoughtful tone: "And it must be our care that his work also stands the trial of the fire."

CHAPTER XXVI.

“MY master, sir, is occupied, and bade us not call him to any one save the need was very pressing. If 'tis your pleasure to settle the account that hath been owing since two years last Martinmas, I can receive the money, and my master will be as well satisfied as though he had received it into his own hand.”

And having thus said, Simon Lingard's senior apprentice drew himself up to his full height, and surveyed the fashionably attired young gallant before him with an air of conscious self-superiority that might well under other circumstances have been provocative of a quarrel. Without, however, appearing to notice the rudeness offered him, the latter replied in a tone of earnestness :

“Tell your master I desire speech with him on the gravest business,—it may be a matter of life or death ; therefore delay not, I pray you, good youth, for I have short time to spare.”

The apprentice's eyes opened to their utmost width,—astonishment at the indifference with which his impertinence had been received, mingling with curiosity as to the nature of the communication to be made to his master, and he proceeded slowly to summon the latter in compliance with the gallant's request.

“I crave your pardon, Master Lingard,” said the young man as Simon entered the shop, “if I have hindered you in aught, but I was fain to have a word or two with you in private. It is not a matter that concerns myself, else would I scarcely have ventured to come hither—at all events until I had paid my debts,” he continued, as he felt rather than saw the severity with which Simon was regarding him, an expression which gave way, however, immediately to the accustomed kindness, as this honest confession of backsliding fell upon the old man's ear.

“Follow me, Master Carey,” he said, leading the way to the pleasant sitting-room above the shop, “we shall be alone here ;”

and having secured the door and motioned his guest to a seat, he too sat down and awaited his communication.

“I pray you think not, good Master Lingard, that I am wishful only to meddle idly with things that concern me not ; what hath brought me hither to-day is an earnest anxiety for the welfare of that good man, Bartholomew Legate, to whom as I have heard, it matters not how, your daughter is betrothed. Him I would rescue if possible from present and future peril, but he knows me not, and likely enough would pay little heed to any counsel that came from me, but were your daughter to plead with him to carefully guard his replies and rule his conduct by discretion, she would surely prevail.”

“I apprehend not your meaning, good sir,” replied Simon in a puzzled tone, and with a vague fear that the young gallant's senses were deserting him.”

“I crave your pardon for my forgetfulness, Master Lingard. I should have told you that the king hath commanded Bartholomew Legate to be brought before him to-morrow at noon in the hope of obtaining his conversion from his errors. Now his Majesty cannot brook contradiction, and is easily angered thereby, and should Master Legate, as I much fear he might, speak out his mind with too great boldness, mischief would surely ensue, and therefore would I pray young Mistress Lingard to hasten to him with all speed, and entreat him for her sake so to behave as to give no ground for offence. I would fain have gone to him myself, but he knows me not, and hath, alas ! had little reason to place trust in some of us who are about the Court.”

“Well, thank you kindly for your warning, Master Carey,” answered Simon, “Maysie shall go without loss of time, though I fear me it may be of little use. Bartholomew is ever bold of speech, and not easily affrighted from what he deems to be the right, but she shall go and try if her persuasions may avail aught. Farewell, young sir, and take an old man's thanks with you,” he continued as his guest prepared to depart.

“Farewell, good Master Lingard, and may your daughter prosper in her undertaking, and this present trouble have a happy ending,” returned the young man in an earnest tone as he held out his hand to the worthy hosier, who took it in his own with a

pleased surprise, from which he had scarce time to recover ere Carey had descended the stairs and was out of the house.

As soon as his visitor had left, Simon sought out Maysie, and after giving her a brief account of his conversation with Walter Carey, bade her prepare to accompany him at once to the prison.

"Not that persuasions are like to avail much with Barty," he ended by saying, "but the warning was kindly meant, and 'tis well we should take heed thereto; so haste thee, Maysie, and fret not, sweetheart, for thy old father's sake as well as for Barty's. It may be that even now our trouble is ending."

He spoke cheerfully, for he saw the tears welling up in her brown eyes, and dismissing her with an affectionate kiss, descended to the shop to wait till she should be ready. She reappeared in a few minutes cloaked and hooded, and father and daughter were soon threading their way through the busy streets, unmindful of aught save the errand on which they were bound, and, reaching the prison, were admitted without difficulty.

Bartholomew, who was sitting reading by the dim light that reached him through the narrow aperture which served for a window, looked up as his visitors entered, with pleased astonishment, and greeted them affectionately.

"This is kind indeed," he said. "I scarce hoped to see you again so soon," and drawing Maysie closer to him, he looked down on her with loving eyes.

"Nor should we have come so soon," returned Simon, "but for somewhat that hath happened this morn. Nay, there is no cause for alarm, it concerns thyself alone. Have you heard that the king will see and speak with you on the morrow?"

"Yes," answered Bartholomew in a tone of relief, "I have been informed thereof, though I know not on what account his Majesty can desire speech with me, save it be to learn for himself if I have been justly accused."

"Nay, Barty, as I learn, (and it is Master Walter Carey, a gentleman about the Court who hath told me this,) he hath no such motive,—his aim is to convert you from what he takes to be your errors, and should he fail or think that he has failed, he will be angered exceedingly; and this is wherefore Maysie and I have

come, that we may persuade you to be discreet and circumspect in your replies, that you risk not displeasing his Highness, for none can know what may be the consequences else. Tell him so, Maysie; he will give more heed to your words than to mine."

But the girl answered not. Her eyes were fixed upon her betrothed, over whose countenance a bright smile was stealing; and he, still keeping her hand in his, turned to Simon and said in his usual cheery tone:

"Good Father Lingard, be not troubled on my behalf; I know not that there is any cause to apprehend danger, but even if there were, am I not a subject of the King of heaven, and owe to Him allegiance above any earthly monarch!"

"But, Barty," broke in Maysie tremulously, "you will consider carefully before you speak, and not say aught that might anger the king!"

"Sweetheart!" was the reply in a half-reproachful tone, "wouldst have me take no heed to my Master's commands? See here what He says," and opening his black-letter Bible, he pointed to the passage in Matthew: "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." "Wilt not rather pray, Maysie," he continued, gently caressing as he spoke the brown clustering curls, "that I may have strength to be faithful to the right, whate'er betide?"

"Yes, Barty, I will try," replied the girl with a sob; "but oh, it is hard!"

"It has ended as I feared it might," said her father, "yet I would fain you could have seen the thing differently, Son Barty; not that I would have you do what is wrong, but only to beware of overmuch zeal, or that which may savour too strongly of heresy. And good Mistress Alison would bear me out therein, I warrant me."

Bartholomew's countenance saddened a little at these worldly-wise though well meant remarks of his old friend, but ere he had time to reply, the grating of the key in the lock gave intimation that his visitors must depart.

"Bear my loving remembrance to her, dear faithful Kate! and

bid her be of good cheer," he said, as he took leave of Simon. Then turning to Maysie, and putting his arm around her, he pressed her to his heart, saying in a gentle yet cheery tone, "Farewell, sweetheart; fret not thyself about me, only pray that God will grant us all, of His grace, strength to bear and do His holy will."

The poor girl tried to speak, but utterance failed her, and she could only answer with a faint smile as the lips of her betrothed met hers in a loving kiss, ere he yielded her up to her father.

Another moment, and Bartholomew was left alone within the four walls of his dungeon, which looked gloomier than ever now that Maysie's presence was withdrawn. Nor did he find himself able to renew the reading which had been so pleasantly interrupted, for his thoughts would continually recur to the object of Simon's visit, his coming interview with the king, and its possible consequences. Not that he was apprehensive of further harm arising to himself therefrom, but neither did he expect any very favourable result, since, come what might, he must speak the truth, and that alone, and it was highly probable it might not sound agreeably in the royal ear, accustomed as that was to little else save the tones of obsequious flattery. But his chief anxiety was the safety and well-being of his friends, and he was not without fear lest by an unguarded word he might implicate some of them in his so-called unlawful acts, the more especially as he found it difficult to assign a sufficient cause for the king's desiring a personal interview with him, and in his present depressed condition of spirits could not rid himself of the idea that the monarch's well-known suspicious disposition might have led him to play the part of a royal inquisitor in expectation of the discovery of political as well as religious heresy, in which case he could hope for scant mercy at his hands.

Happily, this (for Bartholomew) very unusual frame of mind was not of long duration. With a resolute effort he threw off his gloomy forebodings, and applied himself again with diligence to his Bible studies, until the few rays of daylight that could enter through the small grating faded quite away, and once more threw him back upon his own thoughts. These were, however, no longer sad, for his mind had travelled back to his childhood and youth

with all their sweet and tender associations—kind faces, long since hidden by the grave, smiled again upon him with the old affection, and voices hushed for years spoke their loving words of encouragement and hope.

"Fear not, dear ones! I will not forget your counsel," he murmured half aloud, just as the entrance of the gaoler with his supper broke the chain of his thoughts and roused him from his reverie. The man started at hearing the prisoner apparently conversing, and glanced uneasily around the narrow chamber as if suspicious of the presence of some preternatural visitant. Even Bartholomew's smile, as he perceived the effect of his involuntary exclamation, failed to reassure him, and setting down the bread and ale, he beat a hasty retreat, scarce replying to the cordial "Good-night" which followed him.

"Yon Legate is leagued with the devil. His Majesty had best have a care of himself when he comes before him," he said as he joined his fellow below.

"An it be so or no, he is a pleasant speaking gentleman, and I wish him well with all my heart," replied the other with a laugh, as his companion concluded his narration of how he had just heard the prisoner conversing with some unseen visitor.

"Tush, man!" he continued; "pull not so solemn a visage. If the king gets no nigher the evil one than when Master Legate stands in his presence, he will have nought to fear."

Meantime Bartholomew, having partaken of his frugal meal, stretched himself on his rude couch, and soon fell into a profound slumber, from which he did not awake until aroused by his grim attendant, who had brought him breakfast and a change of raiment. Pointing to the latter, the man, in surly tones, bade him remember he was to go before the king that morning, and that he must be ready to start for Whitehall within an hour. It was so long since he had breathed the fresh air that, despite no little anxiety as to the result of the interview, Bartholomew was conscious of something like pleasurable excitement at the prospect of quitting even for a short time his gloomy surroundings, and he made his preparations with considerable alacrity. The welcome summons came at last, and, attended by two warders, he left the prison, and was led in the direction of the Fleet River.

Descending a steep flight of steps they entered a boat, and had soon glided down the narrow stream and emerged on the broad, clear waters of the Thames, which sparkled in the sunshine of a rare winter day; above was an almost cloudless sky, while a thin blue haze lent an added charm to the distant landscape, as Bartholomew viewed it through the graceful network formed by the bare branches of the trees upon the river's bank. From the long gardens of the houses in the Strand that sloped down almost to the water's edge, was borne upon the breeze the cheerful chirping of the sparrows and the sweet music of the robin's note; and as he drank in the welcome sights and sounds, it seemed to him that Nature had never before worn so gracious an aspect, never told in clearer tones of the eternal love and goodness.

All too soon for Bartholomew's enjoyment of the peacefulness and beauty of the scene, Whitehall appeared in sight, and in a few minutes the boat was moored at the landing stairs, and he found himself met by a guard of armed soldiers who placed him in their midst, and conducted him through the labyrinth of staircases and corridors which led to the king's apartments. As they passed along, little groups of fashionable idlers would pause in their gossip to gaze with listlessness or curiosity upon the prisoner. Once his eyes met those of Ralph Capel fixed upon him with an expression of derisive contempt; and again, a face he did not recognise, but which yet seemed half familiar, was turned upon him with a look of troubled pity.

At length they reached the ante-room of the king's apartments, where a page met them, and desired the officer of the little company, by his Majesty's commands, to send two of his men forward with the prisoner, and let the rest retire to their quarters. He then led the way into a smaller and more comfortably furnished room, and drawing back some tapestry hangings, made a low obeisance, and said:

"The prisoner Legate is here, your Majesty. Shall the soldiers enter with him?"

"No, boy, dinna ye mind we said we would speak with him alone? Only see that he hath no weapon upon him, and let the men stay where they now are in case of need," was the reply,

made in a somewhat querulous tone, which assumed a coaxing character as the royal speaker continued: "And ye must gang your gait, Robert; we would have none present but ourself, that our words may have the more effect."

"As you will. I have no wish to listen to your arguments and homilies," was the somewhat insolent answer, and almost at the same moment a handsome, foppishly attired man came from behind the tapestry, and having stared rudely at the prisoner standing between the two soldiers, passed out by another door.

Next came the search for weapons, which, of course, proved fruitless; and then the page conducted Bartholomew into the royal presence, and he found himself in a large room hung round with skilfully executed tapestry, representing scenes from New Testament history. At a table littered with papers sat a man of middle age attired in a hunting suit of green velvet. His figure was awkward and ungainly, and his countenance at once expressive of peevishness and self-conceit. There was, indeed, nothing about James I. of England indicative of the refinement and dignity usually ascribed to royalty. He looked up as Bartholomew entered, and it was evident that, with his well known predilection for good looks, he was very favourably impressed with the grave, handsome face, and dignified, almost courtly bearing of the man who stood before him, for a smile played over his features, and his tone when he spoke, though pompous, was not otherwise than kindly.

"Bartholomew Legate," he said, "it is by reason of the fatherly regard in which we hold all our subjects that we have sent for you, being anxiously desirous to wean you from your errors rather than to punish you for maintaining them."

"I trust I am not unmindful of your Majesty's gracious intent," returned Bartholomew, feeling, as the king paused, that an answer was expected from him.

"Nay, mon, nor should you be; but ye maun bear in mind that we are not only the father of our people, we are also the Defender of the Faith, and it behoves us to see that nought but the true Christian doctrine is set forth, and that by duly appointed preachers. Now, we have been informed that you have taken upon yourself to preach and teach without having received a

proper call thereto, or the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. Is this a true accusation?"

"It is true, your Majesty, that I have not been appointed to the ministry of the gospel according to the accustomed forms of the Church of the land; but nevertheless, I was called thereto, and in a manner I dared not resist, for the call came from God."

"Nay, nay, mon, look to your words," interposed the king, "and see to it that you set not up your carnal reason against the authority of the Church, for she hath declared that the gift of the Holy Spirit which came down direct from the blessed apostles, and alone giveth to a man grace and power to minister in her service, can be imparted only by the laying on of hands."

"I crave your Majesty's pardon; but where the Church agreeth not with the commands of God, I see no choice but to obey the higher law."

"By my soul, then, you are wrong; for how should you know which is the higher law save the Church showeth it? It is trusting in your reason, which, as we told you before, is base and carnal," returned James in an irritated tone.

"Sire," answered Bartholomew, firmly but respectfully, "my reason, no less than my faith, was given unto me by God, and it is at my peril if I use it not in His service; nevertheless the call to His ministry came rather to my heart and conscience than to my reason."

The king was silent for a few minutes, then he said in a persuasive tone: "But see now into what grave errors your misguided reason hath led you, for I have been told further that you hold divers most strange and heretical notions concerning the person and office of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have done much harm to some of our subjects by the preaching and teaching of the same."

"It is true, your Majesty, that I have been led by the Spirit of God to interpret His Holy Scripture according to its plain and simple meaning, which, in truth, is but a return to the doctrines held by the primitive Church, though it may seem new and strange to many who have been long accustomed to a different rendering thereof."

"Then, hath it been rightly reported to me that you deny our blessed Lord and Saviour to be God?"

"Yes, I find no warrant in Holy Scripture for believing Him to be so, save as an anointed God."

"But, if He be not God, what, then, do you believe Him to be?"

"A man, sire," replied Bartholomew firmly; "a man, as Peter or Paul, as David or Stephen, only differing from them in that He was without sin, and had the Spirit of God beyond measure."

"See now," said the king, hardly able to control his impatience; "into what detestable errors your base and carnal reason hath already led you. Were we to treat your heresies as they deserve, we should hand you over to the civil power to be dealt with according to the laws of the land; but in our clemency, we, who are the Supreme Governor of that Church, whose loving counsel you have despised and set aside, desire rather so to instruct you in her doctrines that ye may be brought again into her bosom; wherefore, attend humbly to our words, and be not puffed up with the vain conceit of your own heart."

Bartholomew bowed assent, and James continued:

"The Church teacheth that there is one God, who hath made and doth preserve all things both visible and invisible, and that in this Godhead there are three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Son (mark this) proceeding from the Father from everlasting, of one substance with Him, the very and eternal God, and the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son, being also the very and eternal God. Now, the office of the Son is to satisfy the offended justice of the Father by offering Himself up as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, not only for the original sin which we inherit from our forefather Adam, but also for the sins which men do every day commit, as it saith in the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.' But since the sin is infinite, so must also the sacrifice be, and herein it would fail, were Jesus mere man. Furthermore, the Church showeth how the Scripture doth set out that only by the name of Jesus Christ can men be saved, and if they do not so believe,

they will receive everlasting damnation. This must convince you that the doctrines you hold are false and of the devil."

"Your Majesty," answered Bartholomew, "the truths I now hold have been revealed to me after long and diligent searching of the Scriptures and much travail of soul, and to deny them would be to deny that Holy Spirit from whom they came. I do verily believe in one God, who hath made and doth uphold all things that are, and in Holy Scripture I find that Jesus taught us to look upon Him as our loving Heavenly Father, no less merciful than just. Nowhere do I find that He speaks of the Trinity, or of the need of an atoning sacrifice. Contrariwise, He bids us be merciful and forgiving that we may be like unto our Heavenly Father, and doth sum up His teaching in the two great commands: 'The Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength,' and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'"

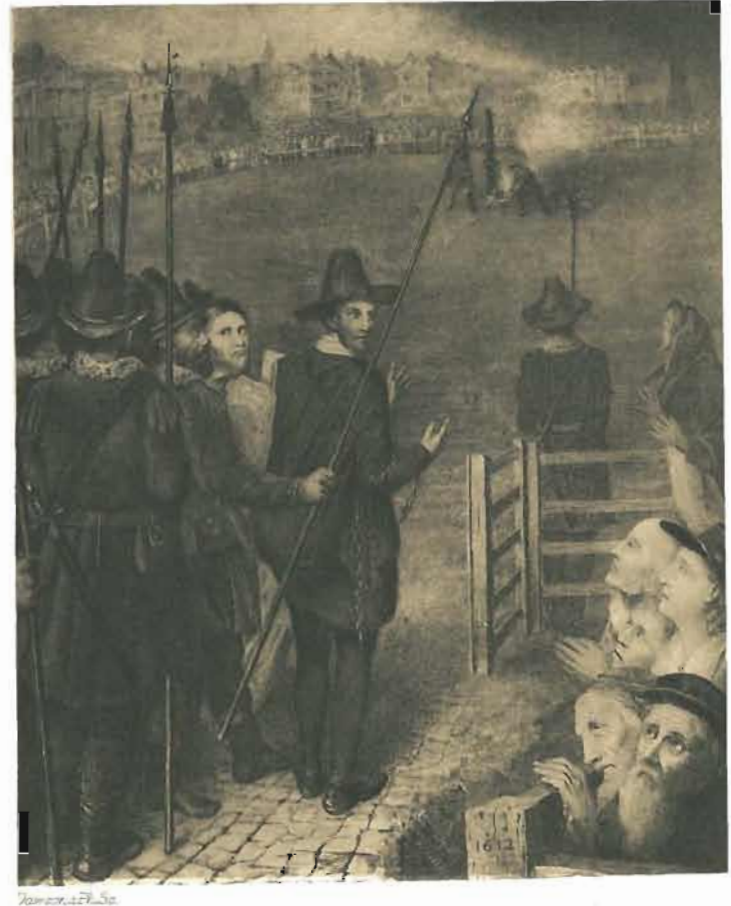
He ceased, and the king, evidently perplexed, was also silent. He began to feel far less confident than he had done of his power to bring back the heretic before him to the orthodox faith, and the consciousness of his failure was irritating in the extreme. Suddenly, however, an idea occurred to him that he might surprise his opponent into an acknowledgment of the Deity of Christ; and looking up, and speaking in a tone of assumed suavity, he said:

"Since you hold our Saviour in so high regard, and pay such good heed to His teachings, it cannot surely be but that you pray to Him daily."

"In Holy Writ, your Majesty," answered Bartholomew, "we read that Jesus was a man like unto ourselves, and though it be true that in the days of my ignorance I did pray unto Him, I have not done so for the last seven years, believing that such an act would be idolatry."

He spoke calmly and respectfully, but James, who had with difficulty restrained his ire until now, suddenly lost all self-command, and rising from his seat and spurning at Bartholomew with his foot, shrieked out:

"Begone, base fellow; it shall never be said that one standeth



Legate is led to execution: (see p 272)

in our presence who hath not prayed to Christ for seven years. Bid those soldiers remove this blasphemer," he continued as a page appeared upon the scene, "and let him receive the punishment he so justly merits."

Bartholomew uttered no word of expostulation or reproach, but only cast a glance of sorrowful pity towards the irate monarch as the soldiers roughly hurried him away.

On reaching the landing stairs of the river, where he was again delivered into the custody of his gaolers, he saw hastening towards them one of the young gallants he had observed on his way through the palace. He gave some coin to the men, and turning to Bartholomew, said in a low tone :

"I fear me you have sadly angered the king, he brooks not to be crossed in aught, and none can tell to what this may lead. You should have regarded the warning sent you."

"He who obeys the King of kings need fear no earthly ruler," answered Bartholomew, a bright smile illumining his countenance ; "but I do thank you most heartily for your kind regard for my welfare."

"Nay," was the reply ; "it is for me to thank you for bringing me out of darkness into light."

"Rather bless God, therefore, whose humble instrument I am," returned Bartholomew, with a kind pressure of the young man's hand, ere he took his seat in the boat that was soon bearing him back again to his gloomy prison.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE year 1670 was fast waning to its close : amid chill mists and a driving sleet that rendered the city streets almost impassable, its last few hours were being spent. The dusk had fallen rapidly, and Simon Lingard, having desired his apprentices to close the shop early, had betaken himself with his account-books upstairs, intending to devote the remainder of the evening undisturbed to them. But although he had the volumes open on the table before him, had mended his pen and got all else in readiness, he could not, try as he would, keep his attention fixed on debtor and creditor and the matters pertaining thereto. Perhaps it was because he could not shut out the moaning of the wind and the beating of the sleet against the casements, that he could not shut out the mournful reflections to which those sounds seemed so appropriate an accompaniment. Not that he felt particularly regretful at parting from the old year. It had not been a very happy one to him or his ; for it had taken from him his beloved sister, leaving a void in his home that could never be filled ; and it had left, as it had found, Bartholomew Legate still a prisoner, with apparently no prospect of regaining his freedom, and Simon had the added sorrow of seeing the countenance of his once bright, merry Maysie saddened with the heart-sickness of hope deferred. No, it had not been a happy year, and he could almost have rejoiced that it was so near its end, but for a dim foreboding that prevented a confident outlook into the future. Perhaps one reason for this very unusual dejection might be that he was quite alone this evening, Maysie having gone to visit Alice White, who had on the previous day given birth to her third child. Kate Alison was with her, but she had craved for Maysie, and John had not long since brought word that she would stay with them that night. He made another effort to betake himself to his books, but again in vain ; his eyes might rest on columns of

figures, but his mind refused to dwell thereon ; and it was with a feeling of intense relief that he at length heard a footstep on the stairs. Rising from his seat he went quickly towards the door, and welcomed his old friend Hugh Capel with all his usual heartiness.

“But 'tis a fearsome night for you to be abroad, Hugh,” he said, taking his wet cloak from him and drawing the settle close to the hearth ; “yet I am right glad to see you ; here, sit ye down, and I will get you a cup of sack to take the chill out of your bones. Have you seen Alice ?”

“I saw her an hour or two since, she was fairly well, and the child is a goodly infant ; I pray it may be a greater comfort to her and her husband than my son hath been to me, yet I fear me they are both over-confident for their children, notwithstanding I have tried to warn them thereof.”

“Nay,” answered Simon ; “with such examples as they will be to their children, it would be strange indeed did they not grow up true and good.”

“I would fain hope they may,” said Hugh ; “though it is not ever so with the children of those who do strive to set them the best example. But I came not to speak of Alice or her children : I have other news for you. It is rumoured that Bartholomew Legate will shortly be tried in the Consistory Court, when he will certainly be either condemned or acquitted for his opinions ; I fear me the former may be the case, should they bring the iniquitous heresy laws into force.”

“Say you so? when heard you this?”

“To-day at noon, I know not if it be aught but rumour, but it is likely enough true, and I will tell you wherefore. Three days since, as you know, Legate was again convented before the bishop, in St. Paul's. I was there amid many others to listen to the disputation, which lasted some hours, and Legate did hold his own well,—not that I conceive him to be in the right, for some of his opinions are truly monstrous ; yet he is withal honest and sober-minded, and not without some measure of God's grace ; moreover, he hath no dealings with the scarlet woman, as have the double-tongued priests and bishops of this God-forsaken land.”

"But what of the disputation, Hugh?" interrupted Simon, anxious to divert his friend's mind from his favourite topic of the iniquities of the Church.

"Oh, the bishop did make a long speech showing forth that the Church of this day is the very same as that established by the apostles, and that all her bishops and priests have received Divine appointment through the laying on of hands, on which account it is impossible they should err, either in their interpretation of Scripture, or in the framing of other doctrines set forth by them, such as the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds; and therefore, any one publishing aught contrary to such doctrines must be dealt with as a dangerous schismatic, an enemy to the Church and to God. Whereupon, Legate boldly made answer that the word of God, as the Scriptures did declare, was not to be sought in any far-off land, nor in a time long past, neither with this teacher or with that, since it was within the heart of every man who should seek and find it for himself; that it was this same word which bore witness to him that Christ was the Son of God, not God the Son, that by Him was nothing made, and that worship should not be paid to Him, but to God alone, His Father and our Father, and that the creeds which taught contrary to this were by no means figures of true Christian faith. And in this wise did he speak for some time; and many standing about showed forth so openly by word and sign their approval of what he said, that if the bishop or those of the clergy about him could have refuted him, they durst not. At last the bishop waxed very wroth, and sharply rebuked Legate for his ingratitude after the many favours and indulgences which had been granted him, who thereupon made answer that he took no account of those so-called indulgences, seeing that he was falsely imprisoned, by reason of the court by which he had been tried having no authority over him. 'Then shall you be tried again, and by a court whose authority you cannot deny,' answered the bishop angrily; whereupon, one standing near me, whom I believe to have seen in times past in company with my unhappy son, uttered a groan, saying: 'Now hath he undone himself, for the king is also angered against him.' And then did he hasten away, and I saw him speaking with Legate as he was led from the court. To-day, it is rumoured that the bishop, by

sanction of the king, will summon to a Consistory Court all our most learned men, lawyers as well as divines, before whom Legate will be convented, and that shortly."

Lingard's countenance fell, and he sat for some moments in silence; at last he said: "I fear the worst; Barty will never sufficiently guard his words, and without a doubt, the minds of the bishop and other of his accusers, are already made up against him. Should they find him guilty of heresy, what punishment think you will be meted out to him?"

"Nay, that I cannot tell," answered Capel; "but likely enough it will be a long imprisonment, or perchance outlawry. Methinks they would be well pleased to rid the country of him, seeing that the common folk pay such heed to his words, and hold him in such high esteem."

"My poor little Maysie," sighed Simon; "if such judgment be passed on Barty, it will be sore trial for her."

"Ay, but the innocent must e'en suffer for and with the guilty. Mark my words, Lingard," continued Capel, raising his voice, and bringing his hand down heavily on the arm of the settle; "mark my words: this is but the beginning of the great tribulation, the reign of wickedness upon earth, even as it is prophesied in Scripture: 'The devil has come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.' Yea, He knoweth His own, and the days will come when those who sit in high places and work iniquity shall be utterly confounded."

Simon sat regarding his friend during this outbreak of fanatical zeal with that feeling of alarm and perplexity which always possessed him on such occasions; then as he ceased, he remarked quietly:

"That's as it may be, Hugh; neither you nor I know aught of what is going to happen—so much the better for us; and as to wickedness, I know not that our country is worse than others. It would have been better for Barty, truly, had he kept within the law of the land; not but what I love him the more for his steadfast honesty, e'en though it bring such sore trouble to us all. But, hark! the storm still rageth without. Wilt stay with me to-night? thou knowest there is ever a bed for thee."

"Thanks, Lingard, but this night I cannot; I have to meet

some of the faithful at ten, and must not fail. Indeed, it already waxeth late, I must be going."

"Have a care, Hugh, about these same secret meetings, lest the law be brought to bear against you."

"Let the wicked e'en do as they will,—they may kill the body, but cannot hurt the soul, and their time is short," returned Capel in a triumphant tone that plainly indicated he would rather court than shun persecution; then rising from his seat he began to don his cloak. Simon shook his head, but made no further attempt at dissuading him from his purpose, and they parted with mutual good wishes.

The next day, as Simon was busily engaged in the examination of a newly arrived packet of goods in his little back shop, he became suddenly aware of some one standing near, while a blithe voice exclaimed in well known tones: "Good-morrow, Father Lingard, a glad New Year to you."

"And to you also, Son Barty," returned Simon with real heartiness, as he grasped Legate's hand affectionately; "but this is an unthought-of pleasure, I scarce thought you would have had liberty to go abroad continued to you."

"Nor am I sure how long that same liberty will last, seeing my trial is to take place this month or next; but Master Joyce, my new gaoler, hath already shown me much kindness, and if it be permitted to him, I doubt not he will be still ready to do me a good turn whenever the occasion serves; so I hope I may still count on the visits of my friends even should I be unable to visit them. How is Maysie?"

"Quite well, I trust, but she slept not at home last night, nor Mistress Alison either; they were with Alice White. Have you heard that she hath another little one?"

"Nay, but I rejoice to hear it; such parents as John and Alice must needs bring up good and brave children; but how doth she?"

"Well, God be thanked, and the child also. But come upstairs, Barty, and Deborah shall get you a bit and a sup."

"Thanks, Father Lingard, but I had breakfast only two hours since, and am not yet hungry."

"Tut, man; what of that? prison fare is none of the best, I

warrant me, and you are looking all too pale." And the worthy man peered anxiously into Bartholomew's face, which was indeed thinner and paler than of yore, while in his black hair many a silver thread was visible.

"Nay, Father Lingard, there is nought amiss with me," he said, laughing, "save that I need more labour and less rest. If you will grant me leave, I would first walk over and see Maysie and Alice and the rest, and afterwards come back here for what remaineth of my time."

"Not until you have eaten," returned Simon in a determined tone; "when you have done that, you may go hither if you will, and bring my maid back save they need her longer;" and having thus spoken, he led the way upstairs, nor rested until he had seen his guest not only supplied with an ample meal, but doing justice thereto.

"What of this trial, Barty?" he said at length, as the latter laid down his knife and fork; "think you it was wisely done to provoke the bishop to such a step?"

"Nay, how could I avoid it?" was the answer; "save it had been possible to frame my replies according to his mind, and that were not consistent with the truth, as it hath been revealed to me."

Simon sighed. "But what think you will be the end of this?"

"Nay, good Father Lingard, who shall tell? I know only this—that my times are in God's hands, and my trust in Him," replied Bartholomew, with the quiet smile that spoke far more than his words. "And now, I will go," he continued in a cheerful tone; "for I would fain, if possible, see some others of my flock on my way; and if Maysie can be spared, be sure I will bring her back: that were too pleasant a task not to be fulfilled. I must make the most of my time now."

"Ay, that must you," replied Simon in a sadder tone; "so get you gone, and let me see you again as soon as may be." He led the way downstairs, and stood for some minutes at the door, following Legate with his eyes as he passed along among the busy folk thronging the thoroughfare, bent on celebrating in their various ways the birth of the new year; and as the tall figure vanished from his sight, he wondered what the hidden future might have in store for him of good or ill.

It would have been difficult to decide from whom Bartholomew received the warmest welcome on his arrival at the Whites' pleasant home. Mistress Alison was quite overjoyed at seeing him again, and receiving once more with all the old tenderness his affectionate embrace and loving congratulations; Maysie, though less demonstrative than the old woman, showed by her brightened countenance the quiet contentment of her happiness; while to John and Alice his visit at such a time was especially welcome, for, regarding him as they did with a feeling akin to reverence, it seemed that for him to take the new-born babe in his arms and pronounce a benediction over it would indeed insure a blessing on it and them.

"Alice and I wish to call him by your name," said John to Bartholomew, as they stood looking down on the helpless infant lying by its mother's side; "and we hope he will prove himself worthy of so great an honour. We would also, if you will, that you should name him this day."

"Nay, dear friends, rather hope and pray that he may be a better man than I. Yet I do thank you for this one more proof of your love," answered Bartholomew, taking a hand of each of the young parents in his own, and pressing them affectionately; "and I will gladly do your bidding."

So, in the presence of the assembled household, he proceeded to perform at once the simple rite of dedicating to the service of God and humanity the child so lately sent to earth, ending with a touching exhortation to all to guard the little being in its purity and innocence, and to stimulate it by their counsel and example to all good works. Then, having spoken the name by which the babe should henceforth be known in the world, and pronounced the benediction, he imprinted a kiss on the tiny brow, gave little Bartholomew back into his mother's arms, and bidding her an affectionate farewell, left the chamber accompanied by John and Maysie. They went downstairs together, and over the cheerful fire re-read the latest letter from Holland, recalled old times, and talked of old friends; but it was not until Maysie had retired to prepare for her return home that John ventured to broach the subject uppermost in his mind.

"Have you heard aught concerning this new trial before the

Consistory, which, as it is noised abroad, is shortly to take place?" he said, with no slight degree of anxiety in his tone.

"I have heard thereof, truly, but know nothing certain either of the time when it is to take place, or of the persons before whom I am to be tried, though I do remember, the last time I was convicted before Master King, he said, somewhat angrily, that I should have no occasion to complain of the want of due authority on the part of my judges at my next trial."

"But what think you will be the conclusion thereof?"

"Dear John, how should I know? The results are with God, and not with me. I can but act as He commands, and speak the words He puts into my lips. And indeed this idle waiting hath become so wearisome, I could almost welcome any change therefrom; wherefore I pray you not to let anxiety on my behalf weigh down your spirit and take the sunshine out of your life;" and as he spoke, Bartholomew rose from his seat and, laying his hands on the young man's shoulder, looked steadfastly into his face with a smile entirely devoid of apprehension or gloom. "Dear lad," he continued, "if we could be without God, or if the coming of His blessed kingdom could be delayed by aught that man can do, then indeed were there cause for sorrow and anxious fear; but seeing that all things are in His hand who hath promised to be the strength and succour of all such as trust in Him, who shall make us afraid? True it is, I have had my hours of darkness, John, when the thought that it might not be allowed me to finish the work God had given me to do, hath tormented me almost to despair; but, thanks be to Him, that is past. I know now that His blessed truth can never fail, nor His work come to an untimely end; for though He call one labourer out of the vineyard and bid him to sit still and wait, He is able to bring in others no less faithful to prepare the ground and tend the growing vines. And for him that tarrieth, may he not also thus fulfil the Master's will?"

"My heart doth assure me you are right, dear friend," answered John, with an attempt at a smile; "but my faith is small, and like Peter, I cannot walk with firmness upon a sea of trouble."

"Take fast hold of the Master's hand, John, and the waves shall be as dry land to your feet," answered Bartholomew. "Come,

lad," he continued, in a cheerful tone, "banish care from thy heart, and let us rejoice together in this glad new year that hath dawned upon us out of the life and love of God, assured that whatever may befall ere its course is run is known to and approved of Him."

The sound of Maysie's footsteps upon the stairs here put an abrupt end to their conversation; and having bidden John farewell, Bartholomew and his betrothed set forth on their walk to the home of the latter. The streets were still thronged with pleasure-seekers, and the kindly greetings they received from many an acquaintance as they passed along added an additional zest to the happiness of both. But suddenly, as they turned the corner of a street, Bartholomew observed Maysie start, and felt her hand clasp his own more tightly.

"What ails thee, sweetheart?" he asked, with some anxiety. There was no need for her reply, however, for, at the same moment raising his head, his eyes met those of Ralph Capel fixed upon him with a malignant smile. Another moment, and he was gone, but Maysie's cheek was still white, and she trembled visibly.

"Why, Maysie, there is surely nought in Ralph Capel to make thee afraid."

"I do fear him, Barty, for he is a bad man, and would scruple not to injure any whom he hates. Saw you not how he looked at you?"

"I did see, sweetheart, but there was nought in his countenance that need cloud our happiness for to-day. Let us hasten on, or your father will think I have forgotten my promise. Why, who comes here?" he continued, catching sight of another familiar figure amid the throng. "Well met, good Brother Postlethwaite; how fares it with you?"

It was, indeed, the travelling preacher, bending as of old beneath his load, but with an added weight of years and infirmities.

"God be thanked I meet you thus," he replied, his careworn countenance beaming with pleasure. "I had feared I must e'en have betaken me to the prison to fulfil my errand to you;" and as he spoke, he drew from his bosom a sealed packet, and handed it to Legate, who received it with some surprise. "I passed

through Rumwell two days since," continued Postlethwaite, by way of explanation, "and chanced to meet with Master Carey, who prayed me to bring this to you. How he will rejoice to know you are once more free; for he hath great affection for you, as well he may, seeing he owes to God, through you, even the life of his immortal soul."

"He hath already shown me some kindness," returned Bartholomew; "and I am truly glad to be held in remembrance by him."

"And when were you released?" asked the old man with a smile of kindly interest.

"I am free of the prison but for a few hours," was the reply; "bound by promise to return thither ere sunset."

"Say you so, brother? then it is as I feared. Alas! for thy sake, and for that of religion in this land of ours. How long shall the wicked triumph?"

"Shall we receive good at the Lord's hand, and not also evil?" answered Bartholomew; "or rather, can aught be evil that is ordained of God? It is not your wont to look on the dark side of things, brother; but you are weary. Come home with us and rest awhile; my Maysie's father will give thee a right hearty welcome, will he not, Maysie?"

"Indeed he will," she answered, glancing half shyly, half pityingly, at the pale, worn countenance, and the bent, emaciated form.

The old man shook his head. "Thanks, Brother Legate; thanks, gentle maiden. I am weary, it is true; but rest is not yet for me. It will come ere long, I doubt not, and I shall hear the Master's summons with joy; but meantime the part of the faithful servant is to occupy till He comes." Then remarking the puzzled expression on Maysie's countenance, he added: "Even now the brethren are expecting me to give account to them of my past labours ere I set forth again on the morrow; so I must say farewell, and go my way; yet I trust we shall meet again ere long, Brother Legate, and till then may the Lord's arm be your defence, and His blessing rest on you and yours."

"May He bless and keep you in all your ways," replied Bartholomew, warmly returning the grasp of the proffered hand.

Another moment, and the old man was gone—lost to sight amid the busy throng.

“Who is he, Barty?” asked Maysie, as they resumed their walk.

“A travelling preacher, sweetheart, Ephraim Postlethwaite by name; but to what sect he belongs, or whence he comes, or whither he goes, I know not, being sure only of this, that he is a truly good man, and zealous for what he thinks to be the truth, as he hath shown by his willingness both to labour and suffer therefor. I have some cause also to be grateful to him, for he it was who came to warn me of my danger on the night when I was taken prisoner.”

“Dear good old man!” murmured the girl. “Would you had listened to him, Barty!”

“Nay, nay, Maysie; you surely would not that I should have shown myself a craven when the moment of trial came, and perchance thereby suffered some one else to fall into the hands of the persecutor. You would have been justly ashamed of me in such a case.”

Maysie made no reply, but Bartholomew felt her hand clasp his own more tightly, and looking down into her face, was met by a loving, though somewhat piteous smile.

“Courage, sweetheart!” he said softly; “take the sunshine while you may, and if dark days should come, doubt not that God will lead us out safely into the light. But see! there is your good father watching for us; let us not meet him with doleful countenances on this New Year’s day.”

She answered with another smile, and by the time they reached the shop-door, where Simon stood ready to welcome them, had apparently resumed her usual tranquil cheerfulness.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“WILT come with me to Greenwich to-morrow, Capel? There is to be a rare bear-baiting, if I mistake not, and we may chance to light upon some other sport by the way. This humdrum life we have led of late will soon weary me to death, save I find some change therefrom. By my soul! one might as well be shut up in the Tower!”

“Or take service in the household of our most virtuous Prince Henry,” returned Ralph Capel in a sneering tone. “’Sdeath, Lester, you are right for once; the Court hath been dull enough for the past three weeks to pleasure even his royal Highness, but sport is beginning for me, and I would not quit London for a ship-load of treasure; so you must e’en seek another companion for to-morrow’s bear-baiting.”

“You always find some reason for not going abroad with me since Walter Carey left us,” grumbled Lester in a highly offended tone.

“Truly spoken, by’r Lady, though I scarce thought your wisdom would have availed to find it out. The case lies thus, sweet gossip: Walter Carey knew how to rule and govern your truculent spirit, and so prevent you from brawling with every second man you meet; and since I possess not that power, it is surely the safer plan to avoid the risk altogether by not going abroad in your company.”

“What! dare you call me a brawler!” cried Lester, rising from his seat with a flushed countenance, and laying his hand upon the hilt of his dagger.

“Nay, sit ye down again; I am not for fighting at this moment,” replied his companion with provoking coolness.

“Take back those words then,” demanded the angry little man.

“Certainly,” was the mocking answer, “and I will put in their stead,—exchanging pleasant courtesies. Will that suit your humour?”

"What is the meaning of this?" said another voice, and looking up, they beheld to their astonishment their master's favourite, Robert Carr, who had entered the room unobserved, and stood looking from one to the other. "What is the meaning of this?" he said again; "Lester looking as sweet as a crab-apple, and Capel in most unusually good temper. Is the world coming to an end?"

"He called me a brawler," began Lester, "and I will take that insult from no man. I am no more brawler than he."

"Heed him not, Master Carr," said Ralph, rising from his seat and preparing to don his cloak; "'tis but a slight disorder of the spleen; he will recover anon."

"And whither are you bound in such unkindly weather?"

"To St. Paul's, where I look for rare entertainment."

"What! to the trial of that heretic, Legate? I should ne'er have thought you had taste for dry argument, be it ever so learned."

"Nor have I, but I would fain hear that same Legate brought to confusion and made to eat his own words, for I owe him more than one grudge, Master Carr, and it will rejoice my heart to hear him sentenced as he deserves."

"Ah, ah, good Ralph! so that is your mind, is it? But I fear me you must prepare for some measure of disappointment. Fanatic though he be, Bartholomew Legate will not easily be brought to confusion in argument, seeing he hath both a clear head and a fluent tongue, and is a brave man to boot; for one must e'en give the devil his due. Yet I would he had not gained such sway over Walter Carey; he spoiled in him as merry a boon companion as man could desire."

"Ay, that he did," echoed Lester; "the Court has not been the same since he went away and shut himself up in his musty old country house."

"Well, I hate the canting fellow for other cause than that," said Ralph with some vehemence, "and I hope he may get his due."

"And I hope he may, sweet gossip, but should he not, I'll swear 'twill be by no fault of yours."

"No, indeed, Master Carr; I will take good heed thereto,"

returned Ralph, as he threw on his plumed hat with a jerk, and left the room.

The morning was bitterly cold as he reached the outer air, and on gaining the river stairs, a thin sheet of ice on the surface of the water made it evident to him that there was no prospect of a boat, and he must, therefore, accept the only remaining alternative, and go on foot to St. Paul's. He accordingly turned into the Strand, and made his way as he best could along the uneven, slippery road, and by the gardens, dreary enough in the chill morning mist with their leafless trees and melancholy shrubs.

Ralph Capel walked along, however, so absorbed in thought as to be entirely heedless of his surroundings, and he started involuntarily when, as he neared the precincts of the Temple, a hand was laid upon his arm, and a hollow voice pronounced his name.

"What do you want with me?" he asked, endeavouring with an impatient gesture to escape from the touch of his quondam host and physician, Doctor Dare, who, however, still retained his hold, and sternly replied:

"To know from your own lips if it be true that you have proved ingrate enough to betray to his doom one who, but for your own stubbornness, was your truest friend?"

"I know not who or what you mean," returned Ralph defiantly, and if I did, I am not bound to give account to you of all my doings. Let me go, Doctor Dare. I have business of import which may not wait; and moreover, I will brook no insults from you, and if you again waylay me thus, you shall have cause to repent it. Should it come to the king's ears how you continually practise the black art, not even sanctuary shall avail you aught."

"Threaten not, Ralph Capel, neither boast ye of your power, for that will be short-lived indeed," said the old man with quiet dignity; then he added, after a pause: "I read your horoscope last night, and your evil star, whose course might earlier have been changed, is rising rapidly into the ascendant, and ——"

Ralph interrupted him with a scornful laugh, and disengaging himself with a sudden jerk from his detaining hand, strode rapidly away. But, spite of his pretended incredulity, the old man's

words left a very uncomfortable impression on his mind, which he could not for some time succeed in shaking off, and he almost wished he had allowed Doctor Dare to finish his sentence, and thereby learned the worst. On arriving at the cathedral, he found a considerable number of persons already assembled, but the young gallant had no difficulty in obtaining a good place whence he could see and hear all that occurred.

The bishops had not yet taken their seats, nor was the prisoner present, but glancing over the sea of faces, Ralph soon recognised the portly form of Simon Lingard, and by his side Maysie, her dark eyes turned wistfully towards the door at which it was expected Bartholomew would enter; John White also stood near, and by his side, with stern and resolute countenance, was Hugh Capel. Ralph turned his eyes away, dreading to meet the gaze of the father he had wronged, but it was only to encounter instead the searching glance of Doctor Dare; and could he have done so without observation, the young man would gladly have quitted the cathedral. But now there arose a buzz of expectation among the assembled folk, and with much pomp and ceremony the bishops and other dignitaries entered, clad in their ecclesiastical robes, and took their places.

The scene was an imposing one, for such an assemblage had seldom before been gathered within the walls of the cathedral. There was the Archbishop of Canterbury (though his *role* on this occasion was simply that of a spectator); John King, Bishop of London, on whom principally devolved the conduct of the trial; the Bishops of Ely, Lichfield, and Rochester; Dr. Morton, the Dean of Westminster; Dr. Leyfield, the Dean of St. Paul's; and the two eminent lawyers, Sir John Blount and Sir Thomas Fowler; besides many others more or less interested in the trial. When the murmur of excitement had somewhat subsided, the order was given to bring in the accused, and Bartholomew entered, accompanied by his guards, and with quiet dignity took the place assigned to him, opposite the benches occupied by his judges, amid another murmur of voices, which was, however, quickly suppressed. He was somewhat pale, owing to the close confinement within his prison walls; for since the beginning of the year liberty to go abroad had been denied him. But his

countenance indicated no trace either of fear or anxiety; on the contrary, there was apparent in his demeanour, as he stood there calmly awaiting his trial, a cheerful tranquillity that bespoke a conscience at peace with itself, and might well have moved the envy of a less guiltily perturbed spirit than that of Ralph Capel.

Now ensued a slight pause, during which Bishop King set his papers in order; then he rose from his seat, and bade the chancellor read the indictment, which was listened to by the whole assembly with almost breathless attention. It began, of course, with the usual preamble, setting forth the advantages of the Protestant Church, and especially in having for its head a great and virtuous king instead of that antichrist, the Pope. This was followed by an enumeration of the various statutes against heresy, and then came the charge against Bartholomew Legate as a heretic on the suspicion of his most sacred Majesty, James, King of Britain, Ireland, and France, as Christ's vicegerent of the English Church, and Defender of the Faith. The indictment charged the said Bartholomew Legate with endeavouring to undermine and destroy the holy Protestant Church as by law established, by the preaching and teaching of certain false and mischievous doctrines, the principal among them being the denials of the creeds, both the Athanasian and Nicene, and the assertions that Christ is not God, that there are no persons in the Godhead, and that Christ is not to be prayed unto.

As the chancellor resumed his seat after the reading of this indictment, which had been listened to with the same breathless attention by the whole of the vast assembly, all eyes were turned towards the Bishop of London, who, with ill-concealed impatience, now rose and called upon the accused to make answer to the charges brought against him, and say if he were guilty or not guilty.

If the interest of the on-lookers had been great before, it was now intensified to the utmost; even Ralph forgot his anxiety to remain unrecognised, in his eagerness to hear what Bartholomew could say in his defence, seeing what consequences depended thereon. But calm and unabashed, as regardless apparently of the many eyes fixed upon him as of the bishop's almost threaten-

ing tone, Bartholomew stepped a few paces forward, and in clear, unflinching accents, began his reply :—

“My lord bishop,” he said, “as to the first of these charges, I can truly affirm that I have never desired, far less sought to bring about, the overthrow of the Church ; for though my reason disapproves of many of her doctrines, and my conscience forbids me to take part in all her rites and ceremonies, yet seeing that many can believe and take comfort therein, it would ill become me to judge their consciences ; and I would not, therefore, that the Church should be destroyed, but only purified from error, that she may be the better able to strengthen the weak, comfort the sorrowful, and instruct the ignorant. As to the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds, I do, indeed, deny them both, as having no authority human or Divine, and being, moreover, contrary to Holy Scripture.”

“Hear what he saith ; he hath already condemned himself !” exclaimed Bishop King, turning to his brethren.

“Nay, let us hear him further,” answered the Bishop of Ely ; “it may be we have scarce understood him aright. Bethink you,” he continued, addressing himself to Legate, “these creeds are part of the foundation on which the Church is built ; how then can they be contrary to Scripture ?”

“My lord,” answered Bartholomew, “I read in Scripture that there is one God, who made heaven and earth and all that therein is ; that He is almighty and everlasting ; and that before Him none was, nor can any be after Him. I read also in the Gospels what Jesus Christ, our Master, taught of Him : that He is our Father, merciful and loving, slow to anger and ready to forgive, and that we, being His children, need none to mediate between us and Him. Nowhere do I find that Christ speaks of Himself as God : contrariwise He seeks strength of His heavenly Father by prayer ; He bids His disciples pray to Him and to Him alone ; and calls upon Him from the cross, which if He were Himself God would be a mockery.”

“But do you not also read,” interrupted the bishop, “how Christ said, ‘I am in the Father and the Father in Me’ ; and at another time, ‘I and My Father are one’ ? Surely, these words can have no other meaning than that they are one in essence !”

“Nay, my lord,” replied Bartholomew ; “for you will also remember that our Master, in praying for His disciples, asked that they might be one with Him even as He was one with His Father, wherefore He could not intend that He was one with Him in any bodily sense, but in spirit only.”

“Brother Ely,” interrupted Bishop King, “you must see that it is worse than useless to bandy words with this obstinate schismatic, who out of his wicked and perverse understanding is ready with an answer to every argument. Yet am I minded to give him one more chance. Say, heretic, what mean these words, ‘And now, O Father, glorify Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was’ ; do they not prove Him co-eternal with God ?”

“It might well be,” returned Bartholomew with quiet reverence, “that our Master, like many another holy-minded man, feeling the nearness of God’s Spirit with His own, close and dear as that of a beloved father’s to a son’s, seemed to have known and even lived with Him in another state of being ; yet even were this so it could not prove Him co-eternal with God, much less as co-equal ; neither would it show Him as holding in that pre-existent state any special rank or office, since Christ came not until the fulness of time except by promise.”

“Impious heretic !” exclaimed the bishop, “how darest thou thus to wrest the word of Holy Scripture from its true meaning for the justification of thy own damnable errors ?”

“If I am in error,” answered Bartholomew with firmness, “may God grant me grace to escape therefrom ; but what I have spoken I believe to be the truth, and as God’s servant I dare speak nought else, whate’er betide.”

“Now put away thy foolish pride,” broke in the Bishop of Lichfield, “and bethink thee how the Scripture saith that ‘The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.’ What should that mean but that God took upon Him the likeness of man, and came and dwelt upon the earth below ?”

“My lord,” replied Bartholomew, “I understand it not in that sense, but rather that a most full and complete measure of that Holy Spirit of God, which bloweth where it listeth, dwelt in our Master Christ, whereby He was enabled to work His Father’s will

upon earth, and leave behind Him an ensample for all men in all time to come. That God could be made man, and die a shameful death upon the cross, savoureth to me of such monstrous blasphemy I scarce dare give it utterance."

"But doubtless," interposed Dr. Morton, "you hold Christ in greater reverence than you hold any other religious teacher?"

"Assuredly I do," said Bartholomew with fervour; "not only because He was divinely appointed, but because of His holy life of devotion and self-sacrifice crowned by the death He so nobly met, which hath not been equalled by any other teacher of whom I have ever heard."

"Then," continued the Dean of Westminster, "seeing you have thus accepted Christ as your Master and Guide, you must feel that He is somewhat far above and beyond mere mortal man, and I doubt not oftentimes seek in prayer His aid and succour in seasons of difficulty and trial."

"Nay," replied Bartholomew, "for that were idolatry. Unto God alone, and not to any of His creatures, must prayer be offered, as our Master Himself commanded when He said, 'Pray to your Father which is in secret.'"

"Presumptuous man," exclaimed the Bishop of Lichfield; "thinkest thou *thyself* not guilty of idolatry when thou darest to set up thy carnal reason against all the wisdom of the fathers of the Church, ay, even of the holy apostles themselves?"

"My lord," was the firm and dignified reply, "my reason was given unto me by God, and it is my duty in all humility, yet with zeal and faithfulness, to make use thereof, else were I but an unprofitable servant, and worthy to be cast into that outer darkness where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

"In all humility!" retorted the bishop in an angry tone; "methinks it were rather in all pride and stubbornness! Know you not how the Scripture saith: 'Can man by searching find out God?' and will you dare adventure so to do?"

"I have never claimed aught of such power or intent, my lord," answered Bartholomew; "nor deem I that any were justified in so doing; what Jesus Christ hath revealed of His Father and our Father sufficeth for me; and wherein the creeds do differ from His teaching I hold them to be in error."

"Brother Lichfield," interposed Bishop King hastily, seeing from the countenances of the onlookers that the prisoner's arguments were not without convincing power, "it is surely waste of words to hold longer parley with so obstinate a schismatic. We have heard him hitherto with much patience and forbearance, and painfully striven to wean him from his detestable errors; but seeing that he obstinately continueth in the same, his blood must be upon his own head; for it cannot but be your opinion, and that of my other reverend and learned brethren present, that he hath proved himself guilty of most wicked and damnable heresy, and deserving of the punishment accorded thereunto by the laws of this land—to wit, burning at the stake, that thereby like iniquity may be purged out from amongst us." The bishop paused for a moment for the assent of the other prelates and lawyers, and this having been given he rose from his seat, and in tones that resounded through the cathedral said: "Bartholomew Legate, after fair and open trial, you are pronounced, decreed, and declared an obdurate, contumacious and incorrigible heretic! Sir Sheriff, have the prisoner removed; in a few days you will know his Majesty's pleasure concerning him."

A thrill of horror passed through the vast concourse of spectators as they realized the full meaning of the bishop's words, and all eyes turned towards Bartholomew, who had remained standing with the same calm, undaunted mien that had characterized him throughout.

"Bear witness," he said, as the warders approached to remove him, "that I die for the sake of God's truth, as revealed by our Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

"Away with him," cried the bishop angrily, observing how eagerly Bartholomew was listened to; "we have had more than enough of his pestilential talk."

At these words a murmur arose among the vast assembly, but as quickly subsided, though anger and indignation remained visible on many a countenance, and sympathising glances were directed towards the prisoner as the warders led him away; for this unexpected revival of the hated heresy laws in all their old terrors had struck dismay to every heart, and none knew what should follow thereupon.

The ecclesiastics and others engaged in the trial now left their seats amid a somewhat ominous silence, and within a few minutes after the crowd of onlookers had streamed out of the cathedral, for the most part in sullen dejection, though there were not wanting among them some more fiery spirits whose indignation could hardly be restrained from endeavours to arouse the populace in active opposition against such open proof of ecclesiastical bigotry and oppression.

Ralph had lingered until nearly the last, anxious, if possible, to avoid recognition by any acquaintances, and especially the chance of an encounter with Doctor Dare. Scarce knowing why, he felt ill at ease with himself and all the world beside, and it was, therefore, with no small annoyance that on reaching the portal he felt a hand laid upon his arm, and heard the tones of Lester's voice.

"Give you good day, Capel. Sith you would not come with me, I was fain to seek you out, and it hath been brave entertainment, save that I could make nought of the matter of their disputation; but I am right glad Master Legate hath got his deserts; he will not find a chance to spoil another gossip for us; and when he is no longer nigh, who knows but Mistress Maysie may restore you to her favour?"

"Hold your peace, Lester; I will none of your meddling with my affairs," returned Ralph angrily.

"Sdeath, Capel, what aileth thee now, man? hath not all happened according to thy wish?" exclaimed Lester, too astonished to be angry.

"I want none of your interference; go your ways, and leave me to go mine," was Ralph's ungracious answer, as breaking from his companion he darted off and was soon lost to sight among the winding byways.

"Plague take him for a surly dog, and me too if I e'er speak him civil again," said the latter to himself; "yet I'd fain know what hath angered him thus," he added as he went his way.

CHAPTER XXIX

SINCE the trial at St. Paul's a week had elapsed, one short week; but to Simon Lingard and his household, as indeed to all the friends of Bartholomew Legate, it seemed a year, so filled had it been with distress and anxiety.

Despite the sentence pronounced by the bishop, no one was willing to believe that the horrible penalty of burning to death would really be carried out. Indeed, there were men of high authority on legal matters who openly avowed their opinion that it could not be lawfully done. But meanwhile, to those most nearly concerned, the suspense was terrible, and some intimation of the king's intent was eagerly looked for, even while dreaded.

It was an early day in March, one of those rare mornings when, while the cold and gloom of winter yet linger around, the spring pays a bright though fitting visit, as if to cheer and reassure her votaries, who, tempted abroad by the pleasant sunshine and mild breeze, were thronging the streets of the city. There was plenty of business for Simon Lingard and his two apprentices, but it would have been evident to even the most casual observer that the former was preoccupied, and that it cost him no small effort to concentrate his attention upon newest fashions in gloves and hose. It was, indeed, no easy thing for the old man to fix his thoughts upon the petty details of business with the vision of Maysie with her pale face and dark wistful eyes constantly rising before him, and the harrowing reflection of what might be the consequences to her if—Ah, thank God that we live but a moment of our lives at a time!

"Good-morrow, Master Lingard. Have you yet heard aught concerning our friend's fate?"

Simon, who had but just dismissed a customer, started at the sound of Walter Carey's voice.

"Nay, Master Carey; I would that we had, e'en though I fear the worst," was his reply, as he led his visitor to the back part of the shop; "for it is ill work this waiting for ill news; it is killing my Maysie." His voice trembled as he spoke, and he brushed his hand quickly across his eyes.

"Take heart, good Master Lingard," returned the young man with an attempt at cheerfulness; "it may well be that this delay bodes no ill, but rather good for Master Legate, sith, if the king was minded that the sentence should be carried out, there would be no need for tarrying; think you not so?"

"I would fain hope so," answered Simon; "but from all that hath gone before," he continued, shaking his grey head, "I have little cause thereto. Look you, Master Carey, this is how the matter stands: Barty hath angered the king in that he suffered not himself to be persuaded by him, but held firmly to his own opinions; and he hath angered the bishop by withstanding him to his face before all the folk in St. Paul's, and I much mistake if either will easily forgive him therefore; so he hath few friends left to him in high places, though there be many of the humbler sort would gladly lay down their lives for him."

"That do I well believe," returned Carey; "yet I pray you lose not heart, and bid Mistress Maysie be of good cheer. I go now to Whitehall, and if I hear aught concerning Master Legate, rest assured I will let you know, e'en before I go to see him in Newgate. Would only that I were in favour with the king, then might I do Master Legate some real service."

"Barty would liefer have it as it is, if I mistake not," replied Simon, as the young man took his leave.

Soon after he had gone Hugh Capel came, and Simon, seeing by his countenance that he had something to communicate, took him at once to the upper chamber where Maysie and Kate sat at their needlework and spinning. He bade "Good-morrow" to Mistress Alison, and advancing to the maiden, took her hands in his and kissed her on the forehead with unwonted tenderness; then having seated himself, he replied in answer to Simon's "Have you heard aught?"

"Yea, I have just learned that the king hath this morn sent Legate a free pardon if he will but promise to recant, and make

public profession of his belief in the creeds and articles of the Church."

Maysie's work had dropped from her hands as the old man spoke, and she trembled visibly.

"That he can never do," she said in a low voice.

"He hath not yet given his answer?" said her father, who had apparently not heeded her remark.

"Nay, but he will ere this day is done, and who can doubt what that answer will be?" returned Hugh Capel triumphantly. "Bartholomew Legate is no craven, and will stand by what he holds to be the truth to his latest breath. I fear him not."

"An he refuse the pardon as the king offers it, what then?" asked Mistress Alison sharply, her white lips alone betraying her emotion.

"God only knows, dear Kate," whispered Maysie, the tears welling up in her dark eyes, as she seated herself on the settle beside the old woman, and placed her arm affectionately round her.

"Yea," continued Hugh, after a short pause; "though his reason may err, yet is he one of those who keep their loins girt up and their lamps burning, and themselves ready for the coming of their Lord. Mind you not, Lingard," he went on, his tone growing more excited, "how I warned you long since that this would come, and it is but the beginning of tribulations, this persecution of the servants of the Most High; for Satan is let loose upon the earth, and maketh warfare upon all the powers of heaven; yet his dominion shall be short, and whoso endureth to the end shall be saved."

"I am minded," said Simon, willing to divert Capel's mind from his favourite theme, "to betake me to Newgate, and try if I may get speech of Barty. Yes, my wench," he continued, noting Maysie's wistful glance, "thou shalt come an thou wilt, and Mistress Alison."

"Nay, Master Lingard, Maysie shall bring me word how he fareth; but I cannot see him yet, it would break my heart, and but trouble him."

"What, Mistress Alison!" said Hugh Capel in a tone of reproach, "is it just cause for sorrow that he should be counted

worthy to suffer for conscience' sake? Shouldst thou not rather be glad and rejoice therefor?"

"I am but a weak woman," she replied, "and Barty hath been unto me as a son; I must needs think of his suffering and my own loss, should they carry out that cruel decree."

"We are not all made of such stern stuff as thyself, Hugh," said Lingard, "and none can deny that Mistress Alison hath just cause for heart-heaviness, though she hath borne up bravely until now."

"There be that have yet deeper cause for sorrow," returned Capel sternly; "were it my son thus called and found ready to bear witness for the truth, how could I thank God and rejoice! ay, and see him suffer with a gladsome heart, for then would I know that the parting with him were but for a time, and that his reward was sure."

Lingard made no reply, but pressed his friend's hand sympathetically, and Maysie just then appearing ready for the walk, they left the house together.

On reaching Newgate, they met John White and one of the elders of the Church coming from thence. Simon scanned their countenances anxiously.

"You have seen him?" he said.

"Yes," replied John, "he is bravely well and of excellent cheer."

"What saith he to the king's offer?" asked Capel eagerly.

"That he will accept of no pardon on such terms, for that his allegiance is first to the King of kings, and afterwards to his earthly sovereign."

"Said I not it would be so?" returned the old man, triumphantly turning to Lingard, who, however, seeing that their little group was becoming a centre of attention to passers-by, only replied by asking if Capel would accompany them on their visit to the prisoner.

"Nay, it were better not; my presence might prove a hindrance to your being admitted, and he would scarce wish to see me this day," he added, with a glance at Maysie; "but bear my remembrance to him, and say I trust we shall meet ere long."

They parted, and in a few minutes more Maysie and her father

had exchanged the bright sunshine and sweet fresh spring breeze, for the close atmosphere and comparative darkness of the apartment in which Bartholomew Legate was confined. They found him as John had described, well and cheerful, and undismayed by any apprehensions as to the fate that might await him. He greeted them both lovingly, and spoke of the joy it had been to him to hear from John White and the good elder of the unfailing zeal and faithfulness of his people in the keeping up of their worship, the instruction of the young, and the general care for each other's weal. "It hath reconciled me much to parting from them all," he said.

"Nay, Barty, talk not in such wise," replied Simon, "let us rather hope there will be no need for parting."

"Good Father Lingard, and Maysie, my dear love," answered Bartholomew, "let us not cheat ourselves with false hopes. God knows that were it His will I would gladly remain here awhile longer; for life is sweet, and there is much to bind me to the earth, but it may scarcely be. If I had hopes of some lighter punishment, they have been entirely quenched by that message from the king; death or banishment will surely be my portion, since it were impossible for me to recant. Nay, sweetheart, weep not," he continued, drawing the trembling Maysie more closely to him; "the pain and the parting are but for a moment, and in that better life we shall suffer them no more."

"Yet I would fain hope it may be otherwise than you think," persisted Lingard. "Master Carey was with me this morn, in much concern about you, and anxious to do you service: he was on his way to Whitehall, and who knows but that through some friend he might obtain the king's ear on your behalf?"

That Simon spoke rather with the hope of cheering his companions than from conviction was evident to Bartholomew, who replied:

"That were most unlikely, Father Lingard, seeing he is by no means in his Majesty's favour, yet I thank him heartily for his kind wishes. But let us vex ourselves no more with these anxious cares. We can surely trust to Him who seeth the end from the beginning. Tell me rather how doth my good Kate, and if there is hope I may see her ere long."

"The poor old soul is well in health, but sadly troubled on thy account," answered Simon, seeing that Maysie was still struggling with her tears; "she cannot endure to think of thee as suffering, and her pain was increased when she heard of the king's message, for she knew well what answer thou wouldst give, else I doubt not she would have come with us to-day."

"Bear my loving remembrance to her," replied Bartholomew, "and bid her be of good cheer, for that I am well and content. Courage, sweetheart!" he continued, turning to Maysie, as the key turned in the lock, and gave the signal for parting: "nought can befall us save by God's will; and so we be on His side, there is nought to fear." He kissed her lovingly, pressed Lingard's hand once again, and in another minute was alone.

Contrary to expectation, no immediate result, favourable or otherwise, followed upon Bartholomew's refusal of the conditions of pardon, and for the next few days hope and fear alternated in the hearts of his friends, while they awaited his final sentence, which, they had learned, would depend upon the decision of the eminent lawyers whom the king had caused to be consulted as to the legality of the penalties imposed by the old heresy laws, a proceeding regarded with some suspicion by those best informed, who knew that the authorities selected were such as his Majesty could depend upon for deciding according to his own wishes.*

On the evening of the 11th of March, as Lingard was preparing to close his shop after an unusually quiet day, John White suddenly made his appearance. It was contrary to his custom to be so late from home, and Simon, observing his pale and troubled countenance, feared somewhat must be amiss with Alice or the children; but he replied to the old man's kindly solicitations, with:

"Nay, they are all well, thank God! but have you not heard?"

"Heard what! of Barty?"

John bowed his head.

* "And as I conceived, his Highness did not much desire that the Lord Coke should be called thereunto, least by his singularity in opinion he should give stay to the business."—*Vide* Letter from Archbishop of Canterbury to Lord Ellesmere, Egerton Papers, p. 446.

"Come in, lad, and sit ye down," he said, laying a trembling hand upon the young man's arm, and leading him to the room behind the shop.

"What of him?" he asked, motioning John to a seat.

"The king hath signed the warrant; he is to be burned in Smithfield this day se'night," was the mournful answer.

"When heard you this? perchance it is not true; nay, it cannot be true!" cried Simon almost fiercely.

"Alas, Master Lingard! it is but too true. Doctor Dare it was who brought the sad news to us an hour since; he, having heard rumour thereof in the morn, himself went to Newgate and prayed to see Bartholomew Legate, but this was denied, the gaoler saying, moreover, that he had orders to keep him from seeing any, even his nearest friends, until the day before his execution, concerning which he told Doctor Dare many particulars."

"God help my poor Maysie! how am I to tell her this?" exclaimed Lingard, sinking his grey head into his hands.

But even as he spoke, the door opened softly and Maysie entered; she looked in fear and wonder from one despairing face to another, then dropping upon her knees by her father's side, said, as she folded her arms around him:

"Father, dear father, hath aught of ill befallen?"

He clasped her to his breast: "My maid, my little maid, how shall I tell thee?"

"Doth it concern Barty?" she asked, looking steadily into his face with her dark trustful eyes.

"Ay, sweetheart, 'tis even so, and cruel and wicked is the deed, though the king hath set his hand thereto; for they will burn him, Maysie! burn him in Smithfield!"

He watched her anxiously as he spoke; she had turned very pale, but was outwardly calm.

"Father, when will it be?" she asked, with a little tremor in her tone.

"But a se'night hence, my Maysie!" he answered.

For some minutes she made no reply, but remained sunk upon her knees with bowed head. When she at last looked up, a sad half smile hovered about her eyes and lips.

"Father, dear!" she said, "if it be God's will, we must e'en

try to bear it, must we not? Barty would say so, were he now here. But oh, poor Kate! it will be hard for her, for she hath hoped until now; I scarce can tell how we may break to her such sad tidings."

"Say nought thereof to-night, sweetheart," replied her father; "the morn will be time enough for the good old woman to know fresh sorrow."

"And if you will it, Maysie," said John, as he rose to go, "Alice shall come round then, she may help to comfort Mistress Alison."

"Ay, and Maysie too," returned Lingard. "Thanks for thy kind thoughtfulness, good John; and bid her, if she will, to bring the babes: God's blessing on her and them."

With the next morning came Alice and her children, nor did she leave the stricken household all through that dreary week, save for occasional visits to her home to see that all was in its usual order, or to take part in the worship of the faithful few, who met there to pray for their beloved pastor, and the persecuted Church.

At length, the day arrived on which they should pay their farewell visit to Bartholomew in his prison, and Lingard went thither early in the forenoon accompanied by Maysie and Kate Alison, John and Alice having arranged to go later in the day with other friends. It was a trying ordeal for all, but especially for the poor old woman, whose limbs, when they reached the frowning gateway, seemed scarcely able to support her weight. At sight of Bartholomew she broke down entirely.

"My boy, my boy," she sobbed, falling upon his neck; "that I should have lived to see this!"

"Dear old nurse," he answered, tenderly placing his arm around her; and leading her to the seat. "Grieve not thus; rather rejoice that God hath counted me worthy to suffer for His truth; and think not of the pain, but of that which shall follow, for hath not Paul said, that 'our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory'? Maysie, dear heart," he continued, taking her hands in his, and looking down into the sweet girlish face so brave and earnest in its sorrow; "it is hard to sa farewell to thee, but

God wills it so, and the parting is not for ever: thou wilt still help to tend the little ones of the flock, and be a strength and support to the weak and wavering, for this will be a time of trial to many."

"I will try, dear Barty," she answered through her tears; "with God's help."

He drew her closer to him, kissing her lips and forehead, and remained silent for some minutes, as did they all. When he next spoke it was in cheery tones, asking Lingard after one and another of his friends and acquaintances, and charging him with kind messages to several, as though he had simply been going a journey. At length the signal for departure was given, and Bartholomew, having commended Kate to the care of Maysie and her father, bade them all a loving farewell, desiring they should think of him, not as dead, but as gone before to await them in their Father's home.

The next morning broke cold and grey; yet, despite the lowering sky and piercing east wind, thousands of folk had from an early hour been flocking the approaches to Smithfield, some attracted thither by a morbid curiosity to witness the burning of the heretic, but many more by sympathy with the martyr, and the desire to hear his latest testimony.

The clocks were striking eleven, and the bell of St. Bartholomew the Great beginning to toll as Lingard and Maysie, accompanied by Hugh Capel and John White, wended their way to a spot whence they might see and be seen of Bartholomew, as he entered the space kept by the soldiers. It was a trying moment for the girl, but her father had been unable to resist her entreaties to be allowed to look once more upon the face of her betrothed, and Alice having undertaken to remain with Kate Alison, there was nothing to prevent her going. Fortunately, they had not long to wait. There was a surging of the human sea, and then, attended by a guard of soldiers and a sour-visaged chaplain, Bartholomew appeared, walking with firm step and untroubled mien towards the place of doom. But he had scarcely entered the enclosure ere a man burst from the crowd, and, undeterred by the menaces of the soldiers, flung himself on his knees before him, crying, "Forgive! forgive! I wist not it could ever come to this."

"I have nought to forgive, Master Capel," answered Bartholomew gently, yet with surprise. "It is from God you must seek pardon."

"Nay! but say that you forgive," persisted the wretched man.

"If I had aught to forgive I would do so from my heart," was the pitying reply.

Ralph seized one of the manacled hands and pressed it to his lips, but at the same moment the guards forced him roughly away, and the mournful procession moved on. Soon Bartholomew caught sight of the little group of dear familiar faces, and paused to utter a fervent "God bless you," but the soldiers again urged him on. They had nearly reached the stake, when a voice from the crowd rang out in clear, triumphant tones:

"God speed thee, brother; a merry meeting thou wilt have with the Lord this day;" and there, his white hair waving in the wind and his sunken eyes gleaming with unnatural brightness in his wan countenance, stood Ephraim Postlethwaite. "I am but waiting the Master's call, and shall soon join thee in His blessed home," he continued.

"And I will give you right glad welcome," answered Bartholomew.

"It were surely more fitting," interposed the clergyman with severity, "to spend your last remaining moments in making peace with your offended God rather than in profane talk."

"I have nought to fear from my Heavenly Father. From Him I come, and unto Him I go," was the calm reply; "and I call upon all present to witness that I lay down my life for the sake of His truth as revealed by our Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath taught us that there is one God, the Father, and that unto Him alone must all prayer be offered and all praise be given. Blessed be His name for ever and ever!"

He was now divested of his cloak and chained to the stake, and the executioner having besought his forgiveness, brought a torch and set light to the pile; the while Bartholomew, his countenance bright with a smile of unspeakable peace, stood calmly awaiting the end. As the flames shot upwards they heard him exclaim: "Father, receive my spirit!" and so fiercely did the fire rage they scarce saw him again.

As the fagots caught light Lingard drew Maysie gently away and led her home, where, for the first time since she had heard of the sentence, her overwrought spirit gave way, and she sobbed on Alice's bosom like a child. The paroxysm was over at last, and they led her to her own room, where she fell asleep on the bed, Kate Alison, who seemed to have forgotten her own grief in her endeavour to soothe and comfort her darling, watching by her side.

Later in the evening, as they were all seated around the fire, Alice anxiously wondering what had become of her husband and father, the latter suddenly appeared.

"I have come to fetch thee, Alice," he said. "John hath taken thy unhappy brother to his home, where he lies stricken by some sore sickness, and he needs thy help. It might be well, perchance, to leave the children here."

"Ay, do, dear Alice," said Maysie; "I will tend them with great care, and Kate is here to give me counsel, should aught be amiss."

So it was settled; and Alice, leaving her little ones behind, went home to assist in nursing Ralph through the long tedious illness that followed, and from which he arose so changed that his former friends would scarce have recognised him. Nor was the change an outward one merely: he was evidently sincerely desirous of abandoning his old evil courses, and leading a useful, honourable life; and when strong enough he gladly adopted John's suggestion that he should go to Leyden, and there, amidst new surroundings and comparatively free from temptation, begin a new life.

But while Ralph was yet hovering between life and death, the little band of disciples had received another shock, which had struck them with terror and dismay. From Lichfield had come the tidings that only three weeks after Bartholomew Legate met his martyr's death Edward Wightman had been burned there for holding similar opinions, and people dreaded what might come next. But, happily, the martyr fires were not rekindled in England, and although the Church to which Bartholomew had ministered had yet to undergo much trial and not a little persecution, there were not wanting in its midst noble-minded men and

women to bear on the torch in the race, out of which their leader had fallen; and among these shone not the least brightly the names of John and Alice White and Maysie Lingard. To the latter, especially, the trust committed to her by Bartholomew was a sacred one, and she took up such of his work as lay within her power with untiring zeal and earnestness, teaching the children, visiting the sick, and ever ready with love and sympathy for all that needed it, besides being a brightness and joy in her own home, so that Kate sometimes wondered at herself for feeling happy once more.

During the summer, Maysie and her father went, by invitation of Master Walter Carey, to Rumwell. It was a pleasant and much needed change for both, although the associations of the place were somewhat melancholy; but their host was all kindness, and the fresh country air soon restored the colour to Maysie's cheek, and the elasticity to her gait, so that Lingard felt happier than he had done for many months past.

The evening before their return home, they strolled, by Maysie's wish, into the quiet churchyard, and sought the resting-place of the Legates, and there on the tombstone, newly cut, they saw Bartholomew's name beneath those of his father and mother, with the simple text, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and soul, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself."

"I could not bear he should seem unremembered," said Master Carey with a tremor in his tone; "but there is small need of graven words, seeing that his name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

APPENDIX.

HISTORICAL NOTES.

ANABAPTISTS (*page 41*).

I have supposed Ephraim Postlethwaite to belong to this sect, which appears to have taken its rise among the Dutch merchants who had settled in England about the year 1538, when the name first occurs.

"Four Anabaptists, three men and one woman, all Dutch, bare faggots at Paul's Crosse, and three daies after a man and woman of their sect was burnt in Smithfield." (*Vide Stowe's Chronicles*, pp. 576.)

ARMINIUS, JAMES (*page 95*).

This learned man was born at Oudewater, in Holland, in the year 1560, and received his education first at Leyden and afterwards at Geneva; he succeeded Francis Junius as Professor of Divinity at the former university. Some time before this appointment, while officiating as minister at Amsterdam, he, being engaged in preparing a reply to an attack which had been made upon the views respecting Predestination held by Calvin and Beza, became a convert to the opinions which he had undertaken to refute, and which have since been known by the name of Arminianism. (*Vide Wallace's "Antitrinitarian Biography," Vol. III., pp. 560.*)

CASTELLIO OR CASTALIO SEBASTIAN (*page 95*).

In the early part of his career Castellio seems to have resided for a time and to have been on very friendly terms with Calvin at Strasburg. Through the influence of the reformer he obtained the rectorship of a school at Geneva, an office which included also the duties of a clergyman, in the fulfilment of which he advocated theological opinions that greatly offended Calvin, whose vehement opponent he afterwards became. In less than four years Castellio had to quit Geneva on account of his religious views, and occupied himself in the translation of the Bible. After a time he was appointed professor of Greek at the Basle University. (*Vide "Real-Encyclopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche."*)

GARNET, HENRY (*page 153*).

A Jesuit priest executed for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot.

The anecdote of the miraculous straw is related by Fuller, and concludes

thus: "However, this inspirited straw was afterwards copied out, and at Rome printed in pomp, with many superstitious copartments about it (as a coroner, a crosse and nails) more than ever were in the originall. Yea, this miracle (how silly and simple soever) gave the groundwork to Garnet's beatification by the Pope some months after." (*Vide Fuller's "Church History of Britain," Book X., p. 55.*)

JUNIUS, FRANCIS (*page 94*).

He was born at Bourges, 1545; became Divinity Professor at Heidelberg, and afterwards at Leyden; in conjunction with Tremellius he translated the Bible into Latin. He is spoken of as a man of great learning and pious zeal. (*Vide Hook's "Ecclesiastical Biography."*)

KING, JOHN (*pp. 244, 257-261*).

"About 1610 he was appointed Bishop of London by King James; . . . was renowned for a most excellent flow of speech. . . . He was the last bishop of the Church of England who (with another, the Bishop of Lichfield) put in force the statute for the burning of heretics. It was in the Consistory Court of the Bishop of London that his victim, Bartholomew Legate, accused of Arianism, was made over to the civil power and burned at the stake. For the last time the atmosphere of London was tainted with the reek of a holocaust for that crime. Legate was offered a pardon on recantation, refused it, and died a martyr for his faith." (*Vide Milman's "Annals of St. Paul's Cathedral," Chap. XII., pp. 321.*)

LEGATE, BARTHOLOMEW.

Fuller speaks thus regarding him:—

"Bartholomew Legate, native county, Essex; person comely; . . . age about forty years. Of a bold spirit, confident carriage, fluent tongue, excellently skilled in the Scriptures, and well had it been for him if he had known them less, or understood them better. . . . His conversation (for ought I can learn to the contrary) very unblameable. . . . King James caused this Legate often to be brought to him and seriously dealt with him to endeavour his conversion. . . .

"For maintaining these opinions, Legate had long been in Newgate, yet with liberty allowed him to go abroad. . . . Bishop King finally convented him in the Consistory of St. Paul's, . . . and chose many reverend Bishops, able Divines, and learned Lawyers to assist him. . . . By the counsell and consent of these, by his definitive sentence, he pronounced, decreed, and declared the foresaid Bartholomew Legate an obdurate, contumacious, and incorrigible Heretick, and by an instrument called a Significavit, certified the same into the Chancery, delivering him up into the Secular power, the church keys, in such cases, craving the help of the civil sword. Whereupon, King James, with his letters, dated March 11th, under the Privy Seal, gave orders to the Broad Seal to direct the Writ de Hæretico Comburendo to the Sheriffs of London for the burning of

the foresaid Legate. (*Vide Fuller's "Church History of Britain," Book X., Sect. iv.*)

PENALTIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE AT CHURCH AND THE FREQUENTING OF CONVENTICLES (*page 12*).

" . . . That if any person or persons above the age of sixteen years, which shall obstinately refuse to repair to some church, chapel, or usual place of common prayer to hear Divine service as established by her Majesty's laws and statutes in that behalf made, and shall forbear to do the same by the space of a month next after, without any lawful cause, . . . shall willingly join in, or be present at any such assemblies, conventicles, or meetings under colour or pretence of any such exercise of religion contrary to the laws and statutes of this realm as is aforesaid; that then every person so offending as aforesaid and being thereof lawfully convicted, shall be committed to prison, there to remain without bail or mainprise, until they shall conform and yield themselves to come to some church, chapel, or usual place of common prayer, and hear Divine service according to her Majesty's laws and statutes aforesaid, and to make such open submission and declaration of their said conformity as hereafter in this Act is declared and appointed." (*Vide "An Act to retain the Queen's Majesty's subjects in their due obedience," Cap. l., 35th Elizabeth.*)

REYNOLDS, DR. JOHN (*page 174*).

"This John Reynolds at the first was a zealous Papist, whilst William, his brother, was as earnest a Protestant, and afterwards Providence so ordered it, that by their mutual disputation, John Reynolds turned an eminent Protestant and William an inveterate Papist, in which persuasion he died." (*Vide Fuller's "Church History of Britain," Book X., Sect. iii.*)

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