

his real trial began, and did not end till the October of that year. The unfairness, the tediousness, the brutality of this mock trial is, perhaps, without a parallel in the annals of mankind. Every act of his life, from his college days to the trial, was dragged before the public with merciless particularity. A man named Prynne had taken from the Archbishop all his papers, and among them his own private diary, which he altered and added to, so as to make it tell the more heavily against its unfortunate author. This, containing his own private reflections, altered here and there to suit a vile purpose, was put in evidence against him. History, perhaps, nowhere records more heartless treatment of an old man than this so-called trial of Laud. The dress that he wore, the pictures hanging on his walls, indeed every imaginable thing was urged against him, and to everything he replied with wonderful dignity, patience, and learning. But all to no avail. His evident desire to restore images, pictures, and stained glass windows to the churches, was rank treason in the eyes of his judges, and, therefore, he was at last sentenced to be hanged on the gibbet. It was not till the 4th of January, 1645, that this strange trial was over and this sentence given. The king sent him a royal pardon, but this, while it gratified the poor Archbishop, was taken no notice of by the parliament.

Laud was now face to face with death. He was deeply moved when he was told that he had to hang on a gibbet. He felt the deep insult that it would be for the primate of all England to be brought to such a humiliating end. He, therefore, respectfully petitioned parliament that he might be beheaded instead. Even this poor request was denied him in the House of Commons, but the Lords, among whom a little shred of decency and pity was left, gave their consent, and order was given accordingly.

On the 9th of January, 1645, he was led to the scaffold. Even here he was tormented by his fanatical foes, who, by violent questions, sought to cause him to lose his temper. But he gave as meek replies as he could, and seemed to wish to be allowed to die in peace. He preached a short sermon from Hebrews xii. 2, briefly reviewed his life, declared himself innocent of treason, and offered up a solemn prayer to God. Delivering a little money to the executioner he said, "God forgive thee, friend, as I do. Do thine office upon me in mercy."

Kneeling at the block he said, "Lord, I am coming as fast as I can," and other words of prayer, ending with a loud cry, "Lord, receive my soul." These words were the preconcerted signal to the executioner. At once the axe descended, and the poor old gray head of William Laud rolled, dyed in his own blood, upon the scaffold. He was buried in the Church of All Hallows, Barking, near the Tower. His ene-

mies allowed the burial service of the Church to be read over him, the last request that they were ever to have placed before them regarding the innocent man whom they had hounded to the death.

Unhappy England! Unhappy Church! No Archbishop of Canterbury could be thought of now. No primate was needed in England. The see of Canterbury was vacant, and the Covenanters needed no bishops. But their ambition soared much higher. A nobler quarry was in view. The headsman's axe was to be stained with richer blood. King Charles was at last brought to the same terrible tribunal that had sent the Archbishop to his death. For many things the unhappy Charles was to be blamed; but when we see him in the hands of his enemies, treated with every mark of indignity, sentenced at last to death; when we see him approaching his last moments, attended, at his own request, by William Juxon, Bishop of London—so far as the Parliament of England at that time would allow anyone to be such; when we see him calm and dignified, resolutely bracing himself for "the work," as he expressed it, "that lay before him," and that work was to die; when we see his last farewell with his little boy and girl—the Duke of Gloucester and the Princess Elizabeth—and then his march to the place of death; when we hear the solemn words of the broken-hearted bishop, as he prayed for the king, then the last word of the condemned monarch as he said, "Remember"; when we close our eyes as the axe severs the head from his body, and feel the tremor that ran through the crowd as the heartless executioner holds the bleeding head on high and says, "This is the head of a traitor"; when we see all this and hear it, we mourn for the king, who, whatever were his faults, merited no such punishment as that which he received.

This woeful execution took place on the 30th of January, 1649, five years after the judicial murder of Archbishop Laud.

The scenes that followed belong to secular history. The historian of the Archbishops of Canterbury has little or nothing to do with them, for the church bells were hushed, the churches closed, the bishops' palaces empty. Rough troopers stalked through the land, trying to find anyone that would dare to use a Prayer Book. Wild fanatics preached the doctrines of the Covenanters, and the friends of England, as it once used to be, had to hide their heads and wait. The iron heel of Oliver Cromwell was pressed hard upon the neck of the nation, and the Church and her friends had to wait till his rule was over.

It is difficult to imagine an England without a sovereign, without bishops, without clergy, without prayer books, without merry chimes bidding to decent and orderly worship—yet