

"Shall I," he wrote, "who have for so many years preached patience and constancy under trials—shall I fall into perjury, and so shamefully scandalize the people of God? Far from me be the thought! The Lord Jesus will be my succour and my recompense."

He freely forgave all his enemies—even his chief accuser, who came to gloat upon his sufferings in his cell, and whom he heard say to the gaoler, "By the grace of God we will soon burn this heretic." After thirty days longer of weary confinement, he was brought forth to receive his sentence. The august ceremony took place in the venerable cathedral. Sigismund and the princes of the empire sat on thrones of state. The cardinals in scarlet robes, the bishops in golden mitres, filled the chancel. High mass was sung; the solemn music pealing through the vaulted aisles, and the fragrant incense rising like a cloud. The writings of Huss were first condemned to be destroyed, then himself to be degraded from his office of priest, and his body to be burned. "Freely came I hither," said Huss in that supreme hour, "under the safe-conduct of the Emperor," and he looked steadfastly on Sigismund, over whose face there spread a deep blush.* "Oh! blessed Jesus," he went on, "this Thy Council condemns me because in my afflictions I sought refuge with Thee, the one just Judge." To this day men point to a stone slab in the pavement of the church—a white spot on which always remains dry, when the rest is damp—as the place where Huss stood when sentenced to be burned at the stake.

The last indignities were now to be inflicted. Priestly vestments were first put upon the destined victim, and then, in formal degradation, removed. As they took the chalice of the sacrament from his hands, the apparitor said, "Accursed Judas, we take away from thee this cup filled with the blood of Jesus Christ." "Nay," he replied, "I trust that this very day I shall drink of His cup in the Kingdom of Heaven." They placed on his head a paper mitre daubed over with devils, with the words of cursing: "We devote thy soul to the devils in hell." "And I commend my soul," he meekly replied, "to the most merciful Lord Christ Jesus. I wear with joy this crown of shame, for the love of Him who wore for me a crown of thorns."

Then the Church—having declared him no longer a priest but a layman—delivered him to the secular power to be destroyed. He was conducted between four town sergeants and followed by a guard of eight hundred horsemen and a great multitude of people, from the gray old minister to the place of execution, in a green meadow without the walls. Before the bishop's palace the guard halted, that Huss might see the fire on which his books were burning. Knowing that truth is mighty—next to God Himself—he only smiled at the ineffective act of malice.

Arrived at his funeral pyre, Huss knelt down and recited several of the penitential psalms, and prayed, "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me. Into Thy hands I commit my spirit. I beseech Thee to pardon all my enemies." "We know not what this man's crime may be," said the people;

*At the Diet of Worms, a hundred years later, when Charles V. was urged to violate the safe-conduct which he had given Luther, he replied, remembering this scene, "No; I should not like to blush like Sigismund."

"we only know that his prayers to God are excellent." As he prayed, his paper mitre fell from his head. A soldier rudely thrust it on, with the jeer, "He shall be burned with all his devils." "Friend," said the patient martyr, "I trust that I shall reign with Christ since I die for his cause." He was then bound to the stake with a rusty chain, and wood and straw were heaped about him. As the fire was applied and the smoke wreaths rose, the voice of the dying martyr was heard singing the *Christe Eleison*: "Jesus, Son of the living God, have mercy upon me." Then his head fell upon his breast, and the awful silence was broken only by the crackling of faggots and the roar of flames. In impotent rage his executioners gathered his ashes and cast them into the swift-flowing Rhine. But the zeal of his followers scraped up the very earth of the spot, and bore it as a precious relic to Bohemia.

But one victim could not appease the wrath of this zealous Council. A few days later, Jerome of Prague suffered on the same spot. On his way to the place of burning, Jerome repeated with firm voice the Apostles' Creed. As they piled the faggots and straw about him, he sang the hymn, "Salve festa dies—Hail, joyful day," as though it were his birthday—as it was—into immortal life. As the executioner was lighting the fire behind his back, he said, "Light it before my face. Had I been afraid, I would not have been here." He then committed his soul to God, and prayed in the Bohemian tongue as long as life lasted.

To-day the pilgrims from many a foreign land visit with reverence the places made sacred by those imperishable memories. They see the house in which the martyrs lodged, the cell in which they were confined, the hall in which they were arraigned, and the church in which they were condemned. Then following the route of that last procession through the quaint old streets and beneath an ancient gateway, they reach the place of their martyrdom. No chiselled monument commemorates their death. Nothing but a huge granite boulder, bearing simply their names and the date of their martyrdom—the emblem of the indestructible character of the truths for which they died.

Measured by years, their lives were short—Huss was forty-two and Jerome forty-one. But measured by sublime achievement, by heroic daring, by high-souled courage, their lives were long and grand and glorious. They conquered a wider liberty, a richer heritage for man. They defied oppression in its direst form—the oppression of the souls of men. They counted not their lives dear unto them for the testimony of Jesus. They have joined the immortal band whose names the world will not willingly let die. Their ashes were sown upon the wandering wind and rushing wave; but their spirits are alive for evermore. Their name and fame, in every age and every land, have been an inspiration and a watchword in the conflict of eternal right against ancient wrong.

No county or city has ever gone back to the license system after having had a trial of the Scott Act. The liquor men have brought on seven repeal contests, but have always been beaten. The Scott Act has never been repealed.

Think of Heaven.*

(Luke x: 20.)

BY REV. JAMES LAWSON, CORDON, ONT.

PERCHANCE, while travelling thro' this vale of tears,

Dark clouds may overhang thee on thy way;

Yet heed them not, but drive away thy fears,—

Dark nights can ne'er prevent the light of day.

However dark the night, 'twill pass away

As surely as the daylight fades at even;

Look, then, and thro' the darkness see the day;

Think not of troubles here, but think of heav'n.

It may be that thy lot to thee may seem

A hard one, full of griefs hard to be borne;

But why despair? 'tis but a scaring dream,

That, at the most, can last but till the morn.

No matter, then, what griefs may thee depress,

Howe'er by tempests toss'd, or wildly driv'n,

Despair can never make thy sorrows less;

Then grieve not over them, but think of heav'n.

The trials which we all must suffer here,

Are nought, compared with that eternal rest,

Where, safe from ev'ry sorrow, ev'ry fear,

The saints shall ever dwell among the blest;

Forever more at rest, their joys unbroken,

No loving hearts are there asunder riven;

No parting words of sadness ever spoken;

Then think no more of earth, but think of heav'n.

O may we all prove faithful to the grace

Which Christ in us has richly shed abroad,

That we at last in peace may see His face,

And dwell forevermore with Christ our God.

May we improve the blessings we enjoy,

The time and talents which to us are given;

Let things of earth no more our thoughts employ,

But daily feast on Christ, and think of heav'n.

A Missionary's Letter.

DEAR DR. WITHROW,—

With your permission I shall fulfil my promise of giving some further information about Bella-Bella.

I intended to speak chiefly about Christmas and its pleasures, but there are other things which I believe will be interesting to many, so I note them down also.

Since last I wrote you there has been much of sadness as well as of joy. Early in December the diphtheria broke out, very suddenly, too. Among its victims was little Eva. Though she was but five years old, she had learnt something of Jesus, and just before the end came she said, in her own language, "Mamma, I want to pray." When the dear child had completed her simple prayer, she said, "Now, lay me down to sleep." This being done, she closed her eyes as in sleep. Presently she awoke with these words, "Oh, I see Jesus and his angels; and how lovely, how lovely is Jesus!"

Another was a young woman. Her illness was more protracted, but borne with Christian patience; her constant testimony being, "I have no fear of death."

During the last three weeks of the old year revival meetings were held. All through the meetings the people attended well, and were very attentive, but best of all, the Lord was with us.

Christmas time was very interesting. For weeks before two bands of singers were in preparation. No one else must know their songs; not even one

* These verses, set to music, can be had at 5 cents per sheet, or 50 cents per dozen, by addressing the author.

band know the others. They are to burst upon the ears of the village for the first time on Christmas eve.

At last the long expected evening arrives, and long before the hour for the march to begin the singers are in their respective places, all aglow with the excitement of their task, the seniors in the mission-house, the children in the schoolroom.

At about 11 p.m. the processions were formed, taking opposite directions, and each making the tour of the village, singing as they marched, and serenading the principal houses.

Nearly every window in the village was lighted, and all the houses were decorated with evergreens; also arches were formed over the street in many places. About 1 a.m. we returned to the mission-house, where refreshments were served. Then after prayer and merry handshaking, all went to their respective homes.

Doubtless we should have slept late next morning, but were prevented from so doing by the joy-bell, which rang out at 6 a.m., loud and long. And indeed it was well it did so, for the old are to be entertained to breakfast at 8 a.m., and there is no time to spare.

Six boys, carrying a basket of sweetmeats as pledge of fidelity, give the invitations, and assist the more feeble ones to the house; then entertain them with songs till breakfast is ready. Fourteen have come. To these too feeble to come the boys carry parcels. How pleased all were!

By the time breakfast is over it is time for church. The church was full—all in their best attire, worn only on Christmas. The church was nicely decorated with evergreens, and everything bespoke happiness. The singing at this service is worthy of note—every one sang with heart as well as voice. After service there were happy smiles and kindly greetings and hearty handshaking all around.

Before long a messenger came to say that all was now ready—come to the feast. Just then the soldiers marched past, and were there to receive us. Already the guests were assembled. With but few exceptions every man, woman, and child were there, and yet there was room. All being in order, the games begin.

The soldiers performed their marchings and counter-marchings with unexpected precision around the large open fire, at intervals firing off their muskets through the opening in the roof. They looked well in their military suits, and did themselves credit by their actions. They kept time to "Grandfather's Clock" and "Sweet Bye and Bye," played on the accordion by one of their number who headed the procession.

The firemen soon came marching in, dressed in black trousers and red shirts, with white caps and sashes, draped in black in token of respect to the sister whom they had buried but a few days before. They were of all sizes, from the middle-aged man to the boy of nine years. They even excelled the soldiers in their performances, obeying the commands of their leader with a promptness to be admired.

Next in order were the Chinamen. Two boys dressed after the fashion of Chinamen came upon the scene, and performed various actions common to that people, using the Chinese accent in their conversation. These were most amusing.

When the food was all ready, a