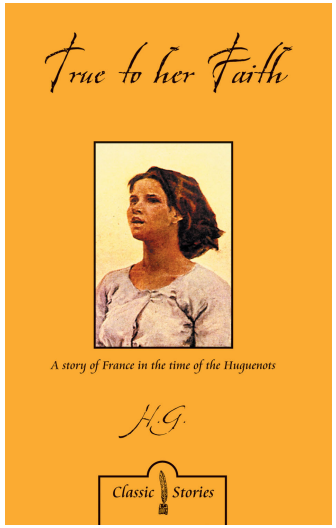
True to Her Faith

A Story of France in the Time of the Huguenots

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I bought this book mainly because of the subtitle: A Story of France in the Time of the Huguenots. That was the subject of interest to me, as some of my ancestors in Jersey were forced to flee France during the persecution after the Edict of Nantes was repealed in 1685. The fact that the story was apparently told through the life of a child, and claimed to be suitable for reading to 7 year olds, was an added benefit; my grandson is almost seven.

The book is beautifully and vividly written, both as regards descriptions of the rural scenery and depictions of the convictions and tortured emotions of the main players, and contains a wealth of information about the sufferings of the Huguenots under the obsessive and paranoid King Louis IV.

Two major stories - the lives of Suzanne de l'Orme and Jean Ferrand and their families - are linked through the person of the faithful Pastor Louis Morin, with the fates of several minor characters woven between them.

We are shocked by the indiscriminate, brutal persecution of innocent people - confiscation of property, destruction of Protestant Churches, banning of private worship meetings, prohibition of practising one's profession, abduction of children to be reeducated in convents; their only offence being refusal to renounce their faith and claim allegiance to the ruling Roman Catholic Church. At the same time, we see some sincere Catholics ignoring the royal policy and assisting the miserable victims. The conflict is not in essence a question of faith, but of conformity or otherwise to national religion practices. And the consequence for hundreds of thousands is that they have no option but to flee at dead of night by perilous routes - across stormy seas in small sailing vessels or via long treks through hostile mountains - and to seek asylum in neighbouring countries: England, the Netherlands, Switzerland. For the nation, the result is a collapse of the social and economic structures.

The parallel today, of religious bigotry in the Middle East and parts of Africa, causing untold suffering, massive destruction and the resulting complications of hundreds of thousands of desperate refugees risking their lives to cross over to the imagined paradise of Western Europe, cannot be overlooked.

Sadly, however, this book's Dickensian language makes it

TECHNICAL DETAILS

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