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THE PEN.

The pen, the pen, the gliding pen,
The knowing pen for me,
So swift it moves o'er the snow-white page,
With its motions wild and free.

I ask not the warrior's reeking sword,
Or the sceptre of princely kind;
'Tis the *Pen* that doth fashion the nation's will,
And mouldeth the nation's mind.

'Tis the *Pen* that telleth the tale of love,
That pleadeth the cause of good;
'Tis the *Pen* that fileth the heart with peace,
Or stirreth the angry blood.

Then hail, mighty means of almighty results,
Mighty agent of good or ill,
Ere long shalt thou rule o'er the wide-spread
ing earth,
And the world with thy influence fill.

Thou'rt the servant of progress, improvement
and truth,
The champion of justice and right,
The foe of oppression, of fear and of doubt,
Of ignorance, darkness and night.

Thou'rt the symbol of knowledge, enlighten-
ment, peace,
Sent hither to dwell amid men,
Oh! hasten the hour when the sword and the
spear,
And the sceptre shall yield to THE PEN!

SUFFERINGS OF FLEMISH BAPTISTS IN 1575.

The following account of the persecutions of a Society of Flemish Baptists in the 16th century, is graphic and touching. The spirit and circumstances here illustrated, are not without an easy application to our own times:

It was on Easter-day, April 3, 1575, that a congregation of Flemish Baptists, numbering some thirty persons, men and women, assembled in a private house in the suburbs of London, just without Aldgate Bars. The slaughters and devastations of the Duke of Alva, in the Low Countries, had caused severe distress and loss of trade. Urged by the desire of obtaining a livelihood for their wives and children, and liberty to worship God in the simplicity of faith and love, these exiles had left Flanders for England. Outcasts and strangers, they sought a heavenly citizenship, and in their sojourn met to comfort each other, and to unite their prayers at the throne of grace. Their meeting was espied by the neighbours, although conducted with secrecy. While commending each other to God, their devotions were suddenly interrupted by the entrance of a constable, who, addressing them as devils, demanded which was their teacher. Seven-and-twenty names were put down at his command, and taking their promise to remain, he proceeded with a few to the magistrate.—He shortly returned, and with opprobrious and cruel words drove the rest before him to the gaol. Two escaped on the way; the rest were "led as sheep to the slaughter." On the third day they were released, heavy bail being taken for their appearance, whenever and wherever it should please the authorities to determine.

Information of the capture was conveyed to the Queen's council; and at the suggestion, apparently, of archbishop Parker, a commission was issued on the 27th of April, to Sandys, the bishop of London, assisted by several civilians and judges, to "confer with the accused, and to proceed judicially, if the case so required." But a few days elapsed before the summonses to appear were issued, and these poor people stood criminally arraigned, for worshipping God according to their convictions. The court assembled in the consistory

of St. Paul's; for it was a case of heresy.— Besides the commissioners, certain members of the Dutch congregation were present as interpreters, a French preacher, and two aldermen. The prisoners first laid before the court a confession of their faith. The bishop was not satisfied. He produced four articles requiring their subscription; if obstinate in their refusal, they should be burnt alive.— Such were the instructions he had received.

"They proposed to us four questions," says one of the prisoners, "telling us to say yea, or nay?"

"1. Whether Christ had not taken his flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary?"

"We answered: He is the son of the living God."

"2. Ought not little children to be baptized?"

"We answered: Not so; we find it not written in holy Scripture."

"3. May a Christian serve the office of a magistrate?"

"We answered, That it did not oblige our consciences; but, as we read, we esteemed it an ordinance of God."

"4. Whether a Christian, if needs be, may not swear?"

"We answered, That it also obliged not our consciences; for Christ has said, in Matthew, *Let your words be yea, yea; nay, nay.* Then we were silent."

"But the bishop said, that our misdeeds therein were so great, that we could not enjoy the favour of God. O Lord! avenge it not. He then said to us all, that we should be imprisoned in the Marshalsea."

Many threats were uttered during the examination; they were vexed with subtle questions, and urged to recant on peril of a cruel death. That they might expect no favour, the bishop sternly informed them of the firm determination of the Queen and her council to compel all strangers to sign a renunciation of these articles. The conforming might remain in the land, and be free from taxes; but the uncompliant should die a frightful death. The prisoners were unmoved, and were conveyed to the Marshalsea for the testimony of Christ. One young brother, the first questioned, was sent into solitary confinement at Westminster, for his bold attestation to the truth.

And now severe trials and temptations beset them. Private friendships, the arguments of learned men, and the dark background of a fearful death, combined to shake their constancy. "Master Joris came to us and said, If we would join the church, that is, the Dutch church, our chains should be struck off, and our bonds loosed. The bishop, he said, had given him command so to do. But we remained steadfast to the truth of Jesus Christ. He is indeed our Captain, and no other; yea, in Him is all our trust. My dear brethren, and sweet sisters let us bravely persevere until we conquer. The Lord will then give us to drink of the new wine. O Lord, strengthen our faith. As we have received the Lord Jesus Christ, let us go forward courageously, trusting in Him."

Five, however, yielded to the solicitations of the Netherland preachers, quailing at the fearful prospect set before them. They consented to forego their convictions, and subscribe the articles. Notwithstanding the bishop's promise, that subscription should release them from all pains and penalties, they were brought to St. Paul's Cross on the 25th of May, to make a public recantation. Taken in their toils, these recovered sheep were not gently lifted on the shepherd's shoulders, and brought home with joyful shouts, as Christ teaches us the good pastor will do; but before many thousands of people, in the churchyard of St. Paul's they were set for a

gazing stock, a fagot bound on each one's shoulder, as a sign that they were worthy of the fire. At the close of the bishop's sermon, their prescribed recantation was read. They declared themselves to have been seduced by the spirit of error, and that their renounced opinions were damnable and detestable heresies; but that the whole doctrine and religion established in England, as also that received and practised by the Dutch congregation in London was sound, true, and according to the Word of God. It was afterwards repeated in the Dutch church, to which they promised to unite; and bail taken for the performance of the vow.

Two several times were the rest taken before their inquisitors, and for three weeks endured rigorous imprisonment, the sore chafing of iron fetters, with mingled entreaties and threats, to induce them to a renunciation of their faith. On the 11th of May, further commission was issued, to proceed to their condemnation. On Whitsun-eve, the 21st, ten women and one man were formally condemned to the fire, one female shrank from the trial. A few days after the public penance at St. Paul's the remainder were again brought up to the bishop's court, the place of Bonner's savage cruelties in Queen Mary's time. Day was just dawning when, bound two and two, they entered the place of doom. "We remember the word of the Lord," says Gerrit van Byler, "When they shall lead you before lords and princes, fear not what you shall say, for in that hour it shall be given you. So we trusted in the Lord. The questions were again proposed, and subscription demanded; but we said, That we would cleave to the Word of the Lord."

In the plenitude of royal authority—dare any one call it apostolical? delegated to him, the bishop sentenced them to excision from the church of Christ, and to death; and formally delivered them to the secular arm for punishment.

Fourteen women and a youth, bound together, were led away to Newgate; the remaining five were kept in the bishop's custody.— And now for five or six days they suffered great anxiety and temptation. Oft threatened with a cruel and fiery death, they feared from day to day, the hour of their offering up was at hand. They were severely treated, and compelled to hear the blasphemies of the vilest criminals. Ten days thus passed, when on the eve of the first of June, about ten o'clock, the gaoler, with his officers, entered their place of confinement, noted down their goods, and bid them prepare to die on the morrow. Seeing that their courage, and faith in God remained unshaken, he then announced to them, that the Queen, in her clemency, had commanded a milder penalty—banishment.

In the morning, surrounded by halberdiers, they were led by the sheriffs to the water-side, and put on board a ship at St. Catherine's.— The youth followed, tied to a cart's tail, and was whipped to the place of embarkation.— Thus the ties of nature were severed: some of the poor exiles had to mourn in anguish over husbands and fathers, left in the hands of their persecutors, for whom yet more cruel severities were reserved. The next day, June 2d, the five men, who remained of this company, were again led bound into the consistory. The terrors of the stake were vividly set before them; their only escape, subscription to the articles. They were urged, they were threatened; it was unavailing. "It is a small matter thus to die," said Jan Peters with a courageous mind. The bishop sharply inquired, "What does he say?" Peters replied, "The bishop listened with some moderation, and then stoutly said, 'We must shave such heretics, and cut them off as an evil thing from the church.'" Said Hendrik Terwoort, "How

canst thou cut us off from your church, since we are not of it? The bishop, "It was all the same; there were none in England who were not members of the church of God."— And now were these friends of Christ unjustly condemned, and led away to Newgate to await the day of death.

Here they were strongly secured, heavily ironed, and thrown into a deep and noisome den, swarming with foul and disgusting vermin. "Then we thought ourselves," says Byler, "within one or two days of the end, after which we earnestly longed, for the prison was grievous; but it was not yet the Lord's will. After eight days, one of our brethren was released by death, trusting in God; his dying testimony filled us with joy." Even the society of thieves and malefactors was deemed too pure for them, both the bishop and a preacher saying, that care must be taken, lest the criminals should be corrupted by the association. Great indeed must have been the horror their opinions had inspired, when an English preacher occasionally visiting their dungeon, would lay his hands upon them, and falling upon his knees, cry aloud, "Sirs, be ye converted;" and then, exorcising the devil within them, exclaim, "Hence, depart, thou evil fiend!"

But exertions of another kind were not wanting on their behalf. Strenuous efforts were made to bring their case before the Queen. An earnest supplication, and a confession of their faith on the four articles, were prepared: but the attempt to present them to her was met with a stern and passionate rebuke to the ladies of her court, who ventured to intrude on the royal prerogative. Reports of the most unjust kind were rumoured about; that they disowned God and Christ, and rejected all government and authority of magistrates. Her Majesty was not free from these impressions, and they were sedulously fostered in her mind, by parties thirsting for innocent blood. The bishop was next applied to. A nobleman, Lord de Bodley, undertook to plead their cause, and, if possible, move his compassion. A simple confession of their faith was laid before him. But bishop Sandys refused to interfere. He even demanded their assent to the doctrine, that a Christian magistrate may rightly punish the obstinate heretic with a sword.

A month's reprieve was, however, granted them, at the earnest suit of the venerable martyrologist, John Fox. His pious admiration of Marian martyrs was shocked at the thought, that the scene of their triumphs would be defiled with the blood of these fanatic and miserable wretches. To roast olive was more accordant to papal practices, he said, than to the custom of the gospellers. He therefore urged upon Her Majesty the adoption of some other mode of punishment. Might not close imprisonment, or bonds, or perpetual banishment, or burning of the hand, or scourging, or even slavery suffice? Any or all of these would be preferable to death by fire. But not one word does her "Father Fox" breathe of tenderness for the rights of conscience. He also addressed the victims. He laboured to persuade them to acknowledge their error, and how to the voice of scripture; to cease "to cultivate certain fanatic conceptions, nay, rather deceptions, of their own minds; for it is sufficiently apparent, that for long you have disturbed the church by your great scandal and offence."— To the Lord Chief Justice Monson, one of their judges, he sent a copy of his letters to the Queen and council, further reprobating the punishment of death. The sufferers highly estimated his kindly interference; but while they thanked him for his condescension, they endeavoured to change his unfavourable opinion.