



THE  
TOWER OF LONDON.



PUBLISHED BY THE  
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,  
150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.

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ONE of the first places to be seen by the stranger who visits London, is the Tower; and one of the first questions put to a stranger returning from

London, is, "Did you go to the Tower?" In short, if you have seen the whole of London's fine city, and yet have not visited the Tower, you have left unseen one of the most remarkable places in it.

Thousands of persons even in London know but little about the Tower, and hundreds of thousands of people know nothing more of it, than that it is a large building with wild beasts in it. A short account of it, therefore, may not be unacceptable to our young readers.

This large pile has been celebrated as a strong fortress, a splendid palace, and a secure prison. It stands on a rising piece of ground on the banks of the river Thames, and covers a space of twelve acres.

It often happens that correct information cannot be obtained about the erection of ancient buildings, and this

is the case with respect to the Tower ; for though the building now standing was originally founded by William the Conqueror, yet there is every reason to believe that, long before his time, the Romans had a fort on the spot. The wide ditch around it, and the more modern part of the building, have been added in later periods.

The Tower is, indeed, a monument of ancient times, wherein those who are acquainted with history, may read the uncertainty of earthly possessions, and the changing customs of mankind. William the Conqueror built the Tower to keep the citizens of London in subjection, being fearful of their revolting against him.

The kings and queens of England, from William the Conqueror to Elizabeth, occasionally resided in the Tower.



Here it was that king John reposed in imaginary security when his barons besieged him in his palace, after which he was compelled to sign the Magna Charta.

Here, too, Henry the Second took refuge against his barons and the citizens of London.

The Tower was the principal scene of action during the rebellion of Jack Cade, in the reign of Henry the Sixth

It was in the Tower, also, that Richard the Third is said to have caused the murder of the two young princes, Edward the Fifth and the duke of York.

Now listen to a striking instance of the sudden change to which human greatness is liable. Ann Boleyn was married by Henry the Eighth, and became a queen. She was borne to the Tower of London in a grand procession, consisting of fifty barges. Bands of music played incessantly; the Tower guns were fired, and hundreds of thousands of people crowded to behold the imposing spectacle. The queen, in splendid attire, was, at that time, borne on a litter drawn by palFREYS covered with white damask, a golden canopy rose over her, her ladies rode in chariots, and her guards were richly arrayed. As she passed, fountains of white marble spouted

forth the richest wines, and the figures of goddesses offered her gifts. These were the honors which were paid to her, and yet Ann Boleyn was, soon after, carried there a prisoner, then led out of the Tower, as a condemned malefactor, though falsely accused, and perished beneath the axe of the executioner.



Who would envy the great, when we consider such changes? It is better to dwell in a lowly cottage in peace, than in a palace with such dangers around.



Among the many prisoners who have been confined in the Tower, may be mentioned those men of God, bishop Latimer and archbishop Cranmer, during the reign of the bigoted queen Mary.

The Tower of London has, in later years, been principally used as a state prison, and is now principally occupied as a magazine for arms. Cannon and large field-pieces are kept in the lower story of the building, and the smaller armor above. There are muskets, and other implements of destruction, sufficient to arm more than a hundred thousand men.

O what misery has sin brought upon mankind! If it were not for sin, what need would there be for fortresses, and cannon, and muskets, and instruments of cruelty and death?

The arms are arranged very taste-

fully in the Tower in the shape of pillars, columns, cornices, stars, and other devices; and, in the horse armory, there are figures on horseback in complete suits of armor, representing most of the sovereigns who have reigned in England from William the Conqueror to George the Second. No one can look on these without being carried back in thought to generations long gone by, and to manners and customs now altogether changed.

In the Spanish armory there are the arms and instruments of torture which were taken from the Spanish Armada when the Spaniards invaded England. Who can look on these instruments without offering praise to the God of armies, for delivering England from the cruel scourge that threatened her?

Among these instruments of torture

are thumbscrews, iron collars for the neck, and others with sharp poisoned points. When man has his evil passions excited, and is destitute of the restraining power of God's grace, he is more cruel and relentless than a famished tiger. It is dreadful to think of the hard-hearted bitterness with which men have persecuted their fellow-sinners.

In the Tower, also, are kept the crown jewels, which are of great value, and among them is to be seen the imperial crown, worn by the kings of England at their coronation. The jewels are said to be worth two millions of money, and are kept with very great care, as more than one attempt has been made to carry off the crown. An iron railing prevents the spectator from drawing too near, and every one who visits the place is

locked up in the room, before he is allowed to peep at the treasure.

Formerly the wild beasts of the Tower, many of which were presents to the kings of England from foreign parts, attracted great attention.

But now we have talked about the Tower as a fortress, a palace, a prison, an armory, and a jewel office, let us see if we cannot turn it to some good account.

They who have seen the Tower, and yet learn no useful lesson from it, have seen it to very little purpose.

As a fortress, the Tower has afforded succor to many for a season, while others have found how incapable it is of defending them from evils to which all are liable, dishonor, disease, despair, and sudden death, with a thousand other evils, from which nothing but God's mercy can defend

us. Let us, then, not trust in buildings of wood and stone, but take up the words of the psalmist, and adopt them as our own: "The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

As a palace, the Tower has afforded every means for royalty to indulge in luxury and splendor, but some have gone from the palace to the dungeon—from a stately chamber to the block of the executioner; therefore let us not desire a palace to dwell in, but rather be contented with our lowlier lot, and seek to obtain a heavenly mansion, "whose builder and maker is God."

As a prison, the Tower has kept in captivity the bodies of men, but it never yet could confine their souls, nor withhold the follower of the Re-

deemer from entering into glory. Let us, then, fear neither dungeons, nor bonds, nor chains, but trust in Him who hears "the groaning of the prisoner," and proclaims "liberty to the captive."

As an armory, the Tower is well furnished, but though its suits of armor might defend many from the wrath of men, they cannot save any from the wrath of God. Let us, then, rather take unto ourselves "the whole armor of God," that we "may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

As a jewel-office, the Tower contains many costly gems and an imperial crown, but "the Pearl of great price" is not there; we must seek and obtain that from Him alone, who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift.