

a man left to enjoy your Tyburn, or to be racked with your torments, or to be consumed with your prisons. The expense is reckoned, the enterprise is begun; it is of God—it cannot be withstood. So the Faith was planted, so it must be restored.”

When the end was at hand, after repeated rackings and the long agony of a mock trial, Father Campion was dragged on a hurdle through the muddy London streets, followed by a second hurdle bearing Fathers Briant and Sherwin. A priest who saw them on the way told how they had a smile on their faces, and actually laughed as they drew near to Tyburn. “But they laugh; they don’t care for death!” the bystanders cried.

Father Campion’s companions in martyrdom were as heroic and almost as magnetic as he. Father Briant, a Jesuit novice, had been tortured repeatedly. The rack-master boasted that he had made him a foot longer than God intended him to be. Needles had been thrust under his nails, he had been deprived of food and drink, and even after torture had been given no softer bed than the floor of a prison cell. Nevertheless, one who was present at his final examination spoke emphatically of his cheerfulness. With Father Campion he laughed for joy when the gallows came in sight.

The companion of these two Jesuits, Father Ralph Sherwin, had been one of a notable band which set out for England in 1580. He had not labored there long before he was apprehended. One of his fellow priests wrote at the time: “When Sherwin was taken into the inner court of the prison, they fastened on him very heavy fetters, which he could scarcely move. The gaolers then went away to see in what cell or dungeon he was to be confined. On looking round and finding himself alone, he gazed up to heaven with a face full of joy and gave God thanks. Then looking down again at his feet loaded with chains, he tried whether he could move them; but when he heard the clank of the chains as he stirred, he could not help breaking out into laughter, and then into tears of happiness, and with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, betrayed the greatness of his joy. This scene was witnessed by two heretics, who were confined in a neighboring part of the prison, and who were filled with astonishment.”

Father Sherwin himself, writing from his prison, said: “I wear now upon my feet and legs some little bells to keep me in mind who I am and whose I am. I never heard such sweet harmony before! Pray for me that I may finish my course with courage and fidelity.”

He had been in custody for a year before he and Father Campion and several others were tried. When sentence was pronounced he cried: “This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein”; and as the prisoners were led back to their cells, he pointed to the setting sun, saying to Father Campion: “I shall soon be above you fellow!”

Nor were the women of those dreadful days less merrily courageous than the men. We read, for instance, of Mistress Anne Line, a widow, who offered herself to Father Gerard, head of the English mission, to do any work for God’s Church which he should as-

sign her. It was desirable that there should be a house where priests might find refuge on landing in England, and the management of the place was confided to her. Arrested at last, as she had hoped some day to be, Mistress Line feared she would not live to reach Tyburn. She had always been very frail, and harboring priests in those days was not invalids’ work. So weak was she at the time of her trial that she had to be carried into court, but her spirit was as strong as it had ever been. Accused of having sheltered priests, and asked if she were guilty, her reply was: “My lords, nothing grieves me but that I could not receive a thousand more.” On reaching the gallows she kissed them “with great joy,” and kneeling prayed until the hangman’s work was done.

Better known, perhaps, is Venerable Margaret Clitherow, whom her countrymen love to call the “Pearl of York”—a convert with more than the typical convert’s zeal and enthusiasm. Her greatest delight, especially after the bloody statute against priests and their harborers had been passed, was to have two or three Fathers in her house at the same time. Her biographer tells us “how she would laugh with inward glee to have Mass said within her home divers times in one day, and how she deceived the heretics.”

When, at length, she was denounced, imprisoned, and tried, the sentence imposed was that she must die by the *peine forte et dure*—the horrible torture of being slowly pressed to death. “God be thanked! I am not worthy of so good a death as this,” she cried, with a joyful countenance. So evident was her happiness that the heretics were puzzled to account for it, and decided that she was possessed by a merry devil!

She passed smiling through the streets to her martyrdom, giving alms to the poor who pressed close to see and touch her. “This way to heaven is as short as any other,” she told them cheerfully. They may have noted that her feet were bare. She had sent her shoes and stockings to her little daughter as a token that she should follow in her footsteps.

The merry wit of Blessed Thomas More is too well known to need more than passing mention. Father Benson emphasised it in *The King’s Achievement*, and Francis Thompson referred to it in the “Motto and Invocation,” which Mr. Meynell used to preface the volume of his collected essays:

“Thomas More,
Teach (thereof my need is sore)
What thou showedest well on earth—
Good writ, good wit, make goodly mirth!”

Honor and dishonor, good and ill fortune, life and death found him equally merry. His ready wit had amused the king and court, and it made his executioner laugh. No doubt it now delights the angels.

So the story is repeated again and again and again. For the English martyrs, the thought of the reward not only sweetened, it almost counteracted, the sufferings of this life. Father Francis Ingleby said to his friends, when fetters were put on his legs: “I fear I shall be over-proud of my new boots.” Blessed Thomas Woodhouse gave

money to the smith who riveted heavy irons on his limbs, and promised gold to the one who should bring him word that he was to be racked. When he fell and bruised himself severely on the stone stairs of his prison, he told some one who spoke pityingly to him, that such troubles were sweet in the bearing. He smiled upon a brute who struck him in the face. When his gaoler warned Blessed Thomas Sherwood that he was to be racked again, he said cheerily, laughingly: “I am very little and you are very tall; you might hide me in your pocket and they would not find me.”

The glorious list may well end with John Finch, a young farmer, who, to atone for years of tepidity, made it his special task to guide priests from one Catholic house to another. Betrayed by a spy, who had pretended to be a Catholic, he suffered a year’s cruel torture. His courage gave way at last, and he attended Protestant service; but repentance followed swiftly, and he did heroic penance. He began to long for martyrdom, and when he was condemned, on a charge of high treason, he smiled and gave thanks to God. Friends who visited him the night before his execution “found him so merry in God, and so joyful of the next day’s banquet which he expected, that they were marvellously comforted and edified.” It was in April, 1584, that he died. We are told that when the executioners came at the appointed hour, “this blessed man most joyfully bid them welcome, and thanked God for His infinite and innumerable benefits, especially for this death he was now to receive.”

The cause of these martyrs is going forward rapidly. Their canonisation will be a joy, not alone to English Catholics, but to all who love the old Faith and delight to see it defended ably and valiantly and gladly. England has no holier spot than Tyburn, no greater glory than her martyrs.—*Franciscan Herald*.

SACRED HEART CONVENT, ST. JOHN’S HILL, WANGANUI.

The Sisters of St. Joseph are notified of the following successes secured at the public examinations held in September, November, and December respectively:—Class C. (partial pass): R. Nolan and M. Ahern. Class D (1 group): L. Engle, N. Cooper, and L. Howard. Matriculation (partial pass): L. Engel and N. Cooper. Public Entrance: L. Engel, N. Cooper, P. McGreevy, G. Culling, and L. Howard. Intermediate: Z. Donnelly (credit), R. Mullins, M. Keegan, W. Howard, O. Graham, E. McGrail, and L. Cross.

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