

**MEMOIRS**  
OF  
**JOHN BROWN,**  
*OF PRIESTHILL,*  
AND THE  
**REV. HUGH MACKAIL,**  
*Two Sufferers*  
FOR THE CAUSE OF THE  
*Covenanted Reformation in Scotland.*

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WITH  
**A PREFACE AND NOTES,**  
BY **WILLIAM M'GAVIN,**  
*AUTHOR OF THE PROTESTANT.*

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**GLASGOW,**

*PRINTED BY ANDREW YOUNG.*

SOLD BY G. GALLIE, M. OGLE, AND W. R. M'PHUN;  
AND THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS  
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

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1828.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE following Narrative of the life and death of JOHN BROWN was written by a person of no great literary acquirements, chiefly, I believe, as the amusement of a leisure hour, and with scarcely a hope on the part of the author that it would be worth presenting to the public. It was submitted to my review in manuscript; and such was my opinion of its merit, that I recommended its publication, which was done under my own direction; and this fact being known, there were many who gave me the credit of being its author, especially as my sentiments and style were traceable in some of the notes: but with the exception of these notes, and a few verbal alterations, I had no hand in its composition. My good opinion of it has been confirmed by the public; three editions having been called for in a short space; and the Editor of a new edition of the Scots Worthies has given it the honour of a place in that work.

The favourable reception of this first essay encouraged the author, whose reading had been extensive in that line, to write a narrative of the sufferings of another of our worthies; and the youthful martyr, HUGH M'KAIL, was the subject selected. I had the honour of introducing this also to the world; and it met with a favourable reception. Both are now presented to the public in a small volume, recommended to the serious attention of youth, for whose use it is very much adapted, as it relates to a subject highly interesting to them, but which they are in danger of neglecting, while their attention is engaged by more light and fascinating reading, of which there is now such an abundant supply.

The author very justly remarks, that in the suffering period to which these Narratives relate, "Children took an interest in every thing that was going on in Scotland, and read the same books as their fathers did." This was indeed the case within my own recollection, so far as relates to the kind of reading of both old and young. Half a century ago, there were scarcely any books peculiarly adapted for the use of children, except a parcel of silly ballads and filthy stories, which wise parents endeavoured to keep out of their children's sight. In every farm-house, almost in

every cottage in the west and south of Scotland, there was, besides the Bible, a stock of good sound divinity; and in every family there was a martyrology, under the title of Naphtali, or a Cloud of Witnesses, and latterly the Scots Worthies, which was first published about fifty years ago. Children in general would find little entertainment in books of systematic divinity, though they did read them, and no doubt in many instances were instructed by them; but the martyrologies furnished an inexhaustible fund of entertainment as well as instruction. While possessing the reality of strict historical truth, the heroic fortitude of the martyrs imparted to their narratives all the charms of romance. No one could read them without a feeling of veneration for the sufferers, and an abhorrence of popery and tyranny, which was for a time exercised under the garb of Protestant prelacy. Thus the youth of the last age were taught to prize the privileges which they enjoyed, in being free from such oppression as their fathers endured; and were ready at all hazards to maintain and defend these privileges.

But the youth of the present age have in a great measure lost sight of these things. Amidst the abundance of entertaining and instructive reading now provided for them, the martyrs are in danger

of being forgotten. This would be ungrateful to the memory of the men to whom we owe so much. But even this, bad as it is, would not be of so much importance, were it not that in forgetting the men, we forget also the cause for which they suffered and died. It was the cause of God and truth as they understood it; and upon the whole, their understanding was enlightened, though not perfect. It would be dishonouring their memory, and only mocking them, to say they were *perfectly* enlightened; but it is not saying too much to affirm, that almost all the spiritual light of the age was with them, and their suffering brethren in England and elsewhere: and that for which we respect their memory is the faithful use which they made of the light they had; their holding fast the truth which they had learned from the word of God,—especially the truth of the sole headship and authority of Christ in his own church, which was a main point at issue between them and their persecutors. This indeed was the cause for which most of them died; and though they may have made mistakes in the application of the truth on this head; and were not perhaps aware of all its extent and bearing; yet it was the truth which they held fast; and it was worth the dying for.

Much has been said and written of late years



to throw ridicule on the memory of these men, and on the cause for which they suffered. In short, a strong current had set in which threatened to carry the rising generation away with it; and the consequence would have been, the banishment of serious religion from the land, and the restoration of that superstition, will-worship, and idolatry, with which our fathers had to contend: for however much Protestants may forget the cause of truth, the Devil never forgets his cause, nor the Man of Sin his. Their agents are all busy, and always labouring to recover the footing which they formerly had in these kingdoms; and of course to extirpate Protestantism, and Protestants too, who will not submit to their yoke: and they will undoubtedly gain their point, unless God in mercy interpose to prevent it; and as we cannot expect any miraculous interposition, we must look for it in the way of holding fast the truth, making it known to all around us, and filling the kingdom with the knowledge of it. In so good a work the weakest auxiliary ought not to be despised; and if this small volume shall be generally read by the youth of the present day, as I hope it will, it may tell with a powerful effect upon the generation to come.

I observe, in conclusion, and I do it with great

satisfaction, that the current of public opinion seems to be turning in favour of the cause which I am pleading. The very attempt by some wits of the age, to run down by ridicule and lying the memory of our Reformers, has roused from the slumber of a century, some men of a kindred spirit, who have triumphantly effected their vindication, and set them higher in public esteem than they had ever been before.\* This is valuable, as indicating a better understanding, and a growing attachment to the cause of truth and righteousness, which cannot fail to be accompanied by a grateful remembrance of the men who laid down their lives for that cause; and procured the blessings of civil and religious liberty which we enjoy.

W. M'GAVIN.

GLASGOW, 12th Sept. 1827.

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\* See particularly Dr. M'Crie's *Vindication of the Covenanters*.

SOME ACCOUNT

OF

JOHN BROWN.

AND

HIS COMPANIONS IN SUFFERING,

*During the latter part of the last persecuting Period in Scotland,*

1680—1688.

FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

*Fourth Edition.*



## JOHN BROWN.

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ABOUT a hundred and forty years ago, lived in the district of Kyle, in Ayrshire, JOHN BROWN, of Priesthill, in the parish of Muirkirk, on the borders of Lanarkshire.

His house, which stands to this day,\* is on the brow of a hill, behind which rises an extensive tract of heath, moss hags and rocks, some of which command a view of several counties. The house is of stone and lime, and is covered with heather. The inside must have been comfortable according to the taste of the time; and John Brown had it respectably furnished, for a person of his rank. But wealthy farmers and graziers of the present day would scarcely call it comfortable. It had no grate; the fire was burned on the floor; and having no openings in the wall, the smoke rose tardily to the chimney top. Yet

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\* From subsequent information it would appear that the present house is of more modern date.

dark and smoky as it was, many had found it a *little sanctuary*: not only for refuge, but for God's presence.

Though simple in their habits and furniture, the inhabitants of these wild districts were well informed; even their children took an interest in every thing that was going on in Scotland, and read the same books as their fathers did.

John Brown was only a boy when upwards of three hundred ministers were deposed, in one day, by Charles the II.; because they, in conscience, could not, or would not, submit that the Church should be lorded over by bishops. He often described the distress that prevailed in the country on that occasion; and the anguish and weeping, throughout the churches, on the sabbath their ministers preached their farewell sermons. It was heart-rending to part with such men, so remarkable for grace, eminent for gifts, many of them learned, and all of them singularly dear to their people. "None of them were scandalous, insufficient, or negligent, and the fruits of their ministry were every where conspicuous. You might have travelled many miles, without hearing an oath. You scarce could lodge in a house where God was not worshipped. Iniquity, ashamed, hid its head. But what a dreadful reverse was

felt, when Prelacy was introduced by arbitrary means. It was like King Saul's change, a bad spirit after a good."\*

"It is something remarkable, that every time that Prelacy was established in Scotland, it was accompanied with persecution of the Church, taking away the rights of the people, and degeneracy in the moral character of the nation. The discipline of the Presbyterians was too strict for the king and his counsellors. The bishops were ambitious, and attained power and riches, by flattering the great, and passing over their sins. *They justified the wicked for reward*; and their curates were the dregs of society, ignorant and wicked. Many of the bishops had sworn, along with the king and his nobles, to support the church they had overturned. It was no wonder though they were regarded as coming in with perjury written on their foreheads; where holiness to the Lord had formerly been."† The consequence was, that the churches were deserted; and the ministers, still bound by God's laws to their people, taught them from house to house. This the bishops could not bear; and fell to their former practice of making laws against them. The laws against nonconformity, says a writer‡ of

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\* Wodrow.

† Ibid.

‡ See Defoe.

that age, were so extraordinary, and savoured so much of a spirit of persecution, were in themselves so unjust, and in some things so unnatural, that none can wonder though they sometimes drove the poor people to desperation. "They suffered extremities that cannot be described, and which the heart can hardly conceive of, from hunger, nakedness, and the severity of the weather; where it is known how unsufferable the cold is, lying in damp caves, without covering, fire, or food. None durst harbour, speak to them, or relieve them, but upon the pain of death." The heathen may rage, and Princes may combine to plot against the Lord and his anointed, saying, Let us asunder break their bands, and cast their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heaven shall laugh; The Lord shall have them in derision. The wrath of men shall praise him.

The whirlwind of persecution carried the seeds of salvation where the influence of the Reformation had not reached. The Scottish border, proverbial for freebooters or robbers, felt the divine effects of the banished ministers.\* They were there harboured without fear or dread of laws, and kindly entertained. The inhabitants of the

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\* Mr. Gabriel Semple, and Mr. John Welsh, grandson of Knox, planted churches that flourish to this day.



heath-covered moors, and the distant isles of the sea were made glad, and blossomed as the rose. Thus, the scattering of the ministers made new inroads upon Satan's kingdom. The gospel flourished, though driven from temples made with hands. Many date their conversion from the glad tidings they heard in these wilds, saying with the Psalmist, Lo! we heard of thee at Ephratah, we found thee in the field of the wood.\*

It was from these banished ministers, that John Brown received his superior education. He was intended for the Church, had not an uncommon difficulty of expressing his sentiments to strangers prevented him from prosecuting his studies. But what was strange, in prayer he was gifted in an extraordinary measure. In such scriptural language did he pour forth his soul, and at the same time with such variety, fluency and affection, that he appeared like one superhuman.† Many have a gift of prayer whose lives bespeak them far from the kingdom of heaven. Such was not Priesthill. His actions with men were just and judicious; so much so, that he was intrusted, when a very young man, with the produce of the neighbouring shepherds, to carry to market, and dispose of, and bring back what

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\* Hind let loose.

† See Wodrow.

they required in return. In this capacity he got the name of the *Christian Carrier*; and was often the first that brought them tidings of the mischief that was framed by law against the Presbyterians.

He was merely a youth at the rising of Pentland; and not having been either at the battle of Drumclog or Bothwell, he could evade with ease the ensnaring questions that every traveller was required to answer; by which means he passed to and fro unmolested; although he did not attend the curate of Muirkirk, who was a silly, easy creature, and did not make so many complaints of his parishioners as some did: Nor was he like his brother curate of Blantyr, who, one Sabbath just as he rose to pronounce the blessing, exclaimed, "Divel nor ane o' you see bel-tane!" At which his congregation were panic-struck, thinking they were betrayed into the hands of the Highland Host, then ravaging the country: but were relieved of their fears by his next bawling out, with an oath, to the door keeper, "Jamie, rin an' a sorrow to you, an' put thae sheep out o' my kail-yard." This was nothing to the scandalous lives of others, who were guilty of such things as are not even to be named.—It was impossible the well-informed people of Scotland could bear such men, setting their unscriptural will-worship aside.

John Brown's good education was not lost. Besides being a source of enjoyment to himself, it was a benefit to the youth for miles around him, who were then much neglected. No faithful minister was left to instruct them. The fathers who used to tell the children what great things the Lord had done for Scotland, were either banished or had suffered death. To counteract the bad example of the wicked, who now walked on every side, since vile men were high in place, every Monday night he met with these young persons, and instructed them from the Bible and the Confession of Faith. In summer, they assembled in a sheep-bught; and in winter, they formed a circle wide around a large fire of peats and candle-coal, that blazed in the middle of the spence-floor. The effects of the substantial information these rustics got is felt to this day in that neighbourhood. John Brown was not alone in this good work. David and William Steel were help-mates.

It was about the year 1680, that Priesthill got acquainted with Isabell Weir, in the parish of Sorn. She was a very superior woman, though her disposition was the very reverse of his. She was lively and humorous, and could cheer up his grave countenance, till he was as animated as her-

self: at other times she would sit and listen to the good sense of his conversation with the simplicity of a child. She saw him often, for he had frequently business to transact with her father, when he passed to and from Ayr. They often talked of Zion's trouble; and what was remarkable, when he sought her in marriage, he told her he felt a foreboding in his mind that he would one day be called to seal the Church's testimony with his blood. If it should be so, she nobly answered, through affliction and death I will be your comfort. The Lord has promised me grace, and he will give you glory.\*

After this, the indulged ministers † had gone so far in the course of defection, that the more conscientious sufferers had none they could hear, after the death of Cameron and Cargil. They resolved to form themselves into societies, to meet quarterly, of members delegated from their weekly prayer-meetings. The second of these quarterly meetings took place at Priesthill, February, 1682, where they made a contribution to send a young man to Holland, to be licensed

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\* Crookshank.

† These were persons who were *indulged*, or *permitted* to exercise their ministry, on coming under certain obligations, to which the more conscientious could not submit.

as preacher to them. The fruits of this brought forward Mr. Renwick, of glorious memory. And these meetings, for no other end than to enjoy the liberty of serving God, free from the impositions of men, were counted seditious, and the members punished with death. What a dreadful state was Scotland in then, when God's people were counted her enemies?

About two months after this, Priesthill was married by Mr. Peden, who happened to be in Kyle baptizing children. The marriage took place in a glen, near the house. When Isabell and her company arrived at the spot, they were surprised at the assembly gathered. Mr. Peden welcomed her, and said, These are to be witnesses of your vows. They are all friends, and have come at the risk of their lives to hear God's word, and to countenance his ordinance of marriage. After all was over, Mr. Peden took Isabell aside, and said, "You have got a good husband, value him highly; keep linen for a winding-sheet beside you; for in a day when you least expect it, thy master will be taken from thy head. In him the image of our Lord and Saviour is too visible to pass unnoticed by those who drive the chariot wheels of persecution through the breadth and

length of bleeding Scotland. But fear not, thou shalt be comforted.\*

There is something in the human heart that puts the evil day far away. She could not think it possible, that one so blameless as her husband could be considered an enemy to any. However, the kind warning had this good effect on them both, that none of the trifles that make such havoc upon domestic peace were regarded by them.

John Brown had, by a former wife, a little girl about five years of age, who on the morning after his marriage, lifted the latch of the spence-door, and finding Isabell alone, said, while she covered her face slyly with her arm, "They say ye are my mother:" "What if I should be your mother?" replied Isabell. "Naething, but if I thought ye were my mother, I would like to come in aside you a wee," said Jennie, with artless simplicity. "I hope I will be your mother, my bairn, and that God will give me grace to be so, and that you will be a comfort to me and your father." And

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\* See Peden's Life in the Scots Worthies. From incidents and anticipations of this kind, some have weakly imagined, that this worthy minister was endowed with the gift of prophecy; whereas, no more appears, than that he possessed a natural, or if you will, a spiritual sagacity, by which he could perceive that, in the temper of those times, a man of John Brown's decision of character, and zeal for divine institutions, was not likely to escape the fury of the enemy.

she proved so. When but a child she was a help and pleasure to them: She would watch her father's return, and as soon as she saw his pack horse\* at a distance, coming along the bent, she would announce the joyful tidings. Then the gudewife hasted, and made ready his milk porridge, had them dished, covered with a clean cloth, and warm water to wash his weary feet, a blazing fire, a clean hearth; and she and Janet would go out and welcome him home, and help him off with his horse's load.

The domestic peace and comfort of Priesthill are talked of to this day; and many anecdotes are told, and one among the rest, that illustrates the precept of hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. The second year after his marriage, one night in the beginning of winter, John Brown had gone to a neighbour's house: The family at home were preparing the wool of their flocks for hoden gray cloth, to sell at Lowrie's fair in Hamilton. The shepherd carded the black and white wool together, for the women to spin: Janet and the herd boy were teasing for the carder: The gudewife sat nursing her first-born son at one side of the

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\* Carriers in those days were unacquainted with the luxury of wheel-carts; and there were no toll-roads on which wheels could turn.

fire; when the dog, which lay at full length at the other, started up, and ran to the door, barking at the approach of a stranger. Isabell thought it would be her husband returned, and was about to rise to meet him. Janet and the herd were almost as soon at the door as the dog, and calling to him, "Whisht, Collie, whisht, ye mu'na speak to the unco man." The herd caught the dog in his arms, and returned with him into the house, while Janet followed, leading a stranger, first looking to her mother for encouragement, and then to her guest. She led him to her father's chair with a courtesy that seemed to give rise to strong emotions in his heart.

The stranger was young in years, of a little stature, and fine fair countenance, but he was pale with fatigue and sickness. His shoes were worn out; a shepherd's plaid hung round him, seemingly for disguise, for by his dress and speech he seemed of a superior rank. While the servants gazed on him, the gudewife did not know whether she should welcome him as a sufferer, or consider him as a spy; so she left Janet to perform the kind offices the stranger required, while she lulled her boy to sleep, by singing a verse of an old song.

While the gudewife sang, the stranger's face



brightened up, and he more cheerfully accepted the child's endearing attentions, who placed him in the warmest corner, helped him off with his dreeping plaid, imitating all the kind offices she had seen her mother perform to her father, to the no small amusement of the rest of the family. On the stranger it had a different effect. He burst into tears, and cried, "May the blessing of him that is ready to perish rest upon you, my dear bairn. Surely God has heard my cry, and provided me a place to rest my head for a night. O that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them; for they be an assembly of treacherous men."

Just as he had finished, John Brown entered. He gazed at him, and with great deference bade him welcome to his house. "Do you know me," said the stranger. "I think I do," said John Brown. "It was in this house that the Societies met that contributed to send you to Holland, and now I fear they have not received you (at least some of them) as they ought. "Their reproach has not broken my heart," said Mr. Renwick,\* (for it was he, though he was not named before the family,)

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\* The last who suffered death in Scotland for the sake of truth and a good conscience. He was executed at Edinburgh, Feb. 17th, 1688.

“ but the excessive travelling, night wanderings, unseasonable sleep, frequent preaching in all weathers, especially in the night, has so debilitated me, that I am unfit often for my work. The reproach of those who called me to the ministry, I look upon as a device of the enemy to stop the Lord’s work; but blessed be his grace that has kept me from mixing anger or scorn of them with my sorrow. Some have declared, that I will never be honoured of the Lord to do his poor remnant good. But one thing I know, and may say, that the Lord has done me good. Oh! let none fear a suffering lot. Enemies think themselves satisfied that we are put to wander in mosses, and upon mountains; but even amidst the storms of these last two nights, I cannot express what sweet times I have had, when I had no covering but the dark curtains of night. Yea, in the silent watch, my mind was led out to admire the deep and inexpressible ocean of joy, wherein the whole family of heaven swim. Each star led me to wonder what he must be who is the star of Jacob, of whom all stars borrow their shining. Indeed, if I may term it, I am much obliged to enemies, they have covered me many a table in the wilderness, and have made me friends where I never expected them.”\*

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\* Renwick’s Letters.

When he ceased speaking, every one of the family strove to do him some kindness. The shepherd brought him clean hose and shoes: the herd his new night-cap: the lasses left their wheels and washed his feet: the gudewife prepared him a warm supper; while little Janet, worn out, was fast asleep at his side.

He remained another night with them, and was greatly bettered in his health. It was a time of refreshing to the family from on high.

In those days, hospitality was with many, in reality what it ought to be, purely exercised for God's glory, and without display of grandeur. The motives were like silver tried; it was at the risk of all, even life. Hence, the joy of such pure intercourse was sweet, beyond description. As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the face of man his friend. Renwick and Priesthill talked of the sufferings of the church, her testimony, her covenanted cause, and her ultimate triumph. Yes, they had more comfort in the faith that Christ would one day be head over all things, King of kings, and Lord of lords, than the wicked have, when corn and wine do most abound.

Mr. M'Ward, who was some time minister of the Tron Church, Glasgow, wrote a long letter from Holland to the sufferers, concluding with

these remarkable words; "Though all the powers on earth should combine to settle the Supremacy on the head of a mortal, the immortal God shall, with the omnipotent power of his arm, shake the usurper out of his seat, and settle the throne of his Anointed upon the ruin of his adversaries. Hath Christ bought his crown and sceptre with his blood? And hath he such a right and title to it? And hath he all power in heaven and in earth, for securing him the possession of his purchase? And shall any mortal offer to mount his throne, pull the crown from his head, and clothe himself with the spoils of the Mediator's honour! and keep himself in possession of what he has taken from the Son of God! O vain attempt! What says the second Psalm? O let them read their doom in verses 4th and 5th. He shall dash them in pieces. His crown shall flourish on his *own* head, and his enemies will be clothe with shame, who dared to take it by our laws." They comforted themselves in these hopes, and with the assurance that the Lord would one day return to Scotland, and that the place of his feet would be glorious.

Soon after Mr. Renwick left Priesthill, his followers and he published their Apologetic Declaration. Mr. Renwick was at first averse to the measure, but at last agreed.

The circumstances of the times were dismal, says Crookshank's History. The societies that had made choice of Mr. Renwick for their minister, were now exposed to the whole vengeance of the government. The sea-ports were shut, that none could leave the kingdom. They were pursued by bloody and merciless soldiers. The whole country was sworn to discover them, and bound from giving them meat, drink, or lodgings. Secret spies were hired to find out their haunts, or any who shewed them the least kindness. They were put from under the protection of the laws of their country. No terms were allowed them but a renouncing of principles, and swallowing those oaths by which thousands were involved in the horrid guilt of perjury. What can we think of that tree which produced such fruit?

It was under such circumstances that the Apologetic Declaration was published. In it may be seen a spirit, still in Scotland, that dared to be free from tyranny; a spirit that animated the first Reformers; that would, one day, speak terrible things in righteousness.

“ Yes, thy proud lords, unpitied land! shall see  
That man hath yet a soul, and dare be free.  
A little while, along thy saddening plains,  
The starless night of desolation reigns:

TRUTH shall restore the light by Nature given,  
 And, like Prometheus, bring the fire of heaven:  
 Prone to the dust, oppression shall be hurl'd;  
 Her name, her nature, wither from the world."\*

Although this effort of freedom was like the child threshing the mountain, and its consequence apparently the same, save that the church on this account suffered much; the court-party making it a pretence for sending more soldiers on the country, particularly about Lanark, vainly thinking that it would never be well with them till the South and West of Scotland were made a hunting-field; and the better to execute this, any soldier in the ranks had liberty *to shoot all they thought suspicious*, and it was not long till there was scarce a moss or mountain in the West of Scotland but was flowered with martyrs.†

The society that met at Priesthill was soon broken up. John Wilson, and John Smith of Lesmahago, were shot by Colonel Buchan and the Laird of Lee, in February, 1685. John Brown of Blackwood, in the same parish, was shot in the beginning of March following, by Lieutenant Murray, after the promise of quarter. The pure snow then on the ground, was stained with his blood.

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\* Campbell.

† Renwick's letters to Sir Robert Hamilton.

His corpse was buried, under cloud of night, near to the spot where he was treacherously slain

Murray might murder such as godly Brown,  
But could not rob him of that glorious crown  
He now enjoys. His credit, not his crime,  
Was non-compliance with a wicked time.

These lines are inscribed on the stone that covers his grave.\*

After this, John Brown could not continue his business of Carrier, though he had no hand in the Apologetic Declaration. His opinion, (and his conduct was consistent with it,) was, that he ought to live as in an enemy's country, and *without sin*. Yet he was often obliged to betake to the high lands of Kyle, and of Lanarkshire, and to bear the chilling cold of March and April winds, with the more bitter blast of persecution. Still, however, amidst the storms of nature, and of the political heavens, he had the rainbow of the covenant around his head, and enjoyed a freedom and pleasure that his enemies could not rob him of.

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\* Cloud of Witnesses.

A very interesting account of the death of John Brown appeared in Blackwood's Magazine, some time after this was written: but the writer has confounded the account of John Brown of Blackwood parish, with that of his namesake of Priesthill; and the house on the Muir, with that in Muirkirk.—The house on the Muir was where Caldwell, Kerland, and the gentlemen of Renfrewshire, rendezvoused on their way to join Colonel Wallace, and the company who fell at Pentland. Wodrow; Vol. I. Appendix;

On one of those days, when driven from his home, he fled for refuge to a deep ravine, or moss hag, that had been formed by the current of a water-spout, carrying shrubs, soil, moss, and all before it, to the dale land beneath, leaving a frightful chasm, amidst a vast field of heath. Its deep mossy sides made it inaccessible to strangers; only the neighbouring husbandmen knew where the brackens hid the rocks, whose shelvy sides conducted to the bottom. In the sides of this natural alley, were dens and caves, sufficient to hide a large company. In one of these, Priesthill intended to spend the day in prayer; and had begun to pour out his soul, in the words of Lamentations iii. 40, and downwards, when a sweet sound reached his ear, that seemed to proceed from another part of the moss hag. At first it was in a soft under voice, as afraid to be heard, but soon rose above all fear, joined with others; and the following Psalm was distinctly sung:—

Because I am brought very low,

Attend unto my cry;

Me from my persecutors save,

Who stronger are than I.

From prison bring my soul, that I

Thy name may glorify.

The just shall compass me when thou

With me deal'st bounteously.



“It is the hallowed sound of praising God; and by some fellow-sufferers;” said John Brown, as he arose from his knees to search them out. And to his no small joy, found out David and William Steel, his neighbours, and Joseph Wilson from Lesmahago, in the cleft of a rock that juttet half-way into the ravine. David Steel had a narrow escape the day before this. When just about to begin the morning worship, one cried out, “There is the enemy coming.” He arose with the Bible under his arm, and, without knowing what he was about, went into the byre, and laid himself down in an empty cow-stall, putting the Bible on his breast. His wife, equally unconscious, turned over him a heap of bedding, just as the soldiers entered the place. They stabbed the straw where he lay, but the bible received the point of the sword, and they left the house without finding their victim. William Steel’s house was near at hand, and was also searched. His wife had locked him in her clothes-press. After they searched every place without success, and had left the house, a soldier returned, and said to the gude-wife, “Mistress, next time you hide, hide better; part of your husband’s coat is locked without your press;” and with these words, he left her, to join his company. After he was gone, to her amaze-

ment, she found it as the soldier had said. It was to avoid such harassing scenes, that they had all fled to the ravine; and they found, to their sweet experience, this dreary waste a Bethel; and in their harassings and hidings, as it was with Moses on the mount, nearest God when farthest from creature comforts. All day, they read God's word and prayed by turns; and during the dark and silent watches of the night, by turns they prayed and praised.

The seventy-fourth Psalm was deeply imprinted on their memories, from its being remarkably descriptive of their situation. The whole of it was sung about midnight, and while the wind carried the sound to the dale land below, faith carried the matter up to heaven. It entered the ear of the God of sabaoth, through the highly exalted Intercessor, for his suffering church. And though the Lord waited to be gracious, as the cup of wickedness that the Stuart race was to fill had not come to the brim they were to fill it; but he sent the Comforter to uphold them with peace and joy, in believing that it was *Jesus' cause* they were suffering for. And though counted as slaughter sheep, they were fed in green pastures, and drank of that river of life, whose divine influences refreshed their souls, passing all understand-

ing. They felt a peace that made them loath to part. Every one was sensible that the presence of God had been with them. It was in this spirit that these poor haunted saints spent the time till morning dawned, and the lark arose above their heads, joining his note with theirs in praise to God for the light of another day.

William Steel, who escaped death from the persecutors, and lived many years after the Revolution, said often, if ever there was a time in his life that he would wish to enjoy over again, it was that in which he suffered persecution; especially that day and night he spent in the moss hag. They all thought it would be their last meeting on earth. He was the first that ascended from the ravine, to look if the enemy were in view; and it being a clear morning, and no person in sight, they all followed, and were standing to consult on the separate paths they would take home, to prevent them from being seen, when they were struck silent by a voice, sweeter than any thing they had ever heard, passing over the ravine, singing these words;—

Oh! let the prisoners' sighs ascend  
 Before thy sight on high;  
 Preserve those by thy mighty power,  
 That are ordained to die.

And again, while they still stood speechless, another voice sung, in tones of exaltation;—

Though ye have lain among the pots,  
 Like doves ye shall appear,  
 Whose wings with silver, and with gold  
 Whose feathers covered are.

After standing for some time looking at one another, some of them thought they had left other worshippers in the moss hag. Others thought that the sound echoed from a greater distance. "Whoever or wherever the words come from, we have little concern," said John Brown; "one thing we may take comfort from; they are God's words to his church in affliction; and that is our situation. Who lie among the pots? We scullions, black in the opinion of our enemies. But God sees us not as man sees us, but compares us to doves; doves on the wing, whose feathers of gold and silver are best seen when they fly. It may be, we are on the wing to an eternal world, and this Bethel meeting is preparing us to mount up with wings like eagles. If so, let us keep in mind, that we have nothing to boast of, but grace, grace: unto it is our acknowledgment." While he spoke, his countenance beamed the pleasantest ever they had seen; and when he parted from them, they stood and looked after him. It was

the last time they saw him in life, and the last time they heard him speak. "He had a most uncommon talent in communicating information and consolation to others, and when he came himself to be tried, he was not left a cast-away."\*

Among the last of the needy adventurers of Charles II.'s reign, who could swim through the blood of their more conscientious countrymen, to favour and emolument, was Graham of Claverhouse. "He was descended from the house of Montrose, and was educated in France, the best school for dissolute manners and cruelty. He fought against the French in the Low Countries, under the prince of Orange, but being refused the command of one of the Scottish regiments, then in the Dutch service, he left it in disgust, and came over to England. His dissolute manners and vivacity soon got him notice at court, and the command of a party of Highlanders."† His first appearance on the stage of Scotland's tragedy was in 1678, taking free quarters for himself and men in the house of Gilbert M'Michen, in New Glenluce; and when they went off, beside what they consumed, they took with them three horses, worth ten pounds each.‡ In every succeeding

\* Wodrow.

† Brewster's Encyclopedia, article Graham.

‡ Arnot, who commanded this party, had his bowels trod out next year, at the battle of Drumclog, by a horse.

appearance he may be marked as rising in cruelty and exaction.

“What Bishop Burnet says of Dalziel, may be affirmed of Claverhouse with equal, or perhaps with greater truth; that he acted the Muscovite too grossly, threatening to spit men, and roast them alive. He pleaded in excuse that terror was true mercy, if it put an end to, or prevented war.”

Charles being now dead, James, Duke of York, required such instruments to compel submission to his system of cruelty. Having now thrown off the mask, the suspicion of the Reformers, that Prelacy was to be handmaid to the introduction of Popery in Scotland, was verified. For that purpose he enlarged the commission of Claverhouse, and created him Viscount of Dundee; and none was better fitted to drive *fell Ruin's ploughshare* through every thing that could make life desirable.

“The measure of fixing garrisons of soldiers through the South and West counties, as if Scotland had been invaded by a foreign enemy, was the beginning of many cold-blooded murders in the field. One of these garrisons was fixed at Lesmahago.”\* Claverhouse came unexpectedly there, late on the last night of April, 1685, and having heard of John Brown's piety and non-conformity, by six o'clock next morning he was at

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\* Wodrow,

Priesthill. A proof how he thirsted after the blood of such men.

John Brown, as usual, had arisen with the dawn, and had offered up the morning sacrifice. His wife often told how remarkably the Psalm, sung that morning, tended to gird up the loins of their minds. It was as follows:—

PSALM xxvii. 1—4.

The Lord's my light and saving health;  
 Who shall make me dismayed?  
 My life's strength is the Lord; of whom  
 Then shall I be afraid?

When as mine enemies and foes,  
 Most wicked persons all,  
 To eat my flesh against me rose,  
 They stumbled and did fall.

Against me though an host encamp,  
 My heart yet fearless is:  
 Though war against me rise, I will  
 Be confident in this.

One thing I of the Lord desired,  
 And will seek to obtain,  
 That all days of my life I may  
 Within God's house remain;

That I the beauty of the Lord  
 Behold may and admire,  
 And that I in his holy place  
 May rev'rently inquire.

The chapter read was John xvi., equally suitable; and his prayers were like those of one lost to the world, and entered into the holy of holies, through the rent vail of the Redeemer's death.

How good it is, when the Lord comes, to be found watching in the way of doing our duty, was experienced in no small measure by the family at Priesthill. After worship, the gudeman went to the hill to prepare some peat-ground; the servants were also out, but at some distance, when Claverhouse surrounded the helpless man with three troops of dragoons, and brought him down to his own house. He left his implements of industry with great composure, and walked down before them more like a leader than a captive.

Meanwhile Janet had alarmed her mother by telling her that a great many horsemen were coming down the hill with her father. "The thing that I feared is come upon me; O give me grace for this hour!" said her mother, hastily taking up her boy, and wrapping him in her plaid, and taking Janet by the hand, she went out to meet her foes, praying in secret as she went.

The leisurely way of examining persons by law, in which there was some semblance of justice, was now departed from. Claverhouse simply asked John Brown, Why he did not attend the



curate, and if he would pray for king James? It was remarkable that, though a stammerer in speech to strangers, this morning he answered Claverhouse distinctly. He said he acknowledged only Christ as supreme head of the Church, and could not attend the curates, because they were placed there contrary to his law, and were mere creatures of the bishops, and the bishops were creatures of the king; and he being a Papist, and himself a Protestant Presbyterian, who, along with all ranks in the nation, had sworn and covenanted to God, that no Papist should bear rule over these lands; so that he neither could nor would pray for him. But if he repented, and turned from his wicked way, he would acknowledge, obey, and pray for him.\*

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\* Some readers will be surpris'd that so holy a man should have refus'd to pray for the king, seeing we are so plainly commanded to pray for kings, and all in authority over us. In the present state and circumstances of this kingdom, it is not easy with some persons to perceive the force of the reasons which induc'd our persecuted forefathers to refuse obedience to this command. One thing, however, is very evident from their history, that they refus'd obedience, not to divine, but only to arbitrary human authority, and when it was considered a test of their compliance with what was sinful. It is probable that the Apostle Paul himself would have refus'd to pray for Nero as emperor, had he been commanded to do so at the point of the sword, as a test of his acknowledging him as Head of the Church. He would have pray'd like Stephen for his enemies and murderers; but certainly he would not have acknowledg'd, nor would he have done any thing that so much as seem'd to acknowledge, the ecclesiastical supremacy of the emperor. Now this is the plain fact of the

Upon hearing this, Claverhouse said, Go to your prayers, for you shall immediately die;\* which he did in such a manner as filled the troops with amazement. On his family, it had a different effect. His wife, who was great with child, with another in her arms, and Janet at her side, stood while he prayed "that every covenanted blessing

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case with regard to our fathers in the reign of Charles II. Praying for the king was enforced at the point of the bayonet; and compliance was understood by both parties to be a renouncing of a fundamental principle of the Scottish Reformation, which incurred the guilt of both hypocrisy and perjury. Charles was not content with being acknowledged head of the state. He would be head of the church too; and James, his successor, would have resigned the headship of both to the Pope.

But with their convictions, they could not even pray for Charles as head of the state, without gross hypocrisy; for they believed that by his violation of his solemn engagements to the nation, he had forfeited all right to the sovereignty. This, it must be allowed, is a delicate question; and one at all times of difficult application; but if the worthy men whose conduct is the subject of this note, were wrong either in the conception or application of the principle, their error was adopted and followed up into practice, by the whole nation, a few years after; and this is now universally approved by Protestants of all denominations. The fact is, the strict Covenanters saw the cloven foot of Popery and arbitrary power in the administration of Charles II. almost from the beginning, and still more in that of his brother James. They refused to submit to it, or to come under any oath that should bind them to an approbation of Popery and tyranny, or even to utter a word in their prayers that could imply such a thing. Surely these were at least honest men; and they were more noble than those of their countrymen, who, after having made many compliances, and sworn many oaths to the reigning family, felt themselves compelled to throw them off. "Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?"

\* Wodrow and Crookshanks.

might be poured upon her and her children, born and unborn, as one refreshed by the influence of the Holy Spirit, when he comes down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers upon the earth."

There is a light in the Christian's life that discovers the spots of the wicked, and torments them before the time. When Claverhouse could bear his prayers no longer, and had succeeded, after interrupting him twice, with the most blasphemous language, to raise him from his knees, John Brown said to his wife—Isabell, this is the day I told you of, before we were married; and added with his usual kindness, You see me summoned to appear, in a few minutes, before the court of Heaven, as a witness in our Redeemer's cause, against the Ruler of Scotland. Are you willing that I should part from you? Heartily willing, said she, in a voice that spoke her regard for her husband, and her submission to the Lord, even when he called her to bow before his terrible things. "That is all I wait for: O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where will be thy victory?" said John Brown, while he tenderly laid his arms around her, kissed her and her little boy, and lastly Janet, saying to her, My sweet bairn, give your hand to God as your guide; and be your mother's comfort.—He could add no more; a tide of tenderness overflowed his heart. At last, he uttered

these words, "Blessed be thou, O Holy Spirit! that speaketh more comfort to my heart than the voice of my oppressors can speak terror to my ears!" Thus, when the Lord brought his witness to be tried, he discovered such magnanimity that, as he fell, he conquered his persecutors.

If, in the christian's life, there is a light that discovers the spots of the wicked; so, in the martyr's heroic grappling with death, there was a *heat* that scorched past enduring. It was doubtless under this feeling that Claverhouse ordered six of his dragoons to shoot him, ere the last words were out of his mouth: but his prayers and conduct had disarmed them from performing such a savage action. They stood motionless. Fearing for their mutiny, Claverhouse snatched a pistol from his own belt, and shot him through the head. . . . . And while his troops slunk from the awful scene, he, like a beast of prey that tramples and howls over a fallen victim, insulted the tender-hearted wife, while she gathered up the shattered head, by taunting jeers: "What thinkest thou of thy husband now, woman?" "I ever thought mickle good of him," said she, "and now more than ever." He, seeing her courage, said, "It were but justice to lay thee beside him." She replied, "If ye were permitted, I doubt not your cruelty

could go that length; but how will ye answer for this morning's work." With a countenance that belied his words, he answered, "To men I can be answerable, and as for God, I will take him in my own hands." Thus saying, he hastily put spurs to his horse, and left her with the corpse. She tied up his head with her napkin, composed his body, covered it with her plaid, and when she had nothing further to do or contend with, she sat down on the ground, drew her children to her, and wept over her mangled husband.

But think not, reader, she was miserable; it is only when we have brought on ourselves our afflictions, that we are miserable under them. Nor think that she was alone. Are not angels ministering spirits to believers in their troubles? And being spirits they are well fitted for the service. They can reach the spirit with healing on their wings. They soothe, they comfort the afflicted widow. They bring God's promises to mind, saying, "Fear not, for thy Maker is thy husband. For the Lord has called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit. Thy God saith, For a moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations

with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. Thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be their peace. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." There are also kindred spirits with angels, here on earth, in whom the most High God puts his Spirit, to speak a word in season to the weary soul.

The mourners of Priesthill did not long want friends. The report of the foul deed circulated rapidly, creating dismay and abhorrence. Who now could think themselves safe, when John Brown was thus treated, who was not otherwise obnoxious to government than in not attending the curate, and he several miles distant? The first who arrived on the spot was David Steel's wife, one well fitted to comfort in the most trying dispensation. She ran up to the group, and throwing her arms around them, saluted Isabell thus, "Wow woman! and has your master been taken from your head this day? and has he won the martyr's crown? and has God taken you and your children under his *own care*, saying, I will be a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless? No wonder though ye are overcome

and astonished at his doings." This salutation aroused and strengthened the widow. She remembered the words of Mr. Peden, and she arose from the ground to search out the linen he had warned her to prepare. About this time David Steel and William Steel, with his wife, arrived and assisted Isabell to bring in and wrap up the precious dust. All was done, while the silence of death reigned over the household.

After breakfast David Steel took the Bible, and, in the ordinary course of the family, began the worship of God by singing part of the consolatory psalm that remained unsung in the morning:—

For he, in his pavilion, shall  
 Me hide in evil days;  
 In secret of his tent me hide,  
 And on a rock me raise.

And now, even at this present time,  
 Mine head shall lifted be,  
 Above all those that are my foes,  
 And round encompass me:

Therefore, unto his tabernacle  
 I'll sacrifices bring  
 Of joyfulness; I'll sing, yea, I  
 To God will praises sing.

And followed also the footsteps of his friend by reading the xviii<sup>th</sup> chapter of John.

Those in affliction read and sing in a faith that those who are at ease know nothing about. Every word of God comes home just as if he spoke with a voice in their ear. It was with such acts of faith on God's promise that Isabell received with composure her visitors, many of whom came at the risk of their lives to condole with her.

As was said of the protomartyr Stephen, devout men carried him to his burial; in like manner was John Brown, for literally God's hidden ones carried him forth, and laid him in his grave, on the very spot where he fell.—“ They wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, in dens and caves of the earth, afflicted and tormented;” and left but one opinion on the minds of those who heard them, viz. that those who had been slain “ had entered into rest.” And as the disciples, after they had seen the Lord ascend, returned unto Jerusalem rejoicing, in like manner did the company at Priesthill rejoice, and had their “ song in the night.”

Every writer of that age, among the sufferers, bears witness how wonderfully they who suffered were borne up, as on eagle's wings, above the world's scorn and hatred. Ask all the letters written by Rutherford and others, down to those written by Sir R. Hamilton. Ask the dying testimonies, from Argyle and Guthrie to Renwick.



They would fill volumes, and establish the truth, that one like unto the Son of God walked with them in the fiery furnace of affliction. Renwick writes, on one occasion, to Sir R. Hamilton, after a field-preaching, that "if ever God could be tied to any place, I think it is to the muirs and mountains of Scotland." Rutherford many a time declares, "Sweet, sweet is the cross; and no wonder, when Christ bears both us and it." The sorrow of the righteous is better far than the joys of the wicked, that are only like the crackling of thorns under a pot, and worketh death. Had a miracle opened the eyes of Claverhouse, as it did the eyes of the prophet's servant, to have seen John Brown's soul from "insult springing," at the moment his body fell a mangled corpse, he would have seen himself changed from a powerful oppressor, like Haman, to a mean servant, only fit, as an instrument, to clothe the humble sinner at the king's gate, in royal robes and a glorious crown, and usher him into the city Shushan, as a man whom the King delights to honour. It was not granted that his eyes should be opened by a miracle, or by faith in God's written testimony, to see himself as he really was; but God's vicegerent, conscience, even in this life, speaks out awful things of righteousness and

judgment to come. " He afterwards acknowledged that John Brown's prayer made such an impression on his spirit, that he could never get altogether worn off, when he gave himself liberty to think."\* Thus, " mischief haunts the violent man, and the bloody and deceitful man shall not live half his days." This was eminently exemplified in the lives and deaths of the persecutors of that age; and in none more than in Graham of Claverhouse.

His maxim, of terror being true mercy, if it prevented or put an end to war, like every other attempt to do evil that good may come out of it, proved fallacious: and acting up to it was the mean of bringing on the Revolution of 1688, and of " banishing James VII. from the throne and hearts of the people of Scotland. Claverhouse, for various reasons, had no alternative than to follow the fortune of his benefactor. When he found a large majority in the Scots Convention on the side of William, he left Edinburgh with the determination of exerting himself in the cause of James, in the field. Not long after this he appeared openly in arms at Inverness, and was successful at the battle of Killcrankie; putting William's army to flight; but while in the act of raising

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\* Wodrow.

himself on the saddle, and waving with his arm, pointing to guard the pass of Killicrankie, that his favorite maxim, "no quarter," might be put into execution, Lo! a musket-ball passed into his armpit that proved fatal in a few hours after. His estate was made over to the house of Douglas, and his widow marrying to Lord Kilsyth, and returning to Holland, became, along with her children, the victim of a dreadful misfortune.\* The house in which she resided at Utrecht, falling suddenly in, and overwhelming the whole family, his name and titles became extinct."†

He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke—who made Scotland a wilderness—that destroyed the cities thereof—that opened not the house of the prisoners: Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols. The worms are spread under thee, and worms cover thee. I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, for thou hast destroyed the wicked; thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

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\* This was the Lady whose body was, about twenty years ago, discovered in a vault under Kilsyth church, in a state of entire preservation, and which was for years exposed to the gaze of all who chose to look at it. See Garnett's Tour, in which there is a print of the body as it appeared immediately after discovery.

† Brewster's Encyclopædia.

The poor widow of Priesthill and her children did inherit the earth, and had a name long after that of her oppressors was not.—About forty years ago, a gentleman riding to Edinburgh fell into conversation with a respectable-looking country-woman, on the road, and learning that she was a grand-daughter of John Brown, he on that account made her ride behind him into the city. So much was the memory of the Christian Carrier respected. And what was a proof of the harmony of his family, she could not tell whether she was of the first or the second wife's children. None of them now reside at Priesthill, but their house stands, and the broad flat stone that covers their father's grave, is shewn, with this inscription,

In death's cold bed, the dusty part here lies  
 Of one who did the earth as dust despise:  
 Here in this place from earth he took departure;  
 Now he has got the garland of the martyr.  
 Butcher'd by Clavers and his bloody band,  
 Raging most rav'nously o'er all the land,  
 Only for owning Christ's supremacy,  
 Wickedly wrong'd by encroaching tyranny.  
 Nothing how near so ever he to good

Esteem'd, nor dear for any truth his blood.

It has not been exactly ascertained how long the widow lived after her husband, nor is the present state of their posterity known to the writer:

but it is certain, that eight months after her husband's death, Isabell mingled her tears with those of David Steel's wife, and had her wounds opened afresh by that worthy man's untimely end.

The enemy came on a sudden to Cumberhead where he lived, and while he was flying before them to a flow-moss, where no trooper could follow, they called him back, assuring him that they did not intend his hurt. In confidence of which, he sat down on a little knoll, on which a kiln stood, to look at the soldiers passing; and while doing so, Lieutenant Crichton, who commanded the troop, and who came up in the rear, shot him through the heart, after that he had been treacherously promised safety !!!

His wife saw him all the while, and was the first that got to the bloody corpse, and while she gently pressed down the eyelids on the fixed face, she said with great composure, "The archers have shot at thee, but they could not reach thy soul: it has escaped like a dove, far away, and is at rest." She then, clapping her hands together, and looking up with an eye that pierced the heavens, said, Lord, give strength unto thine handmaid, that will prove she has waited for thee even in the way of thy judgments.

David Steel lies buried in Lesmahago church-yard. On his grave is a stone with this epitaph,

David a shepherd first, and then  
 Advanced to be king of men,  
 Had of his graces in this quarter,  
 This heir, a wand'rer, now a martyr ;  
 Who for his constancy and zeal,  
 Still to the back did prove good steel ;  
 Who for Christ's royal truth and laws,  
 And for the covenanted cause  
 Of Scotland's famous Reformation,  
 Declining tyrants' usurpation,  
 By cruel Crichton murder'd lies,  
 Whose blood to heaven for vengeance cries.\*

Joseph Wilson, who was also under hiding in the moss-hag with John Brown, was met by a party of North Highlanders in a moss, near the water of Kyle, when he and other four men were returning from hearing Mr. Renwick preach ; and on their confession where they had been, were all shot without further trial. Thus their blood was mingled with their sacrifice. They were not granted even time to commit their souls to God, but their souls' safety did not depend on their prayers, but on their praying HEAD.

William Steel alone of these friends survived the persecution period, and lived after the Revol-

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\* Cloud of Witnesses.

ution to tell his wonderful escapes. The visitor to the high lands of the five Western Shires, to this day, will hear of the sufferings of that period in the houses of the husbandmen; and on the hills the shepherd points to the cairns that cover the sufferers' graves. Few of them have inscriptions, yet their tales of wo are handed down from father to son, with a minuteness that is well expressed by the bard of Kyle.

Still o'er these scenes the mem'ry wakes,  
 And fondly broods with miser care;  
 Time but the impression deeper makes,  
 As streams their channels deeper wear.

“The memory of the most glorious scenes of action, and the most dismal scenes of suffering, that the Church of Scotland has passed through have not been left buried in their own ashes.” Her first Reformers have been nobly drawn forth from the rubbish of lies and prejudice, that had long lain heaped upon their memories. And may not the less conspicuous stones that compose the fair building, be gathered out with this warrant—The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance?





AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

**Life and Death**

OF THE

REV. HUGH MACKAIL;

WHO, AFTER SUFFERING

**THE TORTURE OF THE BOOT,**

WAS EXECUTED AT EDINBURGH, IN DEC. 1666,

FOR

HIS ADHERENCE TO THE COVENANTED REFORMATION  
IN SCOTLAND.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF  
JOHN BROWN, OF PRIESTHILL.



## HUGH MACKAIL.

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IN 1640, when the fathers of the second Reformation were contending with the enemies of God's Church for that liberty which at last crowned them victorious, Hugh Mackail was a helpless babe in swaddling clothes; but when, in mysterious providence, the Lord again allowed the enemy to prevail, and to try his saints as silver is tried, in the fiery persecution which followed the restoration of Charles II. and when the fathers who formerly fought the good fight of faith slept in Jesus, then Mackail, though a stripling, came forward to the combat, and fell in the cause of Christ, a glorious martyr.

Almost all the historians of that period record his sufferings and triumphant death, yet none of them tell the place of his birth. His parents, who resided in the parish of Libberton in Mid-Lothian, were pious and respectable; and early

dedicated their son to the work of the ministry. Young Mackail received his classical education in the University of Edinburgh, under the superintending care of his uncle, Mr. Hugh Mackail, one of the ministers of that city. He was an eminent scholar, and as a student of Divinity, gave great hopes of being an honour to the profession of the Gospel.

Before he was twenty years of age, he became Chaplain and tutor in the family of Sir James Stewart of Coltness, a highly respected gentleman, and an able supporter of both civil and religious liberty, and who at that time was Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

In this family, Mackail enjoyed many advantages; his studies were improved, and at the table of his host, he enjoyed friendly intercourse with many noblemen and gentlemen, who were not only great, but good. Here he met with the Earl of Argyle, the Earls of Loudon, Lord Warriston, and many other supporters of Scottish independence. Perhaps no age ever furnished more noble examples of the christian and the patriot; and Mr. Mackail's after-life shewed how deeply he had imbibed their spirit and principles.

But the advantages of a happy home, and highly intelligent society, were soon wrecked in the

destructive overturn of the Presbyterian Church. For although Sir James Stewart and his friends had been true to their King, when his interest was at the lowest, yet their covenanting principles and determined hatred of tyranny in church or state, made them objects of dislike to Charles's government; and it was necessary to get rid of them, so as they might not disturb the mischievous devices of popish incendiaries.\* The events of that period are pretty generally known: Argyle was beheaded, Loudon died of grief, Warriston fled beyond seas for a time, and the rest of Sir James Stewart's friends were all scattered and dispersed. He himself, being beguiled to escort his friend Sir John Chieflly of Carswell, to Edinburgh Castle, they were both left prisoners.†

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\* Charles II. who had drunk in Popery with his mother's milk, entertained at his court several priests and jesuits. Soon after the Restoration, Cardinal de Retz came to England in disguise, and had a private audience of the King. What passed, was not publicly known; but may be conjectured by the arguments this Cardinal used on his return to France, to persuade a French Protestant Marquis, to change his religion; saying, it was impossible the Protestant interest could stand, as it could expect no aid from England, seeing both the Princes had become Papists. Charles, indeed, did not throw off the mask at once, as his brother did; but he introduced Prelacy as a step towards the restoration of Popery.

† From Edinburgh Castle, Sir James was moved to Dundee; and fined, first £500, and afterwards, £1000. His fourth son James, was bred to the bar, and became one of the first lawyers of his time. He distinguished himself by his able defence of his father, which so exas-

During these trying circumstances, Mackail, who still abode with the family of Coltness, offered himself on trials for the ministry, before the Presbytery of Edinburgh, and being approved, was licensed to preach the Gospel, which he did with great acceptance.

One of Charles's first acts, with regard to the Church, was the restoration of patronage, and all presentees were required to take the new oath of allegiance, declaring the King's supremacy over all persons and causes, civil and ecclesiastical. This oath being refused by Mackail, he, on this account, notwithstanding his erudition and piety, was still a Probationer in 1662. And what was infinitely more distressing to him than his own unsettled condition, the Church which had been built up by the labour of the first and second reformations, and which stood like Sion of old, the joy of all the land, was now levelled with the dust, and all her beauty and comeliness defaced.

“ For in this City, glorious as it is,  
 No beauty to the wordling's eye appears;  
 Her walls, her gates, her blest inhabitants,  
 Her flowing river, and her heavenly food,

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perated the then rulers, that he was forced to abscond, and he remained concealed for some time in the house of Allanton. See MS. history of the family.

Her Lord supreme, and those unequalled laws  
 By which he governs them who trust his grace;  
 The sweet communion of her happy saints,  
 And their immortal hopes, are all to him  
 As a romantic tale, or idle dream."\*

The chief instrument, employed in the destruction of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, was James Sharp, a minister of her own communion, afterwards the well known Archbishop of St. Andrews. This arch enemy not only sold his Church, but, like every other apostate, he hated the image of Christ in others, and went about effectually to silence the more faithful of his former brethren, which he accomplished by the sweeping act of assembly at Glasgow. This act was planned by him, and pushed forward by the jesuitical reasoning of Archbishop Fairfoul, before a drunken council. By it upwards of three hundred faithful pastors were banished from their flocks, because they would not unminister themselves, by taking new ordination from the bishops; and were driven from their houses; they and their little ones having to wander amidst the storms of November, twenty miles from their own parish Church; six, from a cathedral; and four, from any borough town: and, in this way, they learned the import

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\* Swain's Church on earth.

of the Saviour's words, " Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter."

It has ever been the manner of Rome to extinguish the lamps that light to heaven; but although it had power to remove the lamp-stands, it could not extinguish the light, for its source is Him who dwelleth in light inaccessible; nor was there wanting a witness to that light in the darkest day Scotland ever saw,—the last day the ejected ministers preached, " a day not only of weeping, but of howling, like the weeping of Jazer, as when a besieged city is sacked."

It was on that day, Mr. Mackail preached, in the great Church of Edinburgh, his last public sermon. His text was, " Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions." In this sermon, he fearlessly shewed that it was no new thing for the Church to suffer persecution; and amplifying the subject, he said a Pharaoh on the throne, a Haman in the state, and a Judas in the church, had been instrumental in that work in former times; and though, in his account of Haman and Judas, he made no application, yet Sharp and Lauderdale, thinking most justly, that their portraits had been



very accurately taken, were galled to the heart. Nothing cuts deeper than merited reproof, when aided by conscious guilt, or will raise up more implacable enemies. For this, John the Baptist was beheaded in prison: and for this, a troop of dragoons surrounded the house of Sir James Stewart, to apprehend Mr. Mackail; but, upon a moment's warning, he escaped from his own bed to another, and was almost miraculously preserved.

Being disappointed of their object, they fell upon his patron, Sir James, and his second son, Mr. Walter.—The following document, which still stands on the records of council, is a very good specimen of prelatie domination, and proves what they had to expect who favoured Presbyterians.

“Information having been given, that Mr. Hugh Mackail, Chaplain to Sir James Stewart of Coltness and Goodtrees, did of late, in a sermon preached by him in one of the Kirks in Edinburgh, most maliciously inveigh against, and abuse his most sacred Majesty, and the present government in church and state, to the great offence of God, and the stumbling of his people; and that the said Sir James Stewart and Mr. Walter his son were present, when said sermon was preached; at least, were certainly informed thereof; yet notwithstanding, did entertain him in their family.

As also the said Mr. Walter, had emitted some speeches in a smithy, on———(a certain day,) tending to sedition, especially anent public differences,—said that before business went on long as it was going, a hundred thousand would lose their lives in the three kingdoms. Therefore, Macers are ordered to cite them before the Council against the 11th Inst.”

Sir James Stewart got clear of these charges, but Mr. Walter his son, on being examined, and witnesses called, was found guilty of having uttered something tending to a spirit of liberty, and dislike of the bishops, which, in those days, was sedition, and that of the worst kind; he was therefore imprisoned, but afterwards set at large. He soon after died, and was thus set at liberty from a body of sin, and taken from the evil to come. He was a pious young man, and warmly attached to Mr. Mackail, who was left a wandering exile, while his friend had got home to his Father's house, and to the place where the voice of the oppressor is unknown.

Sharp's rage being unbounded, Mr. Mackail had to leave his young charge,\* and all that was

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\* None of the younger branches of this interesting family came of age, except Marion, who was married to Sir John Maxwell of Pollock, who was, after the Revolution, one of the Senators of the Col-

dear to him in his native country. He went to Holland, at that time the asylum of Scottish refugees, and making a virtue of necessity, increased his theological knowledge by studying in one of the Dutch Universities.

He came home about the year 1664 or 1665, and found the state of affairs much worse than when he went abroad. Now, profligate curates filled the pulpits which had formerly been occupied by men of worth. The curates were generally very ignorant and illiterate; and Mr. Mackail's superior attainments in theology and science, made him just so much the more the object of their malice.

At this time, also, Sir James Turner, an Englishman, who had been bred to plunder and violence in the French service, was employed by the Council, in harassing the inhabitants of Dumfries and Galloway, on account of their Presbyterian principles. He employed himself and the troops under his command, in levying fines, for conformity to Cromwell, and for non-attendance on the

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lege of Justice. See Crawford's history of Renfrewshire. Thus she became united to a family highly distinguished for adherence to the cause of truth, as well as by suffering for the sake of it.

curates,† whose audiences generally consisted of the clerk and other Church officers, with occasionally a very few of the parishioners; whilst some few of the Presbyterian Ministers, who, at their hazard, (or protected perhaps by some family of interest in the country, for the gentry were not in general favourable to Episcopacy,) remained by their flocks, had crowded audiences. Sir James Turner's soldiers were therefore employed in examining all those who came out of the kirks. If they were parishioners, they were allowed to pass; but if not, though of the best character and standing in society, they were fined for not attending their own parish kirk, even though it was not yet furnished with a curate. And the soldiers were to be seen returning from the Churches of the faithful, as if from the field of battle, after having stripped the slain.

Mr. Mackail, after his return, as he was still obnoxious to the prelates, lived mostly retired at his father's house: but though secluded, he was not idle; the sheep-walks and vallies were his resort for prayer and conference, with those who were as sheep without a shepherd, many of whom

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† One of these Curates, one day, bawled out from the pulpit, "Lord nor I should be hanged o'er the bauk o' the Kirk, but I'll gar ye a' come some day frae the helghest to the laigest o' ye."

bore witness that he had been with Jesus, advancing in knowledge and true holiness. And when his native land, which had once been Beulah, married to the Lord, had forsaken her God, Mr. Mackail thought it a time for weeping, and fasting, and prayer. During one day every week, he poured out his soul to God in godly sorrow; and being thus suitably exercised, by God's blessing, he was endued with strength and grace to help him in the time of need, which he soon experienced. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear his name, and Mr. Mackail had now a presentiment, that he would one day fall into the hands of his enemies, and be a martyr for the truth. This event, even in anticipation, no way dismayed him. To the sweet experience of those who met him, in his retired haunts, he appeared as one coming from the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and all the powders of the merchant.

Charles the II. had given himself wholly up to the pleasures of a most dissolute court, and the management of Scottish affairs was entrusted to his brother, the Duke of York, a bigotted papist. The Duke devoted the whole of his influence to the power of Rome, and treating conscientious opinions as crimes, he tried to extirpate honest

convictions by means of terror and cruelty. Finding, however, that his efforts in detail were fruitless, he did what he could to provoke the people to a general revolt, so that he might have an opportunity of crushing them more effectually in the mass.\*

It was evidently in concert with him, that his creatures, the Bishops and curates, instigated Turner's troops to acts of extortion and cruelty, unknown and unallowed even by the Council. The inhabitants of Dumfries and Galloway were fined to the amount of £66,000 Scots, an enormous sum in those days: and their houses were infested with merciless soldiers, who would often snatch the bread from the mouths of children and give it to their dogs; and when they had consumed all the provisions, burned or sold the furniture, obliging many to leave their homes and wander in mosses and mountains: such was their cruelty.

One day, some soldiers were actually preparing to roast a poor old man alive, upon a large grid-iron, when they were desired by four countrymen to desist. This interference only exasperated the soldiers, and a scuffle ensued, in which the countrymen succeeded in disarming their antagonists,

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\* The Duke openly expressed himself to this effect, and talked about turning the whole south-west of Scotland into a hunting-field.

and releasing their friend: and fearing lest the other military, which were quartered in the parish, would cruelly avenge the quarrel of their fellows, they immediately mustered a stronger party, and disarmed the whole, without harm to any but one, who was killed in resisting. They had now good reason to fear that Sir James Turner would resent what was done, and, with his usual cruelty, make the whole country, without discrimination, suffer for a few. They therefore marched to Dumfries, took him also prisoner, and disarmed his troops, and that without injury to any but one, who was wounded.

Their intention at first was only self-defence, but they now felt themselves engaged in such a way as made retreat impossible; they therefore, after some deliberation, resolved to march towards Edinburgh with their prisoner, whom they treated with great humanity; although Turner's guilty conscience made him dread, at every halting-place, that now he would be hung up, which some were for doing; but Neilson of Corsack, whom he had harassed beyond measure, saved him. Being formed into a small army, they continued their march, and were joined by many brethren who were in the same condition as themselves, and by some ministers, among whom was Mr. Mackail.

Having advice which made them hasten, they found it necessary to march from Cumnock to Muirkirk, through a deep moss, and during a heavy rain. It was dark when they arrived, and though wet and cold, they had to lodge in the kirk, with little fire to warm themselves, and without food. Mr. Mackail was of a delicate constitution, not suited to undergo such hardships; indeed, previous to this, he had been confined to his bed at Ayr, but recovering a little, he rejoined and went along with them on horseback.

When they came to Douglas, they held a council of war, to determine whether they would disband or continue in arms. Their number did not exceed 1500, and the season of the year was far advanced: yet all of them agreed that they had a clear call to rise in arms, and that they could not lay them down till they had as clear a warrant. They were conscious of no motive, but the attainment of freedom for themselves and their country, from the most galling oppression. It was useless to disband, as it only left them a more easy prey to their adversaries, who would then severely avenge the affront put upon Turnet, their minion; besides, the right of laying their grievances before the throne was now declared treason, and therefore, they could only seek redress in arms. They



knew that the Lord could work by few as well as by many, and hoped they were such as he would concern himself with. They were clearly in the way of their duty, and therefore were not afraid of the result; and if their enterprise failed, they could say, it was in their heart to build a house to the Lord, and to act for his glory, in the cause of freedom. They were willing to die in this cause, and they esteemed a testimony for their Lord and their country, a sufficient reward for all their labour and loss.

It was here also that they consulted on the expediency of renewing the Covenants. These deeds they considered as containing a moral obligation, from which the nation could not be free, so long as the ends of them were not accomplished; and they likewise looked upon themselves as the only free public representatives of Covenanted Scotland, though a small minority. They wished to shew that their principles were the same that the Church of Scotland held before she was despoiled of her liberties. And they knew no better preparation for death, should their blood be poured out on the high places of the field, than a solemn dedication of themselves to God.

Accordingly, when they came to Lanark, they prepared to vow unto the mighty God of Jacob;

they appointed a day of solemn fasting and humiliation; and having used the ordinary precautions against surprisal by the enemy, sending out their scouts and advanced guards, they committed themselves to the protection of the Lord; and He, on this occasion, was indeed a wall of fire around, and the glory in the midst of, their solemn assembly.

The foot soldiers occupied the main street, and Mr. Guthrie of Tarbolton preached to them. The horsemen assembled at the head of the town, and Mr. Gabriel Semple addressed them from Proverbs xxiv. 11, 12. "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn to death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not, doth not the Lord who pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall he not render unto everyone according to his works?" While he spake, many wept aloud, and deep concern pervaded the whole audience, whilst many joined who had hitherto stood aloof.

After sermon, the Covenants were read; and at the end of each article, the people lifted up their hands, and solemnly swore unto the Lord their God. And surely, the Angel of the everlasting Covenant witnessed with delight, the multitude devoting themselves to him, not in word only, but

in sincerity and truth, jeoparding their lives in the high places of the field, under the banner of CHRIST'S CROWN, AND COVENANT.\* They were not such men as, with an enthusiastic huzza, could be led forth in any cause: No, says a writer of that period, "it will be hard to parallel such another company; so many together of sound judgment, true piety, integrity of heart, prudent zeal, undaunted courage and resolution: and with so small a mixture of persons of corrupt minds, profane conversation, and sinistrous ends: and although we would not be prodigal of men's lives, especially of saints, when there are so few now to stand between the dead and the living; yet that simple act of renewing the Covenants, gave more glory to God, and was a greater testimony and advantage to that covenanted cause, than (we hope) the loss of so many as fell in its support."† This testimony is of some value, as it was not without danger that any spake honourably of Covenanters in those days; for they then resisted unto blood, striving against sin; and were neither afraid to act, nor ashamed to suffer, for their Lord. At the closing of their assembly, the multitude sang,

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\* One of these Banners still exists, and is in the possession of James Howie, Lochgoin.

† Naphtali.

Thou art my Father, he shall cry,  
 Thou art my God alone:  
 And he shall say, Thou art the rock  
 Of my salvation.

I'll make him my first-born, more high  
 Than kings of any land;  
 My love I'll ever keep for him:  
 My covenant fast shall stand.

The Psalmist's sacred song now sweetly rose  
 In heavenly strains, that martyrs used to sing;  
 Now plaintive wild, it seemed to breathe their woes;  
 Now bold, it rose upon triumphant wing.  
 Pray'r followed praise; and suffering patriots heard  
 Their pastor breathe their griefs before the throne;  
 Heard him invoke Jehovah's two-edged sword  
 To scatter all the enemies of his Son.  
 And now, betimes, some aged heart was moved;  
 Some furrowed cheek was moistened with a tear;  
 When hoary Guthrie, by his flock beloved,  
 Beseeched his God the fainting heart to cheer;  
 To throw his shield around those babes who feel  
 The wrath of tyrants in a father's death;  
 To stay the widow, who, ere long, might kneel  
 O'er mangled corpse, to catch a husband's breath:  
 And more than all, to shield the truth divine,  
 And keep it pure upon our native sod;  
 And that our offspring, to remotest line,  
 Cherish their fathers, who on tyrants trod,  
 Their cause,—the cause of mankind, and of God. }

After leaving Lanark, they had a letter from Sir James Stewart, advising them to march forward to Edinburgh, and informing them of those who were ready to join them. This information, though intended for good, led them into new hardships; for while taking a hurried march, by Bathgate, towards Edinburgh, Sharp, alarmed at their approach, had all the ports of the city shut, and the passages guarded, in such a way, that their friends there were prevented from joining them, while Dalziel's army cut off their friends in the rear. Mr. Mackail, through bodily fatigue, was unable to accompany them farther than the water of Cramond, and parted from them there. He was making his way towards Libberton, and passing through Braid's Craigs, when one Kenneway, an officer of dragoons, and another, met him, and apprehended him. He made no resistance, either through weakness, or being insufficiently armed. It is observable, that his escape formerly was not more wonderful than his apprehension now; for had he observed the slightest caution, he might have escaped, as he had often done before: but God, who gave him the full experience, that all things wrought for his good, did, by his simplicity, lead the way to his own glory, and to his servant's joy.

Being brought before the Council at Edinburgh, he was stripped and searched for letters; and though none were found on him, he was committed to prison. Next day, by order of the secret Council, he was brought before the Earl of Dumfries, Lord Sinclair, and others: and being questioned concerning the rebellion, as they termed it, he refused to answer several of their interrogations; as he did not conceive himself bound, by any law, to be his own accuser. He also scrupled about the names rebel and rebellion, not wishing to acknowledge either; and his reserve on these points made the Council suspect he was a dissembler, and that he knew more than he would tell.

Meanwhile the little army, meditating a retreat, were attacked by Dalziel on Pentland hills. Twice they repulsed their enemies with great bravery, and considerable loss to the King's troops: but alas, when off their guard, in consequence of a truce, and when expecting a peaceful negotiation, Dalziel treacherously fell upon them, and though gallantly resisted, routed them, killing about fifty, and taking as many prisoners: some country people also of that neighbourhood, in order to ingratiate themselves with the Council, killed a good many more.\* Many escaped by be-

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\* Brown's History of the British Churches.

taking themselves to the deep ravines of the Esk, and the embowered underwood, around Roslin Castle. Being thus completely broke up, and scattered, they furnished employment to the King's troops, hunting them like partridges on the mountains, for many months afterwards. Before the battle they had sung,

Unto the multitude do not  
Thy turtle's soul deliver:  
The congregation of thy poor  
Do not forget for ever.

Unto thy covenant have respect;  
For earth's dark places be  
Full of the habitations  
Of horrid cruelty.

Oh! let not those that be oppress'd  
Return again with shame;  
Let those that poor and needy are  
Give praise unto thy name.

Do thou, O God, arise and plead  
The cause that is thine own;  
Remember how thou art reproached  
Still by the foolish one.

Do not forget the voice of those  
That are thine enemies;  
Of those the tumult ever grows,  
That do against thee rise.\*

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\* Burnet's History of his own Times.

Now, after their defeat, they were like Habakkuk, at a stand, why the Lord looked on, while the wicked devoured the righteous; but still amidst their sorrow, they had at least the mournful pleasure of a song, suitable to their case.

O Lord, thou hast rejected us,  
 And scatter'd us abroad;  
 Thou justly hast displeas'd been;  
 Return to us, O God.

The earth to tremble thou hast made;  
 Therein didst breaches make;  
 Do thou thereof the breaches heal,  
 Because the land doth shake.

Unto thy people, thou hard things  
 Hast shew'd, and on them sent;  
 And thou has caused us to drink  
 Wine of astonishment.

And yet a banner thou hast given  
 To them who do thee fear,  
 That it by them, because of truth,  
 Displayed may appear.

But other strains were heard <sup>on</sup> the same evening after the battle, and also after some of the executions which followed,—Melody, sweeter than music in her softest strains, sweet as the harmony of hymning seraphims, congratulating the ransomed spirit on the threshold of heaven.\* While angels

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\* See Wodrow, vol. I. p. 261.



carried their souls to glory, this song would be sung, "Open up the gates that the righteous nation, that keepeth the truth, may enter in."

Though the tabernacles of robbers prosper, and the people of God fall before their enemies; yet the word of God explains, that there is a prosperity which tendeth to destruction. God's enemies are allowed to be fully ripe, before they are cut down; and his saints are by these dispensations of his providence, tried as the silver in the refiner's crucible. Although this effort for freedom was not attended with success; yet the noble and unshaken stedfastness to truth, displayed in this cause, turned out to its advantage; and the cruelties inflicted upon the prisoners, who had the promise of life, when taken, discovered the prelates in their true colours, and were a striking comment on the warnings of Melville, Henderson, Rutherford and others, in former times, against this antichristian system.

On Thursday, November 29th, Mr. Mackail was again called before the Council, to whom he gave in a declaration, admitting that he had been with the West-land forces: thinking by this he would remove their prejudices against him: but still they insisted that he was privy to all the designs of his party, and urged him to discover what

correspondence they had either at home or abroad. On the day following they renewed their importunity, and the boot, a terrible instrument of torture, was laid before him, warning him that he certainly would be subjected to it if he would not confess.

On the 1st December, Neilson of Corsack was tortured. Sir James Turner, whose life he had saved, did all in his power to save him, but the bishops opposed and prevailed over every other interest, and got Corsack tormented in such a way that his shrieks would have melted the heart of any other, than those of the monsters of the Council, who in jeer called out for "the other touch." Immediately after this barbarous action, Mr. Mackail was brought in and examined by the Earl of Rothes, and the Duke of Montrose: The bishop of St. Andrews for the honour of his profession, forsooth, withdrew. Mackail declared to them, with a most solemn attestation, that he knew no more than what he had formerly confessed: Upon which the executioner is ordered to put his leg into the boot and proceed, for

" 'Tis not enough felonious caves to fill,  
 'Tis not enough for cords and steel to kill,  
 But on the ancle the sharp wedge descends,  
 The bone reluctant with the iron bends;

Crushed is its frame, blood spouts from every pore,  
And the white marrow swims in purple gore."\*

Although Corsack's shrieks might still sound in his ears, and the instrument reeking with his blood was before his eyes; yet this young martyr, unmoved, allowed them to do their worst in excruciating his limb beyond description. This agonizing torture could extort nothing from him, not even a complaint, or the least impatience at their cruelty. Surely the Spirit of the Lord strengthened him, as he did those of old who endured racking, and sawing asunder, through faith in that weight of glory laid up for them in heaven. No other hope could have made the hearts of these martyrs like that of the leviathan's, esteeming steel as stubble, and iron as rotten wood.

Before he got the last three strokes, he protested before God, that he could say no more though all the joints in his body were in as great torture as that poor limb, viz. that the rising in Galloway was merely occasioned by the discontent of some, at the measures of Sir James Turner, to which every one ran as their hearts moved them when they heard of it.

Many thought, as his accession to the rising

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\* Gibbon's verses to Crookshank's History.

was so small, and that only proved by his own confession, that the torture he had already undergone would have satisfied his enemies; but it was determined otherwise. They had not forgot the sermon about Pharaoh on the throne, &c., and he received his indictment of high treason, to appear on the 12th of the same month, December 1666.

The torture having cast him into a fever, he petitioned the Council to delay their proceedings against him. Two physicians and two surgeons were therefore appointed to visit him and report to the Council, which they did, confirming his statement of ill health. The Council however only allowed him other six days.

In the mean-time, his friends made every exertion on his behalf. Anne, Duchess of Hamilton, and her mother-in-law, the Marchioness of Douglas, both interested themselves in his favour. They wrote to the Earl of Rothes, who was then in Glasgow examining witnesses as to the cause of the rising, which he found had originated just as Mr. Mackail had said, when about to be tortured: But although these illustrious Ladies had many claims to be heard, their letters were disregarded, and Mr. Mackail, along with other four, on the 18th December, were brought before Lord Ren-

ton, Justice Clerk, and Mr. Murray, Advocate depute.

The proceedings were opened by reading the general charge, formed of old and new acts of Parliament, against rising in arms and entering into leagues contrary to the King's authority, declaring the same to be rebellion; renewing the Solemn League and Covenant at Lanark, for which they ought to be punished as traitors. They then read Mr. Mackail's special indictment. "That he had been at Ayr, Ochiltree, and Lanark with the rebels, on horseback, and with a sword, &c." Being permitted to speak for himself, he arose, and though still an invalid, addressed the court at great length with calmness and manly fortitude. He said that from the conclusion of his indictment, and what had happened to others, he looked upon himself as one appointed to die, and therefore he would ingenuously avow that he was not ashamed of belonging to that persecuted afflicted party, the Presbyterians: and proceeded to reason of the scriptural engagements that were on the land, commending the institutions, dignity and blessing of the Presbyterian government, he repeated the last words of the National Covenant, "We call upon the living God, the searcher of hearts to witness, that our

desires are, that religion and righteousness may flourish in the land, to the glory of God, and the good of all; that we will prosecute these, although at the pain of infamy, and the loss of all honour and respect in the world."—He was here interrupted by the Advocate, who told him, that it was not for his principles, but for the crime of rebellion against his Majesty, that he was called before them: like Stephen's accusers, they gnashed their teeth at him, while he, like the proto-martyr, unmoved, repeated the saying of our Lord, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth me and my words before men, shall be denied before the angels of God."

Adverting to the charge of rebellion, he said, That his accession to it was only simple presence, with a sword, and that only by his own extrajudicial confession. The Advocate answered, that not only presence, such as he was charged with, was treason, but that all intercommuning, even for the space of half an hour, was also treason; adding, that he had been guilty of far deeper accession to the rebellion than what was contained in his own confession. But this he failed to prove; and indeed the whole of the after-process consist-

ed in reading over his own confession, and the deposition of several witnesses concerning it. Mr. Mackail observed that the depositions they had read contained nothing in them but his own confession, which he did not deny. The Advocate however sustained the libel; and having again read over his confession to the Assize or Jury, without any farther proof, referred the matter entirely to them. The Jury, being called upon, gave their verdict by Sir William Murray of Newton, their chancellor,—Reported Mackail guilty of being with the rebels at several places, according to his own confession before the Council.\* The verdict being reported, doom was pronounced on him, and subsequently on the other four, decerning and ordaining them to be taken on Saturday the 22d December, to the market-cross of Edinburgh, and then and there hanged till dead; and their goods and lands escheated and forfeited for his Highness's use.

On hearing his sentence, Mackail cheerfully said, The Lord giveth life, and the Lord taketh

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\* It was afterwards understood that some of the jury did reluctantly bring in this verdict, thinking death too great punishment for so slender guilt; and that the major part would have acquitted him, if the fear of an assize of error had not prevailed with them.

it away, blessed be the name of the Lord. When he was carried back to prison, the multitude of people whom the interest of his trial had collected about the court, and in the streets, made great lamentation for him; to whom he said, Though men cut us off, God will receive us: Trust in God, Oh! trust in God. On his return to the place of confinement, he immediately retired, and addressed himself to God in prayer.

There is a hope which sustains the soul when all other hope is fled. Though low in our estate, and the help of friends of no avail, God has promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you:" and when the pillow of creature-comforts is lost for ever, then does the soul rest solely on the bosom of its God, and with a confidence which they only know who have no other stay. Although the inhabitant of a dark dungeon, yet even

" There, if thy Spirit touch the soul,  
 And grace her dark abode,  
 Oh! with what joy, and peace, and love,  
 She communes with her God."

Such was the blest experience of Mr. Hugh Mackail. On his return to his fellow-sufferers, he exclaimed, in a transport of heavenly joy, Oh! how good to be within four days of a sight of Jesus, who is altogether lovely: and protested he



was not so cumbered to die, as he had often been to preach a Sermon. To some females, who were lamenting his being cut off in the budding of his hope and usefulness in the ministry, he said, Mourn not for my condition; God can make one drop of my blood subdue more hearts to himself than many years' sermons.

On the 19th, he petitioned the Council that his father might be allowed to visit him, which being granted, he came to him on the following day. Their meeting was most mournful, but not the least appearance of vindictive spirit in either of them against their persecutors. Perhaps in no scene of his life did Mackail appear more amiable, or the spirit of persecution more execrable. On entering the place of confinement, the good old man was overwhelmed with anguish, when he saw the son whom he loved chained in a cell like a condemned felon; his fine countenance, that once beamed with manly beauty, now pale and emaciated; his handsome limb, broken and lacerated with the torture. Such a scene was too much for a tender-hearted parent; he sunk under it in an agony of grief, till raised up and relieved by that balm which alone can bind up the broken in heart —“ Is any afflicted, let him pray.” It was after he had laid all the feelings of his heart before the

Lord, that he addressed his son, with all the tenderness of a father, and by the endearing name of his childhood. "Hugo," said he, "I called thee a goodly olive-tree of fair fruit; but now the storm hath destroyed the tree, and the branches, and the fruit." To which the young Martyr replied, "Your too good thoughts of me have afflicted me." His father added, that he was "persuaded God was visiting the sins of his parents upon him, so that he might say, 'Our fathers have sinned, and we have borne their iniquities.' Yes, my son, I have sinned; thou poor sheep, what hast thou done."

Although Mr. Mackail, by the testimony of all who knew him, was a most obedient son, yet now, under a view of the glorious purity and spirituality of God's law, he answered his father, that "through short-coming of keeping the fifth commandment, he had come short of the promise, that his days would be prolonged in the land of the living; and that God's controversy with his father was for over-valuing his children, especially himself."

Thus did this father and son search and try their hearts and life, accusing themselves and excusing one another. If Ephraim, bemoaning himself under merited correction, was esteemed a

pleasant child; surely this noble youth, suffering for a glorious and just cause, and in the highest actings of grace, exhibiting the rich travail of Emmanuel's soul, would be the object of his divine Lord's peculiar satisfaction and delight.

On Thursday the 20th, more from the impotunity of his friends than any inclination of his own, he petitioned the Council for a mitigation of punishment. Some one, unknown to him, added to his petition, making it more condescending. They even went so far, in their zeal for his life, as to propose that the declaration for renouncing the Covenants should be tendered to him; but this being entirely without his consent, it, along with the petition, was rejected.\*

Although his supplications to men were rejected; not so his applications to that glorious high throne which from the beginning is the place of sanctuary to the saints. Were the prison-experiences of God's love to his saints written, they would fill volumes, and tell of the glorious nature of that liberty which their souls enjoyed, in the company of Him whom gates and bars cannot exclude; for even when their bodies were groaning under the most galling bondage, and when all things

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\* See this Petition in Naphtali.

seemed to frown darkness upon them, then their midnight song was sweetest. The deeper the affliction, the dearer the consolation. Their access to God in prayer and in praise, like Jacob's ladder, seemed near access to glory. Their sanctified trials were the best interpreters of Scripture, and they had a witness in themselves that it was indeed the word of one who was in all manner tempted as they were, and who suffered in all their sufferings, so wonderfully was it suited to their case.\*

Mr. Mackail and his suffering companions seemed as if they already breathed the air of heaven. His bed-fellow, Mr. John Wodrow, a merchant in Glasgow, who had been made prisoner at Pentland, while under sentence of death, wrote to his wife as follows: "Reverence the providence of the Lord our God, who can do nothing wrong. All is well done, -and my soul sayeth Amen. I have not had a wish of mine own since we parted; my Lord and my God has so captivated my heart, and brought it under subjection to himself, whose name I bless for ever. I have now sworn, with uplifted hands, the Covenant of Scotland, for myself, for you, and for my four children; and

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\* Fleming's Fulfilling of the Scriptures.

now I give you and them unto the Lord, your covenant God and Husband, and my children's covenanted Father, wishing and praying for the blessings of the new covenant to you all,—farewell."

On the night previous to his martyrdom, Mr. Mackail blessed God, that he had been so simple as to come to that prison, saying, Many crosses have come in our way and wrought but weakly upon us, but here is a cross that has done us more good, than all that befel us before.

During supper he conversed cheerfully with his fellow-sufferers, strengthening their hearts in the following manner; Query, How shall we, going from prison, through a multitude of gazing people and guards, to a scaffold and gibbet, overcome the impressions which these are calculated to excite? By conceiving in our minds a more deep impression of a multitude of beholding angels; for although we are made gazing-stocks to the world, yet angels will rejoice at our good confession. They will wait to carry our souls into Abraham's bosom; not to receive them, for that is Christ's office: he himself shall welcome us to heaven, with the songs of angels and blessed spirits. The angels are ministering spirits, ready to serve and strengthen all dying believers. As Stephen was

the heavens open, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; in like manner, I believe that Christ is now also ready to receive the souls of us his dying sufferers. Again, what is the way for us to conceive of heaven who are hasting into it, seeing it is written, Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them who love him? I answer, the scripture assists us in two ways; the first is by way of similitude, Rev. xxi. by the representation of a glorious city; and in the same place it is also termed a bride; how unlike are these two, a city and a bride! which doth clearly evidence the insufficiency and vast disproportion of any similitude. And therefore he added, the scripture furnishes a more excellent way, even by conceiving of the love of Christ to us, in its breadth and length, depth and height, for this furnishes the highest and sweetest note of praise to glorified saints. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen;" and by holding forth the saints' love and admiration of Christ, which is the very joy and exultation of heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,

to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength and honour, and glory, and blessing." In nothing else than the out-breakings of the soul in love to Christ, and admiration of his love to men, can we so rightly apprehend the joys of heaven.

After supper, he said, Oh! but knowledge without love is of small worth, evanishing in nothing, and very dangerous. His father having given thanks, he read the xvith Psalm: Mr. Mackail then remarked, that if there was any thing in this world sadly and unwillingly to be parted with, it was reading the scriptures. "I said I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living;" but this need not vex us, for where we go, the Lamb is the book of scripture, and we shall not be in the dark, for he is the light of that city; there also is life, even the river of the water of life, and living springs. In mentioning the 23d verse of the xxxi<sup>st</sup> Psalm, "Oh love the Lord all ye his saints," he said, that where love was, it was so operative, that it made flesh spirit; and where it was not, there spirit was made flesh. Then he sung,

Because thou art my Rock, and thee  
I for my fortress take,  
Therefore do thou me lead and guide,  
Even for thine own name's sake.

And sith thou art my strength, therefore  
 Pull me out of the net,  
 Which they in subtilty for me  
 So privily have set.

I'll in thy mercy gladly joy,  
 For thou my miseries  
 Considered hast, thou hast my soul  
 Known in adversities.

Soon after this, he with a smile called for a pen to write his testament, and then ordered in writing some borrowed books to be returned to their owners. He was naturally of a jocular disposition, and when now asked for his tortured leg, he laughing replied, that the fear of his neck had made him quite forget his leg. He went to bed about eleven o'clock, and slept well till about five: He then rose and called his companion, John Wodrow, saying, Up John, you and I look not like men going to be hanged to-day; and added, "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers," did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? &c. Yet for all this we need not be afraid, for "Now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, Fear not, I have redeemed thee, thou art mine; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall



the flame kindle upon thee:" From this we may rest assured, that all will go well with us. Yes, answered Wodrow, you and I will be chambered shortly in heaven beside Mr. Robertson. If you do not bar me out, said Mackail, for you were more free before the Council than I was, but I shall be as free as any of you on the scaffold.

Before breakfast, he observed to those about him, that he had got a cheerful view of the Majesty of God after his awaking, but it was a little overlouded again. Soon after, he prayed, and acknowledging that he had devoted himself to the ministry of the Lord Jesus, and the edification of souls, very early in life, he said, Albeit I have not been so with God, yet thou hast made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: this is all my desire, joy, and salvation, albeit thou makest not my house to grow. Now, Lord, we come to thy throne in a way we have not been acquainted with. The thrones of earthly kings have advocates against poor men; but thy throne hath Jesus an advocate for us. Our supplication this day is not to be free from death, or the pains of death, but that we may witness before many a good confession, and thus glorify thy name.

When his father came to bid him farewell, he observed that his sufferings would do more

harm to the cause of the Prelates, and be more edifying to the Lord's people, than if he had lived in the undisturbed exercise of his ministry for twenty years. He then desired him to leave him, as his presence would but trouble him; and requested him, as the last and best service he could render him, to go to his chamber, and pray earnestly to the Lord, to be with him on the scaffold; for how to carry there was his care, even that he might be strengthened to endure to the end.

At about two o'clock, he was carried to the scaffold, with the other four who suffered along with him, and for the same cause. He appeared there, to the conviction of all, with a fairer and more composed countenance than ever he had been seen with before. He had naturally a fine graceful countenance, and handsome person. His youth, and interesting appearance, created universal sympathy in the dense multitude which had collected at the place of execution; and they listened with deep attention to his testimony, which he had written out. During the awful silence which pervaded the multitude, he sung,—

“ Into thine hand I do commit  
 My sp'rit, for thou art He,  
 O thou, JEHOVAH, God of truth,  
 Who hast redeemed me.

In secret of thy presence, thou  
 Shalt hide me from men's pride;  
 From strife of tongues, thou closely shalt,  
 As in a tent, me hide.

For from thine eyes cut off I am,  
 I in my haste had said:  
 My voice yet heardst thou, when to thee  
 With cries my mpan I made.

Oh! love the Lord all ye his saints,  
 Because the Lord doth guard  
 The faithful, and he plenteously  
 Proud doers doth reward."

After singing, he prayed with such power and fervency as made many to weep bitterly. Having ended, he gave his cloak and hat from him, and told the executioner not to throw him off, till he first put over his own shoulder. Taking hold of the ladder, he said with an audible voice, "I care no more to go up this ladder, than if I were going home to my father's house." As he went up, hearing a noise among the people, he spake down to his companions, saying, "Friends and fellow-sufferers, be not afraid; every step of this ladder is a degree nearer heaven." When seated on the ladder, he said, "I do partly believe that the nobles and councillors of this nation would have mitigated our sentence, had it not been the Pre-

lates; so our blood lies at their door. However, this is my comfort; 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom mine eyes shall behold and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.' And now I willingly lay down my life for the truth and cause of God; the Covenants and work of reformation, which were once counted the glory of this land; and it is for endeavouring to defend these, and to extirpate Popery and Prelacy, that I embrace this rope." Hearing the people weep, he said, "Your work is not to weep, but to pray; that we may be honourably brought through; and blessed be the Lord, who supports me hitherto. As I have been indebted to many prayers in my confinement, I hope I will not be forsaken now in the last step of my journey, that I may witness a good confession. That you may know the ground of my confidence, and what my hope is, I will read you the last chapter of the Bible." . . . . Having read it, he said, "Here is the glory that is to be revealed to me; a pure river of the water of life; the throne of God, and of the Lamb, where his servants serve him, and see his face, having his name written on their

foreheads; the Lord also giveth them light, and they reign with him for ever and ever. Here also is my access; 'Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely.' But this is not all: here is my welcome; 'The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.' I have only another word to say. My friends, do not mourn, or be ashamed of my condition; for truly I can say, I go to your Father and my Father, to your God and my God, to your King and my King; to blessed apostles and martyrs, to an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. So I bid you all farewell; for God will be more comfortable to you, than I can be; and he is more refreshing to me, than you can be. Farewell, farewell in the Lord."

When the napkin was bound on his face, he prayed for sometime within himself; after which, he lifted the cloth from off his eyes, to say how comfortable he felt, and that the spectators might see his countenance unmoved. Shewing a face serenely fair, he said, "You may wonder at me. I am a wonder to myself. Nothing could support me in this manner, but the justness of my cause, and the hope which maketh not ashamed. What

a solemnity is here ! what a confluence of people ! what multitudes looking out of windows ! But there is a far greater solemnity unseen ; a solemnity of angels to carry my soul to Christ : and, Oh ! how comforting to pass into His hands who will present me blameless to the Father ! and I shall be ever with the Lord. And now leaving off with the world, I turn my speech to thee, O Lord ! Farewell, father, and mother, and friends ! farewell, the world, and all its delights ! farewell, weak and frail body ! farewell, sun, moon, and stars ! Welcome, God and Father ! welcome, sweet Lord Jesus ! welcome, Spirit of grace, and God of all consolation ! welcome, glory, and eternal life ! welcome, death !” Then putting his own shoulder over, while saying, “ O Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit ; for thou hast redeemed my soul, Lord God of truth !” he died as he had lived, in the Lord, and

“ Shouting forth, with his expiring breath,  
 The great Redeemer’s praise. Triumphant leap’d  
 Into the monster Death’s devouring jaws,  
 And made his hollow vaults, while passing through,  
 With hallelujahs ring. Thus Stephen died.”

And thus Mr. Hugh Mackail, in the twenty-sixth year of his age.

Mean while, his fellow-sufferers, who were men of little education, who

“ lived unknown,  
Till persecution dragged them into fame,  
And chased them up to heaven,”

spoke their last testimonies with such meekness and patience towards their enemies, with such greatness of soul, piety, and good sense, that they were an admiration to all. Those who knew them before were convinced that it was given them from on high what they should speak. John Wodrow, Michael Shields, an Englishman, John Wilson of Ayr, and Humphrey Colquhoun, were like men in the suburbs of heaven. Colquhoun called for his Bible, laid it on his wounded arm, and read from it apposite passages, to the astonishment of all. When they were taken in the battle, they had the promise of life; but, to gratify the Primate's rage and cruelty, they were put to death, contrary to all law; and, what is more, contrary to King Charles's order, that no more lives should be taken in that quarrel. Bishop Burnet brought the King's order to this effect to Sharp, as head of the Council, and connived at its being kept secret, till Mackail and his brethren were cut off.

They would have been forgiven their rising in arms, on account of Turner's cruelty. The sole



cause of their execution was that they would not renounce the Covenants; which they thought equal to renouncing their God and his Church, to whom, and for which, the Covenants were first entered into.

Since the executions of Argyle and Guthrie, never did men die more lamented; never was seen more sorrow; scarce a dry cheek among the immense multitude. Many wept aloud; and while the martyrs spake of their comfort in death, heavy groans were heard from all parts of the crowd.\* On leaving this sad scene, those who used to curse, cursed the Prelates; and those who used to pray, prayed that the guilt of this innocent blood might not be laid to their charge, nor visited upon the nation.

The enemy were so galled by the effect of these executions on the public mind, that, at those following, particularly at Glasgow, a piece of inhumanity was added, which we believe was never practised in any civilised nation, not even in the Popish persecutions of Mary of England; a barbarity beyond death. All the while the execu-

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\* "Mackail, notwithstanding the pain of his torture, died in a rapture of joy; and his concluding words were spoken in a voice and manner which struck the beholders as something superhuman."



tions lasted, drums were beat round the scaffold, so that the people might not hear what the sufferers said; and if possible, to disturb their thoughts in their last moments. The reason was, evidently, that so abundant was the fulness of grace treasured up in Christ, displayed in the magnanimity and heroic spirit of the Pentland sufferers, that many became converts to the cause of truth. Christ's name was as sweet ointment poured forth; therefore did the virgins love him: and while the converts cast new crowns at Emmanuel's feet, the noble martyrs placed upon his head a diadem of beauty, composed of the richest gems. Clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, having a bow to pierce the enemies of the King, the fiery chariot of persecution was transformed into a triumphal car, on which he rode forth conquering, and to conquer. Yes; he was then seen in the greatness of his strength, subduing his people under him, and avenging himself on his enemies. From that time, Prelacy, and its antichristian abettors, declined in Scotland, till they were at last cast out.

The Martyrs were not only called to fight bloodless battles against their own corrupt hearts; but they were also called to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and stand fast for the precious liberties of Christ's Church. For

these things, they fought and bled, and were triumphant, securing to generations unborn the rich blessings which we now enjoy. Surely we ought to venerate these men; and keep on record the names of those worthies who did valiantly in Israel, and who, like soldiers, brought us to the spoil, through garments rolled in blood.

THE END.

## REFLECTIONS

*On the battles of Drumclog and Bothwell-Bridge, by the Laird of Torfoot; which, it would seem, he related to his children.*

“My children,” the Laird would say, after he had told the adventures of the bloody affair at Drumclog, “I visited the field of battle next day; I shall never forget the sight.\* Men and horses lay in their gory beds. I turned away from the horrible spectacle. I passed by the spot where God saved my life in the single combat, and where the unhappy Captain Arrol fell. I observed that, in the subsequent fray, the body had been trampled on by a horse, and his bowels were poured out.” Thus, my children, the defence of our lives, and the regaining of our liberty and religion, has subjected us to severe trials. And how great must be the love of liberty, when it carries men forward, under the impulse of self-defence, to witness the most disgusting spectacles, and to encounter the most cruel hardships of war!”

\* \* \* \* After the ranks of the patriotic Whigs were broken by overwhelming forces, at Bothwell-Bridge, and while Dalziel and Clavers swept the south and west of Scotland like the blast of the desert, breathing pestilence and death—the individual wanderers betook themselves to the caves and fastnesses of their rugged country. This was their situation chiefly from A. D. 1680 to the Revolution. The Laird spent his days in seclusion; but still he fearlessly attended the weekly assemblies in

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\* This fact is recorded in Crookshank's History, vol. 1. chap. 13. But the author does not mention the name of the Laird by whom Arrol fell.

the fields, for the worship of Almighty God. What had he to fear? What more could he lose? His estate had been confiscated. His wife and babes stript by the life-guards of the last remnant of earthly comfort which they could take away; and himself doomed, as an outlaw, to be executed by the military assassins when taken. He became reckless of the world.

“I have lived,” said he in anguish, “to see a Prince twice, of his own choice, take the oath of the covenants to support religion and the fundamental laws of the land. I have lived to see that Prince turn traitor to his country, and, with unblushing impiety, order these covenants to be burnt by the hands of the executioner. I have seen him subvert the liberty of my country, both civil and religious.—I have seen him erect a bloody inquisition. The priests, imposed on us by tyranny, instead of wooing us by the loveliness of religion, have thrown off the bowels of mercy. They occupy seats in the bloody Council. They stimulate the cruelties of Lauderdale, M’Kenzie, and York. Their hands are dipt in blood to the wrists. This Council will not permit us to live in peace. Our property they confiscate. Our houses they convert into barracks. They drag free men into chains. They bring no witnesses of our guilt. They invent new tortures to convert us. They employ the thumb-screws and boot-kins. If we are silent, they condemn us. If we confess our Christian creed, they doom us to the gibbet. If we offer a defence, a judge rises from the bench, and with his naked sword wounds us.\* Not only our sentence,

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\* See an instance recorded in the Scots Worthies, p. 378, Edin. edit. of A. D. 1818.

but the manner of our execution, is fixed before our trial. In our last moments they command the kettle-drum to beat one continued roll; and when a strong sense of injustice extorts a complaint against our barbarous treatment, a military servant of the Council strikes the dying man in his last moment;\* and as if this sanguinary process were too slow in exterminating us, I have seen Charles Stuart let loose a brutal soldiery on us—on us who recalled him from exile, and who placed the crown on his head. He has murdered our men, our wives, and our children. We have, indeed, formally renounced this tyrant, by declaring war against him; but we have hitherto failed in the attempt to rouse the energies of our sleeping country. It is sunk into a deadly slumber. It has hitherto permitted the tyrant to keep us under martial law. Clavers is our judge; his dragoons are the executioners; and these savages do still continue to employ even the *sagacity of blood-hounds to hunt us down.*—My soul turns away from these loathsome spectacles. They have cut in pieces the friends and companions of my youth. M'Kail, Kid, and King, are no more. Cameron fell bleeding at my side. Hackstone they have butchered. My father, Cargil—they could not spare even thee! Nor thee, dear young Renwick! Brown fell by the bloody Clavers, at the feet of his wife and crying babes. I have seen my friends, and those in whose veins my blood ran, fall in the ranks on bloody Bothwell, as the golden flowers of the meadow beneath the mower's hand. I have seen the greedy axe of the inhuman executioner mangle the limbs

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\* See an instance in Crookshank's Hist. vol. II. ch. 7, p. 127, edition of 1812.

of my dearest friends. I have seen the minions of tyranny perform their disgusting service of transfixing and suspending, as on shambles, the bleeding limbs of the martyrs. I have seen the hammer of the barbarians fix the heads of my companions on thy walls, O bloody Edinburgh! And Oh! disgusting spectacle! I have seen these forms, once dear to my soul as the light of heaven, become naked and bleached bones, under the rain and the sun. I have lived to see the dreadful effects of civil war. The frequent butcheries in the field and on the scaffold have rendered men callous. The ghastly heads and mangled quarters are set up before the mob. Mothers and children daily feast their eyes with the spectacle; even delicate females roll their eyes over them without a shudder. Our sufferings are not felt, for the human bosom has lost its feelings.—O God of my fathers! bend in mercy thine eyes on my bleeding country—and on thy weeping Kirk! Shall these men spread havoc without bounds? Shall our blood stream in torrents? Shall the Stuarts and their slaves bind these chains on the neck of our country and of thy Kirk for ever!"

*See Narrative of Battles.*







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