

and the last verse :

‘Finish then thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be.’

Then with singing, followed by prayer and benediction, this memorable meeting closed. And in a short time afterward the two friends, B. and H., were wending their way homewards. The influence which the day at Madeley exercised upon their experience will be traced in their future lives. They went forth: the one in the midst of rural scenes and the unceasing cares of a farm; the other to struggle with the anxieties of a commercial pursuit amid a thronged city—both baptised with high resolves to do and dare for Jesus. And nobly did they fulfil their heavenly purpose.

We return to Shrewsbury. Within its walls there stood, and for aught I know it stands there still, a dreary prison. Its high and gloomy walls enclosed at all times many a sad as well as many a criminal heart; and from its scaffold a scene was exhibited with the regularity of every semi-annual assize court, which should have made Justice often blush, while Mercy turned away to weep. Half a score or more of men and women were brought forth to expiate some perhaps trivial crime by the extreme penalty of the law. But even these scenes of brutality were mild compared with the seething corruption which reeked in its corridors and cells. Here force, licentiousness and brutality held riot, and the doomed inmates of the overcrowded condemned cell could say, “No man careth for our souls.”

Mr. Brocas resided at this time at Sansaw, a few miles from the city. In March, 1784, he heard the news that thirteen miserable persons were condemned at Shrewsbury. Ten of these were subsequently reprieved—three remained under the fearful sentence. The heart of Mr. B. was strangely and deeply moved. “To-morrow,” says he, “they are to be suspended before a gazing multitude, and who can tell whether they have a friend to pity them. None on earth can now help them, and I fear that they know not the language of supplication. Oh, that those who know the Saviour and have heard of those miserable men would be instant in prayer for the salvation of their souls! O Lord, look down from heaven; give me a heart to pray for them, and give to them a heart to pray for themselves!”

The prayer was answered so far as Mr. B. himself was concerned, for three days after he thus writes: “For some time I have had a strange desire to go to see the prisoners in jail. The last time but one that I went to Shrewsbury, this was my chief business; but, alas! the cross was too heavy. I could not prevail upon any one to accompany me; and as I knew but little of that dismal place, and was acquainted with none of the prisoners, I was obliged to give it up. But my conscience gave me no rest. I thought of the value