

Wild was the excitement throughout London that night. For by some mysterious process the story of the interview oozed out. And not only that, but the Petition itself, printed word for word, was sold by thousands in the streets. The excitement was only exceeded by the enthusiastic pride and delight in the firm stand taken by the Bishops. With such an example before their eyes, it was no wonder that the clergy and the people alike were wrought up to an irresistible pitch of indignant determination.

Great suspense was felt by all as to what would be the action of the clergy on the following Sunday. In Westminster Abbey a great body of people were assembled:—

Quietly passed the greater part of the service, and Aimée's thoughts were far enough removed from all remembrance of the King's Declaration. Suddenly she was aroused by a general stir and movement all around her. She sat upright, and looked about her.

Bishop Spratt was standing with a paper in his hands, which he had begun to read aloud. The whole congregation had arisen. It was one unanimous and impulsive movement of deep disapprobation, throughout the length and breadth of the building. Frowning brows and resolute faces met her startled gaze on every side. An instant more, and a vast gathering throng was pressing rapidly and steadily out of the Abbey. A deep hushed threatening murmur of suppressed and passionate resentment rose from every side, drowning the tones of the reader.

Mr. Selwyn was one of the first to be upon his feet. "Come," he said in a low voice. "We will remain to sanction no such illegal proceeding."

Alleyne was already on his way to the door. Aimée cast one glance at the agitated and alarmed Bishop, in whose hand the paper shook and trembled visibly. Then with Margery and Mrs. Selwyn she joined the moving congregation. Long before Bishop Spratt reached the end of the Declaration, his voice sounded over the empty stalls and benches of the mighty Abbey. Not a man remained to listen, save those whose office rendered it next to impossible that they should leave.

In two other city churches that day, the reading of the Declaration was attended with precisely the same results. No sooner did it begin, than the congregations calmly rose and left the buildings in which they were seated. In one instance, a plea of forgetfulness formed the excuse for disobedience. In every other church throughout the whole of London, including even the Chapel of St. James's Palace, the unconstitutional command of the King was

steadily, deliberately, conscientiously disregarded.

Shortly afterwards the seven bishops were summoned to appear before the Privy Council. At the appointed hour the streets were thronged with anxious crowds and the river covered with loaded wherries. The excitement grew and culminated when the issue was made known:—

Elstob had suddenly appeared in the midst of the crowd, his face flushed and fierce with no groundless wrath. "Do you desire to hear the upshot of the matter?" he cried, in tones which, though not loud, yet penetrated far and wide. "Their lordships are forthwith committed as close prisoners to the Tower."

"The Tower!" An angry swelling murmur arose from the mighty concourse. "The Bishops to the Tower!!"

"Ha! there they come!"

And as the seven venerable men appeared, walking from the palace to the river, escorted by a military guard, the excitement of the people broke through all bounds. They surged forwards, around and about the prisoners, in a perfect tempest of furious and agitated feeling. Vaughan forced his way impetuously forward, and for one instant grasped the hand of Bishop Ken.

"My Lord!—you a prisoner in the Tower! No more of passive obedience for me to the will of a Popish tyrant," he said passionately.

"Nay, Sir Vaughan; fear God and honor the King now as ever," gravely responded the Bishop, and with a gentle farewell pressure of his young friend's hand, he passed on with his companions towards the royal barge which awaited them.

Sir Vaughan stepped back with compressed lips and gleaming eyes, which found their reflection in many a face near at hand. But the next instant a change swept over the angry people. As if animated by a single impulse, the assembled masses of men and women sank upon their knees in the open streets, praying with one heart and one voice aloud to God.

A strange sight was that kneeling multitude, with their upturned faces, and clasped hands, and fervent supplications, as they besought God to be with these brave and single-hearted men, thus willingly suffering in the cause of truth.

The royal barge was reached, and the reverend prisoners embarked, with the same calm and dignified demeanor that they had preserved throughout. As the barge floated down the stream, on its way to the Tower of dark and ominous history, a mighty cheer arose from the crowd—a cheer of encouragement to the prisoners—