

and that no man hereafter shall put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the Article, but shall take it in the literal and grammatical sense." A few days before "the feast of St. Bartholomew," some of the copies of the prayer-book were ready at the printer's, but only a few persons could get the book in time to examine its contents. Bishop Burnett says great numbers made the required declaration without at all seeing the book to which they solemnly gave their assent and consent, but that about TWO THOUSAND, principally of the most pious and eloquent, bade farewell to their congregations. What made the matter the more harsh was the fact that the salaries of the ministers, most of whom were but poorly paid, came due in a few days, and thus they were cut off from the money they depended upon to save themselves and families from starvation. "My God," exclaimed one of these heroic men, "may I declare my unfeigned assent and consent to ALL THINGS contained in this book of Common Prayer? My Lord, I am at thy footstool. I surrender myself, my ministry, my place, my people, my wife, my children, into thy hand, from whom I received them." Sad was the fate of these unfortunates. "Houseless, homeless, and penniless they went forth," says a writer, their children crying for bread. Thus were the English Presbyterians paid for their faithfulness to the House of Stuart. Three or four times did they make serious mistakes, and now they were by their own act at the mercy of their enemies. Some of their younger men of ability, Tillotson and others, gave their "assent and consent" with misgivings, but were soon rewarded with good places, and did honor to the nation; but the grand spectacle was witnessed of two thousand ministers abandoning their places, and going forth to the world to suffer. Thus did Presbyterians nobly atone for the past, and take a stand that led to glorious results. A few of the two thousand were Independents, but not many of them, as the Independent ministers were principally settled over churches that were separate from the national establishment.

Following hard upon this was the Conventicle Act, that crowded the gaols of the kingdom. Any number of people could assemble together for a drunken carousal, and it was considered harmless; but if more than five persons assembled for prayer, they were fined and imprisoned. The king went forth from the bed-chambers of his mistresses to partake of the sacrament, and lewdness and wickedness spread over the land; but if one of the ejected two thousand taught the people the way of salvation, he had to atone for it terribly. So far did wickedness raise its head that an Episcopalian writer says—"In a short time 1,500 debauched men were ordained to fill the places of the ejected ones," and so glaring did the vices of the nation show themselves among both clergy and people that Charles on one occasion withdrew from his carousals and lectured the parliament on the extent of the nation's wickedness. Parliament soon passed the Five Mile Act, which forbade any of the ejected clergy from coming within five miles of the place where he had been "parson, priest, or vicar," under pain of imprisonment and a fine of £10; and then a still more severe Conventicle Act, and a "Test Act," that required all public officials to take the sacrament in the parish church. Informers and spies were abroad all over the nation. Thousands upon thousands of generous hearted people were so harassed by the courts for assisting the starving ministers and their families, that they left their native land. Some of them settled on the continent, while large numbers made their way to the settlements in America.

For several years did a terrible work of persecution go on, and New Eng-