

Northern Messenger

VOLUME XXXVIII. No. 24

MONTREAL, JUNE 12, 1903.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid

Prisoners In the Tower of London.

(Z. A., in 'Sunday Reading.')

I do not think there is a sadder pile of buildings in all London than the Tower. The history of the Tower from beginning to end is a record of the ignorance, cruelty, and tyranny of man. 'Pity the poor prisoners,' one might well ask, in those old days of vengeance and bloodshed. When the prisoner was eventually led out to execution, he probably lingered

seen, and the narrow walk on the wall is still called Sir Walter Raleigh's Walk.

Here came to visit him Ben Jonson and many clever men of his time. Prince Henry, the son of James I., came, too, observing, 'No man but my father would keep such a bird in such a cage.'

Within the Tower walls, two centuries later, another prisoner ended his days, whose uneventful story has, in some way, linked itself with that of the brave and unfortunate Raleigh.

Prince Henry's allusion to a bird recalls

More touching lines still were those actually written by Sir Walter Raleigh on the blank leaf of his Bible the night before his execution. He was passing the night in the common prison at Westminster:—

'Even such is time that takes on trust

Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust;

Who, in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days.

But, from this earth, this grave, this dust,
The Lord shall raise me up, I trust.'

How a Skeptic Found God.

I had been holding a meeting for young men one Sunday evening and was about to leave the building when a young man asked for an interview and came into the vestry.

He said, 'I am a skeptic.'

'I dare say you are. Lots of fellows are. What do you want with me to-night?'

'I want to know if you could help me by proving to me that Christ exists.'

'I would not spend two minutes in trying to do so. It is only wasting my time and yours to try and prove to you that Christ exists.'

'How is that? I thought you would be glad to help me?'

'Oh, no, you are a skeptic. You have made up your mind to it. You had better stick to it and not trouble about this question of Christ existing or not.'

'But I am in trouble.'

'Very likely, and it serves you right if you are.'

'Would you not try and teach me that Christ exists?'

'No, certainly not. Not worth my while.'

'But I thought you would have helped me somehow.'

'Well, now, we will make a bargain. If you will prove one thing to me, I will try and prove what you want to know. If you will prove to me that you are your own mother's son, I will prove that Christ exists.'

'Oh, yes, I will do that,' and he sat down to begin to think how to begin it.

Presently he said, 'I don't know how to begin.'

'Neither do I on my side. All you can tell me is this, that so far back as you can remember, somebody taught you to call her mother, and she called you her own little boy, and you have gone on doing so ever since, but you have no proof whatever that she is your mother. Are you satisfied that she is?'

'Perfectly.'

'And does it work all right?'

'Yes, certainly, it works perfectly.'

'Similarly some long time ago I began to call a Person named "Jesus Christ" my Lord and Saviour and he began to call me his and the thing works perfectly, is most satisfactory and that is all I can say about it.'

'Well,' said he, 'that seems to be common



through years of miserable imprisonment, some tasting of both these punishments, notably, Sir Walter Raleigh. Three times was he incarcerated in the Tower, one alone of these imprisonments lasting sixteen years. Good Queen Bess was none too merciful towards her deposed favorites.

Happily Raleigh was allowed to wile away the weary hours by the use of his pen. In his chamber in the Bloody Tower he wrote his 'History of the World.' In the adjoining garden he used to work to cultivate rare plants, and distil curious essences from them. His room can still be

to mind the 'Epitaph to a Goldfinch' recorded on the wall of the Beauchamp Tower. It runs as follows:—

'Where Raleigh pined within a prison's gloom
I cheerful sang, nor murmured at my doom;
Where heroes bold and patriot's form could dwell,
A goldfinch in content his note might swell;
But death, more gentle than the law's decree,
Hath paid my ransom from captivity.'

Buried, June 23, 1794, by a fellow-prisoner in the Tower of London.'