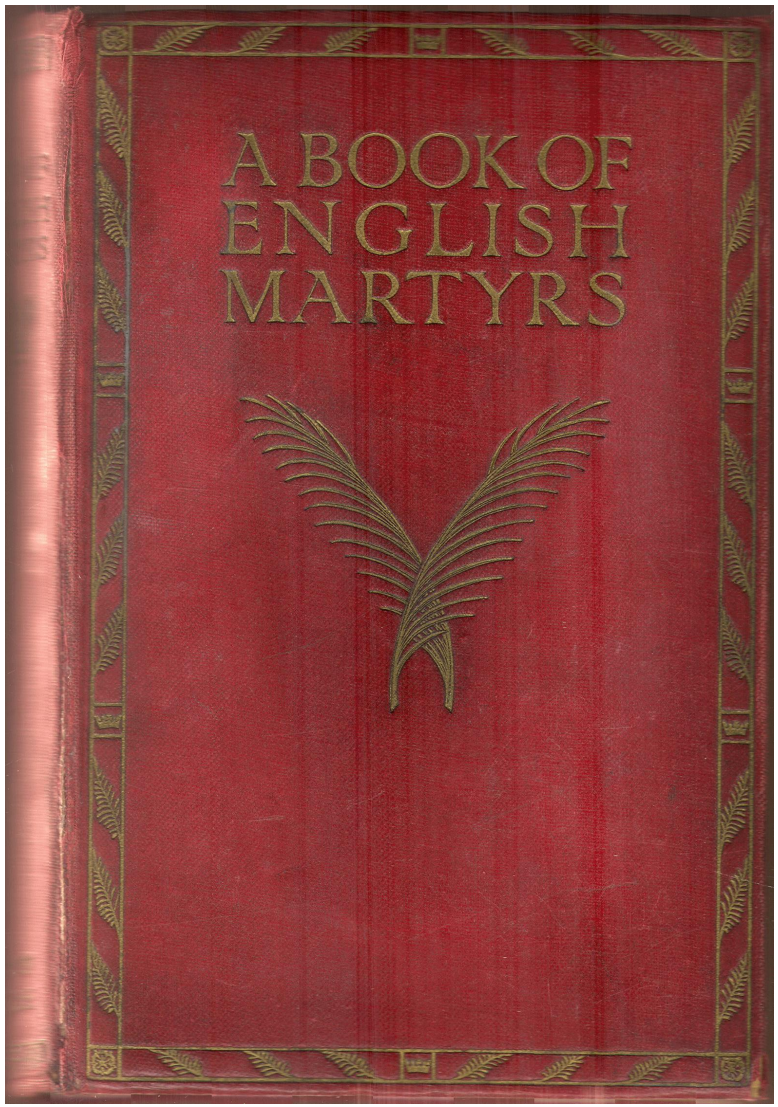

A BOOK OF ENGLISH MARTYRS

By E.M. WILMOT-BUXTON
F.R.Hist.S.
Illustrated by
M. MEREDITH WILLIAMS

BURNS & OATES LIMITED
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1915

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EXECUTION OF MARGARET POLE, COUNTESS OF SALISBURY.

THE PREFACE

By Dom Bede Camm, O.S.B.

I have been asked to introduce this book to the public on the ground that the idea of it was obtained from some of my writings, and I have felt it impossible to refuse, though, of course, the author needs no introduction from me. For I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing once more my conviction of the extreme importance of familiarizing our Catholic children with the story of all that our Fathers suffered in order to keep the Faith alive in England. We owe them everything, and we cannot afford to forget the debt. I am certain that devotion to these heroes of ours will do more than anything else to keep our own faith fervent, and, by helping our children to realize at what a price this glorious heritage has been preserved to them, make them cherish it as their own most priceless possession. It is therefore not only a duty of gratitude, but also an apostolate, to make the story of the Martyrs known. For we cannot love those whom we do not know, and we shall not strive to follow those whom we have not learnt to love.

There is yet another reason for making this story known, and that is the charity which we owe to those whom we are taught to pray for as our "separated brethren." There is nothing which refutes so simply and so irresistibly the sophisms of modern Anglican theories of "Continuity" and the like, as the simple, unvarnished history of those who died in England for the Pope and for the Mass.

The present writer was brought up, as are so many nowadays, in the firm belief that the Church by Law Established was the true representative of the old Catholic Church in England, the Church of Anselm, Dunstan and More. It was the Beatification of our Martyrs in 1886 which first directed his attention to them, and in reading their history he soon found the whole fabric of this belief tumbling about his

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ears like a pack of cards. Why did these Martyrs suffer torture and death? Simply for clinging to the Faith of their Fathers. They had not changed their religion, they were not the innovators; they died because they held dearer than life the old Faith of old England. We cannot serve two masters; we must choose between the cause for which these men fought, that is the old religion, and the new religion of their persecutors. If we wish to have our part with More and Campion, we cannot serve the Church of Cramer and Elizabeth.

Thus the history of the Martyrs has an important apologetic value, and we trust that among the readers of this book there will be many to whom the facts recounted may come as a revelation, as a first gleam of light in the darkness. For the Martyrs of England are still carrying on their apostolate, still pointing their beloved countrymen to the Rock whence they were hewn.

But the primary intention of the author has been to make Catholic children familiar with their glorious story, and so to make them more enthusiastic lovers of their holy religion. And I think that this aim is accomplished, for the book is written with knowledge and is instinct with enthusiasm. I hope that she will be encouraged by the reception it receives to continue the story into the seventeenth century, where there are Martyrs not less splendid to tell of, stories not less full of high adventure and thrilling interest than those here recounted.

The reader will not fail to grasp how futile are the calumnies which would brand our Martyrs as traitors to the State. As one of them said at the very foot of the gallows, "You may make the saying of a blessed Mass treason, you may make the saying of a Hail Mary treason, but other treason than this have I never committed." These men prayed with their dying breath for the Sovereign whose cruel laws sent them to their doom, and not one of them but might have saved his life had he consented to attend even once the Protestant service. Not disloyalty, not treason, but conscience was their true offence.

We hope that no one will think that we have any desire to rake up old grievances, or to stir up the dying embers of controversial strife, by thus dwelling on the memories of these heroes of the Faith. We have long ago forgiven the horrors of Tyburn: the only revenge that we desire is the divine vengeance of Christ's Martyrs who cry beneath the Altar of God, "How long, O Lord, How long?" Their one desire on earth was the conversion of their dear England; that, we may be sure, is their prayer now. It is also our own. Of late years, devotion to our Martyrs has happily found a local center among us at Tyburn Convent. The ceaseless intercession, the public Novenas, the processions, the pilgrimages there, have done very much to enkindle and to strengthen enthusiasm and love for their dear memories.

It would be well if all who read this work were able to make a pilgrimage to Tyburn, to honor those whose outpoured blood has made it the holiest spot in all our land. There they will find many memorials; relics, statues, pictures, stained glass windows, telling the deathless story of suffering and triumph. Children should be taken there to learn the stories in the windows, and to pray before the sacred images of those whom this book will then have taught them to love.

DOWNSIDE ABBEY, 4th March, 1915.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

It has been the endeavor of the writer of this book to tell the Story of the English Martyrs, wherever possible, in the actual words of the records or letters of the time. There has been no need, and no attempt to color the story in order to heighten its interest; for the accounts available, though matter-of-fact enough, and very simple, breathe a spirit of fervent faith and high adventure that should appeal to every right-minded boy and girl of to-day.

That the story told here is incomplete goes without saying. It has, indeed, only been possible to include the two-and-thirty martyrs, whose lives form the subject matter of this book, by grouping them together according to the particular point of history which their martyrdom best illustrates.

The story has also been confined to the sixteenth century by limits of space, and because the next century opens up a new phase in the Persecution, which can best be dealt with in a separate volume.

For much fuller information and further illustration of this most interesting period of Catholic history, amongst the many to whom the author owes a debt of gratitude, she would send her young readers to the following volumes:

- Cardinal Gasquet: HENRY VIII AND THE ENGLISH MONASTERIES and LAST ABBOT OF GLASTONBURY
- Father Morris: TROUBLES OF OUR CATHOLIC FORE-FATHERS and LIFE OF FATHER JOHN GERARD
- Father Bridgett: BLESSED THOMAS MORE and BLESSED JOHN FISHER
- Dom Beded Cassius: LIVES OF THE ENGLISH MARTYRS, I AND II and FORGOTTEN SHRINES
- Dr. Allen: MARTYRDOM OF CAMPION and DEFENCE OF ENGLISH CATHOLICS
- Parson: LIFE OF CAMPION
- Richard Simpson: LIFE
- Canon Jessopp: ONE GENERATION OF A NORFOLK HOUSE
- Challoner: MEMOIRS OF MISSIONARY PRIESTS
- Gillow: DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH CATHOLICS

E. M. W. B.

Hove, Easter 1915

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CHAPTER I

THE ROAD TO TYBURN
MAY 4, 1535

"Arbor decora et fulgida"

The bright sun of a London spring was shining cheerfully one May morning upon the narrow unpaved streets and crowded houses of the city. Folk were astir early that fourth of May, in the year 1535, hurrying in groups of three or four to line the byways, as though eager to secure good places from which to view some great procession.

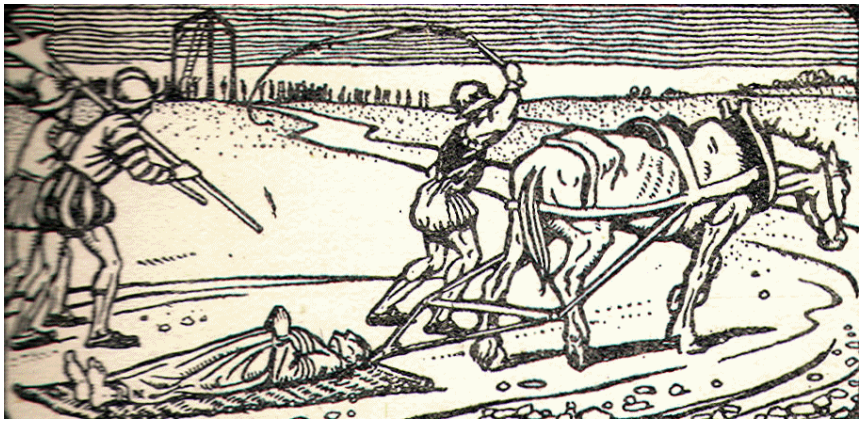
News travelled slowly in those days, and a young man just arrived in London from the North country might well be utterly ignorant of the cause of the unwonted excitement. Such an one we may imagine pushing his way eagerly through the crowd fast gathering in close ranks round the gates of the Tower; and having gained a place of vantage, we can hear him questioning a grave-faced onlooker at whose side he found himself.

"Is it a royal procession, good sir? Doth the king belike pass by this way with the new queen?"

"Nay," said the other, "'tis a procession, indeed, but a sad enough sight, methinks, for a bright May morning. But see there for yourself; the gates open, and they come."

There was a shout or two from the crowd, but on the whole the onlookers viewed in astonished silence a sight that was strange indeed to Catholic England in the year 1535.

A broken-kneed horse, urged forward by much use of the whip, was dragging behind him a hurdle, upon which lay bound a venerable old man in the robes of a Carthusian monk. Behind him, in like fashion, were drawn three other monks; and an old secular priest in his cap and cassock brought up the rear. Through the filth and mud of the unpaved streets they jolted, covered with mire, their heads to the horses' tails, yet upon their faces a look of strange joy and peace as they passed upon their Way of Sorrows to Tyburn Tree.



THE ROAD TO TYBURN

"These be no traitors surely," said our young countryman, deeply stirred. "What can be the meaning of it?"

His companion looked cautiously about him, but the crowd was fast thinning as the people hurried in the wake of the procession, and he was able to speak without fear of being overheard.

"These be three holy priors of the Charterhouse," he said. "John Houghton, prior of the London house, and Dom Robert Lawrence and Dom Augustine Webster, from the country convents of Beauvale and Axholme. After them is drawn Richard Reynolds, of the monastery of Syon, down Isleworth way, a Bridgettine monk; and he that came last is Father John Haile, Vicar of Isleworth."

"But what wrong have they done?" questioned the lad. "Have they given up the Faith and turned heretics, like the

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followers of Master Tyndale and of the German friar, Martin Luther?"

"Nay," said the other with a strange smile; "far from it. But let us walk together to Tyburn, for I would fain see the end of these good men; and we will talk by the way. Before you go, however, look up at these walls and tell me if you know who lie in prison there these many months?"

The boy looked up at the frowning grey walls of the Tower and shook his head. "Tell me, good sir."

His companion pointed to a narrow window in the Beauchamp Tower overlooking the courtyard. "There," said he solemnly, "Sir Thomas More, late Chancellor of England, keeps his state; and yonder in the Bell Tower lies Bishop John Fisher of Rochester, very sorely sick, and awaiting the call of death. Both these are here at the king's pleasure for the same fault that has brought you holy priors to the gallows."

"But what *is* their fault?" cried the youth. "Why, in my part of the country, we regard these monks with the utmost reverence, and more especially the Carthusians. For 'tis well known that their dress is meaner and poorer than that of other monks, so short and scanty and rough that the very sight affrights one. They wear coarse hair-shirts next their skin, fast nearly always, eat only bran bread, never touch flesh, and have but one meal a day."

"That is very true," replied his companion, "and amongst all the holy brethren Prior Houghton was one of the holiest and humblest of all, and greatly beloved by his monks. And. now, if you will be patient with an old man's tale and let him tell it in his own way, I will tell you what has brought them to this condition." To this the lad eagerly assented, and as eagerly listened, as they walked on the outskirts of the crowd along the three long miles that lay between the Tower and Tyburn.

For some minutes his companion seemed lost in thought, for which, briskly rousing himself, he presently offered a sort of apology.

"It is just twenty-four years since I passed here on my way to see the great procession that hailed King Henry on his marriage with Queen Catherine. A gallant youth he was indeed, and we who cared deeply for our Faith rejoiced to think we had a ruler who delighted in theology as others did in tennis, and who indeed might have been our archbishop had his brother Arthur lived to be king. I remember well how firmly he stood by Pope Julius II in his league against the French invaders of Italy, and I was present when the legate landed at Dover with the 'golden rose' blessed by the Pope and sent to his 'well-beloved son Henry.'

"Four years after his accession, the new Pope Leo X sent him a consecrated sword and cap, which the king was proud to wear in procession to St. Paul's over yonder."

"Were those the days of the Cardinal Wolsey, good sir?" asked the youth.

"He was then beginning to make his influence felt," was the reply; "but it was in the years that followed, the years of the French war and the Holy League, that he really came to the front. Most men in England hated and feared him; and some of us think that the worldly spirit in which he worked his will, and his own selfish ambitions, were the grounds for much of the king's action in later days."

"But surely they brought about a terrible fall for the Cardinal?"

"Aye, and some think a no less terrible fall for King Henry, young sir. Yet in those days Henry was still a devoted servant of the Church, and the Cardinal himself was known to have written to Rome that 'the king will be ready to expose his person and goods to support the honor and dignity of the Holy See.'

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"Barely two months before the death of Leo X, he had conferred upon Henry that noble title 'Defensor Fidei'—Defender of the Faith—which, strangely enough, he still holds with pride. You know, methinks, why it was given him, and of the book he wrote in defense of our Catholic doctrines against the ex-monk Luther—a book which so expressly and clearly supported the supreme authority of the Holy Father that even those who had had doubts of the divine origin of that authority were at once convinced."

"What, then, was the cause of the sudden change in the king's mind?—that is what I have never clearly grasped," said the boy.

"Mayhap it was not so sudden as it seemed," replied the other. "There were those among us who marked with dismay, even in those days, the extravagance of the king, the good-for-nothings who thronged the Court, the growing indifference of his Majesty to our good Queen Catherine.

"Self-pleasing and laxity of life suit not well with the precepts of our holy Faith; and one who was as mighty a spendthrift as his father was a miser, had already begun to look covetously upon the rich lands of the monasteries, the gifts of donors in bygone years.

"Meantime, however, his Majesty had other matters on hand. 'Tis thought that it was early in May of the year 1527, the year that Wolsey went to France to make an alliance with the king of that land, that Henry first told him that he intended to put away his queen, Catherine of Aragon, on the plea that her previous marriage with his brother Arthur made their wedlock an unlawful bond. It was not, however, till the Cardinal's return that he realized the truth of the case, that the king had fallen in love with the queen's waiting-woman, Anne Boleyn, and was determined to make her his wife.

"It was in 1529, now nearly six years ago, since that strange trial took place in the great hall of the Black Friars before the Pope's legate, Cardinal Campeggio, and our Cardinal Wolsey. The queen, you must know, refused to plead before such judges, made a dignified appeal to the Pope, and then withdrew. The trial went on, and a week later John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, rose and declared that a two years' study of the question had convinced him that the marriage-tie was even more sacred since Christ's day than when John Baptist died for it. From which time the king hath never ceased to look with an evil eye upon that good bishop.

"Nothing came of the trial, as was clearly meant by the Pope beforehand, as far as judgment on Catherine was concerned; but from that time dated the resentment of Mistress Boleyn—as she was then—which brought about the fall of Wolsey. Let us leave him now—though, methinks, I would rather he lay to-day with Bishop Fisher, ready to make a glorious end for his religion, than in his unhonored grave at Leicester Abbey.

"That was in 1530, and two years later the king was privately married to Anne Boleyn."

To the latter part of this information the lad had listened somewhat impatiently. "I know," he said, "that the king hath married the queen in the face of Holy Church, and that many of us say it is no marriage at all. But what has this to do with the priors yonder, whose limbs are by this time well-nigh rent asunder by the jolting of those hurdles? Surely they had no voice in the matter of the royal marriage?"

"See, my son, how one thing hangs upon another," replied the old man gravely. "No sooner had Henry disobeyed the Head of the Church in this matter, than he must needs justify his position. His adviser was now Thomas Cromwell, whom no doubt you know as Vicar-General, which he hath been made this year. Already, too, a suggestion had been made by one Thomas Crammer, a private tutor whom the king had met at Waltham Abbey when he stayed there on a royal progress, soon after the trial of Queen Catherine had been dropped. This man said that if the universities of Europe would pronounce in favor of the Divorce, the king would have

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sufficient authority on which to act. 'Twas a lucky suggestion for him, for after being made private chaplain to Anne Boleyn, in less than three years he sitteth as Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace, though a priest twice married, and full, they say, of the new doctrines taught by Master Tyndale and his followers.

"Thus were the first steps taken in the direction of throwing off the authority of the Holy See; and now the king began to realize, 'tis said, what he, wise and far-seeing sovereign though he be, had taken three-and-twenty years to discover; and that was the fact that bishops and abbots at their consecration make an oath to the Pope clean contrary to the oath they make to him, so that they seem his subjects and not the king's."

"But surely that oath hath been taken since the days of Anselm without harm coming of it?" cried the boy, who was himself something of a scholar.

"That is so; but it gave the king the foothold he needed in trying to make the clergy answerable to his authority alone. On the day that they submitted their ancient rights into his hands, Sir Thomas More surrendered the great seal, the symbol of his office as Chancellor."

"I had heard of that," said the youth. "Indeed, many in my part of England blamed him for so doing, seeing that the king had not yet thrown off subjection to Rome, and was busy about the punishment of heretics at that very time."

"And meantime," said his companion drily, "Henry had got Cranmer to declare his marriage lawful, and was openly scoffing at the Papal excommunication, which naturally descended on one who was living in sin and in open defiance of the authority of the Church. In the year that Anne was crowned queen—a sorry ceremony, when not a man cheered or uncovered as she passed through the streets—it was ordered by the King's Council that none should preach at Paul's Cross without declaring in his sermon that the Pope's authority was no greater than that of any foreign bishop.

"Then came last year's Parliament, which abolished all payments to Rome, ordered that bishops were to be elected at the king's will, and passed the famous Succession Act, which not only declared the king's first marriage to be against the laws of God, but entailed the succession to the crown on the children of Anne Boleyn. This, as you know, deprived the young princess Mary of her rights, and made the princess Elizabeth, then but a few months old, our future queen; and, moreover, the oath to support this succession was ordered to be taken by every person over sixteen.

"In the April of that same year, a nun named Elizabeth Barton was executed, with six of her adherents, for claiming an inspiration from God that bade her declare the displeasure of the Almighty with the king's divorce. And this, methinks, so frightened people that many hastened to take the oath when it was clear against their conscience.

"The first to refuse publicly was Sir Thomas More; and Bishop Fisher soon followed his example. Within a few days both these good men were sent to the Tower, where they still lie, as you saw just now.

"This was in the April of last year; and soon after did Cranmer begin a visitation throughout his province, in order to get the signatures of the clergy to the oath, and to a declaration that 'the Bishop of Rome has no greater jurisdiction conferred upon him by God in this kingdom than any other foreign bishop.' Presently, therefore, his commissioners come to the Charterhouse, and demand the oath of Prior Houghton. So occupied was this good old man with the things of God, and so far removed from worldly matters, that at first he saith that what lady the king was pleased to marry or divorce was no concern of him or his monks. 'But you must declare the king's first marriage invalid,' said they. 'And that,' he said very simply, 'I cannot do, since the Pope must know better than I.'

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"At that he was ordered to the Tower; but after some weeks he was persuaded, good simple soul, by various learned men, that the oath might be taken with the qualifying words 'as far as was lawful.' His monks, 'tis said, understanding little of the matter, openly rejoiced in this solution, at which he solemnly warned them, saying, 'Our hour is not yet come.' And then he told them of a dream that he had had the night before leaving the Tower, when he had been warned that within a year he should return to the same prison and there finish his road of martyrdom.

"Now late last year, as no doubt you know, an Act was passed by Parliament proclaiming the king Supreme Head of the Church in England, and declaring the oath touching the succession to be binding on every subject in the realm.

"Early in the present year, therefore, Prior Houghton was visited by two country priors, Lawrence and Webster, who wished to consult with him as to the course they must take.

"The prior told them that he had already assembled his convent and put the matter before them. 'Let us die in our simplicity,' they had cried. But he knew that a worse trial than death was before them, and warned them that while he himself and some of the older monks might suffer death, the young novices would he cast out into a world for which they were entirely unfitted. He determined therefore to go, with his brother priors, to Cromwell, lately appointed Vicar-General to the king, and het; him to soften in some way the terms of the oath.

"Will you obey the king as Supreme Head of the Church in England?' asked Cromwell bluntly.

We cannot acknowledge him as such,' said they.

"Forthwith they were committed to the Tower, and with them Richard Reynolds, a Bridgettine monk, who had refused the oath, and old John Haile, Vicar of Isleworth, who had lamented the king's cruelty and oppression to a young priest named Feron, who afterwards betrayed him.

"'Tis well known that at their trial last week the jury refused to find a verdict against them, being horrified at the thought of condemning such holy men to a cruel death. But Cromwell himself came down and raged at them, so that at last they were terrified into a verdict of high treason."

By this time the speaker and his young companion had reached the spot now known as Marble Arch, and formed part of a vast crowd of onlookers, silent and awed for the most part, in the midst of which rose the gallows, the fatal Tyburn Tree. By dint of scrambling up the lower branches of a neighboring tree, the lad could see that Prior Houghton, still in his monk's robe, was standing on the ladder which rested against one of the supports, and that from below a man in the robes of a King's Councilor was urging him to yield, and promising him pardon.

"What saith he in answer?" asked the lad's companion.

"Hush, thou canst hear him for thyself," said the boy, as a clear, gentle old voice floated over the heads of the crowd, now profoundly silent.

"I call God to witness, and beg of you all to bear me witness at the dread Judgment day, that here, about to die, I declare publicly that I refuse to comply with the will of our lord the king, not out of any pertinacity, malice, or rebellious disposition, but only from the fear of God, lest I should offend His Sovereign Majesty, seeing our Holy Mother the Church has decreed and determined otherwise than the king and his Parliament have ordained. Wherefore I am obliged in conscience, and am also ready and not dismayed, to suffer these and all possible torments rather than oppose the teaching of the Church. Pray for me, and pity my brethren, whose unworthy prior I have been."

Then came a pause. "What doth he now?" asked the elder man. "He commendeth his spirit into the hands of God,"

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replied the lad's awed voice. "And now they turn the ladder, so that he hangs by the neck—and now—and now they cut him down while he is yet alive. Ah, and the rest I cannot bear to look upon! But hark! Surely 'tis his voice again!"

Thin and faint but full of fervor came the words from that bed of torture and death.

"Most Holy Jesus, have mercy on me in this hour!"

A moment later he spoke his last words, and the lad, white and trembling as he descended from the tree, whispered to his companion that as the executioner, in his brutal office, laid his hand upon his heart to tear it from his breast, the old man said gently, "Good Jesus, what wilt thou do with my heart?" and so died.

"What of the others?" his companion asked a bystander some time later, when he had led his unnerved companion away from the dreadful scene.

The reply was emphatic. "It is long since persons have been seen to die with greater constancy. No change was noticed in their color or tone of speech, though they saw the execution of their friends before they died themselves. But while it was going on they preached and exhorted the bystanders with the greatest boldness to do well, and obey the king in everything that was not against the honor of God and the Church."

"Do not such brave words cheer thy sinking heart, my son?" said the old man to his young companion. "And was it not truly a royal procession along the Way of Sorrows that we have witnessed together, even as that of our Master on the road to Calvary?

But the lad was still stricken with horror. "How can these things be in Christian England?" he gasped. "Surely the very stones will cry out against such treatment of holy men, and 'twill be the last time that men look upon such a sorry sight."

"'Tis the first, but 'twill be by no means the last," said the old man solemnly. "I see, methinks, a long procession of martyrs, monks, secular priests, and laymen, passing along to Tyburn Tree during the years to come; and the fruit borne by that Tree, though bitter to the taste, shall be for the healing of the nation and the return of England once more to the true Faith."

And with these words they parted.

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CHAPTER II

BLESSED THOMAS MORE
JOYFUL OF TRIBULACIONS

(Martyred on Tower Hill, July 6, 1535)

"If love be strong, hot, mighty and fervent,
Then may no trouble, grief, or sorrow fall,
But that the lover would be well content
All to endure and think it eke too small,
Though it were death, so he might therewithal
The joyful presence of that Person get
On whom he hath his heart and love yset."
Sir Thomas More

On that same fourth of May, when the Carthusians and their fellow-martyrs were leaving the Tower for Tyburn, a grey-haired prisoner with a singularly bright and cheery expression upon his worn face, looked down upon them from the Beauchamp Tower, and said to his daughter, as she pressed close to hint with a shudder at the sight: "Lo, dost thou not see, Meg, that these blessed Fathers be now as cheerfully going to their deaths as bridegrooms to their marriage? See then, mine own dear daughter, the great difference there is between such as have spent their days in a narrow and penitential life for their religion, and such as have in the world, as thy poor father hath done, spent their days in ease and pleasure. For God, considering their long lives of penance, speedily taketh them hence to the joy of Heaven. Whereas He leaveth thy father, Meg, thinking him not worthy to come to that blessedness, leaveth him here to be plagued and turmoiled with misery."

The words were those of a truly brave and humble spirit, that shrank not at all from death, seeing that this was but the means of uniting him to the Divine Friend whose life-long lover he had been.

Two months later Sir Thomas More, late Chancellor of England, had himself joined the tiny band of English martyrs that was to increase so fast in the days to come.

From his earliest childhood Thomas More had shown himself one of those happy souls that are so full of Divine grace, that everything to them is a cause of joy and merriment. The story goes that, as a babe, his nurse was carrying him on horseback across a river, when just as they reached the opposite bank, the animal slipped and lost its balance. The frightened nurse flung the child as far as she could towards the shore, and held on to the saddle herself until the horse had floundered into a place of safety. But when she ran in terror to seek the babe, she found him lying on his back in a ditch, laughing and chuckling to himself with glee. It was in the same spirit of happy humor that he was to meet all the adventures of his future life.

He was born at Milk Street in the City of London, in the year 1478, and was educated at St. Anthony's School in Threadneedle Street, close to where the Bank of England now stands. St. Anthony's was a free grammar school where he received an excellent grounding in Latin from one of the few "born school-masters" of that time.

It was the custom in those days to send promising boys, the sons of gentlemen or of nobles, to serve as pages in the houses of great ecclesiastics; and accordingly young More was sent, when he was thirteen years old, to the household of Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor of England.

There his bright face and ready wit soon made him a favorite. The Cardinal, usually a somewhat severe personage, would watch with a twinkling eye how the boy threw himself into the breach when an actor in one of the Christmas "mumming plays" fell out; and how he took the part without

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previous preparation, "so that he made the lookers-on more sport than the players themselves." And more than once, as he stood behind his master's chair, or poured the wine for some distinguished guest, the Cardinal would murmur to his neighbor confidentially, "That child here waiting at the table, whoever shall live to see it, will prove a marvelous man."

At the age of fourteen, through Cardinal Morton's interest, Thomas More was placed at Canterbury College, Oxford, the future Christ-church or Cardinal's College. His father had a large family and no money to spare, so the life of the young "foundation scholar" was not too easy. In after life he spoke gratefully of his training in this respect. "It was thus," he says, "that I indulged in no vice or pleasure, and spent my time in no vain or hurtful amusements. I did not know what luxury meant, and never learnt to use money badly; in a word, I loved and thought of nothing but my studies."

It was probably during this period of "plain living and high thinking" that he found time to study, besides Latin and Greek, French, music, arithmetic, geometry, and history.

When he was eighteen years of age, he entered upon his career as a barrister, becoming a student at Lincoln's Inn; and there, while engaged in the study of law, his mind was occupied still more fully by considerations as to whether he were not called to the higher path of the secular priest or the monk. For some years he lived near the Carthusians of the Charterhouse, "frequenting daily their spiritual exercises, but without anie vow"; and though it was made clear to him in time that his vocation was to marry and bring up his children in fear of the Lord, it was no dread of the austerity of the religious life that withheld him. His great-grandson tells us that "he used oftentimes to wear a sharp shirt of hayre next his skinne, which he never left off wholly; no, not when he was Lord Chancellor of England, which my grandmother, on a time in the heate of sommer espying, laughed at . . . not knowing wherein the true wisdome of a Christian man consisteth. He added also to this austerity a discipline everie Fryday and high fasting dayes, thinking that such cheere was the best he could bestowe on his rebellious bodie. He used also much fasting and watching, lying often either upon the bare ground or upon some bench, or laying some logg under his head." And with all this, he was ever one of the merriest and most cheerful of men.

While he was a student, More, then just of age, made the acquaintance of the great Greek scholar Erasmus, and the two became close friends. Their letters give charming evidence of their mutual affection and appreciation of each other.

"Did Nature ever frame a sweeter, happier character than that of More?" asks Erasmus, writing to a mutual acquaintance; and in another letter he gives an interesting glimpse of the royal family, and especially of the young Prince Henry, who was to play such an important part in the life of "his most delightful" friend.

Says he, "I once composed a heroic poem in praise of Henry VII and of his children, on this wise. Thomas More, who, while I was staying in a country house, had paid me a visit, took me out for a walk to a neighboring village. There all the king's children, except Arthur, the eldest, were being educated. When we reached the Hall, all the attendants were assembled, and in the midst stood Henry, then nine years old, yet already with a royal bearing, betokening a certain loftiness of mind joined with singular condescension. At his right was Margaret, about eleven years old. She afterwards married James, King of the Scots. At his left, in play, was Mary, four years old. Edmund, an infant, was carried by the nurse. More, after saluting Prince Henry, presented him with something he had written. As I was entirely taken by surprise I had nothing to offer, and I was obliged to promise to write something to show my respect. I was somewhat vexed with More for not warning me, and especially so since the prince, while we were dining, sent me a note asking some fruit of my pen. So I went

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home, and in spite of the Muses from whom I had long been separated, I finished my poem within three days."

This, then, was the first encounter between More and the future king, who was to become his intimate friend, and thirty-six years later was to sign his death-warrant.

Another of More's friends was the learned Colet, he future founder of St. Paul's School, and one of our great reformers of education. Colet became More's confessor, and to him we find the latter writing in such affectionate terms as these: "What can be more distressing to me than to be deprived of your most dear society, after being guided by your wise counsels, cheered by your charming familiarity, assured by your earnest sermons, and helped forward by your example, so that I used to obey your very look and nod."

So the years passed quickly by, enlivened by the society of clever and witty scholars such as these, until, in the year 1505, More took to himself one closer still, his "dear little wife," as he calls her in his own epitaph, composed some twenty years later.

She gave him four children—Margaret, Elizabeth, Cicely, John; and after six years of happy married life, she died. Her husband, who "had made her such," says Erasmus quaintly, "that he would willingly have passed his whole life with her," doubtless had her in mind when he wrote the lines:

> Far from her lips' soft door
> Be noise, be silence stern,
> And hers be learning's store,
> Or hers the power to learn.

His four young children called urgently for a mother's care, and within a very short time Thomas More married a worthy soul seven years his elder, who, while she probably never understood in any way the depth and religious feeling of her husband's character, made him a good sensible wife and his children an excellent stepmother.

Just before his first marriage, More had fallen into disgrace with King Henry VII for opposing his unlawful exactions in the way of money. This seemed a bad beginning for the young lawyer, who had recently taken his seat as Member of Parliament; but a year before his second marriage, the death of the old king placed Henry VIII upon the throne. This handsome young prince, full of zeal for learning and religion, had not forgotten his old acquaintance, Sir Thomas More, who soon became a leading light in his profession, and Under-Sheriff for London. It was now that he moved from his home in Wallbrook to Crosby Place in Bishopsgate Street Without, the hall of which still remains, and has recently been moved bodily to Chelsea. Here his children began to grow up, until Margaret, the eldest, was about eighteen, when the whole family moved to the beautiful house in Chelsea he had built for himself, a house "commodious rather than magnificent," in the midst of a large garden stretching a hundred yards to the river's edge.

Chelsea was in those days a little country village, some way from London town, and generally approached by the river Thames, then "a pleasant stream bordered by gardens and palaces." Here he wrote his famous *Utopia*, setting forth his ideas as to government and education, and meantime put them to some extent into practice by experimenting upon his household, which by this time had reached a considerable size.

There were, of course, his own four children, of whom John, the youngest, would be thirteen when the move was made to Chelsea. There were also William Roper, the young husband of his daughter Margaret, who had married at the age of sixteen; and his step-daughter, Alice Middleton, with her husband, also quite young people. Probably a lad named Giles Heron, a ward of More, and later on the husband of Cecily More, made an eighth inmate; and Margaret Giggs, an orphan relation, was as one of his own daughters. There was also John Clements, student and tutor, who afterwards married this Margaret; John Harris, the secretary; Henry Paterson, "the

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Fool," for whom More had a particularly gentle and kindly affection; and a little later, a poor gentlewoman named Paula, who had lost her all in a lawsuit.

This, then, formed the "whole school" to whom More writes those delightful letters, of which lack of space forbids more than a mention here. He reminds them how on returning from his journeys, he has ever brought back some cake or fruit or piece of silk to deck them; how he has always given them plenty of kisses and but very few strokes of the rod, the rod itself being only a bundle of peacock's feathers.

But Margaret, wedded to her boy husband, whom More rescued from the snares of heresy, was his special darling, to whom he wrote on terms of the most tender affection, and for whom his heart was wrung to its depths on one dark morning, when she lay apparently at death's door with the terrible "sweating sickness" of those days.

Kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament in his private chapel, "Sir Thomas," says Roper, "there on his knees, with tears, most devoutly besought Almighty God that it would like His goodness, unto whom nothing is impossible, if it were His blessed will, to vouchsafe graciously to hear his petition."

His prayer was heard, and a remedy the doctors had not tried occurring to him, he used it with such effect that the girl recovered—"as it was thought miraculously," says her husband. Adding, "Whom, if it had pleased God at that time to have taken to His mercy, her father said he would never have meddled in worldly matters more."

If we remember the description given by Lady Jane Grey of her own childhood some few years later, of the harshness of her parents, and the abundance of slaps and pinches that fell to the lot of the ordinary child in those days, we turn with relief to this peaceful picture at Chelsea. There we see the witty father, with his merry eyes and keen-edged tongue, quick to soften in sympathy and understanding with the clever, bright-eyed girls and boys, all eager to please him with their studies, and yet sure of an equally sympathetic interest in their play or their small troubles. "I never saw him really angry but once," declares Margaret Giggs; and yet his was no easy-going indulgence. None of the children was ever allowed to be idle. Mistress More's sharp eyes saw that each had his or her appointed task about the house; their father, "when his official position prevented personal attention to the poor, would send some of his family to dispense his alms, especially to the sick and aged. . . . In his parish of Chelsea he hired a house, in which he gathered many infirm, poor, and old people, and maintained them at his own expense . . . his daughter Margaret had the charge of this house when he was away."

The training thus given to Margaret Giggs in charity bore noble fruit later on, when we find her ministering to some of our martyrs in Newgate before their death, at the risk of her own life.

Their actual studies he superintended very closely. Girls and boys alike wrote to him in Latin, and meal-times were the scene of discussions in that language, sometimes deep, often merry, of some point raised in the daily reading.

So charming and cultured a nature as More's was not suffered to hide itself within the borders of Chelsea. His son-in-law tells us that "the king upon holidays, when he had done his own devotions, used to send for him, and then sit and converse with him upon matters of astronomy, geometry, divinity, and sometimes of his worldly affairs. And because he was of a pleasant disposition, it pleased the king and queen, after the council had supped—yea, at the time of their supper—to send for him to be merry with them. Who, when he perceived so much in his talk to delight that he could not in a month get leave to go home to his wife and children (whose company he most desired) . . . he began thereupon somewhat to dissemble his nature, and so by little and little from his accustomed mirth to disuse himself, so that he was not so often sent for."

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This device, however, did not always save him from the royal importunities. We hear that "such entire favor did the king bear him that he made him Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; and for the pleasure he took in his company would His Grace suddenly sometimes come to his house at Chelsea to be merry with him. Whither, on a time unlooked for, he came to dinner with him, and after dinner, in a fair garden of his, walked with him by the space of an hour, holding his arm about his neck."

Such marks of royal favor did not deceive the clear-sighted Chancellor, even in those early days when Henry was still, outwardly at least, a devout son of the Church. For when Roper expressed his surprise and gratification that he should be thus honored, Sir Thomas replied with a humorous look and smile: "I thank the Lord, son, that I find His Grace my very good lord indeed, and I believe he doth as singularly favor me as any subject within this realm. Howbeit, son Roper, I may tell thee I have no cause to be proud thereof, for if my head would win him a castle in France, it should not fail to go."

The words were a strange presage of what was to happen ten years later.

One is tempted to dwell on these peaceful days among the happy, merry folk at Chelsea, watched over and fondly cherished by the keen-witted, cultivated father, who, in the midst of the world, was accustomed to live the life of religious fervor and devotion of a monk. But the clouds were already threatening to blot out the sunshine of that ideal home, as the king's character deteriorated and his Court degenerated into a circle of vicious and self-indulgent gamesters, without a moral principle or a serious thought among them.

It was as he was on the point of starting for France with Wolsey, in order to bring about the Peace of Amiens, in 1527, that More would first hear of the king's pretended scruples concerning his marriage with Queen Catherine. We know that he and the Cardinal spent a night at the Bishop of Rochester's palace, when Wolsey did his best to bring over the holy John Fisher to the king's view; and we may safely conclude that Bishop Fisher was strengthened in his condemnation of it by the uprightness and sound principles of Sir Thomas More.

Two years later, Wolsey's failure to secure the divorce for the master he had tried to serve better than his God, had left him a ruined man, and the Chancellor's seal had been handed to More as his successor. "Everyone," writes a contemporary, "is delighted at his promotion, because he is an upright and learned man, and a good servant of the queen."

In accepting this office More himself had no choice, but he made it perfectly clear that, if offered as a bribe, it would certainly fail in its object. For, on the occasion of his taking the Chancellor's oath in the great Hall at Westminster, he said, before the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk: "Considering how wise and honorable a prelate hath lately taken so great a fall, I have no cause to rejoice in my new dignity. And as the dukes have charged me, on the king's behalf, uprightly to administer justice without corruption or partiality, so do I likewise charge them if they see me in anything to digress from my duty, not to fail to disclose it to His Grace."

"I do not at all congratulate More or literature," wrote his old friend Erasmus, when he heard of his elevation, "but I do indeed congratulate England, for a better or holier judge could not have been appointed.

The office of Chancellor was held by Sir Thomas More for two and a half years, during which time the unhappy question of the divorce of the king came more and more to the front. It was a sad and difficult time for one in such high position, for though More kept himself apart from all such matters as far as possible while they were yet undecided, he never hesitated to assert his own strong principles when called upon to act or speak.

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We have seen already how it came about that Henry, finding the Catholic Church would never grant him permission to put away his lawful wife, determined to defy that Church in the person of her representative, the Pope, and to be from henceforth a law unto himself. In the May of 1532 we find the French ambassador Chapuys writing thus: "Parliament is discussing the . . . prohibition of holding synods without express license of the king. This is a strange thing. Churchmen will be of less account than shoemakers, who have the power of assembling and making their own statutes . . . . The king also wishes bishops not to have the power to arrest persons accused of heresy. The Chancellor and the bishops oppose him. *He is very angry, especially with the Chancellor* . . . and is determined to carry the matter."

On May 16, 1532, Sir Thomas More resigned the Great Seal into the king's own hands in the garden of York Place, near Westminster. The reason given was that he was not equal to the work, but the actual cause of his resignation was well known. "The Chancellor has resigned," wrote a contemporary, "seeing that if he retained his office he would be obliged to act against his conscience. Everyone is concerned, for there never was a better man in the office."

The news was a great blow to his wife, who had never understood his high principles and uprightness of character. He told her of it in his own humorous fashion. It was the custom upon holy days, when his family attended the parish church of Chelsea, in the choir of which he was wont to sing, for one of his gentlemen in waiting to come to the door of his wife's pew when the Mass was over and to say, "Madam, my lord is gone."

On the next holy day after he had given up the seal he came himself to the pew, and with a low bow said to her, "Madam, my lord is gone."

"Tilly vally!" cried the lady, "what mean you by your silly jest?

"I mean," said he, "that Sir Thomas More is no longer Chancellor, having given up the Great Seal to the king."

The wrath of Alice was overwhelming, and probably enlivened all the walk home, though her husband, half rueful, half in fun, did his best to divert her attention to other subjects.

The loss of this office reduced Sir Thomas to comparative poverty. The strictest economy took the place of the old system of lavish expenditure. In cold weather "he was compelled, for the lack of other fuel, every night before he went to bed, to cause a great bundle of fern to be brought into his chamber, and with the blaze thereof to warm himself, his wife and his children, and so without any other fires to go to their beds."

More bitter than cold or short rations of food, however, would be the necessary dispersion of his big family, his beloved "school," and the pin-pricks of tiresome and trivial charges that Henry was now at pains to bring against his once revered Chancellor. In these it was easy enough to see the spiteful hand of Anne Boleyn, who clearly recognized him as the firm opponent of the only measures that could in any way justify her position as Henry's wife.

Thus he was accused of accepting the bribe of a silver gilt cup from a lady in whose husband's favor he had pronounced a verdict.

Called before the Council, he was asked if this were so.

"Certainly the lady offered me the cup," said More, "though long after the decree was given; and I did accept it out of courtesy."

At these words the Earl of Wiltshire, father of Anne Boleyn, exclaimed in glee: "Aha! Did I not tell you, my lords, that you would find the matter true?"

"And now perhaps my lord of Wiltshire would like to hear the end of the tale," suggested More quietly. "When I had received the cup, I caused my butler to fill it with wine, drank

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to the lady, and made her pledge me again. I did then oblige her to receive back the cup once more, and to take it as a New Year's gift to her husband."

This combination of courtesy and integrity was so absolutely characteristic of the late Chancellor that even his enemies were put to silence for a time.

It was now becoming increasingly clear to Sir Thomas More that the matter of the king's change of opinion was bound to have the most serious consequences in England. He seems to have once shared with his son-in-law Roper his forebodings that a time of persecution was at hand; and when the young man vehemently denied that such a thing was possible "under so Catholic a prince," he replied gravely, "I pray God, son Roper, some of us live not till that day." For this reason he now began to use his spare time in writing vigorous books in English in defense of the Catholic Faith, which was being attacked openly abroad and secretly in England.

Then came the Pentecost of 1533, when Anne Boleyn, who had been already privately married to the king, rode at the head of a magnificent procession to her coronation in London.

To this all the bishops of the southern province were summoned, and all the more prominent men of the kingdom, including, of course, Sir Thomas More. Bishop Fisher of Rochester, having sent a direct refusal, had been already arrested. More stayed quietly at home and said nothing. His wife and family at this time must have been sorely ill at ease, for the air was full of ugly rumors as to what line the king would take with those who dared to defy his wishes. Probably their affectionate representations made life no easier for him at this critical time, and there is perhaps a hint of gentle reproach in his words when, "after speaking often of the joys of Heaven, of the lives of the holy martyrs, of their marvelous patience, and what a happy and blessed thing it was for the love of God, to suffer the loss of goods, of liberty, and even of life, he would add that for himself, if he could perceive himself encouraged by his wife and children to die in a good cause, for joy thereof he would merrily run to death."

Yet he was wisely cautious and careful not to give offence unnecessarily, and to defend himself vigorously against the many false accusations brought against him at this time.

One of these was in connection with that curious phenomenon of the age, the ex-nun Elizabeth Barton, known as the Holy Maid of Kent. From the day of Queen Catherine's divorce this woman, claiming to have had special revelations from above, had loudly prophesied the downfall of the king, and was supported in this by several monks and friars. Nearly every person of importance in and about London became interested in her, though most had doubts as to her integrity; and amongst others, Sir Thomas More saw and talked with her, though not of any matter that touched the king or politics.

When, however, this unhappy nun, being forced at Paul's Cross to confess herself an impostor, was ordered to be hanged with six of her supporters, the fact that More had been even distantly connected with her was seized upon by Anne Boleyn to ruin him with the king. His name actually figured in the Bill of Attainder against the nun and her supporters, but when he was examined before a small Commission he found a far graver charge preferred against him. "How," asked Cranmer, Cromwell, and the Duke of Norfolk, "could he have been so ungrateful to the king as to provoke the latter put forth his book on the Seven Sacraments maintaining the Pope's authority, thus causing him, to his dishonor throughout all Christendom, to put a sword in the Pope's hand to fight against himself?"

The miserable meanness of this charge was sharply reproved by More, who reminded them that when Henry had written the book which earned him the title of "Defender of the Faith," he had actually warned his royal master that he was possibly unwise in so strongly maintaining the temporal as well as the spiritual authority of the Pope, of the necessity of

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which Sir Thomas at that time was not fully convinced. But Henry had replied, "We will set forth that authority to the uttermost, for we receive from the See of Rome our crown imperial."

"Which," said More, "I never heard of before, till His Grace told it me with his own mouth. And then we parted somewhat unpleasantly." The sequel to this interview with the Council must be told in Roper's own words:

"Then took Sir Thomas More his boat towards Chelsea, wherein the way he was very merry, and for that I was nothing sorry, hoping that he had got himself discharged out of the Parliament Bill. When he was landed and come home, then walked we twain alone in his garden together, when I, desirous to know how he had sped, said, 'I trust, sir, that all is well, because you are so merry?' 'It is so indeed, son Roper, I thank God,' quoth he. 'Are you then put out of the Bill?' quoth I. 'By my troth, son Roper, I never remembered it!' 'Never remembered it!' said I. 'A cause that toucheth yourself so near, and all of us for your sake! I verily trusted when I saw you so merry that all was well.'

"Then said he: ' Wilt thou know, son Roper, why I was so merry? In good faith I rejoiced that I had given the devil a foul fall, and that with those lords I had gone so far as, without great shame, I could never go back again.'

"At which words waxed I very sad, for though himself liked it well, yet liked it me but a little."

More, however, had too many friends for the king to dare to convict him on practically no evidence at all. It was only a matter of waiting, as he well knew, for when his favorite daughter congratulated him on his safety he said with a smile, "Meg, *quod differtur non aufertur*" (what is deferred is not done away with). When on another occasion an old friend in high position, the Duke of Norfolk, warned him that "it was perilous to strive with princes, since that meant death," he replied with his usual humorous twinkle: "Then in good faith, between your Grace and me is but this difference, that I shall die to-day and you to-morrow."

It was not long before the storm burst. On April 13, 1534 Sir Thomas More was summoned before a Commission composed of Archbishop Cranmer, Chancellor Audley, Thomas Cromwell, and—to his shame be it said—Benson, Abbot of Westminster, that he might publicly take the oath to support the Succession Act.

Now the whole point of this Act was that it directly set at nought the authority of the Pope, who had solemnly declared that Henry's marriage with Catherine was valid; for the Act proclaimed it to be against the law of God, and made the children of Anne Boleyn the only legal heirs to the Crown.

Many of the clergy had taken the oath, salving their consciences with the plea that they were bound to obey the king in matters temporal, and that the arrangements for the succession came under that head. That there must have been a long and bitter struggle in the mind of Blessed Thomas himself over this question is clear, both from his words to Roper and his declaration before the Commissioners, that he "saw no peril" in swearing to the succession, but would never "swear for a piece and set his hand to the whole oath." Such a man of prayer and of keen spiritual insight saw clearly that the whole Act was planned to be the death-blow of the Papal authority in the land; and as such he was determined not to sign. But that he knew that the alternative was death is clear. On the morning of the day on which he had been summoned to Lambeth he made his confession and received Holy Communion, "as his accustomed manner always was ere he entered into any matter of importance."

It was usual, when he left his home, for his wife and children to accompany him to the boat, where he would kiss them and bid them all farewell. But on this occasion the great fatherly heart of the future martyr could not face the ordeal of what he alone knew was his last farewell to his family in the home he loved so dearly. "He would suffer none of them forth

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the gate to follow him," says Roper, "but pulled the wicket after him, and shut them all from him; and with a heavy heart, as by his countenance it appeared, with me there took boat towards Lambeth. Wherein sitting still sadly awhile, at the last he suddenly rounded me in the ear and said, 'Son Roper, I thank our Lord the field is won.'

"What he meant thereby I then wist not, yet, loath to seem ignorant, I answered, 'Sir, I am therefore very glad.' But, as I conjectured afterwards, it was for that the love he had to God wrought in him so effectually that he conquered utterly all his worldly affections."

From that moment of anguish, when he looked his last as a free man upon his beloved ones, the bitterness of death was over for Thomas More. He had offered up to God those nearest his heart, and henceforth the love of the Divine Friend alone was his comfort and reward. Four days later he was committed to the tower for refusing to take the oath, and then, after a month's solitude within the grim walls of the Beauchamp Tower, the first pangs of his martyrdom were anticipated through his best-loved child, Margaret Roper, who had with difficulty got leave to see him. Filled with despair at the thought of her father, far from strong in health, shut up within those cold stone walls, and with only the prospect of death before him, Margaret, who had herself taken the oath, being also primed with arguments in its favor by Lady Alington, More's step-daughter, used these interviews to try her utmost to persuade him to stifle the voice of conscience and to take the oath. At first Sir Thomas tried to silence her with assurances that he was by no means unhappy, seeing that he had always loved the thought of solitude, "even in a straiter room than this." "I find no cause, I thank God, Meg, to reckon myself in worse case here than at home, for methinks God maketh a pet of me and setteth me on His lap and dandleth me." But when Margaret, in her blind affection, pressed him very sorely with her urging, he said very seriously: "Daughter Margaret, we two have talked of this thing more than twice or thrice, and I have told you that if it were possible for me to do the thing that might content the king's Grace, and God be not offended, no man had taken the oath more gladly than I would do."

"No man refuseth save you and the blind (obstinate) Bishop of Rochester," urged his daughter; to which he replied that even if Blessed John Fisher himself should take the oath, it would make no difference to him. He also solemnly assured her that in this matter he was in no such minority as she thought, since the greater part of Christendom were with him. "But it may mean death," urged Margaret weeping, to which he said very quietly that he had been prepared for that from the first. "I counted, Margaret, full surely many a restless, weary night while my wife slept, and thought I slept too, what peril were possible to fall to me; and in thinking of this I had a full, heavy heart. But yet I thank Our Lord for all that I never thought to change, though the very uttermost should happen to me that my fear ran upon."

In her grief the girl urged that the actual details of death might be far more terrible than he had yet realized, and that then it would perhaps be too late to take the oath.

"Too late, daughter Margaret," cried Sir Thomas, with kindling eyes, "I pray Our Lord that if ever I make such a change it may be Too late, indeed, for well I wot such change cannot be good for my soul." And then with softening voice as he saw her tears, he added, "Therefore, mine own good daughter, never trouble thy mind for anything that may happen to me in this life, since I wot very well that, without my fault, He will not let me be lost. Nothing can come but what God wills; and if anything happen me that you would rather not, pray to God for me, but trouble not yourselves; as I shall full heartily pray for us all that we may meet together in heaven, where we shall make merry forever and never have trouble after."

After this sharp trial of his constancy at the hands of the daughter he loved best in the world, the visits of his more

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worldly wife must have come almost as a relief. Dame Alice had no illusions on the subject, and rated him soundly for his foolishness in thus preferring to be shut up "in a close, filthy prison among rats and mice, when he might be enjoying the favor of the king and his council in his own 'fair house at Chelsea.' What, in God's name, mean you by tarrying here thus foolishly?" she cried, with a vexation probably assumed in order to mask her real sorrow and concern.

"But is not this house as nigh heaven as my own?" said he, when he could get a word in. "Tilly vally, tilly vally," cried she, "will this gear never be left!" To which he answered with his usual humorous twinkle, that he saw no great cause to rejoice in his house, since if he were to die and rise again after seven years and go thither again he would find some therein who would bid him get out of doors since it was none of his. He was much amused too at her real or pretended horror when she heard that he was locked in at night. "If the door were shut upon me, 'twould shut up my breath!" she cried. He said nothing, but he remembered "that she used on the inside to shut every night full surely her own chamber to her both doors and windows too, and used not to open them for all the long night."

Gay of heart then he remained during the long months of his imprisonment, though he was physically very ill, suffering agonies from cramp and internal troubles, and dependent on the charity of friends outside for the smallest comfort. All these things he gladly embraced as penances, adding thereto his own hair-shirt, worn by him for years, and a discipline "of whips and knotted cords"on certain fast-days. His maintenance had to be paid by his family, who were by this time so poor that Lady More had to sell her own clothes to pay his board, frugal as it was. Yet Sir Thomas was never without a jest and a smile for gaoler and friend alike, even when his imprisonment grew much more rigorous. His own consolation then became the writing of those beautiful religious works in which he mingled mirth and devotion of the deepest kind in a way only possible to one who was in closest touch with his Saviour. Then his enemies deprived him of this last solace, taking away his books and papers, on the plea that he had sent letters to his fellow-prisoner, Blessed John Fisher, in the Bell Tower. Now even the visits of Margaret were denied him, but he, "nothing daunted, closed the shutters of his cell and sat in darkness, the better to meditate on the joys of Heaven. When asked the reason by the lieutenant of the Tower, he replied merrily, 'When all the wares are gone, the shop windows might as well be shut.'"

In the May of that year, 1535, he had seen the Carthusian martyrs led out to die, and a month later, three more of the same Order followed them. On June 22nd, the Feast of St. Alban, the aged Bishop Fisher had been taken out upon Tower Hill, just outside the Tower; and possibly More would have been told of his brave bearing, how he had begged the onlookers for their prayers, "that at the very point and instant of death's stroke, he might stand steadfast without fainting in any one point of the Catholic Faith, free from any fear; and how he had besought God to save the king and this realm, and to send the king good counsel"; and how the people, at his wish, had cried aloud the holy name of Jesus, "at the moment when, head and body being severed, his innocent soul mounted to the blissful joys of Heaven."

Nine days later sentence for high treason was pronounced upon Sir Thomas More in Westminster Hall. In dignified words he uttered his protest against the iniquitous Act which declared the king Supreme Head of the Church; and when the Chancellor tried to rebuke him for considering himself wiser and of better conscience than all the bishops and nobles of this realm, he uttered these momentous words: "My lord, for one bishop of your opinion, I have a hundred saints of mine; and for one Parliament of yours, and God knows of what kind, I have all the General Councils for one thousand years; and for one kingdom, I have all the kingdoms of Christendom. I say further that your statute is ill-made,

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because you have sworn never to do anything against the Church, which through all Christendom is one and undivided; and you have no authority, without the common consent of all Christians, to make a law or Act of Parliament or Council against the Union of Christendom."

Thus did the brave old man, weak and broken now in body, but undaunted in soul, bear his unswerving testimony to the Catholic faith for which he was so soon to die.

As he left Westminster Hall, his son John was waiting on his knees to receive his blessing; and as he was led back to the Tower, his eyes sought the outskirts of the crowd on the Tower Wharf, for he knew that Margaret would be there, faithful to the last, and yearning for a glimpse at the beloved father to whom access was now denied.

Suddenly his worn face kindled, and he lifted his hand in blessing, as a girlish figure sank upon its knees. But Margaret could not be content with that, and throwing herself against the halberds and bills of the guard she hastily ran to him, and there openly in sight of them embraced him, took him about the neck and kissed him, sobbing, "Oh, my father! Oh, my father!"

"Take patience, Margaret," murmured the tender voice as he held her close. "Do not grieve, my child. God has willed it so. For many years didst thou know the secret of my heart."

Fully, indeed, may that faithful daughter be forgiven for her one mistaken effort to keep her father from his Way of Sorrows, when we realize the mingled bitterness and sweetness of that supreme moment. She had her part to play in the sacrifice; but she had been admitted into the holy place of that brave heart, and she knew better now than to hold him back. What wonder if she turned back again as he passed on, and "having respect neither to herself nor to the peers that were about him, ran to him as before, took him about the neck and divers times kissed him lovingly, and at last with a full and heavy heart was fain to depart from him."

SIR THOMAS MORE'S LAST FAREWELL TO HIS DAUGHTER MARGARET ON TOWER WHARF.

More's last letter to this tenderly loved child was written with a charred stick upon a scrap of paper. In this, after sending loving messages to all the members of his family, he

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says, "I never liked your manner towards me better than when you kissed me last; for I love when daughterly love and dear charity hath no leisure to look to worldly courtesy. Farewell, my dear child, and pray for me, and I shall for you and all your friends that we may merrily meet in Heaven."

He had been at first condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and on hearing that the king had "mercifully changed his sentence to beheading," he replied cheerily, "God forbid that the king should show any more such mercy unto any of my friends!"

The 6th of July, the eve of the Feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury, found him ready and longing for the end. They who brought the tidings of execution wept so bitterly that it was the martyr's lot to speak words of comfort. About nine of the clock he was brought forth, carrying in his hands a red cross, casting his eyes towards Heaven. Passing a good woman's house, she offered him a cup of wine, which he refused, saying, "Christ at His Passion drank no wine, but only gall and vinegar."

Having promised his prayers to one under temptation of suicide, he came to the scaffold on Tower Hill, which "seemed to him weak and ready to fall, wherefore he said merrily to the lieutenant, 'I pray you, sir, see me safe up, and for my coming down let me shift for myself.'"

"When he began to speak a little to the people, which were in great troops there to hear and see him, he was interrupted by the sheriff. Wherefore briefly he desired all the people to pray for him, and to bear witness with him that he there died in and for the faith of the Holy Catholic Church, a faithful servant both of God and the king. Having spoken but this, he kneeled down and pronounced with great devotion the *Miserere* psalm; which, being ended, he cheerfully rose up, and the executioner asking him forgiveness, he kissed him, saying, 'Thou wilt do me this day a greater benefit than ever any mortal man can be able to give me; pluck up thy spirit, man, and be not afraid to do thine office; my neck is very short, take heed therefore that thou strike not awry.'

"Then, having covered his eyes, he laid his head upon the block, bidding the executioner stay till he had removed his beard, saying, 'Pity that should be cut. That hath not committed treason.' And so, with great alacrity and spiritual joy, he received the fatal blow of the axe, which no sooner had severed the head from the body, but his soul was carried by angels into everlasting glory, where a crown of martyrdom was put upon him, which can never fade nor decay. And then did he find those words true, which he had often spoken, 'that a man may lose his head and have no harm—yea, I say, unspeakable good and everlasting happiness.'"

Well may it be said of such a man, that "he had learnt to tread in the road of the Passion of His Master, and it seemed to him to be strewn with flowers. He died rather than tarnish the whiteness of his soul."

The story goes that the head of Blessed Thomas More, which for a time was fixed upon London Bridge by the side of that of Blessed John Fisher, was afterwards bought by his daughter Margaret, and being "carefully embalmed in spices" was laid in the Roper family vault in St. Dunstan's Church, Canterbury. His body was laid in the chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula in the Tower, close to the entrance of the small belfry. A Book of Hours used by him during his imprisonment is now in the possession of the Earl of Denbigh, and contains in his own handwriting in the margin some beautiful prayers, from which we may quote the following lines as a summary of his noble life.

Gyve me Thy grace good God
To sette the worlde at naughte
To be joyful of tribulaciouns;
To walk the narrow way that leadeth lo life;
To bere the crosse with Christ;
To have the last things in remembrance.

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CHAPTER III

THE ENGLISH TERROR
1535–1540

"He shall be judged by the bloody laws he hath himself made."
(The Council at the Trial of Cromwell.)

The martyrdom of Blessed Thomas More and of six Carthusian monks was but the prelude to a veritable Reign of Terror, which lasted with scarcely ntermission till the death of Cromwell in 1540.

For these live years, under the plea of protecting his royal master from the slightest breath of disloyalty, this "Hammer of Monks," as he has been called, held England in thrall, watering her soil meantime with the blood of many martyrs, while he strove to destroy the Church by striking a death-blow at the religious houses in this land.

Soon after the passing of the Act of Supremacy, steps had been taken to dissolve the smaller monasteries, on the plea that they were no longer needed, or that they had failed to keep their former good reputation. That both these accusations were false is clearly seen in the consternation felt in their own neighborhood at their loss. Many of these houses were the only means of relief for the poor of the district; many kept the only schools for many miles round; some, such as that of Hexham in Northumberland, situated in a bare country, with not a house between it and Scotland, were invaluable in times of border warfare. But though attempts at resistance were made, monks and nuns were ruthlessly flung forth, and helped to swell the swarms of wandering beggars, which were the disgrace of England at that time.

At length the smoldering discontent of the Northerners, in Yorkshire, where most of the more important abbeys were situated, broke into open flame. "The world will never mend till we fight for it," declared one landowner, and zeal for the faith of their Fathers kindling in the hearts of the stout Yorkshiremen, they marched, "with the parish priest at their head," upon York and seized the city. Then Durham rose, almost to a man, and the Mercies of Northumberland led out their clan, though the head of their house feigned sickness and lay abed. "The whole nobility of the north were now in arms, and thirty thousand, "tall men and well horsed," moved on the Don, demanding the reversal of the royal policy, a reunion with Rome, the restoration of Catherine's daughter, Mary, to her rights as heiress to the Crown, redress for the wrongs done to the Church, and above all, the fall of Cromwell."

Alas for the "Pilgrimage of Grace"! The wiles of Cromwell in promising pardon and a free Parliament at York to the insurgents broke up the ranks. The rebels thought they had been granted all they asked, and went home with glad hearts. Then Cromwell struck, and struck hard; and the nobles of the north went under for good and all. Many went to the block, and amongst them Lord Darcy, whose words as he stood before the Council are memorable enough:

"Cromwell, it is *thou* that that art the very special and chief cause of all this rebellion and wickedness; and thou dolt make it thy daily work to bring us to our ends and strike off our heads. I trust that ere thou die, though thou wouldst procure all the noblest heads within the realm to be stricken off, there yet shall oar head remain that shall strike off thine."

With Sir Thomas Percy of Northumberland were hung at Tyburn the Abbots of Fountains and of Jervaulx; the Abbots of Balding and of Kirkstead shared their fate elsewhere, their only crime being the sympathy they had shown with the rebellion, or the fact that the insurgents had reinstated them in their monasteries.

The farmers and yeomen who had shared in the revolt were hanged by hundreds at a time upon the trees of the north country waysides.

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Encouraged by the success of this wholesale suppression, Henry, following Cromwell's lead, determined to strike a blow not only at the north, but at the west, where the twin houses of the Courtenays and the Poles, staunch adherents of the Faith, held rule. The head of the Pole family, Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, was of royal descent, and Henry Courtenay, Marquis of Exeter, his kinsman, was next in succession, after Henry's children, to the throne. Reginald, fourth son of the countess, after refusing the highest bribes to approve his divorce that the king could offer him, had fled for safety to Rome, where he had been made Cardinal, and from whence he openly attacked the king in his outspoken book on the Unity of the Church. His representation at Rome had hastened the Excommunication now pronounced upon Henry by the Pope, and the king took a cowardly revenge. "They shall feel what it is to have a traitor for their kinsman," cried he, and forthwith Lord Montague, Pole's elder brother, was executed, together with the Marquis of Exeter, on Tower Hill. Sir Geoffrey Pole, a younger brother, who had been prevailed upon to hear witness against them, was pardoned, and passed the rest of his life in miserable regret for his Judas-like act.

Two years later his mother, the aged countess, who had formerly had charge of the unhappy Princess Mary, and was herself a royal princess, after a long and tedious imprisonment, was led out to die on Tower Green. She was nearly ninety years old, and to the last she knew not of what crime she was accused, nor how she had been sentenced. We know, however, that she suffered solely and entirely for the Catholic Faith, of which her son was at that time the most active defender; and her last words, "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake," are fulfilled in the title conferred upon her by the Church of "Blessed Margaret Pole."

The "Pilgrimage of Grace," failure though it seemed, had succeeded in staying for a while the suppression of the monasteries, for even Henry and Cromwell dared not entirely ignore the temper of the country. When they turned again to the matter they tried a different method. Instead of using force to close the religious houses, Cromwell in some cases persuaded the superiors to submit quietly to the king's authority; in others he set up as abbot one who was willing to acknowledge the royal supremacy, and ordered him to convert his monks as a preliminary to a peaceful surrender.

The latter plan was tried at the London Charterhouse after the martyrdom of Blessed John Houghton, and several of the monks and lay brothers, under the threat of total suppression, were induced to acknowledge the royal supremacy. This they did "with remorse of conscience and with many reserves"; but of their companions, ten valiant souls scorned utterly to buy their safety with such base compromise.

Thrown into Newgate without even the pretense of a trial, these ten monks and lay brothers were chained in standing position to posts in a filthy dungeon, with hands tied behind them, and were there left to die. For a short time their lives were preserved by the beautiful devotion of Margaret Giggs, now Margaret Clement, whom we remember as an inmate of the household of Sir Thomas More, and specially entrusted by him with works of mercy. She bribed the gaoler to let her enter the prison disguised as a milkmaid, and carrying a "great pail upon her head full of meat, wherewith she fed that blessed company, putting meat into their mouths, they being tied and not able to stir, nor to help themselves."

Then the king, finding they were still alive, "commanded a straiter watch to be set over them, so that the keeper durst not let in this good woman any more, fearing it might cost him his head if it should be discovered." But she, undaunted by difficulties, persuaded and bribed him to let her clamber over the tiles of the roof till she reached the cell where they were confined; then, having made a hole in the roof, she let down meat in a basket, "approaching the same as well as she could unto their mouths as they did stand chained against the posts. But they, not being able to feed themselves out of the basket, or very little, and the gaoler, fearing very much that

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it should be perceived, in the end refused to let her come any more. And so, soon after, they languished and pined away."

THE EXECUTION OF MARGARET POLE

Thus did they win their crown of martyrdom; nor was the charity of Margaret Clement forgotten by them in the realm of bliss. For on the day of her death she told her husband that "there were standing about her bed the Reverend Fathers, monks of the Charterhouse, whom she had relieved in prison, and who did call upon her to come away with them."

The Carthusians had thus paid rich toll of their numbers to the cause of the Faith. It was now the turn of the Franciscans to offer up their sacrifice.

There was an important monastery of the Friars Observant of the rule of St. Francis at Greenwich in those days, the warder of which, John Forest, acted for a time as confessor to Queen Catherine of Aragon and her gentlewomen of the Court. The unhappy queen had a special love for the Observant Friars, as is shown by the clause in her will asking that she should be buried in one of their convents; and this alone was enough to draw down upon them the wrath of Henry after his divorce.

For a time Forest seems to have warded off the threat of dissolution of the whole Order throughout England, and actually prevailed upon the king to change his mind; but he knew that this would not last for long, and in 1534 the Observants, who were the strictest Order of the Franciscans, were everywhere suppressed. Their convents were handed over in some cases to other communities for a time, and of those who refused thus to change their Order, some two hundred were imprisoned, of whom fifty died in captivity.

That Forest was among these prisoners is proved by a pathetic letter written to him at this time by Queen Catherine, encouraging him to be brave and constant, while full of grief for herself at the thought of losing him. To this he replied with courageous words of consolation, and sent to her his rosary, since he believed he had but three days to live. To a very natural and impulsive little letter from one of the queen's ladies which reached him at the same time, and which urged him to try to make his escape, the Franciscan friar replied in

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gentle reproof: "Elizabeth Hammon, my child, I am very sorry for the great grief of your mistress and yourself on account of the pains I suffer, as if there were no resurrection to glory. . . . If I were willing to break faith, and through fear of torments or love of riches were to give myself to the devil, beyond doubt I could easily escape, but pray think of none of these things."

The call to martyrdom, however, was delayed for some time yet. How or why he was released from prison we know not; it is difficult to believe, after reading the brave words above, that he took the Oath of Supremacy, as his enemies would have us believe, though it is possible that, like so many other monks at that time, he took it under some form of compromise. Four years later we find Forest again acting as confessor at a convent of the Grey Friars, another branch of the Franciscans, in Newgate Street, where Christ's Hospital, the Bluecoat School, afterwards stood. If he had ever wavered, his faith burnt clear again in these days, and his foes, suspecting this, had recourse to the meanest of devices to bring a charge against him. A certain man called Waferer, in the confessional, asked him his opinion as to the king's supremacy, and being answered frankly by him, went out straightway and laid information that he had said that the king was not Supreme Head of the Church.

Brought before the Council, bullied and coaxed alternately, bewildered by countless questions and endless points of controversy, the unfortunate friar seems to have signed some form of recantation of certain doctrines, which was eagerly seized upon by his enemies as an "abjuration." It is not difficult to realize the agony of mind that would be the lot of a sensitive nature, lacking the gift of moral courage, and possibly weakened somewhat by the remembrance of a former successful compromise, before such a thing was possible. Of one thing we may be sure. The physical pains of martyrdom were as nothing compared to the misery of remorse that were certainly his immediately after he had done the deed. All that he could do to atone was nobly done. Says a writer of the time: "The 12th of May being the third Sunday after Easter, the Bishop of Worcester, Dr. Latimer, preached at Paul's Cross, at whose sermon should have been present a penitent to have done his penance, called John Forest . . . who should have borne a faggot and with a loud voice have declared certain things."

But "when his abjuration was sent him to read and look upon, he utterly refused it." So Latimer could but read it for him and ask the crowd to pray that "the friar might be converted from his said obstinacy."

On May 22, 1538, this old friar, dressed in his torn habit, was drawn from Newgate to Smithfield on a hurdle, and there, after a lengthy sermon by Latimer, in which he offered Forest "a good living" if he would "turn," he was burnt alive.

"Neither fire nor faggot nor scaffold shall separate me from Thee, O Lord," he cried, and with his last breath asked for mercy, not from man, but from the Lord whom, in confusion of mind, he had gone near to deny. An onlooker declares that "the fire had hardly destroyed the body, when at mid-day was seen a dove, as white as snow, over the head of the sainted dead, and remained there a long time, seen by many people."

The next year, 1539, saw the martyrdom of three abbots of the great Benedictine Order. By this time the work of destruction had gone on so fast that only a few of the larger monasteries survived; and now, under the pretext of creating new bishoprics and endowing them with the confiscated monastic lands, the three great monasteries of Glastonbury, Reading, and Colchester were ordered to surrender.

Those of us who have visited the ruins of Glastonbury and tried to reconstruct the past, can have but little real idea of the glory of this ancient foundation. It is built on the spot to which Joseph of Arimathea is said to have brought the Holy Grail, the chalice containing the blood of Our Savior; where year by year the thorn tree bears its white blossoms in dead of

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winter; where Saint Paulinus and Saint Dunstan and King Alfred lived and prayed and worked. The great Abbey Church, the vast library, the sunny cloisters, the "scriptorium," where some of the most beautiful of the ancient missals were produced, the noted school full of youths of noble blood, the kitchens from which the poor were fed day by day—all these formed an immense and most powerful community, whose good deeds were known throughout Christendom, and whose Abbot sat as a peer in the House of Lords, and ruled his vast domain in all wisdom and justice.

Great are the perils of those who stand in high places; and when in 1534 Abbot Richard Whiting was called upon to take the Oath of Supremacy, for the refusal of which More, Fisher, and the Carthusians had been content to die, it was taken by him, his prior, and fifty of his monks. We, who can never know the bitter struggle he underwent and the mental reservations made, can but feel our sorrow at his fall change into pity and respect when we realize the atonement he was to make five years later. In the following year another attempt was made by Cromwell to get hold of the coveted riches of the abbey. Commissioners were sent to find something of which to accuse the monks and so form a pretext for dissolution. But here again he failed. "At Glastonbury," writes one of his evil subordinates to him, "the brethren be kept so strait that they cannot offend." This is only one of many testimonies to their upright and holy lives. "The monks," says a Protestant bishop a little later, "following the example of the ancient fathers, lived apart from the world religiously and in peace, eschewing worldly employments, and wholly given to study and contemplation."

Everything was done by the commissioners sent by Cromwell, men of most evil character, to force the monks "by harsh regulations or cruel privations" to leave the monastery, but in vain. So, in fear and trembling, the Abbot continued to hold sway till the year 1539, when by Act of Parliament all monasteries were granted to the king, both "those that should surrender and those that should come by attainder of treason."

When this was known, three abbots, who had long held secret communication with each other—Richard Whiting; of Glastonbury, Hugh Faringdon of Rending, and John Beche of Colchester—knowing well that the consequence was a cruel death, determined not to surrender the sacred change that had been committed to them. All three had taken the Oath of Supremacy five years before; but time had made clear to them the weakness they had shown and the peril of their position in yielding any point of the Catholic Faith to such a king as Henry.

They now prepared to face the worst. It was not long before Cromwell's minions had found the empty pretext they wanted. At Glastonbury they searched the old Abbot's rooms by night, and found there a "book of arguments against the divorce, which we take to be a great matter, as also divers pardons, copies of bulls, and the counterfeit life of Thomas Becket in print; but we could not find any letter that was material."

On this feeble charge, coupled with the fact that his answers to all questions showed his unswerving faith in the Papal Authority which he had once denied, was Abbot Whiting sent to the Tower and condemned to death.

In his prison he was tortured mentally, if not physically, by the most severe investigation as to where he had hidden the money and plate of the abbey; for of this there seemed strange dearth at Glastonbury, now in the spoilers' hands. He had indeed concealed much of the Church property, sacred vessels, copes, and money within the walls, rightly conceiving it to be in his trust and not to be delivered into lay hands. Most of this was found before his death, and was laid to his charge as a "theft" by judges blinded with avarice and greed. Up to the very end they ceased not to pester him for fresh information, until he was actually brought back to Glastonbury to die.

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They jeered at his last request that he might be allowed to enter the abbey, once more to bless his sons before his death, knowing, as they did, that the walls stood bare and roofless to the sky; and binding him to a hurdle, they drew him up the steep side of Tor Hill, and before the eyes of two of his monks, "who also took their deaths very patiently," the old man expiated his sin of weakness by a glorious death.

"Remember how poor Abbot Whiting was used," says a ballad written some hundred years later; and it is remarkable that the memory of this good old man has been kept green in that countryside almost down to the present day.

On that same grey November morning there suffered at his abbey gate at Reading another abbot, Blessed Hugh Faringdon or Cook, declaring his firm belief in the Holy See—"a belief that was but the common faith," said he, "of those who had the best right to declare the true teaching of the English Church." And a few days later Blessed John Beche of Colchester had also won his martyr's crown. He had always been a great admirer of Sir Thomas More and of Bishop John Fisher, and after their deaths he frequently spoke of them, "being in the habit of extolling the piety, meekness, and innocence of the late martyrs to those guests whom he invited to his table."

But there came at length a Judas guest who invited the good Abbot to speak in praise of them and to "marvel what cause of complaint the king could have found in men so virtuous and learned, and the greatest ornaments of Church and State."

Away hurried the traitor to Cromwell, and the condemnation of the Abbot was assured. One can but feel the deepest pity for the aged man, worn out with anxiety and ceaseless questioning, even when we hear that for a brief while he tried to save his life at the expense of his convictions; but his repentance was bitter and complete. At his trial he pleaded guilty, thus proclaiming his contrition for his momentary fall; and went forth to execution at Colchester with a steadfast heart.

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CHAPTER IV

PAPISTS AND HERETICS
1570 • IRON • STORE • DOCTOR

(Inscription in the Beauchamp Tower.)

Eighteen years had passed away since the fall of Cromwell in 1540 had to some extent stayed the persecuting hand of Henry VIII. Seven years later the king himself had gone to meet his terrible account, leaving in charge of his young son Edward a land torn asunder by the extraordinary upheaval of the past twenty years.

It is indeed almost impossible to realize the effect of the shock to England of the changes brought about by the so-called Reformation." The monasteries alone had formed such an important part of ordinary social life, as the schools, the libraries, the hospitals, the almoners, and indeed the whole "charity organization" of the time, that the suppression of more than six-hundred of these religious houses was bound to disorganize the country. Thousands of monks, lay brothers, and nuns had been turned out, often without any friends or means of support, and left to starve by the wayside. Many of these monks were men of learning, with all the tastes of a student and no knowledge of practical affairs, and these found themselves at the mercy of a brutal mob or a jeering crowd as they passed in their worn habits through the public streets.

When this became the ordinary fate of men whose holy office had hitherto caused for them respect and reverence, the effect upon the more ignorant part of the population can be easily understood. When the ordinary restraints of religion were destroyed, license and disorder became a natural result, and accounts for much of the extraordinary violence shown in the reign of Edward VI, when the persecution of abbots and monks was exchanged for a furious attack upon the churches and chantries of the land.

So we find the beautiful old buildings, raised by the generosity of benefactors and the loving hands of monastic workmen, despoiled; the statue of Our Lady smashed with ribald glee; the Holy Rood, from which the image of the Savior stretched imploring hands, defaced by His rebellious children; the stained windows splintered by stones, the painted walls, long bright with pictures of the Saints, covered with coats of whitewash.

When England had fallen so far from grace, she might well wish to hide or destroy all those tender reminders of her former position as the Isle of Saints.

Then, in the July of the year 1553, the boy king, who had been simply the tool of one ambitious nobleman after another, died; and his sister Mary, after years of disgrace and peril, was hailed as Queen of England by a joyful crowd of Londoners.

Was it but the fickleness of the changeable mob, or were men beginning already to weary of the stone that had been given them in place of bread? It certainly seemed as though the greater part of England would have been unfeignedly glad to return to the old paths of the Catholic Faith, had it not been for that ill-fated marriage with a prince of the hated Spanish race. As it was, Mary's people could but look on in distaste and wonder at her union with the man who neglected and forsook her; and later at the persecutions for heresy at the hands of one who, at her accession, had urged her subjects to "live together in quiet sort and Christian charity, without use of the new-found devilish terms of papist and heretic."

It must, however, in fairness be remembered that the so-called "martyrs" who suffered under Mary, died, not for their fidelity to the faith of the English Church, but for their holding of opinions which had brought down a similar penalty

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in the latter days of the reforming Henry VIII; and that these very "Reformers" themselves had never hesitated to send such "heretics" as Anabaptists to the stake. But that we will not attempt to justify either one side or the other need scarcely be said.

One class of Englishmen, however much they disapproved of the fires at Smithfield, must have felt unmixed relief at the prospect of a return to the old ways of Catholicism. The landed gentry of the countryside had never ceased to regret the changes that had occurred in the past twenty years.

They had not wavered in their faith, but all that had been to them of aid and consolation in their often lonely lives had been swept away. In place of the genial parish priest they found some "under groom" or unlearned curate, jeered at by the country lads as "lack-Latins who slubbered up their services," or worse still, read a service that sounded strange and irreverent to ears attuned to the fine cadences of the Roman Missal.

No longer could they send their boys and girls to the neighboring abbey school or convent, for the beautiful old cloisters, where the children had stood to sing their "prick-song," now stood roofless and desolate.

"In the dark chimney corner during the long, dull, winter evenings, while the Christmas logs were sending up their lazy smoke, as his children gathered round him and stared at the fire, many an old squire, still but a little past his prime, would tell of this or that prior or monk who used to drop in in the old days and bring some relief to the monotony of their isolated lives; he would not seldom mutter his curse upon the ribald recklessness of the parvenus who had ousted their betters and made the grand old places desolate. Sometimes, too, he would sigh for a priest of the old school, into whose practiced ear he might pour out his soul to seek remission of sins that pressed sorely upon his hardened conscience. How bitterly he would mourn for 'the good old times' and denounce the wild havoc that had been wrought!

"Generous lads heard the laments and brooded over them; they got to believe that their parents' lives had been saddened and their own estates seriously damaged by that which they had been taught from childhood to regard as sacrilege, and the rising generation were in the mood to hope for little in the future, and to regret very much in the past."

To such as these the "reconciliation" of England to the Holy See came as an unmixed joy. It was too late to restore the abbey lands that by this time had changed hands more than once; but hopes were high that with the return of monks and priors and priests the "old order" would again revive.

Just when this seemed most possible, Queen Mary died; and out of the tumult of disappointed hopes and irritated feelings that lay on the surface, and the deep devotion to the Catholic Church of their fathers that surged beneath, arose that spirit of enthusiasm and faith that was to produce a noble army of martyrs during the reign of Elizabeth.

The hearts of those who cared so deeply about these things might well have grown heavy when they heard that at the opening of Elizabeth's first Parliament, which contained but ten who were loyal to the Catholic Faith, no Mass of the Holy Ghost was sung at Westminster; and that when the abbot received the queen at the entrance to the abbey with the usual procession of monks bearing lighted candles, she had cried, "Away with these lights; we see very well!" She had listened, moreover, on that occasion to the sermon of a heretic priest who had "said many things against the Christian religion." It was no wonder that the more ignorant folk, taking their cue from such happenings, began a campaign of sacrilege and blasphemy, which drove the only abbot who still survived in the House of Lords to make a hot protest.

"My good lords, when in Queen Mary's days you know how the people of this realm did live in an order . . . there was

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no spoiling of churches, pulling down of altars, and most blasphemous treading down of the Sacrament under their feet . . . the subjects of this realm knew the way unto churches and chapels, there to begin their daily work with calling for help and grace by humble prayer. But now, since the coming of our most sovereign and dear lady Queen Elizabeth . . . all things are now changed and turned upside down . . . obedience is gone, humility and meekness clean abolished, and virtuous, chaste, and straight living abandoned."

Yet when the Act of Supremacy, which made the queen "to be supreme in all causes, both ecclesiastical and civil," was passed, only one member of the Commons spoke out boldly against it; and that was Dr. John Storey, late chancellor to the Bishop of London, one of those who had taken part in the trial of Archbishop Cranmer in Mary's reign, and had helped, though without undue severity, to suppress the heretics who had tried to set up a new religion during those years.

For his outspoken condemnation of the changes proposed by this Act and that of Uniformity, which imposed a penalty on those who refused to attend the "reformed" services, Storey was summoned before the Council, when he defied his accusers to prove that he had said anything at which offence could reasonably be taken, adding, "Should her Majesty will otherwise, I do not refuse to die for the Church."

The words were prophetic of his end; but in those days he was more eager to live for his faith than to lay down his life. He had done nothing so far for which he could be condemned, but on openly taking the side of a Catholic bishop who was about to be deprived of his lands, Storey found himself in peril at the hands of his many enemies on the Council, and so fled to the West country in disguise.

As soon, however, as it was realized that a sure way of winning favor with the queen was to attack those who clung to the Catholic faith, her servants were on the lookout for all "suspects"; and one of them, a fellow called Ayleworth, recognized Dr. Storey "dressed in a frieze coat like a serving-man and riding before the mail."

Accused of "having obstinately refused attendance or public worship, and everywhere declaiming and railing against that religion which we now profess," he was thrown into the Fleet prison—a miserable place, where the prisoner had to pay an exorbitant sum for the necessaries of life. From here, being a man of much spirit and resource, he seems to have made his escape, for we find him retaken some two years later, again in the West country, this time disguised as a courtier. He was now thrown into the Marshalsea prison, while his enemies hurried through Parliament a new Act, which required the Oath of Supremacy to be taken, on pain of death, by anyone who had held office during the last three reigns.

Life is sweet to all of us, and John Storey had a wife and children whom he tenderly loved. Faced with the grim alternative of acting against his conscience or being hanged, he determined to avoid both by escaping from the country. A Flemish gentleman confined in the same prison for debt gave him information of how to get across the Channel to Belgium, and helped him to escape from his cell into a garden. This led down to the river, and having scaled a wall, Storey took a boat and went to the house of the Spanish ambassador, from whose chaplain he hoped to get assistance. The chaplain was out, however, and Storey had to wait for an anxious hour or two, until his return, when he begged him to help him to escape. Afraid of compromising his master with the queen, the chaplain refused; and poor Storey went out into the cold midnight to do what he could alone. For a time he lay hid in the houses of his friends, but at length he managed to get a passage across to Belgium and settled down at Louvain, where his family soon joined him.

From that time Storey became a changed man. His old spirit and enterprise forsook him, and he seemed crushed under a mysterious burden of woe. His wife thought it was on account of the utter poverty to which he saw her and his

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children reduced; but at length he confided to her that he suffered bitterly from the remembrance that he had thrown away the crown of martyrdom when it was placed within his grasp. She, seeing his evident eagerness to return and give himself up, persuaded him to take advice upon the matter; and he was assured that since he had been delivered by the will of God, he "must not count upon Divine grace if he placed himself in danger when God had set him free."

Still, however, he could not quiet his conscience. He tried to get his wife to enter the religious life, that he might be free to become a monk of the Charterhouse at Louvain, and so expiate his failing by a life of penance; and when she would not agree, he compromised by "spending more time at prayer with the Carthusians than at home with his family." But even this solace was denied him, for his household, now increased by the family of a nephew and niece and a married daughter with her children, whom the penal laws had driven out of England, had to be maintained.

These seven years of poverty, anxiety, and exile were but steps on the ladder of martyrdom. He was known in England to be in close communication with the Duke of Alva, and that through the latter he had received some help in money from the King of Spain. This was magnified into treason, and a plot was laid to entrap him.

It had been lately arranged by the King of Spain and the Duke of Alva that all English ships coming and going from the port of Antwerp should be searched for heretical books "or other forbidden merchandise." Hearing this, the English Council bribed one William Parker, brother of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, under the pretense of being a convert to Catholicism and a fugitive from his own country, to obtain the post of "searcher" from Alva. This was readily granted, for the duke was naturally much interested in the case of a convert so nearly related to "the chief spiritual heretic" in England; and Parker at once offered the post of assistant to Dr. Storey, who was still living in great poverty at Louvain, and quite unable to find work.

Storey seems to have utterly disliked the office, which was quite unworthy of a man of his position; but he would not refuse because of his family. He was by this time a naturalized Spanish subject, and as such there was no reason whatever for refusing to take office under the Spanish king, any more than there is reason to believe that at any time he took part in a plot to rid England of a Protestant queen by the aid of the King of Spain.

Thus he walked innocently enough into the net so carefully spread for him. Certain agents of Cecil, Elizabeth's Prime Minister, otherwise spies, arranged that a ship should enter the port of Antwerp, and that Parker and Dr. Storey should search it as usual. Three merchants were bribed to carry this out, and the ship having touched at Bergen-op-Zoom, the two went on board and below hatches to search the cargo. At once the hatches were shut down, and the ship set full sail for Yarmouth, where Dr. Storey was landed on an August evening of the year 1570.

He was now an old man of sixty-six, much tried by poverty and disease, and he writes a pathetic letter to Cecil on his arrival, begging that if he be thrown into his old prison, he may be made to wear heavy irons, on "that of my legs, which is only able to bear the same." He also pleads that Cecil will hear his side of the matter and not only that of his agents.

There was great rejoicing in London at the old man's apprehension. "The Lollards' Tower, in which he shut up the heretics whom the ancient laws then punished, was to be new-locked and bolted to shut him up 'for fear lest in a common prison he should find too many friends.'" And while with great ingenuity his gaoler, the Archdeacon of London, was appointing "two of my neighbors, being honest men and favorable of the truth, to be his keepers jointly, and have divided the keys of the prison between them, so that the one

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cannot come to him without the other," he also reports that his prisoner "seemeth to take little thought for any matters."

He might well not grieve at the straitness of his prison, for the day of his real deliverance was now assured, though it was to be won through a bitter draining of the cup of suffering.

In the December of that year (1570) the King of Spain received this ominous letter: "Dr. Storey has been lodged in the Tower, and confronted with the man who brought him. He is accused of having plotted with the Duke of Alva. *They are putting him to the torture to-day, and I expect it will go hardly with him*. God help him. All the Catholics pray for him."

The difficulty, of course, was to find any good cause of condemnation, and finding themselves hard put to it, a new charge was concocted by the council of having had intercourse with a traitor at Antwerp in the person of one of the Nortons, the family who had led the ill-fated Northern rising in the end of the year 1569, and who had fled to Belgium for their lives. In the indictment against Storey we find it stated that "he came one day to Parker's house at Antwerp; where, sitting at dinner, the elder Norton and some other of his company came in from the church, and one said, 'This is Norton,' and thereupon Storey rose and gave him place and bid him welcome; and so the elder Norton sat down in Storey's place."

On this frivolous charge, therefore, was John Storey brought to Westminster Hall in the May of 1571. He was weak with long imprisonment, and his body torn with the frequent torture that had been used to wring some incriminating admission from him. But when he found himself before magistrates appointed by an excommunicated queen, he refused to plead, saying, "That he was not an English subject, that men were not born slaves but freemen, and that he was a naturalized Spaniard, the subject of the most Catholic and mighty prince, the King of Spain."

In his courage and despair he called upon any friends who might be present to give notice to that prince, how cruelly they dealt with him, though he must have known that Philip was but a broken reed upon which to lean. The Spanish ambassador, indeed, after his condemnation, did demand that Storey should be sent back to Flanders; upon which Elizabeth insolently replied that the King of Spain might have his head, but that she meant to keep his body.

So William Storey, alone and friendless, though still undaunted in spirit, was condemned to be hung, drawn, and quartered, and was taken to the Tower through a yelling crowd, who shrieked blasphemous outrages all the way; to all of which "he answered never a word."

But his brave speech and bearing had not been unmarked by one who stood by and watched the progress of his trial. A young man of brilliant intellect and great promise, who had been led by hopes of high preferment to linger awhile in the paths of heresy, had lately become more and more uneasy as to his position. He had by this time openly professed the Catholic faith, but from any further step he held back until he was present at the unjust trial of Blessed William Storey.

That decided him. "He was animated to offer himself by this blessed man's example to any danger or peril for the same faith for which the doctor died."

So the man who was to be known as Blessed Edmund Campion set forth at once for Douay, there to become a Jesuit priest, and one of the noblest of our martyrs.

Just before his death, Storey wrote his wife a letter, in which he thanks God that he was thought worthy to die in so good a cause, and thinks that his wife and all his friends would be right glad if they knew "with what eagerness he prepare himself for that death by which in so short a time he would expiate the faults of a life of nearly seventy years."

He was helped in this preparation by his old friend Feckenham, Abbot of Westminster, himself a prisoner in the Tower, who was allowed to spend that last night with him.

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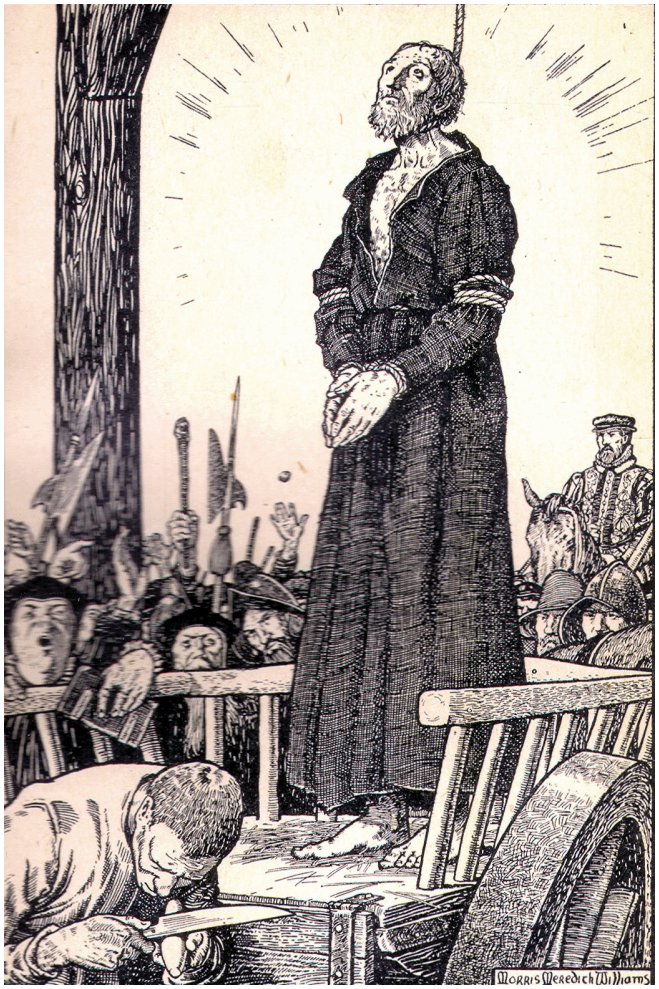
On the morning of the first of June, the martyr was drawn on a hurdle from the Tower to Tyburn. Even on that terrible journey men ceased not to revile him, and call on him to repent, "but he lay as though he had been asleep, and would not speak to any person."



THE MARTYRDOM OF DR. STORY

When, however, he was set up on the cart under the gallows, he made a beautiful speech, full of resignation and spiritual joy. He confessed that for a time he had been sorely afraid of death, but that had now passed from him. He briefly recounted the story of his arrest and trial, and declared that he was innocent of any plot against the queen. He referred to the charge of cruelty in the previous reign, which the mob had so persistently brought against him, and reminded them that while he was bound by his office to carry out the sentence of the bishop for heresy, both he and Bonner had done their best to be merciful; on one occasion, indeed, saving twenty-eight heretics from burning, on the plea that "they knew not what they did."

"Wherefore, I pray you, name me not cruel; I would be loth to have any such slander to run on me; but since I die in charity, I pray you all of charity to pray for me, that God may strengthen me with patience to suffer my death, to the which I yield most willingly."

In the midst of a declaration that he died "in the ship of Christ, of which the Apostle Peter is the guide," they began to question him anew; and receiving nothing of satisfaction from him, "cried, 'Away with the cart,' and so he was hanged."

He was cut down immediately, and cruelly butchered while still in the possession of his senses; and so, "through much tribulation" obtained the martyr's crown.

On the walls of his prison in the Beauchamp Tower that almost sacred spot, hallowed with the memories of so many of our martyrs, you may still see the inscription cut by his own hand—

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CHAPTER V

THE NORTHERN RISING AND ITS EFFECTS 1568–1572

"Throughout his life he was beyond measure dear to the whole people."
—Sander's *Martyrdom of Blessed Thomas Percy*

The first ten years of the reign of Elizabeth (1558—1568) were not a time of persecution. Penal laws had been made, but were not strictly enforced; and the earlier imprisonment of Blessed John Storey was due rather to his outspoken criticism of the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity than to the fact that he was a Catholic. All the bishops, it is true, save one, had refused to take the oath of Supremacy, and had been thrown into prison, but when the more advanced reformers urged the queen's advisers to "kill the caged wolves," the latter wisely held their hands. In the year 1570, however, the fire of persecution shot up anew, and four martyrs, including Blessed John Storey, perished.

The reasons for this change of spirit are interesting. The ambition of Queen Elizabeth had at first been to win popularity in all quarters, from Catholic and Protestant alike. Herself devoid of any kind of religious conviction, she fondly imagined that her choice of a *Via Media* as the policy of the English Church, combining Protestant doctrines with a certain amount of Catholic order and ceremonial, would satisfy all parties; and as long as Catholics were content to suppress their opinions and to offer no open opposition to her supremacy, they wore allowed to stay away from the Protestant service held in their parish churches, with only an occasional tine as a reminder of their position; and even to hear Mass whenever they could smuggle a priest quietly into their houses for the purpose, was not a dangerous matter. With this state of sufferance, therefore, Catholics were obliged to be content, until the year 1568, when the flight of Mary, Queen of Scots, into England, kindled almost forgotten hopes, and the flame of religious zeal burned up anew. For Mary, though a prisoner in her cousin's hands, was a Catholic, and next heir to the throne; and it was impossible but that even those most loyal to Elizabeth should look forward to the day when she should rule in England.

The affairs of the country, however, were in the hands of William Cecil, one of the most astute politicians who ever lived, and he, knowing well that the one strong bond between Catholics and Protestants was their common hatred of himself, determined to separate their forces by a far severer administration of the penal laws where Catholics were concerned. These fell with special weight upon the north country, which, partly because of its isolation, had never fallen away in any marked degree from the Faith. The people, it is true, had been forced to look on while their beautiful cathedrals at York, Ripon, Durham and Carlisle had been stripped of their crucifixes and their altars; while the care of their souls had been committed to strange bishops and ministers, who read, in place of the ancient Liturgy, an unfamiliar service which they were fined if they did not attend.

But the Faith lived on. The new Bishop of Carlisle complained bitterly of the "great prevalence of Popery in his diocese"; the Earl of Sussex, the queen's general in the north, wrote frankly to Cecil: "There are not ten gentlemen in all this country that favor the queen's proceedings in religion."

Hence it was that in the year 1569 the eyes of Catholics in the north began to turn hopefully towards Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland, who with the Earl of Westmoreland, was the leading Catholic nobleman of the district.

As a child of nine years old Thomas Percy had listened awestruck to the news of his father's death on Tyburn Tree "for that he did, as a false traitor, conspire to deprive the king of his royal dignity, viz., of being on earth Supreme Head of

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the Chruch of England." Under St. Cuthbert's banner that brave father had led one army of the Pilgrimage of Grace and when he died for his faith, he left a legacy of religious zeal to his young son that was to develop into the martyrs's crown. After a forlorn childhood, Percy came into his own again during the reign of Mary, when he was created Earl of Northumberland and Warden of the Marches. This office kept him busy with border warfare, and afforded an excuse to the Council for his not being summoned to attend the Parliament of Elizabeth which passed the Acts fo Supremacy and Uniformity. Suspicion and distrust began to surround the Earl almost from the first, for the agents of Cecil had been already tampering with his younger brother Henry, and they were well aware of the horror with which Thomas Percy regarded the latter's apostasy from the Faith. Finding his position as Warden untenable under such conditions, the Earl resigned it, and went to live for a time at Petworth, his estate in Sussex. It is possible that during these years he escaped persecution by conforming, as did countless other Catholics of that time, to the rule of attending his parish church and that this was what he refers to when he declared at the time of his trial that he had been "reconciled" to the Church some two years before the rebellion. That he did not apostatise is clear from the fact that he spoke boldly in the Parliament of 1563 against the Act imposing the Oath of Supremacy on all Catholics on penalty of death, saying "that the heretics should be satisfied to enjoy the bishoprics and benefits of the others without wishing to cut off their heads as well"; and again in 1566 against the hasty Act brought in to declare the defective consecration of the Protestant bishops "good, lawful, and perfect."

Three years later Percy was staying at Topcliffe, his Yorkshire estate, when he heard of the arrival of a certain Dr. Nicholas Morton. This man, once Prebendary of York Minster, was now acting by the Pope's orders as "Apostolic Penitentiary" in order to grant faculties to those priests yet in the country, who were anxious to administer the Sacraments to Catholics. Dr. Morton had been staying at the house of his relative, Mr. Richard Norton, an old Catholic gentleman who, with his son Francis, was seething with wrath against the treatment of his fellow Catholics at the hands of Cecil. When Percy knew of this, he sent for Mr. Morton and spoke to him very strongly of "the great grief he had for that they all lived out of the laws of the Catholic Church, for the restitution of which he would willingly spend his life."

Then Francis Norton joined the conference. The possibility of securing the freedom of Mary of Scotland as the next heir to the throne was discussed, preparations for a general rising among the Catholics of the North were set on fist, and all through that autumn the Catholic gentry met, first in one place, then in another, to frame their plans. Curiously enough, the Earl of Northumberland was the last to give his consent to a general revolt. He was indeed torn between his loyalty to his sovereign and his devotion to the Church, and nothing but his belief that only by setting free the person of Mary could they hope to secure religious liberty, prevailed on him to join it. That he had not the faintest intention of personal harm, or even of disloyalty to Elizabeth is clear front a letter written to her the day before the rebellion broke out; and that his one object was the safe-guarding of the Faith is equally clear from his reply to one who urged that they should give some other cause for their revolt than the Catholic religion. "I neither know of nor acknowledge any other," said the Earl, "for we are seeking, I imagine, the glory not of men but of God."

The actual rising was precipitated by a sudden summons to the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland to appear before the queen. At once they gathered their men and marched on Durham, where, amid the joyful shouts of the people, they went to the Cathedral, cast out the Communion table and Protestant service books, and publicly restored the altar and the Mass.

They stayed but one hour, but that was long enough to bring back the ancient faith lost for eleven years to the city of

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St. Cuthbert. The Protestant canons and ministers fled, and once more the cathedral and the churches of the city were to be seen filled with penitents who knelt in thousands at the feet of four zealous priests to receive absolution for the falling away of those dark years of schism. The investigations during the trials that followed reveal a moving picture of the relief of the people at this return to the ancient Faith; of the scruples of the "singing men" who had not yet had time to be "reconciled" as to whether they might sing the Mass, and of the reassurance of the priest; of their joy at being allowed to "occupy their gaudies"—that is, to tell their beads again—and to receive once more holy water into their houses as well as in the church. We hear also of the thronged High Mass at the cathedral on St. Andrew's Day, when the crowd was so great that some "could not see the Mass, and so sat down in the low end and said their prayers."

Meantime the two earls were moving southward to Mary's prison at Tutbury, under a standard representing Our Lord with blood streaming from His Five Wounds, which was held by grey-haired old Mr. Richard Norton. With them marched their chaplain, Thomas Plumtree, and a great force "all of whom wear red crosses, as well the priests as others." Through Staindrop and Darlington and Ripon they passed, staying only to see the Holy Mass once more celebrated in each of these places, and having captured a body of horse at Tadcaster, encamped on Clifford Moor.

A vigorous assault on York would probably have left the north country in their hands, but supplies and money were falling short, and the leaders could not agree upon their plans. Turning north again they began to besiege Barnard Castle, but disquieting rumors reaching them from Durham, Earl Percy returned thither with Father Plumtree to guard the city. So he was present on that wonderful occasion when, on the second Sunday in Advent, before High Mass, the whole of the vast congregation was absolved from the sins of heresy committed during the previous eleven years.

This was their last scene of triumph. Westmoreland would have fought to the last, regard-less of the hopelessness of their cause; the gentler Northumberland, always unwilling to resist his queen, hesitated to place so many brave fellows in peril of their lives. And so in the middle of December they dismissed their followers and fled to Scotland, from whence Westmoreland, the Nortons, and others, escaped to the Continent.

A dreadful vengeance was exacted from the north by Cecil. "In the country of Durham alone," says the historian Lingard, "more than three hundred individuals suffered death; nor was there between Newcastle and Wetherby, a district of sixty miles in length and forty in breadth, a town or village in which some of the inhabitants did not expire on the gibbet."

The hand of the avenger fell heaviest on Durham, as might have been expected, and one of the first to suffer was the priest Thomas Plumtree.

On the fourth of January, 1570, he was taken from Durham castle to the market-place, where, "on his arriving at the place of execution his life was offered to him if he would but renounce the Catholic faith and embrace the heresy; to which he made answer 'that he had no desire so to continue living in the world, as meantime to die to God.' Wherefore having fearlessly confessed his faith, by God's grace he suffered death in this world, that he might merit to receive from Christ eternal life."

Meantime the Earl of Northumberland and his brave wife, who had been at his side ever since the rising began, had taken refuge in the cottage of a border outlaw of Liddesdale named John o' the Side. Driven thence by suspicion of disloyalty among the Liddesdale men, who went in fear of Murray, the Scottish regent, the Earl fled to the protection of the Armstrong clan, one of whom he had befriended when a fugitive in England. They appeared to receive him kindly; but a plot had been already made with the regent, and Hector Armstrong had volunteered to be the one to betray his former

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benefactor. He persuaded the Earl to meet an envoy from Murray for a friendly conference, and while they talked, arranged that a troop of horsemen should surround them and carry off the former to Hawick as the Regent's prisoner.

When she heard this Elizabeth insisted on his being handed over to her, though warned that "most of the nobility of Scotland thought it a great reproach to the country to deliver any banished man to the slaughter."

While the matter was under discussion, and the queen was hesitating to pay the large ransom asked, the noble prisoner was left to a heart-breaking imprisonment in the lonely castle of Lochleven.

There he remained for two and a half years, in great anxiety as to the safety of his wife and his four little girls, and harassed by his keeper, the Laird of Lochleven, who was continually urging him to give up his Faith on condition of release. Then, in 1572, came a gleam of hope. His gallant wife had been moving heaven and earth to raise a large sum of money for his ransom from the Scots; with great difficulty, thanks to a timely promise of 4000 crowns from Pope Pius V, this had now been done, and both she and the friends of Percy were able to write congratulating him on his immediate release, and arranging for his safe passage to the Continent.

Directly this was made known to Elizabeth through her spies, she hastened to make a disgraceful bargain with the regent for a sum of £2000. As this outbid the money offered by the Countess, the Earl was handed over to Lord Hunsdon by the cold-blooded laird, who actually tried to persuade him that he was going to be set free and allowed to depart from the country in peace. "You have got your money, but you have sold your faith and honor!" declared Hunsdon as he paid the ransom to the Scottish laird; and seems, in his pity for a prisoner who had the pluck to "discuss hawks and hounds with him, though very sorrowful and fearing for his life," to have raised hopes of "Her Majesty's Mercy" in the Earl's breast.

These, however, were soon crushed by the order to take him to York for execution, which Hunsdon bluntly refused to do. He conducted him, however, to his own feudal castle at Alnwick, not without anxiety, for the way led through the land of a people who "knew no other prince but a Percy"; and from thence Sir John Forster, to whom the castle had been given, conveyed him to York. Here, once again, he was offered his life if he would but give up his Faith, and once more firmly refused. His "modest firmness" is commented on even by his gaoler, Forster, who announced to him that he would be executed on the following day.

And yet the heart of this man, still in the prime of life at forty-four, must have been full of desire to live. Probably he had been allowed to see his four little daughters as he passed through Topcliffe on his journey to York; probably they had clung round his neck and begged him to come back to them and to bring their mother home once more. The familiar scenes, the friendly faces of the Northumbrian yeomen and shepherds, the sweet August sunshine, all must have stirred in him an intense wish to return to the old normal happy life that seemed now like a dream. The alternative was the scaffold, the block, the disgrace of a traitor's death; and yet he never wavered, but after a night of prayer went forth to the place of execution with a cheerful and glad countenance.

On the scaffold he spoke some plain words. "Know," he said to the listening crowd, "that from my earliest years down to this present day I have held the faith of that Church, which throughout the whole Christian world is knit and bound together; and that in this same faith I am about to end this unhappy life. But as for this new Church of England, I do not acknowledge it." At these words the protestant minister Palmer, who had been sent to harass him the previous night, called out: "I see that you are dying an obstinate Papist, a member not of the Catholic but of the Roman Church."

To which the Earl made dignified answer: "That which you call the Roman Church is the Catholic Church, which has

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been founded on the teaching of the Apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being its cornerstone, strengthened by the blood of martyrs, honored by the recognition of the holy Fathers; and it continues always the same, being the Church against which, as Christ our Savior said, the gates of Hell shall not prevail."

"Then," says Sander, "after kissing a cross which he traced upon the ladder of the scaffold, with his arms so folded on his breast as to form a cross, he stretched himself upon the block; and as soon as he had said 'Lord, receive my soul!' the executioner struck off his head. At that same instant a great groan, which sounded like a roll of thunder, burst from the weeping spectators, as with one voice they called on God to receive his soul into eternal rest."

So died blessed Thomas Percy, one who "throughout his life was beyond measure dear to the whole people," at three o'clock on Friday, August 22nd, 1572.

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CHAPTER VI

THE EXCOMMUNICATION 1570–1577

"The Queen never was, nor is, nor shall be head of the Church in England."
—(Words of Blessed Cuthbert Mayne the day before his martyrdom)

On Thursday May 25th, the feast of Corpus Christi in the year 1570, London was in a strange ferment of excitement. It was not on account of the feast itself, for the days of joyous processions, when the Blessed Sacrament was carried through the kneeling ranks of worshippers, were over now and well-nigh forgotten by all save the elder folk. Yet the throng was thickest in St. Paul's Church yard, from whence the Procession used to start, and a crowd of people were staring up at the gates of the Bishop of London's palace close by the Cathedral.

"What is it? What is it?" cried a young man who had come too late to get a place anywhere near the front of the mob. To whom one who was pushing his way out of the throng replied in awestruck tones, "'Tis a Bull of Excommunication sent by the Pope against the Queen's Majesty."

"But whoever dared to put it up there?" exclaimed the youth.

"That no one knows. But it has been there since dawn, and already they say the houses of all the Catholics in or about London are being searched."

"'Twas a bold man who fixed up that parchment!" said the young man thoughtfully. "Ay, and 'twill go hard for him if he is discovered," said the other. "Not that these Catholics seem to fear the consequences of their obstinacy, for I have already heard several in the crowd express their joy that this bull releases them from their allegiance, and that a redress for their evils is now bound shortly to follow, since the Christian princes of Europe will not fail to take up their cause against an excommunicate queen."

"That is strange talk," said the lad. "I myself come of a Catholic family and hold the old faith; and though I know many Catholics I never heard of one who was less loyal to the queen than the Protestants. That they long for freedom in their religion goes without saying, but they would not do aught to harm a hair of the queen's head."

"Then 'tis a desperate remedy they have hit upon yonder, for methinks 'twill recoil hardest upon themselves!" replied the Protestant with a somewhat mocking smile, and forthwith went his way.

Later on, the lad heard that a lawyer, in whose chambers a copy of the bull had been found, had been cruelly racked till he confessed that it had been given him by his friend, Mr. John Felton, then living at Bermondsey Abbey, near Southwark. Hastening thither the next morning he caught a glimpse of that gallant gentleman, whom he knew as belonging to a wealthy and zealous Catholic family of Norfolk, looking down from a window at the armed men preparing to break down the Abbey gate while he tried at the same time to cheer and support his swooning wife. He heard the clear voice bidding the men "have patience, since he knew they came for him, and he would come down to them," and saw him open to them and bid them welcome. He heard a little later of his frank admission that he had posted up the Bull, "and also that as he held the Pope to be the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, since it came from him, he thought it ought to be duly venerated." He heard also that in spite of this declaration of his so-called "guilt" he had been cruelly racked three times.

Nothing, however, daunted that brave and ardent spirit. Up to the hour of his martyrdom he was harassed and bullied by protestant ministers, to whom he is said to have answered

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"arrogantly" that he believed the ancient and Catholic faith for which he was about to die. For a moment, as was but natural, his bright face paled as he saw on the scaffold erected in front of the gates of the Bishop's palace, the rope, the cauldron, the knife and the fire; but his fear was but the dismay of a moment.

"What is this? Art thou afraid of death? he cried to himself; and then pointing with a smile to the palace gates he said cheerfully, "The Sovereign Pontiff's letters were duly exhibited there, and now I am content to die for the Catholic Faith."

"Ask forgiveness of her Majesty," bade the crowd.

"Nay, I have done her no injury," he replied. "But if I have injured anyone I ask forgiveness of him, and for the matter of that of the whole world."

And forthwith he took a valuable diamond ring from his finger, and in the generosity of his heart sent it to the queen to show that he had borne no ill will towards her. And so, calling upon the name of "Jesus," he suffered the awful death of a traitor.

It was in the same spirit of dauntless courage that the martyred priest, Blessed Thomas Woodhouse, who had been taken in the act of saying Mass, after enduring twelve years of captivity, actually bearded the Treasurer Cecil, first, in a letter of rebuke for his conduct as a heretic, urging both him and the queen to repent and be reconciled to the Holy See; and then in a conversation so outspoken that even the grim Lord Treasurer was moved to a kind of sour humor, and asked the daring little priest if he would be his chaplain.

"Yea, certainly," replied Woodhouse. "And wilt thou say Mass in my house?" "Yea, that I will." "And shall I come to it?" "No, that ye shall not," was the quick reply, "unless ye will be reconciled to the Catholic Church."

This was turning the tables with a vengeance. A week later we find him calmly surveying the Council, who had sent for him in the hope that he might be classed as a madman rather than denounced as a traitor. They told him to kneel, but he refused, and stood upright. "Oh, poor fool," said one, "the Pope hath nothing to do in this realm." To which he replied, "Christ said unto Peter, *'Pasce oves meas, pasce agnos meos,'* and I say that if Christ have in England either sheep or lambs, the Pope, who is Peter's successor, bath to do in this realm."

"'This is thy dream," said one of the Council, rather helplessly; to which he quickly replied, "No, 'tis not my dream, but the opinion of St. Augustine and other doctors of the Church."

This was no madness, and he was condemned to die.

Few of our martyrs met their death with such extraordinary courage and joy. He gave money to the smith who riveted heavy irons on his limbs, and promised a crown of gold to one who should bring him word that he was to be racked. When in his weakness he fell and sorely bruised himself on the stone stairs of Newgate he told one who would pity him that these were troubles sweet in the bearing. To one in the crowd who gave him a blow on the face he said with his sunny smile, "Would God I might suffer ten times as much that thou might go free for the blow thou hast given me. I forgive thee, and pray to God to forgive thee even as I would be forgiven."

Even on the scaffold he never quailed for a moment, but when the sheriff bade him ask pardon of God, the queen, and his country, Blessed Thomas replied, "Nay, I, on the part of God demand of you and of the queen that ye ask pardon of God and of Holy Mother Church, because contrary to the truth ye have resisted Christ the Lord, and the Pope, His Vicar upon Earth."

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"Hang him, hang him, this man is worse than Storey!" cried the mob, and so after the usual butchery, that intrepid spirit gained its reward.

Not all Catholics, however, were so courageous and steadfast as these men; and the lull in persecution that followed the death of Blessed Thomas Woodhouse in 1573 speaks for itself. The severity of the Penal Laws was certainly not relaxed; the old ones indeed were put more strongly into force, and a new one added after the death of Felton made it high treason to obtain or publish any writing whatever from the Pope, or to absolve from heresy or reconcile any person to the Catholic Church. A second clause made it penal to possess or give to anyone an Agnus Dei, beads or crosses that had been blessed by the Pope. A third ordered all those who had left the realm to return within six months under penalty of forfeiting their property.

This last clause was aimed at the crowds of Catholics, many of them people of wealth and position, who were daily leaving England for an exile where they could practice their religion in freedom. They had no wish to languish in prison, or to be reduced to beggary because they refused to attend the Protestant Church; there were in the land no Catholic Schools where their children could be taught, and the presence of a priest in the house as chaplain or tutor was an offence. Therefore many during these years indignantly or sullenly "conformed "so far as to attend their parish Church so many times a year, or paid their fines and suffered imprisonment in silence; many others escaped abroad; while a large minority, sad to say, fell away from the faith altogether under the stress of constant persecution.

This was not altogether to be wondered at when we remember that the Catholic priests were rapidly dying out. There were no bishops to ordain new ones, and though the old priests of Mary's time were braving every danger to carry on their work, they were fast diminishing in number, and were not nearly enough to fan the flickering embers of the Faith. With no sacraments to console and inspire, no backing, no encouragement, it was nothing less than a marvel that more of the old Catholic families did not fall away. If the Church were still to exist in England, new priests and a revival of enthusiastic devotion were absolutely necessary; and already preparations for both these requirements were in the making.

In 1568 Dr. Allen, formerly Proctor of Oxford University and Canon of York, who had left the country seven years before, but had returned for three years of strenuous labor, founded the Seminary at Douay in Flanders "for the training of priests who should perpetuate the faith in England." Little by little students were gathered in. The first ordination took place in the year Blessed Thomas Woodhouse was executed. "The next year, 1574, the first three missionary priests left the College gates for England. In the course of another six years it sent a hundred such laborers into the English vineyard."

Well might this institution become a source of constant annoyance and harass to Elizabeth and her advisers, seeing that within ten years from its foundation it was training the flower of England's youth in zeal and devotion to the cause of the Catholic faith, and turning them into devout priests eager for martyrdom, if by that path alone their Master could best be served.

The effect on England was most striking. One of those sent over writes to Dr. Allen after a year's work, "The number of Catholics increases so abundantly on all sides that he who almost alone holds the rudder of the State has privately admitted to one of his friends that for one staunch Catholic at the beginning of the reign there were now, he knew for certain, ten."

Later on it was reported that "one of the younger priests lately sent on the mission had reconciled no fewer than eighty persons in one day."

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Such a revival was certain not to escape the vigilant eye of Cecil, and in 1577 the first of the long line of seminary priests whose names are written as martyrs in the Book of Life was called upon to die for the Faith.

Blessed Cuthbert Mayne was a West country-man, brought up near Barnstaple by his uncle, a Catholic priest who to his shame had been bribed by the offer of a fat living to become a protestant minister.

When still only a lad of nineteen, and as he says, "knowing neither what religion nor ministry meant," he was himself ordained as a minister in order to keep the living in the family. He then went to Oxford, took his degree, and being evidently a young man of unusual intelligence and most attractive appearance, was given the good post of chaplain at St. John's College, then recently built.

Many were his friends among both Protestants and Catholics, but of the former there was one Edmund Campion, an ordained deacon of the English Church, and of the latter one Gregory Martin, who, themselves constantly together, were forever drawing the young chaplain into religious discussions that left him troubled in mind.

Both these young men were notable scholars, the pride of their college, until Martin left to become tutor to the boys of the Duke of Norfolk. His absence did not seem to settle the doubts of either of his protestant friends; and in the year when Martin fled abroad, choosing exile rather than obey the command to attend the protestant service, Campion, drawn by the chains of his friend's devoted love, left Oxford, and after being present at Storey's trial in 1571, went straight to Douay.

Both he and Martin had sacrificed all at the call of God; for Cuthbert Mayne the struggle was a bitter one. He longed to enter the Church, but the dread of poverty, loss of office, and loss of friends held him back awhile from taking the decisive step. The frequent letters from Douay, by which Campion and Martin strove to convince their old comrade and to brace his will to act left him no peace, however, and while he still hesitated, the hand of God suddenly made his way quite clear. One of his friends' letters came into the hands of the Bishop of London, who, in dismay at the obvious unsoundness of the chaplain and some of his acquaintances, sent to have them all arrested. Warned of his danger by another Oxford friend, Thomas Ford, himself a future martyr, Cuthbert fled into hiding, and after a fairly long interval during which we know nothing of his movements, crossed the sea and entered the seminary of Douay in 1573.

That he was naturally timid and slow to act seems clear from this part of his story, and makes his end the more glorious, since his was one of those characters which find it no easy task to face pain and death unmoved.

His great desire after he was ordained priest was to return and labor for that country in which he had once held office as a heretic, and so, having won a high reputation for sanctity and humility, he set out in company with John Payne, another seminary priest, and landing in England, made his way alone to the West Country, where he hoped to convert many of his old acquaintances.

That he met with marked success is clear from the fact that a letter soon reached Douay from another source, declaring "that a spirit of great exasperation had been excited among the heretics by numerous conversions, and that all kinds of torture were threatened, in particular against Henry Shaw (one of the first missionaries from Douay), Cuthbert Mayne and John Payne, whenever they should be caught."'

We should like to know more details, but none are forthcoming till we find Cuthbert living in the house of a staunch Catholic, Mr. Francis Tregian, of Golden, near Truro, and passing as his steward. He would, of course, act as chaplain to the household, and use his opportunities of seeing those who sought hire to instruct and receive them into the Church; and probably it was some rumor to this effect that brought upon Golden the attention of the Sheriff, Richard

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Grenville of Stowe. Accompanied by the Bishop of Exeter, the sheriff determined to search the house, pretending that he was in pursuit of an escaped criminal. There was no time for Tregian to warn the priest, though he did his best to prevent the unwelcome visitors from entering. Forcing their way into the house they came to the door of Blessed Cuthbert's room, which happened to be locked. The priest entering at that moment from the garden heard the blows upon the panels and opened it himself to the high sheriff.

"Who are you?" cried the latter rudely. "I am a man!" replied Cuthbert in his gentle voice; but Grenville as he spoke had seized him by the doublet, and thrusting his hand into his breast pulled out an Agnus Dei which he wore hung from his neck in a silver case.

He was at once arrested, dragged off to a horrible underground prison at Launceston and presently brought to trial. The charge brought against him was that he had absolved and reconciled certain persons; that he had taught at Launceston the "ecclesiastical power of a foreign bishop, to wit, the Bishop of Rome"; that he had publicly said Mass, and had brought into the kingdom a "vain and superstitious thing commonly called an Agnus Dei."

As a matter of fact none of these things could be proved, except the last, and that, since it had not been brought from Rome, was actually not illegal. The jury at Launceston, before which he was tried, was indeed most unwilling to convict him, but was forced to do so by the sheriff, now knighted as Sir Richard Grenville as a reward for his zeal in arresting Cuthbert Mayne.

When sentence was pronounced, the priest, with eyes and hands uplifted to heaven, cried, "Deo Gratias," and joyfully prepared to die. But for five months longer he had to endure a living martyrdom in that filthy prison, while the two judges who had tried him quarreled over and discussed the justice of the verdict. However unjustly he had been condemned, he was not to escape the toils of Cecil and the Privy Council. There had been too many conversions of late to make that even probable, and in November 1577, the order came for his death.

The day before his martyrdom he was brought out to a "conference" with a number of gentlemen, justices, and ministers who seem to have made it their pastime to worry and argue with Catholics as they were about to die. From early in the morning till it grew dark, Blessed Cuthbert either held his own or stood modestly silent during the heat of this controversy. Last of all they offered him life and liberty if he would swear that the queen was Head of the Church in England. He at once asked for a Bible, and as they gathered round with eager glances fixed upon their apparently yielding prey, he quickly made the sign of the Cross, kissed the book, and holding it up cried in a clear, firm voice:

"The Queen never was, nor is, nor shall be Head of the Church of England."

On the eve of St. Andrew, 1577, they drew him on a hurdle to the marketplace of Launceston, and when the rope was actually about his neck, began to question him as to whether Mr. Tregian, and Sir John Arundell, his brother-in-law, "knew of the things he was about to die for."

"I know nothing about them except that they are good and pious men," said he steadfastly; "and as to the things laid to my charge, no one but myself has any knowledge."

Thus bravely died the man who once had been afraid even to declare himself a Catholic or to face the loss of worldly goods. He had indeed outdistanced for a time his old friend and tutor Edmund Campion, who writes a year later to express his joy that Cuthbert had obtained the palm of martyrdom. "Wretch that I am! How has that novice outdone me? May he be favorable to his old friend and tutor! I shall now boast of these titles more than ever."

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CHAPTER VII

INCREASE IN PERSECUTION 1578–1585

"Lord Jesus, I am not worthy to suffer these things for Thee, much less to receive those rewards which Thou hast promised to such as confess Thee."
—(Prayer of Blessed Thomas Sherwood)

The first of our seminary priests had been martyred in the year 1577, a victim to the panic still reigning in the breasts of Protestants as a consequence of the combined terrors of the Bull of Excommunication, the various plots to free the imprisoned Mary of Scotland, and the establishment of seminaries abroad for the training of missionaries.

In the years that immediately followed we can note very clearly an increase in persecution, accompanied by a no less increase in missionary zeal and self-sacrificing devotion.

We have seen that an early Act of Elizabeth's reign had declared that any person not resorting to his parish church on Sundays and holy days was to forfeit "twelve pence"—a much larger sum then than now. For the first twelve years of the reign this had been paid by many of the Catholic gentry, though with scowls, in order to escape the charge of recusancy, while they consoled themselves by getting Mass said in their private houses as often as a priest passed by their way.

The first fruit of the excommunication, however, was an Act declaring it penal under pain of death for any priest to exercise his functions in England in absolving or reconciling, or for any lay person to receive the same at his hands. This, as we saw, was the crime for which Blessed Cuthbert Payne suffered.

In the next year (1572) the terrible Massacre of St. Bartholomew in France roused a fresh outburst of fury against the innocent Catholics of England. No actual victims presented themselves, however, till some few years later, when the ministers of Elizabeth and the queen herself determined to turn for a while from questions of foreign policy and royal engagements to settle once and for all the matter of these "obstinate recusants."

The method of procedure was a curious one. The queen, as we all know, was fond of making "royal progresses," exceedingly inconvenient and expensive matters for those who had to entertain her on the route, but a means of making an impression upon her subjects which was not to be neglected.

In July, 1578, she set out on a progress through the East of England, and was entertained at Euston Hall, near Thetford, by a gentleman named Rookwood, who was lately married and was but just come of age. Next day, when she was about to depart, her host advanced to kiss her hand; upon which the Lord Chamberlain suddenly began to rail upon him as a "recusant," unfit to see or touch the sacred person of his sovereign. Speechless with astonishment, the young man had nothing to answer, and within a short time found himself a prisoner in Norwich Castle. A week later the queen stayed at Braconash, near Norwich, the estate of Thomas Townshend, whose wife, the Lady Elizabeth Style, had refused to conform, even though her husband had submitted. A fairly large party of neighboring gentry had come to pay their respects to the queen, and these were sacrificed to her spite against her hostess. Nine of these unsuspecting gentlemen were arrested and thrown into gaol at Norwich.

As she approached the city itself, Elizabeth was met by Mr. Downes, lord of the manor of Earlham, who presented her with a pair of gold spurs and some verses. But it was whispered in her ear that he too had refused to attend church, and so this gallant, with the rest, was taken back to Norwich as a prisoner.

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No wonder that a royal progress became a matter for dread, and that the temper of the queen was reflected in the conduct of a host of spies and informers, who now began to infest the country for the purpose of recusant-hunting and priest-baiting.

Opportunities for this latter form of sport became more common after 1579, when a new band of zealous missionaries drawn from the English College at Rome, joined the constant stream of seminary priests from Douay; and when also the prejudices of Protestants had been further roused by the attempt made by certain adventurers, with the approbation of the Pope, to rouse a rebellion against Elizabeth in Ireland. This vain enterprise gave Walsingham, now coming more and more to the front as the queen's chief minister, a fine excuse for stirring up a new spirit of hatred against the Catholics, who themselves scarcely knew of the existence of the plot. There was big talk of a "Papal League" to crush English Protestantism, though no one knew better than Walsingham that such a thing was utterly impracticable. This was quite sufficient to gain popular approval for an Act that now imposed on "recusants" a ruinous fine of twenty pounds a month; that made reconciliation with the Church high treason, and the keeping of a Catholic tutor an illegal act. So far there was no law under which men could be executed merely because they were missionary priests; and so the process of conversion itself had to be twisted into an act of treason against the queen's supremacy before such persons could be condemned. After 1585, as we shall see, the acceptance of Orders from the Pope—i.e. the very fact of being a priest, became in itself an excuse for a traitor's death.

Meantime, in the February of 1578, Tyburn Tree had claimed two more victims within a single week. Blessed John Nelson, a Yorkshireman, had seen during his lifetime of forty-four years the whole progress of the Great Schism, and was wont to declare emphatically that England would never return to the Catholic faith till her earth had been drenched with the blood of martyrs. He seemed, indeed, to have foreseen long beforehand that he himself would die for his religion.

He went to Douay in 1573, was ordained three years later, and possibly about that time was admitted into the Jesuit order. In that same year he returned to labor for the souls of his fellow-countrymen in this land. We know little of his work save that he was probably the priest who, regardless of his own safety, went to the death-bed of an "anchoress," who had been living for years in a tiny enclosed space in London, and had become a kind of spectacle to the people of that district.

Although living the life of a religious, she seems to have practically given up the Faith, and never to have made any attempt to obtain the sacraments. But when she was dying, we read in the Douay records that "one of ours, rather than allow a soul so religious in life to pass away without the sacraments, disguised himself so that he should not be at once seized as a priest, and then boldly entering the place, bade the bystanders withdraw a little, and as if he were engaged in some other business with her, reconciled her to the Church, and that done, she expired."

A year after his arrival he was asked to exorcise a person possessed of an evil spirit; and it is said that as it departed, the evil spirit threatened him that he should be arrested very shortly and put to death. Probably some bystander gave information concerning him, and on the following Sunday he was seized and thrown into Newgate. The commissioners could find no definite charge against him, and so were bent on getting him to say something that could be construed into treason. When he refused to take the oath of supremacy, they asked him what he thought of the religion then practiced in England. He replied "that it was schismatical and heretical."

"Is the queen then a schismatic and a heretic?" they asked, knowing that if he said "yes" he could be condemned as a traitor.

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Nelson knew this as well as they did, and for a moment he hesitated, considering if the answer could be evaded. Then he replied calmly, "If she be the setter forth and defender of this religion now practiced in England, then is she a schismatic and a heretic."

Condemned to await execution in "a filthy underground dungeon," Blessed John Nelson passed the intervening time in a state of extraordinary peace and joy. Indeed, when his two brothers, now also priests in the English mission, came to take leave of him, it was found that they were in more need of consolation than himself. On the scaffold he said to the onlookers, "I beg you to bear me witness that I die in the unity of the Catholic Church, and for that unity do now most willingly suffer my blood to be shed; and I earnestly beseech of God, through His infinite mercy, to make you all true Catholic men, and both to live and die in the unity of the Roman Catholic Faith."

"Away with thee and thy Catholic Romish Faith," cried the crowd; but when the fatal cart was withdrawn and the brave martyr was swinging from the beam, many voices were heard to say, "Lord, receive his soul."

Four days later a young layman of twenty-seven years, Thomas Sherwood by name, earned his martyr's crown. He was the nephew of Mr. Francis Ingram, in whose house Blessed Cuthbert Mayne was seized, and who had suffered many things for the faith. In his boyhood he had seen his parents driven from one place to another in order to avoid the penalties for not attending church, and finally they had settled in London, where they hoped to escape notice by living in the strictest retirement.

About that time, Thomas had obtained his parents' leave to visit Douay and consult the Fathers there as to his vocation for the priesthood. As he knew very little Latin, a long course of study would be necessary for him, and he returned therefore to London to make arrangements with his father for the necessary expenses. He had almost completed the business, and was eagerly looking forward to his return to Douay, when he happened to meet one morning in Chancery Lane a youth, who looked hard at him with a peculiar expression, and then hastened away.

His face seemed familiar, and Sherwood presently recognized him as the son of a widow, Lady Tregonwell, at whose London house he had frequently visited, since the Sacraments were administered there as often as it was safe to do so, by a certain Father Stampe, whose Mass he had probably served. The son of this lady, George Martin by name, was utterly opposed to the Faith, and is thought to have "conceived an implacable hatred against Thomas Sherwood," because "by means of him" Mass had been said in his mother's house. He was mean-spirited enough, therefore, to betray her friend, and as Blessed Thomas was walking, unconscious of danger, through the London streets, he was seized on the mere suspicion of being a "Papist," and brought before the dreaded Mr. Justice Fleetwood.

This man had a perfect genius for provoking replies that could be turned and twisted into treason, and in the gentle and simple-hearted young Sherwood he found an easy victim.

Asked what he thought of the Bull of Ex-communication, and whether, if she were ex-communicated, Elizabeth could be the lawful queen, he replied ingenuously that he knew nothing of the Bull, but if the Pope had actually excommunicated her, he did not see how she could be lawful queen.

This was enough to secure his own condemnation for high treason, but it did not satisfy his persecutors. They hoped to get the names of other Catholics through him, and hence he was sent to the Tower, and was the first of our martyrs whom we know for certain to have been racked. Moreover, the letters of his committal expressly state that "if the said Sherwood will not willingly confess such things as shall be demanded of him, he is then to be committed to *the dungeon among the rats."*

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This gruesome spot is described as "a cell below high-water mark, and totally dark. As the tide flowed, innumerable rats which infest the muddy banks of the Thames were driven through the orifices of the walls into the dungeon. The alarm excited by the irruption of these loathsome creatures in the dark was the least part of the torture which the unfortunate captives had to undergo instances are related where the flesh has been torn from the arms and legs of prisoners during sleep."

Even this awful treatment did not break the spirit of this brave youth, and they then had recourse to the torture of the rack, "in order that, overcome by pain, he might confess where he had heard Mass, to the intent that any he might name might be punished. . . . But he was brave beyond his years; no racking, no cross-examination could make him betray anyone."

Then, having lost the use of his limbs through racking, he was thrown again, naked and helpless, into that awful cell. A sinister story goes that, knowing what kind of fare the Tower provided for penniless prisoners, William Roper, son-in-law of Blessed Thomas More, sent money to Sherwood's gaoler in order to buy food for his prisoner. This was returned on the plea that the lieutenant would not allow the youth to have the benefit of any alms. All he could effect was that he would expend sixpence on a bale of straw upon which his starving prisoner might lie in that filthy dungeon.

Once again we can but marvel at the pluck and spirit shown under such awful conditions. Truly said Thomas a Kempis of such souls as Blessed Thomas Sherwood, "He rides at ease who is carried by the grace of God." His brother says: "After his first racking in the Tower, being visited by a Catholic gentlewoman, he showed himself of that joyful and comfortable spirit as she was astonished there-at. As also his keeper with compassion giving him warning that he was to be racked again, he was so little moved there-at, as merrily and with a cheerful countenance to say these words: 'I am very little, and you are very tall; you may hide me in your great hose, and so they shall not find me;' which the keeper did afterwards report to divers, much marveling at his great fortitude and courage."

The story makes us wonder whether such heroism left the hearts of those grim warders utterly untouched. Pity they certainly felt, and perhaps, all unknown to history, the Sacred Heart of Jesus rewarded them for that spark of compassion and gave them in some cases at least, the grace of conversion before their death.

On the feast of the Purification this "little one of God" was condemned finally to a traitor's death. There could not have been much left of the brave young martyr when he was dragged from the Tower to Tyburn, and the end, in all its horrid details, must have come as a blessed relief to one who throughout his torture had cried continually: "Lord Jesus, I am not worthy to suffer these things for Thee, much less to receive those rewards which Thou hast promised to such as confess Thee."

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CHAPTER VIII

FATHER EDMUND CAMPION
1581—THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THE JESUIT MISSION

"Touching our Society . . . all the Jesuits in the world have made a league cheerfully to carry the cross that you may lay upon and never to despair your recovery while we have a man left to enjoy your Tyburn."
—The Challenge of Father Campion.

The first day of December, 1581, saw the wood of Tyburn Tree dyed with the blood of three martyrs, who, short as their mission had been, had sown seed in England that was to bear brave fruit thereafter.

Of the first of these, Blessed Edmund Campion, it is hard to speak in few words, for the charm of his personality and the adventurous character of his sojourn in this country makes one want to linger over the details of his story. But as that cannot be, we will try to follow him in the different phases of his career by glancing at a series of pictures, showing him at the more critical moments of his life.

The first takes us back to the year 1553, on the day when Mary of England entered London through the "Old Gate," or Aldgate, on her Coronation procession to the royal residence in the Tower. It was a glad day for those citizens who had received the poor little "nine days queen," Lady Jane Grey, in such grim silence a short time before. With the return of the true queen the evil days of unrest and disorder, and changes of religion that were liked as little as they were understood, would pass away; and so the Londoners greeted the dignified little lady who sat upon her white palfrey in a pearl-embroidered robe of crimson velvet with shouts of unfeigned joy.

In the wide space outside St. Paul's Cathedral the procession comes to a standstill, and we see advancing from the midst of a crowd of Blue-coat boys from the recently-established school in Newgate Street a bright-faced lad of thirteen years, who has been selected to make an oration in Latin predicting the "justice, mercy, and religion" that had returned to England with the accession of the queen. And Mary Tudor smiles upon him graciously, little thinking that less than thirty years later, this charming boy, with his ready tongue and nimble wit, would have gained his martyr's crown, as Blessed Edmund Campion, the Jesuit priest and missioner.

Five years later, when the tragedy of Mary's reign was accomplished, and the Protestant religion was declared to be the faith of England, we see young Edmund Campion again. He is Fellow of his college at Oxford now, but is still famous for his eloquence—so famous, indeed, that he cares more for worldly arts and learning than for theology, and is content to take the oath of supremacy and to defer the consideration of serious matters till a more convenient season. So popular is he that a band of gallant youngsters like himself are proud to dub themselves "Campionists" and to enroll themselves as his pupils; and when a great public display is to be made at Oxford on the occasion of the burial of the unfortunate Amy Robsart, it is Campion who makes the oration and wins the approval of Dudley, the future Earl of Leicester.

Nay, in 1566, when Queen Elizabeth herself visits the University, he is selected to make the oration in her honor; and though there are indications that he is getting uneasy as to his position under a queen of whose father he had already said that "he destroyed the religion and commonwealth of England," the things of this world, praise, popularity, ambition, are as yet too strong for him. He has not abjured the faith in which he had been born, but, like his parents and most other folk at that time, he has ceased to practice his religion.

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And so, after he has made his successful disputation before the queen, we find him gladly accepting her patronage and the friendship of Leicester, then her Chancellor, who spoke of him in after clays as "one of the diamonds of England."

Amidst the "infinite praises of all men that were given to Campion at this time," there came grave risk lest he should lose his immortal soul as their price; yet while he longed to follow up the course so successfully begun, and under Leicester's influence to become one of Elizabeth's most brilliant orators, his conscience, ever tender, left him no peace of mind. Fortunately, he had not ceased to pray for light, especially after the study of the Fathers of the Church which his college course imposed on him; but for a while he compromised.

He was at this time much under the influence of one Richard Cheney, Bishop of Gloucester, who persuaded himself that, while loathing the doctrines of the Established Church, he might still hold office in the same if he privately believed in those of Catholicism and taught them as far as possible; and this subterfuge was now held out to Campion as a means of taking Orders. Still blinded by ambition and by a temperament naturally inclined to a peaceful settlement of knotty points, Edmund was induced to take so-called Orders as a deacon, in order to help Bishop Cheney and to use his powers of eloquence as a preacher.

From that moment his conscience gave him no peace at all. Louder and louder grew the call to escape from his false position at any cost, and, as so often happens, his weak will was braced at this crisis by an apparently chance event. The Grocers' Company, whose exhibition largely maintained him at Oxford, uneasy as to his orthodoxy, suddenly demanded that he should preach a Protestant sermon at Paul's Cross. Perhaps the remembrance of his oration on that same spot fifteen years ago, before a Catholic queen, awoke in the young man's mind; anyway, he refused the call, resigned his exhibition, and in the next year, 1569, left Oxford.

For the next two years we find him in Ireland, living among Catholics as a Catholic, though still more concerned with plans for refounding a university at Dublin than with the propagation of the Faith. Then came the sting of persecution to stimulate his dormant soul. His name was on the list of those to be apprehended as dangerous recusants after the posting of the Bull of Excommunication in 1570; and Campion, lately the admired orator and popular tutor of his college, becomes Campion the fugitive, though a merry and high-hearted one, fleeing for his safety to Douay, whither his chief friend, Gregory Martin, had been calling him for some time past.

Here, no doubt, he was formally "reconciled" to the Church and became from henceforth one of her most ardent converts. Douay, full of enthusiasm as it was, could not satisfy a soul that was not only intent on the utmost for the highest, but was still full of remorse for its past Iuke-warmness. After two years of study for the priesthood, we find hint travelling the road to Rome in pilgrim's garb to seek admission into the Society of Jesus. He has indeed cast the things of this world behind him and has set his eyes steadfastly on the eternal.

Seven years later, when Father Campion had been for five quiet years a teacher of rhetoric in the Jesuit College at Prague, the call to action came. The probation has been a long one, and not seldom must that enthusiastic spirit, eager for active service and fired by the rumors of persecution and martyrdom among his own people, have yearned for a share in the honors of the fight. And yet for five long years his work had been to teach boys Latin, to wash dishes in the kitchen, and to visit the prisons and hospitals of the town as a humble priest! Thus was this finely-tempered soul trained and disciplined for the one year of glorious work which lay before him in his native land.

The call to action comes first in a letter from Dr. Allen, the founder of Douay, then at Rome in order to obtain the

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assistance of the Jesuits in the English mission. Tenderly he writes to this beloved son of his: "Since your brethren after the flesh call upon you (for though you hear not their words, God has heard their prayers), I, who am so closely connected with you, with them, and with our common country both in the world and in the Lord, must not be the only one to keep silence, when I should be the first to call you. . . . I do not stay to inquire what your own wish may be, since it is your happiness to live not by your own will, but by others. Our harvest is already great in England: ordinary laborers are not enough; more practiced men are wanted, but chiefly you and others of your order. . . . Prepare yourself then for a journey, a work, a trial. You will have an excellent colleague, and though they still live who sought the Child's life, yet for some time past a door has been open to you in the Lord. May He send you to us as soon as may be."

At once Father Campion held himself in readiness for the final call. On the night before it came, a certain simple old Jesuit had written over his cell the words: "Edmundus Campeanius, Martyr," and so, when interviewed by the rector of the College next day, the young Father, blushing at his kindly words, said, "The Fathers seem indeed to guess something concerning me. I hope their suspicions may be true." So had the years of grace enabled a naturally timorous spirit to lay aside the fear of death and to face the dark future with unswerving courage. We hear, indeed, that on receiving the command to set forth, he, "being scarce able to hold tears for joy and tenderness of heart, went to his chamber, and there upon his knees to God offered himself wholly to His divine disposition without any exception or restraint, whether it were to rack, cross, quartering, or any other torment or death whatsoever."

Father Campion's fellow-worker on the mission was Father Robert Parsons, a man of very different character, who, after many hairbreadth escapes, died at last in his bed. It is to his life of the martyr that we owe most of our information about the latter, and it was he who, disguised as a soldier, preceded him to England a few days in advance.

"Such a peacock, such a swagger!" writes Father Campion in one of his natural, happy-hearted letters to his Superior. "A man must needs have very sharp eyes to catch a glimpse of holiness beneath such a garb, such a look. Yet our minds cannot but misgive us when we hear all men, I will not say whispering, but crying the news of our coming. According to orders, I have stayed here (at St. Omer's) to try if possible to fish some news as to Father Robert's success out of the carriers before I sail across. If I hear anything I will advise upon it; but in any case I will go over and take a part in the fight, though I die for it."

On the Feast of St. John Baptist, 1580, Father Edmund Campion, with the young lay brother Ralph Emerson, disguised as a jewel-merchant and his servant, landed at Dover, and was instantly apprehended by the "searcher" at that port, who took him to be a Mr. Allen, brother of the founder of Douay, and charged him before the Mayor as "a foe of the queen's religion, sailing under a false name; as having been abroad for religion, and for returning to propagate popery."

But when Campion offered to swear he was not Allen, some indecision arose. The mayor withdrew to consider the matter, and presently to Campion, as he stood there praying for the intercession of his patron, St. John Baptist, and to God for deliverance, came forth an old clerk from the mayor, who said, "You are dismissed. Good-bye to you."

"Being so happily and unexpectedly delivered from Dover," says Father Parsons, "he made all the haste he could to come to London, where he was greatly desired, and much prayer was made for him. The greatest solicitude was how he would do at his first arrival, for that he knew not where to go. . . . But God provided better for him herein than he could possibly imagine, for coming to land upon the Thames side of London, there was there by God's providence a certain Catholic that partly by his person and apparel, described to

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him before, and partly that he was accompanied by a little man named Ralph Emerson, he did suspect him to be the man he wanted; and so stepping to the boat-side, said, 'Mr. Edmonds' (for so he was called), 'give me your hand. I stay here for you to lead you to your friends.' With which speech Father Campion was wonderfully comforted."

These things make us realize to some extent what was the state of England at that time. For an Englishman to be ordained abroad and to return to his own land, was not yet an act of treason; but the whole country was swarming with spies and "watchers" ready to entrap those who did so. The marvel was that their vigilance was so long eluded; for on June 29th, the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, we find Father Campion preaching to a band of enthusiastic Catholics in the great hall of a house near Smithfield, while the doors were guarded by "gentlemen of worship and honor" in place of porters; and this sermon on St. Peter's confession of faith so stirred his hearers that "each of them supposed that if this loose Catholic or that sincere Protestant could be brought to speak with the preacher, the conversion of the wanderer would be secured; hence Campion's coming was entrusted as a grand secret to half the world, and after a few days, which he well spent in conference with all comers, the Council began to suspect what was on hand, and set on foot a diligent search for his apprehension."

Thus the enthusiastic young Jesuit soon found his path strewn with dangers. He was warned that "false brothers," pretended Catholics, would attend his sermons or his Mass, so that he had to content himself with private conferences and with saying Mass secretly. A young Catholic on his way to visit Campion and Parsons was apprehended by a spy in the street, whereby the Fathers were warned of their very present danger. At another time they only escaped by the good-will of a constable, a Catholic at heart, who arrested another would-be visitor before he could reach their house, whither he was being followed by this same spy and informer.

It was therefore thought best that Parsons and Campion should leave London separately and begin their work in the country, where there was indeed much to be done. For by this time fear or indolence had caused many who were Catholics at heart to conform to the Protestant religion; and we must again remind ourselves that this cannot he wondered at, when we remember the very little encouragement they had to stand firm, the lack of sacraments and of teachers, and, on the other hand, the harsh treatment, ruinous fines, and long imprisonment that were the lot of those who refused to "conform."

To such as these the Jesuits went forth, to call upon them to separate themselves from heresy, and, strong in the faith renewed by sacramental grace, to face the consequences, however bitter they might be. Just before they left London, there came in hot haste a Catholic named Pound, who urged that something should be written by the Fathers that should disprove the rumor, so industriously circulated by the Council, that they had come to England for political purposes, to preach treason towards the queen. Upon which, "being a man of singular good-nature and easy to be persuaded to what ever religion or piety inclined towards," Father Campion rose from the company, took a pen, and in less than half an hour wrote the famous declaration addressed to the Council, known by his foes as "Campion's Brag and Challenge," which ends with these most touching words:

"Many innocent hands are lifted up for you daily and hourly by those English students whose posterity shall not die, which beyond the seas, gathering virtue and sufficient knowledge for the purpose, are determined never to give you over, but either to win you to Heaven or to die upon your pikes. And, touching our Society, be it known unto you that we have made a league—all the Jesuits in the world—cheerfully to carry the cross that you shall lay upon us and never to despair your recovery while we have a man left to enjoy your Tyburn, or to be racked with your torments, or to

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be consumed with your prisons. The expense is reckoned, the enterprise is begun; it is of God—it cannot be withstood. So the Faith was planted, so it must be restored."

Though this document was only written for a case of emergency, Pound was so delighted with it that he could not help publishing it broadcast among both friends and foes, with the result that as Campion's name became more famous, the danger to his life and freedom rapidly increased. Meantime the two priests were busy enough. The country people were more tender of conscience than those who lived near the court, and did not hesitate to bring their scruples and doubts to the Jesuit Fathers, even at great risk of detection. Letters written to Rome at this period give a vivid picture of the way in which the mission was carried on.

"When a priest comes to their houses, they first salute him as a stranger unknown to them, and then they take him to an inner chamber where an oratory is set up, where all fall on their knees and beg his blessing. If he says he must go on the morrow, they all prepare for confession that evening; the next morning they hear Mass and receive Holy Communion; then after preaching and giving his blessing a second time, the priest is conducted on his journey by one of the young men of the house."

"Sometimes," says another letter, "when we are sitting merrily at table, conversing familiarly on matters of faith and devotion, there comes a hurried knock at the door, like that of a pursuivant; all start up and listen; we leave our food and commend ourselves to God in a brief ejaculation; nor is word or sound heard till the servants come to say what the matter is."

The effect of the stirring words of the Jesuits was soon apparent. "No one is to be found in these parts who complains of the length of services; if a Mass does not last nearly an hour, many are discontented . . . A lady was lately told that she should be let out of prison if she would once walk through a church: she refused. She had come into prison with a sound conscience, and she would depart with it, or die. In the days of Henry, the father of this Elizabeth, the whole kingdom, with all its bishops and learned men, abjured their faith at one word of the tyrant. But now, in his daughter's days, boys and women boldly profess their faith before the judge and refuse to make the slightest concession even at the threat of death."

"We hear," write the Fathers themselves, "that one month since more than fifty thousand names of persons who refused to go to the heretical churches have been reported. We, although all conversation with us is forbidden by proclamation, are yet most earnestly invited everywhere; many take long journeys only to speak with us, and put themselves and their fortune entirely in our hands."

And Campion adds a personal touch, after begging for more laborers to be sent into the vineyard. "I cannot long escape the hands of the heretics; the enemies have so many eyes, so many tongues, so many scouts and crafts. I am in apparel to myself very ridiculous; I often change it and my name also. I read letters sometimes myself that, in the first front, tell news that Campion is taken, which, noised in every place where I come, so filleth my ears with the sound thereof, that fear itself hath taken away all fear. 'My soul is ever in my hands.' Let such as you send for supply pre-meditate and make count of this always. Marry, the solaces that are ever intermingled with these miseries are so great, that they do not only countervail the fear that may come, but by infinite sweetness make all worldly pains, be they never so great, seem nothing. They will find consciences that are pure, courage invincible, zeal incredible, a work so worthy, the number innumerable of every age and sex, both of high degree, of mean calling, and of the inferior sort."

Eighty years later the memory of the stirring sermons of Father Campion was still green in the north country, where he was now preaching almost daily, though in imminent danger of apprehension. At Blainscow Hall he nearly fell into the hands of a pursuivant, who followed him as he was

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walking through the garden to the house; but here he was saved by the quick action of a Catholic maid-servant, who, treating him as though he had been an over-bold farm servant, pushed him into the horse-pond, from which he emerged covered with green slime and quite unrecognizable.

Meantime, a Bill was being rushed through Parliament which "made it treason to absolve any Englishman, to convert him to Popery, to move him thereto, or to do any overt act tending that way." The saying or hearing of Mass was forbidden under penalty of 200 marks and a year's imprisonment; and a system of fines for refusing to attend the Protestant services was imposed, which effectually ruined those who held to the Faith, and "became for half a century one of the great items in the budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer."

In the Whitsuntide of 1581, Campion returned to London, at Father Parsons' request, to see to the printing of his book, *Ten Reasons*, in support of his previous challenge to those who opposed the Catholic Faith. Visiting Harrow, the home of one of his most zealous converts, from his various abodes in London, he would pass Tyburn Gate, just beyond the present Marble Arch, where stood the triangular gallows ready for the weekly sacrifice of "murderers, thieves, traitors, or priests." Its first victim had been Dr. Storey, whose martyrdom he had seen; and partly in honor of his memory and that of the other martyrs, partly because he knew it was to be one day the scene of his own conflict, he was wont to walk between the posts bareheaded and with a deep obeisance to the Tree of the Cross of which it was the emblem.

His active work on earth was getting very near its completion. In July 1581 his book, secretly printed, was openly published, and took the world by storm. We can only quote from it the last stirring words, addressed to Elizabeth the queen.

"Listen, Elizabeth, mighty queen. I tell thee, one heaven cannot receive Calvin and these thy ancestors (the kings of Christendom). Join thyself therefore to them, be worthy of thy name, of thy genius, of thy learning, of thy fame, of thy fortune. Thus only do I conspire, thus only will I conspire against thee, whatever becomes of me, who am so often threatened with the gallows as a conspirator against thy life. Hail, thou Good Cross! The day shall come, Elizabeth, the day that will show thee clearly who loved thee best, the Society of Jesus, or the brood of Luther."

Meantime there was one dogging his steps, the spy George Eliot, a renegade Catholic, who, to escape the penalty of a charge for murder, hoped to win favor with the court by the capture of the "notorious Jesuit." Finding that Campion had been sent for safety out of London, he discovered that he was about to visit at a house called The Moat, at Lyford, the residence of a Mrs. Yate, and laid his plans accordingly. Acting under Parsons' orders, however, the priest moved on next day to Oxford, and reached an inn on the outskirts of the city, where a number of university men had assembled to meet him. There he was overtaken by a priest named Ford, who had been one of Mrs. Pate's guests, and who now implored him to return and preach to a number of Catholics who had come to The Moat after his departure, and who were bitterly disappointed at having arrived too late. His companion, Brother Ralph Emerson, was strongly opposed to his return, but the Father's cheery confidence overruled him, and Campion returned for the Sunday, July 16th, to find more than sixty Catholics, many of them Oxford men, waiting to hear Mass, and to listen to his last most wonderful sermon on the Tears of Jesus over Jerusalem.

But among that devoted throng knelt one, Eliot the traitor, who only hesitated to apprehend him in the very act of saying Mass because of the crowd of stalwart Catholic youths by whom he was surrounded. Immediately after the sermon he hurried away, and scarcely was the evening meal finished before a watcher reported that the house was surrounded by armed men. Father Campion would have saved the rest by

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delivering himself up at once, but this was not allowed. With the two other priests, Ford and Collington, he was hurried into a secret room hollowed out of the wall above the gateway, where there was just room for a narrow bed, upon which they lay side by side, with their hands uplifted in prayer. All the long hot afternoon they heard the sounds of tapping and breaking wood, as every part of the house was searched in vain. When evening came, the magistrate so hurriedly summoned by Eliot, denounced him as a "gull," and asking pardon of his neighbor, Mrs. Yate, for the trouble he had caused her, took his departure, to her unmeasured and possibly too openly shown satisfaction.

Outside, hot recriminations ensued between Eliot and the searchers, whom the former accused of favoring the Catholics in their attempt. Frightened by the apprehension of one of their number who had detected Eliot in the fact that he had no warrant for destroying or breaking down the walls of the house, they consented to return, and very nearly came right upon the fugitives, who had left their narrow quarters and were in the midst of a torrent of thanksgiving and congratulation from the in-mates of the house. They had just time to slip back while Mrs. Yate reproached the magistrate and insisted that she should be allowed her night's rest. To this he agreed, and she at once had her bed made up in the room out of which opened the stair leading to the secret chamber. Weary with the vain search, and heavy with the ale so liberally supplied, the sheriff's men were soon asleep in the hall and passages, and escape might yet have been possible had not Mrs. Yate, with incredible lack of caution, insisted that Father Campion should preach one more sermon to the little congregation hastily assembled within her room. He was willing enough; but they, excited by his eloquence, lost all sense of danger, and when one of the priests fell on the stairway, they made a commotion which roused the guards. Once more the three priests escaped by the skin of their teeth, their hearers also dispersing through secret passages in the darkness, while the men searched Mrs. Yate's room thoroughly but in vain.

FATHER CAMPION BROUGHT INTO LONDON.

The next morning, when Eliot, pale with disappointed fury, was about to depart, ushered out by a servant who was in the secret all along, he suddenly struck the wall over the stairs, exclaiming, "We have not broken through here yet."

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The man lost his nerve, stammered out that he should have thought enough had been broken, and showed such confusion that Eliot took an axe, smashed the wall, and disclosed the narrow chamber in which lay the three priests, calm and composed, awaiting their fate.

When we next see our martyr, he rides into London, the center of a great crowd, his elbows tied behind him, his hands in front, with a paper stuck on his hat upon which is written, "Campion, the seditious Jesuit." The crowd cried out on Eliot by the name of "Judas," but the priest had forgiven him for his share of the foul work. For when the wretched man said to him as they left Lyford, "Mr. Campion, you look cheerfully upon everybody but me; I know you are angry with me for this work," he replied, "God forgive thee, Eliot, for so judging me; I forgive thee; and in token thereof I drink to thee; yea, and if thou wilt repent and come to confession, I will absolve thee; but large penance thou must have."

Cheerfully still he rides upon his way of sorrows, while some mock and others "lament to see the land fallen to such barbarism, as to abuse in this manner a gentleman famous throughout Europe for his scholarship and his innocence of life, and this before any trial or any proof against him." Passing the Cross in Cheapside he bows his comely head in a reverent obeisance, crossing himself with his tied hands as far as he could; and so rides onward to the Tower, whose grim gates close behind him and bring him one step nearer to the end.

When we next see Edmund Campion he is standing once more as on a bygone occasion, in the presence of the Earls of Leicester and Bedford. He has been brought secretly from his dungeon, known as "Little Ease," where he could neither stand upright nor lie at length, to he questioned by Leicester as to why he had come to England. Doubtless the Earl remembered the gallant youth of bygone days, and looked with interest on the eager face, worn with four nights' watching and discomfort, as Campion readily made answer to his interrogations. He seems, indeed, to have convinced them that his only purpose was the propagation of the Faith, for they told him they found no fault in him save that he was a Papist.

"But that," said he, modestly but with a glad look that was not to be mistaken, "is my greatest glory."

There was a rustle and a commotion at the door just then, and the prisoner, to his astonishment, found himself the object of the interested gaze of a richly-dressed lady whose face he dimly remembered. What passed between Elizabeth and the Jesuit priest is recorded in Campion's own words at his trial. The queen asked him if he acknowledged her as his sovereign; to which he emphatically replied in the affirmative; as to whether the Pope could lawfully excommunicate her, he refused to be the judge.

Elizabeth, with all her faults, always loved pluck in a man, and there is no doubt that she looked with no disfavor on the priest. Either then or later in the Tower, he was offered life, liberty, and high preferment in the Anglican Church if he would renounce his faith; but when he steadfastly refused either to abjure himself or to give up the names of his Catholic friends and converts, she made no attempt to save him even from the horrors of the rack.

Once again we see him at a public conference, with his fellow-prisoners Sherwin and others, sitting on stools facing a table loaded with controversial literature, at which sit the most learned Protestant divines of that day. His arms are almost dislocated with the rack, his face is pale and drawn with physical pain and with the anxiety caused by the persistent rumors that he has betrayed his friends, rumors that were groundless as far as any new information was concerned, but which were industriously spread abroad in order to injure his reputation with the Catholics.

Yet in these so-called conferences, the future martyr bore himself so calmly, and gave such clear and weighty answers to the insulting and threatening questions hurled at

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him that even the Protestant bishops who were present declared that the discussions did more harm than good to their cause. They thought the rack was their better argument; and three times he was so cruelly used that when his gaoler asked him, in sheer pity and admiration of his pluck, how his hands and feet felt, he answered with that brave sweet smile of his, "Not ill, because not at all." Finding it useless to try to shake his constancy thus, and fearing a reaction among the London populace, which was already making ballads in his praise, the Council condemned him, with Sherwin and Briant, to be executed at Tyburn on the first of the ensuing month of December. A curious fact is recorded of the judge who sat awaiting the return of the jury on that day: "Pulling off his glove he found all his hand and his seal of arms bloody, without any token of wrong, pricking, or hurt; and being dismayed therewith, wiping, it went not away, but still returned; he showed it to the gentlemen that sat before him, who can be witnesses of it to this day."

"The verdict of the jury," says an old writer, "was the most unjust that ever was given in this land; whereat already (in 1582) not only England but all the Christian world doth wonder, and which our posterity shall lament and be ashamed of."

The three priests heard their condemnation in dignified silence; but when asked if they had aught to say, Campion spoke these eloquent and unforgettable words:

"If our religion doth make us traitors, we are worthy to be condemned, but otherwise are and have been as true subjects as ever the queen had. In condemning us, you condemn all your own ancestors—all the ancient priests, bishops, and kings—all that was once the glory of England, the isle of Saints, and the most devoted child of the See of Peter. For what have we taught, however you may qualify it with the odious name of treason, that they did not uniformly teach? To be condemned with these old lights by their degenerate descendants is both gladness and glory to us. God lives; posterity will live; their judgment is not so liable to corruption as that of those who are now about to sentence us to death."

"In the splash and mud of a rainy December morning Campion was brought forth from his cell, clad in a gown of Irish frieze, and was taken to Coleharbour Tower, where he found Sherwin and Briant waiting for him. . . . Outside the Tower a vast crowd was already collected. Campion, nothing daunted, looked cheerfully round and saluted them: 'God save you all, gentlemen! God bless you and make you all good Catholics!' Then he knelt and prayed, with his face towards the East; concluding with the words 'In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum.'

"There were two hurdles in waiting, each tied to the tails of two horses. On one Sherwin and Briant were laid and bound, Campion on the other. As they were dragged through the gutters and filth each hurdle was followed by a rabble of ministers and fanatics." These, however, were soon daunted by the wind and rain and by the pace of the horses. "There were intervals during which sundry Catholics spoke to Campion of matters of conscience and received comfort. One gentleman, like St. Veronica in another *via dolorosa*, either for pity or affection, courteously wiped his face, all spattered with mire and dirt, as he was drawn most miserably through thick and thin. 'For which charity,' says the priest who saw it done, 'or haply some sudden-moved affection, God reward him and bless him.'

As they passed the niche over the arch of Newgate, where stood as yet untouched the image of Our Lady, Campion with difficulty raised himself upon his hurdle and saluted her. "A priest who saw the martyrs on their way constantly declared they had a smile on their faces, and as they drew near Tyburn they actually laughed. There was a cry raised among the people, 'But they laugh; they don't care for death.'"

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It had been a dreary daybreak, but when they reached that place of execution the sun shone out from the dark clouds upon the tiny group of martyrs and upon the great crowd assembled to see their end.

Campion was the first to put his head into the halter, and standing thus upon the cart below, he declared emphatically that he died "as a Catholic man and a priest" for his religion; and in that alone was he found guilty.

Then, in the midst of the wrangling and questioning that the Protestant ministers kept up all round the scaffold, Father Campion quietly said his prayers. Once, indeed, when rudely interrupted and urged to say a prayer with his opponents, he looked up and said gently, "You and I are not one in religion, wherefore I pray you content yourself; I bar none of prayer; but I only desire them of the household of faith to pray for me and in mine agony to say one Creed."

But when called on to pray for the queen, he gladly agreed, saying: "I wish her a long, quiet reign, with all prosperity."

"While he was speaking these last words the cart was drawn away, and he, amid the tears and groans of the vast multitude, meekly and sweetly yielded his soul unto his Savior, protesting that he died a true Catholic." In accordance with the demands of the crowd, he was not cut down till he had ceased to live.

Sherwin, his fellow-martyr, kissed his blood upon the hands of the hangman after the cruel work of quartering had been accomplished, and died with the words: "Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, be to me a Jesu!" upon his lips; and Briant, "a very fair young man, not more than twenty-eight years of age," praised God openly that He had made him worthy to suffer death for the Catholic faith in company with one whom he so revered.

From the moment of his martyrdom, the pure and beautiful soul of Edmund Campion called others to their conversion. Already his bearing during the trial had been the means of the conversion of Philip, Earl of Arundel; and as we shall see in a future chapter, it was a few drops of Campion's blood splashing from the cauldron on to his garment that turned Henry Walpole from a wavering Catholic into an ardent witness to the Faith. With one verse from the "Epitaph" written by the latter we must close this all too brief account of one of the most attractive of the band of martyrs:

"Blessed be God, which lent him so much grace,
Thanked be Christ, which blessed this martyr so.
Happy is he, which seeth his Master's face,
Cursed all they, that thought to work him woe;
Bounden be we to give eternal praise
To Jesus' name, which such a man did raise."

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CHAPTER IX

BLESSED RALPH SHERWIN
DECEMBER 1, 1581

"Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, esto mihi Jesus!"
(Last prayer of Blessed Ralph Sherwin")

One of the most attractive, in its almost boyish simplicity of face and figure, of the statues of the martyrs now placed in Tyburn Chapel, close to the scene of their martyrdom, is that of Ralph Sherwin, the young secular priest, who, at the age of thirty-one, earned his crown as the companion in death of Blessed Edmund Campion.

He began life as a distinguished student of Exeter College, Oxford, where, like Campion, his public "disputation" won the favor of the Earl of Leicester, that patron of talented youth, and opened to him the gate of a brilliant career in the Anglican Church or at the bar. But in 1575, when he was twenty-five years of age, attracted irresistibly by the beauty and reasonableness of the true Faith, Sherwin left all and went to join that fast-increasing band at Douay which was preparing for a priesthood frequently crowned by martyrdom.

Soon after his ordination, he was sent to Rome to help in forming the English College which nowadays is proud to claim him as its first martyr. During his three years there, the College was placed under the direction of the Jesuit Fathers, who made it their business to find out at once which of their scholars were willing to go on the "English mission"—which meant, as was well known, almost certain death. The first entry made can still be read in the annals of the College.

"1579. Father Ralph Sherwin, English, a priest, aged 29, a student of sacred theology, declares and swears upon the Holy Scriptures that he is ready to-day rather than to-morrow, at the intimation of Superiors, to proceed to England for the help of souls."

So Ralph Sherwin was one of those chosen to accompany that notable group of missionaries which set out for the English shores in 1580, and which included Blessed Edmund Campion and Father Parsons. Most of the journey was made on foot and was not without its perils, described with boyish delight by Father Ralph in a letter to his friends. The only thing that annoys him is the need of entering England in the disguise of a dashing young Frenchman, for he writes to his friend Ralph Bickley, "Well, my loving friend Ralph, even while I wrote these letters, came in Mr. Paschal (his lay companion) and the trip to frenchify me. 0) ?> miserable time when a priest must counterfeit a cutter! God give us still priests' minds, for we go far astray from the habit here. Mr. Paschal crieth, 'You will never be handsome,' and I tell him there was never priest handsome in this attire. Thus, for Christ, we put ourselves in colors . . . all which imperfections I hope He hath washed away with His blood."

At Paris the party separated, for rumors had already arrived to the effect that their names and appearance were all known to Walsingham and his spies. Still Father Sherwin writes in the highest spirits to Rome. "Believe me," he says, "that the nearer we get to the labors and perils of England, the more eagerly we advance upon the country commended to our zeal and the burden laid upon our shoulders."

When we next hear of him, four months later, he is a prisoner in the Marshalsea, loaded with heavy irons.

What had happened in the interval can only be gathered from two letters of Father Parsons, written some time later. Says the first of these, written to the Rector of the English College:

"Your Sherwin who burned with such zeal at Rome, with no less ardor of spirit spent nearly six entire months

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preaching in various parts of the kingdom: in this work he enjoyed a very special grace and ascendancy: and it seemed as if Divine Providence meant to reward such great labors by disposing that he should be taken in the very act of preaching in London."

The words sound almost ironic at the present day, when suffering and death are regarded by an effeminate generation as the greatest evil that can happen. In those days men saw more clearly that the way of tribulation is the short cut to eternal joy, and that oftentimes a noble death does more to win souls than the most strenuous life.

In a second letter Parsons describes his first meeting with Sherwin after they had parted in France.

"We passed the night together in spiritual conference, wherein he told me of his desire to die. The next day he came to tell me what danger we were in, and then went away to preach. For we had agreed that he should stay in London for the arrival of a certain gentleman who had asked for him, and in the meantime should occupy himself in preaching. And it was while preaching in Mr. Roscarrock's house that he was captured. I think he was the first of our confraternity that was taken. .

The description of the young priest's first days of imprisonment is also taken from a letter of Father Parsons:

"When Sherwin was taken into the inner court of the prison they fastened on him very heavy fetters which he could scarcely move. The gaolers then went away to see in what cell or dungeon he was to be confined. On looking round and finding himself alone, he gazed up to heaven with a face full of joy and gave God thanks. Then looking down again at his feet loaded with chains, he tried whether he could move them, but when he heard the clank of the chains as he stirred, he could not help breaking out into laughter, and then again into tears of happiness, and with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, betraying the greatness of his joy. This scene was witnessed by two heretics of the 'family of love,' who were confined in a neighboring part of the prison, and who were filled with astonishment; and who have again and again related it since."

And Blessed Ralph himself, writing from prison in almost boyish high spirits, says, "I wear now upon my feet and legs some little bells to keep me in mind who I am and whose I am. I never heard such sweet harmony before! Pray for me that I may finish my course with courage and fidelity."

Within those prison walls this joyous captive never ceased to carry on his work of winning souls. The heretics who have been mentioned above, were only two among many whom the serene happiness of the young priest first amazed, then interested, and finally won over to the true Faith; and many were the regrets when on the fourth of December Sherwin was suddenly removed to the Tower.

The most awful ordeal that awaited the martyrs lay before him, and on December 15th we hear that he was "put on the rack and severely tortured." What was the object of such cruelty? It seemed that the Council was eager to obtain evidence against his host, Mr. Roscarrock, then a fellow-prisoner in the Tower, against Campion, with information of his whereabouts, against the Queen of Scots, and especially as to the probability of an invasion of Ireland.

With refined cruelty, they laid the young priest, almost torn asunder, yet silent save for the groans wrung from him by the excruciating pain, on the snow in the courtyard outside Roscarrock's cell, hoping thus to frighten the latter into giving evidence. Next day the racking recommenced, but with it came interior consolation of a rare and intimate kind. He told his brother, who visited him in his cell, "that he had been twice racked, and the latter time he lay five days and nights without any food or speaking to anybody. All which time he lay, as he thought, in a sleep before Our Savior on the Cross. After which time he came to himself, not finding any distemper in his joints by the extremity of the torture."

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For more than a year this imprisonment lasted, though mental suffering now took the place of the old bodily racking. The news that Paschal, his especial charge and pupil, who had also been sent to the Tower, had apostatized, was a terrible grief to him. That this weak young man had thus earned the derisive scorn of the Protestants, and was "very ill received by them," was no consolation to his friend, who used to say of him mournfully: "O John, John, little knowest thou what thou shall do before thou comest to it."

Another trial was the being forced to attend the heretical services and sermons every Sunday until Midsummer Day, when, in order to formulate some specific charge against him, he was asked by the governor if he would attend the Protestant service of his own will. This he of course refused. There followed some months of comparative peace: and these were used by Blessed Ralph in a preparation for death that earned even the admiration of his gaoler, "who would always call him a man of God, and the best and devoutest priest that he ever saw in his life."

He was tried, as we have seen, with Blessed Edmund Campion and others, on a trumped-up charge of conspiracy in which no one believed, least of all the queen herself; and he received his condemnation with a cry of joy.

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us exult and be glad therein."

"God grant us humility, that we following His footsteps may obtain the victory," are among the last words written by him to a friend; and once more the sweet ardor of his soul breaks forth in his exclamation to his fellow prisoner as they left the judgment hall two days before the end, and looked up at the setting sun.

"Ah, Father Campion, I shall soon be above yon fellow!"

His last words upon the scaffold were "a most sweet prayer to Our Lord Jesus, acknowledging the imperfection, misery, and sinful wickedness of his own nature." Even then his enemies could not leave him in peace, but called him "traitor," to which he replied boldly, "If to be a Catholic only is to be a traitor, then am I a traitor." Then putting aside with smiling dignity the efforts at controversy thrust upon him he put his head into the halter, repeating the ejaculation:

Jesu, Jesu, Jesu, esto mihi Jesus!

The multitude cried out to him, "Good Mr. Sherwin, the Lord receive your soul!" and so they kept crying, and could not he stayed even after the cart had been drawn away and he had been some time dead.

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CHAPTER X

THE YORK MARTYRS
1582–1586

"You might, sir, with the some justice, charge the Apostles with being traitors, for they taught the same doctrines that I teach, and did the same things for which you condemn me."
(Father Kirkman at his Trial.)

It is tempting to linger over the stories of nine more martyrs who laid down their lives at Tyburn between December 1581 and May 1582; to tell of the sufferings of Father Briant, under whose nails were thrust sharp needles to make him disclose where he had seen Father Parsons, who was thrown for eight days into the "pit," a subterranean cave, twenty feet deep, without light, and who was only drawn out to be racked till he swooned with pain; on whom Norton, the rack-master, made the infamous jest that he "would make him a foot longer than God made him." Or of Blessed Thomas Ford, and Blessed John Sharpe and Blessed Robert Johnson, priests, who after their glorious passing, are said to have appeared to Stephen Rowsham, a future martyr, in the Tower, and to have told him "what pains their martyrdom had been to them and with what joy they were rewarded." But we must pass on to a group of priests and others martyred at York between the years 1582 and 1586, which represents another phase of these years of persecution and triumph over death.

The virulence of the persecution of Catholics in that city can be accounted for partly by the fact that it was the seat of the Northern Council, by which the northern counties was ruled, and which was under the presidency of the Earl of Huntingdon, a Protestant, and all the more bitter that he had given up the Faith held at the cost of life by his Catholic ancestors. For he was a Pole on his mother's side, and great-grandson of Blessed Margaret herself.

The old Faith was strong in the North, which had been left to some extent untouched by Protestant teaching, and had survived even the terrible consequences of the rising of earlier days; and it was to be the vain boast of Huntingdon that he would stamp it out in blood.

On a certain morning, in the spring of 1582, Mass had been said in the Castle prison in York under rather exceptional circumstances.

The prisons of the ancient city were crowded at that time, and during the whole of the twenty years of Huntingdon's rule, with Catholics, many of whom died in gaol. For we are told on good authority that these prisons were "dens of iniquity and horror. . . . Some of them had no light and no ventilation; several were partly under water whenever there was a flood."

To cheer and to encourage these brave sufferers for the Faith by bringing them food both for body and soul, several priests were wont to visit the prisons in disguise, and among them Father William Hart, and Father William Lacey were two of the most earnest and courageous. To them came one day a third, Father Thomas Bell, lately ordained and returned from abroad, who told them that he had once been himself confined in the Castle prison for six years, for refusing to attend the Protestant Church, and had been put to the torture there by being hung up head downwards for three days. Now he was minded to sing High Mass in that very prison as an act of thanksgiving for his escape and subsequent ordination; in which office Fathers Hart and Lacey joyfully promised to assist.

Word was passed round the prison; and in the dark of early morning Mass was said in the cell of a Catholic prisoner, in the presence of all those who had been able to leave their cells unobserved. It was just over when a certain prisoner who

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had been delayed in making his way to the cell, fell over a bench. The noise roused the gaolers, who found all in confusion and the lights but just extinguished. In the hurried search that followed, Father Hart managed to climb the outer wall and make his way through the moat to a place of safety. Bell also escaped, and in later years became an apostate, to his everlasting shame. But Father Lacey, a grey haired old man who, now a widower, had but lately been ordained after an honorable career in York as a magistrate and a married man, was taken as he was trying to follow his friends over the wall.

When he was searched, his letters of Orders were found upon him, a dangerous possession enough in those days, which, however, he accounted for by the fact that "it was a difficult matter to convince many of his acquaintances, especially Protestants, that he was in Orders, having lived in a married state so long and having been absent from his country so short a time." There was little chance of escape for him, since he was well known to have constantly harbored priests as a layman and to have only escaped imprisonment by wandering from one place to another in disguise; but as the Act which would have condemned him as a priest ordained abroad was not yet passed, they could only bring him in guilty of high treason by the answer he gave to the usual blunt question:

"Will you acknowledge the queen as supreme head of the Church?" To which he replied, "About this and all other things I hold with the Catholic Church and all good Christians."

And so he passed tranquilly to the hurdle and the gallows.

In the narrow turret-room that was his prison he had for a time the consolation of the companionship of a young secular priest named Richard Kirkman. On his arrival in England he had acted as tutor, and carried on meantime very active missionary work at the house of that good confessor, Robert Dymoke, who died in prison in 1580 for refusing to attend the Protestant service. For some time Father Kirkman carried on his work as a missionary among the vales of Northumberland and Yorkshire before he was tracked down and brought to York. Accused of being a Papist and a traitor, he replied calmly, "You might, sir, with the same justice charge the apostles with being traitors, for they taught the same doctrine that I now teach, and did the same things for which you condemn me."

Nine months later saw the martyrdom of Father Hart, who thus fulfilled the prediction that he would be the fourth martyr of York, since Blessed James Thomson had suffered there in the previous November.

For a little more than a year he had carried on his mission, winning by his zeal, his sweetness of nature, and his love for souls, the title of the "Apostle of Yorkshire"; while many people declared that he was like Father Campion himself in his eloquence and persuasiveness.

We have seen him ministering, at the risk of his life, to the Catholic prisoners who crowded those terrible prisons of York; and six months after his escape from the Castle on the morning of Father Bell's Mass, he was carrying on this good work from the house of Margaret Clitherow, of whom we shall presently hear more.

Betrayed by a miserable apostate who had tracked him to this spot, he was taken on Christmas night, as he lay sleeping quietly in his chamber after five nights' hard work spent in hearing confessions and giving Holy Communion to his people. When dragged before the Lord President, Father Hart evidently showed such fearlessness and innocence in his replies that a certain nobleman, hearing he was accused of treason, said to Huntingdon, "This man, my lord, seems to me to be altogether guiltless of any such crime." Nevertheless he was thrown into an underground dungeon and loaded with chains, in a vain attempt to deprive him of his joyousness of soul. A more successful means of torture was the report that the Dean of York had more than half converted him to the new

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religion in the disputations, the truth being, as he was able to assure his anxious penitents, that he had silenced his questioners on every point raised. His trial was the usual tissue of catch questions and injustice, and after his condemnation he gladly prepared himself for death.

Throughout the many letters written to his spiritual children and others during these last days breathes the most wonderful spirit of Joy—almost, indeed, of mirth—at the thought of the honor to which his Master had called him; indeed, in one of them he beseeches his friends to stay indoors on the day of his execution unless they can assist at it with joyful face and a tranquil mien.

His end was harassed by the rude interruptions and railings of the Protestant ministers who were present, and who finally tried to insist that he should pray with them—presumably for his own conversion, since of their own righteousness they were well assured. But he only said gently, "As I do not belong to your Church, I may not pray with you," and then cried clearly to the thronging multitude below, "This one request I earnestly make of all Catholics, that they pray for me, and bear witness to all men that I die a Catholic and for the Catholic faith, not for any crime or treason."

"His virtues were so illustrious," says one who knew him well, "that they shone as the stars of heaven, and compelled the admiration not only of his friends, but even of his deadly foes. One of the jurymen at his trial had been so struck by his holiness that he openly said to his colleague that he would have no part in condemning one so innocent and holy; and he was in consequence thrown into prison, though a man of good name and much respected in York. Even the porter of the prison, callous and hard-hearted as he was, was moved to tears when he saw the holy martyr dragged so cruelly to death. In spite of all the efforts of the magistrates, the people could not be hindered from carrying off his sacred relics, and proclaiming aloud his innocence and sanctity, though many were imprisoned for doing so."

Another writes of him thus to Dr. Allen, his old master at Douay. "The week before Palm Sunday William Hart gloriously poured out his blood for the Church of Christ and the authority of His Vicar—a young priest, who, as you know, was both innocent, modest, learned, and holy. As he was being carried to execution very many saluted him with the greatest kindness and love. Among them were two brothers of the noble family of Ingleby of Ripley, who are now in prison on this charge."

Father Francis Ingleby, brother of these gallant gentlemen, who was in that same year ordained priest at Douay, was another of those gay and high-spirited natures who had learnt, by the grace of God, to meet a terrible death with a smile of welcome. For two years his zeal for souls did a wonderful work in Yorkshire, and then, in the spring of 1586, he was captured on his way to York by one of the President's men, who saw a Catholic kneel to him and ask his blessing, and so made sure that he was a priest. Knowing him to be of high birth, "they said to him, they marveled that he, being a gentleman of so great calling, would abase himself to be a priest. He answered that he made more account of his priesthood than of all other titles whatsoever. Brought into the Castle, he had a pair of fetters laid upon his legs at the prison door. The Catholic prisoners craved his blessing. With smiling countenance he said, 'I fear me I shall be over proud of my new boots,' meaning his fetters.

"After his condemnation, he showed such tokens of inward joy that the keeper said that he took no small pleasure to behold his sweet and joyful conversation; for his joy was such that his keeper, a very earnest Puritan, could not abstain from tears."

Blessed William Hart, Blessed William Lacey, and Venerable Francis Ingleby are probably all to be numbered among the many priests who were protected and harbored by that gallant gentlewoman, Venerable Margaret Clitherow, the

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last of the long list of York martyrs whom we have space to notice here.

Brought up in her quiet, well-to-do home in York in ignorance of the Catholic Faith, Margaret's eyes were not opened until two or three years after her marriage with a rich tradesman of the city. Then her enthusiasm knew no bounds, and her one desire was to serve the Church into whose borders she had been admitted. Her husband, though he took no risks himself, and remained on the safe side of Protestantism, was of Catholic family, and left both her and their children free to practice their faith.

During the two years after her conversion she had been imprisoned several times for refusing to attend the Church, but, says her confessor, Father John Marsh, who tells us full details of her life, "the prison she accounted a most happy and profitable school; they persecuted her, and she thereby learnt patience. . . They separated her from house, children, and husband, and she thereby became familiar with God; they sought to terrify her, and she thereby increased in the most glorious constancy and fortitude, insomuch that her greatest joy was to be assaulted by them."

The executions of the martyrs Lacey, Thomson, and Kirkman in 1582 stirred Margaret up to fresh enthusiasm for the cause of the Faith. She had prepared a little room for priests close to her house in Davygate, where they could be free from observation; and when that became unsafe, another was made ready at some little distance. Here many a wayfaring priest on his way through York lay hidden, getting a much needed rest while Margaret kept guard. The living and the dead were thus both her companions in her vigils, for many a dark night would see her walking barefoot to the place of execution outside Micklegate, where she would kneel and pray for the fulfillment of her earnest wish that if it were God's will she might give her life for the same Catholic cause.

After the Penal Act of 1585, Margaret was in terror lest her confessor should command her not to harbor priests any longer, since it was now an offence punishable by death; and when he, moved by her eagerness, would not forbid it, she cried with joy, "Now by God's grace all priests shall be more welcome to me than ever they were, and I will do what I can to set forward God's Catholic service."

"Then you must needs prepare your neck for the rope," he said smiling; to which she replied, "God's will be done, but I am far unworthy of that honor."

Quite suddenly, however, after nearly two years of freedom, an order came for Margaret's husband to appear before the Council, and the sheriffs arrived to search the house. There were at that time two priests within the house, one newly arrived, the other acting as tutor to the Clitherow children and some of their friends.

The former was hastily hidden by Margaret in a secret cellar, while the latter, who had only lately escaped from the Castle prison, was unsuspectingly giving a lesson to his pupils. Before she could warn him, one of the searchers opened the door, and seeing him teaching, suspected him to be a priest and hurried back to tell the rest. "The schoolmaster, thinking him to be a friend, opened the door to call him in, but when he perceived the matter, he shut the door again, and by that way which was from the martyr's house to the priest's chamber escaped their paws."

In their rage at these two escapes, the sheriffs took the future martyr, her children, and her servants, and threw them into different prisons. Then by a cruel device they took a young Flemish boy of ten or twelve years whom Margaret had taken into her household, stripped him, and threatened to beat him unmercifully if he would not tell them all they asked. The terrified child confessed that his benefactress had "harbored and maintained" various priests, of whom he mentioned two by name, and even at length consented to take them to the "priest's hole," empty now, however, of their desired prey. This was enough for them; for they could now secure a verdict of high treason against Margaret Clitherow.

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The trial of this brave, high-spirited woman had this strange feature. After hearing her strenuous denial that she was guilty of maintaining "enemies to her Majesty," since she knew very well that priests could not be so described, they asked her how she would be tried. To which she cheerfully made answer, "Having made no offence, I need no trial."

Now as all the evidence against her rested on the word of a young child, Margaret might possibly have gained her acquittal had she stood her trial and pleaded "Not guilty." But she knew very well that if the trial took place, her friends, her husband, and her children would be forced to give evidence against her, and she was determined that they should not have her blood upon their heads.

The alternative was a terrible sentence enough, and this was now pronounced upon her.

"You must return from whence you came, and there in the lowest part of the prison, be stripped naked, laid down, your back upon the ground, and as much weight laid upon you as you are able to bear, and so continue three days without meat or drink, except a little barley bread and puddle water, and the third day be pressed to death, your hands and feet bound to posts, and a sharp stone under your back."

Such cruelties seem scarcely possible, even in the sixteenth century; but Margaret heard the sentence unmoved, merely saying, "If this judgment be according to your own conscience, I pray God send you better judgment before Him. I thank God heartily for this."

Even the judge ceased not to appeal to her to change her mind, but she was quite unmoved. She knew, of course, that her husband, as a Protestant, might easily be brought at the trial to betray many of the priests by name, and as her own martyrdom on this charge was certain either way, she chose the more cruel death to save him from the remorse of having in any way brought about her condemnation. He, indeed, poor man, was beside himself with grief at this time. "Will they kill my wife?" he cried. "Let them take all I have and save her, for she is the best wife in all England, and the best Catholic."

We will not linger over the dreadful details of her martyrdom. It is sufficient to know that her courage never failed, so that all who looked upon her marveled greatly, saying, "Surely this woman receiveth comfort from the Holy Ghost."

The sheriff tried his best to make her confess that she died for treason, but she replied, "No, no, Mr. Sheriff, I die for the love of my Lord Jesus."

Her sufferings lasted for fifteen minutes, and "thus most victoriously this gracious martyr overcame all her enemies, passing from this mortal life with marvelous triumph into the peaceable City of God."

Her little daughter Anne, twelve years of age, after being imprisoned for refusing to betray her mother, was beaten and ill-used because she would not go to church. Then they falsely tricked her into going to hear a sermon, by saying that if she refused, her mother would be put to death, after which they told the heart-broken child that Margaret was already dead. After suffering imprisonment for some time, she managed to escape from England, and became an Ursuline nun at Louvain. Her two brothers became priests, and thus by her descendants as well as by her own prayers in the City of God did Venerable Margaret Clitherow carry on the work so nobly begun on earth.

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CHAPTER XI

A GROUP OF LAY MARTYRS 1584–1601

"They found him so merry in God, and so joyful of the next day's banquet which he expected, that they were all marvelously comforted and edified."
—The report of those who visited the prison of John Finch the night before his martyrdom

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The infamous Act of 1585, "Against Jesuits, seminary priests, and other such like disobedient persons," the practical effect of which, as we have seen, was to outlaw the whole of the secular and regular clergy for two hundred years, had also a far-reaching effect upon the laymen and laywomen of the Catholic Faith. For since the very presence of such priests in England was now high treason, it became an act of felony for any person to receive or to relieve one under any circumstances. Moreover, by one of its conditions, the Act laid down that "Any person, not being a priest or deacon, now being in any college or seminary abroad, shall return within six months, and within two days of their return take the Oath of Supremacy, failing which they are guilty of high treason."

The penalty for felony was hanging, for high treason, hanging and quartering after being cut down alive; and this awful fate was faced on one charge or the other by five lay people in the years 1583 and 1584, and by seventeen between 1585 and 1588.

There stand indeed on our martyr list more than seventy names of lay people out of the two hundred and fifty-three persons who are awaiting the title of "Blessed." In this chapter we can but tell the story of very few of these, and so will choose those who belong to the most stirring years of the persecution, the period between 1584 and 1601.

In these days when the Catholic Press is beginning to send out its voice in this land with no uncertain sound, a special interest is attached to the martyrdom of Venerable William Carter, hung and quartered at Tyburn in January 1584 for the crime of printing Catholic books and pamphlets.

He had already tasted imprisonment several times, either for printing such works or "for not conforming himself in matters of religion," until in 1581 he gained a year of freedom by giving a heavy bond as surety that "he would not depart the realm, but continue within three miles of his house in Hart Street, St. Olave's, until he conform unto orders for religion and come into divine service established by Act of Parliament. Also he shall not admit the access of any Jesuit, massing priest or seminary priest, or recusant, or keep any Catholic servant or partner."

When, a year later, his house was raided by Topcliffe, and found to contain vestments, chalices, crosses, and a large store of Catholic books, he might yet have escaped anything worse than long imprisonment, had it not been for the action of one of Walsingham's spies. This wretched creature, a gentleman by birth and received by Catholics as a Catholic, met Carter's wife Jane in great grief at loss of him, and by a pretense of sympathy, wormed from her the admission that the "Mass furniture"-really belonged to a nobleman of high rank, from whom she now hoped to will help for her husband. This news was promptly sent to Walsingham, and Carter was thereupon cruelly racked in order to make him betray those who had acted with him in the matter.

But "though nearly killed, nothing could be drawn from him but the name of Jesus."

For eighteen months they kept William Carter in the Tower, where he had the grief of hearing of his wife's death and of the poverty of his children. But courage never failed the

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brave little printer, though he must have longed for the day when his crown of glory should be won. He was condemned on an absolutely unjust charge of printing a book inciting Catholic Englishwomen to cut off the head of Elizabeth as Judith did that of Holofernes. Needless to say, the pamphlet did nothing of the kind, merely urging them to stay the progress of the schism by refusing to "conform" and go to the Protestant services. This fact was clearly proved by Carter in his defense, but to no avail. He was bullied and shouted down to such an extent that he could but say with a shrug of the shoulders, "Well, God have mercy on me—I see what the end will be."

By his side at the bar of judgment stood a priest, also waiting for conviction and sentence, to whom the martyr quietly turned and made his confession, knowing this would be his only chance before the end; and having received absolution, cheerfully awaited his execution, which took place on the following day. His constancy and unselfish courage in returning again and again after his many imprisonments to the dangerous task of printing and disseminating Catholic literature rank him high upon the martyr list, and his epitaph might well be the words of his Master, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

John Finch, the Lancaster martyr, was another victim of that despicable band of spies who, by pretending to be Catholics, acted the part of Judas in the household of faith.

He was a young yeoman who, with the aid of his sensible and thrifty wife, worked his farm for some years without caring very much for the great questions that were agitating the rest of England. Then, somehow, the call to conversion came. It may have been through the words of some hunted priest, to whom, for the sake of charity, Finch had given a meal and a night's lodging; however it was, he became, with his family, a fervent Catholic, and to make up for the lost years of coldness, made it his special task to guide priests from one Catholic house to another—a dangerous bit of work that might well cost him life and liberty if discovered.

To him there came one Christmas a certain man in the secret employ of the Earl of Derby, who told Finch that he was a Catholic at heart, and begged him to persuade two or more priests to his house, that they might "Church some wives in the neighborhood, hear confessions, say Mass, preach, and confer with some like himself who were desirous to be Catholics and to be reconciled."

Fortunately, most of the priests in the north were engaged at the festival time in less dangerous districts, but Finch managed to get a certain Father Ostcliffe to come to his house for such a desirable end. Meantime the wife of the traitor had sent her glove as signal to the Earl of Derby, who rode down to Finch's farm before it was light and arrested both him and the priest in their beds.

This was not the only act of treachery from which Finch had to suffer. Instead of being thrown into prison, he was kept closely secluded in the earl's own house, in order that more probability might be given to the statement that he had not only betrayed Father Ostcliffe into the hands of the enemy, but also the names of many other local Catholics whom he had seen at Mass.

Nothing shook his constancy, however. "The Pope's Holiness is head of the whole Church of God throughout the world, and it is impossible for any woman or layman to be head of any part thereof in spiritual causes," was his firm declaration, which so enraged the earl that he "up with his fist and gave the poor man a great blow in the face."

After about a year he was thrown into prison at Salford, where he found many other Catholics, and here a veritable purgatory of trial began. For glorying in his faith, and especially in the martyrdom of Blessed Campion, "whom he loved better than any man in the world," he was "drawn to the church with such fury and barbarous cruelty as though they

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had drawn a beast to the slaughter, taking him by the heels through the streets upon the stones in such sort that his head was very sore wounded, and all the stones besprinkled with his blood."

After that they "thrust him into a deep, dark, cold, and stinking dungeon, which was in the midst of a bridge, where they pinched him with extreme hunger." Driven to despair, his courage suddenly gave way, and one sad November Sunday he attended morning prayer at the parish church of Manchester. But his repentance was speedy, and his self-inflicted penance severe. Contriving to get rid of his keeper for a moment, he flung himself into the icy river, crying, "Yesterday I damned my soul, and to-day I will destroy my body," and so "stood upon his feet, the greatest part of his body being in the water, and there continued still without moving, until they drove him out with stones"; showing that his motive was not suicide, but penance for the weakness of the flesh. From that day he longed for the martyrdom that was to be his in a few months' time, and when he was condemned at Lancaster for high treason, he smiled and gave thanks to God. It seemed indeed as though from the moment of that brief fall and speedy contrition he had been blessed and fortified in a rare and very wonderful way, for those of his friends who visited him on the eve of his death "found him so merry in God, and so joyful of the next day's banquet which he expected, that they were all marvelously comforted and edified."

"Upon Friday, the 20th day of April 1584, the executioners came at the appointed hour. This blessed man most joyfully bid them welcome, and thanked God for His infinite and innumerable benefits (especially for this death, which now he went to receive); exhorted all the people to the Catholic faith and to good life; and desired a minister who was there not to trouble him. 'For I am not,' quoth he, 'of your religion, neither will I be for anything you can say. God give you grace to amend.' And so used very few words, either upon the hurdle or upon the ladder; but continually occupied himself in secret prayers and meditation until by glorious martyrdom his blessed soul forsook the body and was made partaker of the everlasting and unspeakable joys."

These two men are typical of the group of those who were condemned for high treason before the year 1585, when the new Act made it still easier to secure victims, who could now be hung on a charge of felony for having given a "seminary priest" a cup of cold water in Christ's name.

We have seen in the last chapter how Margaret Clitherow suffered at York in 1586 for "harboring priests," and that one of these latter had been Father Francis Ingleby, martyred some two months later on the same spot. One of those who saw him going to execution was a young man named Robert Bickerdyke, who had already been in prison on the charge of paying for a pot of ale for a weary and thirsty priest. There he had lain for a year before he was brought to trial and acquitted. This was in the summer of 1585; and when, a year later, Father Ingleby was on his way to execution, "Robert Bickerdyke, going over the way to the Tolbooth, the minister's wife in the street, in his way, said to her sister who was with her, 'Let us go into the Tolbooth, and we shall see the traitorly thief come over on the hurdle.'"

"No, no thief," quoth he, "but as true as thou art."

These chivalrous words cost him his life, for the lady never rested till she had obtained his committal to prison. Lest he should again escape, they asked him at his trial the "bloody question" which had already brought about the death of many.

"Whose part would you take if the Pope were to invade the realm?"

"I cannot tell beforehand what I should do in time to come," said Robert cheerfully; "but I should do as it shall please God to put me in mind."

"For which words they railed and called him traitor, and thereupon indicted him. But the jury perceiving malice . . .

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in both the wicked judges and the merchants, which, for want of true crime, would so impudently by their deceitful and bloody demand entangle him with some offensive matter, cleared him of all and gave their verdict for his innocence."

But the tigers were not thus to be baulked of their prey, and never rested till a less scrupulous jury found him guilty of high treason. So gross a case of injustice caused some stir in the place, even in those days. "All the country was amazed to see this young man so unjustly made away," and some gentlemen, meeting one of his judges, asked him "whether the young man's answer that 'he would do in time to come as it should please God to put in his mind'" was treason by any statute or law or no. Which demand he took in great dudgeon, and said, "You do us no less injury than the traitor did at the bar when he asked us the same question. *We are not sent hither to scan and dispute the statutes, but to give judgment against offenders!"*

Our tale of the lay martyrs shall end with the story of a brave young waterman and two faithful women, martyred at Tyburn in 1588 and 1601.

A certain young priest named William Watson had come over from Douay and had been arrested almost immediately after his arrival, and imprisoned in the Marshalsea in 1586. He was soon released, on condition of leaving England within a certain number of days, and while hesitating between duty and a desire for safety, was again seized by the infamous Topcliffe and flung into Bridewell gaol. Then, being yet somewhat lacking in fortitude, the poor young priest agreed to go once to the Protestant Church of Bridewell, and might have thus escaped further penalty of body. But his conscience quickly smote him, and he determined to do public penance by confessing his sin and weakness publicly in that same place. For this he was thrown into a yet more grievous cell, and so tormented that in his loneliness and misery, he again had almost yielded to their persuasions once more to go to the Protestant Church.

At this point his unhappy condition of mind and body was reported to a certain gentlewoman named Margaret Ward, who at that time was companion to a Catholic lady of rank then resident in London. Having obtained leave of her, Margaret Ward "changed her dress, and taking a basket upon her arm full of provisions, went to the prison, but could not have leave to come at the priest, till, by the intercession of the gaoler's wife, whom Margaret had found means to make her friend, with much ado she obtained permission to see him from time to time, and bring him necessaries, upon condition that she should be searched on coming in and going out, that she might carry no letter to him or from him. This searching was so strictly observed for the first month that they even broke the loaves or pies that she brought him, lest any paper should thereby be conveyed to him; and all the while she was with him, care was taken that someone should stand by to hear all that was said."

We can well imagine, however, the comfort that the very presence of this visitor with her bright woman's voice and encouraging looks brought to the weary and harassed young priest. After a time vigilance relaxed a little; and one day in hurried, broken sentences, Watson told her that "he had found a way by which, if he had a cord long enough for that purpose, he could let himself down from the top of the house where he was now imprisoned, and so make his escape."

Next time Margaret Ward appeared in the prison she brought him a clean shirt, which she gave to him folded up, for it contained a strong rope wherewith he could make his escape. She told him, moreover, in guarded language, that between ten and eleven o'clock at night a boatman would be waiting below to conduct him over Lambeth Marsh to the river, where a boat would be in readiness; and so left him in very good spirits for the forthcoming adventure.

When Margaret Ward went to make sure that her boatman would keep his appointment, she found to her dismay that he had changed his mind. Nothing she could say, and no

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reward she could promise would induce him to take the risk of helping a priest, and so incurring the death penalty himself. As she was returning in sad perplexity to her mistress' house she met a young Irish serving-man, named John Roche, to whom she must have shown some kindness in past years, for he was much concerned at her downcast appearance, and begged to be of some assistance to her.

"I dare not tell you," she replied. "'Tis a matter of life and death."

"So much the more reason for telling me," said he, "since I would willingly adventure my life to do you a pleasure."

"So you must do, John, if you would help me at all," said she.

"And that I gladly promise," he replied, at which she told him all her trouble.

At once John Roche undertook to do all that was required, and that night he stood below the priest's prison ready to conduct him to the boat that lay in readiness. But as Watson slid down the rope, he dislodged a stone or tile, which fell with such a noise that the whole house was roused. Roche was hurrying Watson away as fast as he could across Lambeth Marsh, when they found the keeper running hard upon them. The priest gave up all hope, saying, "Sure we be undone, for yonder comes my keeper."

But John Roche bade him walk quietly on, and turning composedly to the pursuer, gave him "good morrow" so naturally that the man after a hurried glance in the half darkness of the August night, ran on towards the river.

"Surely they will take me there!" cried Watson despairingly, upon which the young Waterman bade him stay and change clothes with him, and so pass on to the boat.

This stratagem was perfectly successful as far as the priest was concerned, for he got safely away by boat in the serving-man's clothes; but Roche, who probably ensured his safety by distracting the attention of his pursuers, was taken by them in the priest's cassock. "He was examined what he was, for at first they thought he had been Watson the priest; but he confessed that he was a Catholic and had helped the priest to escape, for which he was executed at Tyburn."

His happy lot was to die by the side of the mistress he had served so faithfully. When the rope was discovered, the gaoler declared that it could have been brought into the prison by none but Mistress Margaret Ward; and she was accordingly arrested early next day.

They threw her into prison, and wreaked a cowardly vengeance on her for the priest's successful escape. "She was flogged and hung up by the wrists, the tips of her toes only touching the ground, for so long a time that she was crippled and paralyzed; but these sufferings greatly strengthened the glorious martyr for her last struggle."

Brought to trial at Newgate a week later, she confessed with a smiling countenance that she had provided Watson with the means of escape, and no threats of any kind could force her to give any information as to the whereabouts of the priest.

"Liberty was offered to her if she would ask pardon of the Queen's majesty and promise to go to church. In reply, Margaret Ward refused to ask pardon for an offence against the Queen which she had not committed, and expressed her belief that the Queen herself, if she had the compassion of a woman, would have done as much under similar circumstances."

"With regard to going to church," she said, "I have been convinced for many years that it is not lawful to do so, and I would lay down many lives, if I had them, rather than act against my conscience or do anything against God and His holy religion."

Her courage and cheerfulness must have put fresh heart into the devoted young servant who was condemned with her,

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and who suffered the pains of death and earned the martyr's crown with her on the 30th of August 1588.

The story of Anne Line, another brave Catholic gentlewoman who laid down her life in the cause of the Faith, is told by that dauntless and adventurous priest, Father John Gerard, who, after undergoing every kind of torture in prison, and daring all manner of perils in the pursuit of his wonderful work of conversion and reconciliation, died at last peacefully in his bed.

He tells us that Mistress Anne Line was the widow of a staunch Catholic who had given up a fine estate rather than "conform," and had lived abroad in poverty till his death. After that event she returned to England and sought out Father Gerard, who saw in her simplicity and holiness of character, combined with "a good store of charity and wariness," the very qualities he wanted. For a woman was needed who should manage a house in which priests might find a refuge for a time when they had newly come to England, or when they wanted to consult Father Gerard, now head of the English mission. He wanted, moreover, someone to "manage the money matters, take care of the guests, and meet the inquiries of strangers," and this work Anne Line gladly accepted at his hands.

She was one of those ardent souls whose delicate bodies seem almost too frail a sheath for the strong spirit within; but instead of repining at her physical weakness, it was to her a cause of joy; for as she once said to Father Gerard, "Though I desire above all things to die for Christ, I dare not hope to die by the hand of the executioner; but perhaps the Lord will let me be taken in the same house as a priest, and then be thrown into a chill and filthy dungeon, where I shall not be able to last out long."

"Her delight was in the Lord," comments Father Gerard, "and the Lord granted her the desires of her heart."

When Gerard escaped from the Tower in 1597, by the daring and almost incredible feat of throwing a rope across the moat from the place of his imprisonment, Anne Line gave up the management of his house, for by that time so many people knew who she was that it would have been unsafe for him. He tells the rest himself:

"So a room was hired for her in another person's house, where she often used to harbor priests. One day (it was the Feast of the Purification) she let in a great many Catholics to hear Mass, a thing which she would never have done in my house. Good soul, she was more careful of me than of herself. Some neighbors noticed the throng, and called the constables. They went upstairs to the room, which they found full of people. The celebrant was Father Francis Page, S.J., who was afterwards martyred. He had pulled off his vestments before the priest-hunters came in, so that they could not readily make out which was the priest.

"Accordingly they laid hold of him, and began questioning him and others also. No one would own that there was a priest there; but as the altar had been found ready for Mass, they acknowledged that they had been waiting for a priest to come. While the Catholics and their persecutors were wrangling on this point, Father Francis Page, taking advantage of someone's opening the door, got away from those that held him and slipped out, shutting the door behind him. He then went upstairs to a place that he knew, where Mrs. Line had had a hiding-place made, and there he ensconced himself. Search was made for him the whole house over, but to no purpose.

"So they took Mrs. Line and the richer ones of the party to prison, and let the others go on bail. God lengthened out the martyr's life beyond her expectation. It was some months before she was brought to trial, on a charge of harboring and supporting priests. To the question of 'guilty or not guilty' she made no direct answer, but cried out in a loud voice, so that all could hear her:

"'My lords, nothing grieves me but that I could not receive a thousand more.'

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"She listened to the sentence of death with great show of joy and thanksgiving to the Lord God, though she was so weak that she had to be carried to court in a chair, and sat there during the whole of the trial.

"Being arrived at the place of punishment, some preachers wanted to tease her, as usual, with warnings, to abandon her errors; but she cut them short, saying, 'Away! I have no dealings or communion with you.'

"Then kissing the gallows with great joy, she knelt down to pray, and kept on praying till the hangman had done his duty. So she gave up her soul to God."

It was at Tyburn, in the February of 1601, that God thus used the weak things of this earth to confound the strong.

CHAPTER XII

THE MARTYRS OF 1588

"If I had a hundred lives I would willingly lay down all in defense of my Faith"
—Last words of Father Christopher Buxton at Canterbury.

The beginning of the August of the year 1588 had seen the downfall of the Armada sent by Philip II to invade England and restore by force the Catholic faith. It was a foolhardy attempt, deplored by all, by Catholics no less than Protestants. That a faith cannot be imposed universally by force had been clearly proved during the persecutions of the past forty years; none indeed knew so well as Catholics the futility of such an attempt. Nor had they been backward in showing their loyalty. Lord Howard of Effingham, the High Admiral, was of the Faith: Catholic gentlemen had furnished arms and men as readily as their Protestant neighbors; and in the Spanish State papers are several passages which show that the co-operation of English Catholics with the army of Philip against their queen was not to be relied on.

We might be content to account for the extraordinary renewal of persecution that took place in that year 1588 by the natural outburst of popular excitement and prejudice against all those who shared the faith of England's would-be conqueror. But history makes it clear that this wholesale butchery was due rather to a cold-blooded decision on the part of Cecil, Lord Burghley, to prove to the Catholic powers how little they had to hope for from those of the Catholic faith in England.

It was a massacre deliberately planned to extend all over the country. Derby, Mile End Green, Shoreditch, Lincoln's Inn Fields, Clerkenwell, Brentford, Tyburn,

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Canterbury, Chichester, Ipswich, and Gloucester were all scenes of martyrdom in that year.

"The names of those in prison on August 14," says Father Pollen, "were distributed over as wide an area as he (Cecil) could, in order that as many places as possible might witness the executions of Popish priests. London, with Middlesex, obtained the lion's share, partly because many had been arrested there, partly because London was the home of Protestant bigotry and would greatly enjoy the spectacle."

Within the three last days of August, six priests and eight of the laity suffered; at the beginning of October, nine priests and three laymen; and three more priests and three more laymen laid down their lives before that terrible year came to an end, bringing the total up to thirty-one martyrdoms within four months.

It is an interesting and remarkable fact that when these people were brought to trial "it was not so much as whispered that they had been guilty of any act of disloyalty. Nothing was objected to them but the practice of their religion. Thus some were hung merely for being priests, others for having been reconciled to the church as laymen, others, such as venerable Margaret Ward, for having helped or harbored priests."

Nor did the end of this year see a cessation of persecution. During the last fourteen years of the reign over a hundred persons actually suffered death on the scaffold, while hundreds more perished in prison. Those who escaped these penalties, that is the ordinary "recusants," who refused to go to church, were yet liable to a perpetual fine of twenty pounds a month, and to a year's imprisonment, and a fine of one hundred marks every time they heard Mass; at any hint of invasion they were thrown into gaol; and they were "liable to the forfeiture of their goods, lands, and annuities during life for the offence of straying more than five miles from their own doors." No one accused them of being traitors; they were mostly men who had "engaged to fight in defense of their sovereign against any foreign prince, pope, or potentate whomsoever." But they were ruined men as far as this world's goods were concerned; and ruined by the set plan of Burghley, in order that Catholic countries might judge how little aid could be expected of them in case of invasion.

The poorer Catholics soon crowded out the gaols, and some had perforce to be set at liberty, after being whipped in public, or suffering their ears to be bored with a hot iron. As for priest-hunting, that now became a recognized and profitable occupation; for though the priest might escape the search, there was always plenty of plunder to be carried off, and no chance of justice being given to the suspected "priest harborer," should he try to claim it. If the priest was discovered, the house was forfeited by the owner, who had in any case to pay those who descended upon his property "like leopards," as Father Gerard says in one of his vivid descriptions of these household visits.

The story of this intrepid young priest, a man of high birth and of no less exalted qualities of soul, begins in the same dark year of 1588. He was one of the very few who lived through captures and adventures innumerable, to die quietly in his bed at last, so that his life, strictly speaking, does not belong to this book; but we will quote his description of a priest-hunt, since it illustrates a common feature of the lives of the martyrs at this time.

There were five Jesuits and two secular priests hidden in the house of a Mrs. Brooksby and her sister, Mistress Anne Vaux, in Warwickshire. Among them were Father Gerard, and Father Southwell the future martyr. Says the former:

"About five o'clock, when Father Southwell was beginning Mass, and the others and myself were at meditation, I heard a bustle at the house door. Directly after I heard cries and oaths poured forth against the servant for refusing admittance. The fact was that four priest-hunters, or pursuivants, as they are called, with drawn swords, were trying to break down the door and force an entrance. The faithful servant withstood them, otherwise we should all have been

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made prisoners. But by this time Father Southwell had heard the uproar, and guessing what it meant, had at once taken off his vestments and stripped the altar; while we strove to seek out everything belonging to us, that there might be nothing found to betray the lurking of a priest. We did not even wish to leave boots and swords lying about, which would serve to show there had been many guests, though none of them appeared.

"Hence many of us were anxious about our beds, which were still warm and only covered according to custom before being made. Some therefore went and turned the beds over so that the colder part might deceive anybody who put his hand in to feel. Thus, while the enemy were shouting and bawling outside, and our servants were keeping the door, saying that the mistress of the house had not yet got up, but that she was coming directly and would give them an answer, we profited by the delay to stow away ourselves and all our baggage in a cleverly contrived hiding-place.

"At last these leopards were let in. They raged about the house, looking everywhere, and prying into the darkest corners with candles. They took four hours over the business but failed in their search, and only brought out the forbearance of the Catholics in suffering, and their own spite and obstinacy in seeking. At last they took themselves off, after getting paid, forsooth, for their trouble. . . .

"When they were gone, and were now some way off, so that there was no fear of their returning as they sometimes do, a lady came and summoned out of the den not one but many Daniels. The hiding-place was underground, covered with water at the bottom, so that I was standing with my feet in water all the time . . . .

Not so fortunate in their escape were those who suffered in that dread year of the Armada.

In the chimney of the ancient chapel of Padley Hall, in the High Peak district, used now as a barn, is a cleverly constructed hiding-place often used as a "priest's hole" by Mr. John Fitzherbert of Padley, a zealous Catholic gentleman of Derbyshire. On Candlemas Day, 1587, Padley Hall was searched for priests at the very time that Father Garlick, a young school-master who had just risked his life by returning from exile for the Faith, was staying there. The search failed, for the "hole" was well and cunningly contrived; and Father Garlick and Father Ludlam continued to live at the Hall for a while in peace.

But Topcliffe was meantime tampering with the conscience of the wretched son and heir of the house, Thomas Fitzherbert, by telling him he could secure the whole of the estate of Padley if he would betray his father and uncle. About the middle of July a cavalcade approaching the house was noticed by one of the priests as he was saying his Office in the garden. The alarm was given, and the two priests fled to the hiding-place. But young Fitzherbert led the pursuivants straight to the place after he had delivered up his father into their hands.

What must have been the feelings of this wretched man as he saw that piteous procession pass forth along the Derby road can be better imagined than described.

The two earnest young priests, the grey-haired man, a loyal servant of queen and country, rode pinioned through the countryside, passing little groups of dismayed friends or tenants, many of whom had either learnt the Faith or received many a kindness at their hands.

At Derby they were thrown into a filthy prison, where they found Father Sympson, another zealous priest who had been betrayed by a pretended Catholic, and who for a time seems to have wavered in his own constancy in order to avoid death. By a fortunate chance, Garlick and Ludlam shared his cell, and soon convinced him by their earnest representations, so successfully, indeed, that he openly did penance for his brief period of weakness and faced the end with the utmost faith and courage.

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All four were condemned to die, but the life of Mr. Fitzherbert was bought by his son-in-law, though only to be prolonged in poverty in the Fleet prison for another two years.

A contemporary ballad shows that the sympathy of the vast crowd, assembled to see them die, was entirely with the martyred priests.

Father Sympson was to have died first, but Father Garlick, fearing somewhat for his constancy, pressed forward and kissed the ladder before he mounted it, talking cheerfully to the people as he did so. Father Ludlam met his death with a smile of joy upon his lips and his eyes as though he gazed at a vision of angels, while Father Sympson, wearing a hair-shirt in penance for his fall, said plainly that his only regret was not for death but for his brief inconstancy. These are the points commemorated in the ballad.

"When Garlick did the ladder kiss,
And Sympson after he,
Methought that then Saint Andrew was
Desirous for to die.

When Ludlam looked on smilingly,
And joyful did remain,
It seemed St. Stephen was standing by
For to be stoned again.

And what if Sympson seemed to yield
For doubt or dread to die,
He rose again, and won the field,
And died most constantly."

Out of the long list of martyrs of this year we can tell the stories of very few. We have seen so many suffering at Tyburn that we will choose for this chapter a little group of three young priests and one layman, who were executed on the first of October 1588, in the ancient city of Canterbury.

At Tideswell, in the Peak district, where his family name may still often be met with, a boy named Christopher Buxton, the son of conforming parents, was educated. It is probable that his family had "conformed" with the least possible amount of goodwill; and that certainly one relative of his had been a member of the English College at Rome, and a fellow pupil of Blessed Ralph Sherwin, who sent a special message of affection to one John Buxton, a Derbyshire man, in the year 1580.

Certainly Christopher's people made no objection to his being taught by so staunch a Catholic as Nicholas Garlick, and when the boy, at the age of nineteen, announced his intention of following his master to Douay, there to study for the priesthood, no hindrance seems to have been put in his way.

One could scarcely, however, expect his parents to furnish him with money for such an undertaking, and when, three years later, we find him at the English College, Rome, he comes as a pilgrim and a poor man, and remaining as a student for the next two years, is reckoned in the annals of that college as one of her many glorious martyrs for the Faith.

Late in the year 1588 he had taken the oath "to be ready at the order of the Sovereign Pontiff or other lawful Superior of this College to embrace the ecclesiastical profession, to take Holy Orders, and to proceed to England for the aid of souls"; and from that moment his heart must have burned to commence his work, for we find him admitted to the priesthood at the unusually early age of twenty-four, and five months later setting off for Reims, where the "Douay" College was now situated, on his way to England.

By that time the highroads even of Lorraine and France were infested by heretic spies on the lookout for priests traveling from Rome, and Father Buxton and the little band who accompanied him were often hard put to it to escape with their lives. Reims, too, gave him a discouraging welcome, for news was arriving every day of the capture and imprisonment of priests, often at the moment of their arrival; and Christopher

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was told that it was impossible to effect an entrance into the country. But he only made answer that he came from Rome to go to England, and that to England he meant to go.

"And if I can get any hope to escape by any means I will venture in the name of Jesus Christ and Our Blessed Lady and all the holy and blessed company of heaven."

Forthwith he hastened on to Rouen, where a perplexing difficulty had to be dealt with. As he passed through Paris, he had been told by a certain Dr. Darbishire that Father Parsons in England had received orders from the Rector of the English College at Rome that no missionaries were to cross the Channel until they had received his permission.

Obedience ranks high among the virtues of a priest, and Father Christopher would do nothing till he heard from the Rector, but he adds wistfully in his letter to Rome, "we are very loath to stay."

However there he had to wait, and even to see his fellow-Catholics set off before him into Scotland "because of the great liberty given lately unto Catholics there"; yet always hoping and longing for the day that was to give entrance to what every priest of those times must have felt were the gates of imprisonment and death.

He must indeed have been not only very zealous, but of a singularly sweet and happy disposition. An almost boyish note of eagerness is seen in the letter written to the Rector in reply to one that told him that there was no authority for Father Darbishire's action and that he might now proceed. "Had I not been so injuriously handled by Father Darbishire, who forged such things to make me stay," he writes indignantly, "I had been the first of all my companions in England." Then with evident intention to make the best of things, he adds, "But considering the thing is past I will not take it much to heart, but will let it lightly pass; and now at length with full zeal and courageous minds most like unto Aeneas, we will cut the surging seas and make assault towards our foes," and presently signs himself, after begging for prayers, "Your loving child, never until death to fail in obedience, Christopher Buxton."

The ministry of this devoted young priest was short enough. He managed to evade the spies and searchers of the port at landing, but within two months he was captured, probably in the middle of the November of the year 1587. He never, therefore, fulfilled his longing wish to return to his own Derbyshire home, there to save the souls of his family and friends; for he was taken in Kent, and thrown into the Marshalsea prison.

There he must have been greeted with joy and welcome by Father Robert Wilcox, who had been a fellow-pupil of his at Douay four years earlier, and who had already lain a year in that filthy prison; and he would quickly make him known to another ardent young Douay priest named Edwards, who had taken the name of Edward Campion because of his love and admiration for the martyr. During the long years that followed, these three must often have cheered each other by their conversation, and no doubt gladly admitted to their companionship a young layman named Robert Widmerpool, charged with having introduced a priest into the house of the Countess of Northumberland, where he was acting as tutor to her children.

In their dismal quarters they would hear rumors of the advance and defeat of the Armada, and possibly conjectured that this would hasten the date of the martyrdom for which, if their bodies shrank from the suffering entailed, their ardent souls were always longing.

In the middle of August of that year, 1588, their so-called "trial" began.

Edward Campion was the first to be questioned, who, on being termed a traitor, replied warmly that "he wished he was no worse traitor than Campion that was executed for treason." Asked the famous "bloody question" as to which side

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he would take if an army came by apostolic authority to "deprive her Majesty and to restore Romish religion," he refused to say, "but will pray that the Catholic Church may prevail so long as he liveth."

FATHER CHRISTOPHER BUXTON BEFORE THE COUNCIL.

On the next day Father Christopher Buxton came before the Council. Of the result of his examination we have the brief and striking entry:

"This man will not take her majesty's part against the army, nor do anything to hinder his religion."

No doubt the Council were glad to have the chance of striking terror into the hearts of the people of Kent, the county where a foreign army was most likely to try to land; and all three priests, with Robert Widmerpool, were forthwith sent to Canterbury for execution.

When they were brought out to die on Oaten Hill on that October morning, it seems as though the pity even of those grim officials was moved by the boyish look of Christopher Buxton, the youngest of the four, and only twenty-six years of age. With doubtful kindness they ordained that he should suffer last, hoping that the sight of the terrible butchery of the rest would break down his courage and cause him to apostatize.

But their example could only have strengthened him, since Father Wilcox as he mounted the ladder "turned to his companions and with a smiling countenance bade them be of good heart, telling them 'that he was going to heaven before them, when he should carry the tidings of their coming'; and Robert Widmerpool gave thanks aloud that 'he was brought to so great a glory as that of dying for his faith and truth in the same place where the glorious martyr St. Thomas of Canterbury had shed his blood.'"

At the last moment Father Buxton was offered life if he would "conform"; to which he replied cheerfully, "I will not purchase corruptible life at so dear a rate; and indeed, if I had a hundred lives, I would willingly lay down all in defense of my Faith."

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CHAPTER XIII

PHILIP, EARL OF ARUNDEL
1584–1595

"Gloria et honore eum coronasti, Domino.
In memoria aeterna erit justus."
(Inscription in the Beauchamp Tower.)

Other victim of the Armada fury in England stands a little outside the ranks of those whose story we have just told.

He held the position, to begin with, of first peer in England and cousin to the queen; and, though condemned to die for his Faith on the usual charge of high treason, he actually gave up his life after eleven years of captivity, in prison, though not without a strong suspicion of having been poisoned.

Upon the staircase leading to his cell in the Beauchamp Tower may still be seen the inscription cut by him in an effort to relieve the monotony of those long and weary days.

In the original Latin it runs thus:

"Sicut peccati causa vinciri opprobrium est ita e contra pro Cristo custodiae vincula sustinere maxima gloria est. ambro. Arundell. 16 of May 1587." ("To be bound on account of sin is a disgrace; but to sustain the bonds of prison for Christ's sake is the greatest glory.")

These words tell more completely than any others the story of this young nobleman, who at the age of twenty-seven disappeared from the gay world of London behind the gloomy walls of the Tower (1585).

Till a year or two earlier, Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel and Surrey, had been one of the wildest and most extravagant of courtiers, and in high favor with Elizabeth, in spite of the fact that his unfortunate father had been executed by her for planning a marriage with Mary Queen of Scots.

But at that time Philip had been but a lad of fifteen, on his way to the University of Cambridge; and when some two years later he made his appearance at the Court, his handsome face and debonair manners so attracted the notice of the queen that she exercised all her influence to keep him by her side, and away from the child wife of his own age whom he had married some six years earlier.

But the favor of Elizabeth was notoriously fickle; possibly, too, his position as possible heir to the throne made her uneasy. Men who had once been only too ready to win a glance from him now looked askance; and no hindrance was put in Philip's way when he retired from a Court that had turned him the cold shoulder, to his wife and household at Arundel.

His renewed affection for the wife he had neglected gave Elizabeth a chance of showing her spite towards him in a characteristic manner. She could not touch him for his faith, for the easy-going young courtier, who cared little enough in those days for the things of God, had readily enough conformed to the Protestant religion. But his wife, who had lately become a staunch Catholic, was "presented for recusancy "as it was termed, and condemned to be confined for twelve months in the house of the Protestant Sir Thomas Shirley.

This was not enough, however, for the queen was determined, as she expressed it, to "lay her hand on Arundel's collar"; and the opportunity soon came. In the year 1581 Philip had been present in the Tower when two holy young priests bore witness to their faith before a representative body of Protestant ministers armed with books of controversy. As he looked at the spiritual face of Blessed Edmund Campion, worn with the agony of the rack, and at his dislocated hand and arm, which he could not even lift; as he heard his beautiful voice thrill with conviction and joy of the Faith in face of a terrible

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death, God touched his heart and gave him the grace of conversion. For two years he struggled in vain against a step that assuredly meant worldly ruin, if no worse; but in 1583, as he paced the long gallery of Arundel Castle, the conflict ended in victory, and the young earl determined to be reconciled to the Church at the first opportunity.

For this, however, he had to wait many a year. His first intention was to leave his own land and go into Flanders, where he and his family could practice their religion in freedom. But he was now closely watched, and not only was his secretary, whom he had sent to prepare for their journey, arrested and closely questioned as to his faith, but the queen herself visited the earl at Arundel House in the Strand, and in return for his princely hospitality, bade him remain a prisoner in his own domain.

Nothing, however, could be actually proved against Philip at this time, though the very clear intimation of what was in store for him after his reception into the Church might well have frightened a weaker catechumen from making his profession of faith. Being received in the next year by the Jesuit Father Weston, he immediately became one of the most earnest of converts; and "he who had once found his delight in the frivolity of a Court, now discovered it in the joy of Communion with his Lord at the daily Mass, which with great humility and reverence he himself many times would serve."

Reconciliation to the Church, the hearing of Mass, the harboring of a Jesuit priest were crimes enough to condemn any man in those days; and the earl soon decided that his only chance of life and liberty lay in carrying out his plan of voluntary exile, into which his wife and the child soon to be born were shortly to follow him. In a letter written to the queen he explains his reasons and "how he was come to the point in which he must consent, either to the certain destruction of his body or the manifest endangering of his soul; he trusted, therefore, that if, to escape such evils, he should leave the realm without license, the queen would not visit him with her displeasure."

Embarking from the nearest port, probably somewhere about Littlehampton, Philip Howard set out, little thinking that every movement of his had been reported to the queen by spies, and that she had allowed him to proceed so far that she might the more surely entrap him.

Before he was out of sight of land he was pursued and captured and thrown into the Tower. There for a year he lay unnoticed, for it was difficult even now to formulate a definite charge of treason against him; but at the end of that time he was accused of having sought to leave the kingdom without a license and of having corresponded with Cardinal Allen. To these the earl replied that "as to the first he was justified by necessity, because the laws of the country did not permit him to worship God according to his conscience, and that his correspondence with Allen was not on matters of state but of religion."

He was, notwithstanding, condemned to pay a fine of ten thousand pounds and to be imprisoned during her Majesty's pleasure.

Close confinement in the Tower was now his lot. Grief indeed he must have felt at the separation from his wife and the child whose face he was never to look upon; bodily pain too he suffered, for the harsh treatment he received changed him from a gallant young courtier to an invalid, old before his time; but his soul was free and happy enough, for he had ample leisure to pray and meditate, and fortitude sufficient to take these trials as a penance for his years of indifference and sin. The year 1587, after two years had thus passed, bears witness upon the walls of his prison to his devotion to the Faith.

"Quarto plus afflictionis pro Christo in hoc saeculo, tanto plus gloriae cum Christo in futuro.

—ARUNDELL, June 22, 1587."

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("The more affliction we endure for Christ in this world, the more glory we shall obtain with Christ in the next.")

The next year saw the attempt of Philip of Spain to invade England and marked a crisis in the story of the imprisoned earl. At the beginning of that year his close confinement had been so far relaxed that he was allowed to converse with an old priest named William Bennett, and two laymen, Sir Thomas Gerard, father of the Jesuit, and Mr. Shelley, all imprisoned for their faith. To these four captives presently came a rumor that the Armada had sailed for England, and that on its arrival all Catholic prisoners would be promptly put to death. A suggestion made by Philip that they should join in a common form of prayer against this fate was rejected almost immediately lest it should be misrepresented by those outside; but the harm was already done.

Prison walls have ears; and when presently the earl was again placed in solitary confinement, the three other prisoners were threatened with torture unless they would bear witness against him. The answer of Sir Thomas Gerard, one who had borne much persecution for the Faith, was fatal to the earl; for he declared that the latter had proposed a prayer of twenty-four hours' duration "for the success of the Spaniards." Possibly he said it from weakness and hope of release, for there seems to have been little enough truth in it. Anyhow it proved the ruin of his own soul, for he became an apostate from the Faith, and lived an evil life till about a year before his death.

On this evidence Philip Howard was found guilty of high treason and condemned to die.

Possibly, however, the queen had reason to dread a public outcry if this noble victim of hers were brought on so slender a charge to the scaffold; possibly his delicacy of health suggested that he would save her further trouble by dying quietly in prison within a few months.

That, however, was not to be. For six more years Philip remained in the Tower, adding to the rigors of his imprisonment by his own austerities, and expecting that every day might be his last. His letters to his wife breathe a truly wonderful spirit of peace and resignation to the Will of God, and his whole time was spent in making preparation for the hour of death.

In the August of 1595, being seized with a fatal sickness that showed many symptoms of poison, he once more earnestly entreated the queen to let him say farewell in person to his wife and his young son.

The mocking answer was returned that "if the earl would but once go to the Protestant service his request should not only be granted, but he should be restored to her favor, and to all his former estates and honors."

To this the dying man listened very patiently, returning answer that "he declined to accept her Majesty's favors on this condition, and that his chief sorrow was that he had but one life to lose in so good a cause."

After a night spent in constant prayer, he died at noon of Sunday, October 19, 1595, "in a most sweet manner, without any sign of grief or moan, only turning his head a little aside. As one falling into a pleasing sleep, he surrendered his happy soul into the hands of Almighty God, who to His so great glory had created it."

His body, put hastily away in his father's dishonored grave within the Tower, was brought by his widow, nearly thirty years later, to his family seat at Arundel in Sussex, where it lies in a vault beneath the Collegiate Chapel which forms part of the parish church.

A part of the inscription on the coffin runs thus:

"On account of his profession of the Catholic faith he was first imprisoned, then condemned to pay a fine of £10,000, and at length was most unjustly sentenced to death under Elizabeth. After a life of ten years and six months, very holily and piously spent in the severest bondage in the same

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Tower, on the 19th of October, 1595, he fell asleep in the Lord, not without a suspicion that his death was caused by poison."

A finer epitaph is that traced by some unknown prisoner in the Tower immediately below his own inscription:

"Gloria et honore eum coronasti, Domine. In memoria aeterna erit justus."

("Thou, O Lord, hast crowned him with glory and honor. The just shall be had in everlasting remembrance.")

CHAPTER XIV

"COME RACK, COME ROPE!" 1595

"He cannot have God for his Father that refuseth the Catholic Church for his Mother."
—(Letter of Father Robert Southwell.)

In the spring of the year that saw the death of the Earl of Arundel there was committed for some months to the Marshalsea that monster of iniquity, Richard Topcliffe, the scourge and persecutor of Catholics throughout the reign of Elizabeth.

His offence, the least of all his many crimes, was contemptuous speech used towards the Privy Council when examined as to a business disgraceful enough. He was accused of securing a huge bribe for undertaking to "persecute to death" the father and uncle of another precious rascal, Thomas Fitzherbert, the betrayer of Father Garlick, in order that he might obtain their estates.

Bullies are ever cowards; and in a letter written on Good Friday to the queen, this arch-hypocrite whines: "I have helped more traitors to Tyburn than all the noblemen and gentlemen of your Court, your counselors excepted. And now by this disgrace I am in fair way and made apt to adventure my life every night to murderers, for since I was committed, wine in Westminster hath been given for joy of that news.

"In all prisons rejoicings; and it is like that the fresh dead bones of Father Southwell at Tyburn and Father Walpole at York, executed both since Shrovetide, will dance for joy!"

The first of these two martyrs, who had for some time been the fellow-prisoner of Lord Arundel in the Tower, was the son of a Norfolk squire who had been induced by the sting of constant persecution to fall away from the Faith.

That his "conforming" was no very thorough affair is seen by the fact that though he brought up his eldest boy as a Protestant, he sent the younger, Robert, to Douay, when he was quite a child. From thence the imaginative enthusiastic boy of fifteen went to Paris; and within two years became a Jesuit.

From that time he strove by every means in his power to prepare himself for the life of a missionary in England, a life which was almost certainly doomed, as we have seen, to end in a martyr's death. "Think," he writes as a novice, "what is demanded of one thrown into prison by heretics, condemned to hunger and thirst, and to be tempted in all manner of ways!"

And again, five years later, when he was hoping and longing to be sent on that Jesuit mission that had cost Father Campion his life and all the other missionaries save one their liberty, he notes down this reflection: "What would you do if your health were to fail and with it all hope of suffering for Christ and the glory of martyrdom?" Such an event was clearly too terrible to be conceived.

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In 1586, when he was about twenty-six years old, this ardent young priest was granted his heart's desire, and was sent on the English mission with Father Garnet.

His headquarters were mainly at the town or country house of the Countess of Arundel, whose husband was by this time a prisoner in the Tower. The very existence of Father Southwell was a menace to her safety, and for that reason he probably wore constantly the livery of a groom of the chambers; but we can imagine the consolation his presence was to the grief-stricken young wife, whose chief care now was to bring up her baby boy aright and to aid the Church for whose faith her husband was suffering.

By her aid he opened a house whither harassed priests might resort, and where he set up a printing-press for that ever-pressing necessity of spreading Catholic literature. But the greater part of his time during his six years' missionary work was spent in going from place to place, saying Mass whenever possible, instructing, preaching, drawing back the weak to the Faith, strengthening the timid, encouraging the strong. That all this was done in the face of almost hourly danger is seen in his letter to Father Parsons about this time. He says:

"I give myself to preaching, hearing confessions, and other works proper to the Society, compassed with daily dangers and never for a moment in security; but my very difficulties are a source of courage, for alarms jostle one another so thick and fast that none can last long, and hence all are little thought of. My one endeavor is that the enemy find me not unprepared. The rest I leave to God."

In the midst of all this busy work he solaces himself with the composition of those verses burning with fervor, which give him a high rank among our religious poets. We will quote here a few lines from his "Time goes by Turns," which breathe that spirit of hope and faith and humility by which he was distinguished:

Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring,
No endless night, yet not eternal day;
The saddest birds a season find to sing,
The roughest storm a calve may soon allay;
Thus with succeeding turns God tempereth all,
That man may hope to rise, yet fear to fall.

There is no doubt that to the sensitive poetic soul of this young priest the thought of the martyr's death with all its attendant horrors was most repugnant. His proper "setting," one would think, was the shelter of some beautiful old country house, or the dreaming spires of a quiet university city, where he might have matured the fruit of his poetic imagination in peace and seclusion. Yet he spent his six short years in England, as we have seen, in constant danger, harassed on all sides, with hope yet dread of martyrdom ever before his eyes. His notes are full of hints of this perfectly natural fear of a cruel death. "There are many among the martyrs," he writes, "of my age and younger, and as weak or weaker than I; but the Divine Grace that did not fail them will sustain me."

One great encouragement was his at this time. His great desire was to draw his father again to the Faith he had deserted. Tenderly he writes to him such words as these:

"O dear sire, remember that the Scripture terns it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who is able to crush the proud spirit of the obstinate and to make his enemies the footstool of His feet. Wrestle no longer against the struggles of your own conscience and the forcible admonitions that God doth send you. Embrace His mercy before the time of rigor, and return to His Church, lest He debar you the portals of His Kingdom.

"He cannot have God for his Father that refuseth the Catholic Church for his Mother; neither can he attain to the Church Triumphant who is not a member of the Church Militant."

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His earnest words prevailed; and one of the secret joys of his imprisonment must have been the knowledge that his father, in the face of hideous difficulties, was now a fervent Catholic.

His own life-work was nearly over, though he was still barely thirty-two years of age and probably looked much younger. His zeal and success in saving souls had already made him the special mark of Topcliffe's hatred; and the latter now made use of a miserable tool, one of the priest's own penitents, to betray him.

One of Father Southwell's hiding-places had been at Uxenden near Harrow, the home of the Bellamys, a family conspicuous for its faith during the years of persecution. Anne, youngest daughter of the family, had, under his direction, developed such devotion and fervor that she had been arrested and imprisoned at Westminster, close to Topcliffe's own house. There this unhappy girl fell absolutely into the miscreant's clutches. Such power did he exert over her that, probably in despair, she gave up her faith and agreed to aid him in his work of "priest-hunting." By his direction she wrote to Father Southwell on her release, asking him to meet her at her father's house, thus, as Father Gerard says, "betraying to death both her spiritual and her natural father." Her fall seems to have been known by this time, but it is probable that the young priest thought she was turning to him for help as a penitent and longing to be reconciled to the Church. He hastened to Uxenden, and was implored by Mrs. Bellamy to say Mass early next morning before seeing the unhappy girl. This he did, and was taken in the act of doing so, with the vestments still upon him, by Topcliffe himself and the officers who had been watching the house ever since his arrival.

"I never did take so weighty a man, if he be rightly considered," writes the miscreant in glee to Elizabeth; and proceeded to carry off his victim to the prison he kept in his own house for the purpose of using in secret the torture of which even the fanatic judges of those days had ceased to approve.

Ten times here was the young Jesuit hung up by his hands, an agony which he himself declared was worse than ten deaths; and again three times after he was committed to the Tower. Yet not one word would he say as to the houses or company he had frequented, lest other Catholics should get into trouble through him.

The dungeon into which this refined and scholarly man was at first thrown was so filthy that his clothes were soon covered with vermin, and he would probably have remained there had not his father boldly petitioned the queen, "that if his son had committed anything for which by the laws he had deserved death, he might suffer death; if not, as he was a gentleman, he hoped her Majesty would be pleased to order that he should be treated as a gentleman, and not be confined any longer to that filthy hole."

Perhaps the youth of her prisoner appealed to the ageing queen; anyhow she not only bade that Father Robert be removed to a better lodging, but allowed him to have the books he asked for, to wit, the Holy Bible, and the Works of St. Bernard, and his Breviary.

Here for nearly three years Father Southwell passed out of sight. Almost all we know of his imprisonment is comprised in the report of Father Garnet, in which he says "he had for nearly three years been confined more straitly than ever was anyone before, so that he had neither sight nor speech of any Catholic, and had endured more cruel tortures than this savagery is wont to inflict upon others." Beside this, we know that he managed to write letters of comfort to the Earl of Arundel, cheering him with the reminder that his long martyrdom in prison is a "title of honor," a "crown of glory." And we have a letter from the Earl to his "blessed father," in which he says, "I could not be more bound to any man, nor to any but one of your calling so much; and all this in a time when such comforts were most welcome."

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Since he had never yet been tried, Father Southwell at length took the step of writing to Lord Burghley, asking that he might either be brought to trial and condemned or acquitted, or else that his friends might be admitted to see him. The reply of Cecil was that if he were in such haste to be hanged, he should certainly have his wish.

From the Tower he was thrown into "Limbo," the condemned cell of Newgate, a horrible dungeon without air or light, and from thence passed to the usual mockery of a trial. Accused of being a "false traitor to our lady the queen," Father Robert replied indignantly that he was no traitor, and that he had no other design in returning to his native country than to administer the sacraments according to the rite of the Catholic Church to such as desired them. The youth of the boy-priest, as one of his judges called him, seems to have touched even their callous hearts, and the Lord Chief Justice asked him how old he was.

"I am nearly the same age as was my Savior at the time of His Passion," he replied; at which the hypocrite Topcliffe cried out at the "blasphemy!"

Then judgment was pronounced, to which he listened quietly, only thanking the judge for the terrible sentence passed upon him, and saying simply, when offered the services of a minister to prepare him for death:

"Nay, my lord; the Grace of God will be sufficient for that."

And so he was led back to Limbo, to spend his last night in prayer, "full of the thought of the journey he was to take next day, through the gate of martyrdom into a happy eternity."

Dragged on a hurdle to Tyburn, he found a huge crowd waiting to see his end. The usual note of ribaldry and execration was strangely absent, and the people listened with sympathetic interest when, once more denying that he was a traitor, he said, "I die a priest of the Holy Roman Church, and a religious of the Society of Jesus, on which account I owe eternal thanks and praises to my God and Savior. I have always prayed for the queen, and for this short time of my life will pray."

"I recommend to the mercy of God my poor country," was the last prayer for others of that sweet soul before it ascended to the Savior's throne.

Even the crowd watched him die in silence and respect, and refused to allow the hangman to finish his brutal work after he had been hanged.

"He came to the scaffold," writes Father Garnet to the Superior of the Society of Jesus, "as calm and tranquil as though of his own free will he were going to a banquet. And now I present you . . . a most lovely flower from your garden, a most sweet fruit of your orchard, a matchless jewel from your treasure-house, that unconquered soldier of Christ, most faithful disciple and courageous martyr, Robert Southwell."

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CHAPTER XV

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS
1595

"Great hope for the Catholic Faith in England! I could wish myself there . . ."
(Letter of Father Henry Walpole from Belgium.)

In the year that saw the martyrdom of Father Southwell there was executed at York another priest of the Society of Jesus. Fourteen years earlier, Henry Walpole, a young man of three-and-twenty and a promising lawyer of Gray's Inn, had been one of those who pressed closest to the scaffold on which Blessed Edmund Campion was speaking his last words on earth.

"When the executioner had finished his bloody work and flung Campion's quarters into the cauldron that was simmering hard by, the blood spurted out upon Henry Walpole and bespattered his garment. The beating heart of the young enthusiast throbbed with a new emotion; every impulse of horror and indignation stirred within him; and it seemed that there had come to him a call from Heaven to take up the work that had been so cruelly cut short, and to follow the path which Campion had trodden.

"From that moment his course was determined on, and from that day he resolved to devote himself to the cause for which Edmund Campion had died."

In these words does Canon Jessopp, in his most interesting account of our martyr *(One Generation of a Norfolk House)*, tell the story of the call of another ardent, sensitive soul to the martyr band. In those days his enthusiasm led him to the point of rashness; his verses upon the death of Campion were everywhere bought up; a large following of young men were said to have been "converted" by him; and his refusal to take the oath of allegiance finally brought the pursuivants down upon him. It was feared that this would bring his relatives, a well-known Catholic family of Norfolk, into trouble, and forthwith young Walpole set out for the Continent to Douay and to the English College at Rome; and finally, in 1584, was admitted to the Society of Jesus. Four years later he was ordained priest (1588), and seems to have won high esteem from the authorities for his learning and powers of preaching.

It was during this year, when his eyes were beginning to turn longingly back to his native land, that Father Walpole began to get news of the successful work carried on by that gallant adventurer in the Cause of Christ, Father John Gerard. By him his cousin, Edward Walpole, now a large landholder, and formerly content with merely abstaining from the services of the Established Church, had been converted into an ardent Catholic; nearer still to the exile's heart was his own young brother, Michael, ever restless and adventurous of soul, who, after watching the deportment of the gay and fearless young priest who literally held his life in his hand, threw in his lot with him with all the enthusiasm of a generous-hearted youth.

When Father Walpole had left England, Richard, another of his six brothers, had followed hard upon his steps, and had been enrolled in the English College in 1584; and a third, Christopher Walpole, was the next to give in his adhesion to the Faith, under the influence of Gerard. It only needed the news that Father Henry Walpole had been arrested at Flushing, and was lying there in peril of his life, to make another enthusiastic Catholic of Thomas, a fifth brother; so that in 1589 five out of the six sons of Christopher Walpole of Anmer Hall were ready to stand shoulder to shoulder in defense of the Faith.

It was young Michael who undertook the dangerous task of travelling to Flushing and obtaining his brother's release. For Flushing was held at that time by a garrison of

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Englishmen, commanded by a nephew of Leicester; and it was in the performance of his duties as a priest among the Catholic soldiers that Father Henry had been seized and flung into the filthy common prison among the vilest criminals.

By Michael's efforts he was released at length on payment of a ransom, having learnt, as he says, during his imprisonment, "to know better both God, the world, and himself."

For the next two years he was again actively engaged upon the Jesuit Mission in Belgium among the soldiers of the Spanish camps as well as among the large number of English refugees who had settled in that country. It was an important work, by no means free from danger, as he had already proved; and the interest and excitement must have been very pleasant to his type of mind. Moreover, during these two years, his fervent prayers to God and letters to his family were answered; for his brother Michael had now joined Richard at the English College, together with his cousin, Edward Walpole; Christopher was at Douay, and Thomas had also crossed over to Belgium and obtained a commission in the Spanish army.

But the soul of Father Walpole was not yet satisfied. His eyes still turned longingly to his own land and to the old home where his father, mother, and sisters yet lived, together with Geoffrey, the stolid, apathetic second son, who never seems to have been stirred in conscience or to wish to suffer for the Faith.

"Gerard doeth much good!" writes the young priest wistfully to a friend. If only he might be sent to work and suffer by his side! And then again he writes, "Great hope for the Catholic Faith in England! I could wish myself there if all were answerable."

But he had still to wait and possess his soul in patience, first at Tournai, then at Bruges, where amongst other work he translated into English the famous "Philopater" document, the clever cynical pamphlet written by Father Parsons, which attacked Cecil as the real author of the Catholic persecution in England.

Scarcely was it finished when he was summoned to join its author at the new English seminary at Seville. There, and again at Valladolid, he came under the close scrutiny of that master mind; and Father Parsons was not slow to mark both his strength and his weakness. "Suddenly came the question, 'Would he go into England?' 'Yes!' without a moment's doubt or hesitation. 'Though a thousand edicts threaten and a thousand deaths deter?' 'Gerard doeth much good. Why not I?'"

But months of delay followed his arrival at St. Omer, for the plague was raging in London, and he could get no chance of a passage from Calais to Dover. His brother Thomas had thrown up his commission by this time, and had joined him on the route, together with another priest and a soldier of fortune named Lingen.

Weary of waiting for an ordinary transit boat, this little band determined to secure a passage on one of these small pirate ships found lying in Dunkirk harbor, and went aboard one stormy December night in high spirits, knowing nothing of the fact that a fifth man, who had stealthily slipped aboard one of the other ships, was one of Walsingham's spies who had for some time been watching their every movement.

They had a fearful passage, and being carried far past Norfolk, where Father Walpole hoped to land, were presently off the coast of Yorkshire. There was nothing for it but to disembark there and hope for the best; and this they did, still ignorant of the fact that the sinister figure of the spy had managed to land before them and had hurried hotfoot to York to lay information of the probable approach of a Jesuit priest straight from Spain.

It was on a wild and dark December night that Father Walpole set foot on the unfriendly soil of Yorkshire and

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buried for safety in the sand the packet of letters he had brought with him. Utterly ignorant of their whereabouts, and with no settled plans to guide them, the two brothers and their friend committed the fatal blunder of keeping together instead of promptly separating; and after wandering through woods or hiding in a barn all that night, sought food and shelter at the village inn of Kilham, some nine miles from the coast.

Within a few hours the news of the arrival of three strangers in drenched foreign dress was spread far and wide; the constables were at once on the track, and the sunset of the next clay saw all three exiles committed to the Castle prison in York. Here was notable work for Lord Huntingdon, and his success was beyond his expectations. It is true that Father Walpole, having once confessed himself a Jesuit, kept obstinate silence as to matters which affected the lives of others, and that Lingen followed his example. But, to the dismay of his companions, young Thomas Walpole, having no strong religious convictions and not minded to run any risk for having served on the Spanish side in Belgium, at once told all he knew; and not only dug up the packet of letters hidden by Father Henry, but took pains to identify another returned priest on his arrival, and so became the means of getting him sent to the Tower.

They were surely of mixed qualities, these Walpoles; for their zeal and readiness to take up a losing cause was often tempered with a sensitive dread of pain and loss, which led in this case to something like apostasy; and in that of poor Father Walpole to a lapse for which we can but feel the tenderest pity and sympathy, and which was nobly atoned for by his heroic death.

At first Huntingdon hoped to win over the elder brother by means more suave than threats. There were at York at that time a group of apostate priests whom fear of prison and death had prevailed upon to "recant" and to give information as to their former associates. It was arranged that these gentlemen should hold public disputations with Father Walpole; but as the only effect was to gain for the Jesuit from the populace a reputation for learning and devoted piety, they were hastily stopped, and the three men were put on their trial. Their first examination was at the hands of Topcliffe himself, who writes exultingly to the queen as to the success he had had with "young Thomas"—who had, in fact, already told all he knew; but quite otherwise of Father Henry and Lingen:

"The Jesuit and Lingen must be dealt with in some sharp sort alone, and more will burst out than yet, or otherwise, can be known."

Meantime, from his dismal cell, the lonely priest has found means to write and receive letters from his friends, and his words are somewhat wistful and pathetic in tone, especially when we recall what was to happen a few months later:

"Your Reverence's letters give me great comfort; but if I could but see you, though it were but for one hour, it would be of greater service to me than I could possibly express. I hope that what is wanting my sweet Lord Jesus will supply by other means, whose heavenly comfort and assistance has always hitherto stood by me in my greatest necessities, and I am persuaded will continue so to do, since His love for us is everlasting. . . Then, referring to his examination, he says, "I told them I returned into England with a very great desire of the conversion not only of the people, but most of all of the queen herself, and of the whole English nobility; which I plainly assured them I should ever use my best endeavors to bring about, with the grace of God.

"To their queries concerning others, I refused to answer. And when Topcliffe threatened that he would make me answer when he had me in Bridewell, or in the Tower, I told him that Our Lord God, I hoped, would never permit me, for fear of any torments whatsoever, to do anything against His Divine Majesty or against my own conscience, or to the prejudice of justice and the innocence of others."

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The whole letter breathes a spirit of almost childlike simplicity, faith, and readiness to suffer, together with a curious undercurrent of self-distrustfulness, and even uneasiness as to whether what he had said to his enemies had been altogether wise—as though, in fact, he would have been glad of reassurance from his Superior on these points.

As to another matter just at this time he was equally full of scruples. His many friends outside were eager to formulate a plan of escape for him, but the gentle young priest was doubtful both as to the nature of the risks to be run, and even more as to his right to try thus to evade martyrdom. He managed to get through the prison gates a letter from the Jesuit Father Holtby, who, a second Gerard, was passing unscathed through daily risk of detection, and had managed to establish a correspondence with the prisoner in the Castle. Knowing probably his lack of the nerve and cunning necessary to such an undertaking, Father Holtby advised him not to attempt to escape, and he readily agreed.

But the time of real trial was now hard at hand.

In 1594 a pretended plot to assassinate Elizabeth had been fastened on a certain Portuguese named Lopez, the queen's physician, who was said to be in the pay of Spain.

Lopez, probably an innocent victim of the headstrong zeal and suspicions of the Earl of Essex, was put to death; and the whole affair became a convenient peg upon which Topcliffe might hang a Jesuit priest come straight from Spain.

Hurrying him from York, Topcliffe soon had Father Walpole committed to the Tower, where Philip Howard still lay, and Father Southwell, his fellow-Jesuit, with whom he left no stone unturned to establish communication during the two months of solitary confinement that elapsed before his "examination."

When this began, though faced with the horrors of the torture-chamber, the replies of the prisoner were firm enough. He frankly owned to facts that were already known or which referred to people safe across the sea; but when pressed to name the forty young Englishmen then studying at the Valladolid seminary, or any Englishmen with whom he had intercourse at Dunkirk or on his arrival, he was absolutely silent.

It was the same on the days that followed. In the record of the questions asked again and again the clerk notes down as his answer, "He knoweth, but refuseth to disclose." He was now utterly in Topcliffe's power; the rack and the manacles were ready. "Let him speak, this stubborn Jesuit, who knew so much!—speak, or hang till life should be only horrible torment."

But still he would not open his mouth, though the examination was only ended by his fainting with agony under the torture.

In the lonely cell in the Salt Tower, that must have seemed like Heaven after that chamber of horrors, the Jesuit priest spent the long hours in drawing pictures of saints and angels in chalk upon the walls, and in carving his name upon the stones, where it may yet be seen. Father Gerard, his successor there, in later days thus describes the spot:

"The next day I examined the place, for there was some light, though dim, and I found the name of Father Henry Walpole, of blessed memory, cut with a knife on the wall; and not far from there I found his oratory, which was a space where there had been a narrow window, now blocked up with stones. There he had written on either side with chalk the names of the different choirs of angels, and on the top, above the cherubim and seraphim, the name of the Mother of God; and above that again, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, the name of God."

He adds words at whose import we can but shudder: "It was truly a great consolation to me to find myself in this place, hallowed by the presence of so great and so devoted a martyr, the place too in which he was frequently tortured, to the

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number, as I have heard, of fourteen times. Probably they were unwilling to torture him in public and in the ordinary place, because they did it oftener than they would have it known."

The suggestion, in the light of what followed, is truly horrible. Did Topcliffe, during those June days, deal with his helpless victim, unchecked by observers, according to his wicked will? It seems so, for on the thirteenth of that month he had managed to extort a written confession, which, after all, betrays nobody and tells nothing that was not already known to the government. But that his splendid courage is broken is seen by the pathetic appeal for mercy with which it ends, an appeal from a heart wrung with despair at its own weakness:

"I desire that this act be concealed till it shall please the Council to dispose of me howsoever to their honors shall seem most to the good of the realm and service of her Majesty, whom I do beseech upon my knees to take pity upon a miserable prisoner and offender: yet now resolve to employ all my forces to her Majesty's service and to conform myself ever as it shall please her Majesty to appoint me."

But still they had not learnt all they wished to know, the names of the seminarists abroad, the names of priest-harborers at home; and it was only after another night of horror that this information was extracted from him. What refinement of torture was employed, or what agony of remorse followed these revelations, we can but surmise, when we read that in this same document he declares his readiness to "go to the church . . . " though he adds immediately, "and there preach only such doctrine as my conscience doth tell me to be manifestly deduced out of the Word of God"—ending with a brave attempt to regain his self-respect in the significant words, "so that it be without prejudice to the Catholic Faith, which I ever profess."

Let us not presume to judge this man of nervous, highly sensitive mind and body, who under physical agony such as we cannot even imagine was forced to declare things for which in saner moments he would have died rather than reveal. Death indeed was a light thing compared to daily torture; and death he would have been ready to face with courage. But the worst part of the story is to come. That he had not yet betrayed anything of great importance is proved by the fact that for the next few months he was left entirely in Topcliffe's hands to do with as he pleased. What happened exactly we cannot tell; the secret is well kept by those grim grey stones of the Tower cell. But we do know that in July 1594 he was able to write the hand of an educated man; and that at the end of his nine months' imprisonment, when some notes of meditations, written by him in prison, had come into the possession of Father Gerard, the latter says of them, "I could scarcely read them at all, not because they were written hastily, but because the hand of the writer could not form the letters. It seemed more like the first attempts of a child than the handwriting of a scholar and a gentleman such as he was."

What put an end to this dark period of failure of body and soul is not quite certain. It seems clear that his admission that he had translated Parsons' pamphlet ridiculing Cecil was enough to sign his death-warrant at Lord Burghley's hands. Moreover, in the January of 1595 a Jesuit priest, who had been captured in the act of taking over six boys to the Spanish seminary, had managed to outwit the government and, under the appearance of a Neapolitan merchant, to get exchanged for an English prisoner of war. In their annoyance and irritation when they found they had let a Jesuit missionary slip through their fingers, the Council called upon Topcliffe for advice, who reminded them that they had two notable Jesuits still lying in the Tower—Father Southwell for nearly three years, Father Walpole for fifteen months. To make an example of these might terrorize the rest of the Society, since no Jesuit had been actually executed since the days of Campion, thirteen years before.

So, since Father Walpole had been taken at York, he was sent thither again to stand the bitter mockery of the trial which, be it remembered, he had never yet been allowed.

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His answers on this occasion show that if he had fallen with St. Peter, he had, indeed, not only repented with him, but was prepared to bear the most distinct witness to the Faith of his Church. For towards the end of a long accusation, most ably refuted by him, the Lord President said to him, "We deal very favorably with you, Mr. Walpole, when, notwithstanding all these treasons and conspiracies with the persons aforesaid, we offer you the benefit of the law if you will but make the submission ordered by the law; which, if you will not accept of, it is proper you should be punished according to the law."

To which Father Walpole replied, "There is nothing, my lord, in which I would not most willingly submit myself, provided it be not against God. But may His Divine Majesty never suffer me to consent to the least thing by which He may be dishonored. As to the queen, I every day pray for her to our Lord God that He would bless her with His Holy Spirit. . . . And God is my witness that to all here present, and particularly to my accusers and to such as desire my death, I wish, as to myself, the salvation of their souls, and that to this end, they may live in the true Catholic Faith, the only way to eternal happiness."

When Father Walpole was removed to his condemned cell, he thought that the end was close at hand; and writing to Father Holtby, he says with touching humility:

"I am to be executed to-morrow. . . . Pray therefore to our God that He may be my helper in this last conflict that I have to sustain, for the glory of His name and for the edification of His Church. "I tell you," he adds, "nothing of all that passed during my year's detention in the Tower of London. I hold my peace, too, on many other details. You will know them in heaven, when we shall see each other again. Let this letter, written in haste, but with cordial affection, suffice. It is time for me to lay my pen aside to employ myself only in prayer to the great God, for whom I am fighting the good fight, with whom I hope to be face to face on the morrow."

Even now, however, he was not left at peace, for his judges insisted on another public disputation being held on the Sunday following. Monday, April 17, 1595, was the actual date of the martyrdom; and for an account of this we go to the record of Father Holtby, who speaks first of the self-inflicted penance under-gone by the priest before his death:

"He was very austere to himself after his coming out of the Tower . . . at night he lay upon the stones unless he leaned upon his elbow and he that lay in the chamber with him did affirm that he never wakened but he heard the father either pray or sigh."

With him suffered a seminary priest named Alexander Rawlings, whose death it was hoped might terrorize Father Walpole into giving way. Some gentlemen of position indeed seemed most anxious to save the latter, for when, in answer to the usual question, he replied that he would gladly pray for Elizabeth, whom he honored as his queen, they "ran to the President with the news." But Huntingdon with his evil smile bade them ask if he would so do if the Pope forbade it. Upon which he answered "he might not nor would not."

Even up to the last moment both enemies and well-wishers tormented him with questions, which perhaps he bore the more meekly because he regarded them as a penance for his past weakness. Then at length the end came.

"His last prayer was *Paternoster*, and he was beginning *Ave Maria* when they turned him over the ladder. They let him hang until he was dead."

And thus, by a steadfast faith in death, Father Henry Walpole atoned for the mistakes and lapses of past days, finding at the moment of death a Judge more merciful than those of us who would blame a man for failing always to stand upright under a test from which the bravest might well shrink and fall.

With him we end for the present our Story of the Martyrs of the Sixteenth Century, though four-and-twenty

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more were to suffer before that century was complete. But perhaps it is as well that we should close this book with the life of Father Walpole fresh in remembrance, lest familiarity with the details of martyrdom make us forget all that it meant to those who suffered. For they were men and women not unlike ourselves; they loved their lives, they rejoiced in the sunshine and the joy of living just as we do, and were not made of stuff that feels no pain and no regrets. So much the more then do we owe them veneration and honor, since all that they accomplished was done, not by their own superior force of will or physical endurance, but by their swift and eager correspondence with the Grace of God.

BLESSED ENGLISH MARTYRS
PRAY FOR THE AUTHOR, THE ILLUSTRATOR,
THE PUBLISHERS,
AND THE READERS OF THIS BOOK.
AMEN

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