

The Martyr Maiden.



If you visit the Wigton (Scotland) Church yard, you will see a tomb-stone on which is inscribed, "*Here lies Margaret Wilson, daughter to Gilbert Wilson, in Galloway, who was drowned Anno, 1685, aged 18.*"

Margaret Wilson, lived in the days of persecution, the days of the Covenanters. In those days the Gospel, preached not in churches, but in fields and on hill sides, or in private houses, was blessed very remarkably. Margaret, her sister, aged 13, and her brother, were all led into the truth at those open air services.

Trials soon came on. The curate of the parish kept a list of all who did not attend the church, and lodged information against them. The result was, that many were obliged to flee, or to hide themselves in order to escape imprisonment, fines, etc. Margaret and her sister hid themselves in the neighbourhood of their house. The brother escaped from the country. The two girls were, however, betrayed and arrested, and cast into prison, where they remained for some time. At length they were tried on a charge of joining in the Bothwell Bridge and Airmoss rebellion, and of having attended about twenty conventicles in the fields and twenty house conventicles. The judges called on them to go on their knees, and confess their guilt. They refused to do so, denying that

they had done any wrong in attending meetings where God's word was preached.

The issue was, as might be expected a declaration of their guilt. The sentence of death was passed on all, even on young Agnes, who, however, was afterwards, on his paying down £100, given up to her father, on his engaging that she should be produced again in court whenever called for.

The sentence of death was all the more startling as it was to be death by *drowning*; for the Government had lately passed a law that "women found guilty, should be drowned."

It was the pleasant spring time, the 11th day of May, 1685, that the prisoners, (the aged Margaret McLachlan), and the youthful Margaret Wilson were led from prison to the shore. They were tied to stakes fixed in the sand, at low water mark. The elder martyr was placed at a post where she would be drowned first, in the hope that the youngest might be shaken in her firmness. The tide soon set in; it rose higher, forcing back, and thereby deepening the river, till the water was up to

her breast, then to her chin, and at last swept over her. Meanwhile, Margaret Wilson calmly looked toward her, and saw her die. Her relentless persecutors, at this moment, still hoping to overcome her firmness, asked her, "what she thought of that sight?"

Her reply from the stake was; "What do I see but Christ wrestling there in one of His members! Think ye that we are the only sufferers?"

