

Put On the Shoe.

Have you heard that old saw of the Persians,
That saying, both witty and true,
"The whole world is covered with leather
To him who is shod with a shoe?"
Fine calfskin or kid or morocco,
Great cavalry boots armed with steel,
The daintiest, jauntiest slippers,
Coarse brogues tumbled down at the heel—
What matter the different fashions?—
The richest and poorest of you
Will find the whole world clad in leather
As soon as you put on the shoe!
Before, it was cold and uneven,
Rough pebbles and sharp bits of glass.
Now, presto! a smooth and warm pavement
Wherever it please you to pass.

But, ah! there's a maid—have you seen her?
A little maid cheery and sweet,
Who daintily trips, yet I see not
What leather she wears on her feet.
For I know by her sunny eyes' sparkle,
And by the calm curve of her mouth,
And by the kind grace of her manners,
Like warm breezes fresh from the south.
I know that wherever her foot falls—
On loving task speeding or sent—
The cobbler may laugh, but I care not,
She is shod with the shoe of content!

And that little maid, Cinderella,
Might claim your wee shoe for her own,
But borrowing's out of the question
For me, with my "sevens" outgrown.
Just whisper the secret, I pray thee,
Come, what is the shop and the street,
And where is the cobbler who fashions
Such beautiful gear for the feet?
I'll go and I'll offer a treasure
Will make his big spectacles shine—
If only two shoes—somewhat larger—
Like your little ones, can be mine!
And then I will don them, and leaping
Off over the world will I go;
Off over my frets and my worries,
Off over my aches and my woe.
And loudly to all humping grumblers
My shoemaker cheer shall be sent;
The whole world is covered with gladness
To him who is shod with content!

HUNTED AND HARRIED.

A Tale of the Scottish Covenanters.

BY R. M. BALLANTYNE.

CHAPTER III.—THE TRUK AND THE FALSE AT WORK.

The face of nature did not seem propitious to the great gathering on Skooch Hill. Inky clouds rolled athwart the leaden sky, threatening a deluge of rain, and fitful gusts of wind seemed to indicate the approach of a tempest. Nevertheless the elements were held in check by the God of nature, so that the solemn services of the day were conducted to a close without discomfort, though not altogether without interruption.

Several of the most eminent ministers, who had been expelled from their charges, were present on this occasion. Besides John Welsh of Irongray, there were Arnot of Tongland, Blackadder of Troqueer, and Dickson of Rutherglen—godly men who had for many years suffered persecution and imprisonment, and were ready to lay down their lives in defence of religious liberty. The price set upon the head of that "notour traitor, Mr. John Welsh," dead or alive, was 9,000 merks. Mr. Arnot was valued at 3,000!

These preached and assisted at different parts of the services, while the vast multitude sat on the sloping hillside, and the mounted men drew up on the outskirts of the congregation, so as to be within sound of the preachers' voices, and, at the same time, be ready for action on the defensive if enemies should appear.

Andrew Black and his companion stood for some time listening, with bowed heads, to the slow, sweet music that floated towards them. They were too far distant to hear the words of prayer that followed, yet they continued to stand in reverent silence for some time, listening to the sound—Black with his eyes closed, his young companion gazing wistfully at the distant landscape, which, from the elevated position on which they stood, lay like a magnificent panorama spread out before them. On the left the level lands bordering the rivers Cairn and Nith stretched away to the Solway, with the Cumberland mountains in the extreme distance; in front and on the right lay the wild, romantic hill-country of which, in after years, it was so beautifully written:

"Oh, bonnie hills of Galloway; oft have I stood to see,
At sunset hour, your shadows fall, all darkening on the lee;

While visions of the buried years came o'er me in their might—
As phantoms of the sepulchre—instinct with inward light!
The years, the years when Scotland groaned beneath her tyrant's hand!
And 'twas not for the heather she was called 'the purple land,'
And 'twas not for her loveliness her children blessed their God—
But for secret places of the hills, and the mountain heights untrod."

"Who was the old man I found in what you call your hidy-hole?" asked Wallace, turning suddenly to his companion.

"I'm no' sure that I have a right to answer that," said Black, regarding Wallace with a half-serious, half-amused look. "However, noo that ye've ta'en service wi' me, and ken about my hidy hole, I suppose I may trust ye wi' a' my secrets."

"I would not press you to reveal any secrets, Mr. Black, yet I think you are safe to trust me, seeing that you know enough about my own secrets to bring in to the gallows if so disposed."

"Ay, I ha' ye there, lad! But I'll trust ye on better grounds than that. I believe ye to be an honest man, and that's enough for me. Weel, ye maun ken, it's sixteen year since I howkit the hidy-hole below my hoose, an' wad ye believe it?—they've no' found it out yet! Not even had a suspicion o't, though the sodgers ha' been sair puzzled, mony a time, aboot hoo I managed to gie them the slip. An' mony's the pair body, baith gentle and simple, that I've gien food an' shelter to whae was very likely to ha' perished o' cauld an' hunger, but for the hidy hole. Among ither I've often had the persecuted ministers doon there, readin' their Bibles or sleepin' as comfortable as ye like when the dragoons was drinkin', roarin', an' singin' like deevils ower their heids. My certies! if Clavers, or Sherp, or Lauderdale had an inklin' o' the hundred pairt o' the law brekin' that I've done, it's a gallows in the Gressmarkit as high as Haman's wad be ereckit for me, an' my hid an' hauns, may be, would be bleechin' on the Nether Bow. Humph! but they've no' gotten me yet!"

"And I sincerely hope they never will," remarked Wallace; "but you have not yet told me the name of the old man."

"I was comin' to him," continued Black; "but whenever I wander to the doin's o' that black-hearted Council, I'm like to lose the thread o' my discourse. You is a great man i' the Kirk o' Scotland. They ca' him Donald Cargill. The adventures that pair man has had in the course o' mair nor quarter o' a century wad mak' a grand story buik. He has no fear o' man, an' he's an awfu' stickler for justice. Ise warrant he gie'd ye some strang condemnations o' the poors that be."

"Indeed he did not," said Wallace. "Surely you misjudge his character. His converse with me was entirely religious, and his chief anxiety seemed to be to impress on me the love of God in sending Jesus Christ to redeem a wicked world from sin. I tried to turn the conversation on the state of the times, but he gently turned it round again to the importance of being at peace with God, and giving heed to the condition of my own soul. He became at last so personal that I did not quite like it. Yet he was so earnest and kind that I could not take offence."

"Ay, ay," said Black in a musing tone, "I see. He clearly thinks that yer he'rt needs mair instruction than yer heed. Him! maybe he's right. However, he's a wonderfu' man; ganga aboot the country preachin' everywhere altho' he kens that the sodgers are aye on the look-out for him, an' that if they catch him it's certain death. He wad ha' been at this communion nae doot, if he hadna engaged to preach somewhere near Sanguhar this vera day."

"Then he has left the hidy-hole by this time, I suppose?"

"Ye may be sure o' that, for when there is work to be done for the Master, Donald Cargill doesna let the gress grow under his feet."

"I'm sorry that I shall not see him again," returned the ex-trooper in a tone of regret, "for I like him much."

Now, while this conversation was going on, a portion of the troop of dragoons which had been out in search of Andrew Black was sent under Glendinning (now a sergeant) in quest of an aged couple named Mitchell, who were reported to have entertained intercommuned, i.e. outlawed, persons; attended conventicles in the fields; ventured to have family worship in their cottage while a few neighbours were present, and to have otherwise broken the laws of the Secret Council.

This Council, which was ruled by two monsters in human form, namely, Archbishop Sharp, of St. Andrew's, and the Duke of Lauderdale, having obtained full powers from King Charles II. to put down conventicles and enforce the laws against the fanatics with the utmost possible rigour, had proceeded to

carry out their mission by inviting a host of half, if not quite, savage Highlanders to assist them in quelling the people. This host, numbering, with 2,000 regulars and militia, about 10,000 men, eagerly accepted the invitation, and was let loose on the south and western districts of Scotland about the beginning of the year, and for some time ravaged and pillaged the land as if it had been an enemy's country. They were thanked by the King for so readily agreeing to assist in reducing the Covenanters to obedience to "Us and Our laws," and were told to take up free quarters among the disaffected, to disarm such persons as they should suspect, to carry with them instruments of torture wherewith to subdue the refractory, and in short to act very much in accordance with the promptings of their own desires. Evidently the mission suited these men admirably, for they treated all parties as disaffected, with great impartiality, and plundered, tortured, and insulted to such an extent that after about three months of unassisted depredation, the shame of the thing became so obvious that Government was compelled to send them home again. They had accomplished nothing in the way of bringing the Covenanters to reason; but they had desolated a fair region of Scotland, spilt much innocent blood, ruined many families, and returned to their native hills heavily laden with booty of every kind like a victorious army. It is said that the losses caused by them in the county of Ayr alone amounted to over £11,000 sterling.

The failure of this horde did not in the least check the proceedings of Sharp or Lauderdale or their like-minded colleagues. They kept the regular troops and militia moving about the land, enforcing their idiotical and wicked laws at the point of the sword.

Many of the best men in the land laid down their lives rather than cease to proclaim the Gospel of love and peace and good-will in Jesus Christ. Of course their enemies set them down as self-willed and turbulent fanatics. It has ever been, and ever will be, thus with men who are indifferent to principle. They will not, as well as cannot, understand those who are ready to fight, and, if need be, die for truth!

Men and women in hundreds had to flee from their homes and seek refuge among the dens and caves of the mountains, where many were caught, carried off to prison, tried, tortured, and executed; while of those who escaped their foes, numbers perished from cold and hunger, and disease brought on by lying in damp caves and clefts of the rocks without food or fire in all weathers. The fines which were exacted for so-called offences tempted the avarice of the persecutors and tended to keep the torch of persecution aflame. For example, Sir George Maxwell, of Newark, was fined a sum amounting to nearly £8,000 sterling, for absence from his parish church, attendance at conventicles, and disorderly baptisms, i.e. for preferring his own minister to the curate in the baptizing of his children! Hundreds of somewhat similar instances might be given. Up to the time of which we write (1678) no fewer than 17,000 persons had suffered for attending field meetings, either by fine, imprisonment, or death.

Such was the state of matters when the party of dragoons under command of Sergeant Glendinning rode towards the Mitchells' cottage, which was not far from Black's farm. The body of soldiers being too small to venture to interrupt the communion on Skooch Hill, Glendinning had been told to wait in the neighbourhood and gather information while his officer, Captain Houston, went off in search of reinforcements.

"There's the auld sinner himsel'," cried the sergeant as the party came in sight of an old, white-haired man seated on a knoll by the side of the road. "Hallo! Jock Mitchell, is that you? Come doon here directly. I want to speak t'ye."

The old man, being stone deaf, and having his back to the road, was not aware of the presence of the dragoons, and of course took no notice of the summons.

"D'ye hear!" shouted the sergeant savagely, for he was ignorant of the old man's condition.

Still Mitchell did not move. Glendinning, whose disposition seemed to have been rendered more brutal since his encounter with Wallace, drew a pistol from his holster and presented it at Mitchell.

"Answer me," he shouted again, "or ye're a dead man."

Mitchell did not move. . . . There was a loud report, and next moment the poor old man fell dead upon the ground.

It chanced that Ramblin' Peter heard the report, though he did not witness the terrible scene; for he was returning home from the Mitchells' cottage at the time, after escorting Jean Black and Aggie Wilson thither. The two girls, having been forbidden to attend the gathering on Skooch Hill, had resolved to visit the Mitchells and spend the Sabbath with them. Peter had accompanied them

and spent the greater part of the day with them, but, feeling the responsibility of his position as the representative of Andrew Black during his absence, had at last started for home.

A glance over a rising ground sufficed to make the boy turn sharp round and take to his heels. He was remarkably swift of foot. A few minutes brought him to the cottage-door, which he burst open.

"The sodgers is comin', grannie!" (He so styled the old woman, though she was no relation.)

"Did ye see my auld man?"

"No."

"Away wi' ye, bairns," said Mrs. Mitchell quickly but quietly. "Oot by the back door an' doon the burnside; they'll never see ye for the bushes."

"But, grannie, we canna leave you here alone," remonstrated Jean with an anxious look.

"An' I can fecht!" remarked Peter in a low voice, that betrayed neither fear nor excitement.

"The sodgers can do nae harm to me," returned the old woman firmly. "Do my bidding, bairns. Be aff, I say!"

There was no resisting Mrs. Mitchell's word of command. Hastening out by the back door just as the troopers came in sight, Peter and his companions, diving into the shrubbery of the neighbouring streamlet, made their way to Black's farm by a circuitous route. There the girls took shelter in the house, locking the door and barring the windows, while Peter, diverging to the left, made for the hills like a hunted hare.

Andrew was standing alone at his post when the lithe runner came in sight. Will Wallace had left him by that time, and was listening entranced to the fervid exhortations of Dickson of Rutherglen.

"The sodgers!" gasped Peter, as he flung himself down to rest.

"Comin' this way, lad?"

"Na. They're at the Mitchells'."

"A' safe at the ferm?" asked Andrew quickly.

"Ay, I saw the lasses into the hoose."

"Kin to the meetin' an' gie the alarm. Tell them to send Wallace an' Quentin here wi' sax stout men—weel armed—an' anither sentry, for I'm gaun awa'."

Almost before the sentence was finished Ramblin' Peter was up and away, and soon the alarming cry arose from the assembly. "The dragoons are upon us!"

Instantly the Clydesdale men mounted and formed to meet the expected onset. The men of Nithsdale were not slow to follow their example, and Gordon of Earlstoun, a tried and skilful soldier, put himself at the head of a large troop of Galloway horse. Four or five companies of foot, also well armed, got ready for action, and violettes and single horsemen were sent out to reconnoitre. Thus, in a moment, was this assembly of worshippers transformed into a band of Christian warriors, ready to fight and die for their families and liberties.

But the alarm, as it turned out, was a false one. Glendinning, informed by spies of the nature of the gathering, was much too sagacious a warrior to oppose his small force to such overwhelming odds. He contented himself for the present with smaller game.

After continuing in the posture of defence for a considerable time, the assembly dispersed, those who were defenceless being escorted by armed parties to the barns and cottages around. As they retired from the scene the windows of heaven were opened, and the rain, which had been restrained all day, came down in torrents, and sent the Cairn and Cluden red and roaring to the sea.

But long before this dispersion took place, Andrew Black, with Quentin Dick, Will Wallace, Ramblin' Peter, and six sturdy young men, armed with sword, gun, and pistol, had hurried down the hill to succour the Mitchells, if need be, and see to the welfare of those who had been left behind in the farm.

(To be continued.)

Old Books.

BY SELMA WARE PAYNE.

A THRESHING prime is Father Time:
When harvest loads his wain,
He beats the hollow husks aside
And hoards the golden grain

A winnower is Father Time:
The chaff he blows away;
The sweetest seed he treasures up
For many a year and day.

Oh, very wise is Father Time?
His flail is tried and true.
I love the garnered pile of books
He's winnowed through and through.