

Written for THE YOUNG FRIENDS' REVIEW.

A CHILDREN'S MEETING IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

(Continued from last number.)

Here for weeks those innocent children are detained, although there is no law by which they could be arrested or imprisoned, and the severest threatenings are powerless to obtain from them a promise to relinquish their meetings.

This is only one little scene from the early history of Friends. Let us go back a few years and take a glance at the generation which produced such children. From a multitude of faithful ones, whose eventful lives would fill volumes, we may only notice a few :

A delicate young girl who had suffered many times for her faith in her native land, crosses the ocean to bear the Master's message to those who have left the shores of England and sought in a new country a place in which to worship God according to their will. Behold her reception. Imprisoned simply because she is a Quaker, denied the privilege of speaking with any one, she and her companion suffer such indignities and cruelties in prison as cannot be written, and at last are shipped back to England, their Bibles and other valuables having first been taken from them. Again we see this young woman, strong in conscious purity, fearless in God's strength, standing before the Sultan Mahomet in the camp, round which his army is gathered. Very respectfully does the warrior prince listen to his message accepting it as truly "from the Lord God," and with true courtesy urges her to accept a guard to escort her on her way; this she declines, trusting alone to Him who sent her thither, and who again brings her in safety to her home.

Two other young women, faithful to God's voice in their hearts, trust themselves to the ocean to carry his message to other lands. Taken much against their will, to the island of Malta, it is revealed to one of them

that great sufferings await them there. Under such anguish of mind as might crush the strongest heart, she yet places her trust in God, and is only careful to do His will. We see her kneeling in prayer in the Church of Rome, fearlessly refusing to do homage to idols, and the people so filled with fear they are unable to harm her. At last the blow falls, and those women, apparently so helpless, are taken to the Inquisition and threatened with the most terrible punishments unless they promise to become Catholics. Denying the authority of the Church of Rome, these women, in the strength which "is made perfect in weakness," preach to their persecutors the doctrine of the "light within." Four long years were they kept prisoners in the Inquisition, and although at times their sufferings were almost beyond endurance, and they were brought very near to death, they realized the truth of the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

In other countries, young men who had, indeed, left all for Christ's sake, suffered untold tortures from the Inquisition, and at home they were persecuted by the party in power, whether Episcopal or Puritan.

Are we, the descendants of those heroes and heroines of old, as faithful as they to the "light within?" If we were it seems to me we should witness such a spiritual growth in our midst, and such an enlargement of our borders as followed the preaching of George Fox and the early Friends. May we be truly faithful to the trust committed to our hands, and let the young remember that they, as well as the older ones, have a work to do which can be done by them alone. And as, according to our high profession, we are taught and guided by God's voice in our souls, let us so perform each duty, great and small, that "our light may so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven."

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