

THE

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## BI-CENTENARY COMMEMORATION.

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The 24th of August is a memorable day. The horrid slaughter of the Huguenots, in France, took place on St. Bartholomew's day, under the reign of Charles IX., in 1572. Ninety years thereafter the scene is shifted to England, and there we see a noble band of witnesses for conscience and for truth, who stood up manfully to resist the tyranny of unjust and schismatical legislation. The Act of Uniformity "provided that every clergyman who did not, on or before St. Bartholomew's day, 24th August, 1662, declare his assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common Prayer, and who did not also declare that it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatever, to take arms against the king; and who did not further declare the Solemn League and Covenant to be an unlawful oath, was *ipso facto* deprived of his benefice or curacy; and schoolmasters and tutors who neglected to sign the same declarations, were declared incapable of continuing their duties, even in private houses. The clergy who had not received Episcopal ordination were to submit to it or cease their functions in the church: and heavy penalties were to follow any infraction of the measure." The spirit of the men who concocted and carried into successful enactment that Act, can easily be traced; while the severity by which it was enforced and followed up by the *Conventicle Act*, in 1664, and the *Oxford, or Five Mile Act*, in 1665, displays the bitter cruelty of persecutors. By the *Conventicle Act*, any person, above sixteen years of age, present at any meeting for any religious exercise, not according to the Church of England, where there were five or more persons beside the household, was for the first offence to suffer three months imprisonment, or pay £5; for the second, six months or £10; and for the third to be banished for seven years, or pay £100; and in case of return or escape, to suffer death without benefit of clergy. The *Five-mile Act* restrained all dissenting ministers from coming within five miles of any city, town-corporate or borough, or any place where they had exercised their ministry; and from teaching any school.

The Act of Uniformity obliged two thousand noble, learned, conscientious, godly ministers of Christ to leave their pulpits and their flocks and sacrifice their means of subsistence rather than prove dishonest men. This heroic army, fired with the martyr spirit, commands our admiration. We glorify God in them. They taught a licentious and ungodly age the sublime lesson