

THE  
 LIFE OF THE MARTYR,  
**JOHN BROWN,**  
 OF PRIESTHILL,  
 IN THE PARISH OF MUIRKIRK, AYRSHIRE,  
 Who was Murdered by  
**GRAHAM OF CLAVERHOUSE,**  
 Near his own house, in 1685.

—  
 Also, an Account of  
**HIS COMPANIONS IN SUFFERING,**  
*During the last Persecution in Scotland, between  
 the Years 1680 and 1688.*

They wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, in dens  
 and caves of the earth, afflicted and tormented.—Heb. xi. 37.

—  
 Their constancy in torture and in death,  
 These on Tradition's tongue still live, these shall  
 On History's honest page be pictured bright  
 To latest times.

Grahame's Sabbath.

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AN ACCOUNT OF  
**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. 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 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 those wild districts were well informed. John Brown was only a boy when upwards of three hundred ministers were deposed, in one day, by Charles the II.; because they would not submit to 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, as the fruits of their ministry were every where conspicuous. 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 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 taught them from house to house. This the bishops could not bear, and re-enacted laws against them. The laws against non-conformity, says a writer of 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, from hunger, nakedness, and the severity of the weather, lying in damp caves, without covering, fire or food. None durst harbour or relieve them upon the pain of death." The heathen may rage, and princes may combine, to plot against the Lord and his appointed, saying, Let us asunder break their bands, and cast their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens 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 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 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 insnaring 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, an

did not make so many complaints of his parishioners as some did: nor was he like his brother curate of Blantyre, who, one Sabbath, just as he rose to pronounce the blessing, exclaimed, ‘ Devil nor ane o’ you see beltane!’ 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 hear such men, setting their unscriptural will-worship aside.

John Brown’s good education was not lost. To counteract the bad example of the wicked, who now walked on every side, since vile men were in high place, every Monday night he met with some 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, 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 superiour 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 herself: 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 forboding 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 as a 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 him 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."

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 shily with her arm, 'They say you 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 ye awee," 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 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 the 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 hoddin grey 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 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 superiour rank. The gudewife did not know whether she should welcome him as a sufferer, or consider him as a spy; so 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, '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 the 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 many friends where I never expected them.'

When he ceased speaking, every one of the family strove to do him some kindness. He remained another night with them, and was greatly bettered in his health. In those days, hospitality was with many what it ought to be, purely exer-

cised for God's glory, and without display of grandour. 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 Tren 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 ruins 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 clothed 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 fol-

lowers and he published their Apologetic Declaration. Mr. Renwick was at first averse to the measure, but at last agreed.

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.

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 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. 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.

On one of those days, when driven from his home, he fled for refuge to a deep ravine, or moss bag, that had been formed by the current of a waterspout, 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 bag.— 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 cxlii. Psalm was distinctly sung.

'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 gay 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 gudewife, '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 amazement, 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.

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 heg. 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 separ-

are 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 exultation ;—

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 lye 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 while 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 acknowledgement." 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 in-

formation 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 adventures 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 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

sited to drive *fell Ruin's ploughshire* 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 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 Psalm xxvii. 1—4. The chapter read was John xvii, 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 gude-man 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.— Upon hearing which Claverhouse said, Go to your prayers, for you shall immediatety 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 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 his 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.— 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 mourner 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

ears, 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:—and followed also the footsteps of his friend by reading the xviith chapter of John. 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. 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 in to 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.'

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 Scotch 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 Killiecrankie; putting William's army to flight; but while in the act of rasing himself on the saddle, and waving with his arm pointing to guard the pass of Killiecrankie, that his favourite maxim 'no quarter' might be put into execution, Lo! a musket ball passed into his arm-pit, 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 suddely in and overwhelming the whole family, his name and titles became extinct.

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.

Butchered 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 winter; 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 Críghton, 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 churchyard. On his grave is a stone with this epitaph,—

David a shepherd first, and then  
Advanced to be king of men,  
Had of 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 mixed with their sacrifice. They were not granted even time to commit their souls to God: but their souls' safety did not depend upon their prayers, but on their praying HEAD.

William Steel alone, of those friends, survived the persecution period, and lived after the Revolution to tell his wonderful escapes.

"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.