

A MARTYR IN MEXICO.

How many of you have listened to the stories of the martyrs who laid down their lives for Christ's sake long ago in the early days of Christianity, or in the later days of the persecution in France, England and other countries of Europe? Have you not drawn a deep sigh of relief to think that those days of persecution are over? But while those dark days are past in the history of some countries, it is not so in all, and only a few months ago a faithful servant of Christ was put to death in Mexico, simply because he was trying to tell his countrymen that Christ is able and just to forgive us our sins, if we confess them to Him, without any mediation of saints or prayers or priests.

"It is now about fifteen years since Mr. Nicenor Gomez, walking through the plaza of Santiago on a market day, saw exposed for sale some strange books which attracted his curiosity. Drawing near and examining them, he found them to be copies of the scriptures, and decided to buy one of the volumes. He took it home, and in the evening, after the children were all in bed, he read from his new purchase to his wife. This was repeated evening after evening, and the more they read the more precious the book became to them.

To reading they added prayer, and then they felt constrained to teach their children what to them had proved the way of life. But Mr. Gomez was not satisfied with this, and invited one after another of his neighbors to come in and hear what he should read to them from his new book. In this manner he very soon surrounded himself with a little circle of truly Bible Christians.

"The next step was to provide for the assembling of themselves together for simple united worship, and Mr. Gomez offered to fit up the only comfortable room in his humble dwelling as a chapel, and to move with his family into some out-building which did not even boast of a wall except on one side, the other being enclosed by a sort of picket fence. This offer was made good, and for all those years that

little chapel has resounded Sabbath after Sabbath, and once during the week, with the prayers and praises of God's people in number from twenty to fifty, the services being conducted by Mr. Nicenor Gomez, or by his son Nestor.

Not satisfied with the chapel at first prepared and devoted to gospel services, he had been at work for over a year erecting, out of his scanty income (twenty dollars a month), a better building, which was nearly ready for dedication at his death. In all the regions round about Cuapulhuac, companies of simple Indians are found in whose minds the truth of God has been sown by the good old man whose death we now deplore.

One September our missionaries at Mexico received an earnest request from some fifty people at a town called Almaloya del Rio that they would send ministers to preach to them the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ. The missionaries finally decided to send three men to commence a service there, among whom was Mr. Gomez. You can imagine how happy this good man was at the thought of opening another church of Christ, as he started from his home, and how the Christians in the city of Mexico hoped and prayed for their success. But when Mr. Gomez and his companions reached Almaloya, it was quite plain that the people did not mean to let the service go on; and very soon the house in which they intended to hold the service was surrounded by a crowd of fierce and noisy people.

Soon the bell in the Romish church near by rang for mass, and most of the people went away for a time to their own church; but do you think they heard a gospel of peace preached? No; instead of that, the priest told them many wicked and false things about the Protestants, and told them they must put a stop, at any cost, to the service they meant to hold. After this strange sermon was over, the people hurried back to the house where Mr. Gomez was staying, and soon the narrow street was filled with a mob of fierce people. Men, women and even little children were armed with clubs,