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J. E. Jackson

Greymane



GEORGE FOX,
THE RED-HOT QUAKER.

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By STAFF-CAPTAIN DOUGLAS.



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INTRODUCTION.

The story of George Fox's life suffers from two great disadvantages which the reader should always bear in mind.

In the first place, the old strange stilted language, used by all in his day, makes it difficult for us to feel as much at home with him as we should do. We must remember that even Salvationists in our own days are tempted when they write to give up their simple every-day language, and to wrap up their thoughts more fashionably. But those who will try to see George Fox, as he so often was to be found, praising the Lord in a stinking prison cell, will be able in spite of his strange words to grasp his glorious meaning.

And then we have also to remind ourselves that he had little chance either to observe or to organise any regular and effective warfare. For over a hundred years England had been victimised by religious discussions until the very idea of real worship had been almost lost. No wonder at poor George's perplexities when his hungry soul began to long for God, and no wonder that the great note of his whole life thereafter was so largely that of avoiding whatever others did. If he could anywhere have seen how singing, processions, flags, music, open-air demonstrations could be used in the power of the Holy Ghost to the salvation of the people; and if he could have been allowed to organise accordingly, all England would have been stirred and perhaps delivered at once from the curses of formalism and spiritual death. But it may be that God only granted him light according to what it was then possible to do. He lived a prophet's life, leaving to us in these days of liberty, not a complete description of our duties, but an example of fearless devoted service, that, alas, but few have ever attempted to follow.

We send out this book, not with any idea of valuing the mere details of history which it supplies, but trusting that it may stir many a heart to day to arise out of the miserable ruts of selfish habit, and cry to God for grace to serve as daringly and single-eyedly as George Fox did.

Who will try to see Heaven and hell, God and judgment, with that clear vision that will force them to go out in season and out of season to snatch poor sinners from their awful doom?

Who will get so completely delivered from all regard for public opinion, so utterly impatient of useless routine, that looking to God for hourly direction, they will constantly appear just where nobody expects them, to block the road to hell and point the road to Heaven?

We send this book out, above all, to Salvationists, with a complete organisation working in absolute freedom, at their disposal. How villages, cities, aye, nations, could be made to quake by officers as full of God and faith, as reckless as to their own life, interest and comfort, as determined to wreck the Devil's Kingdom, as George Fox was! God grant this little book may help to produce such men and women wholesale!

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GEORGE FOX, THE RED-HOT QUAKER.

CHAPTER I.

GEORGE.

"Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path."—
Ps. xxvii. 11.

THE picture that rises before us as we take up our pen, is a study in browns, mellowed and subdued by the touch of some two odd centuries.

Can we make you see it, too?

A large, somewhat gloomy kitchen, panelled perhaps in brown wood, with tall, dark settles by the wide chimney nooks. A glowing fire throws its gleams on a chattering group of men and women who have gathered round the cheery ingle-nook of Christopher Fox to gossip or talk over the affairs of the nation, according to their sex, in the short hour between sundown and bed-time. The children gather round the table a little apart, presumably learning their lessons—all except one, a tiny, curly-headed boy with deep, mournful, grey eyes, who sat always in a shadowy corner apart, listening to the laughter and jokes of his elders with unchanging gravity of expression. Years afterward, he told what had been passing in his childish mind at these times, and what he was saying in the as yet unfathomed depths of his child soul.

"If ever I come to be a man, surely I shall not be so wanton!"

And yet the company who, from time to time, gathered under the roof of Christopher Fox and his wife Mary were very far from being what is commonly known as "wanton." Mary and Christopher were godly people. Indeed, among his friends, Christopher was known as "Righteous Christer." They belonged to the Church of England, and

earnestly endeavoured to bring their children up in the fear of the Lord. But George was a different child to any of the others. From his birth the hand of the Lord was upon him. His baptism was one of suffering and sorrow, even the baptism that Christ Himself was baptised with. No wonder that he never cared to join in the games of his brothers, and lacked that irresponsible light-heartedness which is the dower of childhood.

George was a curious child. He was never like other children, but was, we are told, "retired, still and solid." He loved to get into a quiet corner and think and think and think. His questions concerning religious matters were the terror of his friends, so impossible did they find it to answer them; while the quaint answers he gave to questions they put to him showed that he was observant and thoughtful beyond his years. Still, he was not a disagreeable child, nor was there anything of the "prig" about him. He was not conceited or self-confident enough for that. His spiritual and mental attitude toward the world, for the first fifteen years of his life, was that of one who had lost his way on a mountain, and was ever and anon hearing far-away voices that called him to the main road. Happily for him he had a wise and good mother. Though far from understanding her strange, unchildlike, little son, she was content with the fact that he was well inclined, and left him pretty much to his own devices, and did not try to force him into an ordinary boy-mould.

At eleven, he had his first glimmering of inward light—a point of light which hung starlike over the clouds and blackness of his puzzled soul. From then to the day of his death he followed on bravely after that Light, in spite of almost impossible obstacles. His resolution was, first, that he would live a pure and righteous life; second, that he would be faithful in all things, inwardly to God, outwardly to man. He also resolved that he would always keep his word, and that he would not commit excess in eating and drinking!

These two last resolutions were in total opposition to

the spirit of the day, which was a brutal and sensuous one. The fires of the Reformation had burnt themselves out, and the Protestant Church had little else but a name to live. The clergymen were, for the most part, loose and ease-loving, and held their office not through any spiritual right, but in virtue of their education. Spirituality and real heart religion were well-nigh unknown qualities. The Puritan party had risen in protest about the middle of the sixteenth century, and endeavoured to maintain the simplicity of the Gospel, but in the first half of the seventeenth, when little George was born, their protest had largely degenerated into a stern, uncompromising denunciation of various Church ordinances, and external habits of life and mode of dress. The spiritual life was, generally speaking, at a low ebb.

So George's relatives, seeing that he was such a sober and religiously inclined child, insisted to his parents that he should be made a clergyman. But as George had not the slightest ambition in this direction, he was put to service with a man who was a shoemaker, and who also dealt in wood and cattle. His thoughtful turn of mind was never allowed to interfere with his work, and he was so diligent in business that his master became very successful in his trade all the time George was with him. So truthful was he that it was a common saying among his fellows, "If George says 'verily,' there is no altering him."

Time went on, and George was nineteen. For the past eight years he had earnestly and faithfully endeavoured to be true to his eleven-year-old vow. He had grown in grace, so far as leading a godly and temperate life went, but up to this period we do not find that he enjoyed any personal direct communion with God. The "joy of the Lord," which, in after years, was so truly to be his "strength," had not as yet warmed his being; the foreshadowing of a prophet's life gathered chill about him, and the weight of a prophet's mantle hung heavily; his soul was full of vague questionings, and strange longings and continual reachings out after what he himself could not have put into words. Never for a moment did he manifest

any desire to give up what often looked like an unequal contest. His face was to the right always and ever.

At nineteen his life was stirred. It happened one day at a country fair. Thither had repaired George and his cousin and a friend—whether bent on pleasure or business we are not told.

“Come and have a jug of beer,” one said, and as they were all thirsty, they went together to an inn. After they had each had a glass it was suggested that they should drink each other’s health, and if anyone would not drink he would have to pay for all. This grieved George very much, because both his cousin and his friend professed religion, and he did not think that drinking for mere pleasure was consistent with their profession. Indeed, drinking healths was considered by many people in that day as a “heathen custom.” He rose up, and paying for his share, said:—

“If it be so, I’ll leave you,” and went home.

George never went to bed that night. His spirit was intensely troubled, and found vent in crying and praying before God. At last it seemed to him as if the Lord had answered his cry thus:—

“Thou seest how young people go together into vanity, and old people into the earth, therefore thou must forsake all, both old and young, and be as a stranger unto them.”

This command, which George was fully persuaded was a Divine one, he at once set about following. He resolved to break off all friendship with his acquaintances and leave his relations, and live a separate and retired life. So on the 9th of September he left his father’s house in Drayton, Leicestershire, and became a pilgrim and a wanderer.

CHAPTER II.

A PILGRIM AND A STRANGER.

“That in all things He might have the pre-eminence.”—*Col. i. 18.*

For nine months after this George was a wanderer on the face of the earth. A little money that he had in his own right enabled him to follow out his leading. His life was a solitary one, and never was he more alone than when he tried to find a spiritual prop or mainstay. Wherever he heard there were devout or religious people there he turned his steps, only to hasten away disappointed and heartsick. He prayed and fasted so much that he attracted the attention of many professing Christians, who sought to become acquainted with him. At first, he used to hail them with joy, but, perceiving that they professed what they didn’t possess, he sadly let them go their ways.

It must not be supposed from this that George was over-righteous or not willing to be taught. Far from it. That there were pious, devoted, thoroughly godly people in England he found out a little later; but at this period they were, we are fain to believe, kept out of his way by Divine purpose. George Fox was undoubtedly called to be a prophet. His was to be no John-like mission of blissful, ecstatic following and service of tender, loving messages. Rather was his to be the Ishmael-like wanderings of a Jeremiah or an Ezekiel. God was preparing him for the work for which He had created him. It was necessary for him to be strong, and strong souls come out of the furnace of suffering and temptation. So, steadily

and persistently, God removed from under him every earthly prop, that at last, when, spent and weary, he had come to the end of all things—most of all, himself—he should be so purged from dross that he could see the Hand stretched out to succour, and hear the Voice that said: “I am thy strength!” It was necessary for a character like George’s—necessary, too, for the work to which he was called—that he should prove to the very utmost that “vain is the help of man.”

But it was a long Gethsemane, and a toilsome, lonely, dark path that led up to his Calvary. His times of temptation were so fierce as often to amount to despair. For days he would keep his room, waiting upon God. At other times, he used to wander alone about the country, looking deep into his heart, and asking himself again and again, and yet again, wherein he had sinned. Was it against his relations? Had he wronged any? Was there any secret sin unconfessed, and thus unforgiven? His heart was as the noonday clear.

In this wretched, miserable state he went to London to visit the dissenting Christians there. London was the centre of all things. Surely there he would find some help. But there was none. In vain his uncle, who was a Baptist, entreated him to stay. Sadly and sorrowfully he turned his face towards his home again, after a year’s absence.

Is it any wonder his relations did not know what to make of him!

He must get married and settle down, some said. That would put an end to his foolish melancholy. But to this George replied with grim humour that he’d rather “get some wisdom first.” Others insisted that he had better enlist as a soldier. A soldier’s life was a merry one, and he would have no time to brood. So persistent were his kind friends to settle his career in some way that George left them and fled. However, he was soon back again, this time with a view to enquiring more closely of the clergy.

The Drayton clergyman often came to see him, and used

to ask him questions, all of which George answered. But when George found out that his object was not so much to help him as to get material for next Sunday’s sermon, he refused to have anything more to do with him!

At Mansetter he sought another man, who bade him take tobacco and sing psalms.

“But,” said George, “I do not love tobacco, nor am I in any state to sing!”

He was told to come again. He came. The clergyman got irritated with him. He could not understand this strange young man. So when George found out that he told all his most sacred confidences to the servants and milk-lasses, he came to the conclusion that he was a “miserable comforter” and no use to minister to a mind diseased.

Another man he described as “an empty, hollow cask!”

Hearing of a certain Dr. Cradock in Coventry as a man eminent for piety, George repaired there in high hopes. This worthy took him out into the garden and there asked him a number of Biblical questions. George, forgetful of all save his misery, heedlessly trod on a flower-bed, whereupon the doctor got into such a temper that anything he might have to say was rendered of no effect to George, who again turned sadly and sorrowfully homewards.

The next one he tried told him he was ill, and gave him some medicine and tried to bleed him; but, as he writes himself, his body was so dried up with sorrow and grief that not a drop of blood could be got from him.

Human intellect having utterly failed him, George next tried to comfort himself with good works. He visited the poor and helped them, and went from house to house seeking for the widows and fatherless that he might thus follow out the Bible instruction. But he was never a whit better. Often he was fain to wish that he had been born blind, so that he could not see the wickedness of the world, and deaf, that he might not hear the wicked words men used when they blasphemed God! He lived in a veritable hell, keenly alive to the awful peril and blindness men were living in, and totally unable to lend them a

helping hand. His life was nothing less than a protracted nightmare!

However, though perhaps he did not recognise it then, the Light that had begun to glimmer on his path was still shining, and just about this time he arrived at two important conclusions. The first was, that in spite of what was taught in the Church, to the effect that all believers are Christians and therefore entitled to Heaven and born of God, this was not so, but that except a man was converted he could not inherit Eternal Life. Thus the doctrine of conversion was for the first time presented to him. The other was, that to be educated at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to make a man a minister of Christ. This was the common belief at the time, so common that an old contemporary historian relates with much wonder and awe how George took these new ideas as a Divine revelation! You will easily see from this how dead and lifeless and wholly asleep the Church was! It took a man anointed and trained by God Himself to wake it up. It is in itself an interesting study to trace out how wonderfully these years of blackness and soul bitterness, with odd gleams of light on the most vital fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, fitted George Fox for the work he was born into the world to do.

Again he gave himself to wandering to and fro. We find him in cities, tiny villages, sleeping under hedges, studying his Bible in a hollow tree, and in every imaginable and unimaginable place. So hard was this life upon ordinary clothes that he had made for himself that famous pair of leather breeches which have since become historical. Now leather was very far from being unknown as an article of clothing in those days. The Puritans used it a great deal, and we read in old histories of fine, soft, well-tanned, black leather "small clothes." In all probability, George's was rough and untanned, hence its notoriety.

As he wandered round, steadily keeping away now from all the human kind that had proved such poor helps, more light was given him. It was revealed to him that God

did not dwell in houses and temples made with hands, but in people's hearts. His people were the temples He dwelt in. This came to him one day when he was walking in the fields. We have said that the seventeenth century was a brutal age. It was more than that, it was an intensely dark and superstitious one. Among the old notions in vogue then was the theory that women had no souls! This was a relic of barbarism and not supposed to be commonly believed; but, alas for the women, the men of the day, with few exceptions, acted as though this belief were a part of their creed! Against this George never failed to raise his voice.

"The Virgin Mary," he argued, "says, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour,'" proving conclusively that women at any rate *used* to have souls! George Fox was one of those uncomprehended spirits, with theories so in advance of their age that people are wont to say they have been "born too soon!"

But the time was now drawing on when George was to be delivered from the chains that bound his soul. After more fruitless search among the Dissenters for some human being who could speak peace to his tried spirit, he determined to try no more, but to resign himself to God and His will, and take for his guide the Holy Scriptures. He had been a long time in arriving at this point, and had come to it by a circuitous and thorny road, but he *had* come; and when he got there, he found that all the time he had been trying one earthly help after another, the Saviour was standing waiting, waiting, in tireless, unwearied, loving patience. It had been a long way round, but George got there. An ancient chronicler writes thus of this period:—

"And when all his (George's) hopes in them (the Churchmen and the Dissenters) and in all men were gone, then he heard a voice which said, 'There is One, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.' Having heard this, his heart leapt for joy, and it was showed him why there was none upon earth that could speak to his

condition ; namely, that he might give the Lord alone the glory, and that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence."

His understanding being now enlightened, many things were made clear to his mind. For a few days, to his great surprise, temptations continued, so that he began to question as to whether he had not sinned against the Holy Ghost. This brought him into great perplexity and trouble, but true to his new light, he flung himself helplessly and unreasoningly upon God, and one day as he walked alone the veil lifted for ever. His soul was filled with God's love to him personally. For the hour there were but two in the universe, God and himself. There was that personal, close, sensible, yet mystical union that is to be experienced, not described ; that tangible, yet spiritual Something, which, breathed into the soul of man, changes mere dogma and belief into glowing life, a Life that only lives to create more life.

In that hour were shown him Christ's part and man's part in the plan of redemption, that the fires of trial and temptation which were often so grievous were kindled for his profit solely, and for the trial of his faith, that it might come forth as gold that is tried. He saw Christ as a refiner's fire, and he also saw that that part of him that grew impatient and chafed at the spiritual trial was of the flesh—his unsanctified will, that could not yield itself up to the death of the cross. So there was a "giving" as well as a "taking from" God in that hour which closed round George, weighty with future possibilities to which his eyes were as yet closed, as he stood in the open fields under the calm sky, his soul naked and alone before its Creator.

CHAPTER III.

LEAD KINDLY LIGHT.

"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."—1 *John* i. 5.

Most histories are apt to give a somewhat misleading idea of George Fox's character. They judge the man oft n by his outward actions. They see the stern prophet, then hear only his loud denunciations against sin, wickedness and folly. Very few care to follow him behind the scenes, and learn to know the human, nay, even the mystical side of his character: for George was intensely human. As a lad he had an odd, incomprehensible child's desire for human companionship and sympathy, and, when, as we have seen, this was for a time divinely denied him, his heart was often nearly crushed and broken. This craving for love, for human sympathy, for heart and soul friendship, was with him all his life, and never was the little, mystical maiden, Joan of Arc, a greater dreamer of dreams and hearer of voices and seer of visions than the George whom his historians delight to picture as stern, uncompromising, and stiff as his own leathern garments ! They fail to show him to us at seasons when the Voices make known to his soul the awful fate of his New England comrades ; when he sits the night out on his cold, damp gaol floor, suffering with them in spirit, pang for pang, and agony for agony, till the dim trickle of grey light that pierces the crevices of his dungeon shows us a man strained and worn, and years older for that awful night. But one can hardly blame them, for it is only in side-lights and occasional sentences that his contemporaries give us any insight into his real character, or show us his flesh and

blood side. This is not to be wondered at, considering the troublous and stirring times they lived in, when there was so much to chronicle that people had no time for mere character study. George's own journal is little more than a bare record of his doings, and does not give us any hint of the sensitive, sympathetic heart that was often more a torture to him than anything else.

Immediately after he was set at liberty, he went to Manchester to visit some professing Christians, and declare to them what he believed to be the true doctrine. Some among them were convinced of the truth, and accepted as their rule the inward Divine teaching of the Lord. One of the first, if not *the* first of these early converts was a woman called Elizabeth Hooton. This was the beginning of George Fox's preaching. It was a very small beginning, for his words were few and halting, but they were nevertheless piercing, as some found to their eternal good. Then there were others, thoughtful men and women, ripe for instruction, who listened to George's testimony and learned from God's teaching and leading of him what they lacked.

But there were other professors of religion who could not endure to hear George go round preaching holiness of heart, any more than some people in the nineteenth century could endure hearing the Salvation Army talk about a "clean heart."

However, George preached this doctrine with no uncertain sound. He paid no attention to anybody, but travelled on his apostolic way.

While passing through Nottinghamshire, he had a rather curious experience. The Lord gave him such an insight into the hearts and natures of the wicked that he was appalled and stunned by the fact that he was able to understand evils which must, he argued, have an abiding place in his own heart, and be ready to spring into life at any time! He felt crushed and defeated that he, who taught and believed in holiness, should have been so far self-deceived.

"Why should I be thus," he cried (happily to the

Lord), "seeing I never was addicted to such things!"

And the Lord answered.

"It is necessary that thou shouldst have a sense of all conditions, how else canst thou speak to all conditions."

With this answer came a fresh baptism of the love of God. It was also impressed upon him, as never before, that the harvest was great, but there were none to gather it in. He gave himself still more to preaching and exhortation, and the people flocked to him from all the country round. Those who had seen and heard him, and especially those who were converted through his words, spread his fame abroad. There was an incident which occurred at this crisis, which helped to make him known. A man called Brown lay dying in Mansfield, and just before he passed away, he prophesied many things about George, principally that he would be used to the conversion of many sinners. After he was dead, George held a wonderful meeting in Mansfield, which helped to confirm Brown's prophecy. As he prayed, the power of God came down in such a marvellous manner that the very building seemed to rock, and some of those present declared,

"This is like that in the days of the apostles, when at Pentecost the house where they met was shaken!"

After leaving Mansfield, George returned to his own country, Leicester. He was just in time for a great meeting of all denominations, which was called to dispute various vexed points of doctrine. It was held in the church, and thither George repaired. The clergyman of the church who occupied the pulpit, gave permission for anybody in the congregation to speak. Several spoke, and then a woman asked a question.

"I permit not a woman to speak in church!" cried the presiding clergyman, in great heat.

George, who up to this time had been sitting "wraught in a rapture," roused himself and asked:—

"Dost thou call this place a church, or this mixed multitude a church?"

"What do *you* call a church?" asked the clergyman.

"The Church," said George, "is the pillar and ground of the truth, made up of living stones and lively members; a spiritual household of which Christ is the head. But He is not the head of a mixed multitude, or of an old house composed of lime, stones and wood."

This speech was nothing less than rank blasphemy, according to the spirit of the seventeenth century, and there was a general uproar, so much so that the meeting broke up in disorder. The woman who asked the question became a Quaker afterwards. In his writings George always speaks of a church as a "steeple-house." This term originated with the Puritans, who used it to emphasise the fact that they considered a church a mere architectural structure.

George Fox seems to have endured almost all temptation common to mankind! After this meeting we find him agonising with doubts as to the reality and being of God. It seemed so clear to him that there was no God. He was in the depths of woe. Suddenly, as he prayed, his doubts disappeared, and a voice whispered "There is a living God, Who made all things!" Some time later he understood why he was thus tried. In the course of his travels he met with several infidels, and he was so able to deal with them as to persuade them to a new way of life.

And now there came to him that knowledge which has always been a fundamental one of the Quakers,—the consciousness of the inner Light. He was shown that there is a divine light in the regenerated heart which, if followed honestly and truly, would lead to God, and that without the aid of any human ordinances. This revelation was given to him in 1649, the year from which the Quakers consider the origin of their sect to date. It was about this time, too, that his followers and converts began to assemble together, and, sitting in silence, wait upon God till, as His Spirit led one and another to give witness in prayer or speech or song, they obeyed. Many minor revelations George received about this time. There was the one which led him to use "thee" and "thou" in speaking. "Thee" and "thou" were at that period, principally used in ad-

ressing servants and inferiors and George, having been taught by his Bible study that God was no respecter of persons, was led to treat all men simply and alike. His persistent wearing of the hat was akin to this, too. Hats in those days, among the upper classes, were very smart affairs indeed, marvels of costly plumes and gold lace. The fashion of the day dictated that they were to be held in the hand. So the beaux of the period invariably carried theirs on every occasion, and when they wore them never lost an opportunity of taking them off, with sweeping bows, to any chance acquaintance. Ordinary, plain people had, up till now, worn theirs everywhere. Men of that day never thought of taking off their hats in church, at home, or in business, till the new French manners were introduced from over the sea. The Quakers, in wearing their hats, were following out the command, "Be not conformed to this world."

Another strong belief of his was, that Christ expected the Gospel to be preached without fee or reward. About a million and a-half of money is reported to have been gained annually by the bishops and minor clergy by the sale of the Scriptures to their flocks. Then the church tithes were exceedingly heavy—extortionate; so the clergy enjoyed a fat and flourishing living.

Up to this time George Fox had no definite call to the work of God. But, as he was pondering the advisability of becoming a doctor, which profession his friends urged upon him, the Lord commanded him to go abroad into the world, which was a "briery, thorny wilderness," and preach His gospel of repentance. The whole plan of salvation rose up before him clearer than ever, and in contrast, the fearful need of a blind, lost world.

"About this time," he writes in his journal, in his own quaint, matter-of-fact style, "I was sorely exercised in going to courts to cry for justice, and in speaking to judges and justices to do justly; in warning such as kept public-houses, that they should not let people have more drink than would do them good (total abstinence was unknown then), in testifying against wakes, feasts, May

games, and sports, plays and shows, which trained up people to vanity and looseness, and taught them to forget God. In fairs also, and in markets, I was made to declare against their deceitful merchandise and cheating, warning all to deal justly, to speak truth, and let their yea be yea, and their nay be nay, and to do unto others as they would have others do unto them, warning them of that great and terrible day of the Lord that would come to all. I was moved also to cry against all kinds of music, and against the mountebanks playing off their tricks on the stage, for they stirred the peoples' mind to vanity. I was much exercised towards the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, warning them to teach the children sobriety in the fear of the Lord. I was made to warn fathers and mothers to take care that their children and servants might be trained up in the fear of the Lord, and that they themselves should be therein examples and patterns of sobriety and virtue to them."

It was certainly a big contract, and George had his time fully occupied. Never in the whole course of his life, could he see anything sinful, or oppressive, or a sham, without a burning desire to remedy it, and so he always went at it full tilt, heedless of what might be involved to himself in pain and suffering and persecution. Anyone who understands the times he lived in, will not be surprised to learn that in a very short time his pursuance of this course of action led him into gaol!

CHAPTER IV.

A PRISONER.

"Not accepting deliverance."—*Heb. xi. 35.*

THIS was how it happened. George was walking towards Nottingham, one Sunday morning, to attend a meeting of his own people there. As he came to the top of the hill, and looked around on the town he saw the large church, and was mightily moved to go in. However, he went on first into the meeting, where the power of God was much felt. In a very short time he was constrained to get up and go to church. In the middle of the clergyman's sermon, he was further moved to get up and differ from him. Then he went on to preach to the people Jesus Christ and Him crucified for their sins. It is said that some of those who heard him were so much astonished at what he said that they could not get his words out of their heads. Of what followed George writes:—

"As I spoke among them, the officers came, took me away, and put me in a nasty stinking prison; the smell whereof got into my nose, that it very much annoyed me!"

Poor George! The time soon came when he ceased to be particular as to the atmospheres of his prison, so accustomed did he become to them.

"Is this where George Fox was imprisoned," asked a lady who was visiting the dungeons of Colchester Castle, of the custodian.

"There is no record of it," replied the man, "but it is very likely. Fox saw the inside of most of the prisons in England!"

The man spoke truly. Never, we believe, was reformer,

religious or political, imprisoned as many times as George. And, oh! what prisons those were! It would be impossible to describe their filthy and abominable state! Usually they were underground, below the street. Some, the common sewer of the town ran through, so that the air was full of vile, noxious gases. Frogs and toads and newts and all sorts of vermin had their abiding place there. A stone seat ran round the room, which was always wet and always cold. The sunshine never penetrated this drear abode. Only a dim light shone through two or three small gratings in one end. The other end of the room was in perpetual shadow. At night the prisoners made themselves as comfortable (!) as might be on the stone floor and benches. Sometimes their friends were allowed to visit them, and bring them food and clothes, and perhaps a handful of straw to sleep on. A great deal depended on the gaoler, and he was usually a brutal man, who would suffer no indulgences, unless he was well paid. This the Quakers refused to do, having scruples on the score of bribery, consequently their sufferings were intense. But to return to our narrative.

That evening George was taken before the mayor, alderman and sheriffs. The mayor was a disagreeable sort of man, but there was something about the prisoner that forced him to give him a fair hearing. After some discussion as to what to do with him, they agreed to send him back to prison. He had hardly arrived at the gaol door, when a message came from the head sheriff, John Reckless, asking him to go to his house. George went. As he entered, the sheriff's wife met him and, shaking hands, cried:—

“This day is salvation come to our house!”

This lady had been in the church and heard George preach, and was greatly touched by all she had heard. They kept him all night, and treated him kindly, and also urged him to explain to them his views. This he did so effectually that the whole family were saved!

The sheriff remembered all at once that he and another Sheriff, who were business partners, had wronged a poor

woman. He sent for him and told him this deed lay heavily on his conscience. The other sheriff denied having done anything wrong, but Reckless, true to his newly-awakened conscience, insisted on making restitution.

Next day, as Reckless was sitting talking with George in his room, he suddenly cried:—

“I must go into the market and preach repentance to the people!”

Out he rushed, without waiting to change his slippers, and preached in several streets. There was a tremendous sensation and considerable uproar, and finally the soldiers had to be called upon to disperse the mob. The magistrates sent to the sheriff's house for George, and committed him to the common prison till the next assizes. After some considerable time he was set at liberty and continued his travels.

At Troy Cross he was moved to go and pray by the bedside of a rich man who was dangerously ill. After he had finished, he was coming downstairs, when a servant with a drawn sword rushed upon him.

“Alack, for thee, poor creature,” said George, quietly, “what wilt thou do with thy drawn weapon? It is no more to me than a straw.”

Utterly taken aback, the man put up his sword and turned away. When his master recovered, as he did soon after, that servant was dismissed.

In Derby, George stayed at the house of a doctor whose wife had been converted through him. While there, he learned there was to be a great lecture, to which many people were going. So George determined to go too. When the service was quite over, he got up and addressed the people, and told them what he believed the Lord required of them. They were most attentive, but a policeman came and arrested him, telling him he must appear before the magistrates.

The magistrates asked him a great many questions, among others,

“Are you sanctified?”

“Yes,” answered George.

Then they wanted to know if he had no sin, to which he replied,

"Christ, my Saviour, has taken away my sin, and in Him there is no sin."

Then they asked how he knew that Christ abode in his heart, and were told,

"By His Spirit, Which He has given us."

Next, he was scoffingly asked if he were Christ.

"Nay," he said, "I am nothing at all. Christ is all."

When they were tired of asking him questions, they sentenced him to six months' imprisonment in Derby House of Correction.

As soon as George was safely under lock and key, the different clergy busied themselves in preaching against the possibility of living without sin, and warning their people against George Fox and his false doctrines. These preachings were as good as a public advertisement, and led a great many to take an interest in the Quakers who would not otherwise have done so. Such a religion as George's, which ran counter, in some way or other, to every known, or rather "taught" creed, was sure to create opposition. It was about this time that the converts of George Fox began to be called Quakers. It was asserted that they performed their worship with shakings and tremblings, and that they taught that this was necessary!

The keeper of Derby prison was known as a very religious man. At first, he was very bitter against George, and also exceedingly cruel to him. But the Lord opened his eyes. One day, he said to his wife:—

"Wife, I have seen the Day of Judgment, and I saw George Fox there, and I was afraid of him, because I had done him so much wrong, and had spoken so against him to ministers and professors."

On the evening of that day, he went down to the prison and apologised to George, told him henceforth he would treat him differently, and finished by asking him to his house. So he took him and lodged him that night. Next day, the gaoler went to the magistrates and told them he had been much plagued on account of this man, whereupon

one of them replied that he, too, had suffered through keeping him in prison. Orders were given that George should be allowed to walk where he liked, and when he liked, so long as he kept within a mile of the prison. He easily saw—what the gaoler acknowledged afterwards to be true—that they wanted him to run away. This he declined to do.

His relations, hearing of his plight, visited him, and offered the magistrates bail, promising them that George would not go near Derby, nor trouble the clergy again. They were heartily ashamed of him, and some of them firmly believed he was mad. Needless to say, when George was asked to agree to this, he decidedly refused, on the ground that he was innocent. Then he knelt down in the court and began to pray that God would forgive the magistrates. One of them, jumping up from the bench in a fury, beat him with both hands, and cried:—

"Away with him, gaoler; take him away!"

And back poor George went to the filthy prison, where he lay with thirty felons till his time was up.

While in Derby prison, George contracted a habit which stuck to him all his life—that of writing letters to various magistrates and people in position. He pestered the Derby magistrates with letters till those not very worthy men did not know what to do, and, to use one of George's own expressions, were "much exercised in spirit." They thought of shipping him to Ireland, or sending him to London to be tried by the Parliament. Others even tried to persuade him to be a soldier! At last, after much thought, he was set free, having been in Derby gaol about twelve months.

During this twelve months, however, the seed he had sown had not lain fallow. Several of his followers and converts had been led out into Gospel preaching, and slowly, but surely, the work was spreading all over the North of England.

Before we follow George any further, we will stop and take a look at some of his earliest friends and followers.

CHAPTER V.

SOME EARLY QUAKERS.

"Those whom Thou hast given me."—*John xvii. 11.*

FRANCIS HOWGILL and John Audland are two whose names are always associated together. Both were clergymen, and both were converts of George's.

John Audland was a very handsome, amiable man. From his earliest boyhood he had been religious, and given to much Bible study. He became an eminent preacher among the Independents, and used to draw large audiences. He was filling this position when he heard George Fox preach, whereupon he immediately left all and followed.

Francis Howgill was also a minister. He had been a minister of the Episcopalian church, and had received a University education. Becoming dissatisfied with some of its doctrines, he joined himself to the Independents. He gave himself to fasting and praying, and all kinds of good works, but in spite of anything he could do, he remained very unhappy, because he felt that sin still had dominion over him, and as his conscience was continually telling him, "His servant thou art whom thou obeyest." However, in praying one day it was revealed to him that the Lord was going to teach him Himself, and that the time was very close at hand. While he was in this state a fair was held in the town, and through this fair went George, according to his custom, preaching and teaching. Some professors of religion were horrified at his talking about holy things outside a church.

"Will you not go into the church?" said one. "This is not a fit place to preach in.

"I don't approve of your church," said George stoutly. Then followed a lengthy argument. Francis Howgill, who had followed George round the fair, and heard his words, and who had been much affected by all he heard, came to the front and said :—

"This man speaks with authority, and not as the scribes."

On the Sunday afternoon following, George had an open-air preaching in Firbank. In the morning, Francis Howgill and John Audland had both preached in that town in different churches, and in the afternoon they joined George's congregation. It was an immense meeting, consisting of perhaps more than a thousand people. He stood on a stone and preached on the spirit of truth, and explained very clearly what was meant by heart holiness. After the meeting was over, John Audland took George home with him, Francis Howgill and others who had been quite won over by George's preaching, accompanying him. That afternoon was the turning-point with both men. Soon after that they became Quaker ministers and travelled a great deal together. As soon as it was known that Howgill had left the church to which he had belonged and joined the Quakers, both clergymen and magistrates, with whom he had been an especial favourite, became his enemies, and through them he was locked up some time in Appleby Gaol, in Westmoreland, one of the worst and vilest dens in the country. But all this served only to strengthen his faith, and for years he was one of the most powerful ministers of the Society.

Edward Burroughs was a clever, well-educated man. He was also eminent among the Quakers, both because of his courage and endurance and powerful speech. He was born at Kendal, in Westmoreland. He also had a great desire for religion, and, when a child, loved to talk with people who were eminent for a pious and godly life. When he was twelve years old he used to go to the meetings of the Presbyterians, because, as he said, "their doctrines were nearer the truth than any others." As soon as he was old enough he joined that Church, and was greatly per-

secuted in consequence. When he was about seventeen years old he was powerfully convicted of sin. He did all he could to make his life what he thought it ought to be. He gave up his worldly pleasures, and prayed and fasted, but with no permanent result.

He was in this condition when he heard George Fox preach. It was just what he needed, and it didn't cost him a moment's hesitation to make up his mind to throw in his lot with these people. His friends were bitterly disappointed, and his father turned him out of the house. He had a hard time of it at the beginning of his career. An old historian tells us that "slandering, buffeting, caning, were often his lot. Watching and fasting were many times his portion. Imprisonment and danger to life he was not unacquainted with." But nothing could make him shrink. He grew in grace and in wisdom. He had the tongue of an orator, and was able to explain very clearly the ground for his belief. He was also a good writer and travelled a great deal, and was always ready to seize an opportunity for bearing his testimony.

Once, while travelling through London, when he was still quite a lad, he was passing by some fields where a crowd of men and boys were amusing themselves after the day's work. A large ring was formed, and wrestling was the amusement of the evening. Edward Burroughs joined the spectators, and saw a strong, athletic fellow vanquish one after another, and then stand waiting for the next to come forward and challenge him. Edward immediately stepped into the ring. He stood and looked at the wrestler solemnly. The man was not a little surprised to be confronted by this grave, staid youth. He stood still with astonishment. Then Edward, taking advantage of the silence, opened his mouth and began to speak. He begged of the people to give up their sin and turn to God, and explained to them the way of righteousness and what it would mean to them if they refused. Not only did they listen to him with respect, but many were converted and changed their way of living from that evening.

He died in prison, of gaol fever, before he was twenty-nine.

Miles Halhead was very much after the style of Edward Burroughs, as far as preaching went, though he was far from being as well educated. He also suffered much for his faith. Once, going to Swarthmoor to visit some friends, he met on the road the wife of a magistrate of the name of Preston. Because he passed her quietly without making any obeisance, she commanded her servant man to go back and beat him, which he did.

"The Lord will plead with thee in His own time," said Halhead to her, and passed on. About three months after this, he had a strange drawing to go and see her, and, calling at her house, he asked for her. She opened the door herself, and Miles not knowing her again, as he explains, "she had put on a different gown," asked her if she were the lady of the house. She said no, but soon re-appeared with another woman, introducing her as Mrs. Preston.

"Woman, how darest thou lie before the Lord and His servant?" said Halhead, having received a revelation that she was deceiving him. "Thou art the woman I came to speak to."

She stood silent, not daring to speak a word. He went on:—

"Oh, woman, harden not thy heart against the Lord. Take warning in time."

But she took no notice of his words, and some time later died in a most miserable condition. About three years after that a man came to Miles and said:—

"Friend, I have something to say to thee. I am the man that, three years ago, at the command of my mistress, did beat you very sore. For it I have been very much troubled, more than for anything I ever did in my life. I pray you forgive me, and ask the Lord to forgive me, that I may have peace and quiet in my mind."

Miles readily forgave him and passed on.

His constant travelling was a great cross to his wife. For the first year after his conversion to Quakerism, she

was not a Quaker, and was very discontented. Often she used to say bitterly :—

“I wish to God I had married a drunkard, for then I should know I would find him at the alehouse, but now I cannot even tell where to find my husband.”

At the end of about a year she was brought to see things differently. She had a little son of five years old whom she almost worshipped. Indeed, she used to say he was her only comfort in life. This child, when he saw her crying, used to put his arms around her neck and say :—

“My dear mother, be content. Father will be home in a little time.”

One night, as she lay in bed crying and complaining that she was so unfortunate in her domestic relations, she thought she heard a Voice, which said :—

“Why art thou so discontented concerning thy husband? I have called and chosen him to My work. Be content and willing that he should serve Me and I will bless thee and thy children for his sake. But if thou wilt not be content, but grudge and murmur and repine against Me and My servant whom I have chosen to do My work, I will bring a greater cross upon thee.”

These words remained in her mind, but, as she said to herself :—

“What cross could this be that would be greater than the one of my husband?”

However, when her little son died, as he did a short time afterwards, she found out the meaning of what the Voice told her, and kneeling down beside her dead child, she prayed for power to suffer the will of the Lord, and that His will might be her will from that hour. She never again questioned the Lord's dealing with her husband.

Elizabeth Hooten was really the first convert to Quakerism. She was also the first woman who was led to speak in public. She lived a long and faithful life. She also suffered much for the cause when travelling in New England to visit the Friends who were in prison there.

There were several other women who suffered much in those early days. Their lives are full of incident, and they were in no way behind the men in courage and daring. Margaret Fell is perhaps the most important of these early Quakers, for very many years after, she became the wife of George Fox.

Margaret was then the wife of a magistrate at Swarthmoor. His house was an open one for clergymen of all denominations. A story is told how once when Judge Thomas Fell came home from a circuit tour, he found his stables so full of strange horses, belonging to neighbouring clergy and professing Christians who came to meet them, that there was no room for either his horse or his servants! One day, when Margaret and her husband were both away, George Fox came there, together with a clergyman of the name of Lampitt. This man George opposed because he perceived he had not any religion. When Margaret came home, her children told her that George Fox and the clergyman had disagreed. This troubled her a great deal, because Lampitt was a man she especially admired. The following day, however, Margaret took her children and went to church at Ulverstone. She asked George, who was stopping in the house, to go with her. He replied that “he must do as he was ordered of the Lord,” and left her to walk in the fields. However, just as they were singing the first hymn, he came in and asked leave to speak a few words. Consent was given, and he stood up and began :—

“It is not a Jew that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward; but he is a Jew that is one inwardly, and that is circumcision which is in the heart.”

Then he went on and explained his meaning more clearly, preaching his doctrine of Christ in the heart.

His words went straight home to Margaret as she sat in her pew. While he talked she wept bitterly, saying :—

“We are all thieves. We have taken the Scriptures in words, and we know nothing about them.”

George talked on till somebody began to cry that he

should be taken out, but Margaret Fell said to the officers :—

“Let him alone. Why can he not speak as well as others?”

They, willing to please her, let him finish.

In the evening, George came back to the Fell's, and took occasion to speak to the servants. Many of them were convinced and embraced the truth. Among these was Margaret herself, and a young man named William Caton, who was acting as a kind of tutor to the Fell children. This youth became a most promising minister.

When Judge Fell came home from his official tour, he was very much surprised at the state of things he found, and was at first a little displeased. However, he had not been at home many hours before he noticed the change in his children. They were quiet and well behaved and altogether so much altered for the better, that he was convinced that something had taken place. In the evening George Fox came, and Margaret asked him if he might come in. He said “Yes.” Secretly, he was anxious to talk with the man who had made such a revolution in his household. George answered all the objections of the judge so thoroughly that he was convinced the Quakers were not so bad as they were supposed to be, and though he never really came into the Society, yet from that time to the day of his death he loved them very much, and did all he could to help them, letting them have his large hall for meetings when they could find no other place. For many years the Friend's meeting was regularly held in Judge Fell's house.

The afore-mentioned William Caton had been in the family of Judge Fell ever since he had been fourteen years old. He was a companion of the judge's son, and wherever one went the other went, and what one did the other did. When they were about fifteen they were sent to school. William, who was a good lad, and honestly trying to live a consistent life, found much to try him here. It was during the midsummer holidays that George Fox visited the Fell family, and though at first William dis-

liked many of his doings very much, he soon learned to look underneath his strange ways and was one of the first who accepted his doctrines.

He suffered more than ever at school after this. We read that “the making of Latin verses became a burden to him, because he could not give his thoughts that liberty of invention as others did.” Margaret Fell, seeing what a hard time he was having, brought him home and made him tutor to her younger children. When he was seventeen, he began to preach in the markets and streets, and had his share of beating and buffeting. At the end of a year he felt led to give himself wholly to the ministry, so he asked to be set free from his tutorship. The Fells were very loth to part with him, but, believing that God called him they let him go. He afterwards became one of the most eminent ministers in the society.

CHAPTER VI.

UPS AND DOWNS OF QUAKER LIFE.

"Master, I will follow Thee."—*Matt.* viii. 19.

THE year that George Fox was confined in Derby Gaol saw many important political changes. The Scotch had acknowledged Charles II. to be their lawful king, and under him had invaded England. They were defeated on the field of Worcester. The king fled to France, leaving his victor, Cromwell, master of the situation, and, if not exactly king, certainly the greatest man in England. But none of these things moved Fox. Monarchs might come and go, kingdoms give place to republics, all he asked for himself and for his people was "freedom to worship God." But that was never granted to him. He never lived to see the day when it was possible for a man to follow, unmolested, the dictates of his own conscience. He sowed that we might reap, and strewed that we might gather. The religious freedom which we enjoy to-day was purchased for us at fearful cost. It has been said that the sufferings of the early Quakers were beyond even those of the Primitive Christians, who, in a large measure, suffered comparatively speedy death. But Quakers lingered, maimed and mutilated, for months, aye, years, in dungeons too vile for description. Occasionally, they were taken out for fresh torture, and those were the blessed and happy whom death released. Men, women, and children perished and endured joyfully rather than lose their peace of soul, or give in to unjust decrees. It is said that at one time there were two thousand men and women Quakers in gaol in England for conscience sake.

As soon as George received his liberty, he trudged off, "and went on with the work of the Lord," as though his past year had been but an incident in his experience; vowing to himself that he would pursue that work as never before. On he travelled, through Nottingham and Derbyshire and Yorkshire. At Wakefield, he made three converts, all of whom were afterwards famous in Quaker annals. They were James Naylor, Francis Goodyear, and William Dewsbury. He arrived at York about Christmas time, and a specially cold Christmas time it was! He felt moved to attend the Cathedral service, and at the close asked leave to say a few words.

"Then say on quickly," replied a member of the congregation, who was cold and hungry, and wanted to go home. George, who never felt any bodily sensation when he had a message to deliver, began, and the people, seeing that it was likely to be a long one, picked him up and flung him down the steps!

In that part of the country, George had several public arguments with the different clergy, at which he usually came off best. One Scotch minister was so enraged at his defeat that he vowed that if he and George Fox ever met again, they wouldn't both live to tell the tale of that meeting! Not very long afterwards this man became a Quaker minister, and twelve years later had the pleasure of entertaining George Fox at his house! The clergy came to have such a fear of George's nimble tongue, that when the cry, "the man in the leathern breeches is coming," was raised, they made themselves rapidly scarce. One man crawled under a hedge and hid rather than meet him. George's mission to Yorkshire was more than ordinarily successful. He made many converts, and really established Quakerism in the north. His fame spread, and the people used to come in crowds to hear him speak. They had yet to learn what Quakerism really was! Once he went to a village to attend a great public meeting. The people poured in to hear him, as soon as they knew he was to be there. George mounted a hay-stack. The people settled themselves to listen. But no words came from the

Quaker's set lips. For several hours they stood waiting. Then they naturally began to grow impatient, but an old clergyman persuaded them to wait, telling them that the people often waited as long for Christ to speak.

"I was commanded," George explained afterwards, "to famish them for words." At last, he was allowed to speak, and the burning words that he poured forth did a mighty work in the hearts of many present!

But it was not all plain sailing. At a town called Patrington, he was refused a lodging, and no one would sell him a drink. He spent the night in the open air, under the shelter of some furze bushes. By daylight a crowd of the inhabitants had found him out. They dragged him nine miles to another town, and forced him before the justice of the place. Fortunately, this man was sober, a most rare event, and he listened fairly well while George urged him to repent. He ordered him to show his papers and letters, having a suspicion that he belonged to the King's party. George opened his bundle, and showed all he had, whereupon the justice remarked that "no vagrant ever had such clean linen," and set him at liberty.

That is, at liberty so far as *he* was concerned. George's captors hauled him back again to Patrington, where they asked him to lie down on a bed. It was currently reported that "the Quaker" would not lie in any bed. This report arose from his being compelled to sleep often in the open-air, being, like his Master, without a place to "lay his head." Having satisfied them on this important point, he was not further molested. At Warmsworth they threw him out of the church and beat him terribly, the clergyman doing his share well!

At Doncaster the magistrate said if he ever saw him again he'd have his life!

In Tickhill church, the parish clerk took his Bible and struck him on the face so that he bled profusely. Then he was dragged out and beaten and stoned. He was, however, able to go on to Halby that day. His hat had been lost in the struggle, and this fact he records

pathetically in his journal: "They got my hat from me, which I never had again." The loss of his hat appears to have caused him much more uneasiness than his aching bones.

All this time, the Quaker doctrines were gaining ground and at every place of any size within the basin of the Trent, or in the Northern parts of the Midland Counties, their adherents were so numerous as to be able to form congregations and hold meetings of their own. Out of these rose one and another who felt themselves called to be ministers of God. These devoted their time to wandering about the country, preaching and teaching, as George had been led to do. Most of them were poor and not very learned, but, nevertheless, they had a marvellous power in stirring men up and reaching their hearts. These men experienced pretty much the same kind of treatment as George; and slowly and surely the persecution increased, and was extended to all who were supposed to be favourable to Quakerism.

This tide of persecution was rapidly increasing. George, together with other of his followers, suffered imprisonment at Lancaster and again at Carlisle. These imprisonments were seasons of missionary labour. Solitary confinement was not known then, and all degrees of vice were thrust into one common dungeon. The Quakers had, therefore, always a congregation. Needless to say, they made the best use of their opportunities. Then, in those days, it was a usual thing for people to visit their friends in gaol. If not admitted, they talked with them through the gratings, which took the place of windows. Curiosity led many to visit the Quakers, in order to see how they took their punishment, and how their peculiar doctrine stood the test of prison life. Many a one we read of who, coming thus, was convicted of sin and led to a renewal of heart and life.

George was released at Lancaster, only to be arrested again at Swannington, when he was sitting in a private house with some friends. The reason for this arrest was that "they were going to have a meeting!" It was a

premature charge, to be sure, but it was none the less effective, for five men and women Quakers were ordered to be conveyed to Leicester gaol. No one seemed willing to convey them. They were busy with the harvest, the country people said. When we say that it was next suggested that the Quakers should take their arrest warrant and convey themselves, we give a wonderful testimony as to the character for honesty and honour that the body had gained even in this short time. This was proposed to them, but they declined to be their own keepers, and a labourer was ordered to take them. As they drove through the town, some with their open Bibles, and one woman with her spinning-wheel in her lap, the people were "mightily affected."

The gaoler at Leicester had a habit of coming with his stick and a fierce dog to attack any Quaker who knelt to pray. When this new consignment arrived, the dog suddenly went over to the enemy, and instead of helping his master as heretofore, he used to take the stick out of his hand and go and fawn all over George. On the Sunday, this gaoler allowed them to hold a meeting with the other prisoners.

All over the country persecution increased. Prisoners were thrown into the worst prisons for no legal offence. Men and women were publicly whipped through the streets, and put into stocks. Some died from the rough handling they received. Indeed, so numerous were the prisoners for the faith, that two Quakers (a man and a woman) were told off to each prison to visit their comrades. They washed and dressed their wounds after they had been beaten and mutilated, they nursed them when they were sick of the fearful gaol fever that carried off so many, and they brought them food and clean straw to lie on when the gaolers permitted.

The sufferings of these, his comrades, moved George as nothing else would. As far as he was concerned, he could suffer all things; but to see his children—particularly the women—tortured and persecuted was more than he could bear. For their sakes he spared neither trouble nor pains.

He boldly forced his way into the houses of those high in office—even into the very presence of Cromwell himself—and into the Courts, and there pleaded their cause, telling of the injustice to which they were subjected. What he would scorn to ask for himself, he would sue for those who were, in the truest and holiest sense of the word, his friends.

It would be hard to say what Cromwell's attitude was towards the Quakers. No new laws were made against them, but the laws that were already made were not repealed. George seems to have had a wonderful fascination for Cromwell. He was seldom refused admittance to his presence, and usually gained the particular favour for which he had come. George foretold the Protector's death, and he mourned over the foreknowledge that was given him as one mourns over a dearly-loved friend.

The first interview George had with him was in London. Thither he was sent by a Colonel Hacker, whom he had told he "should go to meetings when the Lord ordered him, and could not submit himself to his requirings."

"Well, then," said the Colonel, "I will send you tomorrow morning by six o'clock to my Lord Protector."

So to London he went.

As soon as he arrived in London, he wrote Cromwell one of his peculiar and rambling epistles. George's letters always seemed to have the faculty of making something move. In this case, he was landed with Cromwell before that man was up the next morning.

"Peace be to this house," said George as he entered the chamber. Then he proceeded to give Cromwell some excellent advice as to his conduct of himself and the nation he had appropriated. They conversed together on different religious subjects. George explained his Quaker views, and answered all Cromwell's questions satisfactorily. Several people coming into the room, George essayed to take his leave. Cromwell caught him by the hand, saying with tears in his eyes:—

"Come again to my house, for if thou and I were but

an hour a day together, we should be nearer to one another." He also added that he wished him no more harm than he did his own soul.

After he had taken his leave, he was brought into a large hall where the gentlemen of the palace dined.

"What is this for?" demanded George.

He was told that it was Cromwell's will that he should dine with them. This was considered a great honour. But George replied:—

"Tell the Protector I will neither eat of his bread nor drink of his drink."

When this plain message was given to Cromwell, he said:—

"Now I see that there is a people risen up that I cannot win either with gifts, honours, offices, or places, but all other sects and people I can."

George was allowed to go his way in peace, and heard nothing more of the charges brought against him.

That Cromwell possessed a certain admiration for Quakers and their ways is not to be doubted. Once, when George had lain in prison for a long time, a Quaker went to him, and begged to be allowed to take his place and finish his sentence for him. This evidence of true affection, which the law would not allow to be put to the test, so struck Cromwell that he turned to his great men and council, and said:—

"Which of you would do as much for me, if I were in the same condition?"

The ups and downs of a Quaker's life in the seventeenth century was curiously akin to that of the early Salvationist's life in the nineteenth. Both taught the same lessons, worshipped the same Lord, lived the same apostolic life, and were persecuted for the same cause. It is an open question as to whether, if the general body of Quakers had remained true to their first principles and evangelical mode of work, there would ever have been any need for a Salvation Army!

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRES OF PERSECUTION.

"And others had trial of cruel mocking and scourging, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment."—*Heb. xi. 36.*

The more they were persecuted, the more the Quakers spread and grew and waxed strong! The wonder is that the people of the seventeenth century, with the ashes of the Reformation fires scarcely cold, and knowing with such recent knowledge what men will suffer, and how bravely they will die for their faith, should have tried to coerce the Quakers as they did. And never bitterer war was waged against any sect than that which these poor "Children of the Light"—as they were sometimes called—fought through.

"Oh! the daily reproaches, revilings, and beatings we underwent," writes George in his journal. "Even in the highways, because we would not put off our hats to them! Oh, the havoc and spoil the priests made of our goods, because we would not give them tithes, besides casting us into prisons, and besides the great fines laid upon us because we would not swear!"

A gentle old Dutch historian contemporary of George Fox, who writes a long and exhaustive life of him, and an account of the rise of the Quakers, breaks off in the middle of a story about one who would visit and talk in the churches, to beg his readers not to think that "it was very indecent they went so frequently to the steeple-houses." "For," he goes on to explain, "it is certain that these teachers generally did not bring forth fruits of godliness, as was well known to those who themselves had been clergy,

and had freely resigned their ministry to follow Christ in the way of the Cross. Yet they were not for using sharp language to those who, according to their knowledge, feared God; but they levelled their aim chiefly against those who were only rich in words, without bringing forth true Christian fruits."

Hence it was that one Thomas Curtis, formerly a captain in the Army, wrote in a letter to Samuel Wells, minister at Banbury and persecutor of the Quakers, these words:—

"To thy shame, remember, I know thee scandalous! How often hast thou sat, evening after evening, at cards, playing, and sometimes compelling me to play with thee for money, yet then thou wast called of the world a minister!"

It was men such as these the Quakers denounced. Not the clergy in general, as is too often believed.

Naturally, as this was the manner of men they were, they sought for revenge. At first, they strove hard to find reasons why the Quakers should be suppressed, and concocted one story after another. Once they raised the scare that these people would eat each other out and then come on the parish for maintenance! This was because those Quakers who lived at a distance generally stayed over-night, after meetings, at friends' houses. Often, the house being full, the surplus guests had to take to the hay mows.

The inhabitants of the different small villages and towns, having their grievance against the Quakers, didn't need much stirring up. At first, people had a great objection to have any business dealings with the Quakers, because of their peculiar ways, and many Quaker tradesmen suffered very much—so much so, that they often wanted the common necessaries of life. But time changed all this. People found out by experience that they could always trust a Quaker, and this they could not say of the tradesmen belonging to their own sects. Thus it came about that when strangers came to settle in a new town, they would ask:—

"Where can I find a Quaker tailor or shoemaker?" as the case might be.

This exasperated the other tradespeople, and they began to consider that in view of the rapidly-increasing Quaker body, the situation was dangerous!

"If we let these Quakers alone," they said, "they will take the trade of the nation out of our hands!"

With such as these to work upon, the clergy had tools ready to hand to wreak their vengeance upon the luckless Quakers. The Puritans, whom one would imagine would have had some sympathy with the Quakers, were all more or less suspicious of them. Some maintained that they were Jesuits in disguise, others objected strongly to their social peculiarities. In a very short time all pretence of finding something wherewith to accuse them was at an end. The plan of action was "wherever you see a Quaker, hit it, and if you don't meet one go and look for it." It was almost impossible now to hold a meeting in peace. People used to come great distances in order to trap the Quakers in their meetings, and abuse and beat them. It was a regular pastime, that of "baiting the Quakers." In London, on one Sunday alone, some eighty Quakers were beaten, and had their coats and clothes torn off their backs, then were driven outside the city and thrown into ditches and ponds, till it was said they "looked like witches." Rotten eggs used to be thrown into the meetings, and the roughs, but one can hardly call them roughs—for the majority were church members in good and regular standing!—used to bring in drums and tin pans and kettles and beat these till it was impossible for anyone to try to speak.

In the country the persecution was even worse than in the towns. In 1656, there were seldom less than one thousand Quakers in prison at one time. They were imprisoned chiefly for not paying tithes, for not attending church, or for refusing to take off their hats in homage, or take oath.

"We suffer," said one old Quaker, "because we cannot pay tithes, and the clerk's wages who turns the hour glass,

because we do not go to the steeple-house, because we open our shops on fast days, do not put off our hats, say thee and thou to particular persons, because we cannot sing, nor repair the churches, because we cannot swear, because we meet together and worship God, because we deny all games, sports and plays, costly apparel, powdered hair, etc., and because many women speak abroad." This gives us a very clear and concise idea of their crimes, and from these we shall turn to the punishment meted out accordingly.

For visiting his comrades in prison, the mayor of the town ordered a Quaker called Rigg to be fastened to the whipping-post in the market-place and receive a severe flogging. After this he was put in a cart and taken out of the town and forbidden to return under pain of worse punishment. All this was done without any pretence at a trial. Rigg turned up again, and had it not been for the interference of some of the magistrates in the town, the mayor would have fulfilled his threat.

William Dewsbury, one of the most influential Quaker ministers, suffered a term of imprisonment for returning thanks after supper at an inn. This was called "preaching at a conventicle!"

A woman was sent to prison because she had not prevented her husband from allowing a meeting to be held in the house! She happened to be sick in bed at the time, but that fact was not taken any notice of.

Another woman was fearfully beaten and kept chained up like some fierce beast for a month, by her husband, because she had mildly reproved a clergyman who had accused her falsely.

Some Quakers had their lands and goods taken and sold to pay their unjust fines, reducing them and their families to destitution. Men and women were imprisoned without any preliminary warning. The sick were taken from their beds and dragged along the streets by their legs, to some filthy hole so crowded that there was not room for all the prisoners to sit down at once! In York Castle five persons died once from the effects of the impure air. In Berk-

shire, twenty-five were thrust into a small felon's cell, where the air was so close and impure that the gaoler said he thought it would breed sickness, so he wouldn't let them out to walk in the yard, as the other prisoners did. In London, they were treated worse than felons. In some places, they were packed so close that even standing room was scarcely to be had! Of these many died in silence: the few who dared remonstrate were beaten to death.

Nothing daunted, these imprisoned ones continued their work of preaching the gospel wherever they were. One man was put into a vile dungeon, where there was nothing to sleep on but some filthy straw, and nothing to sit on but a stone. But there was a small opening at the top of his den, through which he could see the people walking along the streets. This was enough to fire his soul. Through this he preached to the people, with such power and efficacy that many yielded.

One who relates this story comments upon it thus:—

"This manner of preaching often hath been in England, and I myself, in my young years, have been an eye-witness of it; and have heard these prisoners lift up their voices so that they could be heard very easily in the streets, which made the people that passed by stand still and listen to what was spoken by such zealous preachers. And though these were often hindered of having meetings, yet it was impossible to stop up the fountain from whence their words flowed." He also goes on to explain how next to impossible it was for a Quaker to keep out of prison, "for the Parliament had made a law, that all who were gone from home, and could not give a satisfactory account of their business, should be taken up as vagabonds. Under this pretence, many who travelled to market with their goods were seized by the way if it did but appear that such a one was a Quaker, which was easily seen by his not taking off his hat, then there wanted no pretended reason to clap him into prison."

Those who escaped prison had their own share of suffering, however. They were waylaid going to meetings, and beaten almost to death. Women were taken under

pretext of being witches, and subjected to severe handling, whippings, and prickings with sharp instruments to prove their right to exist. Even children were not exempt. One girl, not yet sixteen, was tried for being a Quaker, and in spite of her being under age was sentenced to be transported to the plantations as a slave. But God in mercy took her before that sentence could be carried out. She died in prison. Eleven boys and four girls were sent to prison in Bristol. Others were flogged, till they were a mass of bruises, by the police, who watched for them going and coming from meeting.

It was at the time when this persecution ran highest that the first regular periodical meetings of a business nature were begun. The object of these meetings was, first, to arrange ways and means of relieving the destitute among them, and secondly, to admonish those whose lives did not harmonise with their profession. George Fox never seemed to have any wish, even when his followers had largely increased, to establish anything approaching a sect. But the doctrines he and his held, while removing them outside the pale of any existing church, necessitated their worshipping alone, and also put on them the onus of relieving their own poor. So that really the action and opposition of Church and State literally forced the Quaker sect into being!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STORY OF SAILOR LURTING.

"Avenge not yourselves."—*Romans* xii. 19.

For an exponent of the Quaker doctrine of non-resistance, we cannot find a better than Thomas Lurting. His story is a singular one. From his childhood he had been brought up to the sea, and in later years saw almost every phase of ocean life as a boatswain's mate on a man-of-war. A sailor's life in those days was very different to what it is now. Pirates abounded on the high seas, and no vessel attempted to go on even the shortest voyage that was not fully prepared to be attacked at any time.

On board a man-of-war life was one continual round of excitement, and many and varied were the adventures Thomas Lurting passed through. Men close beside him were shot or stabbed, half the ship died of fever, but nothing ever hurt him. He seemed to bear a charmed life. He was a staunch Churchman, and quite satisfied in his own mind that he was on the right road to Heaven.

A soldier on board the same ship as Thomas had been to a Quaker meeting and got converted there. The captain had no use for a Quaker officer on board his ship, so he had him transferred. But he had done his work. Two young sailors had been convicted of their sins through him, and shortly after he left they also got converted. These, full of their new joy, told what had happened to them, and several others followed their example. They used to gather by themselves in secluded

corners and there wait on God as they had been told was the Quaker custom. And God blessed them in their own souls, and gave them much light.

The captain was very much annoyed at all this, and so was the ship's chaplain.

The chaplain sent for Thomas, and confided in him.

"Thomas," he said, "you are an honest man and a good Christian. Here is a dangerous people on board belonging to the Quakers, who are a blasphemous people, denying the ordinances and the Word of God."

A word was enough for the valiant Thomas. He was very furious, and to prove his righteousness, he began to beat and abuse the men when they met together. But he must have had some conscience, because he felt that in beating and abusing these harmless people, whose religion forbade them defending themselves, he was doing a cowardly thing. So he gave it up, greatly to the disgust of the chaplain, who said sadly that he could not now be accounted either a good man or a Christian! This opened Thomas's eyes to the real character of the man whom he had always regarded as his spiritual director. Having lost faith in him, poor Thomas was in a very sad way. Really he was under conviction of sin, though he did not know it then. Having always attended Divine service, and paid his tithes, he thought he had done all that was required of a good Christian. He made a great many good resolutions, but they were broken as soon as made; they did very little towards giving him ease of mind.

Amongst those who had become Quakers was a young man whom Thomas loved intensely. His name was Roger Dennis. This man had a great influence over Thomas, and Thomas never beat or abused him. He couldn't. Roger had a pretty good idea what was passing in his friend's heart, but he said nothing—he bided his time and waited. Meanwhile, Thomas grew more and more unhappy. He had lost faith in his own church, his sins were weighing upon him, and he felt like a sheep that had no shepherd. The rest of the crew soon saw that there was something amiss with him, and began

to laugh and joke him about his melancholy, and say that soon he, too, would become a Quaker.

One evening he stood alone, half thinking, half praying. The burden of his thoughts was, "What shall I do? I don't believe in the Church, shall I join the Presbyterians, the Baptists, or what?" A voice seemed to answer him "The Quakers." Thomas started, and drew back with horror. "The Quakers? Never!" he said to himself. After this he was still more unhappy, till at last he confided to his own soul:—

"Whether Quaker or no Quaker, I am for peace with God!"

But he wasn't prepared to give in unless he were quite sure it was God who was calling him. To tell the truth, Thomas would rather have done anything else in the world than join the Quakers!

So, very miserable, he had to confide in Roger Dennis. Roger helped him spiritually a great deal, but the more light he got through him the more he was convinced that God meant him to be a Quaker, and the more he hated the very idea. He knew what it meant. It meant shame and scorn and ignominy—the life of the Cross. Thomas wished that he could die. One Sunday, Roger persuaded him to go to their tiny meeting with him. He went. The other sailors got wind of this, and instead of going to their own service, they all flocked to see "Thomas at the Quaker meeting!" There was a tremendous noise and hubbub, so much so that the captain sent to know what was the matter. To his unutterable disgust, he learned that "Thomas Lurting was amongst the Quakers!" Thomas was a valuable and capable sailor—a kind of leader among the others—so his secession was looked upon as little less than a calamity. Thomas appeared. The captain stood by severely, while the chaplain voiced his sentiments.

"Thomas," said that worthy, "I took you for a very honest man and a good Christian. I am sorry you are being so deluded." Then he proceeded at some length to prove to him from the Scriptures that the Quakers were not Christians. Thomas stood still. He knew that the

chaplain's reasoning was false. Seeing that no impression was being made upon him, some of the officers who stood by began to tell one evil deed after another that the Quakers did. This he well knew was a pack of lies. Returning disgusted to his friends, the Quakers, he said:—

“When I went to the captain I was scarce half a Quaker. Now, by their lies and false reports, they have made me almost a whole Quaker—or, at least, I hope to be one.”

From that day Thomas Lurting was a Quaker, and found peace for his soul. In less than six months after this there were twelve men and two boys on board who belonged to the hated sect. Their lives were far from being smooth. There was no end to the abuse and ridicule that was heaped upon them, the captain being their fiercest persecutor.

A few months later sickness came among them, and some forty of the crew died. Most of the Quakers were ill, too, but none of them died. They did their best for each other and their comrades, and, indeed, were the mainstay of the ship, so that as one poor fellow after another was stricken down, they used to cry:—

“Oh, carry me to the Quakers; they will take some care of me!”

The captain's manner completely changed towards the Quakers; and it was no uncommon thing when something particular had to be done for him to say:—

“Thomas, take your friends, and do so-and-so.”

Up to this time there had been no actual fighting done; but the time came when they were ordered to Barcelona to take or burn a Spanish man-of-war. Neither Thomas nor any of his Quaker comrades had ever heard that the Quakers as a body objected to fighting, and followed literally the Bible commands respecting enemies. How could they? They had no Quaker teaching, and had never seen a real Quaker in their lives! So they got ready for the battle with all their old ardour, and displayed so much hardihood that the captain said they were the most valiant men on board, and he wouldn't care

if all his men turned Quakers if they were made after their model.

They lay alongside a castle, from which the Spaniards poured shot into the ship. Thomas proposed to the captain that he and his comrades should batter that castle in. No sooner said than at it, and in another moment Thomas was ready, with his coat off, and had taken up his station in the fore-castle.

“Don't fire yet!” he called to his men: “wait till I go out and see where the shots will fall, then we shall know how to level the guns.”

Just as he left the fore-castle door, something said to him:—

“What if now thou killest a man?”

This thought struck him like a thunderbolt. No one but God could give life. Once taken, it could never be returned, and after life was over there was the Judgment, and who was he to hurl a man to that doom? From that hour Thomas was changed—all desire for battle left him. He loathed it. He put on his coat and went on deck. Here some of his friends found him walking about in much trouble. “Was he wounded?” they asked anxiously. “No,” he said; “only troubled in my mind.” At night he gathered his comrades in a dark corner, and told them all that he had gone through that day. He asked them what they thought. They were bewildered, and some said if they ever got out of this engagement they would not ship on another man-of-war. But Thomas said his mind was made up, and, with the help of the Lord, he would bear his testimony against war. One by one the others were convinced that he was right, and said that they, too, would bear their testimony. However, they were not called upon to do it just then, for the battle came to an end.

A few months later came another encounter with a Spanish man-of-war. The captain ordered the decks to be cleared for fight, and Thomas saw that their hour of trial had come. Calling his comrades he told them not to be guided by him but to follow their own consciences.

"I leave you all to the Lord," he said, but "I must tell you that the captain puts great faith in us. Therefore, let all who are of my mind meet in the most public place on the deck, in full view of the captain, that he may not say we deceived him in not telling him that we would not fight and giving him an opportunity to put others in our place."

In a little time every Quaker on board rallied round Thomas. There they stood, as sheep ready for the slaughter. Up came a lieutenant,

"Go down to thy quarters," he said to Thomas.

"I can fight no more," was the answer he received.

Off went the lieutenant to the captain in a great way.

"Yonder the Quakers are all together," he said, "and I do not know but that they will mutiny. One says he cannot fight!"

The captain asked the name of that one and going over to Thomas beat him with his great cane, and dragged him to his quarters calling for his sword.

"Now," said he, "I will run it through thee."

"The sword of the Lord is over thee," Thomas replied calmly. "If He will have a sacrifice, offer it to Him."

Then the captain trembled and shook. He was a Baptist, but his religion was nothing less than an overwhelming fear of God. He called to a man to take away his sword and walked off. The ship that they expected to fight with turned out, after all, not to be an enemy but a friend!

As soon as Thomas' time was up he left the man-of-war and entered into merchant service. But again and again he was taken by the press gang, and pressed into the country's service. How it came about that he wasn't hung for insubordination is almost a miracle. But he lived on—lived to make his name famous as the man who captured a ship without fighting or bloodshed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SHIP THAT WAS CAPTURED AND REDEEMED WITHOUT BLOODSHED.

"Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight."—*Psalm cxxiv. 1.*

THIS time, he was first mate under a Quaker, Captain Pattison. They were in the Mediterranean, coming from Venice, when they were captured by a Turkish pirate vessel coming from Algiers. The Turks took Captain Pattison and four of the men on their vessel, leaving Thomas with the remainder of the crew, three men and a boy, under a guard of Turks. For a time, Thomas was very anxious. Turks and Algiers meant slavery and untold tortures. The sailors were terribly frightened and somewhat unruly. They were not Quakers, and so wanted to fight for their lives. This was manifestly absurd. What could they do against so many?

Thomas, as the story runs, "had formerly great experience of the Lord's deliverances, and had already learned to trust in God almost against hope." He gave himself to prayer, and it was revealed to him that they should not go to Algiers. He told his men what he believed, and begged them to be as submissive as they could to the Turks who were in command of their ship.

The men stared and said he was the queerest fellow they ever met that before they were taken he was afraid, and begged the captain, as there were many Turks at sea, to go to Leghorn and there wait for a convoy. This

was quite true, and as the captain wouldn't listen to this good advice, they were now, they firmly believed, on their way to Africa to be made slaves of. Death was preferable to this, they all agreed. But something in the first mate's quiet assurance controlled their fear.

Thomas next gave himself to earnest prayer that God would send the captain and the English sailors back to their own ship. This was granted. The Turkish captain, seeing they were so peaceable, sent them back to their own quarters.

As soon as they were back, the sailors longed more than ever to do some fighting, and it took all Thomas' command to force them to carry out his orders.

"I do not believe," he said, "that we shall go to Algiers. If ye will be ruled by me, I will act for your delivery as well as my own."

This sounded very well, but, as he said it, he had not the faintest idea how that delivery could be accomplished. For one thing, the Turks were all armed and the English were unarmed. But he believed; therefore he spoke:—

"What if we should overcome the Turks," he went on, "and go to Majorca?"

At this there was great joy. First, they thought the mate was coming to his senses.

One said, "I will kill one or two Turks."

"And I," said another, "will cut as many throats as you have for me!"

But Thomas sternly told them they were all wrong. He meant nothing of the kind.

"If I knew any of you would touch a Turk," he said, "I would tell them myself. If ye will be ruled, I will act for you, if not I will be still."

There was no help for it, and they gave in with as much grace as they could summon, and promised obedience.

"Well" said Thomas, "now if the Turks bid you do anything, do it without grumbling, and with as much diligence and quickness as ye can, for that pleases them, and, if they are pleased, they will let us be together."

The men, seeing by his business-like air that he meant

to do something, readily agreed to this. He next repaired to the captain, who was kept under arrest and guarded by night, and told him that they were not going to Algiers, God would, he believed, enable them to effect their deliverance.

"If we offer to rise," said the captain, mistaking his meaning, too, "they will overcome us, and we might as well be burnt alive!"

This was quite true. Nothing would be too barbarous for the savage Turk to do to his victims.

The captain went on to say that he would rather suffer all the horrors of Algiers twenty times over, than be untrue to his principles, and let one drop of blood be shed in his defence. Thomas replied that these were exactly his sentiments too, so the captain told him to do as he would, provided he killed nobody.

Just after this conversation, bad weather came on. Storm followed storm, and the Turkish vessel with the Turkish captain was driven away out of its course. The Turks in charge of the English vessel, seeing that the handful of men in their keeping were unarmed, and quiet and peaceable, grew lax and careless, and, leaving them to do the work, took their ease. On the second day it was shown Thomas what he must do. It was a rainy, heavy, disagreeable day, and the two Turks in charge of the English captain curled themselves up and went to sleep. This was an opportune moment. Thomas quietly took possession of their arms, set his captain free and locked them up. Then he went up on deck, chatted with one Turk and another, and finally advised them to take a little nap downstairs. This they were more than happy to do, and in a very short time all the ten Turks were snoring, unarmed, and under lock and key!

The ship was in Thomas Lurting's possession.

"Now," he said to his men, "we have the Turks at our command. No man shall hurt any of them. If ye do, I shall be against you. But this we will do now they are under deck. We will keep them so, and steer for Majorca."

The wind was in their favour, and by morning they were close to land.

The Turks, when they waked up and found they were in the hands of the English, lost all courage, and wept and begged and pleaded that they might not be sold. Thomas and the captain comforted them, assuring them they need have no fear, and promising they would hide them from the Spaniards.

Arriving at Majorca, the captain landed, did his business, and returned on board. But their troubles were by no means over yet. That night, an English captain came on board to visit. It was useless to try to keep the Turks a secret. He promised he would not tell anybody about them, but he broke his word. He begged Captain Pattison to let him have two or three to sell in England, but was refused. Then he got angry, and called the captain and his mate a pair of fools, saying that these Turks were worth an enormous amount of money. They replied if they were worth a hundred times as much they would never sell them; they were going to return them to their own country. At this he raged with fury, and took himself off and told the Spaniards all about it. They immediately set off in pursuit. Turks they regarded as their lawful prey. Captain Pattison saw them coming. He called to the Turks:—

“Ye must help us, or the Spaniards will take ye away from us!”

The Turks, as you may suppose, were very ready. They worked with might and main, and in a short time they were out at sea. For days they hovered about, not daring to put into any Spanish port for fear of the Spaniards. On the whole, the Turks behaved fairly well. Once they tried to rise, but were firmly put down at once. The English sailors grumbled a good deal that the mate was kinder to the Turks than he was to them. To this Thomas answered, placidly:—

“They are strangers, therefore we must treat them well.”

After much thought, it was decided that the best thing

they could do with their perforce guests was to land them on the Barbary Coast. So they steered in that direction, and were soon about six miles off the shore. How to get the Turks on shore was the next thing. They were ugly customers at best, and not to be trusted very far. The ship was a big, unwieldy thing, impossible to get near shore. Even if there had been a landing-stage, which there was not, it would not have been safe for the English to go near a Turkish port, neither would it have been safe to give the Turks a small boat and let them make their own way home, because they were quite capable of getting men and arms and re-taking the ship. Neither could they land them in two instalments, because one half could raise the country while the other half were coming over. It looked pretty much as though the English, through their benevolence, had got themselves into a fix “betwixt the devil and the deep sea.”

But Thomas rose to the occasion. He had begun this business, he said, and it was only fair that he should play it out. If the captain would let him have a small boat and three men, he would land the Turks. It was a hazardous undertaking. Ten great Turks against four Englishmen, and Thomas, we are told, “was a little man!” Captain Pattison shed tears as he bade Thomas good-bye. I don’t think he ever expected to see him on earth again. But Thomas said cheerfully:—

“I believe the Lord will preserve me, for I have nothing but goodwill in venturing my life, and have not the least fear upon me, but trust that all will be well.”

So the Turks were called up, and the small boat was made ready. It must have been a comical embarking. Thomas placed the leader of the Turks in the stern of the boat, then he called another Turk and placed him on his lap; two more were wedged closely on each side of them, and these two were each given a comrade to nurse. Others were piled on top of them, and then Thomas, two men, and a boy set off for a six miles’ row. All went well till they neared the shore, when a fool of a sailor, whose nerves must have been unstrung, cried out:—

"Lord have mercy on us, there are Turks in the bushes on shore!"

The other man and the boy were frightened out of their wits, and the cunning Turks, seeing their fright, all rose up at once. Of course there were no Turks, it was pure imagination, but the result might have been as fatal as if there were. Again Thomas was equal to the occasion. He gave one man an axe and another a knife, told them to do nothing till he gave them leave, then, saying to himself,

"It's better to strike a man than to cleave his head," took hold of the leading Turk and cuffed him on the side of his head and ordered him to sit down. The astonished Turk obeyed, the rest followed his example, and soon the boat was near enough to land to admit of their wading over.

One by one the Turks waded across, carrying food with them, as they were four miles from the nearest town. They gave the English a cordial invitation to go with them to the town and they would entertain them with the best that was to be had. But the English unanimously declined. It was too much like the old English nursery rhyme, wherein the farmer's wife calls affectionately to the "Lily-white" ducks, "Dilly, dilly, come and be killed." A pious historian writes it that Thomas "very prudently rejected their invitation, well knowing that the Scripture saith, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'"

So putting the boat close to land, they threw them over all their arms, and set off full speed for the ship. The Turks climbed up on a high hill, and waved their hats to them as long as they were in sight.

News (which in those days did not fly fast) reached England of their strange adventure long before they did. As soon as the vessel appeared in the Thames, tidings of her arrival was brought to Greenwich, where the King and the Duke of York and several noblemen were staying. These immediately boarded the royal barge and sailed down to meet the wonderful Quaker ship that had been taken by the Turks and redeemed itself without fighting!

The King would not be satisfied till he heard the whole story from Thomas Lurting's own lips. When he had finished, he said to Captain Pattison in amazement:—

"You have done like a fool, for you might have had good gain for them. You ought to have brought the Turks to me."

"We thought it better for *them* to be in their own country," said Thomas simply.

This was so obvious, that the King could not help laughing, and the royal barge rowed off, agreeing, no doubt, that the special providence which watched over that Quaker ship was the one set apart for the guardianship of fools!

CHAPTER X.

A "CONCERN."

"The Lord your God proveth you."—*Deut. xiii. 3.*

NEVER man held a more curious commission than George Fox. He lived a day at a time, and every day the inner Light in his soul shone upon the path that he was to tread on that day. Sometimes he knew months beforehand what the Lord would require of him next. If his mission was blessed with much fruit, he gave thanks and passed on. If it ended in what we would call failure and disaster, his heart was in perfect peace; God had sent him, and it was a part of the Quaker creed that "God's errands never fail." Carlyle says: "No grander thing was ever done than when George Fox, stitching himself into a suit of leather, went forth determined to find truth for himself, and to do battle for it against all superstition, bigotry, and intolerance." Once having found that truth, his whole life was one continual battle for liberty to follow it. There is no doubt about it, if George Fox and his followers had failed in their mission, or shirked their responsibilities, the world would be a much worse place to live in than it is to-day. Liberty of conscience would soon have been a thing of the past, and religion would have been hopelessly and inextricably mixed up with politics. But George boldly defended the inner sanctuary of the soul. With its secrets no stranger might intermeddle. The Voice that only he could hear speaking to him there, he would, and did obey.

As George, so were his followers. Though many of their actions, looked at from a nineteenth-century point of view,

appear unwise and almost a courting of persecution, yet when carefully studied in connection with the religious history of the day, we can readily see that to give in on one small point would have been a lowering of the colours that were given them to hold, perhaps aggressively high. That this was uncompromisingly done, the religious world of to-day owes a debt of gratitude to the Quakers. They were a curious people, simple, steadfast, and true to their inward leadings. George does not seem to have been in any sense a leader of men. He taught and led more by his example than anything else. Only God could have made an organisation out of a scattered people held together by no outward bonds of rule and regulation.

In the year 1661, George writes in his journal: "Several friends were moved to go beyond the seas to publish truth in foreign countries." In no position do we get a clearer view of that absolute faith and trust in God under all circumstances which was a leading characteristic of the early Quakers, than in these missionary enterprises, especially as some of them bore a family likeness to what some would call "a wild-goose chase!" One and another would feel drawn to some special country. The person thus drawn would take this feeling to the Lord, and wait in quietness before Him till He revealed His mind. Then, when quite confident that a genuine "concern" had been laid on their souls, and not an idle prompting of the devil, as soon as the way opened, they set off in spite of all obstacles. In later days, these "concerns" were laid before different business meetings, and friends were helped on their way. Some wayward ones there were, of course, who set off at their own charges, but they were few and invariably came to grief.

George Robinson had a long sojourn in the East. He had many ups and downs, and it really was a marvel that he ever came back alive. Others went on the Continent and met with much success. Mary Fisher—a most remarkable woman, who is always associated with New England and of whom we shall have more to say later on—undertook a long and perilous journey, in order

to deliver to the Sultan a message from the Lord. When she had delivered her message, she came peaceably home again, declining the guard that the Sultan begged to be allowed to supply her with. Not so fortunate were Catherine Evans and Sarah Cheevers. These two women were imprisoned in Malta for over three years. Their story is an interesting one, and will bear telling.

These two women had a "concern" to visit Alexandria. Exactly what they were to do when they got there, does not seem to have been shown them right away. Would they have gone, had they known all that was to befall them? Happily for them, *all* was not revealed beforehand. Travelling in those days was a slow business. Thirty-one days were spent on the water between Plymouth and Leghorn. In Leghorn they had a very good time, giving away books and talking with different people. As soon as their ship was ready, they embarked, as they thought, for Alexandria. But, the captain of their ship had got so chummy with the captain of another ship bound for Malta, that he made up his mind to sail with his friend for Malta, though he had no business whatever in that place! There was no help for it, the captain did not condescend to consult his passengers, and they were off to Malta before they knew. In those days, there were no passenger vessels, and it was rather a compliment than otherwise to get a passage on board the various trading vessels. A captain could, at the last moment, refuse to take anybody, and did so very often, leaving the would-be passengers to wait days and weeks and perhaps months before they could even set out for their destination. No wonder, then, that only the very wealthy could travel with any degree of comfort.

When our heroines heard whither they were bound, they possessed their souls in patience, and prayed for guidance. As they drew within sight of the harbour, Catherine clutched Sarah and said:—

"Oh, Sarah, I feel we have a dreadful cup to drink at this place!"

Sarah was not alarmed, though Catherine's words were

but the echo of what she heard in her own soul. Together they stood on deck, and watched the crowd of people that swarmed about the tiny landing-stage.

"Shall ye destroy us?" mused Catherine, as she looked at them, then with a sudden burst of confidence, "If we give ourselves up to the Lord, then He is sufficient to deliver us out of your hands, but if we disobey our God, all of ye could not deliver us out of His hand!"

From this moment, they suffered no more from the fear of man.

At first, it looked as if their fears would come to nothing. The English Consul received them, asked what they came for, and politely expressed himself at their service. He took them to his own house, where many of the people of the town visited them. Before that day closed, the Consul knew exactly why they had left their homes and families. Unhappily for their future welfare, they made a deep impression on all who knew them, and many were converted. They were soon the talk of the town, and a great conundrum to the authorities. The Governor took them to a nunnery, to see his sister, perhaps in the hope that they would find their niche there, two lone women wandering in a strange land being an unknown thing in those times. But after talking to the amazed nuns and giving them some books, they came away. The priests next tackled them. Were they Calvinists or Lutherans? Neither. Were they Catholics? They were true Christians, servants of the living God. As they knew but little of the language spoken, they had to help out their scanty knowledge with signs, and this being unsatisfactory, they were allowed to depart.

All might have gone well had it not been for the Consul. He acted the part of Judas toward them. He saw that the Catholics were beginning to be suspicious of them, and instead of protecting them, as he was bound by oath to do, he yielded to a bribe and gave them up into the hands of the Inquisition. It is said that from that time till the day of his death he never knew what peace of mind was. He called them and said that the Inquisition

had sent for them, and he hoped that they would be given their liberty; but all the time he knew that a prison had been prepared for them.

The Chancellor and the Consul escorted them into the presence of the Lord Inquisitor. He then asked them if they were willing to give up the wrong views they held respecting religion. They said, "no, they would not change from the truth." He asked them what the "new light" was they talked about. They replied it was no new light but the same that the prophets and apostles bore testimony to. Next, he wanted to know how it had come to be lost. They said it was not lost, only darkened by disobedience to God. Finally he said that if they would change their minds all would be well, but if they still persisted in their strange doctrines he would do with them as he pleased. It was then their trials began.

They were taken and put into a tiny room in which there were only two small holes to admit light and air. The idea seemed to be to stifle them. In a few days they were hauled out for another cross-questioning. They were asked the names of their fathers and mothers and husbands (both were married women) and children. They tried to get them to take an oath on the crucifix, and then they wanted them to explain *why* they came to Malta! This explanation was far beyond the comprehension of the Inquisitor, and they were allowed to go back to prison.

A few days later, they were interviewed by the friars, who threatened them with all kinds of horrors if they would not change their religion. After this, they were put into a prison so hot and close that it seemed to them they could not live long in it. Added to this, it was full of mosquitos, which stung their faces to such an extent that they looked as if they had the small-pox. Catherine, who was a delicate woman, suffered a great deal, and very soon she was really ill. For ten days a raging fever racked her. The friars brought a doctor to see her. He cheerfully described to her the torments she would suffer at the hour of her death, and warned her that, unless she recanted, she would never leave that room alive! Towards

evening there was a beating of drums, a firing of guns, and a great commotion outside. This, they were told, in the hope of frightening them, was to herald their execution! But they were not to be scared, and remained firm as ever.

During this period, poor Sarah was having the hardest time. She quite believed that Catherine was going to die, and though "she was given up to the will of the Lord, and would not grudge Catherine her eternal rest," yet she knew that she would have to bear still heavier sufferings. Sarah's was a weaker nature than Catherine's, and, it may be, she felt uncertain as to whether she would be able to hold out alone. But Catherine got a little better, and we read that "in time she grew hungry, and, eating, was refreshed." But only for a time. The room in which they were locked seemed to grow hotter and hotter, and at night they had to get out of bed and lie by the chink of the door in order to get a little breath. Alas! it was hot outside as well as in, and this did them little good. Their skins were parched, their hair all fell off, and they had long fainting fits. When it was morning, they wished for night, and when it was night they longed for day! It was a time of sore trial, and one is not surprised to hear that "through human weakness they desired death, eating their bread weeping, and mingling their drink with tears."

They wrote to the Inquisitor, and said that if he thirsted for their lives, he might take them in some other way. He sent and had their pens and ink taken away, saying that their lives were his to do as he liked with. They asked what they had done wrong?

"Bringing books and papers," was their answer.

Orders were then given that Catherine was to be taken to a cooler room. But she clung to Sarah, and said:—

"The Lord has joined us; I'd rather die here with my friend than part from her!"

This so struck the friar who brought the message that he turned and left them, and for five awful weeks they were left to their miseries.

At the end of that time poor Catherine had broken out

in boils from head to foot. A doctor came, and he said they would die if they hadn't more air. Accordingly the door was set a little open for six hours every day. If they would become Catholics, they were told, everyone would love them. It was pointed out to them how agreeable and amiable they were, and how everybody was praying for them that they might be set at liberty. But all these blandishments were of no avail, and then the worst as yet happened to them—they were separated from each other. It was a great blow, but God was with them in this furnace too.

While they were in confinement, some alterations were being made in the prisons, and many visitors came round to see the buildings. This gave Catherine and Sarah an opportunity of witnessing for the truth, which they did not fail to grasp. Time went on; they were moved into prisons where the air was rather better, but, with that exception, their lot was the same. Both were ill by this time—so ill that they could not leave their beds. Catherine prayed hard that the Lord would end their hardships speedily, so sure was she that they would never be set at liberty again. As she prayed, she was surprised when a voice told her:—
“Ye shall not die.”

The Friars all said that they got well because the Lord meant them to become Catholics.

The English consul visited them on their recovery. They told him they knew how he had delivered them up to death, and warned him to repent. He trembled before them, though he tried hard to excuse himself. The next time they heard of him, he was dead.

All this time, friends in England were doing their best for their release, but to no purpose. Two Englishmen, visiting in Malta, also tried hard to get them set free, but their interference did more harm than good. It only exasperated the Inquisitor, so that they were shut up again in the little hot prison.

At the end of three years they were set at liberty. There was no trial. Apparently no decision was arrived at; they were simply told to go. During their imprisonment,

they wrote many letters to their husbands and friends, giving them an account of their imprisonment, and more particularly of God's dealings with their souls. Catherine also wrote several hymns, which she and Sarah sang together to cheer each other up, when feeling inclined to be depressed. The following verses are a specimen of them:—

“ All praise to Him that hath not put
Nor cast me out of mind,
Nor yet His mercy from me shut,
As I could ever find.

My soul, praise thou the only God,
A Fountain pure and clear,
Whose crystal streams spread all abroad,
And cleanseth far and near.

He is the glory of my life,
My joy and my delight,
Within the bosom of His love,
He closed me day and night.”

CHAPTER XI.

NEW ENGLAND TRAGEDIES.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"—*Rom.* viii. 35.

If there was one country and people under the sun to whom the persecuted Quakers might be supposed to naturally flock, in the sure and certain hope of a sympathising welcome, it would be to New England and her Puritans. So, perhaps, the casual reader might imagine. But, alas, for the reality! The story of the New England tragedies is a black page in the religious history of America, and a never-to-be-effaced stain on the annals of seventeenth century civilisation. It was the working out of the old axiom—"The letter killeth, the spirit alone maketh alive." There is no more relentless, crushing Juggernaut than a firmly-held creed out of which the "spirit" has departed, and which maintains its rights by sole virtue of the "letter." Into such a machine had the once persecuted "Pilgrim Fathers" and their descendants degenerated, and so the unfortunate Quakers found to their bitter cost. In the early days of their settlement in America there had been divisions among them, and those who taught a milder doctrine had been driven into other parts. The original Puritans held firmly the belief that all dissent from their doctrines was heresy, and ought to be treated with severity. Distorted accounts of the Quakers in England had reached them, and great was the consternation among the "Fathers" when they learned that a ship containing two Quakers had anchored off Boston! It is nothing short of ridiculous to read of the sensation these two women, **Mary Fisher and Anne Austin,**

created! If they had been the Inquisition incarnate no livelier measures could have been taken for their suppression.

These two had been travelling and preaching in the Barbadoes, and Mary Fisher, having a "concern" to visit New England before she came home, Anne Austin accompanied her. Hence the reason of their visit.

Unfortunately, when this calamity overtook New England, the Governor, Endicott, was away from home. But Bellingham, the Deputy Governor, rose valiantly to the occasion. He sent officers on board the ship to search the trunks and belongings of the two Quakers. All their books were burned by the hangman and they themselves were brought on shore as prisoners and put into prison. They asked their crime and were told solemnly that out of their own mouths they were condemned; they were heard saying "thee" and "thou" in conversation, therefore they must be Quakers. That, in the estimation of the Boston authorities, was quite enough to condemn them.

They were kept close prisoners, and orders were given that no one was to speak to them without permission or send them food. Five pounds was the penalty of any who came in to see them. Their pens, ink and paper were taken from them, and they were not permitted any light. Then, in order to make security doubly sure, a board was nailed up over the window, so that the Puritan Bostonians might not be corrupted by the sight of two real live Quakers.

In all probability they would have been starved, had it not been for a kindly old man called Nicholas Upshal. He, knowing that they had no way of obtaining food, bribed the gaoler to let him supply them. Nicholas Upshal was a good man, and one who would have rejoiced to entertain Anne and Mary at his own house. After five weeks' imprisonment, they were taken out and put on board a vessel, the captain of which was bound to land them nowhere but in England under pain of £100 fine! Thus the authorities flattered themselves that no Quaker element had got in amongst them, because these

women had seen and spoken to none but officials. That the Holy Spirit's course is not to be stopped by bolts and bars, they had yet to learn.

The Governor, Endicott, upon learning at Salem what had been done with the Quakers, remarked:—

"If I had been there, I would have had them well whipped!"

What was his wrath, upon arriving at Boston, to learn that a ship containing *eight* Quakers had come into harbour! These were marched straight into prison, and when brought before Endicott, were warned to,

"Take heed lest ye break our ecclesiastical laws, for then ye are sure to stretch by an halter!"

This remark is an index to the spirit which prevailed among Puritan authorities.

After eleven weeks in prison, they were sent back to England, at the expense of the captain who had brought them. A law was next made forbidding all captains of ships from bringing any more Quakers into that jurisdiction, and the Quakers themselves from coming, under penalty of being sent to the House of Correction. It was a narrow, unjust law, and there was one, and one only, who had the courage to dispute it. That one was old Nicholas Upshal. He showed them how unreasonable they were, and then went on to warn them lest, after all, they should be found to be fighting against God.

Ever since his kindness to the Quaker women Nicholas had been under suspicion, and it was whispered about that he was departing from his Church membership. His interference was taken as a final proof of his guilt, and so he was fined twenty-three pounds, and banished outside the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, in the depth of an intense New England winter. In Rhode Island, whence he made his way, he met an Indian prince, who offered to take him to his home and "make him a warm house."

"What a God," he exclaimed, when told why Nicholas, an old man, was wandering about at that season of the year, "What a God have the English, who deal so with one another about their God!"

Time passed on, and New England was apparently left to pursue its own religious way. Endicott and Bellingham congratulated one another that they had nipped the Quaker heresy in the bud, else in a very short time it would have overrun the country, as it had in England. But God was keeping a watchful eye over that new land. He saw what tyranny was being practised in His name. He saw, too, that souls were being bound down to a lifeless form of religion, that the truth and the blessed Gospel were cramped and hindered, and that the young men and women who were growing up had held before them grim, distorted images of Himself, the all-loving Creator. It was given to the Quakers to tear down the coverings under which they had hidden Him, to proclaim that God not only lived but *loved*, and that He was calling all men to His love. Their suffering lives and ignominious deaths sealed their testimonies.

The story of the New England tragedies is not one we would linger over, but it is by such that the world is purified.

A Quaker widow, Anne Burden, was the next we hear of who came into New England. She came on business to gather some deb's that were owing to her. Associated with her was an elderly woman, Mary Dyer. Mary Dyer lived in Rhode Island, and was the only one of her family who was a Quaker. Rhode Island was outside Endicott's jurisdiction, and there the Quakers would have been comparatively free, had it not been impossible for them to know that wrong was going on anywhere, and not try to right it. So Mary Dyer and Anne Burden made their way to Boston. Here they were both imprisoned—Anne Burden for three months, in the depth of winter, and Mary Dyer till her husband came and, with great difficulty, got her out. Anne Burden was sent back to England without a farthing of the money that was due to her!

After that, the Quakers came into Boston thick and fast, not only from England but from other parts of America where the Quaker teachings had been accepted, and where the Quakers could pursue their own belief unmolested.

All that Quakers had suffered in England was as **nothing** to what awaited them in New England!

Mary Clarke was given into the hands of the hangman, who gave her twenty stripes with his whip, the cords of which were as thick as a man's little finger, and knotted at the end! Others were beaten and imprisoned for weeks during winter weather in unheated prisons. "Now," as one historian writes, "the persecutors began to have abundance of business, and taking away of goods and cruel whippings became almost daily work, which was performed without regard to age or sex." A fine of five shillings was inflicted on all who did not attend church. Quaker converts were to be treated exactly like those who came from other parts, and heavy penalties were laid on those who aided and abetted Quakers. These laws ran thus:—

"Everyone who, directly or indirectly, causes any Quakers to come into this jurisdiction will forfeit one hundred pounds to the country and be committed to prison, there to stay till the penalty be satisfied. And, whoever shall entertain a Quaker shall forfeit forty shillings to the country for every hour's entertaining or concealment, and be committed to prison till the fine is paid. And further, that all and every of those people that arise among us here shall be dealt withal and suffer the like punishment as the laws provide for those that come in, viz. :—

"That for the first offence, if a male, one of his ears shall be cut off and he be kept at work in the House of Correction till he shall be sent away on his own charge (that meant till he paid to get away). For the second offence, the other ear and be kept in the House of Correction till aforesaid. If a woman, then to be severely whipped and kept aforesaid as a male for the first. For the second offence, to be dealt withal as the first. And for the third, he or she have their tongues bored through with a hot iron and be kept at the House of Correction, close at work, till they be sent away at their own charge."

These inhuman laws were vigorously carried out to the letter, with many additions on the part of the gaolers in charge of the House of Correction. Some went without

food for days, others were chained neck and heels so close together that there was only room for the lock between, others again were beaten to death, and some were tied to the tail of a cart and whipped all through the town! These New England decrees were more like those of the Spanish Inquisition than anything else! To detail their working out would be sorry work.

But all the decrees in the world could not keep the work from spreading. The ashes of the almost dead faith were fanned into burning, and hundreds were converted and boldly joined themselves to the persecuted sect. The Governor was wild with fury, and nothing now was too bad to be done to a Quaker! But the cup of woe was not yet filled, and the blood of the martyrs was required to complete the tragedy.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MARTYRS.

"Thou, O God, hast proved us; Thou hast tried us as silver is tried . . . but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."—*Psalm lvi. 10-12.*

THE first two who laid down their lives for the truth—that is, were *sentenced* to death, for many died in prison—were William Robinson, a London merchant, and Marmaduke Stevens, of Yorkshire. These, together with Mary Dyer, were sentenced to banishment on pain of death.

Mary Dyer left Boston, but the other two were not "free to do so." In other words, they were not sure exactly what God meant them to do. So they waited until they heard His voice telling them to go and strengthen the friends in Salem. In a very short time they were again arrested, put into Boston prison, and securely chained to a log of wood. This was no surprise to William Robinson. Some time back the Lord had revealed to him that he was chosen to die for the faith that he held. When in Rhode Island, God had commanded him to go to Boston, and there lay down his life. So he went, he writes, "with an assurance that his soul was to enter into everlasting and eternal rest."

To give you an idea of the inner working of their minds, and the confidence that the Quakers had that they were called of God, we will quote part of a paper which Marmaduke Stevens wrote when in gaol, explaining the Lord's dealings with him.

"In the beginning of the year 1655, I was at the plough in Yorkshire. As I walked, I was filled with the presence and love of God, which did ravish my heart. . . . I stood

still a little, with my heart and mind stayed on the Lord. As I stood, the word of the Lord came to me as a still small voice, which I did hear perfectly, saying to me:—

"I have ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

"At this hearing I was put to a stand, being, as I was, but a child for such a weighty matter. So, at the time appointed, Barbadoes was set before me, unto which I was required of the Lord to go, leaving my dear and loving wife, and tender children. The Lord said unto me, by His Spirit, that He would be a husband to my wife, and a father to my children, and they should not want in my absence. And I believed the Lord would perform what He had spoken. . . . So, in obedience to God, I made preparation to go to Barbadoes in 1658."

(This was over two years after he had received his call. The Quakers believed in making very sure that the voice they heard was really God's voice.)

"After I had been some time on this island, in the service of God, I heard that in New England they had made a law to put the servants of God to death if they returned after sentence of banishment. As I considered and pondered the thing in my heart, immediately came the word of the Lord unto me, saying:—

"Thou knowest not but that thou mayest go thither!"

"I kept this word in my heart, and did not declare it unto any till the time appointed. So, after that, a vessel was made ready for Rhode Island, which I passed in. After a little time there, visiting the seed the Lord had blessed, the word of the Lord came to me, saying:—

"Go to Boston with thy brother, William Robinson."

"At this command I was obedient, and gave myself up to do His will. And this is given forth so that all the people may know that we came not in our own wills but by the will of the Lord."

Before they had been long in prison, Mary Dyer was taken and imprisoned too. So now there were three who, according to the new law, had forfeited their lives. On October 20th these three were brought into Court. And a crowded Court it was, for everybody was anxious to get

a sight of these people, whose consciences led them to brave such dangers.

It was a short business. Endicott said he had no desire to take their lives, and then immediately called upon William Robinson to hear his death sentence.

"William Robinson, you shall be had back to the place from whence you came, and from thence to the place of execution, to be hanged upon the gallows till you are dead."

Marmaduke Stevens was called and received a like sentence, and when he had been taken away, Mary Dyer was brought out for hers, to which she replied:—

"The will of the Lord be done!"

"Take her away, gaoler," cried Endicott in a fury.

"Yes," cried the irrepressible Mary, "joyfully I go!"

She was full of joy, and praised God all the way. She told the Marshal, who was taking her, that he might let her go by herself—she wouldn't run away.

"I believe you, Mrs. Dyer," answered the Marshal, "but I must do as I am commanded."

A week later the martyrs were led to the gallows. The town was all excitement, and so fearful were the authorities that they would be heard when they spoke, that drums were beaten around them all the way to the gallows. They headed the procession with great cheerfulness, almost with gladness, and rejoiced much that the Lord had counted them worthy to suffer death for His name's sake.

Arriving at the place of execution, they said good bye to each other, and Robinson ascended the scaffold first.

"This is the day of your visitation," he cried to the people, as the rope was fastened round his neck. "This is the day of your visitation, wherein the Lord hath visited you." He then warned them to be true to the light that was within them, the light of Christ, of which he had testified to them, and was now about to seal with his blood.

"I suffer for Christ, in whom I live and in whom I die," were his last words.

A few moments later his comrade's spirit had joined his, and so they were together for ever with the Lord.

Just at the last moment, Mary Dyer was reprieved. A great deal of discontent had been manifested by the town at the death sentences, so that when her family pleaded for her life Endicott granted it, with the hope that by so doing he would please the people. Though she got off that time it was not for long. Early the following year she, too, was executed.

William Leddra was the next and last who suffered death. He had been banished from Boston too, and, like the others, he felt himself impelled to return. In a very short time he was taken and chained by the leg in an open prison in very cold January weather. There he stayed, night and day, till he was brought into Court. Here an attempt was made to make him recant, and conform to Puritan form of worship.

"What!" he said gravely, "To join with such murderers as you are? Then let every man that meets me say, 'Lo, this is the man that hath forgotten the God of his salvation.'"

It was next explained to the Court that Leddra had been given his liberty and told to come there no more, and that if he had obeyed he would have saved his life.

"I stand not in my own will," he said to this, "but in the will of the Lord. If I may have my freedom, I shall go, but to make you a promise I cannot."

After this uncompromising statement, sentence of death was passed upon him at once. The day before this sentence was put into execution, he wrote a long letter to his friends, which he begins by saying:—

"The sweet influences of the Morning Star, like a flood distilling into my innocent habitation, has so filled me with the joy of the Lord in the beauty of holiness, that my spirit is as if it did not inhabit a tabernacle of clay but is wholly swallowed up in the bosom of eternity from whence it had its being! What can the wrath of man do to one that is hidden in the secret place of the Almighty,

or unto them that are gathered under the healing wings of the Prince of Peace?"

The whole letter is one of joy and gladness and bright expectation. There is nothing in it of regret over a life cut short, so certain was he that he was in the will of the Lord.

The next day, the Governor and a guard of soldiers came to the prison. Leddra's chains were knocked off, and his time had come. He bade good-bye to those who were with him, saying tenderly to one Edward Wharton, who had also been banished on pain of death:—

"Oh, Edward, it will be your turn next."

"If you speak a word," cried Captain Oliver, "I'll stop your mouth at once!"

"All that will be Christ's disciples must take up the Cross," was his answer.

"William," said someone, as he ascended the gallows ladder, "have you anything to say to the people?"

"Yes," he said, "for the testimony of Jesus, and for testifying against deceivers and the deceived, I am brought here to suffer." At that many of the people were so affected that a Puritan clergyman spoke up and cried:—

"People, I would not have you think it strange to see a man so willing to die. That is no new thing. Ye may read how the Apostle said, some were so given over to strong delusions that they be willing to die for them."

But the impression was made, and it would take more than his words to wipe it out.

"I commit my righteous cause unto Thee, O God," he was heard to say as the hangman fastened the rope about his neck, and with the prayer, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," was launched into eternity.

A spectator, a stranger in Boston, who happened to be one of the crowd at the execution, wrote a full account of it to his friends. He tells how all his questions about Leddra were answered with:—

"He is a rogue, a very rogue!"

Upon asking why, he was told:—

"He has abused authority."

In spite of being advised not to stay to the execution, he went, so interested had he become in this "very rogue."

"When this man was on the ladder," he says, "he looked at me and called me friend, and said:—

"Know this day I am willing to offer up my life for the witness of Jesus Christ?"

"Then I cried:—

"Gentlemen, I am a stranger, both to you and your country and yet a friend to both, but, for the Lord's sake, take not away this man's life."

"Then they bade me be gone, and I told them I was willing, for I could not endure to see this; and when I was in the town some did sympathise with me in my grief!"

All the time these tragedies were being enacted in New England, the Quakers in Old England were not idle. They wrote letters to the King, telling how their comrades were suffering, and begging of him to put a stop to it, because they were his subjects and under his protection. Letters in those days carried very slowly. There was, of course, no post, and answers to them were received months after their receipt, if at all, so that there was plenty of time for Endicott and his clerk Ransom to do their worst. At last, when the news of Leddra's martyrdom reached England, Edward Burroughs determined to see the King himself. He forced an audience, and told the King that "there was a vein of innocent blood opened in his dominions which, if it were not stopped, would overrun all."

"But I will stop that vein," said the King.

"Do it speedily," pleaded Burroughs, "for we know not how many may soon be put to death."

"As soon as ye will," said the King, now thoroughly stirred up. "Call a secretary, and I will do it now."

A secretary was called, and the document, forbidding any more death sentences or any kind of a sentence to be passed upon the Quakers, was drawn up, and orders were given that a ship was to be gotten ready at once to take someone who would deliver the precious paper. Burroughs was appointed to choose a messenger. He chose a New

England man, Samuel Shattocks, who had been banished to England under pain of death. In six weeks Samuel had arrived in Boston, and a few days after his arrival, the following official order was handed to the keeper of the Boston prison :—

“You are required by authority and order of the General Court forthwith to release and discharge the Quakers who are at present in your custody. See that you do not neglect this.

“By order of the Court.”

CHAPTER XIII.

IN ENGLAND AGAIN.

“He will keep the feet of His saints.”—1 Sam. ii. 9.

AFTER the king had so powerfully interfered on behalf of the New England Quakers, there was a marked cessation of persecution all round. But just as the Quakers had begun to congratulate themselves that now their path was getting somewhat smoother, fresh troubles arose. This time, however, it came from within. John Perrot, a once highly esteemed minister, departed from his original principles, and became “puffed up with a high conceit of himself.” He claimed that the light he had was clearer and stronger than that given to any of the others, and endeavoured to make himself the leader of the body. Many followed him, and, by their inconsistent lives, brought great scandal and disgrace on the Quakers. This the organisation was not as yet strong enough to bear without suffering considerably.

George and others did their utmost, both by writing and preaching, to stem this current, and among other writings published was a short warning to Perrot and his followers, part of which ran as follows :—

“Whoever is tainted with the spirit of John Perrot, it will perish. Mark theirs and his end, that are turned into these outward things, and janglings about them, which are not savoury. All which is for judgment, and is to be swept and cleansed out of the camp of God

Consider this before the day be gone from you, and take heed that your removal be not rooted out from among the righteous."

Fortunately, Perrot became restless and discontented with himself, so he left the society and emigrated to America, and there took some public office that necessitated the giving of the oath, thus doing violence at once to Quaker principles. In the end he took to wearing a sword, and living a life of open vice, and became a bitter persecutor of the people he had left. Though his reign was short he did a great deal of harm, more harm than he ever did good, even when at his best.

Indeed, that year, 1662, was a troublous one for the Quakers. The question of the legality of Quaker marriages came up. The Quakers had been in the habit of performing a simple ceremony among themselves, always keeping a full and accurate register. This question was fought out at length in court, and the verdict of the judge was in favour of the Quakers, the validity of whose marriages was then established for ever.

In the early part of this year George received a letter that gave him great pleasure. It was from the gaoler who illtreated him so when he was in Derby prison, and then was led to see the error of his ways. He became a Quaker soon after. The letter ran thus:—

"Dear Friend,—Having a convenient messenger, I could do no less than give thee an account of my present condition, remembering that the first awakening of me to a sense of life and of the inward principle, God was pleased to make use of thee as an instrument; so that sometimes I am taken with admiration that it should come by such a way as it did—that is to say, that Providence should order thee to be my prisoner, to give me my first real sight of the truth, and notwithstanding that my outward losses are since that time such that I am become nothing in the world, yet I hope I shall find that all these light afflictions are but for a moment, and will work for me a far more eternal weight of glory. They have taken all from me. and now, instead of keeping a

prison, I am rather waiting when I shall become a prisoner myself! Pray for me that my faith fail not, but that I may hold out to the death, that I may receive a crown of life. I earnestly desire to hear of thee and of thy condition, which would very much rejoice me.

"In haste, I rest, thine in Christ Jesus,

"THOMAS SHARMAN."

For the past two years George had resided near London, having had that place laid on his heart. Part of this two years were spent in gaol. This year, he felt that his spirit was "clear" of the place, so he set out for Bristol, where alone the persecutions were continued nearly as briskly as ever. At Swannington, he was arrested and charged with "an *intent* to hold an illegal meeting." When he and those that were with him denied this charge, they were offered the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy. The fact that the Quakers never would take an oath on principle was a powerful and never-failing weapon in the hands of unscrupulous men. A Quaker used to be arrested on any kind of trumpery charge, and he might be proved innocent. Then, as a test to his loyalty, he would be asked to take the oath. The desired end would then be easily gained, and the poor Quaker committed to prison for an indefinite period.

Of course, George refused the Oath, adding that he had never taken one in his life, and calling the Justice's attention to the fact that the oath he tendered him was only intended for Catholics. This was quite true, and the Justice knew it. Failing to commit him on this charge alone, he said that "Fox was well known and no good," and made out a document committing him to prison for refusing to take the Oath and stating that they *were* about to hold a meeting!

So to Leicester prison they went, but before they had been long there an order came for their release.

The end of this year George spent in visiting Friends in every part of England. He met with much encouragement. Many "accepted the truth," and, added to this,

the insane rage for persecution seemed to be dying out. Justices would now make excuses not to commit the Quakers, and the townspeople would refuse to pay the constables' fees. Then the Quakers discovered that their warrants said that they were to be "*carried*" before the Justices, and utterly declined to walk! This may seem very absurd, but so much expense and trouble did these curious little ways add to their committals that it did much to tire their enemies out!

George tells many stories in his journals of how he was delivered from his persecutors, when almost in their clutches.

At one place where he was holding a meeting the officers who were searching for him lost their way and went a mile and a-half on the wrong road. By the time they had retraced their steps, and got to the right place, the meeting was all over, and George had left the place!

On another occasion, he was found by a man who had been bribed to arrest him. What was his surprise when the man merely looked at him, said to his companion, "So this is George Fox," and went on his way without attempting an arrest! Other officers let him free at another time when actually under arrest, upon his solemnly assuring them that "the Quakers were a peaceable people."

After his release from Leicester gaol, George travelled on to Swarthmore. Margaret Fell had long been a widow now, and for some time, so George confides to his journal, he had been wishing to marry her. He had left the matter with the Lord, sure that when the time had "come for accomplishing that thing whereof I had long sought," His will would be revealed. Perhaps, even as he journeyed northwards now he thought that time might be near. If he did, he was sorely disappointed. As soon as he arrived he was told that Colonel Kirby, the justice, had sent to the Hall to search for him, and his officers had ransacked every chest and cupboard in the place to find him! This was a work of supererogation on their part, because it was very well known that never on any occasion did George

even go out of his way to avoid his enemies, much less hide from them.

Next morning, George paid Colonel Kirby an early visit to enquire what they had against him now. Kirby was greatly taken aback at this straightforward action, and replied:—

"As I am a gentleman, I have nothing against you. But," he went on, "Margaret Fell must not keep great meetings at her house, for they are contrary to the Act."

"I told him," said George, as he went over the scene with his friends, "that the Act did not take hold on us, but on such as did meet to plot and contrive, and to raise insurrection against the king."

After a long conversation, the Colonel and George shook hands, and parted friends, and went their ways, the Colonel to London and George to Swarthmore Hall.

No sooner had Colonel Kirby departed, than a number of other justices put their heads together and issued a warrant against George. He was warned of this and could easily have escaped, and honourably too, as he had made no arrangements for any meetings. But he declined to yield to the persuasions of his friends, who begged him to depart, because, as he explained, he had heard a rumour of this plot before he came North, and should he go away he feared that the anger of the justices would be turned on the Quakers left. It is in little incidents of this kind that we get glimpses of George's personality, which is so persistently obscured by historians, with the incidents that occurred during his eventful life. As Margaret was among those who would be left behind to suffer, we cannot wonder at his decision; not that that would have made any difference to George's final action, though it may have made him doubly anxious to remain.

The next day an officer came and brought him before the magistrates, who accused him, among other things, of denying God, the Church, and the Faith. After much fruitless cross-questioning, they fell back on their never-failing argument and offered him the Oath. Again, George explained his reasons for refusing to swear. How

tired he must have got eternally explaining why he did and wouldn't do certain things! In this case he might as well have been talking to the walls for all the good it did! He was allowed to return to Swarthmore Hall upon promising that he would appear at the forthcoming Sessions. The inconsistency of this Act does not appear to have struck the worthy justices. Here was a man they had badgered for hours to try and get to take an oath, that they well knew was not considered sacred by nine-tenths of those who glibly swore it, and then upon his simple word dismissed him without bail, in the fullest confidence that he would turn up at the appointed moment and attend his unjust trial, and serve his unjust sentence! Yet so it was. A Quaker's word was as good as his bond any day, and well the people knew it.

In due time the Sessions opened, and George as duly appeared. There were the usual long, wearisome proceedings. The oath was offered and refused, and George was sent to Lancaster Prison. Among the prisoners here he found several of his own people. Some were in for holding meetings, others for refusing to swear.

One of these prisoners was a man called Oliver Atherton, who had been there for nearly two years and a-half. He had been imprisoned through the instrumentality of the Countess of Derby, for not paying tithes. He was a delicate man, and his health had suffered fearfully during his long confinement in that damp, unwholesome place. In fact, he had become so ill that his sole chance of recovery now lay in a speedy discharge. George, though he would suffer uncomplainingly himself, could not bear to see anyone else in misery, wrote a pleading letter to the Countess, begging her to pardon him, stating his case fully, and warning her not "to draw the guilt of his innocent blood upon her head." This cruel woman refused to help him, and a few days later Oliver Atherton breathed his last. Three weeks after his death she, too, was carried to the churchyard.

George was kept a prisoner for some months, and then was taken before Judge Trisden, who, with another, Justice

Turner, was the Judge of the Circuit. There was a lively few hours in the Court. The Judge lost his temper, and called George names, and complained that he spoke so loud his voice drowned his and the Court's out! It all ended up as usual. George was conducted back to prison, there to await the next Assizes. Margaret Fell was added to the number of Quaker prisoners, and committed at this Assizes. She, too, had refused to take the Oath.

CHAPTER XIV.

TREATS OF VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

"I will go in the strength of the Lord God."—*Psalms lxxi. 16.*

WHILE in prison, George occupied himself with building up and strengthening the faith of his fellow comrades by writing them letters of warning and advice. There is no doubt that the Society reaped a rich benefit from these long imprisonments of George's. Had he been always at liberty, he would have spent his time in preaching and visiting and making long apostolic tours, and would have neglected the collective needs of the Society as a whole. It was never his idea to form a new sect, or organise a religious body of workers. It formed itself, and once formed he was naturally looked up to as a leader and forced into that position. When shut up in gaol, he had time and leisure to take a broad, realising view of the Society as a whole.

From March till August, the Quakers were left uninterruptedly in prison, and then at the August Assizes were hauled before the same judges. Pretty much the same ground was gone over. (There must have been plenty of spare time in those days!) George preached a sermonette on the text "Swear not at all," which had the effect of driving the judges into a fine frenzy! Again he was taken back to prison to await the next Assizes. That meant another six months!

George was now considered so dangerous a character that "he was not fit for a prisoner to speak to," so he was put into a room by himself in the tower. This tower was above the room where the other prisoners

were, and the smoke from their rooms came up into his, so thickly "that it stood as dew upon the walls."

"And sometimes," writes George in his faithful journal, "the smoke would be so thick that I could hardly see the candle when it burned, and I, being under three locks, the under-gaoler, when the smoke was great, could hardly be persuaded to come up to unlock one of the uppermost doors for fear of the smoke, so that I was almost smothered. Besides, it rained in upon my bed, and many times, when I went to stop out the rain in the cold winter season, I would be wet through with the rain that came in upon me while I was labouring to stop it out. And, the place being high and open to the wind, sometimes as fast as I stopped it the wind would blow it out again! In this manner did I lie all that long cold winter till the next Assize, in which time I was so starved with cold and rain that my body was greatly swelled and my limbs greatly benumbed."

At the next Assizes George was not liberated as he ought to have been, so faulty and full of errors was the indictment against him. The jury were coerced to bring in a judgment of guilty, and he was again ordered to be kept a close prisoner in Lancaster Castle.

While in Lancaster Gaol, George had several visions, and the spirit of prophecy descended upon him. He foretold that fearful doom, the plague, which even now was casting its shadow over London, and the great fire that followed so closely in its steps. The impending woes made him low and depressed; he was saddened through and through, and his spirit mourned for those over whom death had already unsheathed his sword. This unhappiness, together with his unfavourable surroundings, at last began to tell upon what must have been an iron constitution, and he became exceedingly weak and ill.

The Justices had been very much annoyed with George at his last trial. He had so ably defended himself and his cause, and found so many flaws in their unjust administration, that they were determined to have him removed from Lancaster. About six weeks after the

Assizes, they accomplished their design and procured (by false representation) an order from the King, Charles II., for his removal to Scarborough. This order was put into force at once, and George was dragged out of prison, so weak that he could hardly stand, and placed upon a horse. George protested earnestly against his removal and its illegality, because as no sentence had been passed upon him, he was not the King's prisoner, and therefore could not, according to the law, be sent to another prison. He had only been committed to prison to await the Assizes. He asked to see the authorisation for his removal. The officers replied they would show him "none but their swords!"

After a lengthy and trying journey, rendered more so by the cruelty of the officers in charge, who lashed his horse in order to make it jump and start, he arrived at Scarborough Castle, which was at that period used as a gaol.

For some days after his arrival he was seriously ill. During his illness, he says, he was treated with great kindness, but as soon as ever he was better he was put into an open room where the rain came in. Permission was given him to make it habitable at his own expense. No sooner was it rendered fairly comfortable than he was removed to another, which had neither fireplace nor glazed window, and into which, "it being to the seaside and lying much open, the wind drove the rain in forcibly so that the water came over the bed and ran about the room."

"When my clothes were wet," he writes, "I had no fire to dry them by, so my body was numbed with cold and my fingers swelled so that one was as big as two. Though I was at some charge for this room also, yet I could not keep out the wind and rain. Besides, they would suffer few Friends to come and see me, and many times not any—not so much as to bring me a little food. I was forced for the first quarter to hire one of another society (or sect) to bring me necessaries. Sometimes the soldiers would take it from her, and she would scuffle with them for it. Commonly, a threepenny loaf served me

three weeks and a little longer. Most of my drink was water that had wormwood steeped or bruised into it. Though they would not let Friends come to me, they would often bring others either to gaze upon me or contend with me."

It was an awful life he lived, and no wonder he calls himself "a man buried alive."

The gaol officers were continually threatening him with personal violence. They told him he was to be hanged over a wall, and so forth. But little they knew their man. The blood of the martyrs ran in his veins, and he told them that if that was what they wanted, if God permitted it, he was ready; he never feared either death or suffering in his life, his conscience was clear, and he desired the good of all men!

As time went on, the Governor of Scarborough Castle became kinder to his Quaker prisoner, and as soon as he really knew him grew to love him. Finally he undertook George's cause, and when in London he presented his case to a Mr. March, a great friend of the Quakers. This man had a statement in George's favour drawn up and presented to the King. Charles II., after satisfying himself that George was a quiet, peaceable man, readily granted an order for his discharge. This order was sent to Scarborough, and Sir Jordan called all the officers of the gaol together, and in their presence discharged George, making quite a triumph of the event.

This Sir Jordan Crosslands was ever a good friend of the Quakers, and afterwards, if the Mayor of the town sent to him for soldiers to go and break up their meetings, he always gave them private instructions not to meddle with them.

The day after George left prison, the Great Fire devastated London. George was not the only Quaker who had had a foreknowledge of this event. A man called Thomas Briggs went through London preaching repentance, and crying that unless the people repented as Ninevah did they would surely be destroyed. Thomas Ibbett also warned London of its coming doom.

During the time George was in Lancaster and Scarborough gaols, Quakerism maintained its standing, and in the country places gained considerable ground. In and about London it was very different. Here eleven hundred Quakers died of the plague! This was a serious loss to a society which was only as yet in its infancy. The troubles that befel London in 1665 and 1666 were in one way a protection to the Quakers. People took less interest in them. The fire and plague and their consequences were the theme of the hour, and so the persecution was not as great as it had been. In 1664, a law had been passed to employ banishment as a punishment for obstinate Quakers. Fifty-five were transported to Jamaica. This really meant little else but slavery, and was a much dreaded sentence. To what lengths it might have been carried, had not the plague and fire intervened, it would be hard to say.

About this time, George seems to have given some thought to the future of Quakerism and its better organisation. Wherever he could he instituted Sunday meetings for worship. Then he had quarterly meetings composed of representative Quakers from different communities for business, viz., to enquire into the spiritual condition of the Quakers in the district, to obtain, if possible, redress for those who had been illegally imprisoned or prosecuted, and to see that the children of Quakers were properly educated. These meetings were originally intended to be held once a quarter, but:—

“Whereas,” writes George, “friends had only quarterly meetings before, now truth was spread and they became more numerous. I was moved to recommend the setting up of monthly meetings throughout the nation, and the Lord opened to me what I must do, and how the men’s and women’s monthly and quarterly meetings should be ordered and established in this and other nations, and that I should write to those where I came not to do the same.”

George now spent some considerable time in a protracted tour in England and Ireland. For a wonder he was

allowed to pursue his way in peace. He had much success, and writes that:—

“The Lord’s truth came over all, and many that had been out from the truth came in again this year (1669) confessing and condemning their former out-goings.”

When in Scarborough, Sir Jordan Crosslands sent him the following quaint message: “I hope you will not be so uncivil as not to call and see me and my wife.” So George went and was entertained most kindly by his former gaoler.

During this tour he felt that the time was now come when he might consider his marriage with Margaret Fell. The matter was laid before various Quakers, “both privately and publicly,” we are told, and then Margaret’s children, all of whom were now grown up, were consulted, and as the majority agreed that it was the Lord’s will, the wedding took place at Broadmead Meeting-house. The place was crowded, and the greatest interest was taken in both Margaret and George. A certificate relating the circumstances of the wedding was signed by more than ninety witnesses! Margaret Fell was ten years older than George Fox. She was fifty when she married him.

The newly-married couple stayed a week at Bristol, then they went on together to Oldstone and there took “leave of each other in the Lord” and separated, George going on a preaching tour to London, and Margaret back to Swarthmore and her work of assisting the Northern Quakers.

On arriving home after his tour George was met with the news that his wife had been “haled out of her house and carried to Lancaster Prison on an old charge.” Back to London he posted, holding meetings at the different towns he passed on the way, and sent two of Margaret’s children to see the King and get an order for her release. This order was difficult to procure, and it was only after many visits to Whitehall that they at last succeeded, and Margaret was at liberty again.

The year 1670 saw the final passing of what was known

as the Conventicle Act. This Act limited all meetings outside the Church of England to the number of five! If six met together they could be arrested, tried and sentenced by the Justice who lived in the neighbourhood. Informers were rewarded for telling of such gatherings, and as the Quakers scorned either subterfuge or resistance they were an easy prey. No sooner was the Act in force than persecution broke out again with redoubled energy. The historian Hallam says in his "Constitutional History" that, "no severity comparable to this cold-blooded persecution had been inflicted by the late powers, even in the ferment and fury of a civil war!"

"The firmness and patience of the Quakers in meeting this storm," writes a Quaker at this time, "was of great benefit to their religious profession, being at once a testimony to their innocence and integrity, and a noble assertion of the right of liberty of conscience."

CHAPTER XV.

FOREIGN TRAVELS.

"He led them on safely."—*Psalms* lxxviii 53.

For some time previous to Margaret Fox's imprisonment, George had been in treaty with the captain of a ship for passages for himself and some twelve comrades for the West Indies and America. It had long been laid on George's heart that he ought to visit the Quakers in these places, and now, just as Margaret was released, the vessel was announced ready. She got to London a few days before George sailed, and went with him in the barge that carried him to Wapping, where he was to meet the ship, or, to be strictly correct, the yacht 'Industry,' bound for the West Indies. Here they took an affectionate farewell, committing each to the care of God. Parting for foreign lands was a very different thing in those days to what it is now, and the chances were that friends would never see one another again. The vessels were small and generally leaky. The 'Industry' was so much so that the pumps had to be kept constantly at work during her voyage. Then there were the much-dreaded pirates, which always swarmed on the high seas. There was always danger of drifting out of one's course, or being becalmed or befogged so long that provisions would give out and the crew and passengers be reduced to starvation. The New England persecutions, in spite of the king's mandate, had not entirely ceased in Massachusetts, and having been so

cruel to the followers, what mightn't the Puritan "professors" do to the master, now that they had him in their territory! Altogether, it was no wonder that the leave-taking was a sad one.

Among those who accompanied George were John Stubbs, Robert Widders, William Edmundson, and Elizabeth Hooten, the first convert to Quakerism, now a very old woman.

Though the 'Industry' had the reputation of being a fast sailer, the voyage from Gravesend to Barbadoes took the greater part of two months. When they had been about three weeks at sea they had their first and only exciting adventure. One afternoon a large vessel was seen some five leagues away.

"It is a man-of-war," said the captain. "Come, let us go down to supper; and if it grows dark they'll lose us."

This he said in order not to scare the passengers, some of whom were very much frightened already. The vessel slowly but surely gained on them, George could see as he looked out of his cabin window, and at night the captain came to him and asked—

"What shall we do?"

"I am no mariner," replied George. "What do you think best to do?"

There were two things they might do, the captain said, either outrun them, or tack about and hold the same course they were going when they met the man-of-war. George showed them that it was perfectly simple for the man-of-war to tack about too, and as for outrunning it, that was utter nonsense—the man-of-war was a much faster sailer.

"What shall we do then?" the captain said, "If the mariners had taken Paul's counsel they had not come to damage as they did."

George told them that this was a trial of their faith, and that the Lord was to be waited on for counsel. Then after "retiring in spirit," the Lord showed him that "His life and power was placed between us and the ship that pursued us." He told this to the captain, adding

that the best thing to do was to steer straight by their right course.

"About the eleventh hour," George writes in his journal, "the watch called and said they were just upon us. This disquieted some of the passengers, whereupon I sat up in my cabin, and, looking through the port-hole, the moon not being quite down, I saw them very near us. I was getting up to go out of the cabin, but remembering the word of the Lord, that His life and power was between us and them, I lay down again. The captain and some of the seamen came again, and asked me if they might not steer such a point. I told them they might do as they would. By this time the moon was gone down and a fresh gale arose, and the Lord hid us from them, and we sailed briskly on, and saw them no more."

Every Sunday they held a public meeting on board, which was a time of great blessing. George suffered a great deal during this voyage. It was now plain to all who knew him that his health had become very seriously undermined during his last long imprisonments. Indeed, though they did not know it then, it was thoroughly broken down, and he was never really strong again. The enervating climate of the West Indies intensified his weakness, so that during his first three weeks on the island he was unable to leave the house, and consequently unable to attend the regular meetings. But Thomas Rous, the gentleman who entertained him, gladly allowed the Quakers to hold services at his house. The comrades who were with him did all they could to make up for his absence, and visited as many of the Friends in the adjacent islands as was possible. However, at the end of three weeks George was able to ride out on horseback.

There were great numbers of Quakers in Barbadoes. They formed a large, if not the larger portion of the population. It is considered probable that Quakerism was established in the West Indies by the Quakers who had been banished there from England and America. It is quite certain that it owed its strength to those unfortunate prisoners. However, large as their meetings were, the

West Indian Quakers had grown lax, and become infected with worldliness. It was George's main work to try to get the same order and regularity here as was enforced in England. Among other things, he warned Friends to "be very particular in seeing that their houses were kept spotlessly clean." This was a matter of great importance in that climate, where epidemics were so common. They were also "not to permit unkind things to be said about each other, whereby the enemy had cause to blaspheme." Then they were to provide suitable cemeteries, keep an accurate account of births, deaths and marriages, and to make their wills when in good health.

His advice regarding the slaves showed him to be a man of wisdom and penetration. Curiously enough, many of the West Indian Quakers were slave holders. George was always opposed to slavery, yet he knew if he prevailed upon the West Indians to set all their slaves free at once, they would suffer greatly through having no means of obtaining a livelihood. To turn a large number of uneducated, improvident and unskilled people loose, and tell them to look out for themselves, would be nothing less than cruelty.

"Respecting the negroes," writes George, "I desired them to train them up in the fear of the Lord, so that, with Joshua, every master of a family might say, 'As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.' I desired also that they would cause their overseers to deal mildly and gently with their negroes, and not use cruelty towards them, as the manner of some hath been and is, and that after certain years of servitude, they should set them free."

Unfortunately, this wise advice, which would render slaves little more than apprentices, was not taken, and though the West Indian Quakers treated their slaves kindly, they did not free them.

The American and English Quakers held strong anti-slavery views, and the Americans soon took up the matter in earnest. As early as 1688, we read of one meeting sending a protest against slavery to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. They never ceased to struggle and protest till every slave was emancipated.

The meetings that George held in Barbadoes were largely attended, and his doctrines took root and spread so rapidly that the other "Christians" on the island began to spread slanderous reports about them. George says that the Lord gave him "wisdom and utterance to answer their cavils, so that the auditory generally received satisfaction, and those quarrelsome professors lost ground."

He thought well, before he left, to draw up a formal confession of the Quaker faith, in case the slanders came to the knowledge of the governor.

The following is a Declaration of Faith that was presented to the English Parliament, on the occasion of some wide-spreading scandals against the Quakers:—

"Be it known to all that we sincerely believe and confess:—

I. That Jesus of Nazareth, who was born of the Virgin Mary, is the true Messiah, the very Christ, the Son of the living God, to Whom all the prophets gave witness, and that we do highly value His death, sufferings, works, offices, and merits for the redemption of mankind, together with His laws, doctrines, and ministry.

II. That this very Christ of God, Who is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, was slain, was dead, and is alive, and lives for ever in His Divine eternal glory, dominion, and power, with the Father.

III. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are of Divine authority and have been given by inspiration of God.

IV. And that magistracy, or Civil Government, is God's Ordinance, the good end thereof being for the punishment of evil doers, and praise of them that do well."

After three months in Barbadoes, they sailed for Jamaica. Here, soon after they landed, Elizabeth Hooten died. She was very old—so old that it was a marvel she ever undertook such a journey. She seemed quite in her usual health

the day before she died, but the climate of Barbadoes had also told on her, more than they knew at the time. George only stayed about seven weeks in Jamaica before he departed for Maryland. They had a perilous voyage of six or seven weeks, during which time they were almost starved, owing to their provisions running out.

A Quaker minister, John Burneyate, met them on their arrival, and told them that they were just in time for a meeting which was going to be held to say farewell to him on the eve of his departure for England. This meeting lasted four days! It was a "very large and heavenly one," George says in his journal. At its close, the leading Quakers met again to hold a business meeting. It was at these business meetings that George instructed the Quakers as to the principles of the Society of Friends. After all was over, the visiting Quakers separated. Some went in one direction, some in another, on preaching tours.

There were no people George took more interest in than the Indians. The Puritans, as a general rule, looked upon them as their natural enemies. They would trade with them, but—generally speaking—treat them as friends, and brothers with immortal souls, they wouldn't. With this feeling George had no sympathy whatever. While in America he impressed upon his followers their duties to the red man with such good effect that as late as 1812 a historian tells us that "the best defence against the Indians was the dress of a Quaker."

George spent two years travelling about in Maryland and New England. He spent days in tedious journeyings, through woods and bogs, and across rivers over which he had to make his horse swim. His missionary journey, as a whole, was a successful one. He found much to do—many wrongs to be righted and many crooked things to be made straight—but those "convinced of the truth," whom he left in his wake were sufficient reward for the most toilsome of journeys. Some of his meetings lasted four or five days, and were attended by people who must have travelled at least a week to get there.

During the two years of his absence from England we

never read of his falling into the hands of the law. He was threatened often enough but nothing came of it. It must have been a curious experience for him to be so well treated, and to be so generally in favour with men! In one town, George heard them say that if they had money enough they would hire him to be their minister! This was a place where they did not understand Quaker principles.

"When I heard of it," said George, "I said it was time for me to be gone, for if their eye (inclination) was so much to me or any of us, they would not come to their own minister."

At last George felt his "mind free of America," and began to think of his loved ones across the sea, and soon he was ready to embark upon another perilous voyage. It was a perilous one too. George described it as best he could in his journal:—

"We had in our passage very high winds and tempestuous weather, which made the sea exceedingly rough; the waves rising like mountains, so that both masters and sailors wondered, and said they never saw the like before. But though the wind was strong, it set for the most part with us, so that we sailed before it, and the great God Who commands the winds, Who is Lord of Heaven, earth, and seas, steered our course and preserved us from many imminent dangers."

As soon as he landed in Bristol he wrote the following letter to his wife:—

"Dear Heart,—This day we came into Bristol near night, from the seas, glory to the Lord God over all for ever Who was our convoy and steered our course, Who is God over the whole earth, and of the seas and winds, and made the clouds His chariots beyond all words, blessed be His name for ever, Who is over all in His great power and wisdom, Amen! Robert Widders and James Lancaster are with me, and we are all well, glory to the Lord for ever, Who hath carried us through many perils by water and through storm, perils by pirates and robbers, perils in the wilderness and among false professors. Praises to Him Whose glory is over all,

Amen! Therefore mind the fresh life, and live all to God in it. I do intend (if the Lord will) to stay awhile this way, it may be till the fair. So no more, but my love to all friends.
G. F."

Margaret was not long in finding her way to Bristol, on receipt of this epistle. The news that George was at home soon spread, and many Quakers hastened to Bristol to see him whom now they all looked up to as their chief.

CHAPTER XVI.

PRISON AND JUDGMENT.

'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.'—*Psalms xxxvii. 23.*

GEORGE only stayed in Bristol till after the fair. When it was over, he and Margaret spent some time in London. Here they found plenty of work for a little season, refuting several libellous books that had been circulated round the metropolis. After this was done, George felt he was "clear" of the city, and began a journey northwards. He and his party reached a town in Worcestershire, when the knowledge came upon him that soon he would have to suffer imprisonment again. He confided this presentiment to nobody, but at once made arrangements for Margaret and the women of the party to go on at once to Swarthmore. Poor Margaret was very unwilling to go, but all her objections were overruled, and she went.

A few days later, George and Thomas Lower, a son-in-law of Margaret's, were arrested, as they sat resting in a friend's house after holding a meeting. They were carried at once to Worcester Gaol. From the gaol George wrote the following letter to his wife:—

"Dear Heart,—Thou seemest to be a little grieved when I was speaking of prisons and when I was taken. Be content with the will of the Lord God. For when I was at John Rous', at Kingston, I had a sight of my being taken prisoner; and when I was at Bray Doiley's, in Oxfordshire, as I sat at supper, I saw that I was taken, and I saw I had a suffering to undergo. But the Lord's name is over all, blessed be His holy name for ever!
G. F."

In none of his writings do we ever read that his heart and flesh failed him when, again and again, he was brought

up short against a prison wall. He seems to have been sure that prison was as much God's will for him as liberty for others, and that He was "too wise to err, too good to be unkind." George was not a man who thought much about himself. His motto was always, to the day of his death, "God First." His feelings and preferences were kept so much in abeyance that sometimes one doubts if he had any, apart from the daily happenings of his life, which were taken by him as good, because they came from the hand of the Lord.

After he and Thomas had lain for some time in gaol, they wrote a full account of their arrest to the Lord Mayor of the town. They told how they had been travelling homewards, and were sitting in the house of a friend, talking socially, when Henry Parker, a justice, and Rowland Hans, a clergyman, came in and arrested them. They were sent to prison, because complaints had been made to the justice "of several big past meetings of many hundreds at a time!" George also explained to the Mayor that in the warrant the justice said in one place no satisfactory account of their settlement or place of habitation appeared to him, and then, a little further on, gives their addresses!

No notice whatever was taken of this letter. Thomas Lower's brother, who was a physician to the King, got a letter from Henry Saville, a younger brother of the Mayor of Worcester's, that would have given him his pardon had he taken advantage of it. But as no mention was made of George, Thomas would not leave him, so they stayed together till the Sessions opened and they were called to appear before Justice Parker.

The justice seemed to be at a loss how to begin, and there was an awkward silence in the Court, which was broken by a man who shouted to the justice to know:—

"Are ye afraid? Dare not the justices speak to them!"

Thus adjured, Justice Parker made a long speech, and accused the prisoners of having broken the common laws.

Lower was examined at great length. Parker made a strong point of the fact that there were Quakers from London, Bristol, Cornwall and the North in the house when they were arrested. He looked rather foolish, when it was explained that these people were all of one family and related to each other!

The justices whispered together a little, and then tendered George the Oath. Patiently and clearly, George went over all the old ground and explained his position and that of the Quakers in respect to the Oath. He would be more than willing to take that of Supremacy and Allegiance, for "he acknowledged the King and abhorred all plots against him." But it was no use. He was ordered back to prison. Thomas Lower they dismissed, saying they had nothing against him. But Thomas was not so easily disposed of.

"Why," he demanded, "if I am discharged, should you retain my father?" George was not really his father. If he was any relation at all, it must have been that of stepfather-in-law. But most of Margaret's children and children-in-law loved George very affectionately, and would gladly have suffered in his stead any time.

"If you be not content," said the chairman, "we will tender you the Oath also, and send you to your 'father!'"

"Thou canst do as thou thinkest fit," replied Thomas, "but whether thou sendest me or not, I intend to go and wait on my father, for that is my business in the country."

This was the beginning of a long and wearisome proceeding. At the next Sessions, a true bill was found against George for not taking the Oath, and he was offered the alternative of going to prison or finding bail. He chose prison, because he was an innocent man, and to give bail would be to imply that he was guilty, and that was against his principles. However, so sure were they of him, that they released him after a few hours' imprisonment, on his promising to appear at the time appointed.

The King was appealed to on his behalf. Margaret herself went to London to plead for her husband. Charles II. listened kindly to all she had to say, then told her the matter must be left to the Lord Chancellor. Margaret went to the Chancellor, and he said the only thing to be done was for the King to grant George a free pardon. But to this George replied:—

“I am not free to accept a pardon, knowing I have not done evil. I would rather lie in prison all my days than come out in any way dishonourable to truth.”

William Penn at this time was in high standing at the Court, and he did all in his power to obtain a release for his friend.

“Dear George,” he writes to him, “thy dear and tender love in thy last letter I received, and for business thus, a great lord, a man of noble mind, did as good as put himself in a loving way to get thy liberty. He prevailed with the King for a pardon, but that we rejected; then he pressed for a more noble release that better answered truth. He prevailed and got the King’s hand for a release. It sticks with the keeper. The king is angry with him, and promises very largely and lovingly.”

But the release stuck fast, and early in 1675, more than a year after his arrest, George was brought to London. He was at this time in very poor health, having been seriously ill when in Worcester Gaol, and they had to convey him to London in a coach. On March 11th he appeared before Sir Matthew Hale and other Judges of the Court of King’s Bench. When the Judges saw the indictment against George, they unanimously declared it so full of errors as to be null and void, and that George ought and should be set at liberty. This did not satisfy George’s counsel, Corbett, however. He raised the question as to whether it was legal to imprison anyone under the Statute of *præmunire* for refusing to take Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy. This was an important point. The judges hesitated long before pronouncing a true judgment. To do so was to confess that they had often acted illegally. At last, to their everlasting credit be it

written, they acknowledged that it was illegal. They highly complimented Corbett on the way he had conducted the case.

“You have brought to light,” they said, “that which was not known before, and you have won yourself a great deal of honour by the way you have pleaded George Fox’s cause in Court.”

The fact of George’s letting Corbett plead his case is an evidence of how feeble his health was at the time.

“After I had suffered imprisonment for a year and almost two months for nothing,” writes George in conclusion, “I was fairly set at liberty upon a trial of the errors in my indictment, without receiving pardon or coming under any obligation or engagement at all. And the Lord’s everlasting power went over all, to His glory and praise, and to the magnifying of His name for ever.”

For a long time after this, George was very ill and weak, and forced to give up all active work for a time. He employed himself, when thus laid aside, in writing tracts and epistles. He also gave a great deal of thought to perfecting the business arrangements of the society. For nearly two years he stayed at Swarthmore, and then he made up his mind to attend a yearly meeting in London. His account of his journey there is very different from that of others taken when in health.

“It pleased the Lord to bring me safe to London though much wearied with travel, for, though I rode not very far in a day, yet having had much weakness of body, continued travel was hard to me. Besides, I had not much rest a-nights to refresh nature, for I often sat up late with friends where I lodged, to inform and advise them in things wherein they were wanting, and when I was in bed I was often hindered of sleep by great pains which I felt in my head and teeth, occasioned, as I thought, by a cold I had taken by riding often in the rain. But the Lord’s power was over all, and carried me through all, to His praise.”

Though he seems to have had no idea of it himself, George’s wandering apostolic life, with its arduous

evangelical labours, was at an end. Henceforth, he had to go softly, and be content to be curbed and controlled by his failing strength. This he never deplores. Ill-health he took from God's hands, as he took everything else—as the best thing for him.

His travelling days were not wholly over. He paid a visit to the Quakers in Holland, where he found much business to attend to. It had become the usual thing now, when Quakers could not agree as to any one line of action, to leave the question with a note appended to the effect, "We will leave this for George Fox." This entailed upon him an immense amount of business during his visits to different meetings. After three months' stay in Holland, he returned home to England. He did a little travelling in England the year after his return, and decided that as the Quakers were increasing so rapidly in London it was better to make that city his headquarters.

In 1681, George was sued, together with his wife and several other Quakers, for not paying tithes. This was about the last time he was interfered with by the authorities. At this trial it came out that George had bound himself over never to have anything to do with his wife's estate. The judges would not believe this till they had seen his own writing with signature and seal to that effect!

1662 and 1663 were times of great suffering to the Quakers in London. They often had to worship in the open-air, because soldiers were put at the doors of their meeting-houses to keep them from going in; they were mobbed and ill-treated, and very often fined and imprisoned as well. This persecution extended into the North as well.

"When my husband was from home," writes Margaret Fox, "the justices of our country were very severe and much bent against me, because I had a meeting at my house. They did not fine the house as his, he being absent, but as mine, as being the widow of Judge Fell. They fined me twenty pounds for the house, and twenty

pounds for speaking in the meeting, and then fined me forty pounds the second time for speaking."

It was not until late years that George laid down any very distinct lines as to dress. But about 1684-5 there was a marked falling off in the quiet dress that heretofore had been generally worn, and a going after the fashions. George wrote an address on this subject, and urgently begged of all Quakers to show themselves, by their dress, an example of unworldliness.

In 1685, Charles II. died, and was succeeded by his brother, James II. Unfit as James was to reign, he did one good thing in his time, and that was to open the prison doors and set at liberty all the Quaker and Nonconformist prisoners. It was not that he was particularly fond of Quakers as a body—though William Penn was undoubtedly a favourite—but his only hope of procuring toleration for the Catholics, whom he did love, was to extend freedom of conscience to all dissenters. Some fifteen or sixteen hundred Quakers were released about this time, and it was a very joyful occasion. George urged upon his people to make it one of increased holiness and gratitude to God.

"Let God's people be diligent and careful," he wrote, "to keep the camp of God holy, pure and clean, and to serve God and Christ and one another in the glorious peaceable gospel of life and salvation."

But all this time George's health was steadily failing. Time and again he had to take long rests, and though he attended meetings when he was able to get about at all, he was seldom able to sit one through, and used to have to go to the house of friends near by and rest before he was able to attempt the fatigue of returning home.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE END.

"So He bringeth them into their desired haven."—*Psalm* cvii. 30.

THE last year of George Fox's life was a quiet one. The year 1690 saw the passing of the Toleration Act, after which Quakers could no more be thrust into vile dungeons, there to die of fever and confinement. Never again were they to be whipped through the streets and otherwise personally maltreated. It was of immense satisfaction to George to see the passing of this Act before he died, and thus to know that in the thickest of the fight he had been with his beloved followers, and that now he was about to leave them their future looked bright.

No one has ever attempted to say exactly what George died of. He suffered from no disease. There was just a daily weakening of all physical strength. He was not a very old man, as his appearance might lead one to suppose, but suffering, and imprisonment, and privation had left the marks of their ravages on his body, as they had broken down his iron constitution. In 1690 his voice was feeble, his eyes hollow, and his eyesight dim, his hair thin and white, and he could only with the greatest difficulty crawl the half mile between his house and the meeting. But his intellect was unimpaired. That was keen as ever, and as his body wasted away his soul renewed its youth and mounted up on eagles' wings.

George's life is not one that could be termed picturesque. It is too crowded for that, too full of events to enable one to get an artistic whole. On the other side, there is the steady, unebbing calm of his spiritual life once he had

grasped the truth he sought for. There are no "ups and downs," no struggles, no soul conflicts to record. His life was one truly hid with Christ in God. It was pure and childlike. His faith both in God and human nature was unbounded, his obedience to the Captain of his salvation implicit. His one desire was the extension of Christ's Kingdom upon earth.

His charity and unselfishness all acknowledged. His means were far from large, but on them he supported himself, and even after he was married he refused to partake of his wife's riches. As to his private life none, even his enemies, ever seriously attacked that. He had an undoubted faculty for making friends. All who knew him loved him, and he attracted to himself men of very different classes. Scholars, labourers, statesmen, courtiers, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, all, as soon as they came under the spell of his influence, loved him.

His preaching, we are told, was not remarkable, either for eloquence or clearness. Even those who loved and admired him most cannot say that preaching was his strongest point. He was very often so involved in his sentences as to be almost unintelligible. But one element was never lacking in all his discourses, and that was the Holy Ghost. It was that, combined with his earnestness and enthusiasm, that caused him to sway the masses, as he undoubtedly did. He was not much of a talker in private life, though one has remarked:—

"I observe that when George is present the others are mostly silent."

But if George was not eloquent in speech he was in prayer! Here he excelled, and when the Spirit moved him to pray his tongue was as an angel's.

"Above all," writes a contemporary, "he excelled in prayer. The inwardness and weight of his spirit, the reverence and solemnity and weight of his address and behaviour, the fewness and fulness of his words have often struck even strangers with admiration, as they used to reach others with consolation."

The most striking of George's characteristics are,

perhaps, his clear, practical, common sense and sound wisdom, and his sympathy with all kinds of suffering. It was not possible for him to see or hear of suffering and sorrow, without trying to alleviate it. "No grief," it has been said, "was too small for him to try to assuage, no evil too great for him to attempt to right."

His friend and warm admirer, Thomas Ellwood, writes of him that he was :—

"Valiant for the truth, bold in asserting it, patient in suffering for it, unwearied in labouring in it, steady in his testimony to it, unmovable as a rock. Deep was he in Divine knowledge, clear in opening Heavenly mysteries, plain and powerful in preaching. . . . Graceful was he in countenance, manly in personage, grave in gesture, courteous in conversation, weighty in communication, free from affectation in speech or carriage. A severe reprover of hard and obstinate sinners, a mild and gentle admonisher of such as were tender and sensible of their failings, not apt to resent personal wrongs, easy to forgive injuries, but zealously earnest where the honour of God, the prosperity of the truth, the peace of the Church, were concerned. Very tender, compassionate and pitiful was he to all that were under any kind of affliction; free of brotherly love, full of fatherly care, for the care of the Churches of Christ was upon him. Beloved was he of God, beloved of God's people, and (which was not the least part of his honour) the common butt of all apostates' envy, whose good, notwithstanding, he earnestly sought."

His end was peace. As some vessel, full-freighted, rides into harbour on the calm bosom of a spring tide, so he was borne into the Kingdom. All through the year 1690, he attended as many meetings as his strength would allow, and wrote various epistles to different meetings. He also made a few short journeys, and paid several visits to the House of Parliament to plead against some Bill that was laid before it, which he feared would be injurious to the Quakers. In the latter part of the year he settled down in London, and we are told was almost daily with Friends in meetings. On November 10th—a Saturday night—

he wrote a letter to the Quakers in Ireland, and then wrote his journal up to date before he slept.

The next morning, although it was very cold, he attended a meeting. Of this meeting, it is recorded, he "engaged in prayer and testimony in a powerful and affecting manner." After the meeting he went to the house of a Quaker—Henry Goldney—which was near by, to get a little rest. He was very cold, and, as he said himself, he felt the cold "strike to my heart," but, he added, turning to those who were with him :—

"I am glad I was here—now I am clear—fully clear."

He lay down to rest, but becoming still colder, he went to bed. Then he realised that even now he was walking the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Little by little, he felt his strength ebbing away, and all that night he lay in much peace and contentment. Next day, however, something weighed on his mind. He could not rest. He sent for some special friends, and to them he confided the safe keeping of Quakerism, and made them promise to see that Quaker literature was widely spread, so that future generations might be in no doubt as to what Quakerism really was. With George Fox's death, Quakerism received its first real blow. Though for years the Society kept up its active evangelical work, yet, surely and steadily, it began to retire within itself and lose its first love for a dying world, content in keeping itself pure and unworldly. These gave their promise and George lay down in peace, murmuring :—

"All is well—the Seed of God reigns over all, and over death itself. Though I am weak in body, yet the power of God is over all."

A little later, he appeared to have a great deal of pain. Someone bent over him and asked if he was suffering.

"Never heed," he said, "the Lord's power is over all weakness and death."

He lingered till Wednesday and then, without a struggle, closed his eyes and was with Jesus.

On the Saturday, he was buried. From all parts of England, Quakers came to the funeral, which was an immense one. The little meeting-house in Whitehart Yard was crowded, and for two hours, one after another got up and gave their testimony to the love they bore George Fox. Then the coffin was taken by tender hands to its last resting-place, and followed by a tremendous concourse of people. It was laid in that most dreary of all cemeteries, Bunhill Fields, which was now, in the seventeenth century, a Quaker burying-ground. Here rested the bodies of eleven hundred Quakers who had died of the plague, and a hundred others who had died in Newgate Prison, or on board the ship that was to take them to slavery; among them were Edward Burroughs, Samuel Fisher, and Richard Hubberthorne. No headstone at first marked the place where George was buried, but a little later a plain stone with his initials was placed in the graveyard, to denote the place where one of God's mightiest heroes lay sleeping, in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection.

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