





ANNANDALE,

A STORY

OF THE TIMES OF THE COVENANTERS.





“Speak!” repeated the dragon fiercely, “or you shall die, this instant.”

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Tales

“ Being destitute, afflicted, tormented : (of whom the world was not worthy :) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth.”—HEB. xi. 38.

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ANNANDALE.



CHAPTER I.

“O wild traditioned Scotland,
Thy briery burns and braes
Are full of pleasant memories,
And tales of other days.
Thy story-haunted waters
In music gush along,
Thy mountain glens are tragedies,
Thy heathy hills are song.

* * * *

“Land of the Bruce and Wallace,
Where patriot hearts have stood,
And for their country and their faith,
Like water poured their blood ;
Where wives and little children
Were steadfast to the death,
And graves of martyr warriors
Are in the desert heath.”

ANDREW MURRAY—FAMILY HISTORY — EVENING
PRAYERS—REFLECTIONS.

THE cold gray of a November evening
was fast closing over the hills and moors of

B

Annandale, as Andrew Murray, wrapped in his shepherd's plaid, walked slowly and thoughtfully homeward, following the narrow, winding path which led from the sheepfold to his mother's cottage. He had reached the summit of a hill, and for a moment he stood still, with his arms folded, gazing abstractedly at the scene before him.

All was quiet save the distant bleating of a sheep, and the low murmur of a little stream of water near by; but suddenly the silence was broken by strange, wild sounds—yells, shouts, and rude, drunken laughter, mingled with oaths and curses and the trampling of horsemen.

On they came, sending a cloud of dust before them, and as they swept past almost at his feet, he saw that they carried with them a prisoner from whose cropped ears the warm blood was yet streaming.

Andrew shuddered at the sight. "How long, O Lord, holy and true, how long dost

not thou avenge thy suffering church?" he exclaimed, turning away with a pitying sigh. "O Scotland when will thy woes cease? How long shall the ways of Zion mourn?" He looked again, but they were already out of sight in the increasing darkness, and he hastened on his way.

"You're late the night, Andrew, my lad," said his mother, stopping her wheel as he entered. "Jessie, lassie, put by your knittin' and set the supper on the table."

"Ay, mither," "an' I have seen such a sight I wadna wish to see again," and with a voice tremulous with emotion he related what he had just seen. All listened with breathless attention during the recital. Little Nanny laid her head in her mother's lap and sobbed aloud; Jessie stood still with the porringer of milk in one hand, while, with the other, she wiped away the tears. "I wish I was a man," exclaimed Donald, a sturdy boy of seven, clinching

his teeth and doubling his fist ; “ an’ I wad joost drive the bluidy murthering wretches frae the country.”

“ Ah, woe’s me ! sic sights are common in Scotland now,” said their mother heaving a deep sigh, “ an’ very thankful should we be, my bairns, that thus far we hae a’ escaped the rage of the persecutor.” They sat down to their frugal fare of oatmeal cakes and milk, and, having first craved God’s blessing upon their food, ate it with thankful hearts.

Mrs. Murray was a widow, and Andrew, her first born, though yet a mere lad, felt that upon him devolved the duties of his absent parent ; and this, together with the stern realities of the times in which he lived, had given him a gravity, a sober, steady, thoughtful mien, far beyond his years. Jessie, two years his junior, though naturally of a merry, lively disposition, also showed the effects of these trying times, in the thoughtful, grave, and almost

sad demeanor, which had become nearly habitual to her. Little Nanny, a fragile looking child of eight or nine, the pet lamb of the flock, came next; "a winsome wee thing," she had all her life been called by those who knew and loved her.

Donald was the youngest. The mother, a woman of devoted piety, had earnestly striven to bring up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and with regard to the three elder, at least, she felt that her labour had not been in vain.

The table was cleared away, and the little group gathered about the peat fire, which blazed cheerily on the hearth. There were no idle hands there; the mother's wheel hummed pleasantly, and even little Donald had his knitting. Andrew held a book in his hand, but his mother noticed that he more than once closed it, and sat gazing into the fire, seemingly absorbed in thought. They kept early hours, and ere long, the wheel

was stopped, the work laid aside, and the large family Bible brought out, and laid on the little stand beside Andrew. He opened it, and read with solemn tone their evening chapter. A sweet song of praise arose from their united voices, and then they knelt, while Andrew gave thanks for the blessings of the past day, and implored their heavenly Father's protection during the silent watches of the night; adding a fervent petition for strength to meet all coming trials. The kind and loving good-nights had been spoken, and the younger members of the family had sought their pillows, but Andrew and his mother still sat by the fireside. He had again opened the book he so dearly loved, and was diligently poring over its pages. His mother watched him, and saw the cloud gradually clear from his brow, and presently he looked up with a smile, saying, "Mither, I aye find comfort in this precious book. 'I, even I, am He that comforteth



**“ The wheel was stopped, the work laid aside,
and the large family bible brought out.”**

you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor? The captive exilē hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail; but I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The Lord of hosts is His name.'” Thus he read in low earnest tones.

“Ay, my bairn, 'tis a blessed book, worth more than houses an' land, and a' ither earthly possessions. But ye hae been uncommon sad and thoughtfu' the night, what troubles ye, my laddie?”

“Ye ken, mither, these are not the times for mirth, but rather for the wearing

o' sackcloth an' ashes. The ways of Ziou mourn, few come to her solemn feasts; and ye ken, mither," said he, in a low agitated tone, "I wadna tell ye before wee Nanny (she's growing sae sad an' fearsome); didna ye hear, mither, o' the five men hanged by the bluidy Claverhouse at Mauchline, the ither day, without sae much as a form o' trial an' not allowed a moment to pray, or to look into the blessed Bible? 'Twould seem as though the very devils of hell maun be let loose upon us, an' which o' us kens how sune his ain turn may come?"

"God forgive them!" exclaimed his mother with a deep sigh. "Our brethren are surely gone home to glory, Andrew, but 'twill be a fearsome account their bluidy murderers will hae to render up at the last day. An' ye say truly, laddie, that nane o' us ken how soon his turn may come, an' we hae muckle need to keep our loins girt an' our lights burnin'."

“Ay, mither, an’ whiles I feel ready to lay down my life for the cause, an’ think it wad be only joy to suffer for Christ’s sake; but whiles I fear that when the time of trial comes, I shall no hae strength to stand it.” “‘Trust ye in the Lord, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.’ ’Tis His ain word, my bairn, the word of Him, who cannot lie; put your trust in Him, an’ ye needna fear that ye will ever be brought to confusion. I wadna wish Andrew, to see ye over confident in your ain strength, nay, more than that, laddie, ’twad gi’e me a sore heart, for isna it he that *thinketh* he *standeth*, who is bid to tak’ heed lest he fall? Weel do I mind how zealous Sir James Jordan was in the days of the covenant, and bragged that he had signed it, an’ scorned the test; but when the day of trial came, he took it; an’ ye ken weel, Andrew, that there’s scarce a fiercer or more bluidthirsty persecutor of the Lord’s people in a’ the land, than he is now.”

“Ay, mither, I wad almost as soon fall into the hands o’ Claverhouse himsel’,” said Andrew; “*he* is hard hearted an’ cruel, but he never professed ony love for our covenants.”

“Yes, nae doubt Sir James is whiles in dread that he might be thought to favour the persecuted gospel, an’ that makes him over zealous; an’ more than that, he has the bitter hate o’ an apostate, to the cause he has forsaken, for nae doubt his conscience must sting him sorely, whiles.”

“I canna forget that poor wounded man wi’ his meek pitifu’ looks,” said Andrew sighing; “I hope it may please the Lord to suffer him to ’scape the hands o’ his persecutors, e’en as a bird oot o’ the snare o’ the fowler.”

“We will remember him at the throne of grace, the night, Andrew,” replied his mother, “an’ we dinna ken but it may please our God to grant unto him such great deliverance, as was given to Daniel

in the lions' den, an' to the children in the fiery furnace."

"Ay, said Andrew, "or to Peter in the prison; but ye're looking ower weary, mither, an' it's time ye were preparing for rest."

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CHAPTER II.

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I hear a voice I know full well,
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And storms my path invade,
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DRAGOONS AT CONHEATH—A PRISONER—THREATS
OF CLAVERHOUSE—ESCAPE OF MR. LILBURN—
CONSOLATION IN THE CAVERN.

SOON after Andrew entered his mother's cottage, a party of dragoons halted at the gate of Conheath, and demanded admittance of the porter ; which being instantly granted, they dashed up the avenue, and presently reached the door of the mansion, where they again halted. Sir James

Jordan, hurrying out at the sound of their horses' hoofs upon the gravel, gave a hearty welcome to Sir John Graham of Claverhouse. "Good evening, Sir John; glad to see you; walk in! walk in! and make yourself at home."

"I fear I must encroach upon your hospitality for the night, Conheath," said Claverhouse; "are there any of the disaffected hereabouts, upon whom I can quarter my men?"

"I am sorry to say, I fear there are, though I have used every exertion to keep them down; but there is room enough on my premises, to accommodate your men for to-night; I esteem it a pleasure to entertain the servants of my king, and especially so loyal a subject as yourself, and one who has done his majesty such good service, in putting down and punishing these rebels against his authority. Ah! I see you have a prisoner; well, well, send him to the barn, or some out-house,

'tis good enough for such cattle as he, and with a guard will be sufficiently secure." Claverhouse gave the necessary orders to his subordinate officer, and then followed his host to the drawing-room, where Sir James introduced him to his wife and daughters. While Claverhouse addressed some complimentary speeches to the mother, the youngest of the three (drawing her eldest sister aside) said in an under tone,

"Is it possible, Annie? *Can this* be Claverhouse, the bloody Claverhouse (as I have often heard him called)? I can hardly believe my eyes."

"Why, Mabel?" asked the sister, who had met the officer frequently.

"Because, Annie, though I never heard him described, I had imagined a large, stout man, of a fierce countenance, carrying his cruelty in his face, and inspiring terror by his very looks; but this man looks as though he were all mildness and

gentleness, and would not so much as hurt a fly!"

"Have you never heard, Mabel, that the devil sometimes takes the form of an angel of light?" replied her sister, laughing at Mabel's surprise. "I believe it is true in this case," added Mabel with sudden gravity, "and I do wish papa would not treat him so very cordially."

The conversation was presently interrupted by the announcement of supper, and all repaired to the dining room, where they found a table loaded with the best the house afforded, in the shape of food and wine. While Claverhouse did full justice to the good cheer, his host entertained him with an account of the many undeniable proofs he had been giving of his loyalty for some years past; namely, the fines he had laid upon those of his tenants who had dared to attend the conventicles, the numbers he had "brought to justice," and seen imprisoned, tortured,

or shot, for their obstinate refusal to take the test, &c., &c. To all this Claverhouse listened with a slight sneer on his face, and at length silenced Sir James, by remarking, "that it was necessary for *some* persons to show more than ordinary zeal, lest they might be suspected of secretly favouring the cause, which they professed to have abandoned." Sir James bit his lip, colored violently, but answered not a word, and his lady came to his rescue by changing the subject of conversation, inquiring of Claverhouse concerning the fashions in Edinburgh.

In the meantime, the soldiers gathered in the servants' hall where they were regaled with bread, beef, and quantities of strong beer. But first they had deposited their prisoner (the poor man who had that evening so excited Andrew Murray's sympathies) in a little out-building, stationing one of their number at the door as guard.

“There! get ye in there, ye dog of a Covenanter,” exclaimed the soldier, giving the poor man a kick; if Claverhouse had na been in a wonderful merciful mood, to-night, he would hae scattered your brains over the moor, instead o’ contenting himsel’ with taking off your ears; and I might hae been enjoying the good cheer with the rest, instead o’ staying out here in the rain, to watch the like o’ ye,” and he swore a fearful oath in his rage.

“’Tis nae fault o’ mine, friend, that ye’re stayin’ out here to watch me,” returned the other meekly, sinking down upon a pile of filthy, half-rotten straw, the only furniture of the miserable little apartment; “ye maun ken, man, that I wad far rather be permitted to depart, an’ hide mysel’ in the hills.” A command to “hold his tongue,” accompanied with a volley of oaths, was the only reply, and the soldier slammed the door, and securing it on the outside, paced to and fro before

it, leaving his prisoner to solitude and darkness. Weak, wounded, and suffering, covered with blood and dust, the poor man stretched himself upon his wretched couch, thankful that he was at least left, for a little time, alone with his God and Father, that he might hold communion with him, and gather strength for the sufferings yet in store for him. Oh! how happy are they, who can see a Father's hand in everything, and say, with sweet submission, "Thy will be done." This poor man, with all his privation and suffering, was happier far than his persecutors, revelling (though they were) in the good things of this life. Ay, heard he not a voice, saying in the sweetest tones,—"(O Israel, fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through

the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I *am* the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour ?”

But there was one, at least, of his fellow creatures, who regarded him with compassion. Tender-hearted woman seldom looks with other than pitying eye upon the suffering,—and one of the maid-servants, who had caught sight of the prisoner, as he was brought in, felt her sympathies excited in his favour, and as she listened to the rude jests of the soldiers, and gathered from their talk, the story of his capture ; how, attracted by the barking of his dog, they had caught him asleep in the heather, had mutilated him, and were now carrying him to prison, perhaps to death ; the feeling was increased to such a degree, that she determined to make an effort, not only to relieve his present sufferings, but to assist him to escape. To this end, while supplying the soldiers within the house with

plenty of drink, she carried an abundance of the same to the one on guard, accompanying her more substantial gifts with flattering speeches and lively jests, until she had so far succeeded in restoring him to good humour, that he at length, after a good deal of persuasion, consented to permit her to enter the hovel, dress the prisoner's wounds, and also relieve his hunger and thirst. The last mug of beer she brought to the sentinel, was probably not unadulterated, for he presently began to feel excessively drowsy, and the feeling increased upon him, until at length, entirely overcome, he sunk down upon a little bench, she had kindly placed for him beside the door, and was soon lost in a profound slumber. But ere this had happened, her design had been strangely favoured by another circumstance. Claverhouse and Sir James were yet lingering over their wine, when a servant entered, saying, that a man was waiting below, who insisted that

he must see Claverhouse himself without delay, as he had an important message which he would deliver to no one else. "Show him up," said Claverhouse, without waiting to hear Sir James's order to tell the man to wait till morning. The door was again opened, and the servant ushered in a short man wrapped in a cloak, who walked with a shuffling gait, and seemed almost afraid to look any one in the face. Having saluted the gentlemen, he turned to Claverhouse and said, "I bring you news of Lilburn, sir."

"Ha!" exclaimed Claverhouse, springing to his feet; "where is he? Can you tell me that?"

"He is at the house of one Watson (whose wife is ill, and sent for him), some five or six miles from here," was the reply.

"Say you so? Then I think he must change his quarters to night," said Claverhouse, ringing the bell, and sending an

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order to his men to mount instantly for a ride, at the same time buckling on his sword, evidently with the intention of accompanying them.

“Surely you are not going to expose yourself to the storm,” said Sir James, in a tone of remonstrance, for it was now raining heavily.

“I am,” said Claverhouse; “I have been hunting this Lilburn for nearly two years, but he has constantly eluded me: once indeed I had him in custody, but he escaped; but let me catch him once more and he will not do that again, for I will make short work with the scoundrel.”

“But why expose yourself to-night? The dragoons can do the work as well without you.”

“Nay,” replied Claverhouse, “they say, if you want a thing done well, do it yourself; and besides I would willingly ride twice as far on a worse night than this for the pleasure of shooting Lilburn.”

Let us look into the comfortable kitchen of Farmer Watson's house, where a group of children has gathered about the cheerful fireside. Mrs. Watson was very ill, nigh unto death they feared, and her pastor had ventured from his hiding place, and for the first time in many months, entered a house that he might administer to her the consolations of religion. He had spent some time conversing with her: she seemed better, and it was hoped, if kept perfectly free from all excitement, she might yet recover. Cheered by this hope, her family gathered about their minister with smiling faces. How the poor wanderer enjoyed the pleasant homelike scene! and with what a sense of comfort and keen enjoyment he stretched his limbs before the blazing fire, while watching the preparations for the evening meal! It was indeed long past their usual hour; but they had waited for the coming of the minister, who, knowing that Claverhouse and his dragoons, were

in the vicinity, dared not venture from his place of concealment, until darkness had spread her friendly pall over the face of nature. He is now conversing pleasantly with the family, but, hark! mingled with the steady plashing of the rain outside, comes another sound that sends paleness to every cheek, and almost makes the heart stand still with fear!

Yes, it is—it is the dragoons galloping up the road, and in another instant they will surround the house!

There is not a moment to be lost, and springing to the back door, not even waiting to snatch his plaid, Mr. Lilburn rushes out into the rain and darkness, and hastily scaling the fences, flies across the moor for his life.

Favoured by the darkness, which was intense, he succeeded in making his escape. Ere he had run many yards, the soldiers had surrounded the house, and forcing an entrance, they searched every nook and

corner from garret to cellar; even entering the sick room and running their swords through and through the bed on which the invalid lay, lest the object of their search might possibly be hidden in it. Then, stung with rage at the thought of losing the prey which he had believed just within his grasp, Claverhouse ordered his men to destroy or carry off all they could lay their hands on, including the farmer himself. This done, they galloped rapidly back to Conheath.

When Claverhouse had ridden away from Conheath, leaving only the soldier who had been stationed as guard over the prisoner, Jean, the kind-hearted servant girl, watching until satisfied from unmistakable signs that the dragoon was in a deep sleep, softly unbarred the door of the hut and entered with the intention of arousing the prisoner. But he was not asleep, for the pain of his wounds together with the water dripping through the roof, and

wetting him to the skin, had kept him awake. He was speaking in low yet earnest tones, and Jean stood still to listen, wondering much, for the moment, with whom he could be conversing.

“‘Be merciful unto me, O God; for man would swallow me up: he fighting daily oppresseth me,’” were the first words that fell upon her ear.

“Whist!” she whispered to herself “he’s prayin’, the gude man, an’ I maun wait a bit though time’s sae precious.”

“‘Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou Most High. What time I am afraid I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust: I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.’” The voice ceased, and stepping softly towards him, she whispered him to follow her. He readily obeyed, and walking noiselessly along they passed the sleeping guard.

He might have had some difficulty in finding his way out of the grounds in the pitchy darkness, but Jean, perfectly well acquainted with them, guided him along to the moor, where she left him; and from thence an hour's walk brought him to a cavern which had often been his hiding-place, and where he was comparatively safe. Here he found Mr. Lilburn, chilly and hungry, his clothes soaked with the rain, and with no means of making a fire.

They sat down upon the damp floor of the cavern, and related to each other the trials and mercies which they had that day experienced; and grateful for their spared lives they united in offering up fervent thanksgivings to Him who is the Rock, the Fortress, and the Deliverer of his people, and, like Paul and Silas in their prison, they sang praises to God.

“Hist!” exclaimed Adam in an under tone, “I thought I heard a footstep.”

“Dinna be frightened, Adam Griston;

its name but I," replied the wellknown voice of Farmer Watson.

"Ah! Watson, my friend," said Mr. Lilburn, "have they driven you too from your home?"

"Tis even so," replied the poor man, with a burst of grief, "an' worse than that, they hae kilt my wife, an' my pair weans are left mitherless."

"My poor friend, I am grieved indeed to hear it," said the pastor; "but be comforted, she has but gone home to her Lord and you will soon follow."

"But the weans, Mr. Lilburn, the pair mitherless weans left their lane!" sighed the bereaved husband.

"God will take care of them, my friend," said the minister. "And for your further consolation, remember the words of our divine Master, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your

reward in heaven ; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.' ”

“ Aye, Mr. Lilburn, if ane could see it a' in the right light, but it's no sae easy for a puir shortsighted mortal to rejoice, when his heart is sore wi' recent bereavement. It's no every ane that's blessed wi' your strong faith.”

“ Ah, Watson ! ” replied the minister, with a sigh. “ I often feel that it is far easier to preach these things to others, than to practise them myself. But tell me, how did you escape the dragoons ? ”

“ Well sir, they first made strict search for you, even ganging sae far in their cruelty, as to rin their swords through the very bed my puir wife lay on ; (which I mak' nae doubt frightened her to death ;) an' when they couldna find ye, filled wi' rage an' malice, they pillaged the house, carrying off or destroyin' a' they could lay hands on. Then Claverhouse ordered twa o' the stout fellows to tie me hand an'

foot, an' set me on the back o' the horse behind ane o' them; which order they were nowise unwilling to obey, but, bein' more than half drunk, they didna do their wark ower well; an' the road being baith dark an' muddy, I was enabled by the goodness of God to free myself frae the bonds, an' slippin unperceived frae the horse's back, made gude my escape, an' making all haste back to my ain house, came there just in time to see my wife die." He stopped, overcome with emotion, then dashing away the tears, went on, "I kent it wadna be lang afore they wad return to look for me, and waiting only to commend the bairns to the protection o' the Lord, I fled frae the house."

And he was not mistaken, for when (on dismounting at Conheath) Claverhouse discovered his escape, he, with many oaths at their carelessness, ordered half of them to return instantly and recapture him, if possible, either dead or alive. On their

second visit, they found the children and servants in their desolated home, weeping over the corpse of the mother and mistress; but the husband and father was, for the present at least, beyond their reach, and after a thorough search, they departed with many loud and angry threats of what they would do when they caught him again.

“Did you hear about that poor man the dragoons brought here last night?” asked Mabel Jordan, addressing her elder sister, as they stood together at the breakfast room window, while awaiting the coming of their parents and the guest.

“I heard there was a prisoner; but what of that? ’tis nothing unusual, quite an every day occurrence.”

“Nothing,” said Mable, except that Jean has been exciting my commiseration by a most moving account of his sufferings, and his patience under them.” Any further remark upon the subject was prevented

by the entrance of Sir James accompanied by Claverhouse. Mabel shrank behind her sister, as he approached them with his bland "good morning." He saw the movement, but did not notice it by word or look; but turning to Sir James, made some remark about the beauty of the morning, after the storm of the previous night; adding (as they seated themselves at the table) that he must be early in the saddle, as he doubted not that Lilburn was lurking somewhere in the neighbourhood; and he was determined to apprehend him.

"What will you do with your prisoner?" asked Sir James.

"I will make short work with him," he replied with an oath. "Ah, serjeant,"—addressing a dragoon who had just entered the room, "you've come for your orders, I see. That prisoner should be disposed of first; I had thought of taking him on to Edinburgh, but that would be useless trouble, when he may as well be sent to heaven

at once—he'll find better quarters there, maybe. Just take him out on the moor, Warrock, and shoot him at once. 'Twill not be necessary to take more than three or four of the men, and we'll not be so ungallant as to hurt the ladies' nerves by attending to the business nearer the house."

Mabel's cheek had grown white during this savage speech, but the colour returned to it as the dragoon replied in a hesitating tone—"The prisoner, sir, has unfortunately made his escape."

"Is it possible?" cried Claverhouse springing from his seat in surprise and anger, and pouring forth a volley of oaths and curses upon both prisoner and dragoons. "When did this happen, and by whose carelessness? and why are you not out in hot pursuit after him, instead of standing here like a fool? Begone sir! and mount instantly!

"This is too much; am I to be foiled in

this way on all hands? Lilburn and Watson both escaped me last night and now this wretched dog has followed. But I will have them all yet sooner or later." He was pacing angrily up and down the floor, buckling on his sword as he spoke.

Seeing that his rage had spent itself, Sir James now ventured to urge him to finish his repast, saying that a few moments could make but little difference, as there was very little doubt that he would ultimately succeed in recapturing the prisoner. Claverhouse at length yielded and slightly apologizing to the ladies for such an exhibition of temper in their presence, he resumed his seat. In the meantime the soldiers were mounting in the yard below, the sergeant all the time swearing at Mike for falling asleep and allowing his prisoner to escape. Mike stoutly denied that he had slept. "The devil," he said "must have helped the wretch, for he never took his eyes off the door, one moment, the whole blessed night."

“Whist man!” exclaimed Jean, who had come out to listen to their talk, “ye needna be feart that the devil will e’er be helpin ane o’ the Covenanters: he’s mickle mair sense nor that. ’Twad joost be fightin’ against himsel’, an’ wæ a’ ken he wad be mickle mair likely to be helpin’ the likes o’ ye, ane o’ his ain children.”

“Then can ye inform us how he did get oot, lass?” asked one of the troopers.

Jean, who had already shown symptoms of impatience and disgust at the ribald jokes of the soldiers, suddenly turned round and hastily retreated to the kitchen.

Claverhouse rose to depart, and taking leave of his entertainers, offered his hand to Mable in her turn. She drew back involuntarily. “Nay, sir!” she said, “there is blood upon your hands.”

Her mother and sister looked both astonished and frightened, while her father cried in a stern and angry tone — “Mabel! how dare you?”

Claverhouse's face flushed—"You had better look nearer home, miss," said he, as he strode angrily from the room, followed by Sir James, who endeavoured to say something to soothe him.

"I'll tell you what, Sir James said he, (hurrying to the door, and mounting his horse,) "your loyalty is not above suspicion while you allow your daughter to express such sentiments. Good morning, sir," and he rode off without waiting to hear Conheath's reply

"Would you ruin me, Mabel?" exclaimed her father passionately.

"O papa!" she said, "how can you like such a cruel wretch?"

"I do not," he replied, "I hate him cordially; but he would be a dangerous enemy just now; therefore I am excessively displeased with your rudeness to him this morning."

"O papa, how can you take part in persecuting these poor harmless people?"

Did not you yourself once sign the covenant ?”

“Is my own child to cast it in my teeth, that I am an apostate ?” said he angrily. “If I was fool enough once to do such a thing, is that any reason why I should not be wiser now ?”

“Nay papa, I did not mean to say that either; but I meant, that having been once of the same way of thinking, you should have charity for them, hoping that they, too, may some day become wiser; and they surely are very harmless, and why may they not be permitted to have their own opinions on such subjects ?”

“You know nothing at all about it,” replied her father.

CHAPTER III.

“ At the risk of their lives with their flocks they would meet,
In storm and in tempest, in rain and in sleet ;
Where the mist in the moor-glens lay darkest, 'twas there,
In the thick cloud concealed, they assembled for prayer.

In cities the wells of salvation were sealed,
More brightly to burst in the moor and the field,
And the Spirit, which fled from the dwellings of men,
Like a manna-cloud rained round the camp in the glen.”

WORSHIP OF GOD IN A GLEN—CONFIDENCE IN THE HOUR OF TRIAL—SNOW STORM.

It was Sabbath morning in the depth of winter. The snow lay thick, and white upon the ground, and the air was keen and cold, as the Murrays left their cottage to attend a conventicle to be held that morning in a secluded glen among the hills, some two or three miles distant.

“ We maun walk briskly now to keep ourselves warm ; draw your plaids close about ye, bairns an' come along.”

“Oh, it’s sae cauld, mither!” exclaimed little Nanny, her teeth beginning to chatter.

“Never mind, lassie, it will be warmer when the sun gets up a bit,” replied her mother encouragingly.

“We maun keep oursels warm first wi’ walkin’, and then wi’ listenin’ to the preachin’, Nanny,” said Donald.

“Ay, but dinna I wish we could drive the curate frae the kirk, and pit Mr. Lilburn in the pulpit where he belongs, so we wadna hae to stand in the snaw?”

“Is na yon auld Mr. Atchison coming doon the road?” said Jessie.

“It is the gude man himsel’,” replied her mother, looking in the direction designated by Jessie,—

“Now we will hae some profitable discourse, nae doubt, for he is indeed a godly man, an’ ane who ay lives near his God.”

“Gude morning, Mrs. Murray,” was

the salutation of the old gentleman as he joined them; "how's a' wi' ye an' the bairns this mornin'?"

"All weel an' hearty by God's blessing," replied Mrs. Murray, "an' how's a' wi' yersel', neighbour?"

"It is well wi' all o' us, Mrs. Murray; for isna it all appointed by Him who ruleth in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth?"

"Where's William now?" asked Andrew.

"In hiding, lad; he dares na' venture hame, except whiles under cover o' the night to snatch a few moments with his wife an' bairns."

"Ye maun be in much fear whiles on his account, now that the dragoons are scouring the country sae constantly," said Mrs. Murray.

"Nae doubt, friend; an yet I'm no sae troubled as ye might suppose, for I ken he's in the Lord's keeping, an' I hae lang

had reason to believe my son ready for a sudden call."

"And are ye no feart on your ain account, Mr. Atchison?" asked Jessie.

"No, lass, I canna say that I am, for I ken weel that not a hair o' my head can fall to the ground without my Father's permission. An' then, ye ken, Jessie, lass, I'm an auld man, an' maun be drawing near to the end o' my pilgrimage, an' what matter if man's cruelty *should* cut it short a few days? It wad but send me hame the sooner, an' wad it not be an honour an' a privilege to shed my blood in my blessed Master's quarrel?"

They walked on a few moments in silence, occupied with their own thoughts. The sun rose, and, though soon obscured by clouds, for a time shone brightly on the snow-covered hills and valleys.

"How lovely! how pure and white the snow looks!" said Jessie; "it reminds me of the white robes that were given unto

the souls under the altar, who had been slain for the word of God, and the testimony which they held."

"Ay," said her aged friend; "but white and glistening as this snow is, it it na half sae pure and spotless, sae white and glorious as the robe of Christ's righteousness, in which all His saints shall be clothed. Ah! bairns, bairns, dinna be carefu' for onything but that ye may be found at the last clothed in that glorious garment. Dinna shrink from suffering now the loss of all things, even life itself, but see to it that ye count all things but loss that ye may win Christ, and be found in Him without spot an' blameless. Oh the wondrous, the amazing love of Christ; Oh the condescending love of God in choosing such an one as I, a vile worm o' the dust, to be an heir of glory! Truly it couldna hae been for onything gude or deserving in me, but of His own unmerited love and mercy; and truly that is a blessed

thought, an unspeakable comfort, for did it depend on my choice—the choice o' a fickle, changeable mortal—what security could I hae? But thanks to His blessed an' holy name, it disna rest on that, but on the will of the unchangeable Jehovah, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow o' turning. An' why, I often say to mysel', why, John Atchison, should He hae chosen you, who are by nature no better than the very vilest and bloodiest o' our persecutors?"

With such discourse as this they beguiled the tediousness of the way, until at length they reached the place appointed for the meeting. They were early, yet a number were there before them. Pale, careworn-looking men, most of them, men who looked as if inured to hardships, and yet bearing much of cheerful resignation in their countenances. Many warm greetings were exchanged, for there was much of Christian, brotherly love among these

persecuted children of God, as is ever the case with the true followers of Christ. Mr. Atchison grasped the hand of the minister, saying "May the Lord be praised, Mr. Lilburn, that you have still escaped out o' the snare o' the fowler, and that I may hope to hear His word proclaimed by your mouth once more!"

"Yes," replied Mr. Lilburn, "the Lord has mercifully preserved to me thus far my life and liberty, though I have been in perils oft, and my enemies have laid many snares for me." He then turned to Andrew, and shaking him heartily by the hand, said, "I am truly rejoiced, Andrew, my lad, to see you treading in the steps of your good father, who, I doubt not, is now a saint in heaven. Press on, my son, toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Ay, press forward towards that prize, though your way should lie through seas of blood; but if you would win it, trust not in your own

strength, but gird on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day. And you Jessie, and wee Nanny, and little Donald, I would say the same to you, 'Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness;' seek the Lord now in the morning of your days, and look to Him for strength to follow Him through good and evil report."

Mrs. Murray was speaking to John Watson, who stood pale and sad near Mr. Lilburn. "Ah! John, man, how are ye the day?" she said, "an' how are the puir bairns, left their lane?" He shook his head mournfully—"Tis but a sad house they hae made o' it, Claverhouse and his bluidy crew," he said, with a heavy sigh. "My heart is sore, sore whiles to think I canna be wi' my puir mitherless weans, an' how things are a' ganging to wreck an' ruin about the place."

"It is sad indeed, an' my heart bleeds for ye, but ye maun remember it is the

Lord's hand, though He has used these cruel an' bloody men as His sword, an' ye maun endeavour to submit. But, John, are na ye far better aff e'en now, than our friend Allan Houston, he frae whom they hae taken both wife an' bairns, leaving him scarce a tie to earth?"

"Na, na, Mrs. Murray," said Allan, a pale, thin, wearied-looking man, but with a countenance full of cheerful, hopeful resignation, "I wadna change wi' my friend John; for are na my treasures safe now in *His* keeping—safe from all sin, all care, all sorrow and suffering? an' what have I to do but to bide my time, seeking to glorify Him on the earth, until it is His will to take me hame to glory, whether it be by disease or by the hand o' violence? Ay! I'm a happy man, one to be envied rather than pitied, Mrs. Murray; for what greater happiness can there be, than to be able to say with the whole heart, Thy will, not mine be done?"

Jessie was looking about upon the people, but turned shudderingly away, as her eye fell upon a man seated near Allan Houston. It was a face even paler than any of the others,—a feeble, broken-down-looking man he was, with a distressing cough; but it was not these things which caused Jessie's shudder, but the fact that his ears had both been cut away close to his head. She looked inquiringly at Andrew.

“The very same,” said he, nodding, “it is poor Adam Griston. It pleased the Lord to suffer him to escape frae his enemies that night, an' he has been in hiding ever since—he and Mr. Lilburn an' John Watson and Allan Houston, sometimes altogether and sometimes separately, as seemed safest at the time.”

“Which is Allan, Andrew?” asked his sister.

“That tall, pale man that's speaking to mither now, with such a bright, happy

look on his face; he maun be speaking o' the better land, I think, for that same look o' joy aye comes to his countenance when that is the theme o' his discourse. Ye mind, Jessie, how his wife was shot down at a conventicle some two or three years ago, and his bairns soon after frightened into a fever, that laid them a' in the grave after a few weeks' suffering, by the brutal soldiers, who threatened to shoot them a' because they wadna reveal their father's hiding place."

"Puir man!" said Jessie with a sigh. "Brither, I am whiles sorely tempted to hatred o' these bluidthirsty men that are aye hunting the Lord's people frae place to place, an' shooting them down as though they were nae mair nor the wild beast o' the forest."

"Na, Jessie, we maunna hate nor wish them ill; we maunna do them harm save in our ain lawful self-defence. Let us forgive and pray for them, as ye mind our

blessed Lord did for His murderers. 'Tis only by the sovereign, unmerited grace o' God, (as auld Mr Atchison remarked this mornin',) that ony o' us are made to differ."

"Look at our minister, brither," said Jessie, "how he seems to hae a kind word an' look for all; an' see wi' what looks o' love an' reverence they all regard him, men, women, an' bairns."

"Ay, sister, an' weel may they, for he is a godly man, an' one mighty in the Scriptures." "How I wad like to see him in his ain manse, comfortably housed, an' nae mair compelled to hide for his life in the dens an' caves o' the earth?"

"Ay, and in his ain kirk an' pulpit," said Andrew. "An' it may be that you and I may live to see that day, but I hae small hopes o't, for they say that the bluidy Claverhouse has sworn to wet the heath ere lang wi' his bluid."

Jessie shuddered—"Nae doubt," said

she, "his cruelty will go that length if he be permitted. But I think they maun make haste if they wad hae the pleasure o' shootin' puir Adam Griston; he canna be lang for this world; he has a terrible cough, puir man! an' I think it maun be hard indeed for ane in his condition to sleep i' the moss hags, or on the damp, hard floor o' a cave."

"Nae doubt, Jessie, but he daersna enter a house. See, Jessie, there's William Atchison just coming up! Ah, how glad he and his auld father are to meet once mair! I maun speak to William, he was aye kind to me when I was a wean; puir fellow! he looks ten years aulder than when I saw him last. It maun be a sore trial to him as weel as ithers to be separated frae hame and wife and bairns. Puir John Watson! he hasna gotten ower his wife's death, an' being obliged to leave the bairns their lane."

"I hae been thinking," said Jessie,

“what a blessed time it will be when we all get hame to heaven, for there, there will be nae fear o’ separation to mar the joy.”

“We’re like to hae a storm the day, I fear,” said Andrew, looking at the clouds.

“I fear so, but if we have no worse disturbance, we may be truly thankful,” said William Atchison, who had come up to them, as Andrew made his last remark.

“How do you do, my dear young friend, and you too, Jessie; you have grown, as have the younger bairns also, since I saw you last.”

“I am rejoiced to meet you, William,” said Andrew, “but do you say we have reason to fear interruption to-day?”

“It is reported that the dragoons are in the neighbourhood, but there remains some doubt of the truth o’ the report, an’ the decision is that we proceed with our meeting.”

“See!” said little Nanny, “the minister is opening the Bible.” There had been little groups gathered here and there

conversing in subdued yet earnest tones ; but now all was instantly hushed and silent, as the minister opened the word of God, and read aloud from its sacred pages. The text that day was, " Behold I come quickly."

A searching sermon, drawing clearly and closely the line of separation between the servant of God, and him who serves Him not : exhorting the former to hold fast that which he had, not looking back, but going continually from strength to strength, pressing toward the mark, looking unto Jesus, and casting the world and all its allurements behind his back ; and entreating the latter, by every motive of gratitude and fear, to forsake his evil ways, and " turn unto the Lord." Long before the conclusion of the services, the threatened storm had burst upon their heads, the wind howled about them, and the snow fell thick and fast ; but they were all unheeded by the earnest worshippers, who bent their

heads to the blast and stood immovable there, eagerly drinking in the words of eternal life, so sweet to their taste.

To such a height had the rage, enmity, and hatred of their enemies risen, that it was seldom indeed, that these persecuted disciples of Jesus could meet to speak of His love and encourage each other by the way; very sweet and precious to them seemed the hours spent in this manner, and to secure the enjoyment of such a privilege they were ready to brave all danger, even death itself; and not unfrequently did it happen that their hiding places were discovered by the dragoons, their meetings hastily dispersed, and one and another called upon to seal their testimony with their blood. But this day they were undisturbed save by the war of the elements, to which they probably owed their exemption from the visits of the soldiery. As the storm burst upon them, they drew closer together, and the minister

raised his voice, that it might reach them above the howling of the tempest. But at length the sermon, the prayers, and the songs of praise were finished, and the storm having somewhat abated, they dispersed to their several homes or hiding places. The drifting snow had rendered the roads almost impassable in some places, and it was a work of time and much labour for our friends to retrace their steps. Andrew went first to break the path, and frequently returned to carry little Nanny over the worst places. It was near the close of the day, when, wearied and spent with fatigue, and benumbed with the cold, they at length reached their own cottage door. A fire was quickly kindled, and the simple evening meal prepared and eaten; then gathering around the fire, they spent their sabbath evening in a manner well suited to the sacred uses of the time; the mother first catechizing her children, now and then

pausing to give a simple explanation to bring the truth down to the comprehension of the little ones, or to make some application of it to their own peculiar circumstances.

Then they conversed about the sermon, of which Donald and Nanny could remember the greater part, not criticisingly, but as those who had been profited, and were treasuring up the truth in their hearts, purposing to bring their lives into conformity to it. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee," says the Psalmist, and such seemed to be the language of their hearts. In such exercises, in studying God's word, in singing psalms of praise, and in prayer, they passed the closing hours of the holy day; and then trusting to the protection of Him, without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, they sought their pillows and laid them down to sleep peacefully until the morning.

CHAPTER IV.

——“ In solitudes like these
Thy persecuted children, Scotia, foiled
A tyrant and a bigot's bloody laws.
Here, leaning on his spear,
The lyart veteran heard the word of God,
By Cameron thundered, or by Renwick poured
In gentle streams ; then rose the long, the loud
Acclaim of praise. The wheeling plover ceased
His plaint, the solitary place was glad,
And on the distant cairn the watcher's ear
Caught doubtfully at times the breeze-borne note.”

MURDER OF ADAM GRISTON—LITTLE NANNY—
VISIT OF THE SOLDIERS—THEIR VIOLENCE—
ARRIVAL OF NANNY'S MOTHER.

We will pass over several months ; months of bitter trial and suffering to very many of God's dear children, exposed as they were to all the miseries, that the hellish rage and malice of their enemies could inflict. Months they were during which many, very many, were the acts of

injustice, cruelty, and bloodshed set down by the Recording Angel in God's Book of Remembrance. Adam Griston had gained the martyr's crown. Wearied and worn with privation and disease, too ill to flee, he was taken from his bed and shot by the merciless dragoons. What mattered it to him? He was ready to depart and be with Christ, which truly was far better than wandering on the hills and moorlands, hungry, cold, and weary. And it was but one sharp pang, instead of days of lingering pain. John Watson, too, had watered the heath with his blood; and his children now deprived, by the cruelty of the persecutors, of both parents, were cast houseless and homeless upon the world alone, and yet not alone, for had they not the promise of a covenant keeping God—"I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee?" Mr. Lilburn and Allan Houston had thus far escaped the hands of their persecutors, and were yet in hiding, but

they were in hourly peril, constant search being made for them.

It was a lovely Sabbath morning in sweet balmy June. A conventicle was to be held some five or six miles distant, and Mrs. Murray, Andrew, and Jessie, were preparing to set out to attend it. Donald begged to go too, but little Nanny must remain at home, as the walk would be entirely beyond her strength; for she had not fully recovered her strength, since an attack of illness brought on by exposure on the day mentioned in the last chapter; and having always been a delicate child, she was quite unable to make such an exertion.

“Are ye not afraid to stay alone, Nanny dear?” asked her mother. A neighbour had told them the night before that the dragoons had left the vicinity for the present, so Nanny answered, “No, mither, I’m not afraid, I dinna think the soldiers will come; an’ if they should, you could

not prevent them frae harming me, even if you were here."

"Dinna ye wish Donald to stay wi' ye?"

"No, mither, I wad rather he wad gang to hear the preachin'. Ye ken I hae the Bible to read, an' I'll no be lonesome.' It was yet early morning when they set out, a lovely morning, everything looked fresh and green, the dewdrops sparkled in the sunbeams, and the air was filled with fragrance and the songs of birds. It was in a lovely little glen, almost entirely shut in by hills, that these disciples of Christ met that day to listen to the preaching of His word, and also to obey His dying command, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Sentinels were stationed on the surrounding hills, to give notice in case the dragoons should come in sight. The minister took his stand on a large stone which raised him somewhat above his audience, and the services began.

It was a precious season to many, for to most of them, it had been a long, long time since they had been permitted to sit down to the table of their Lord. The services were more lengthy than usual, and the sun had long passed the meridian ere they were concluded. They were singing the last psalm, when the alarm was given that the dragoons were in sight. The people quickly dispersed, scattering in all directions. The soldiers divided into several parties, but could by no means pursue all. Mr. Atchison and the Murrays were among the number of those who escaped pursuit, and were soon entirely out of sight or sound of their enemies. Mr. Atchison had become old and feeble, and, overcome with fatigue, (for the distance was long, and they had fled rapidly,) he said to Andrew, "Stay a bit, lad, I maun sit doon an' rest, for I'm no sae young as I was once." They accordingly sat down on the grass by the side of a placid stream-

let; but Mrs. Murray, saying, Nanny had already been left alone too long, left them, and hurried on.

“Weel, Andrew,” said the old man, “it has pleased the Lord that you and I should once more, ’scape the hands o’ the persecutors; but we dinna ken, laddie, how soon our turn may come, therefore it behoves us to keep our lamps trimmed and our lights burning.”

“Indeed, Mr. Atchison, that is very true,” replied Andrew; “and we hae had solemn warnings this day, frae the mouth o’ God’s ministers, to look to our ways and examine our hearts, and to make our calling and election sure.”

“These are times that try men’s souls,” said the old man; “God seems in these days to be sifting the chaff from among the wheat. This has been a long persecution, Andrew, (twenty-five years has it lasted,) an’ yet there seems nae prospect o’ relief, the clouds do but gather thicker

and blacker above our heads; but we ken there is Ane at the helm, who winna suffer the ship to be wrecked, but assuredly gie her strength to outride the storm. I'm an auld man, Andrew, and I winna live to see it, but should ye 'scape the persecutors, (and ye may)"—

"Ye're no sae auld but ye may live some years yet, Mr. Atchison," said Andrew.

"Nay, Andrew, I hae seen mair nor my three score years and ten, an' I feel that it winna be lang till I'm called away; but, thanks be to God, I am ready, at whatever hour my Lord shall call. It is all peace and quietness—'The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. Their peace shall be like a river!' See that stream sae broad and deep, flowing sae gently and quietly along. Ay! '*their peace shall be like a river.*' For thirty years I hae kent that I was

ane o' the Lord's chosen anes, and hae been made to rejoice in the light o' His countenance. My sins and short-comings hae been many, very many and grievous, but He has forgiven them all, an' washed them away in Jesus's blood. I hae been a great, a *vile* sinner, but He is a great an' almighty Saviour; His blood cleanseth from *all* sin, and nane can be sae black that he canna be washed white in that precious blood. Yea, He has been made of God unto me, wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. My ain righteousnesses are but as filthy rags, but His is a robe of spotless white."

"I fear," said Andrew after a pause, "that some of our brethren have sealed their testimony this day with their blood."

"Ay, lad, 'tis more than likely, but if so, they hae but gane frae His table on earth to sit down with Him at the marriage supper o' the Lamb,—an' my

heart tells me, I will meet them there ere lang."

We will go back to Nanny, whom we left alone in the cottage when the rest of the family set out for the conventicle. She stood at the door looking after them, until they were quite out of sight; then closing and fastening it, she sat down by the window, and, opening the large family Bible, which lay on the table before her, she was soon so absorbed in the interest of its most beautiful stories, that her loneliness was quite forgotten. Occasionally she paused to think of what she had been reading, or to kneel down and pray in her own simple, childlike words, to be cleansed from sin and made like to the Saviour, whom that blessed book described; and sometimes she sang in her low, soft tone a psalm suited to her feelings. In this manner she passed the day, until the sun began to descend toward the western

horizon, and the lengthening shadows made her hope her friends would soon return. But as she looks from the window, she spies the dreaded dragoons, evidently advancing toward the house; she sprang from the window, her little heart beating fast and loud, and glanced about for a hiding place, but there was none that seemed available, and in another instant, the unwelcome intruders were thundering at the door. For a moment she hesitated and then frightened at their threats, undid the fastenings with trembling hands, and in a voice quivering with affright, asked what they would have.

“Is your father at hame, little lass? He must guide us to the conventicle;” asked one of the troopers.

“No, he is na here, for he died long since, but mither says he’s at hame in heaven.”

“And where’s your mither?”

“She’s no at hame the day,” said Nanny trembling.

“That’s not answering my question,” said her interrogator, with an oath.

“Tell me where she is this instant, or by —— I’ll shoot you.” “Is there no one in the house but you?” asked another of the troopers.

“Nane but God,” said the child solemnly; an’ if ye dinna believe me, ye may joost look for yersels.”

The soldiers had heard that a conventicle was to be held that day somewhere in that neighbourhood, but did not know exactly where, and had called at the cottage in hope of finding some one there who could guide them to the place. They were disappointed at finding only the little girl at home, and after a thorough search of the premises, to satisfy themselves that she really was entirely alone, they again commenced questioning her; having first consulted together in a low tone, as to the best mode of eliciting from her the information they desired.

“So your mither and the rest hae all gane to the conventicle, an’ left you alone, eh?” said one of them.

“Wha telt ye sae?” was Nanny’s rejoinder.

“Oh! do you think we dinna ken that Covenanters never gang visiting o’ Sundays?” “Come, come,” said another “we know very well that they’ve gone to a conventicle; and now you must tell us where it is.”

“I canna do it,” replied the little girl resolutely.

“Ye dinna ken?” asked the first speaker.

“I didna say that. I wadna tell a lie for a’ the world,” said Nanny; “but I winna tell ye, for I ken well enough what ye wad do if ye kent it.”

“And what’s that, eh?”

“Ye wad gang there an’ kill the minister, an’ a’ the folk, or pit them in prison, if ye should be permitted.”

“An’ do ye ken what we’ll do, if ye dinna tell us?” exclaimed the dragoon, fiercely catching her by the arm with a grasp, that almost made her scream with pain.

“I ken I’m in the Lord’s keeping, an’ ye canna harm a hair o’ my head without his will,” she replied firmly, but her cheek became deadly pale as she spoke.

“We’ll soon see that,” said the soldier, swearing a fearful oath and dragging her out of the house. “Now speak an’ tell all you know, or in ten minutes we’ll scatter your brains over the ground.”

She looked up imploringly into the man’s face, but there was no mercy there; she turned to his comrades, their faces were equally hard and pitiless. Claspng her hands, she cried in her agony to Him whose ear is ever open to the cry of His children, who is ever merciful and mighty to save; but she asked not life, but strength to die. They tied her hands behind her,

made her kneel on the ground, and placed two of their number a few paces in front of her with their pieces levelled at her breast; then again demanded, "Will you tell!" adding, "Speak instantly, or we will fire."

There was a moment's silence. The poor, helpless child cast one glance around at the blue sunny sky, the fresh green grass, the flowers, the waving trees, and at the home of her childhood. Could she leave them all, and her mother, her brothers, and sister,—could she die without even one farewell word to them? And how distinctly all the sweet rural sounds came to her ear—the distant bleating of a sheep, the twittering of the little birds, the sighing of the wind in the trees, and the hum of the bee returning to its hive laden with sweets! Oh, had earth ever looked so lovely, and must she so young and innocent submit to a cruel death, while all around her was so full of life and beauty?

It cost her a bitter pang, but life could not be bought at a price so fearful.

“Speak!” repeated the dragoon fiercely, “or by — you shall die, this instant.”

“I canna,” she replied with pale and trembling lips.

Instantly there was a loud, quick report, and Nanny fell forward with her face upon the ground.

“You’ve killed her sure enough!” exclaimed one of the dragoons, running up to the prostrate child, as the smoke cleared away; and untying her hands, he turned her over. She lay still, pale and cold, showing no signs of life—“You’ve killed her!” he repeated.

“We fired over her head,” said one of those addressed.

“Yes, but she’s dead o’ fright.”

“Weel man there’s nae harm done;” replied the other, with a savage laugh, “we’ve only sent her to heaven.”

Untroubled, to all appearance, with any

feelings of pity or remorse, they mounted their horses and galloped away, taking unfortunately the right direction for reaching the conventicle; and when near the spot were apprised of that fact by the sound of the singing of the last psalm, borne to their ears by the evening breeze. The alarm however was given in time for almost all to make their escape. Nanny lay for some time entirely insensible, but gradually consciousness returned. Upon opening her eyes, she felt as if waking from some dreadful dream, and it was some minutes before she was able to recall the occurrences of the day; but when she did, she glanced fearfully around, and not seeing any one near, crept as quickly as her failing strength would permit to the back of the house, where she concealed herself in a clump of bushes. She lay in her hiding place—starting and trembling at every sound—until she heard her mother's voice, calling in tones of distress

and affright, "Nanny! Nanny! my bairn, my bonnie bairn, where are ye?"

"Here mither, here," she cried running to meet her. Her mother caught her in her arms and pressed her to her bosom.

"My precious child, my bonnie bairn, where hae ye been? I was sorely frightened when I missed ye; but what is the matter wi' ye, darlin? ye look like death." Nanny clung sobbing to her neck.

"O mither, mither!" she said; "I thought I was kilt. They hae been here, the bluidy sodgers, an' wad hae me tell where ye were gane, an' where was the conventicle; an' when I wadna do't, they made me kneel down on the turf, an' they shot, an' I thought surely I was kilt, an' I kent naething mair, till they were all gone away; an' I opened my een an' kent I was na kilt, but just lying alone on the sod."

"The wicked, bluidy wretches!" exclaimed Donald, clenching his fists. "I

wish I was a man, an' I wad shoot every ane o' them!"

"Donald! Donald! ye are speakin' sinful words," said his mother. "Ye maunna talk sae, my child, for didna our blessed Lord command us to forgive our enemies, an' pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us?"

"I canna do't, mither; an' I'm sure they deserve shootin' for frightening puir wee Nanny sae sairly."

"Na, na, Donald, I wadna harm ae hair o' their heads," said Nanny. Poor Nanny's nervous system never recovered the shock it had that day received, and from that time until her death she drooped visibly.

CHAPTER V.

“ If only thou art mine—
Though like the ivy torn from parent tree
My earthly ties are severed, yet round thee
My arms secure I twine.”

“ I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust.” Ps. xci. 2.

THE PATH OF DUTY—THE CONDESCENSION OF
CHRIST—ANDREW MURRAY—PRAYER IN A CAVE
—DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL.

“THE Lord protect ye, my son, an’ bring ye hame again in safety. I never see ye cross the door-stane but the thought comes, like a stab to my heart, that I may na see ye again till I find ye a bluidy corpse upon the heath.”

“Dinna fear for me, mither dear, ye ken that I am i’ the path o’ duty; an’ ye mind how often ye hae telt me that while there, I hae naething to fear. He winna

suffer aught to befall me, but what shall be for His ain glory, an' my eternal good."

"Ay, my bairn, ye're right; an' should ye meet wi' the bluidy crew, dinna take the test; ye ken weel your mither wad sooner, far sooner help to lay the son she has aye looked upon as the staff o' her auld age, in the cauld grave, than see him prove false to his covenant vows."

"Ay, mither, an' God helping me, I wad sooner shed the last drop o' my heart's bluid," replied Andrew, as he turned from the door.

"Father in heaven, protect him," ejaculated the mother, following with her eyes the retreating form of her son, till it was lost in the darkness. "In the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, till these calamities be over past," she murmured; and closing the door, she returned to her work. There was no moon, but the sky was clear, and the stars shone brightly, giving sufficient light for one so

thoroughly acquainted with the country as Andrew Murray. Silently he wended his solitary way across the moor, on his errand of mercy; now pausing, as some distant sound met his ear, to listen for the coming of the ever-dreaded dragoons, and anon hurrying on his way.

In a damp, dark cavern sat two men; they had kindled a little fire of peat, (though they felt that they were running some risk of discovery in so doing,) for it was now late in the autumn; the air without was frosty, and within very damp and cold. They have drawn close to the fire, and as the light falls upon their faces, we may recognize in their wan and haggard features, marked with the lines of hunger and physical suffering, yet radiant with that heavenly peace which the world can neither give nor take away, our old friends Mr. Lilburn and Allan Houston. Near them on a bed of dried grass and

leaves, with his plaid wrapped about him, lies another, seemingly buried in profound slumber.

“Poor William is worn out,” said Mr. Lilburn, “he sleeps soundly. The Lord has been merciful indeed, both to him and to us, in permitting him to escape in so wonderful a manner this day, from his blood-thirsty foes.”

“Ay, we have all had many wonderful deliverances,” replied Allan; “but we canna look to escape much longer from our pursuers. I was thinking e’en now o’ the wonderfu’ dealings of God wi’ me. He has taken frae me my earthly possessions, my wife an’ bairns, but He has left me Himself, an’ what need I mair? Truly naething, naething: my cup o’ happiness is sae full, I could sing for very joy o’ heart.”

“And your joy no man taketh from you,” said Mr. Lilburn.

“Nay; these words hae been sounding

in my ears, and hae been sweet as manna to my taste, all the day long."

"Oh! let us count it all joy that we are thus tried with afflictions and persecutions," said Mr. Lilburn. "That Christ has accounted us worthy, not only to believe on His name, but also to suffer shame for His sake. 'Unto Him that loved us and washed us in His own blood.' Oh! what amazing love and condescension! That a king should take a vile and filthy beggar, and wash and clothe him in pure raiment, would be a strange condescension; but that *He* who is the King of kings should thus take pity on those who were not only vile and filthy beggars, but even enemies, and that He should wash away their filth in His own blood, and clothe them in the robes of His own righteousness, is so utterly astonishing, that nothing but the word of God itself could make me believe it. When I think, Allan, of those who have gone before, now freed from sin,

and in the immediate presence of their Redeemer, I could find it in my heart to welcome the bullet or the rope that would send me there; but when I remember my poor suffering people, scattered as sheep without a shepherd, I would fain endure those cares and toils a little longer for their sakes."

"'Tis well the choice is na wi' us, Mr. Lilburn," said Allan—"I ken we wad seldom tak' what wad be best for oursels or others; an' I can truly say, if the Lord were pleased to give me the choice, I wad freely an' gladly put it back in His hands again. Hark! Mr. Lilburn, what was that?" He put out his hand as he spoke and shook the sleeper, who opened his eyes and looked inquiringly at his companions. There was a sound of approaching footsteps—was it friend or foe? They knew not; but rising to their feet, they stood awaiting the approach of the intruder, in profound silence. On each face

was a look of calm, peaceful readiness to meet the worst, while every heart was lifted in prayer for strength. But a few seconds had elapsed since the first alarm, ere the stranger entered the cave, and approaching the group, he threw back his plaid, shewing the features of Andrew Murray. "You are welcome, my son," said Mr. Lilburn, extending his hand; "thrice welcome if you come as the bearer of good tidings."

"Nay, Mr. Lilburn," replied Andrew, cordially returning the salutation; "things do but grow worse, if that were possible. There is scarce a day, that disna bring us news of some fresh outrage upon the liberties of Scotland, some new defection, or some bluidy murder o' the Lord's persecuted flock."

"Ay, my son, these are the times that try men's souls;—'And let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.'"

“Ah, Allan, you are still with us,” said Andrew, pressing his friend’s hand.

“Yes, Andrew, I am still waiting in almost hourly expectation of my summons; but my wanderings are not yet over, though when I heard your approach, I thought it might be they were.”

“Andrew,” said William Atchison, “have ye seen ony o’ my friends lately? Can ye give me some news o’ my auld father, an’ o’ my wife an’ bairns?”

“You here too, William!” said Andrew, “I am glad to see ye, an’ I wad be blythe to bring ye news o’ your dear ones, but I haena seen them for more than a fortnight.”

“An’ how was my father then, Andrew? Puir auld man! I thought the last time I ventured hame, he seemed to be failing fast.”

“I think, mysel’, he is drawing near his hame,” replied Andrew; “but William, dinna grieve, ye ken the righteous is taken

away frae the evil to come, an' nane o' us has sae much comfort in these days, that we should wish to cleave to this world. And mair nor that, I dinna think he will go sae soon, but ye may be called before him, for we all feel that our life hangs by a brittle thread in these troublous times."

"Ay, my son, that is true at all times, and more especially now, when Satan's emissaries are let loose to work their will upon the church of God," said Mr. Lilburn; "'therefore let us give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.' 'Keeping our hearts with all diligence, let us strive to make our calling and election sure.' My friends, the church of Christ is now called to pass through deep waters; many are leaving the Saviour, loving this present world, and caring more for the praise of men than for the praise of God; and to each one of us does Jesus say, 'Will ye also go away?' Oh! shall

we not reply as Peter did—‘Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life,’ ‘For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.’ Keep near to Christ, for there only can you find safety. ‘Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.’ Beware, Oh, beware of trusting in your own strength. I have known many, who for a time seemed to run well, and to be very zealous, of whom I now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, and the most bitter persecutors of His church; therefore would I again repeat the Apostle’s warning: ‘Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.’ Truly, my friends, I can testify that the presence of Christ, His love shed abroad in the heart, can supply the want

of all earthly good ; yea, that the possession of the whole world with all it calls good, could not give me half the joy, the *unutterable* peace, that I a poor outcast wanderer, in hourly danger of a violent death, now feel. Oh ! Jesus is near and precious to my soul. I have been a great sinner, but Jesus is a great Saviour. His blood can cleanse from all sin. He has forgiven my sins and clothed me with His righteousness, and now my conscience is as much at ease as if I had never sinned."

"Yes, Mr. Lilburn, both you and I can testify that He is faithful to His promises ; we hae enjoyed much o' His presence in our wanderings ; a few more days of sorrow and care, of pain and weariness and want, and we shall be at rest. For ever with the Lord : to go no more out for ever ! Oh ! there is joy, there is bliss in that thought."

"I am forgetting my errand," said

Andrew ; “I have brought food, and you look to be sorely in need of it.”

“You are na very far wrong, Andrew,” said William, “for my friends have fasted many hours, and I have travelled many a weary mile the day, escaping for my life.”

The first faint streak of dawn could scarcely be discerned, and many stars were yet twinkling in the sky, as Andrew left the cave, where the greater part of the night had been spent, in the study of God’s word, in conversing of its teachings, and in prayer. As he walked rapidly onward, he watched the stars setting one by one ; the east grew bright, and at length the sun arose in unclouded splendour, shedding a flood of light over hill and valley. Every blade of grass, and every sprig of heather was covered with frost-work, which glittered like diamonds in the sunlight. “The heavens declare the glory of God : and the firmament showeth His handy work. Day unto day

uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun; which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof:”—repeated Andrew, as he stood still for a moment to gaze upon the glorious scene. “What a lovely place this world wad be, were it not for the wickedness an’ cruelty o’ man!”

Again he went on his way, and ere long found himself at old Mr. Atchison’s door. It was a neat, comfortable cottage, and though a great proportion of the worldly goods of its inmates had been carried off by the lawless soldiery, in the several visits

they had paid while searching for the old man's son, William, there was yet an air of great neatness and thrift about the place. The family were evidently astir, though it was yet early; for the smoke curled from the chimney, and the cow had been milked, and was quietly finishing her morning meal. But none of the inmates were to be seen, and as Andrew reached the closed door, he paused to listen. He had thought while yet at a distance that he heard the sound of singing, and now the accents of prayer fell upon his ear. The tones of the old man's voice were low and tremulous; but there was a solemn earnestness, a depth of devotion, as he offered up his confessions, his praises, and petitions, which could not have come from the lips only. Andrew waited until the voice had ceased, and the sounds within told him that the family had returned to their several employments, then knocked for admittance.

“Is it you, Andrew Murray? ye’re kindly welcome,” said Sarah Atchison, as, on opening the door, she perceived who her visitor was. “Walk in, laddie, the auld gudeman will be blythe to see ye.” The old man was seated in his arm-chair by the fire, with the big family Bible open before him, reading in that book, which he loved above all earthly possessions.

“Ah, Andrew my lad,” he said, rising and shaking his visitor warmly by the hand, “gude mornin’ to ye. Sit down, laddie, sit down, ye maun stay a bit an’ take your breakfast wi’ us. But sit ye down, an’ let us have a bit talk of a’ the gude things contained in this blessed Book.”

“I have brought news frae your son William,” said Andrew.

“And is he alive and weel, laddie?” asked the father, his voice trembling with emotion. The children crowded about him, and the wife ceased her preparations

for the morning repast, and stood listening with the tears streaming down her cheeks; while Andrew gave an account of the hot pursuit of the dragoons the preceding day, and William's narrow escape from them, and also of the sufferings and privations he and his companions were enduring.

“Blessed be God for this deliverance of my son from the hands of his bluidthirsty persecutors!” exclaimed the aged man, wiping his eyes, as Andrew concluded his narrative. “Truly may he say with the Psalmist: ‘He delivereth me from mine enemies; yea Thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me; Thou hast delivered me from the violent man.’ It has aye been my petition, that my son William may cleave close to Christ, and not scare at the cross because of suffering! and I wad exhort you to the same, Andrew, for He never sends any a warfare at their own charges, but He aye makes His yoke

easy and His burden light, and never lays a grain weight more of affliction upon His people than they are able to bear, for He always gives them sufficient strength to carry them through; and I wadna ask for my bairns, (dear though they are, as my ain soul,) that they might escape trials and crosses in this life, but rather that they may fulfil the end of their being—glorify God and enjoy Him for ever; and, blessed be His holy name! I hae gude reason to hope that all who are auld enough to ken the way of salvation, hae been gathered into the fold of the Good Shepherd.” The old man was resting both hands upon the top of his staff, and supporting his chin upon them: and though the tears, called forth by the recital of his son’s sufferings, were still undried upon his cheek, his face shone with such a beaming look of happiness, as a king might have envied. There was a pause, during which the old man’s lips moved as if in prayer,

then turning to Andrew he said—"Weel, laddie, an' how is a' wi' your mither an' the bairns?"

"All weel enough, thank ye, except puir, wee Nanny; she has aye been weak and ailing since the sad fright she got wi' the soldiers last June."

"Puir lassie! I dinna ken how they could find it in their hearts to harm a hair o' her head—the winsome wee thing."

"Ye're no sae strong yoursel', Mr. Atchison, as ye once were," said Andrew, "William seems sorely troubled whiles about you."

"No, no, Andrew, ye're not far wrong there; I feel mysel' that I am on the down hill o' life, an' my rest canna be far off; but it is is naething to be grieved or sad about. To me, to live is Christ, an' to die is gain, an' it has been mony years since I doubted of my interest in Him. All the days of my appointed time will I wait, and I am ready to gang, whenever

He shall call. Oh ; 'tis a sweet, a blessed thing, to leave *all* in His hands, an' feel that I dinna need to be troubled about ony thing, great or small !”

CHAPTER VI.

“ If only thou art mine,
Come persecution, come contempt and shame,
All hail to them, when coming in thy name,
When thou hast made me thine.

If only thou art mine,
Then welcome death, though sharp the anguish be,
For then, unworthy though I am, in thee,
I rise to bliss divine.”

CONTINUED PERSECUTION—ENCOURAGING WORDS
—PURSUIT OF MR. LILBURN—A DEATH BED
SCENE—MORE TRIALS—

Several months had passed away since Andrew's visit to the outcasts in their cavern home. Winter, with its storms and bitter cold, had come and gone, bringing with it no change for the better in the circumstances of our friends. Charles II. had gone to render up, to the King of kings, his account of talents and kingly power abused; and his popish brother James (a more fierce and bloody perse-

ctor) now sat upon the throne of Britain, and under his fostering care, the persecution waxed fiercer and hotter day by day, until the cry of His afflicted and downtrodden ones ascended unto the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. A few times during the winter, old Mr. Atchison had been able to meet with his brethren, when they gathered in their solitudes for prayer and praise, and to listen to the words of their much-loved pastor ; but day by day his step had grown more feeble, and his eye more dim, until now he lay upon his dying bed. The old man felt a most ardent desire to behold once more, upon earth, the faces of his pastor and son, the much loved wanderers for whom he had offered up so many fervent prayers ; so he sent his little grand-daughter to ask Andrew Murray to communicate to them, if possible, his dying wish. It had been a cold stormy day in the latter end of March ; the shades of evening were

now closing around them, and still the rain fell with ceaseless patter upon the roof, and the wind sighed mournfully around the house and in the wide chimney. A little band of mourners—Sarah, her children, and a kind neighbour—had gathered about the dying bed. The old man had fallen into a short slumber, but soon opening his eyes, he asked in a low, tremulous tone, “Sarah, have they come?”

“No, father,” she said, leaning over him, “ye ken it is too soon, the cave is some miles away, and they wadna dare venture out afore nightfall; but I dinna doubt they will come if it be possible.”

“They will come, and I shall be spared to see them ance mair,” replied the aged man, in the same trembling tones. “But Sarah, read, read from the blessed Book.” Sarah opened the Bible, and read that most sweet and comforting address of Jesus to His disciples, recorded in the fourteenth chapter of St. John. “Peace

I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you," repeated the dying saint. "Yes, it is all peace, peace, peace, no doubt, no fear. He is faithful who hath promised, who also will do it. I go to the many mansions prepared for His people." A low knock was heard at the outer door, and Sarah went to open it. Another moment and the two, whose presence was so earnestly longed for, entered the apartment. The eye of the dying man brightened, and a smile of joyous recognition overspread his features, as he extended a hand to each, saying, "My dear pastor, my son, my beloved son! God be thanked for this privilege." The son sank on his knees by the bedside, and buried his face in the clothes, while his stalwart frame shook with emotion.

"Dinna greet, William," said the old man, laying his hand lovingly on his son's head. "We maun part, laddie, but I'm

ganging hame, an' ye will sune follow me to the land where there's no more parting, no more dying." " 'At evening time it shall be light.' Is it not so, my brother?" asked the pastor. "It is, it is, all light; no darkness at all, no doubts, no fears."

"And what is the ground of your confidence—that you have lived a sober and godly life?"

"Nay, nay, Mr. Lilburn, ye ken that I hae been a great sinner; yea, the very chief of sinners, but Jesus Christ is a great Saviour. All my righteousnesses are as filthy rags; utterly worthless, nay, more needing to be forgiven; my best motives and desires have been mixed with sin, yea, even my very prayers. Ah! when I look at mysel', I hae nae peace, nae hope; but when I look to Jesus, I have peace and joy in believing, yea, joy unspeakable and full of glory."

"Have you, my friend, been altogether free from doubts and fears, during this

your last sickness?" asked Mr. Lilburn. "Has Satan not been permitted to trouble you?"

"Yesterday," said the old man, "my soul was in deep waters; he told me that my sins were so many and black, that there couldna be ony salvation for me; and when I answered him, that Jesus Christ came, not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, and that He was able to save unto the uttermost *all* that came unto God by Him; he turned about, and told me my religion was all a delusion and a lie. But thanks be to God, who hath given me the victory. Satan will trouble me no more; all now is peace, peace! and that joy which no man taketh from Christ's people. O William, my son, follow Him, and fear not man, 'whose breath is in His nostrils' but fear God and keep His ways. Dinna scare at the cross, for He will give you strength to bear it. Now cleave close to Him, all of ye that

listen to me; put your trust in Him, and He will never forsake ye; and, though ye lose all other things, even life itself, ye shall be no losers, but eternal gainers."

The old man ceased to speak, for in his earnestness he had nearly exhausted his little remaining strength. They knelt around the dying bed, and the pastor's voice went up in fervent supplications and thanksgivings. When they arose from their knees, a change had come over the face of the dying christian; it still bore the same expression of unutterable peace, but the seal of death was plainly visible upon his brow, and his tongue refused to do its office. They stood silently weeping about his bed,—weeping, not for him, but for themselves; when another person stole softly into the room, and Andrew Murray, laying his hand on Mr. Lilburn's arm, said in a low but distinct whisper, which, in the deep hush, was audible to all in the room—

“Fly, fly! Mr. Lilburn, the dragoons are just at hand; but not to the cavern, a party o’ them are now in possession o’ it awaiting your return; fly to my mither’s cottage; she will mak’ ye welcome, an’ I dinna think they will look for ye there. But fly! fly! there isna a moment to lose.” Mr. Lilburn looked at William, who shook his head; “I canna leave my auld father while he yet breathes,” he said. “I maun risk it.”

“O William, for my sake, for the sake o’ the bairns,” said his wife, in tones of earnest entreaty, looking imploringly in his face, while, weeping bitterly, she clung to his arm. “Will ye mak’ your wife a widow, and your bairns orphans? William, dear William, dinna stay! dinna stay! they will shoot you. Ye ken they hae nae mercy.” William stood a moment irresolute; he cast one glance at the terrified faces of his weeping wife and children, then clasping her for an instant to his

breast, "God in heaven bless and protect you, my wife," he murmured in a hoarse whisper. He stooped and pressed his lips to those of his dying parent, and was gone. None but the women and children were now left to watch the dying man; but scarce ten minutes had elapsed, since the departure of the men ere the trampling of horses was heard, the house quickly surrounded, and the soldiers, bursting open the outer door, rushed into the passage.

"Thank God, he is too far gone to be disturbed wi' a' their noise now," said Sarah, stooping over her father. "I dinna think he hears them."

"Where's the minister? an' where's your——husband? you——," vociferated a trooper, dashing open the door of the apartment and stamping in, followed by half a dozen of his comrades, their swords rattling against the floor; while the stamping of their heavy boots, their

loud and boisterous laughter and rude jests, mingled with oaths and curses, were in strange and revolting contrast to the death like quiet, which had reigned there a moment before.

“Where are they?” he repeated; “speak you——, or I’ll shoot you.”

“I dinna ken where the minister is now, nor my husband neither,” said Sarah; “they are na here, as ye may see if ye will tak’ the trouble to look for yoursels. But friends, dinna ye see the auld man is dying, and canna ye be mair quiet?”

“Dying is he, eh?” said the trooper, advancing towards the bed; then, suddenly catching the dying man by the shoulder, he shook him violently, saying, “Speak, you old fool, where’s the minister? Speak, I say, or I’ll knock out your brains with the end o’ my musket.”

“Oh dinna, dinna do so, the auld man is long past speaking,” exclaimed Sarah, springing forward and trying to drag the

soldier away. "Oh! sirs, are your hearts made o' stane? Wad ye abuse an' maltreat a dying auld man?" she continued in piteous accents, the big tears streaming down over her face, while the other woman and the children joined their cries and entreaties to hers. But their distress only seemed to make the hard-hearted dragoons more determined. They quickly dragged the old man from his bed, and beat him most unmercifully with their swords, in the vain attempt to make him speak. He gave one deep groan and expired. The soldiers released their hold, and the corpse fell heavily to the floor. "There he's gone, and there's nae mair to be gotten out o' him," remarked one of the brutes, giving the body a ferocious kick. They then dispersed themselves over the house, searching, in every nook and corner, for their intended victims. Having speedily satisfied themselves that they were not there, they presently mounted their horses

and rode away. Left thus alone, the two women—with some exertion of strength, and not without many tears for all he had suffered—succeeded in lifting the corpse of the old man on to the bed, and laying it out decently for burial.

“Dear, dear gude man, my dear auld father,” sobbed Sarah, “ye’re gane now to the land where the wicked cease frae troublin’, an’ the weary are at rest. But ah! Mary, it wad break my Willie’s heart to ken how they hae treated his puir auld father.”

Aided by the darkness, (for there was neither moon nor star visible that night,) our fugitives escaped their pursuers; they made their way across the moor toward the cottage of the Murrays and concealing themselves in the heather, not far from the house, there awaited the departure of the dragoons, when they entered, and were kindly received by Andrew and his mother, who had already kindled a fire,

that they might dry their clothes, now drenched with the rain. They felt by no means safe, for the dragoons might return at any time; and William especially was sad at heart, for the image of his dying father, seemed ever present to his mind's eye.

“Dinna fret, William, cheer up, gude man, ye ken your auld father has but gane hame to his rest,” said Mrs. Murray soothingly. “He has gotten his crown, and nae doubt is e'en now casting himsel' at the Saviour's feet.”

“I ken weel enough that I hae no cause to mourn for him, Mrs. Murray,” replied William, “but I maun mourn for mysel' and for my bairns. Ye canna deny that my trials are both sore an' heavy.”

“I dinna wish to deny it, William, but ye ken ye are na left to bear them alone, there is Ane who hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, and to him ye maun carry a' your troubles.”

“William,” said Mr. Lilburn, “these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Can you not rejoice in tribulation? Ah, what are our sufferings for Christ’s sake, compared with what He suffered for us? It is true we are not forbidden to mourn—for our Master himself wept at Lazarus’ grave—but these are times in which it seems rather meet to rejoice over our friends, who have fallen asleep in Jesus. Ah, these are indeed troublous times,” he continued, rising from his seat, and pacing up and down the room. “Charles Stuart, that perjured tyrant, and bloody persecutor of the Kirk of Scotland, has gone to render up his account, and his brother James—as all foresaw—is proving himself a far more fierce and cruel persecutor; every day does their hellish rage increase. ‘How long, O Lord, holy, and true, and good, how long dost not Thou avenge thy

suffering church!’ ‘When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me. Arise, O Lord, in Thine anger, lift up Thyself because of the rage of mine enemies. Oh! let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end.’”

“I had wandered several miles frae hame the ither day,” said Andrew, “and in my walk, came unexpectedly upon a party of dragoons at sport on the moor, and finding that they had na perceived my presence, I hid in the broom until they should leave the neighbourhood, that I might safely retreat. I could see them from my hiding place, and as I watched their movements, I presently perceived that the game was football, and they seemed to enjoy it; but sune up came two more o’ the bluidy crew, riding as if they had come some distance, and one, springing to the ground and taking a bag frae the horse’s back, opened it, and brought out a bloody head, saying, ‘*he* had here a better ball, even

the head o' a ——— Covenanter and rebel, and with that, he kicked it to the next, and he, doing likewise, they sent it round frae ane to anither. But some even of those hardened men, it seems, were not altogether lost to all feeling, for they turned and walked away, saying, 'that was carrying matters too far.' "

Mrs. Murray shuddered. "Dinna let wee Nanny hear that, Andrew," said she, "she wad be sorely frightened.—William, where is Allan Houston?"

"I dinna ken," replied William, "but he maun be wandering somewhere in the neighbourhood, unless he has been ta'en."

Ere the morning dawned, the wanderers left the cottage to seek the shelter of the hills. Sarah Atchison had not been able to close her eyes in sleep that night. Her father-in-law dead, her husband a houseless, homeless wanderer in hourly peril of his life, and herself and children without an earthly protector; her thoughts and

fears were too busy to admit of sleep, and, rising at early dawn, she stole to the side of the corpse to look once more at the face she loved so well; for he had ever been a kind parent, a wise counsellor, and sympathizing friend to her. There was no trace of suffering in the countenance, but the features were composed in all the calm, still majesty of death, and the silvery hair lay like a snow wreath on the pillow which supported his head. As Sarah stood gazing upon it, a step startled her, she turned and saw—with an emotion of terror for his safety—her husband standing at her side.

“My dear auld father!” he said, his voice trembling with emotion. “Sarah, they didna harm him? Surely they couldna be sae cruel as to disturb his last moments.”

“O William, dinna fret about it now, ye ken he’s safe an’ happy now, where nane can disturb him.”

William groaned, "And I—wretch that I am—left him unprotected in his last hour; I can never forgive myself."

"Nay, my husband," said Sarah, "dinna reproach yourself, ye couldna have prevented them from doing their will, an' wad but have lost your ain life. And ye are in much danger now. Oh! fly William, for I ken ye're watched for."

"O father! father! run, run! ye maun mak' haste, or they will catch ye—the bluidy murthering dragoons, for they're comin' round the foot o' the hill e'en now," cried his little daughter in tones of wild affright, as she rushed in from her post of observation whither she had been sent by her mother.

"O William!" exclaimed his wife, catching his arm, and attempting to drag him toward the door, "will ye no fly now? Maun I see ye murdered before my very een?" Overcome, more by her entreaties, than by fear of impending

death, William yielded, and springing hastily from the back door, fled across the moor, and concealed himself in a tuft of broom, just as the dragoons rode up in front.

CHAPTER VII.

**"The shadows of evening are fleeing,
Morn breaks on the city of light ;
This moment day starts into being,
Eternity bursts on my sight."**

ALLAN HOUSTON—HIS DEATH—PEACE IN BELIEVING.

APRIL with its alternations of sunshine and shower had passed away, and May had come with her sunny skies and lovely blossoms. But spring with all its sweet influences brought little joy to the hearts and homes of Scotland's persecuted children ; for violence and bloodshed were still abroad in the land ; God's children were still hunted like beasts of prey from covert to covert. Thicker and blacker the clouds seemed to gather above their heads, and the storm of persecution raged with ever increasing fury. It was the

intense midnight darkness which precedes the dawn of the coming day. It was night. Mrs. Murray sat conversing in low tones with her son Andrew, though it was somewhat past their usual hour for retiring, and the younger members of the family had already sought their beds. There was a faint knock; Mrs. Murray rose and went to the door.

“Could you give a night’s shelter to an outlawed man?” asked a broken hollow voice. “I am fainting with hunger and weariness, and hae nae strength to gang farther.”

“Allan Houston!” she exclaimed, though in a tone scarcely above a whisper. “Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; ye’re welcome, Allan, kindly welcome to the best my house affords.”

Andrew supported the half-fainting man into the house and laid him upon the bed, while his mother made haste to light her fire and prepare a cup of warm broth.

Allan was fearfully emaciated; and as Mrs. Murray looked at his wan, haggard face, while offering the refreshment she had prepared, she could not restrain her tears, which he seeing, said—

“Dinna greet for me, my friend, I think I canna be long frae hame now, an’ sae my wanderings an’ privations will sune be a’ past.”

“You hae had a sad weary life o’t for the last ten years, Allan,” she said.

“Dinna say that, Mrs. Murray,” he replied,—“I wad gladly suffer ten thousand times more for my Master if He should see fit to call me to it; an’ I wadna give the sweet peace an’ joy that hae filled my breast these mony years for a’ the worldly ease an’ comfort, or the wealth an’ power o’ James Stuart. I dinna wish to die in your house, Mrs. Murray, for that might bring trouble upon ye; but I hope a night’s rest in a comfortable bed may give me sufficient strength to gang a little

farther and seek another hiding place ; but it maun be as the Lord wills."

"Ay, Allan, His will be done wi' me an' mine!" said Mrs. Murray. "I wadna wish to tak' the ordering o' that, nor ony ither matter out o' his hands."

But alas ! morning brought no renewal of strength to the weary, worn-out pilgrim : nay, it found him far weaker than the night previous, and utterly unable to rise from his couch. Fully sensible as they were of the fearful risk they were running, in case of detection, in thus giving shelter to a proscribed Covenanter, an outlawed man ; Andrew and his mother hesitated not for a moment, never for one instant entertained the thought of turning the helpless wanderer from their door. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Remembering these words of our Saviour, and His command, "See that ye love one another with a pure heart,

fervently," they watched around the dying bed of this follower of Christ, with all the care and tenderness of a mother and brother. Many long, weary years had Allan Houston spent in wandering from one hiding place to another, sleeping upon the damp, cold ground, or in some gloomy cavern; often passing days and weeks without shelter, and enduring privations of every kind—hunger, cold and nakedness. And now exhausted nature could bear no more, and the strong man lay weak and helpless as a little child. He lingered through but few days of bodily suffering, borne with unvarying patience and submission, ere it was evident to all that the summons for his departure had come. They gathered about his dying bed to listen to the last words of hope and comfort, and of earnest exhortation from his lips.

Ah! that humble, little room seemed like the very gate of heaven. The face

of the departing saint shone with the joy of heaven begun on earth; he had fought the good fight, he had kept the faith, he had finished his course, and henceforth there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, should give him at that day. "We needna ask if you are happy in the prospect o' death, Allan," said Mrs. Murray, "your face tells that plainly enough."

"Yes, it is all peace, peace, unclouded peace," replied Allan. "Come near me, all o' ye, while I give my testimony to Christ's faithfulness. An' first I wad say to ye all, that I, Allan Houston, have been a miserable sinner, a vile, *vile* sinner; and though for the greater part of my life, I hae earnestly striven to serve the Lord, an' for many years have seldom felt a doubt o' my interest in Him, yet am I constrained to say that in everything I hae come short, and all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Oh! I darena put the

least trust or confidence in anything that I hae done, but cast myself entirely on the free, unmerited grace and mercy of God. 'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;'—yes, the very *chief*. And I give my testimony, that though I have been an unprofitable servant, he has aye been a good Master. My friends, cleave close to Him. Fear the least sin, for the least sin deserveth death. Fear not man, who canna do more than kill the body, but oh! fear Him who hath power to cast both soul and body into hell."

"Ye dinna regret, Allan, all ye hae suffered for Christ's sake, and on account o' the persecuted gospel?" asked Mrs. Murray.

"No, no, *no*, if every hair o' my head were a man, and every drop o' blood a life, I wad freely lay them all down for

Him, if He called me to it; for He is the chiefest among ten thousands, the One altogether lovely: He is without compare, incomprehensible and glorious." He had not strength to say more, and Andrew, opening the book of God, read from it that beautiful Twenty-third Psalm, beginning—"The Lord is my Shepherd;" then kneeling by the bedside, he prayed that the good Shepherd might indeed be with the dying man, in his passage through the dark valley of the shadow of death. "It is na a dark valley to me, Andrew," said Allan, when they had risen from their knees, Jesus is with me, and His presence and love have made it light as day. Oh, all is peace, peace, and joy—joy unspeakable and full of glory!" And he burst into a song of praise:

"O blessed is the man, to whom is freely pardoned
All the transgressions he hath done, whose sin is covered.
Bless'd is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin,
And in whose sp'rit there is no guile, nor fraud is found therein."

He sank back exhausted, and Mrs. Murray sang, the others joining with her :

“ Into thine hands I do commit my sp'rit ; for thou art he,
O thou Jehovah, God of truth, that hast redeemed me.
Those that do lying vanities regard, I have abhorr'd :
But as for me, my confidence is fixed on the Lord.

“ O love the Lord, all ye his saints ; because the Lord doth guard
The faithful ; and he plenteously proud doers doth reward.
Be of good courage, and he strength unto your hearts shall send,
All ye whose hope and confidence doth on the Lord depend.”

They ceased ; and Allan, raising himself from his pillow, exclaimed : “ And now farewell earth, sun, moon, and stars ; farewell ye dear Christian friends with whom I have held sweet converse by the way ; farewell hunger, thirst, and wearisome wanderings, and manifold sufferings for Christ's sake ; farewell reading, praying ; farewell singing ; and welcome heaven and precious Saviour. Lord Jesus, into Thy hands I commit my spirit !” He sank back, and with a smile of unutterable joy, his spirit took its flight.

“ Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,” said Mrs.

Murray, as she gently closed the eyes and composed the limbs of him that slept. "Poor weary wanderer, safe in his Father's house at last! done for ever wi' suffering, an' wi' sinning! I could almost find it in my heart to envy him his blessed change!" Ah! poor woman, you have yet to pass through bitter trials, ere you too shall gain your crown.

It was in the early morning he had died, and the corpse must be kept concealed, if possible, until the returning darkness may enable them to elude the vigilance of their persecutors, long enough to place it beneath the sod. It was necessary to avoid anything which might excite suspicion, and the family went about their accustomed avocations, until the arrival of the hour for the noonday meal again brought them together. Did any presentiment cross their minds that this was the last time they should gather around that humble board? I know not, but so, alas! it was

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decreed. It was a sad and silent meal, and when they had risen from the table, Andrew and Jessie stole to the side of the corpse to take another look at their friend; for they had loved Allan, whom they had often met and conversed with at the conventicles. Andrew put his arm around his sister's waist, and she laid her head on his shoulder, while the tears streamed down her pale cheeks.

“Dinna greet, Jessie,” he said, soothingly, “ye wadna bring him back to all his toils an’ sufferings, and ye maun think of the eternal weight of glory he has gane to inherit.”

“I ken it a’, brither dear, an’ I could find it in my heart to wish we were all with him in that blessed land, for this is but a dark, weary world,” replied Jessie, mournfully.

“Ah! my dear sister, some of us may be much nearer than we think,” said Andrew. Jessie gave a sudden start of

terror, and clinging convulsively to him, exclaimed, "O brither, dinna say that! I could na bear to part wi' you, an' it wad break my mither's heart."

"Hark! what was that?" he exclaimed, as a dull, heavy sound smote upon their ears. "It is the dragoons!" The colour forsook their faces. Hastily they covered up the corpse, but, alas! they could not hope to elude the vigilance of the approaching search. Andrew clasped Jessie for an instant to his breast, and then putting her silently from him, walked steadily out to meet his foes. His mother had already opened the door, in answer to their thundering knock.

CHAPTER VIII.

“She spread her mantle o'er his breast,
She bathed his lips with dew,
And on his cheek such kisses press'd
As hope and joy ne'er knew.”

“For unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” Phil. i. 29.

APOSTACY OF SIR JAMES JORDAN—FAMILY TRIALS
—MORE PERSECUTION—ANOTHER MARTYR—
CRUEL SUFFERINGS.

IT was a detachment of dragoons, accompanied by Sir James Jordan of Conheath, and a number of his own servants. “You are accused of having given shelter to a proscribed Covenanting rebel,” he replied, in answer to Mrs. Murray's inquiry, what they wanted. “Is it true, or not?” She fixed her eyes upon his face.

“Dare you, Sir James,” she asked, “talk o' Covenanting rebels? hae ye for-

gotten the day ye signed the Covenant yoursel', and swore to maintain it to the last drop o' your blood?"

"I came here not to be questioned, but to question," he answered haughtily, though the colour mounted to his brow. "Will you answer me, or not?"

"Ye ken as weel as I, Sir James, that there is nae law, neither o' God nor man, requiring ane to accuse himsel' o' ony crime. I winna do it, an' if ye accuse me it remains wi' you to bring the proof," she replied. "Though tak' notice I dinna call it a crime to succour God's suffering people." A portion of the party were now placed as guard over the family, to see that none of them escaped, while the rest commenced a thorough search of the premises. Little Nanny, pale and trembling with affright, clung to her mother, who sat gazing with a look of intense anguish at her first born. Jessie's eyes also were fixed upon her brother, as with

clasped hands, and cheek pale as marble, she sank, shuddering with terror, upon the nearest seat. Donald, with a fierce, defiant air, strode up and down the room; while Andrew stood with folded arms, the picture of calm, unwavering determination. But a few moments—they seemed like ages to the wretched victims—had passed, ere a shout of exultation proclaimed that the corpse had been found. Sir James, in furious anger, returned to the apartment where the family were, and pouring out a volley of abusive epithets upon Mrs. Murray and her son, declared that he would instantly level the house with the ground; never should it give shelter to another rebel against his royal master's authority. Then, turning to his servants, he ordered them to commence the work of carrying away the widow's furniture. "As for yourself and your bairns, ye may think yourselves happy in being permitted to depart unhurt; the

moors and mosses are only too good a lodging for you. But you, sir," turning to Andrew, "shall be taken to Claverhouse, who will no doubt give you your deserts." Jessie sprang forward with a wild shriek, and casting herself at Conheath's feet, exclaimed in tones of anguish, fit to move a heart of stone :

"O Sir James, ye wadna do that! ye wadna send my darling brither to that cruel, bluidthirsty man; ye ken he will murder him. O Sir James, spare my brither, my dear, *dear* brither! He has done naething wrang; he has aye been the best an kindest o' sons an' brithers; he doesna deserve to die."

"I'm not the man to be turned from the discharge of my duty to my royal master, by the tears and cries of a silly lass," he said, spurning her contemptuously from him. "Do your duty, men! lead him out at once!"

"Sir James," cried the mother, putting

herself in his path, and forcing him to hear her, "wad ye tak' away the firstborn o' the widow—him who should be the stay an' staff o' my declining years? Oh! ye maun remember he is but a lad, scarce mair nor a bairn, an' innocent o' ony crime—wad ye stain your hands wi' innocent bluid? O Sir James, spare my child, and the blessing o' the widow an' the orphan shall rest upon you!"

"Entreaties are useless, madam, I must do my duty," he replied, pushing her rudely aside, and repeating his order to the men to lead Andrew forth. Donald and Nanny shrieked, and Jessie fell on the floor in a death-like swoon. Even the hearts of the hardened soldiers were touched, and they permitted the heart-broken mother to clasp her son for an instant to her breast. "Andrew, my precious child," she said amid her choking sobs, "the Lord God o' your father will be wi' ye, and give ye strength."

“He will, my mither, and He will tak’ care o’ you an’ the bairns; but dinna greet for me, the suffering will be short, an’ it winna be lang till we meet in the land where there are nae partings.” They tore him from her arms. In vain she essayed to follow; they held her forcibly back, and when he had been carried out of sight, they turned her and her young children out into the field, and proceeded with the work of demolishing the house. The bereaved family took their way across the moor in the direction the soldiers had taken, and at length ascended a hill from which they could have a distant view of what was passing between Andrew and his captors. Sir James had taken him, as he threatened, to Claverhouse, who happened at that time to be passing by with a small body of troops. “I have brought you a young rebel who has had the audacity to shelter a proscribed Covenantanter, and even to permit the wretch to

die under his roof," said Sir James, addressing Claverhouse, as the two parties met.

"Indeed," said Claverhouse sneeringly, "I congratulate you on your zealous loyalty. But this seems a mere lad, surely he was not head of the house?"

"The father of the family has been dead some years," replied Conheath; "there is a mother, and you may think me strangely lenient in sparing her; but I thought perhaps it would punish her sufficiently (as I understand it to be her first offence of the kind,) to shoot her son. But if you wish the woman brought up, it is not yet too late."

"By no means," said Claverhouse, "one victim will be enough."

"I have set my men at work to carry away the woman's furniture, and tear down the house, that it may never again shelter an outlaw; and now, sir, I trust to you to execute summary justice on this young man," said Sir James.

“I have no wish to take the business out of the excellent hands into which it has already fallen,” replied Claverhouse, mockingly, “nor to play executioner under the direction of Sir James Jordan of Conheath.”

“I meant not to direct, but to request it, as a personal favour,” said Sir James, colouring with anger to his very temples.

“Well, well, Sir James, I do not see the necessity of shooting the fellow at all,” replied Claverhouse, who seemed strangely disinclined for the work of murder; “he is only a lad, and hardly to be made accountable for his mother’s misdeeds.”

“Sir,” said Conheath, “would you encourage these wretches in bidding defiance to the laws? I tell you, sir, this fellow ought to be made an example of.” A whisper went round among the dragoons, that their leader was unusually lenient that day. “I tell ye, Jim,” remarked one to his comrade, “he has na rightly gotten

over the death of John Brown, the Christian carrier, joost yet. Ye ken, man, it's joost ten days now since we shot him; and I think our captain has na been quite himsel' since."

"I tell you, Conheath, I have shed blood enough for to-day; I will keep the lad a prisoner for the present, if that will satisfy you, but if ye must have him shot, ye may even do the job yourself." But Sir James continued to urge his wishes, until at length Claverhouse yielded a reluctant consent, saying,—“Remember I am not accountable for this act of bloodshed; it must be required at your hands;” adding, with an oath, “I shall have sins enough of my own to answer for.”

Turning to a Highland captain in his troop, he ordered him to take the lad to Eskdale moor and shoot him. The Highlander indignantly refused, and drawing off his men to a short distance swore, that “he himself would fight Claverhouse and all his dragoons first.”

“This man’s blood shall be upon Con-heath,” muttered Claverhouse. He then ordered three of his own dragoons to do the bloody work, and they—ever ready for any act of cruelty—readily obeyed. Taking Andrew between them, they led him out a short distance upon the moor. There dismounting, they took their station a few paces in front of their prisoner, and proceeded to load their guns, and take deliberate aim at his breast. Andrew stood erect; his eye never quailed before his executioners, and he neither trembled nor turned pale. What was death to one who had made his peace with God, but a short, though it might be stormy passage from earth to heaven? Taking his Bible from his pocket, he held it one instant to his breast, while heart and eyes looked up to heaven.

“Pull your bonnet ower your eyes, mon,” ordered one of the dragoons.

“I winna do it,” replied the youthful

martyr, in a calm, steady voice ; “ I can look ye in the face ; I hae done naething to be ashamed of. But how will *you* look in the day when ye shall be judged by the things written in this book ? ”

Mrs. Murray and her children watched from their post of observation, with intense, breathless interest, the movements of the dragoons. So long a time elapsed without any decided action, that a faint hope was beginning to spring up in their hearts, when they saw first the Highlander draw off his men, which movement was quite unaccountable to them ; and as they strained their eyes to see if Andrew was in the group, they presently beheld the three dragoons lead him out on the moor, dismount, and load their pieces. There could be now no doubt as to the deed they were about to do, and Jessie, putting her fingers in her ears, with one wild scream, flung herself on her face, on the turf ; with a groan of agony, the mother dropped

her face upon her knees, covering her head with her plaid; while Nanny, hiding her face in its folds, clung to her with a death-like grasp, her little heart beat wildly, and her breath came thick and fast. Donald ran forward as if to stop them in their murderous work, but instantly there came a sharp, quick report, echoed and re-echoed by the surrounding hills, and the boy came rushing back, screaming, "O mither, mither! they hae kilt him! they hae kilt him! they hae kilt our Andrew!" And sobbing as if his heart would break, he flung himself on the ground at her feet, and buried his face in her lap.

"Father, help me to say, Thy will be done!" groaned the heart-broken mother. "It is indeed a bitter cup, but help me to drink it."

"It was na God's will, it was joost the wicked, murtherin' wretches!" exclaimed Donald fiercely, lifting his head to dash

away his tears. "I wish they were dead, an' if I were a man I wad kill every ane o' them." So absorbed was the mother in her overwhelming grief, that she scarcely for a time heard or heeded, but at length, as he continued to pour out his feelings of hatred to his brother's murderers, she gasped out —

"O Donald, my bairn, ye maun na talk sae wickedly; remember how our Saviour prayed for His murderers, an' if we are His, we maun be like Him; we maun forgive and pray for these cruel, bluidy men. Oh!" she exclaimed, with a fresh burst of sorrow, "it is nae easy matter for flesh and blood in the first agony of bereavement. O Lord Jesus, give me a submissive and forgiving spirit."

"Mither," exclaimed Donald, passionately, "why do ye say it's God's will, when ye ken it's a' done by those wicked, cruel men?"

"Ah! Donald, though it is a' the wicked

wark o' those cruel men, ye ken it was God's will to permit it for some wise reason, an' we maun submit to Him who doeth all things well."

Their deed of blood accomplished—leaving the lifeless body lying where it fell—the dragoons remounted, and rejoining their companions, the whole party rode rapidly away.

"They've a' gane now, mither," whispered Donald, after a careful survey of the landscape, "they're a' oot o' sight; let us gang now to brither Andrew."

The mother groaned, "I may go to him but he can never come to me." For a brief space, she bowed her head in silent prayer; then rising and taking Nanny's hand, she walked steadily onward to the fatal spot, Jessie and Donald following. But when she reached the place, and beheld the yet warm and bleeding corpse of her darling boy, all her calmness, for a moment, forsook her, and casting herself

upon it, she clasped him in her arms, calling him by every endearing name, while she cried in the bitter anguish of her soul—"My son, my son! would to God I had died for thee! O Andrew, my boy, canna ye speak to your heart-broken mither ance mair? 'I will go down into the grave, unto my son mourning.'"

"Mither," cried Jessie, amid her tears and sobs, throwing her arms around her mother's neck, "dinna greet, ye ken he is done wi' suffering an' wi' sinning. He has professed a good profession before many witnesses; he has been found faithful even unto death; and has now gotten the crown of life. O mither, think if he had denied his Lord for the sake of prolonging his earthly life—"

"Yes, thanks be unto God, who hath given him the victory," exclaimed the mother, rising and kneeling by his side, "I will grieve nae mair." She took the Bible—stained with his life's blood—from

his stiffening hand, straightened his limbs, and covered him with his plaid. Stroking back the hair from his forehead, she kissed the cold brow, and laid her cheek for an instant to his, then clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven, she prayed for his murderers. By the lifeless body of her son, she prayed for those who, with ruthless, unrelenting cruelty, had torn from her the delight of her eyes and the joy of her heart.

The sun was sending his last rays over the hilltops, as the little band of houseless, homeless mourners sat down to keep their sad vigil over their loved one. The sun sank to rest, and one by one the stars came out, and looked pityingly down on the sad group; then the moon arose in all her splendour, and shed a flood of silvery light o'er hilltop and moorland; and still they sat there—silent and sad, alone with their dead. Yet not alone, for the God of the widow and the fatherless was with

them, and they knew that His everlasting arms were around and beneath them.

“ Come near! ere yet the dust
 Soil the bright paleness of the settled brow,
 Look on your brother; and embrace him now,
 In still and solemn trust!
 Come near! once more let kindred lips be pressed
 On his cold cheek; then bear him to his rest.

“ Ye weep, and it is well!
 For tears befit earth's partings!—Yesterday,
 Song was upon the lips of this pale clay,
 And sunshine seemed to dwell
 Where'er he moved—the welcome and the blest—
 Now gaze! and bear the silent unto rest!

“ Yet mourn ye not as they
 Whose spirit's light is quenched—for him the past
 Is sealed. He may not fall, he may not cast
 His birthright's hope away!
 All is not here of our beloved and blest—
 Leave ye the sleeper with his God to rest!”

At length as time passed slowly away, the midnight hour drew near, and the moon's bright face was obscured by clouds. And now a little band of men might have been seen approaching with quiet, noiseless tread; they reached the mourning group, stopped and spoke words of conso-

lation in low, sad tones. It was Mr. Lilburn and William Atchison, with several other friends and neighbours. They had brought the necessary implements, and two of them now set to work to dig a grave on the precise spot where the young martyr had fallen, for such was the usual custom of these followers of the persecuted gospel. They finished their work; and then the pastor briefly addressed the little assembly: “‘He that keepeth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life, for My sake, shall keep it unto life eternal.’ O my friends, is it not a small thing for us to lay down our lives for Him who died, that we might inherit eternal life? ‘While we were yet enemies, Christ died for the ungodly.’ Herein is love, O wondrous, amazing love!” He spoke of the uncertainty of life to all, but especially to them who were in almost hourly expectation of laying down their lives for Christ’s sake, and sealing their testimony with their

blood ; and he exhorted them to keep their hearts with all diligence, to watch against secret faults, against every sin, to pray for the Holy Spirit, and to cleave close to Christ. He spoke of the heavenly peace and joy to be found in believing in Jesus ; and of His promise to be with His people in all their trials ; and, that though earthly possessions and earthly friends might be taken away, *He* would never leave them nor forsake them. He spoke of the many mansions Christ had gone to prepare, and of the happy entrance that day ministered to their young brother. “ This morning,” said he, “ he was with us, exposed, as we are, not only to the ordinary ills of life, but to all that the rage and malice of the persecutors can inflict ; and now he is beyond the stars with Christ in glory—he sleeps in Jesus, and ‘ them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him.’ ” They wrapped him in his plaid, and lowered him in his narrow home, and when the minister

had offered up a prayer of thanksgiving for the dead, and an earnest supplication for the living, they turned away, and left him to his last, long, dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

“Thou wert so like a form of light,
That heaven benignly call'd thee hence,
Ere yet the world could breathe one blight
O'er thy sweet innocence:
And thou, that brighter home to bless,
Art passed, with all thy loveliness!”

MRS. MURRAY AND FAMILY IN A CAVERN—FEARS AND TEARS—A DYING CHRISTIAN CHILD.

IT is night—dark, moonless, starless night. And it is dark, and damp, and cold in the gloomy cavern in which Mrs. Murray and her children have taken refuge; but Donald has collected a few of the dry and withered leaves which the chill autumn wind is whirling at their feet, a few dry sticks and pieces of turf, and is trying to light a fire. At length he succeeds, and the flickering light shows the attenuated form of little Nanny lying on a rude couch of moss and leaves, with her

head upon her mother's lap. She is fearfully thin and pale. Death has plainly set his seal upon her fair young face, and the mother sees it with mingled joy and anguish—anguish that she must part with her darling child ; joy that her loved one is so near her home. Jessie, pale and sad, sat at the foot of the couch, gazing with mournful eyes upon her little sister. Houseless and homeless for months they have wandered from place to place, sometimes sleeping on the open moor, with no roof but the canopy of heaven ; sometimes in an outhouse, or in a cave, and seldom, very seldom, under the roof of some cottager or farmer. And they have suffered not only from exposure, but very often from the pangs of hunger. They were not only willing, but most desirous to obtain employment, and it sometimes happened that Jessie or her mother would be given a day's work at some farmhouse ; but this was a rare occurrence ; for will-

ing as their neighbours might be to assist them, very few were able, so much had they been impoverished by the fines, the quartering of troops upon them, and the plundering of the lawless soldiery.

“How the wind blows the night!” said Donald, holding his hands over the blaze to warm them; “an’ I dinna think the river ever made sic’ a noise afore.”

“That’s because there’s a storm brewing,” said his mother.

“Mither,” exclaimed Nanny, with a start of terror, “didna ye hear a footstep? O mither, are the dragoons coming?”

“No, darling, it was only the wind shaking the leaves at the foot o’ the bank.” There was a pause, during which no sound was heard, but the rush of the waters below, the mournful sighing of the wind, and Nanny’s laboured breathing.

“Nanny, my bairn, my precious child!” said the mother, pressing her lips to the cold, clammy brow, “do ye ken that ye’re no

lang for this world?" The child looked up in her mother's face with a smile.

"Yes, mither," she said; "I kent it lang since, an' I'm blythe to ken it, mither."

"Ye are na feart, my bairn?"

"No, mither."

"And what is it, my bairn," she asked, "that makes ye sae willing to die?"

"Because, mither, I'm going to be with Jesus."

"And how do ye ken that, darling?" asked the mother, striving to control her emotion, and speak with calmness—"Is it because ye hae been a gude bairn?"

"No, mither, I ken that I am a great sinner; I feel that I hae na done onything and *couldna* do onything to deserve salvation. But, mither, I love Jesus; I hae come to Him and He did na cast me out; *He* kept the law for me, He died for me, and God will give me eternal life for His dear sake. O mither, I wish I had been

a better bairn ; I wish I had loved God more, and served Him better, an' I wad like to live to tell a' the folks how good He has been to me ; and to be a comfort to you, and dear Jessie, and Donald ; but mither, I am very glad to die, and go to heaven where Jesus is, an' where there are no soldiers to fright and murder us." The mother's tears were falling thick and fast upon the upturned face of the child.

" Dinna greet, mither," she said, throwing her arm around her mother's neck, and drawing her face down till she could press her lips to her cheek. " Oh ! mither, it will be a' light there, and I shall never be cold, nor hungry again ; and you, and Jessie, and Donald will sune come too, and brither Andrew is there, now, waiting for us." The mother replied,—“ And He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ;

and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.' 'They shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.' 'And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.'"

Jessie and Donald sat listening, and silently weeping; Nanny now called them to come close to her; she bade them farewell, and urged them to love and serve God with all their powers. "I didna think ye loved Jesus, Donald, until after brither Andrew went to heaven," she said; "but I think ye do now."

"Yes, Nanny, I do," sobbed the boy,

“an’ I dinna wish to kill those bluidy men now.”

Exhausted with the exertion of talking so much, the child now sank into a troubled sleep; and Donald, worn out with sorrow, soon followed her example. Jessie and her mother sat watching the unquiet sleep of the dying child; she tossed uneasily from side to side, until at length, starting up with a scream of terror, she cried out, “O mither, the dragoons are coming! They will kill us a’, mither!”

“No, my bonnie bairn, they are na coming, it was only a dream that frightened ye,” said the mother, soothingly.

“Canna they find us here, mither? Oh! dinna let them come,” said the half delirious child, clinging with a convulsive grasp to her parent.

“I dinna think they can, darling, but we will put our trust in the Lord. We ken weel that naething can harm us without His will. ‘What time I am afraid, I

will trust in Thee.' 'In the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, till these calamities be overpast.' God is with us, my bairn, and we will not fear what man can do unto us."

"Sing, mither, sing!" said the child, laying her head again on her mother's lap; "I winna be feart ony mair." With a strong effort, and a silent prayer for strength, the mother controlled her feelings that she might smooth her child's passage to the tomb. With a voice, at first trembling with emotion, but growing stronger as she proceeded, she sang—

"Show mercy, Lord, to me, for man would swallow me outright
 He me oppresseth, while he doth against me daily fight.
 They daily would me swallow up that hate me spitefully:
 For they be many that do fight against me, O most High.
 When I'm afraid, I'll trust in Thee. In God I'll praise His word;
 I will not fear what flesh can do, my trust is in the Lord.
 Each day they wrest my word; their thoughts 'gainst me are all
 for ill.
 They meet, they lurk, they mark my steps, waiting my soul to kill.
 But shall they by iniquity escape thy judgment so?
 O God, with indignation down do Thou the people throw.

My wand'rings all what they have been Thou know'st, their
number took;

Into Thy bottle put my tears; are they not in Thy book?

In God I trust; I will not fear what man can do to me.

Thy vows upon me are, O God: I'll render praise to Thee."

"Oh, I am almost there, I shall soon be with Jesus," said the dying child, when the psalm was finished. "Now, mither, sing—'The Lord's my Shepherd,' I love that psalm so well," Again the mother sang, and Nanny lay without moving; when the last strain had died away, there was a deep hush—a deathlike stillness. The mother leaned over her child, she called her by name. There was no reply—Nanny was no longer there. She was not, for God had taken her.

CHAPTER X.

“Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity: I will mock when your fear cometh.”—Prov. i. 24—26.

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SPEECH RESTORED—LINGERING DEATH OF A
PERSECUTOR—REMORSE AND DESPAIR—CON-
CLUSION.

THREE years more of weary wanderings, of toil and pain and care, of cold and hunger. Three years more of rapine and murder, when God's children were given up to the unrestrained fury of their persecutors, and Scotland's soil was enriched with the blood of her noblest sons, and then came the Revolution, bringing peace to the troubled land, and joy and gratitude to many a careworn heart. The coward tyrant king had fled before the storm of the justly aroused indignation of his oppressed subjects; and William, Prince of

Orange, had been called to the vacant throne. Oh! what a thrill of delight must the glad news have sent to hundreds of aching hearts! Now the proscribed, outlawed Covenanter, who had for years (destitute, afflicted, and tormented) wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, hunted from covert to covert, like a wild beast of the forest; might return in safety to his home, and embrace his wife and children without fear that the next moment a bullet from the carbine of a dragoon, would send him to his long home, and leave his children fatherless and his wife a widow. And now the minister of God might return to his charge, and his people flock to hear the word of truth from his lips, in the broad light of day, without fear of molestation; for civil and religious liberty had been proclaimed, and deeds of cruelty and blood were no longer authorized by the civil magistrate. Mr. Lilburn returned to

his kirk, and again—to the great joy of his people—took possession of the manse ; but alas ! the wife and children who had once made it an earthly paradise to him, worn out with want and sickness, brought on by their many privations and exposures, had long since been numbered with the dead. The husband and father returned, but it was to a barren roof-tree, a desolate hearthstone. Mrs. Murray also returned with her two remaining children to her former neighbourhood, and, having taken possession of a small cottage, she and Jessie supported themselves by the diligent labour of their hands. Donald, too, who was fast growing up, added his mite, and would soon be old enough to take his brother Andrew's place. His mother already looked to him as the one who was to be the earthly stay of her old age. And Sir James Jordan of Conheath, the perjured apostate, the bitter and relentless persecutor of the cause he had once

espoused; the oppressor of the widow and orphan; the murderer of Andrew Murray—Oh! who can tell the remorse that in those moments, when it was impossible to banish thoughts of the past (and conscience *would* speak), must have eaten like a canker into his very soul? But this *we* cannot tell, it is known only to the Searcher of hearts. It may be that—seared as with a red hot iron, by a determined continuance in crime—his conscience slept, during all those months and years; but if so, it had a fearful awakening. About the time of the Revolution, we are told, he was attacked by a lingering and painful disease, which, at length, brought him to the grave. But his anguish of body was as nothing, when compared to his horror and anguish of mind.

Mrs. Murray was, one pleasant autumn day, busily engaged with her spinning, accompanying the sound of her wheel with the music of her voice, as she sang a psalm

of praise, which had often ascended from a chorus of voices in the wild glens and mosses of Scotland, in the days of the persecution. The doorway was darkened for an instant, and looking up she perceived the slight and graceful form of a young girl, evidently belonging to the higher class of society. Mrs. Murray rose, and offered her visitor a seat. "I see you do not know me, Mrs. Murray," said the young lady, as she thankfully accepted the offered chair—"I am Miss Mabel Jordan," she added in a half-hesitating tone, and with an almost pleading look; while cheek and brow were, for an instant, dyed with scarlet. "Ah, I ken ye now, my dear young leddy," said Mrs. Murray kindly. "I wonder I had na kent ye at first, but I haena seen ye for some years, an time makes strange changes."

"Oh! Mrs. Murray, I am ashamed to look you in the face, but oh! surely you must know that, if I could have prevented

it, your"—she stopped, utterly at a loss how to finish her sentence, without tearing open, afresh, wounds which she felt must be scarcely yet healed in the heart of her companion.

"I ken all you wad say, my dear young leddy," said Mrs. Murray, in a sorrowful tone, kindly laying her hand on the young girl's shoulder, "and I believe it a', for I ken ye hae a kind and loving heart; but, Miss Mabel, if I could bear hatred for what is past, could I call myself the disciple of Him who prayed for His murderers? Oh! has he not said, 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will my Father forgive you?' an' O Miss Mabel, my sins against Him have been very many."

"Then, dear Mrs. Murray," said the young girl, wiping away her fast flowing tears, "I may venture to tell you my errand,"—she stopped, as if considering how best to prefer her request.

“An’ what is it, my dear young leddy?” said Mrs. Murray, “I wad be blythe to do onything for you an’ yours.”

“It is a very great favour I am about to ask,” said Mabel. “It was a great, a dreadful, irreparable wrong my father did you; but .O Mrs. Murray, if you could see him now—if you could hear his shrieks and groans of agony, I know you would pity him”—

“Is he ill, dear leddy?”

“Very ill—dying I fear,” replied Mabel with a burst of uncontrollable grief—“in dreadful pain of body—but oh! that is nothing, nothing to his agony of mind. Your name, and the names of your children are continually on his lips, and I thought if you would come and assure him of your forgiveness, it might be some relief; and oh! you could tell him of the dying thief upon the cross.

“I will go this instant, child,” said Mrs. Murray, rising from her seat, “an’ God

grant I may be permitted to do him some good."

Sir James lay tossing wildly upon his couch. In vain did wife and children gather around him, exhausting every device to bring relief to body or mind. "I'm lost, lost, utterly ruined and undone"—was his incessant cry, "I have sold my soul for a mess of pottage. I have betrayed the cause of Christ—I have persecuted and murdered His people. There is blood upon my hands, and the avenger of blood is pursuing me."

"When Mrs. Murray entered the room, and his eye fell upon her countenance, he started up in the bed with a scream of agony and remorse—"Are ye come to torment me before the time?" he exclaimed, with a volley of fearful oaths. "Begone from my sight this instant. I am lost—lost for ever. I am going down to hell, to dwell for ever with the damned, and is that not enough to satisfy you?"

Must ye come to feast your eyes upon my misery?" She attempted to speak; she told him she freely forgave him; she reminded him that the blood of Christ could cleanse from all sin, that there was mercy even for the vilest of the vile.

"Don't talk to me of mercy," he cried—"there is no mercy for me! I have sinned away my day of grace—I have wounded Jesus in the house of His friends—I have denied Him, and He will deny me. I am lost! lost! lost! I feel the torments of hell, already begun in my soul! Fool! fool! that I was, to sell my soul for a little earthly ease and comfort." Thus he raved in his remorse and despair, until death came to end the painful scene, and summon him to appear at the bar of his final Judge.

Finding her presence only added to his distress, Mrs. Murray left the house and returned to her own humble home; the cries of the wretched man, which could be

heard a great distance from the house, still ringing in her ears. "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord." Sir James sleeps in the tomb of his ancestors, and Andrew Murray, in his moorland bed. The traveller, in passing over Eskdale moor, may perchance stumble upon a moss-grown stone, defaced with the stains of nearly two hundred years, bearing this inscription:—

"Halt passenger, a word with thee or two,
Why I lie here, would'st thou truly know?
By wicked hands, hands cruel and unjust,
Without all law, my life from me they thrust;
And being dead, they left me on the spot,
For burial this same place I got:
Truth's friends in Eskdale, now rejoice their lot,
To wit the faithful for truth my seal thus got."

Here lie the mortal remains of Andrew Murray, and thence will they arise, when the last trump shall sound, to be reunited to the spirit, and dwell for ever with the Lord.

THE END.

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