



THE TOWER OF LONDON.

## London's Tragic Tower.

BY REV. W. HARRISON.

It was on a bright, warm day in August last that we found our way to the Tower of London, and as we passed inside the gray walls of this wonderfully historic and famous pile of buildings, we could not but think of the many marvellous changes which have transpired since this gloomy old fortress, palace, and prison lifted its massive and defiant form on the banks of the Thames, eight hundred years ago. It was erected in 1079-80 by Gundulph, Bishop of Rochester, by command of William the Conqueror, and is regarded as a magnificent specimen of the Norman architecture which largely prevailed in those far-off and rugged times. It is doubtful if this hoary structure, for thrilling incident and chronicles of pathetic and dramatic story, can be equalled by any other place in the world. Through those very gateways which admit the curious and pleasure-seeking multitudes of to-day, have passed processions of earthly, kingly splendour which would bankrupt the most opulent phrase to describe, and almost within sight of these trailing glories of state, throngs of illustrious prisoners have been marched along to dungeon, to suffering, and to cruel death.

Again and again, royalty and grandeur have passed beneath those ominous portals to exchange the dreams of honour and glory and the festive brilliancy of courts, for the prison, the torture-room and the fatal block and axe. Within that space of some thirteen acres, which includes the principal and oldest tower, and the eighteen smaller and more recent towers, what sights and sounds have been seen and heard for nearly eight long centuries! Here the kings of England found a refuge in the stormiest times, and though this ancient pile has felt the shock of all the most violent internal convulsions which have agitated the nation, and has had to bear the horrors of war as they have raged around its massive battlements and walls, it still holds its own, and remains like some old unbeaten warrior to tell of deeds of mighty daring, of fallen heroes, of perished splendour, and of scenes of furious passion and of darkness and of death. And what strange contrasts are crowded upon your vision as you walk around this grim old fabric of eight hundred years! Here are crowns of priceless value, flashing with costliest diamonds and famous stones; and just a minute's walk and

you look upon the executioner's block, with the headsman's axe and mask, the thumb-screws, the collar, the bilboes and chains.

Here are rooms once filled with England's beauty, pride and glory, where revelry and mirth held high festival from age to age, and there are the gloomy cells where distinguished prisoners pined in misery, in hunger and rags, and where sufferings too terrible to relate were endured before the fatal hour arrived. Shouts of pleasure in her wild delirium of delight rang through those spacious halls, and cries of deadliest pain and muffled means of broken bleeding hearts crept slowly up from the gloom of the prison-cell below.

In one part of this historic tower, eyes long ago, flashed until they were ablaze with some passing victory, and faces crimsoned until they were red with momentary glory, but alas! other eyes beneath the same roof were filled with scalding tears of bitterest woes, and other countenances which only a little while before basked in the sunshine of royal smile and favour now grew pale with increasing terrors and the swift approach of some cruel and tragic end!

The inscriptions carved or scratched by the doomed prisoners on the walls of their cells, "rudely written, but each letter full of hope, and yet of heart-break" still remain to tell a story laden with pathetic tenderness and with a sorrow too deep for words.

But the spot in all this space where pomp and tragedy have so often met, and which most can move and thrill the soul, is the little chapel of St. Peter. The deep interest attaching to this sanctuary arises not so much from its antiquity, as from the fact that within its walls lie moulding the remains of an illustrious company who fell from the lofty pinnacles of worldly power and wide-spread fame to fates, full of ghastly suffering and cruel wrong.

"There is no sadder spot on earth" say Macaulay, "than this little cemetery. Hither have been carried through successive ages by the rude hands of goalers, without one mourner following, the bleeding relics of men who have been the captains of armies, the leaders of parties, the oracles of senates and the ornaments of courts."

The memorial tablet at the entrance contains the names of thirty-four persons of historical note who after life's fitful stormy day were laid to rest in this chapel. Nearly the whole of this long list of dis-

tinguished individuals, including the two queens, Annie Boleyn and Katherine Howard with Lady Jane Grey perished by the headsman's axe.

Time, however, has wrought wonders, great and strange, and the fair angel of peace has flung her welcome banner over all those scenes of conflict we have been reviewing. The noise and tumult of all that terrible strife has long since died away, and the wild agitations which shook the nation of those distant days are only memories to us.

This old tower, like some huge whispering gallery echoes to us the stirring chapters of that dark tempestuous morning, out of which the bright, broadening England of to-day was yet to come. The march of the right and true has converted many of those ancient implements of torture into uses which wins one's admiration, and as we gaze upon those melancholy symbols of departed darker days, we are glad a thousand times that our lot has fallen on more favoured years.

The very place where stood the grim wooden scaffold on Tower Hill, where so many eminent persons were beheaded is now a garden, and nature from year to year, kindly throws her flowery coverlet over the once crimson and terrible spot. It is well to keep before the rising generation the fact that the freedom which blesses us to-day, has not been achieved without a thousand conflicts with lawless forces, that British history has been swept again and again with fierce hurricanes of malignant passions, and upon the fields of the past has fallen the rain of tears and great baptisms of blood; but out of all the confusion and struggle of centuries there has arisen a temple of liberty and civilization, fair and beautiful, and an empire which for extent and character, stands without an equal in all the annals of time. Hallam in his "Constitutional History of England," says,—"speaking of London's far-famed Tower, 'The dark and gloomy fabric seems to stand in these modern days like a captive tyrant reserved to grace the triumphs of a victorious republic, and should teach us to reflect in thankfulness, how highly we have been elevated in virtue and happiness above our forefathers.'—*The Wesleyan*."

## Glum Religion.

THE religion of Jesus has in it no elements to render its possessor morose, sullen, unattractive, glum. It is essentially cheery, pleasant, joyous. It removes all that terrifies and darkens, and substitutes whatever tends to lighten, beautify, sweeten, and make the heart leap for joy. The curse of sin is removed because it has been borne by Christ; the wrath of God toward the sinner has been quenched in the blood that quenches from all sin; the sin that separated the soul from God has been removed; the peace of God that passeth all understanding keeps the mind and heart; the spirit of love takes possession of the whole man; "the mountains and the hills break forth unto him into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands."

"There is now no condemnation to him;" "Christ dwells in his heart by faith;" "It is formed in him the hope of glory;" and "All things are his because he is Christ's." He has the promise of God for everything that he needs on earth—safe conduct through the vale of death, and an eternal home with God and all blessed ones beyond.

What a falsifier of the Saviour; what a caricaturist of his Master; what a stumbling-block to others in the way to heaven; and what an offence to "the little ones" in Christ's fold is the professor who has nothing to exhibit but a glum religion!—*Selected*.