

Written for THE YOUNG FRIENDS' REVIEW.

## A STORY OF SPAIN IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

The sun sinks low behind the mountains of Sierra de Gaudarama; the shadows lengthen until the hillside is enveloped in darkness. Slightly as the shadows themselves, men and women pass through the darkness and disappear under a projecting crag on the hillside.

Beneath this crag is a cave dug out and formed by the hand of man, and so carefully is the opening concealed by branches and dried grasses that few would suspect the large apartment which is hidden below. At length the company is gathered. Gray-haired fathers are there; men of middle age, and youth whose faces express their high resolves. Woman, too, is there, with the fire of love in her heart and the peace of heaven on her countenance. No less firmly than her brothers will she stand amid the persecutions which await them all if discovered. The minister and his wife are the last to arrive. As the youthful Carlos enters hands are outstretched and blessings softly murmured. The young minister is slightly above medium height; his large black eyes are deep and penetrating; the black hair brushed up from the high forehead reveals features of noble outline and pure Spanish blood.

Very soon the little company kneel in prayer, after which the Scriptures are brought from their hiding-place, read and explained by Carlos. Words of advice are heard from the aged, and words of encouragement from the youth. At last an old man rises and says: "I feel that our dear sister, our pastor's wife, has something on her mind; shall we not unite in asking her to express it if it is her wish?" With the approval of all Camilla rises, very fair is she standing before them; in her excitement she has loosened her hair and it falls upon her shoulders in light clustering curls, her dark blue eyes are

very earnest and the fair face flushed as she speaks, "O, my friends! my brothers and sisters, I can no longer keep silent. I feel the impending doom which is ever hanging over us is about to fall. I know it! I feel it here!" and she presses her hands to her heart. Controlling herself with a great effort she continues, "As you all know, I am a child of the Alps, where my forefathers were hunted like wild beasts and where for centuries the soil was reddened with the blood of God's faithful children. It is not fear for myself makes me tremble; I was early taught to know no fear but the fear of displeasing God. But, O my loved ones! how can I live and see the blow fall upon them? Can we not fly to some safer place where we can worship God in peace? Surely this is the cursed of all lands. My own people suffered greatly, they were suffocated in caves, thrown down precipices, sawn asunder, little babes suffering with their parents. But here is that worst of all things—the Inquisition. Let but the breath of suspicion rest upon one and he is hurried within its walls and his trial is by torture. Whether he plead innocent or guilty, whether he stand up for the truth or accede to all the demands of the Catholic Church, it is the same, only death awaits him—death in its most terrible form, inflicted by wretches employed by the Church of Rome. O, my people, what think ye? Shall we not fly?" A brief silence follows the words of the minister's wife, then an aged man rises, his long white hair falls upon his shoulders which are slightly bent, but the low voice is firm as he says: "As for us older ones, we had better stay where we are; death will soon come to us and it matters little how if we are faithful to Him who refused not to offer up His own life and who promised to be with His followers even unto death. But you, my children, if you hear His voice bidding you fly, do so, and may God's blessing go with you." The last speaker had scarcely taken