

The Reliques of the Christ.

I wonder if in Nazareth
By heedless feet o'erun,
There lingers still some dear relique
Or work by Joseph's Son;
Some carved thought, some tool of toil,
Some house with stones grown gray,
A home he built who had not where
His weary head to lay.

It were a thing most beautiful,
Of rare and rich design;
And something very true and strong,
Made by a skill divine;
The roadside stones at sight of him
Could scarce their rapture hush;
What felt his touch and eye must yet
With conscious beauty blush.

I visit Nazareth, ask each man,
Each mould, each stone, each wind:
"I pray ye, help some precious tract
Of our Great Builder find;"
Alas! ye listeners to my plaint,
The startled silence saith:
"What once was false, is now too true—
No Christ in Nazareth!"

But, O my soul, why thus cast down?
A truer Nazareth scan;
What if thou find no time-spoiled work
Of Christ, the Son of Man?
Joy to thee yet; lift up thy head,
Cast raptured gaze abroad,
See in this vast Christ-built world
Signs of the Son of God!

So Nazareth may silent be,
But earth shall have her song;
And all things true and beautiful,
And all things grand and strong,
And very humblest, too, shall sing:
"Through him have all things been;
And without him was nothing made:
Praise ye the Lord! Amen."

HUNTED AND HARRIED.

A Tale of the Scottish Covenanters.

BY R. A. BALLANTYNE.

CHAPTER IV.—THE HUNTING AND HARRYING DISPLAYED.

Being ignorant, as we have said, of the cruel murder of old Mitchell, Ramblin' Peter's report had not seriously alarmed Black. He concluded that the worst the troopers would do would be to rob the poor old couple of what money they found in their possession, oblige them to take the Oath of Supremacy, drink the health of King and bishops, and otherwise insult and plunder them. Knowing the Mitchells intimately, he had no fear that their opposition would invite severity. Being very fond of them, however, he resolved, at the risk of his life, to prevent as far as possible the threatened indignity and plunder.

"They're a douce and pair," he remarked to Will Wallace as they strode down the hill-side together, "quiet an' peaceable, wi' naething to speak o' in the way of opeinions—someh' like mysel'—an' willin' to let-be for let-be. But since the country has been ower-run by thae Highlanders an' sodgers, they've had little peace, and the auld man has gie'n them a heap o' trouble, for he's as deaf as a post. Peter says the pairty o' dragoons is a sma' ane, so I expect the sight o' us'll scare them away an' prevent fechtin'."

"It may be so," said Wallace, "and of course I shall not fail you in this attempt to protect your old friends; but, to tell you the truth, I don't quite like this readiness on the part of you Covenanters to defy the laws, however bad they may be, and to attack the King's troops. The Bible, which you so often quote, inculcates long-suffering and patience."

"Him! there speaks yer ignorance," returned the farmer with a dash of cynicism in his tone. "Hoo mony years, think ye, are folk to submit to tyranny an' wrang an' fierce oppression for nae sin whatever against the laws o' God or the land? Are twunty, thretty, or forty years no' enough to warrant bor claim to lang-sufferin'? Does submission to law-breakin' on the part o' Government, an' lang-continued, high-handed oppression frae King, courtier, an' prelate, accompanied wi' bare-faced plunder an' murder—does that no justify oor claim to patience? To a' this the Covenanters hae submitted for mony weary years without rebellion, except maybe in the matter o' the Pentlands, when a when o' us were driven to desperation. But I understand your feelin's, lad; for I'm a man o' peace by natur', an' would gladly submit to injustice to keep things quiet—if possible; but some things are, no' possible, an' the Bible itsel' says we're to live peaceably wi' a man only 'as much as in us lies.'"

The ex-trooper was silent. Although ignorant of the full extent of maddening persecution to which not merely the Covenanters but the people of Scotland generally had been subjected, his own limited experience told him that there was much truth in what his companion said; still, like all loyal-hearted men, he shrank from the position of antagonist to Government.

"I agree with you," he said, after a few minutes' thought, "but I have been born, I suppose, with a profound respect for law and legally constituted authority."

"Div ye think, lad," returned Black, impressively, "that nasebody's been born wi' a high respect for law but yersel'? I suppose ye admit that the King is bound to respect the law as weel as the people?"

"Of course I do. I am no advocate of despotism."

"Weel then," continued the farmer with energy, "in the year sixteen forty-ane, an' at ither times, kings an' parliaments hae stamped the Covenants o' Scotland as bein' part o' the law o' this land—whereby freepart o' conscience an' Presbyterian worship dom o' conscience an' Presbyteries Chairles are secured to us. An' here comes Chairles the Second an' breaks the law by sendin' that scoondrel the Duke o' Lauderdale here wi' full poors to dae what he likes—an' Middleton, a poors man wi' nae heart an' less conscience, that was raised up frae naething to be a noble, nae less! My word, nobles are easy made, but Lauderdale makes a cooncil wi' Aircbishop Sherp—a traiter and a turncoat—an' a wheen mair like himsel', and they send sodgers oot ower the land to eat us up an' cram Prelacy doon oor throats, an' curates into oor poo'pits whether we wull or no'. An' that though Chairles himsel' signed the Covenant at the time he was crooned! Ca' ye that law or legally constituted authority?"

Although deeply excited by this brief recital of his country's wrongs, Black maintained the quiet expression of feature and tone of voice that were habitual to him. Further converse on the subject was interrupted by their arrival at the farm, where they found all right save that Jean and Aggie were in a state of fearful anxiety about their poor neighbours.

While the farmer was seeing to the security of his house and its arrangements, preparatory to continuing the march to the Mitchells' cottage, the rest of the party stood about the front door conversing. Will Wallace was contemplating Jean Black with no little admiration, as she moved about the house. There was something peculiarly attractive about Jean. A winsome air and native grace, with refinement of manner unusual in one of her station, would have stamped her with a powerful species of beauty even if she had not possessed in addition a modest look and fair young face.

The ex-trooper was questioning in a dreamy way, whether he had ever before seen such a pretty and agreeable specimen of girlhood, when he experienced a shock of surprise on observing that Jean had gone to neighbouring spring for water and was making something very like a signal to him to follow her.

The surprise was mingled with an uncomfortable feeling of regret, for the action seemed inconsistent with the maiden's natural modesty.

"Forgie me, sir," she said, "for being so bold, but oh! sir, if ye know how anxious I am about Uncle Black, ye would understand—he is wanted so much, an' there's them in the hidy-hole that would fare ill if he was taken to prison just now. If—ye—would—"

"Well, Jean," said Will, sympathising with the struggle it evidently cost the girl to speak to him—"don't hesitate to confide in me. What would you have me do?"

"Only to keep him back frae the sodgers if ye can. He's such an awfu' man to fecht when he's roosed, that he's sure to kill some o' them if he's no' killed himsel'. An' it'll be ruin to us a' an' to the Mitchells too, if—"

She was interrupted at this point by Black himself calling her name.

"Trust me," said Wallace earnestly, "I understand what you wish, and will do my best to prevent evil."

A grateful look was all the maiden's reply as she hurried away.

Our hero's perplexity as to how this promise was to be fulfilled was, however, needless, for on reaching the Mitchells' hut it was found that the troopers had already left the place; but the state of things they had left behind them was enough to stir deeply the pity and the indignation of the party.

Everything in confusion—broken furniture, meal and grain scattered on the floor, open chests and cupboards—told that the legalised brigands had done their worst. Poor Mrs. Mitchell had objected to nothing that they said or did or proposed to her. She feebly drank the health of the King and prelates when bidden to do so, and swore whatever test-oaths they chose to apply to her till they

required her to admit that the King was lord over the kirk and the conscience. Then her spirit fired, and with a firm voice she declared that no king but Christ should rule over her kirk or conscience—to which she boldly added that she had attended conventicles, and would do so again!

Having obtained all they wanted, the dragoons went away, leaving the old woman among the ruins of her home, for they probably did not consider it worth while carrying off a prisoner who would in all likelihood have died on the road to prison.

In the midst of all the noise and confusion it had struck the old woman as strange that they never once asked about her husband. After they had gone, however, the arrival of two neighbours bearing his dead body, revealed the terrible reason. She uttered no cry when they laid his corpse on the floor, but sat gazing in horror as if turned to stone. Thus Black and his friends found her.

She could not be roused to speak, and looked, after a few minutes, like one who had not realised the truth.

In this state she was conveyed to Black's cottage and handed over to Jean, whom every one seemed intuitively to regard as her natural comforter. The poor child led her into her own room, sat down beside her on the bed, laid the aged head on her sympathetic bosom and sobbed as if her heart was breaking. But no response came from the old woman, save that once or twice she looked up feebly and said, "Jean, dear, what ails ye?"

In the Council Chamber at Edinburgh, Lauderdale, learning on one occasion that many persons both high and low had refused to take the bond already referred to, which might well have been styled the bond of slavery, bared his arm in fury, and, smiting the table with his fist, swore with a terrific oath that he would "force them to take the bond."

What we have described is a specimen of the manner in which the force was sometimes applied. The heartless despot and his clerical coadjutors had still to learn that tyranny has not yet forged the weapon that can separate man from his God.

"What think ye noo?" asked Andrew Black, turning to Wallace with a quiet but stern look, after old Mrs. Mitchell had been carried in, "what think ye noo, lad, o' us Covenanters an' oor lack o' lang sufferin' an' oor defyin' the laws? Aren't these laws we ought to defy, but havena properly defied yet, Jaws illegally made by a perjured King and an upstart Council?"

"Mr. Black," said the ex-trooper, seizing his companion's hand with an iron grip, "from this day forward I am with you—heart and soul."

Little did Wallace think, when he came to this decision, that he had stronger reason for his course of action than he was aware of at the moment.

It was night when Mrs. Mitchell was brought into the farm-house, and preparations were being made for a hasty meal, when Ramblin' Peter came in with the news that a number of people in the Lanarkshire district had been intercommuned and driven from their homes—amongst others David Spence, Will Wallace's uncle, with whom his mother had taken up her abode.

The distracted looks of poor Wallace on hearing this showed the powerful effect the news had upon him.

"Keep yersel' quiet, noo," said Black in an encouraging tone, as he took the youth's arm and led him out of the house. "These are no' times to let our hearts rin awa' wi' oor heids. Yer mither let me tell ye that yer uncle Daavid is a douce, cliver felly, an' fears naething i' this warld. If he did, he wadna be among the intercommuned. Be sure he's no' the man to leave his sister Maggie in trouble. Of course ye'll be wantin' to be aff to look after her."

"Of course—instantly," said Wallace.

"Na. Ye'll hae yer supper first—an' a guid ain—for ye'll need it. Have patience, noo, an' listen to me, for I'll do the very best I can for ye in this strait—an' it's no muckle ye can do for yersel' without help."

There was something so decided yet kindly and reassuring in the farmer's tone and manner that Wallace felt relieved in spite of his anxieties, and submitted to his guidance in all things. Black then explained that he had a friend in Lanark who owed him money on lambs sold to him the previous year; that he meant to send his man Quentin Dick first to collect that money, and then proceed to Edinburgh, for the purpose of making further arrangements there about cattle.

"Noo," continued Black, "I've gotten a mither as weel as you, an' she lives in the Canlemaker Row, close to the Greyfriars' Kirkyard, where they signed the Covenants, ye ken. Weel, I wad advise you to gang to Lanark wi' Quentin, an' when ye find yer mither tak' her to Edinbro' an' let her live

wi' my mither i' the meantime, till we see what the Lord has in store for this pair per-secuted remnant. I'm sorry to part wi' ye, lad, sae unexpectedly, but in thae times, when folk are called on to part wi' their heids unexpectedly, we manna compleen."

"I'll take your advice gladly," said Wallace. "When will Quentin Dick be ready to start?"

"In less than an hour. The moon'll be up soon after that. It's o' nae use startin' on sae dark a night till she's up, for ye'll hae to cross some nasty grund. Noo, lad, though I'm no a minister, my advice to ye is, to gang doon into the hidy-hole an' pray about this matter. Niver mind the folk ye find there. They're used to prayin'. It's my opeenion that if there was less preachin' an' mair prayin', we'd be a' the better for't. It's a thrawn warld we live in, but we're bound to mak' the best o't."

Although not much in the habit of engaging in prayer—save at the formal periods of morning and evening—our ex-trooper was just then in the mood to take his friend's advice. He retired to the place of refuge under Black's house, where he found several people who had evidently been at the communion on Skeoch Hill. These were engaged in earnest conversation, and took little notice of him as he entered. The place was very dimly lighted. The end of the low vaulted chamber was involved in obscurity. Thither the youth went and knelt down. From infancy his mother had taught him "to say his prayers," and had sought to induce him to pray. It is probable that the first time he really did so was in that secret chamber where, in much anxiety of soul, he prayed for himself.

(To be continued.)

A Sunset on the Lower St. Lawrence

BY ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

BROAD shadows fall. On all the mountain side
The scythe-swept fields are silent. Slowly home
By the long beach the high-piled hay carts come,
Splashing the pale salt shallows. Over wide
Fawn-coloured wastes of mud the slipping tide,
Round the dun rocks and wattled fisheries,
Creeps murmuring in. And now by twos and threes,
O'er the slow spreading pools with clamorous chide,
Belated crows from strip to strip take flight,
Soon will the first star shine; yet ere the night
Reach onward to the pale green distances,
The sun's last shaft beyond the gray sea-floor
Still dreams upon the Kamouraska shores,
And the long line of golden villages.
Ottawa, Canada.

COME JUST AS YOU ARE.

MANY years ago a little boy was stolen from his mother, in London. Years passed by, and the poor mother constantly prayed for her lost boy. But all seemed to be in vain. Still the mother did not give up her hopes.

One day a little chimney sweeper was sent into the house next to the mother's to clean the chimney. When he had finished his work, he by mistake went down the wrong chimney, which belonged to the next house. He came out at the fireplace of the sitting-room. He looked around, and the room seemed familiar to him. The scenes of the past days of his childhood came back to his mind.

A woman entered the room; and now all was clear to the boy. He cried out: "O my dear mother!"

Did that mother shrink back at the sight of the ragged, sooty clothes of the boy? Do you think she threw him out of the house, and told him to wash himself first before he could dare to come back? No! She took that boy into her arms, and wept tears of joy.

THE cross of Christ is the sweetest burden that I ever bore—such a burden as wings are to a bird, or as sails to a ship—to carry me forward to my desired haven. Truly, it is a glorious thing to follow the Lamb; it is the highway to glory; but when you see Him in his own country, at home, you will think you never saw him before.—Rutherford.