

a Bible marvellously true to the original in the beauty of its tone and the majesty of its language and the subtlety of its power—a fit monument of generations of labor and of the blood of the martyrs.

1. The first volume of Scripture printed in our mother tongue was Tyndale's New Testament. William Tyndale was a student of Oxford, a university whose life had been deeply influenced by Erasmus and other men who made and were made by the New Learning. We learn from Foxe that he was "well versed in the knowledge of the tongues, and especially in the knowledge of the Scriptures, whereunto his mind was singularly addicted." From the first he seems to have boldly dedicated himself to his life's work. He once said to a priest: "I defy the pope's laws. If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause the boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than you do."

Failing to find assistance or sympathy from the Bishop of London, he went into the secret of a foreign city, Cologne on the Rhine, and there was preparing to print the English New Testament. But the church of that day could almost see in secret. The printers were summoned and the authorities swooped down on Tyndale, but their prey was already far up the Rhine, his translation and his printed sheets with him on the way to Worms. Protected by that free city he issued the first printed copies of the English New Testament.

The work was the creature of his own hands, and is the foundation of almost all subsequent translations of the New Testament. It is worthy of note, for example, that the Beatitudes in Matthew V. in the authorized version are, with but two or three slight changes, word for word the translation of William Tyndale. The spiritual insight of Tyndale's mind, the sympathy of his Christian heart, and the strength of his mastery, at once of the original and of the English, have made his the preponderating personality among the group of English translators, and his influence an enriching stream flowing through all the versions.

Tyndale's precious volumes were smuggled into England hidden in bales of all kinds of goods. They were distributed in London and in the country at large by a sort of secret Book and Tract Society, which sold them at from \$8 to \$10 a copy. The class of people who bought them seems to have been university students and intelligent merchants.

These using the book as the test of the faith and practice of the Roman Church brought upon it the wrath of the authorities. Every known copy was seized. They even bought up all Tyndale's stock in Antwerp; Tyndale clearing enough money on the sales to pay his debts and issue a new and revised edition. A grand burning was held in London in St. Paul's churchyard.

There was robing of priests, singing of masses, ringing of bells, speeches by the bishops, etc., about the evil influence of the book; a grand procession round the fire, the tossing of the books to the flames—and all to the glory of God and for the good of the "Holy Catholic Church."

Meanwhile Tyndale was at work. He published revised editions of the New Testament in 1534 and 1535, and also an English version of the Pentateuch. But the net was gathering around him. Betrayed by one who pretended to be a friend, he was kidnapped to the castle of Vilvorde and there after imprisonment, strangled and then burned. His last prayer was: "Lord open the eyes of the King of England."

Thus the first chapter of the story of English translations closes in bloodshed.

2. "Coverdale's Bible." The Reformation movement in England was progressing. Cranmer had pled before Convocation for an English translation. Coverdale made bold to supply it, and published in 1535 the first printed edition of the whole Bible, and was even permitted to issue, in 1537, an edition "with the King's most gracious license"—the beginning of the answer to Tyndale's prayer. The important point about Coverdale's Bible is that the New Testament and the Pentateuch are a reprint of Tyndale's, somewhat revised, and that from Joshua to Malachi was the work of Coverdale himself—a graduate of Cambridge, a devotee of the New Learning and well able to do his work.

Coverdale died in honored old age, but his long and painful imprisonment in Mary's reign, and his narrow escape, through the help of the King of Denmark, lends this chapter of our story a dash of sorrow of its own.

3. Matthew's or Rogers' Bible appeared in 1537 "set forth with the King's most Gracious License." It was made up of Tyndale's New Testament and Pentateuch, revised, and very probably of Tyndale's translation down to Ezra, printed from papers left by him. From Ezra to Malachi was a revision of Coverdale. The important point is that "from Matthew's Bible all later revisions have been formed."

This chapter of the story has its dark memories, for the first martyr at the stake in Mary's reign was none other than Johannes Rogers, alias Matthew.

4. The Great Bible. Matthew's Bible was revised and published under the patronage of Thomas Cromwell, the great Protestant statesman, in 1539, in a large volume—hence the name "the Great Bible"—and was heralded by a royal proclamation "that one booke of the whole Bible of the largest volume in English be set up in the churches," chained to a pillar or desk, that any one might come and read. Often the Latin services were disturbed by the voice of one who read to an assembled crowd. The Latin mummeries have passed away, but our Eng-