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MARGARET WILSON.

THE MARTYR MAIDEN OF GALLOWAY.

"The bonny lassie" as her neighbors called her, was brought up in a pretty farmhouse at the head of a green glen, embosomed amid the purple hills of Galloway, where Gilbert Wilson, her anxious father, would fain have shielded his wife and bairns—two gentle girls and a brave-hearted boy—from the persecutions that were beginning to scatter the families of the faithful and make their hearthstones desolate. There was a lovely prospect from the little homestead: the glen stretched itself away, in field and meadow bare and hollow, while the glittering burn gleamed forth here and there in the bright sunshine. Behind the farmhouse and around the glen stood the purple hills, looking as if they would fain shut out all evil from the dwellers in the valley, to whose hearts they brought home the strengthening word, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people ... for ever." Yea, truly, and in love! not only does He stand as a wall between them and their foes, but also when He sits "as a refiner and purifier of silver," when, as in those days of persecution, evil men were saying, "Thou, God, carest not for it."

But the teachings of nature and grace were alike unheeded by the fanatical and brutalized soldiery, who, as the historian tells us, sought out the wretched fugitives in their rocky hiding-places. If a conventicle was held in a house, the preacher was liable to be put to death. If it was held in the open air, both minister and people incurred the same fate. The Presbyterians were hunted like criminals over the mountains. Their ears were torn from the roots. They were branded with hot irons, their fingers wrenched asunder by the thumbscrews, the bones of their legs shattered in the boot, and women were scourged publicly through the streets.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that many apostatized from the faith of their fathers, and among these was Gilbert Wilson. So it came about, that while the hearth was desolate in many neighboring dwellings, the blue smoke still wreathed about the chimneys of the farm-house at Glenvernoch, where Gilbert and his wife sat mournfully by their silent fireside. They had, in happier days, brought up their children to count

all things but loss for Christ's sake; and now both Margaret and little Agnes, with their steadfast brother, allowed themselves to be driven out homeless, to take refuge among the rocks and caves from the furious soldiers, rather than renounce their cherished convictions.

Seven weary months of homelessness passed by, and the two girls were at length captured, sheltering for the night in the cottage of another Covenanter, an aged

widow named Margaret McLauchlan. Oh the wailing that went up from the farmhouse at Glenvernoch when it was known to the Wilsons that their girls were taken prisoners! Both Margaret and Agnes stood firm at their hasty trial. Wilson succeeded in raising money to ransom his younger daughter, on the score of her extreme youth, for she was only thirteen; but the most exorbitant ransom would not avail to rescue Margaret, who had attained the

age of sixteen years, unless she would abjure her faith. "I cannot," said Margaret; "I am one of Christ's children." During her imprisonment she wrote a long letter to her friends, full of the deep sense she had of the love of Christ to her soul, and of her ardent attachment to His cross and crown, and to Scotland's Covenant.

When the day of execution dawned, the stakes were driven deep into the sand in the Bay of Bladnoch, almost within sight of her home. Crowds of people gathered round the edge of the Bay, and far up among the sheltering rocks and hills the saints of God were kneeling on the heather in earnest prayer. From their dwelling of rocks they could see a company of soldiers, commanded by Major Windram—black Windram he was called—lead two women to the fatal spot. One was the aged widow, Margaret McLauchlan, the other was Margaret Wilson, in all the beautiful promise of her youth. They could see the elder martyr fastened to the stake nearest the cruelly advancing tide, and Margaret Wilson so placed that her sufferings might be sufficiently prolonged to awe her to submission. They watched the tide advancing, and saw the aged widow bow her head in the waters and die, just as the first wave broke about Margaret's feet.

"What think ye of you sight?" said a heartless soldier to her, as he pointed to the dying martyr.

"I think I see Christ yonder, wrestling in one of His members," was her answer. "Think ye it is we who are the sufferers? He sends none to the warfare on his own charges."

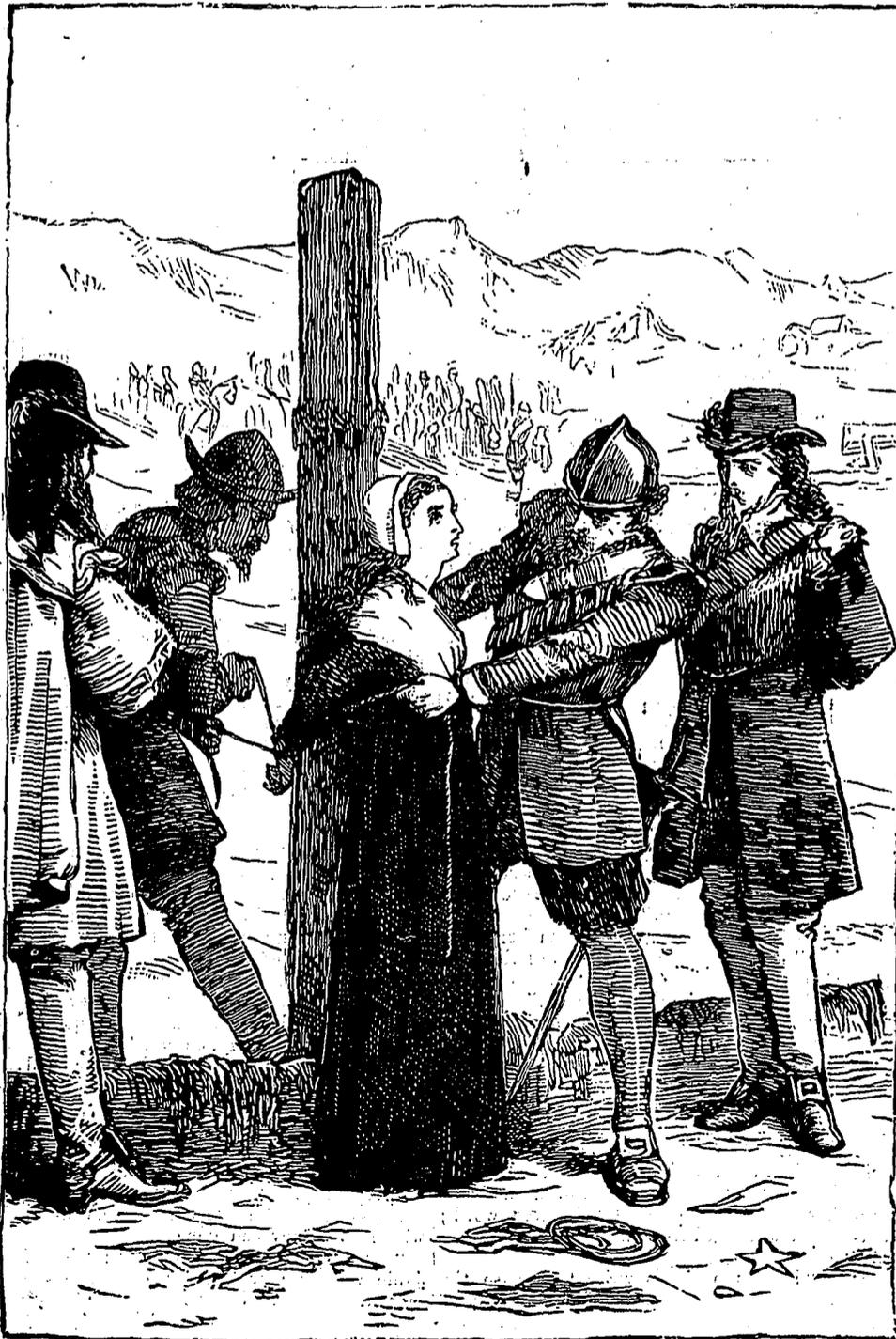
Then, as the tide advanced, slowly but surely, from knee to waist, the watchers on the heights could hear her voice in song. From waist to breast, from chin to lip, the waters slowly rose, while she sang with clear voice the well-known Psalm—

"Let not the errors of my youth,  
Nor sins remembered be;  
In mercy, for Thy goodness' sake,  
Dear Lord, remember me!"

"Oh, do Thou keep my soul, my God,  
Do Thou deliver me;  
Let me not be ashamed, since I  
Do put my trust in Thee."

The breathless crowd gazed in silence at the scene—a silence that was at last broken by the agonized father, who cast himself at Windram's feet, crying, "My child! my child! Save my child!" So piercing was his cry that Windram's heart relented, and he ordered her to be released just

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MARTYDOM OF MARGARET WILSON.