

Book Notices.

"Men of the Covenant." The Story of the Scottish Church in the Years of the Prosecution. By Alexander Smellie, M.A. Author of "In the Hour of Silence." London: Andrew Melrose. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. xii-433. Price, \$2.65.

No more heroic story was ever told than that of the brave men who kept flying through long years of persecution the bonnie blue flag of the Scottish Covenant. In an age of much laxity, not to say latitudinarianism of opinion, when depth and strength of conviction are largely lacking, it is a mental tonic to read of those brave days of old when men gripped convictions to their souls for which they were willing to live and to die. Like a waft from the heathery hills comes this tale of fidelity and fortitude.

Mr. Smellie tells the heroic story in the light of the most recent documents and data. "Surely we in our time ought to know," he says, "and knowing, to praise famous men, and women not a whit less famous than men, who, in Kipling's phrase,

"Put aside To-day
All the joys of their To-day,
And with toil of their To-day,
Bought for us To-morrow."

The setting of the story is of remarkable vigor and vivacity. Charles I., says our author, was the best of the Stuarts, yet he lost his life, while Charles II., the basest of the line, was restored to the forfeited throne amid the adulations of millions. "Put not your trust in princes" is a lesson the Scots have been slow to learn. They clung to the Stuarts, both regnant and Pretenders, with a pathetic fidelity.

The story begins with the chapter, "How the King Came Home," the restoration of Charles II. Then follows the long record of royal perfidy. The very titles of the chapters indicate the insight into the spirit of the times. "Marquis and Martyr" tells the heroic story of Argyll; "The Short Man Who Could Not Bow" is the tale of the valorous James Guthrie, a true counterpart of Bunyan's "Stand Fast in the Faith"; "Sharper

of that ilk," to use Cromwell's phrase, portrays the small, paltry, higgling archbishop, whose name described his character; "A Nonsuch for a Clerk" portrays the noble character of Johnston of Warriston, "God's Gift in Danger's Hour"; Ephraim MacBriar, who was satirized by Scott, is shown to have been a very Sir Galahad; "Blot His Name Out" is the epitaph of Lauderdale: "The Blink" describes the gleam of light in this strange history; and "Gloom After Gleam" describes its extinction. "Spokesmen of Christ" were the field preachers of the day who, counting not their lives dear unto them, freely sealed their testimony with their blood. "A Temporary" is one who tries year in and year out "to carry his dish level." "Claverhouse in a' His Pride" describes the character of the best hated man in Scottish history. The tale of the Killing Time is one that in its plain telling surpasses even the romance of Crockett's tragic story. "Those Women Who Labored in the Gospel" records the faithfulness of those sometimes called the weaker sex, who suffered even more than those made of sterner stuff. The long and tragic story ends with a chapter like the breath of spring, "Lo, the Winter is Past."

Some thirty-six illustrations are given, mostly from quaint old prints of places and persons memorable in this epic of Scottish history. Some of the quotations in the quaint spelling of the period take us back to the very time. Lauderdale this describes his visit to the home: "Wher I found them al weal, and was quickly encompassed with children striving who should be most mead of. Charles is grouen ane mighty kind child, and left al his frowardness, and, I think, squints not mor than he did. I asked Jhon if he knew me; he said, 'Ay, ay,' and clapid my cheek, and kissid both of them, and asked for his grandfather at London. Ann is grouen a pleasant and bewtiful child. My littel dawghter Jean, when she saw me mak mor, as she thought, of the rest than hir, said, 'I am a bairn, too.'"

If we are to merge our fortunes with those of the grand old Presbyterian