

FOX'S BOOK OF MARTYRS

A HISTORY OF THE LIVES, SUFFER-
INGS AND TRIUMPHANT DEATHS
OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN AND
THE PROTESTANT MARTYRS

Edited by
WILLIAM BYRON FORBUSH, D.D.

UNIVERSAL BOOK AND BIBLE HOUSE
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

1926

sively bishop of Worcester, bishop of London, and archbishop of York.

Queen Mary's Treatment of Her Sister, the Princess Elizabeth

The preservation of Princess Elizabeth may be reckoned a remarkable instance of the watchful eye which Christ had over His Church. The bigotry of Mary regarded not the ties of consanguinity, of natural affection, of national succession. Her mind, physically morose, was under the dominion of men who possessed not the milk of human kindness, and whose principles were sanctioned and enjoined by the idolatrous tenets of the Romish pontiff. Could they have foreseen the short date of Mary's reign, they would have imbrued their hands in the Protestant blood of Elizabeth, and, as a *sine qua non* of the queen's salvation, have compelled her to bequeath the kingdom to some Catholic prince. The contest might have been attended with the horrors incidental to a religious civil war, and calamities might have been felt in England similar to those under Henry the Great in France, whom Queen Elizabeth assisted in opposing his priest-ridden Catholic subjects. As if Providence had the perpetual establishment of the Protestant faith in view, the difference of the duration of the two reigns is worthy of notice. Mary might have reigned many years in the course of nature, but the course of grace willed it otherwise. Five years and four months was the time of persecution allotted to this weak, disgraced reign, while that of Elizabeth reckoned a number of years among the highest of those who have sat on the English throne, almost nine times that of her merciless sister!

Before Mary attained the crown, she treated Elizabeth with a sisterly kindness, but from that period her conduct was altered, and the most impetuous distance substituted. Though Elizabeth had no concern in the rebellion of Sir Thomas Wyatt, yet she was apprehended, and treated as a culprit in that commotion. The manner too of her arrest was similar to the mind that dictated it: the three cabinet members, whom she deputed to see the arrest executed, rudely entered the chamber at ten o'clock at night, and, though she was extremely ill, they could scarcely be induced to let her remain until the following morning. Her enfeebled state permitted her to be moved only by short stages in a journey of such length to London; but the princess, though afflicted in person, had a consolation in mind which her sister never could purchase: the people, through whom she passed on her way pitied her, and put up their prayers for her preservation.

Arrived at court, she was made a close prisoner for a fortnight, without knowing who was her accuser, or seeing anyone who could console or advise her. The charge, however, was at length unmasked by Gardiner, who, with nineteen of the Council, accused her of abetting Wyatt's conspiracy, which she religiously affirmed to be false.

Failing in this, they placed against her the transactions of Sir Peter Carew in the west, in which they were as unsuccessful as in the former. The queen now signified that it was her pleasure she should be committed to the Tower, a step which overwhelmed the princess with the greatest alarm and uneasiness. In vain she hoped the queen's majesty would not commit her to such a place; but there was no lenity to be expected; her attendants were limited, and a hundred northern soldiers appointed to guard her day and night.

On Palm Sunday she was conducted to the Tower. When she came to the palace garden, she cast her eyes towards the windows, eagerly anxious to meet those of the queen, but she was disappointed. A strict order was given in London that every one should go to church, and carry palms, that she might be conveyed without clamor or commiseration to her prison.

At the time of passing under London Bridge the fall of the tide made it very dangerous, and the barge some time stuck fast against the starlings. To mortify her the more, she was landed at Traitors' Stairs. As it rained fast, and she was obliged to step in the water to land, she hesitated; but this excited no complaisance in the lord in waiting. When she set her foot on the steps, she exclaimed, "Here lands as true a subject, being prisoner, as ever landed at these stairs; and before Thee, O God, I speak it, having no friend but Thee alone!"

A large number of the wardens and servants of the Tower were arranged in order between whom the princess had to pass. Upon inquiring the use of this parade, she was informed it was customary to do so. "If," said she, "it is on account of me, I beseech you that they may be dismissed." On this the poor men knelt down, and prayed that God would preserve her grace, for which they were the next day turned out of their employments. The tragic scene must have been deeply interesting, to see an amiable and irreproachable princess sent like a lamb to languish in expectation of cruelly and death; against whom there was no other charge than her superiority in Christian virtues and acquired endowments. Her attendants openly wept as she proceeded with a dignified step to the frowning battlements of her destination. "Alas!" said Elizabeth, "what do you mean? I took you to comfort, not to dismay me; for my truth is such that no one shall have cause to weep for me."

The next step of her enemies was to procure evidence by means which, in the present day, are accounted detestable. Many poor prisoners were racked, to extract, if possible, any matters of accusation which might affect her life, and thereby gratify Gardiner's sanguinary disposition. He himself came to examine her, respecting her removal from her house at Ashbridge to Dunnington castle a long while before. The princess had quite forgotten this trivial circumstance, and Lord Arundel, after the investigation, kneeling down,

apologized for having troubled her in such a frivolous matter. "You sit me narrowly," replied the princess, "but of this I am assured, that God has appointed a limit to your proceedings; and so God forgive you all."

Her own gentlemen, who ought to have been her purveyors, and served her provision, were compelled to give place to the common soldiers, at the command of the constable of the Tower, who was in every respect a servile tool of Gardiner; her grace's friends, however, procured an order of Council which regulated this petty tyranny more to her satisfaction.

After having been a whole month in close confinement, she sent for the lord chamberlain and Lord Chandois, to whom she represented the ill state of her health from a want of proper air and exercise. Application being made to the Council, Elizabeth was with some difficulty admitted to walk in the queen's lodgings, and afterwards in the garden, at which time the prisoners on that side were attended by their keepers, and not suffered to look down upon her. Their jealousy was excited by a child of four years, who daily brought flowers to the princess. The child was threatened with a whipping, and the father ordered to keep him from the princess's chambers.

On the fifth of May the constable was discharged from his office, and Sir Henry Benfield appointed in his room, accompanied by a hundred ruffian-looking soldiers in blue. This measure created considerable alarm in the mind of the princess, who imagined it was preparatory to her undergoing the same fate as Lady Jane Grey, upon the same block. Assured that this project was not in agitation, she entertained an idea that the new keeper of the Tower was commissioned to make away with her privately, as his equivocal character was in conformity with the ferocious inclination of those by whom he was appointed.

A report now obtained that her Grace was to be taken away by the new constable and his soldiers, which in the sequel proved to be true. An order of Council was made for her removal to the manor Woodstock, which took place on Trinity Sunday, May 13, under the authority of Sir Henry Benfield and Lord Tame. The ostensible cause of her removal was to make room for other prisoners. Richmond was the first place they stopped at, and here the princess slept, not however without much alarm at first, as her own servants were superseded by the soldiers, who were placed as guards at her chamber door. Upon representation, Lord Tame overruled this indecent stretch of power, and granted her perfect safety while under his custody.

In passing through Windsor, she saw several of her poor dejected servants waiting to see her. "Go to them," said she, to one of her

attendants, "and say these words from me, *tanquam ovis*, that is, like a sheep to the slaughter."

The next night her Grace lodged at the house of a Mr. Dormer, in her way to which the people manifested such tokens of loyal affection that Sir Henry was indignant, and bestowed on them very liberally the names of rebels and traitors. In some villages they rang the bells for joy, imagining the princess's arrival among them was from a very different cause; but this harmless demonstration of gladness was sufficient with the persecuting Benfield to order his soldiers to seize and set these humble persons in the stocks.

The day following, her Grace arrived at Lord Tame's house, where she stayed all night, and was most nobly entertained. This excited Sir Henry's indignation, and made him caution Lord Tame to look well to his proceedings; but the humanity of Lord Tame was not to be frightened, and he returned a suitable reply. At another time, this official prodigal, to show his consequence and disregard of good manners, went up into a chamber, where was appointed for her Grace a chair, two cushions, and a foot carpet, wherein he presumptuously sat and called his man to pull off his boots. As soon as it was known to the ladies and gentlemen they laughed him to scorn. When supper was done, he called to his lordship, and directed that all gentlemen and ladies should withdraw home, marvelling much that he would permit such a large company, considering the great charge he had committed to him. "Sir Henry," said his lordship, "content yourself; all shall be avoided, your men and all." "Nay, but my soldiers," replied Sir Henry, "shall watch all night." Lord Tame answered, "There is no need." "Well," said he, "need or need not, they shall so do."

The next day her Grace took her journey from thence to Woodstock, where she was enclosed, as before in the Tower of London, the soldiers keeping guard within and without the walls, every day, to the number of sixty; and in the night, without the walls were forty during all the time of her imprisonment.

At length she was permitted to walk in the gardens, but under the most severe restrictions, Sir Henry keeping the keys himself, and placing her always under many bolts and locks, whence she was induced to call him her jailer, at which he felt offended, and begged her to substitute the word officer. After much earnest entreaty to the Council, she obtained permission to write to the queen; but the jailer who brought her pen, ink, and paper stood by her while she wrote, and, when she left off, he carried the things away until they were wanted again. He also insisted upon carrying it himself to the queen, but Elizabeth would not suffer him to be the bearer, and it was presented by one of her gentlemen.

After the letter, Doctors Owen and Wendy went to the princess, as the state of her health rendered medical assistance necessary.

They stayed with her five or six days, in which time she grew much better; they then returned to the queen, and spoke flatteringly of the princess' submission and humility, at which the queen seemed moved; but the bishops wanted a concession that she had offended her majesty. Elizabeth spurned this indirect mode of acknowledging herself guilty. "If I have offended," said she, "and am guilty, I crave no mercy but the law, which I am certain I should have had ere this, if anything could have been proved against me. I wish I were as clear from the peril of my enemies; then should I not be thus bolted and locked up within walls and doors."

Much question arose at this time respecting the propriety of uniting the princess to some foreigner, that she might quit the realm with a suitable portion. One of the Council had the brutality to urge the necessity of beholding her, if the king (Philip) meant to keep the realm in peace; but the Spaniards, detesting such a base thought, replied, "God forbid that our king and master should consent to such an infamous proceeding!" Stimulated by a noble principle, the Spaniards from this time repeatedly urged to the king that it would do him the highest honor to liberate the Lady Elizabeth, nor was the king imperious to their solicitation. He took her out of prison, and shortly after she was sent for to Hampton court. It may be remarked in this place, that the fallacy of human reasoning is shown in every moment. The barbarian who suggested the policy of beholding Elizabeth little contemplated the change of condition which his speech would bring about. In her journey from Woodstock, Benfield treated her with the same severity as before; removing her on a stormy day, and not suffering her old servant, who had come to Colnbrook, where she slept, to speak to her.

She remained a fortnight strictly guarded and watched, before anyone dared to speak with her; at length the vile Gardiner with three more of the Council, came with great submission. Elizabeth saluted them, remarked that she had been for a long time kept in solitary confinement, and begged they would intercede with the king and queen to deliver her from prison. Gardiner's visit was to draw from the princess a confession of her guilt; but she was guarded against his subtlety, adding, that, rather than admit she had done wrong, she would lie in prison all the rest of her life. The next day Gardiner came again, and kneeling down, declared that the queen was astonished she should persist in affirming that she was blameless—whence it would be inferred that the queen had unjustly imprisoned her grace. Gardiner further informed her that the queen had declared that she must tell another tale, before she could be set at liberty. "Then," replied the high-minded Elizabeth, "I had rather be in prison with honesty and truth, than have my liberty, and be suspected by her majesty. What I have said, I will stand to; nor will I ever

speak falsehood!" The bishop and his friends then departed, leaving her locked up as before.

Seven days after the queen sent for Elizabeth at ten o'clock at night; two years had elapsed since they had seen each other. It created terror in the mind of the princess, who, at setting out, desired her gentlemen and ladies to pray for her, as her return to them again was uncertain.

Being conducted to the queen's bedchamber, upon entering it the princess knelt down, and having begged of God to preserve her majesty, she humbly assured her that her majesty had not a more loyal subject in the realm, whatever reports might be circulated to the contrary. With a haughty ungraciousness, the imperious queen replied: "You will not confess your offence, but stand stoutly to your truth. I pray God it may so fall out."

"If it do not," said Elizabeth, "I request neither favor nor pardon at your majesty's hands." "Well," said the queen, "you still persevere in your truth. Besides, you will not confess that you have not been wrongfully punished."

"I must not say so, if it please your majesty, to you."

"Why, then," said the queen, "belike you will to others."

"No, if it please you majesty: I have borne the burden, and must bear it. I humbly beseech your majesty to have a good opinion of me and to think me to be your subject, not only from the beginning hitherto, but for ever, as long as life lasteth." They departed without any heartfelt satisfaction on either side; nor can we think the conduct of Elizabeth displayed that independence and fortitude which accompanies perfect innocence. Elizabeth's admitting that she would not say, neither to the queen nor to others, that she had been unjustly punished, was in direct contradiction to what she had told Gardiner, and must have arisen from some motive at this time inexplicable. King Philip is supposed to have been secretly concealed during the interview, and to have been friendly to the princess.

In seven days from the time of her return to imprisonment, her severe jailer and his men were discharged, and she was set at liberty, under the constraint of being always attended and watched by some of the queen's Council. Four of her gentlemen were sent to the Tower without any other charge against them than being zealous servants of their mistress. This event was soon after followed by the happy news of Gardiner's death, for which all good and merciful men glorified God, inasmuch as it had taken the chief tiger from the den, and rendered the life of the Protestant successor of Mary more secure.

This miscreant, while the princess was in the Tower, sent a secret writ, signed by a few of the Council for her private execution, and, had Mr. Bridges, lieutenant of the Tower, been as little scrupulous

of dark assassination as this pious prelate was, she must have perished. The warrant not having the queen's signature, Mr. Bridges hastened to her majesty to give her information of it, and to know her mind. This was a plot of Winchester's, who, to convict her of reasonable practices, caused several prisoners to be racked; particularly Mr. Edmund Tremaine and Smithwicke were offered considerable bribes to accuse the guiltless princess.

Her life was several times in danger. While at Woodstock, she was apparently put between the boards and ceiling under which she lay. It was also reported strongly that one Paul Penny, the keeper of Woodstock, a notorious ruffian, was appointed to assassinate her, but, however this might be, God counteracted in this point the nefarious designs of the enemies of the Reformation. James Basset was another appointed to perform the same deed: he was a peculiar favorite of Gardiner, and had come within a mile of Woodstock, intending to speak with Benifield on the subject. The goodness of God however so ordered it that while Basset was travelling to Woodstock, Benifield, by an order of Council, was going to London: in consequence of which, he left a positive order with his brother, that no man should be admitted to the princess during his absence, not even with a note from the queen; his brother met the murderer, but the latter's intention was frustrated, as no admission could be obtained.

When Elizabeth quitted Woodstock, she left the following lines written with her diamond on the window:

Much suspected by me,

Nothing proved can be. O'noth Elizabeth, prisoner.

With the life of Winchester ceased the extreme danger of the princess, as many of her other secret enemies soon after followed him, and, last of all, her cruel sister, who outlived Gardiner but three years.

The death of Mary was ascribed to several causes. The Council endeavored to console her in her last moments, imagining it was the absence of her husband that lay heavy at her heart, but though his treatment had some weight, the loss of Calais, the last fortress possessed by the English in France, was the true source of her sorrow. "Open my heart," said Mary, "when I am dead, and you shall find Calais written there." Religion caused her no alarm; the priests had lulled to rest every misgiving of conscience, which might have intruded, on account of the accusing spirits of the murdered martyrs. Not the blood she had spilled, but the loss of a town excited her emotions in dying, and this last stroke seemed to be awarded, that her fanatical persecution might be paralleled by her political imbecility.

We earnestly pray that the annals of no country, Catholic or

pagan, may ever be stained with such a repetition of human sacrifices to papal power, and that the detestation in which the character of Mary is holden, may be a beacon to succeeding monarchs to avoid the rocks of fanaticism!

Gods Punishment upon Some of the Persecutors of His People in Mary's Reign

After that arch-persecutor, Gardiner, was dead, others followed, of whom Dr. Morgan, bishop of St. David's, who succeeded Bishop Farrar, is to be noticed. Not long after he was installed in his bishopric, he was stricken by the visitation of God; his food passed through the throat, but rose again with great violence. In this manner, almost literally starved to death, he terminated his existence.

Bishop Thornton, suffragan of Dover, was an indefatigable persecutor of the true Church. One day after he had exercised his cruel tyranny upon a number of pious persons at Canterbury, he came from the chapter-house to Borne, where as he stood on a Sunday looking at his men playing at bowls, he fell down in a fit of the palsy, and did not long survive.

After the latter, succeeded another bishop or suffragan, ordained by Gardiner, who not long after he had been raised to the see of Dover, fell down a pair of stairs in the cardinal's chamber at Greenwich, and broke his neck. He had just received the cardinal's blessing—he could receive nothing worse.

John Cooper, of Watsam, Suffolk, suffered by perjury; he was from private pique persecuted by one Fenning, who suborned two others to swear that they heard Cooper say, 'If God did not take away Queen Mary, the devil would.' Cooper denied all such words, but Cooper was a Protestant and a heretic, and therefore he was hung, drawn and quartered, his property confiscated, and his wife and nine children reduced to beggary. The following harvest, however, Grimwood of Hitcham, one of the witnesses before mentioned, was visited for his villainy: while at work, stacking up corn, his bowels suddenly burst out, and before relief could be obtained, he died. Thus was deliberate perjury rewarded by sudden death!

In the case of the martyr Mr. Bradford, the severity of Mr. Sheriff Woodroffe has been noticed—he rejoiced at the death of the saints, and at Mr. Rogers' execution, he broke the carman's head, because he stopped the cart to let the martyr's children take a last farewell of him. Scarcely had Mr. Woodroffe's sheriffally expired a week, when he was struck with a paralytic affection, and languished a few days in the most pitiable and helpless condition, presenting a striking contrast to his former activity in the cause of blood.

Ralph Lardyn, who betrayed the martyr George Eagles, is believed



ROBERT DEVEREUX, EARL OF ESSEX
Reproduced by courtesy of the Council of Trinity College, Cambridge

The Life and Death of
ROBERT DEVEREUX
EARL OF ESSEX

George
G. B. Harrison

CEDRIC CHIVERS LTD
PORTWAY, BATH

1970

been long sick is most desirous of the physician that is best acquainted with the constitution of his body, so I most wish to have my comfort in spiritual medicine from him who hath been and is best acquainted with the inward griefs and secret afflictions of my soul. And my last request shall be this; that it will please her Highness that my Lord Thomas Howard and the Lieutenant of the Tower may be partakers with me in receiving the sacrament, to witness of me concerning what I have here protested for my loyalty, religion, and peace of conscience; and then, whensoever it shall please her Majesty to call me, I shall be ready to seal the same with my blood."

The Lords promised that they would move the Queen for his requests. The Sergeant-at-Arms stood up with the mace on his shoulder and proclaimed that the commission was dissolved. The peers rose to go home. Essex, as he was being led away, begged the pardon of Lord de la Ware and Lord Morley for involving their sons in his troubles.

It was now about seven o'clock in the evening, and news of the verdict soon spread through the City. As Essex was led back to the Tower, many left their suppers and ran into the streets to watch him pass. He walked with a quick pace, and lowered head, taking no heed of the spectators, though some spoke to him.

Connoisseurs of dramatic occasions were not dissatisfied with the trial. Essex had defended himself, they agreed, with great spirit, as if having lived popularly his chief care was to leave a good opinion in the people's mind at his departing. His protestations of loyalty certainly impressed many of his hearers, and there was considerable surprise that there should have been no mention at the arraignment of the charges that he had plotted with Tyrone, and with the Pope that he was to be King of England, about which his preachers had said much by commandment in their Sunday sermons. Southampton was very generally pitied, though it was felt that in pleading for his life he showed himself somewhat too submissive.

CHAPTER XVII

THE END

NEXT morning Essex was still excited by the events of the trial, and in the same mood, regarding himself as his country's saviour, pulled down by vicious enemies. They, not he, were in the wrong.

After a while, Dr. Thomas Dove, Dean of Norwich, was brought in to him. The Dean came primed with instructions from the Council, who were uneasy about the trial. They felt that there was too much sympathy for the condemned. Essex had been condemned quite legally and on good and sufficient evidence, but something more was needed to convince the public that, beyond any doubt, he deserved his fate.

Essex was not deceived. When the Dean began to urge him to acknowledge his offences, he replied that he was in no way guilty of offending Almighty God; and when the Dean was disposed to argue, he exclaimed, in passion, "If you knew how many motions have been made to me to do my best to remove such evils as the commonwealth is burdened with, you would greatly wonder."

The Dean withdrew to report his failure. A humbler instrument was more successful. The next visitor was the chaplain, the Reverend Abdy Ashton, by whose zeal for the Gospel Essex had been greatly fortified at Essex House and during these last days of waiting. Essex greeted his chaplain cheerfully. Here was a friend who would understand his heroic failure, but Ashton's message was very different from what he had expected.

Ashton, also, had received his instructions, subtly tempered with hints both of danger and of promotion. He knew from

experience how to touch Essex's emotions, and launched at once into invective denunciation.

"My Lord," he exclaimed, "I am unfeignedly sorry to see no more sense in you of these and other fearful sins, into which you have fallen, whereby you have dishonoured God, shamed your profession, offended your Sovereign, and pulled upon yourself many notes of infamy. You have now manifested to the world, that all your show of religion was mere hypocrisy, that you are in your heart either an atheist or a papist, which doth plainly appear, in that all your instruments, followers and favourers, were of this quality; most of them men of no means, but either base persons, that you had raised, or such as lewdly consumed their own patrimony. And if there were any of better condition for their state, yet they were either recusants, or such as were discontented with the present Government; so as the badness of your cause and action doth herein show itself, that no one man but of the sort before-mentioned took your part, or liked your course. Besides, however you would colour it with other pretences, your end was an ambitious seeking of the Crown, the hope whereof for their own raising made these men to follow, animate and applaud you: so that if by a true confession and unfeigned repentance you do not unburden yourself of these sins, you shall carry out of the world a guilty soul before God, and leave upon your memorial an infamous name to posterity. Therefore I will say to you, as Joshua did to Achan (for you have dishonoured God more than ever he did), 'Give glory to God, and make confession of your fault.' For as Solomon saith, 'he that hides his sins shall not prosper.'"

Essex was amazed at this outburst, so unexpected and so bitter; but he defended himself vigorously, though admitting that his followers were indeed men of sundry qualities. He denied that he ever affected the Crown, and declared that he was moved by the misery of his country, oppressed by known atheists, papists, and pensioners of her mortal enemies. "The only means," he protested, "left to turn away these

evils was to procure my access to her Majesty, with whom I assured myself to have had that gracious hearing, that might have tended to the infinite happiness of this state, both in removing evil instruments from about her person, and in settling a succession for the Crown, to the preventing of Spanish servitude, and saving of many thousand Englishmen's lives. No, no, Master Ashton, I never desired other condition than the state of a subject, but only to my Sovereign, and not to so base and unworthy vassals under her."

Ashton resumed in a more sombre, sorrowful tone. "My Lord, these are general speeches, and not much more believed of me now than they were of many then. You must remember, you are going out of the world; you know what it is to receive sentence of death here; but yet you know not what it is to stand before God's judgment seat, and to receive the sentence of eternal condemnation. Leave therefore all glorious pretences; free your conscience from the burthen of your grievous sins; for I protest I cannot believe that you had any other pretence than I have told you, or can name one man (other than such as I have mentioned) that was either adviser, persuader, or approver of your purposes. Neither see I any reason why that I, being watchman over your soul, should not as well have been advised withal, if these things had been so, as any other."

It was a cunning speech, and Essex fell into the trap. He knew that his enemies would naturally misconstrue his actions to the worst, but it had never entered his mind that his own respected chaplain could have so misunderstood his motives. He must justify himself by proofs. Thereupon he went on to relate the details, declaring that his whole aim had been to settle the succession by Act of Parliament on the King of Scots; and, besides, many great men, in Church and State, were with him. He named them.

Ashton now had what he wanted, but the circumstance was delicate, and the confession could hardly be made public.

"These be great matters your Lordship hath opened unto

me," he observed, "and the concealing them may touch my life. Also I hold myself bound in allegiance to reveal them. Besides the publishing of them may give satisfaction to many, that hold the same opinion of your courses, which I did. And farther, it may be dangerous to her Majesty's person in some practice hereafter by them or some of their instruments, the burthen whereof your soul must bear, if you can and do not prevent it, and I will be a witness against you, that you have spoken it."

Essex therefore repeated the confession, and Mr. Ashton went off to report the success of his mission.

When he was left to himself Essex was in black despair. Hitherto he had justified his whole action as a fine act, and himself as a martyr for his country. Ashton's words stripped away his confidence, and he saw himself now as his enemies saw him, an ambitious, self-seeking, self-cozened traitor, who had thrown away honour in this world and salvation in the world to come. But the sinner might still reach salvation up the ladder of confession. He sent for the Lord Thomas Howard, the Constable of the Tower, to beg him to move the Queen to send the Lord Keeper, the Lord Treasurer, the Lord Admiral, and Master Secretary Cecil that he might now clear his heavy conscience, confess his offences, and reconcile himself with his enemies.

The request was immediately forwarded to Court, and next morning—it was Saturday, February 21—the Lord Admiral and Cecil came hurriedly down to the Tower. When Essex appeared before them, he began, "I do humbly thank her Majesty that it hath pleased her to send you two unto me, and you are both most heartily welcome; and above all things I am bound unto her Majesty that it hath pleased her to let me have this little man, Mr. Ashton, my minister, with me for my soul. For this man in a few hours hath made me know my sins unto her Majesty, and to my God. And I must confess to you, that I am the greatest, the most vilest, and most unthankfullest traitor that ever was born in this kind. And

therefore, if it shall please you, I will deliver now the truth, though at the bar, like a most sinful wretch, with countenance and words I maintained all falsehood." He confessed everything, with great penitence, revealing in full detail both the plot to seize the Queen, and the intention thereafter, that having her in possession they would have used the shadow of her authority for changing the government; and how they would then have summoned Parliament and condemned all their enemies.

Having thus relieved his conscience, he asked their forgiveness; first of the Lord Keeper that he and his had been put in fear of their lives. Then he asked forgiveness, in Christian charity, of all whom he had called his enemies.

The two Councillors asked a few questions. What of his accusation of Cecil at the trial? He vowed that in his own conscience he freely acquitted Cecil of it; he was ashamed that he had made it upon no better ground. He even professed that he bore no malice to Cobham or Raleigh; for aught he knew, they were true servants to the Queen and State. He had one request to make, that the Queen might grant him the favour to die privately in the Tower.

There was one other matter. Would he repeat his confession in writing? He took pen and covered four sheets of paper with his own handwriting. He spared no one, and accused especially Christopher Blount, and his two secretaries, Cuffe and Temple. He revealed the names of others privy to his designs, especially Lord Mounjoy and Sir Henry Neville the Ambassador to France, who had been invited to Drury House and there informed of the plan. "And now," he went on, "I must accuse one who is most nearest to me, my sister who did continually urge me on with telling me how all my friends and followers thought me a coward, and that I had lost all my valour. She must be looked to, for she hath a proud spirit." He even commented on Penelope's notorious love for Mounjoy.

Cuffe was sent for. When he came, Essex exhorted him to

call on God and the Queen for mercy, and to deserve it by speaking the truth, adding, "I that must now prepare for another world have resolved to deal clearly with God and the world, and must needs say this to you, you have been one of the chiefest instigators of me to all these my disloyal courses into which I have fallen." Cuffe was too astonished and disgusted to say more than to complain of Essex's inconstancy and betrayal of his most devoted friends.

In the meantime two other divines, Dr. Thomas Mountford and Dr. William Barlow, had been warned to attend to give spiritual assistance to the prisoner. They had heard nothing of Essex's interview with the Councillors or of the confession, and agreed together that they would first beat him to the ground with the dreadful judgments of God, and then raise him again with the comfortable promises of the Gospel. The prisoner, however, was in a very different frame of mind. He welcomed them eagerly, and his remorse was so feelingly expressed that Dr. Barlow was moved to remind him that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Dr. Mountford was puzzled. He had been present at the arraignment, and the change in the prisoner was astonishing. "I wonder," he remarked, "that your Lordship, thus guilty to yourself, should be so confident at the bar. It offended many of your good friends."

"Yea," Essex replied, "but now I am become another man." He told them that he had already confessed to the Council, and though he implicated many by his revelation, "yet," said he, "I hold it my duty to God and the Realm to clear my conscience." He was still so eager to unburden himself to any one who would listen, that he repeated the confession to the embarrassed divines.

It would have caused much bloodshed, they observed. Essex agreed, "God knows what danger and harm it had brought to the Realm." As for himself, he thanked God it had been prevented and that He had made him this example to be justly spewed out of the land. He wished that the time

of his execution had come, for the Queen could not be safe so long as he lived upon the earth.

The conversation went on. He was willing and eager to answer every question. At length the divines turned the talk to the constancy of martyrs at their death, on which he remarked that they died in a good cause, but he should die in a bad cause.

Meanwhile the Queen was greatly agitated. She knew that Essex deserved death. His terrible words—"her mind as crooked as her carcase"—festered. The report of his confession and his latest conversations was brought to her. She was reminded of Lee's attempt, and how Essex himself said she could not be in safety so long as he lived, until he had been spewed out of the land. But yet he was the only man in these last years for whom she really cared. She waited to see if he would write to her or ask for his life. No message came from the Tower. She signed the writ for his execution.

On Tuesday, February 24—it was Shrove Tuesday—the preparations were begun for the execution. By the Council's orders, two executioners were secretly conveyed into the Tower, lest one by himself might falter at the last moment. Exact instructions were sent to the Constable and the Lieutenant. Two divines, Drs. Mountford and Barlow, were to accompany Essex to give him all comforts for his soul, and at the same time to make sure that he confined his speeches at the execution within discreet limits. He might very profitably confess his great treasons and sins towards God, and express hearty repentance and earnest and incessant prayers to God for pardon; but if he should attempt to make any particular declaration of his treasons, or accusation of his adherents, or any justification of himself, as that he had no ill meaning but against his private enemies, then the Constable and the divines, with becoming moderation, but quite firmly, should prevent him. The useful Master Ashton was also to persuade Essex privately to use few words and patience, and to go with him to the end. The writs of execution were despatched to the Tower.

Then the Queen countermanded the order, and sent Sir Edward Carey to the Tower to say that the execution should be stayed. In the evening there was the customary Shrove-tide feasting at Court, and a play was performed by the Lord Chamberlain's players. After the play, the Queen retired to her private apartments. Nothing had come from the Tower. She gave orders that she would have the execution proceed. Mr. Darcy was sent off to the Tower with the message.

Essex was in bed when the Lieutenant of the Tower, with the three divines Mountford, Barlow, and Ashton, came to him with the message that he must prepare for death. He rose, and opening the window of his chamber, spoke a few words to the guard, asking them to pray for him. The rest of the night he spent in prayer and confession, and listening to the exhortation of the divines.

At dawn, the spectators who had been summoned to witness the execution were assembling. By the Queen's order the Earl of Cumberland, the Earl of Hertford, Viscount Bindon, Lord Darcy, Lord Compton, Lord Morley, and Lord Thomas Howard, the Constable of the Tower, were present. A bench had been provided for them, and they took their places facing the scaffold, which was enclosed with a railing and covered with straw. Behind the noblemen stood about a hundred others, knights, gentlemen, and aldermen of the City. Raleigh also came, to answer—so he said—if Essex should object anything against him; but some, suspecting that he wished rather to gloat, murmured. So Raleigh betook himself to the Armoury, and looked on unseen from a window.

The little procession approached; Essex and the three divines, escorted by Sir John Peyton, and a section of partisans of the Guard. As he came, Essex murmured a prayer for strength and patience to the end. He was seen to be dressed all in black, with a gown of wrought velvet, a suit of satin, and a black hat. He mounted the scaffold. He turned to the divines, and said, "O God, be merciful unto me, the most wretched creature on the earth."

He faced the Lords, and, taking off his hat, bowed to them, and with face upturned, began to speak.

"My Lords, and you my Christian brethren, who are to be witnesses of this my just punishment, I confess to the glory of God that I am a most wretched sinner, and that my sins are more in number than the hairs of my head; that I have bestowed my youth in pride, lust, uncleanness, vain glory, and divers other sins, according to the fashion of this world, wherein I have offended most grievously my God, and notwithstanding divers good motions inspired unto me from the Spirit of God, the good which I would, I have not done, and the evil which I would not, I have done; for which I humbly beseech our Saviour Christ to be Mediator unto the Eternal Majesty for my pardon; especially for this my last sin, this great, this bloody, this crying, and this infectious sin, whereby so many, for love of me, have ventured their lives and souls and have been drawn to offend God, to offend their Sovereign, and to offend the world, which is as great a grief unto me as may be. Lord Jesus, forgive it us, and forgive it me, the most wretched of all; and I beseech her Majesty, the State, and Ministers thereof, to forgive it us. The Lord grant her Majesty a prosperous reign, and a long one, if it be His will. O Lord, bless her and the nobles and ministers of the Church and State. And I beseech you and the world to have a charitable opinion of me for my intention towards her Majesty, whose death, upon my salvation and before God, I protest I never meant, nor violence to her person; yet I confess I have received an honourable trial, and am justly condemned. And I desire all the world to forgive me, even as I do freely and from my heart forgive all the world.

"And whereas I have been condemned for my religion, I was never, I thank God, atheist nor papist, for I never denied the power of my God, not believing the word and scriptures, neither did I ever trust to be justified by my own words or merits, but hope, as a true Christian, for my salvation from God only, by the mercy and merits of my Saviour Jesus Christ,

crucified for my sins. This faith I was brought up in, and therein am now ready to die; beseeching you all to join yourselves with me in prayer, not with eyes and lips only, but with lifted up hearts and minds, to the Lord for me, that my soul may be lifted up above all earthly things; for now I will give myself to my private prayer; yet for that I beseech you all to join with me, I will speak that you may hear."

He took off his gown and ruff. One of the chaplains whispered to him not to be afraid. He answered that he had been divers times in places of danger where death was never so present nor certain, and he had felt the weakness of his flesh, and therefore he desired God to strengthen him in this great conflict and not to suffer his flesh to have any rule over him. He asked for the executioner, who came forward and knelt for forgiveness.

"Thou art welcome to me," he said, "I forgive thee. Thou art the minister of justice."

So he knelt in the straw before the block, and with hands clasped, and with long and passionate pauses, he began to pray.

"O God, Creator of all things and Judge of all men, Thou hast let me know by warrant of Thy Word, that Satan is then most busy when our end is nearest, and that Satan being resisted, will fly. I humbly beseech Thee to assist me in this my last combat, and since Thou acceptest even of our desires as of our acts, accept of my desire to resist him, as with true resistance and perfect grace; what Thou seest of my flesh to be frail, strengthen, and give me patience to be as becometh me, in this just punishment inflicted upon me by so honourable a trial. Grant me the inward comfort of Thy Spirit; let Thy Spirit seal unto my soul an assurance of Thy mercies; lift my soul above all earthly cogitations, and when my life and body shall part, send Thy blessed angels to be near unto me, which may convey it to the joys in Heaven."

Then he repeated after the chaplain the Lord's Prayer, in which the spectators joined, sobbing, and when he came to the petition "as we forgive them that trespass against us," he

repeated it, "as we forgive all them that trespass against us." One of the divines reminded him to say over his belief and whispered it quietly clause by clause before him. He was also reminded to forgive and pray for his enemies. He asked God to forgive them as freely as he did, because, he added, "they bear the image of God as well as myself."

Then he took off his doublet, and stood before them in a scarlet waistcoat. He bowed to the block, and said, "O God, give me true humility and patience to endure to the end, and I pray you all to pray with me and for me, that when you shall see me stretch out my arms and my neck on the block, and the stroke ready to be given, it would please the Everlasting God to send down His angels to carry my soul before His Mercy Seat"; and then, with eyes uplifted, "Lord God, as unto Thine Altar do I come, offering up my body and soul for a sacrifice, in humility and obedience to Thy commandment, to Thy ordinance, and to Thy good pleasure. O God, I prosecute myself to my deserved punishment."

He lay flat in the straw, and fitted his head to the block. One of the divines asked him to say the beginning of the Fifty-first Psalm: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of Thy compassions, put away mine iniquities. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Then he stretched out his arms and cried, "Executioner, strike home. Come, Lord Jesus, come, Lord Jesus, and receive my soul: O Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Essex was still speaking when the headman struck. There was no sound or movement. He struck again; and again.

The spectators lingered a while, gazing on the headless carcase sprawled in the straw. Then they made their way numbly to the Tower Gate, and passed out through the silent crowds, each man to his own affairs.