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HISTORY OF ENGLAND

FROM

THE FALL OF WOLSEY
TO THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA.

VOLUME II.

HENRY THE EIGHTH.

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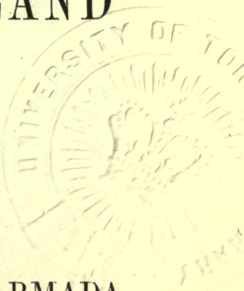

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

FROM

THE FALL OF WOLSEY

TO

THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA

BY

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VOLUME II.

HENRY THE EIGHTH.

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CHAPTER VII.

THE LAST EFFORTS OF DIPLOMACY.

I HAVE now to resume the thread of the political history where it was dropped at the sentence of divorce pronounced by Cranmer, and the coronation of the new Queen. The effect was about to be ascertained of these bold measures upon Europe; and of what their effect would be, only so much could be foretold with certainty, that the time for trifling was past, and the Pope and Francis of France would be compelled to declare their true intentions. If these intentions were honest, the subordination of England to the Papacy might be still preserved in a modified form. The Papal jurisdiction was at end, but the spiritual supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, with a diminished but considerable revenue attached to it, remained unaffected; and it was for the Pope to determine whether, by fulfilling at last his original engagements, he would preserve these remnants of his power and privileges, or boldly take up the gage, excommunicate his disobedient subjects, and attempt by force to bring them back to their allegiance.

The news of what had been done did not take him wholly by surprise. It was known at Brussels at the end of April that the King had married. The Queen Regent[1] spoke of it to the ambassador sternly and significantly, not concealing her expectation of the mortal resentment which would be felt by her brothers;[2] and the information was forwarded with the least possible delay to the cardinals of the Imperial faction at Rome. The true purposes which underlay the contradiction of Clement's language are undiscoverable.

April 22.

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[1] Mary, widow of Louis of Hungary, sister of the Emperor, and Regent of the Netherlands.

[2] She was much affected when the first intimation of the marriage reached her. 'I am informed of a secret friend of mine,' wrote Sir John Hacket, 'that when the Queen here had read the letters which she received of late out of England, the tears came to her eyes with very sad countenance. But indeed this day when I spake to her she showed me not such countenance, but told me that she was not well pleased.

'At her setting forward to ride at hunting, her Grace asked me if I had heard of late any tidings out of England. I told her Grace, as it is true, that I had none. She gave me a look as that she should marvel thereof, and said to me, 'Jay des nouvelles qui ne me semblent point trop bonnes,' and told me touching the King's Highness's marriage. To the which I answered her Grace and said, 'Madame, je ne me doute point syl est faict, et quand le veult prendre et entendre de bonne part et au sain chemyn, sans porter faveur parentelle que ung le trouvera tout lente et bien raysonnable par layde de Dieu et de bonne conscience.' Her Grace said to me again, 'Monsieur l'ambassadeur, c'est Dieu qui le scait que je vouldroye que le tout allysse bien, mais ne scaye comment l'empereur et le roy mon frere entendront l'affaire car il touche a eulx tant que a moy.' I answered and said, 'Madame, il me semble estre assuree que l'empereur et le roy vostre frere qui sont deux Prinssys tres prudens et sayges, quant ilz auront considere indifferentement tout l'affaire, qu'ilz ne le deveroyent prendre que de bonne part.' And hereunto her Grace made me answer, saying, 'Da quant de le prendre de bonne part ce la, ne sayge M. l'ambassadeur.' —Hacket to the Duke of Norfolk: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 452.

Perhaps in the past winter he had been acting out a deep intrigue—perhaps he was drifting between rival currents, and yielded in any or all directions as the alternate pressure varied; yet whatever had been the meaning of his language, whether it was a scheme to deceive Henry, or was the expression only of weakness and good-nature desiring to avoid a quarrel to the latest moment, the decisive step which had been taken in the marriage, even though it was nominally undivulged, obliged him to choose his course and openly adhere to it. After the experience of the past, there could be no doubt what that course would be.

May 12.

On the 12th of May a citation was issued against the King of England, summoning him to appear by person or proxy at a stated day. It had been understood that no step of such a kind was to be taken before the meeting of the Pope and Francis; Bennet, therefore, Henry's faithful secretary, hastily inquired the meaning of this measure. The Pope told him that it could not be avoided, and the language which he used revealed to the English agent the inevitable future. The King, he said, had defied the inhibitory brief which had been lately issued, and had incurred excommunication; the Imperialists insisted that he should be proceeded against for contempt, and that the excommunication should at once be pronounced. However great might be his own personal reluctance, it was not possible for him to remain passive; and if he declined to resort at once to the more extreme exercise of his power, the hesitation was merely until the Em-

peror was prepared to enforce the censures of the Church with the strong hand. It stood not 'with his honour to execute such censures,' he said, 'and the same not to be regarded.'[1] But there was no wish to spare Henry; and if Francis could be detached from his ally, and if the condition of the rest of Christendom became such as to favour the enterprise, England might evidently look for the worst which the Pope, with the Catholic powers, could execute. If the Papal Court was roused into so menacing a mood by the mere intimation of the secret marriage, it was easy to foresee what would ensue when the news arrived of the proceedings at Dunstable. Bennet entreated that the process should be delayed till the interview; but the Pope answered coldly that he had done his best and could do no more; the Imperialists were urgent, and he saw no reason to refuse their petition.[2] This was Clement's usual language, but there was something peculiar in his manner. He had been often violent, but he had never shown resolution, and the English agents were perplexed. The mystery was soon explained. He had secured himself on the side of France; and Francis, who at Calais had told Henry that his negotiations with the See of Rome were solely for the interests of England, that for Henry's sake he was marrying his son into a family beneath him in

[1] *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 457.

[2] Sir Gregory Cassalis to the Duke of Norfolk. Ad pontificem accessi, et mei sermonis illa summa fuit, vellet id præstare ut serenissimum regem nostrum certiorem facere possemus, in suâ causâ nihil innovatum iri. Hic ille, sicut solet, respondit, nescire se quo pacto possit Cæsarianis obsistere.—*State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 461.

rank, that Henry's divorce was to form the especial subject of his conference with the Pope, had consented to allow these dangerous questions to sink into a secondary place, and had relinquished his intention, if he had ever seriously entertained it, of becoming an active party in the English quarrel.

May 28.

The long-talked-of interview was still delayed. First it was to have taken place in the winter, then in the spring; June was the date last fixed for it, and now Bennet had to inform the King that it would not take place before September; and that, from the terms of a communication which had just passed between the parties who were to meet, the subjects discussed at the conference would not be those which he had been led to expect. Francis, in answer to a question from the Pope, had specified three things which he proposed particularly to 'intreat.' The first concerned the defence of Christendom against the Turks, the second concerned the general council, and the third concerned 'the extinction of the Lutheran sect.'[1] These were the points which the Most Christian King was anxious to discuss with the Pope. For the latter good object especially, 'he would devise and treat for the provision of an army.' In the King of England's cause, he trusted 'some means might be found whereby it might be compounded;'[2] but if persuasion failed, there was no fear lest he should have recourse to any other method.

It was this which had given back to the Pope his

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[1] Bennet to Henry: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 462.

[2] Ibid.

courage. It was this which Bennet had now to report to Henry. The French alliance, it was too likely, would prove a broken reed, and pierce the hand that leant upon it.

Henry knew the danger; but danger was not a very terrible thing either to him or to his people. If he had conquered his own reluctance to risk a schism in the Church, he was not likely to yield to the fear of isolation; and if there was something to alarm in the aspect of affairs, there was also much to encourage. His Parliament was united and resolute. His Queen was pregnant. The Nun of Kent had assigned him but a month to live after his marriage; six months had passed, and he was alive and well; the supernatural powers had not declared against him; and while safe with respect to enmity from above, the earthly powers he could afford to defy. When he finally divorced Queen Catherine, he must have foreseen his present position at least as a possibility, and if not prepared for so swift an apostasy in Francis, and if not yet wholly believing it, we may satisfy ourselves he had never absolutely trusted a prince of metal so questionable.

The Duke of Norfolk was waiting at the French Court, with a magnificent embassy, to represent the English King at the interview. The arrival of the Pope had been expected in May. It was now delayed till September; and if Clement came after all, it would be for objects in which England had but small concern. It was better for England that there should be no meeting at all, than a meeting to devise schemes for the massacre

of Lutherans. Henry therefore wrote to the Duke, telling him generally what he had heard from Rome; he mentioned the three topics which he understood were to form the matter of discussion; but he skilfully affected to regard them as having originated with the Imperialists, and not with the French King. In a long paper of instructions, in which earnestness and irony were strangely blended, he directed the ambassador to treat his good brother as if he were still exclusively devoted to the interests of England; and to urge upon him, on the ground of this fresh delay, that the interview should not take place at all.[1]

June.

'Our pleasure is,' he wrote, 'that ye shall say——— that we be not a little moved in our heart to see our good brother and us, being such princes of Christendom, to be so handled with the Pope, so much to our dishonour, and to the Pope's and the Emperor's advancement; seeming to be at the Pope's commandment to come or tarry as he or his cardinals shall appoint; and to depend upon his pleasure when to meet—that is to say, when he list or never. If our good brother and we were either suitors to make request, the obtaining whereof we did much set by, or had any particular matter of advantage to entreat with him, these proceedings might be the better tolerated; but our good brother having no particular matter of his own, and being . . . . that [no] more glory nor surety could happen to the Emperour than to obtain the effect of the three articles moved by the

[1] Letter undated, but written about the middle of June: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 474.

Pope and his cardinals, we think it not convenient to attend the pleasure of the Pope, to go or to abyde. We could have been content to have received and taken at the Pope's hand, jointly with our good brother, pleasure and friendship in our great cause ; [but] on the other part, we cannot esteem the Pope's part so high, as to have our good brother an attendant suitor therefore . . . . desiring him, therefore, in anywise to disappoint for his part the said interview ; and if he have already granted thereto—upon some new good occasion, which he now undoubtedly hath—to depart from the same.

'For we, ye may say, having the justness of our cause for us, with such an entire and whole consent of our nobility and commons of our realm and subjects, and being all matters passed, and in such terms as they now be, do not find such lack and want of that the Pope might do, with us or against us, as we would for the obtaining thereof be contented to have a French king our so perfect a friend, to be not only a mediator but a suitor therein, and a suitor attendant to have audience upon liking and after the advice of such cardinals as repute it among pastymes to play and dally with kings and princes ; whose honour, ye may say, is above all things, and more dear to us in the person of our good brother, than is any piece of our cause at the Pope's hands. And therefore, if there be none other thing but our cause, and the other causes whereof we be advertised, our advice, counsel, special desire also and request is, [that our good brother shall] break off the interview, unless the Pope will make suit to him ; and [unless] our

said good brother hath such causes of his own as may particularly tend to his own benefit, honour, and profit —wherein he shall do great and singular pleasure unto us; *giving to understand to the Pope, that we know ourselves and him both, and look to be esteemed accordingly.*'

Should it appear that on receipt of this communication, Francis was still resolved to persevere, and that he had other objects in view to which Henry had not been made privy, the ambassadors were then to remind him of the remaining obligations into which he had entered; and to ascertain to what degree his assistance might be calculated upon, should the Pope pronounce Henry deposed, and the Emperor attempt to enforce the sentence.

After forwarding these instructions, the King's next step was to anticipate the Pope by an appeal which would neutralize his judgment should he venture upon it; and which offered a fresh opportunity of restoring the peace of Christendom, if there was true anxiety to preserve that peace. The hinge of the great question, in the form which at last it assumed, was the validity or invalidity of the dispensation by which Henry had married his brother's widow. Being a matter which touched the limit of the Pope's power, the Pope was himself unable to determine it in his own favour; and the only authority by which the law could be ruled, was a general council. In the preceding winter, the Pope had volunteered to submit the question to this tribunal; but Henry, believing that it was on the point of immediate solution in another way, had then declined, on the ground that it would cause a needless delay. He was

already married, and he had hoped that sentence might be given in his favour in time to anticipate the publication of the ceremony. But he was perfectly satisfied that justice was on his side; and was equally confident of obtaining the verdict of Europe, if it could be fairly pronounced. Now, therefore, under the altered circumstances, he accepted the offered alternative. He anticipated with tolerable certainty the effect which would be produced at Rome, when the news should arrive there of the Dunstable divorce; and on the 29th of June, he appealed formally, in the presence of the Archbishop of York, from the Pope's impending sentence, to the next general council.[1]

June 29.

Of this curious document the substance was as follows:—It commenced with a declaration that the King had no intention of acting otherwise than became a good Catholic prince; or of injuring the Church or attacking the privileges conceded by God to the Holy See. If his words could be lawfully shown to have such a tendency, he would revoke, emend, and correct them in a catholic spirit.

The general features of the case were then recapitu-

[1] Of the Archbishop of York, not of Canterbury: which provokes a question. Conjectures are of little value in, history but inasmuch as there must have been some grave reason for the substitution, a suggestion of a possible reason may not be wholly out of place. The appeal in itself was strictly legal; and it was of the highest importance to avoid any illegality of form. Cranmer, by transgressing the inhibition which Clement had issued in the winter, might be construed by the Papal party to have virtually incurred the censures threatened, and an escape might thus have been furnished from the difficulty in which the appeal placed them.

lated. His marriage with his brother's wife had been pronounced illegal by the principal universities of Europe, by the clergy of the two provinces of the Church of England, by the most learned theologians and canonists, and finally, by the public judgment of the Church.[1] He therefore had felt himself free ; and, 'by the inspiration of the Most High, had lawfully married another woman.' Furthermore, 'for the common weal and tranquillity of the realm of England, and for the wholesome rule and government of the same, he had caused to be enacted certain statutes and ordinances, by authority of parliaments lawfully called for that purpose.' 'Now, however,' he continued, 'we fearing that his Holyness the Pope . . . having in our said cause treated us far otherwise than either respect for our dignity and desert, or the duty of his own office required at his hands, and having done us many injuries which we now of design do suppress, but which hereafter we shall be ready, should circumstances so require, to divulge . . . . may now proceed to acts of further injustice, and heaping wrong on wrong, may pronounce the censures and other penalties of the spiritual sword against ourselves, our realm, and subjects, seeking thereby to deprive us of the use of the sacraments, and to cut us off, in the sight of the world, from the unity of the Church, to the no slight hurt and injury of our realm and subjects:

'Fearing these things, and desiring to preserve from

[1] Publico ecclesiæ judicio.

detriment not only ourselves, our own dignity and estimation, but also our subjects, committed to us by Almighty God; to keep them in the unity of the Christian faith, and in the wonted participation in the sacraments; that, when in truth they be not cut off from the integrity of the Church, nor can nor will be so cut off in any manner, they may not appear to be so cut off in the estimation of men; [desiring further] to check and hold back our people whom God has given to us, lest, in the event of such injury, they refuse utterly to obey any longer the Roman Pontiff, as a hard and cruel pastor: [for these causes] and believing, from reasons probable, conjectures likely, and words used to our injury by his Holiness the Pope, which in divers manners have been brought to our ears, that some weighty act may be committed by him or others to the prejudice of ourselves and of our realm;—We, therefore, in behalf of all and every of our subjects, and of all persons adhering to us in this our cause, do make our appeal to the next general council, which shall be lawfully held, in place convenient, with the consent of the Christian princes, and of such others as it may concern—not in contempt of the Holy See, but for defence of the truth of the Gospel, and for the other causes afore rehearsed. And we do trust in God that it shall not be interpreted as a thing ill done on our part, if preferring the salvation of our soul and the relief of our conscience to any mundane respects or favours, we have in this cause regarded more the Divine law than the laws of man, and have

thought it rather meet to obey God than to obey man.'[1]

By the appeal and the causes which were assigned for it, Henry pre-occupied the ground of the conflict; he entrenched himself in the 'debateable land' of legal uncertainty; and until his position had been pronounced untenable by the general voice of Christendom, any sentence which the Pope could issue would have but a doubtful validity. It was, perhaps, but a slight advantage; and the niceties of technical fencing might soon resolve themselves into a question of mere strength; yet, in the opening of great conflicts, it is well, even when a resort to force is inevitable, to throw on the opposing party the responsibility of violence; and Henry had been led, either by a refinement of policy, or by the plain straightforwardness of his intentions, into a situation where he could expect without alarm the unrolling of the future.

The character of that future was likely soon to be decided. The appeal was published on the 29th of June; and as the Pope must have heard, by the middle of the month at latest, of the trial and judgment at Dunstable, a few days would bring an account of the manner in which he had received the intelligence. Prior to the arrival of the couriers, Bennet, with the assistance of Cardinal Tournon, had somewhat soothed down his exasperation. Francis, also, having heard that immediate process was threatened, had written earnestly to depre

[1] Rymer, vol. vi, part 2, p. 188.

cate such a measure;[1] and though he took the interference 'very displeasantly,'[2] the Pope could not afford to lose, by premature impatience, the fruit of all his labour and diplomacy, and had yielded so far as to promise that nothing of moment should be done. To this state of mind he had been brought one day in the second week of June. The morning after, Bennet found him 'sore altered.' The news of 'my Lord of Canterbury's proceedings' had arrived the preceding night; and 'his Holiness said that [such] doings were too sore for him to stand still at and do nothing.'[3] It was 'against his duty towards God and the world to tolerate them.' The Imperialist cardinals, impatient before, clamoured that the evil had been caused by the dilatory timidity with which the case had been handled from the first.[4] The consistory sat day after day with closed doors;[5] and even such members of it as had before inclined to the English side, joined in the common indignation. 'Some extreme process' was instantly looked for, and the English agents, in their daily interviews with the Pope, were

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[1] The French King did write unto Cardinal Tournon (not, however, of his own will, but under pressure from the Duke of Norfolk), very instantly, that he should desire the Pope, in the said French King's name, that his Holyness would not innovate anything against your Highness any wise till the congress: adding, withal, that if his Holyness, notwithstanding his said desire, would proceed, he could not less do, considering the great and indissoluble amity betwixt your Highnesses, notorious to all the world, but take and recognize such proceeding for a fresh injury.—Bennet to Henry VIII.; *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 468.

[2] Ibid. p. 469.

[3] Ibid. p. 469.

[4] Ibid. p. 470.

[5] Ibid. p. 467, note, and p. 470.

forced to listen to language which it was hard to bear with equanimity. Bennet's well-bred courtesy carried him successfully through the difficulty; his companion Bonner was not so fortunate. Bonner's tongue was insolent, and under bad control. He replied to menace by impertinence; and on one occasion was so exasperating, that Clement threatened to burn him alive, or boil him in a caldron of lead.[1] When fairly roused, the old man was dangerous; and the future Bishop of London wrote to England in extremity of alarm. His letter has not been found, but the character of it may be perceived from the reassuring reply of the King. The agents, Henry said, were not to allow themselves to be frightened; they were to go on calmly, with their accustomed diligence and dexterity, disputing the ground from point to point, and trust to him. Their cause was good, and, with God's help, he would be able to defend them from the malice of their adversaries.[2]

Fortunately for Bonner, the Pope's passion was of brief duration, and the experiment whether Henry's arm could reach to the dungeons of the Vatican remained

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[1] BURNET, vol. i. p. 221.

[2] We only desire and pray you to endeavour yourselves in the execution of that your charge—casting utterly away and banishing from you such fear and timorousness, or rather despair, as by your said letters we perceive ye have conceived—reducing to your memories in the lieu and stead thereof, as a thing continually lying before your eyes and incessantly sounded in your ears, the justice of our cause, which cannot at length be shadowed, but shall shine and shew itself to the confusion of our adversaries. And we having, as is said, truth for us, with the help and assistance of God, author of the same, shall at all times be able to maintain you.—Henry VIII. to Bonner: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 485.

untried. The more moderate of the cardinals, also, something assuaged the storm; and angry as they all were, the majority still saw the necessity of prudence. In the heat of the irritation, final sentence was to have been pronounced upon the entire cause, backed by interdict, excommunication, and the full volume of the Papal thunders. At the close of a month's deliberation they resolved to reserve judgment on the original question, and to confine themselves for the present to revenging the insult to the Pope by 'my Lord of Canterbury.' Both the King and the Archbishop had disobeyed a formal inhibition. On the 12th of July, the Pope issued a brief, declaring Cranmer's judgment to have been illegal, the English process to have been null and void, and the King, by his disobedience, to have incurred, *ipso facto*, the threatened penalties of excommunication. Of his clemency he suspended these censures till the close of the following September, in order that time might be allowed to restore the respective parties to their old positions: if within that period the parties were not so restored, the censures would fall.[1] This brief was sent into Flanders, and fixed in the usual place against the door of a church in Dunkirk.

July 12.

Henry was prepared for a measure which was no more than natural. He had been prepared for it as a possibility when he married. Both he and Francis must have been prepared for it on their meeting at Calais, when the French King advised him to marry, and

[1] Bonner to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 481.

promised to support him through the consequences. His own measures had been arranged beforehand, and he had secured himself in technical entrenchments by his appeal. After the issue of the brief, however, he could allow no English embassy to compliment Clement by its presence on his visit to France. He 'knew the Pope,' as he said. Long experience had shown him that nothing was to be gained by yielding in minor points; and the only chance which now remained of preserving the established order of Christendom, was to terrify the Vatican Court into submission by the firmness of his attitude. For the present complications, the Court of Rome, not he, was responsible. The Pope, with a culpable complacency for the Emperor, had shrunk from discharging a duty which his office imposed upon him; and the result had been, that the duty was discharged by another. Henry could not blame himself for the consequences of Clement's delinquency. He rather felt himself wronged in having been driven to so extreme a measure against his will. He resolved, therefore, to recall the embassy, and once more, though with no great hope that he would be successful, to invite Francis to fulfil his promise, and to unite with himself in expressing his resentment at the Pope's conduct.

Aug. 8.

His despatch to the Duke of Norfolk on this occasion was the natural sequel of what he had written a few weeks previously. That letter had failed wholly of its effect. The interview was resolved upon for quite other reasons than those which

were acknowledged, and therefore was not to be given up. A promise, however, had been extracted, that it should be given up, if in the course of the summer the Pope 'innovated anything' against the King of England; and Henry now required, formally, that this engagement should be observed. 'A notorious and notable innovation' had been made, and Francis must either deny his words, or adhere to them. It would be evident to all the world, if the interview took place under the present circumstances, that the alliance with England was no longer of the importance with him which it had been; that his place in the struggle, when the struggle came, would be found on the Papal side.

The language of Henry throughout this paper was very fine and noble. He reminded Francis that substantially the cause at issue was the cause of all princes; the Pope claiming a right to summon them to plead in the courts of Rome, and refusing to admit their exemption as sovereign rulers. He had been required not only to undo his marriage, and cancel the sentence of divorce, but, as a condition of reconciliation with the Holy See, to undo also the Act of Appeals, and to restore the Papal jurisdiction. He desired it to be understood, with emphasis, that these points were all equally sacred, and the repeal of the Act was as little to be thought of as the annulling the marriage. 'The Pope,' he said, 'did inforce us to excogitate some new thing, whereby we might be healed and relieved of that continual disease, to care for our cause at Rome, where such defence was taken from us, as by the laws of God,

nature, and man, is due unto us. Hereupon depended the wealth of our realm; hereupon consisted the surety of our succession, which by no other means could be well assured.' 'And therefore,' he went on, 'you [the Duke] shall say to our good brother, that the Pope persisting in the ways he hath entered, ye must needs despair in any meeting between the French King and the Pope, to produce any such effect as to cause us to meet in concord with the Pope; but we shall be even as far asunder as is between yea and nay. For to the Pope's enterprise to revoke or put back anything that is done here, either in marriage, statute, sentence, or proclamation[1]—of which four members is knit and conjoined the surety of our matter, nor any can be removed from the other, lest thereby the whole edifice should be destroyed—we will and shall, by all ways and means, say nay, and declare our nay in such sort as the world shall hear, and the Pope feel it. Wherein ye may say our firm trust, perfect hope, and assured confidence is, that our good brother will agree with us: as well for that it should be partly dishonourable for him to see decay the thing that was of his own foundation and planting; as also that it should be too much dishonourable for us—having travelled so far in this matter, and brought it to this point, that, all the storms of the year passed, it is now come to harvest, trusting to see shortly the fruit of our marriage, to the wealth, joy, and comfort of all our realm and our own singular consolation—that anything should now be

[1] The proclamation ordering that Catherine should be called not Queen, but Princess Dowager.

done by us to impair the same, and to put our issue either in peril of bastardy, or otherwise disturb that [which] is by the whole agreement of our realm established for their and our commodity, wealth, and benefit. And in this determination ye know us to be so fixed, and the contrary hereof to be so infeasible, either at our hands, or by the consent of the realm, that ye must needs despair of any order to be taken by the French King with the Pope. For if any were by him taken wherein any of these four pieces should be touched—that is to say, the marriage of the Queen our wife, the revocation of the Bishop of Canterbury's sentence, the statute of our realm, or our late proclamation, which be as it were one—and as walls, covering, and foundation make a house, so they knit together, establish, and make one matter—ye be well assured, and be so ascertained from us, that in no wise we will relent, but will, as we have before written, withstand the same. Whereof ye may say that ye have thought good to advertise him, to the intent he make no further promise to the Pope therein than may be performed.'

The ambassadors were the more emphatically to insist on the King's resolution, lest Francis, in his desire for conciliation, might hold out hopes to the Pope which could not be realized. They were to say, however, that the King of England still trusted that the interview would not take place. The See of Rome was asserting a jurisdiction which, if conceded, would encourage an unlimited usurpation. If princes might be cited to the Papal courts in a cause of matrimony, they might

be cited equally in other causes at the Pope's pleasure; and the free kingdoms of Europe would be converted into dependent provinces of the See of Rome. It concerned alike the interest and the honour of all sovereigns to resist encroachments which pointed to such an issue; and, therefore, Henry said he hoped that his good brother would use the Pope as he had deserved, 'doing him to understand his folly, and [that] unless he had first made amends, he could not find in his heart to have further amity with him.'

If notwithstanding, the instructions concluded, 'all these persuasions cannot have place to let the said meeting, and the French King shall say it is expedient for him to have in his hands the duchess,[1] under pretence of marriage for his son, which he cannot obtain but by this means, ye shall say that ye remember ye heard him say once he would never conclude that marriage but to do us good, which is now infaisible; and now in the voice of the world shall do us both more hurt in the diminution of the reputation of our amity than it should do otherwise profit. Nevertheless, [if] ye cannot let his precise determination, [ye] can but lament and bewail your own chance to depart home in this sort; and that yet of the two inconvenients, it is to you more tolerable to return to us nothing done, than to be present at the interview and to be compelled to look patiently upon your master's enemy.'

Aug. 8.

After having entered thus their protest against the

[1] Catherine de Medici.

French King's conduct, the embassy was to return to England, leaving a parting intimation of the single condition under which Henry would consent to treat. If the Pope would declare that 'the matrimony with the Lady Catherine was and is nought, he should do somewhat not to be refused;' except with this preliminary, no offer whatever could be entertained.[1]

This communication, as Henry anticipated, was not more effectual than the former in respect of its immediate object. At the meeting of Calais the interests of Francis had united him with England, and in pursuing the objects of Henry he was then pursuing his own. The Pope and the Emperor had dissolved the coalition by concessions on the least dangerous side. The interests of Francis lay now in the other direction, and there are few instances in history in which Governments have adhered to obligations against their advantage from a spirit of honour, when the purposes with which they contracted those obligations have been otherwise obtained. The English envoys returned as they were ordered; the French Court pursued their way to Marseilles; not quarrelling with England; intending to abide by the alliance, and to give all proofs of amity which did not involve inconvenient sacrifices; but producing on the world at large by their conduct the precise effect which Henry had foretold. The world at large, looking at acts rather than to words, regarded the interview as a contrivance to reconcile Francis and the Emperor

[1] Henry VIII. to the Duke of Norfolk: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 493.

through the intervention of the Pope, as a preliminary for a packed council, and for a holy war against the Lutherans[1]—a combination of ominous augury to Christendom, from the consequences of which, if Germany was to be the first sufferer, England would be inevitably the second.

Meanwhile, as the French alliance threatened to fail, the English Government found themselves driven at last to look for a connection among those powers from whom they had hitherto most anxiously disconnected themselves. At such a time Protestant Germany, not Catholic France, was England's natural friend. The Reformation was essentially a Teutonic movement; the Germans, the English, the Scotch, the Swedes, the Hollanders, all were struggling on their various roads towards an end essentially the same. The same dangers threatened them, the same inspiration moved them; and in the eyes of the orthodox Catholics they were united in a black communion of heresy. Unhappily, though this identity was obvious to their enemies, it was far from obvious to themselves. The odium theo-

Sept. 6.

[1] Sir John Hacket, writing from Ghent on the 6th of September, describes as the general impression that the Pope's 'trust was to assure his alliance on both sides.' 'He trusts to bring about that his Majesty the French King and he shall become and remain in good, fast, and sure alliance together; and so ensuring that they three (the Pope, Francis, and Charles V.) shall be able to reform and set good order in the rest of Christendom. But whether his Unhappiness's—I mean his Holiness's—intention is set for the welfare and utility of Christendom, or for his own insincerity and singular purpose, I remit that to God and to them that know more of the world than I do.'—Hacket to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 506.

logicum is ever hotter between sections of the same party which are divided by trifling differences, than between the open representatives of antagonist principles; and Anglicans and Lutherans, instead of joining hands across the Channel, endeavoured only to secure each a recognition of themselves at the expense of the other. The English plumed themselves on their orthodoxy. They were 'not as those publicans,' heretics, despisers of the keys, disobedient to authority; they desired only the independence of their National Church, and they proved their zeal for the established faith with all the warmth of persecution. To the Germans national freedom was of wholly minor moment, in comparison with the freedom of the soul; the orthodoxy of England was as distasteful to the disciples of Luther as the orthodoxy of Rome—and the interests of Europe were sacrificed on both sides to this foolish and fatal disunion. Circumstances indeed would not permit the division to remain in its first intensity, and their common danger compelled the two nations into a partial understanding. Yet the reconciliation, imperfect to the last, was at the outset all but impossible. Their relations were already embittered by many reciprocal acts of hostility. Henry VIII. had won his spurs as a theologian by an attack on Luther. Luther had replied by a hailstorm of invectives. The Lutheran books had been proscribed, the Lutherans themselves had been burnt by Henry's bishops. The Protestant divines in Germany had attempted to conciliate the Emperor by supporting the cause of Catherine; and Luther himself had spoken

loudly in condemnation of the King. The elements of disunion were so many and so powerful, that there was little hope of contending against them successfully. Nevertheless, as Henry saw, the coalition of Francis and the Emperor, if the Pope succeeded in cementing it, was a most serious danger, to which an opposite alliance would alone be an adequate counterpoise; and the experiment might at least be tried whether such an alliance was possible. At the beginning of August, therefore, Stephen Vaughan was sent on a tentative mission to the Elector of Saxe, John Frederick, at Weimar.[1] He was the bearer of letters containing a proposal for a resident English ambassador; and if the Elector gave his consent, he was to proceed with similar offers to the Courts of the Landgrave of Hesse and the Duke of Lunenberg.[2] Vaughan arrived in due time at the Elector's Court, was admitted to audience and delivered his letters. The prince read them, and in the evening of the same day returned for answer a polite but wholly absolute refusal. Being but a prince elector, he said, he might not aspire to so high an honour as to be favoured with the presence of an English ambassador. It was not the custom in Germany, and he feared that if he consented he should displease the Emperor.[3] The meaning of such a reply delivered

[1] John the Magnanimous, son of John the Steadfast, and nephew of the Elector Frederick, Luther's first protector.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 499–501.

[3] Princeps Elector ducit se imparem ut Regiæ Celsitudinis vel aliorum regum oratores eâ lege in aulâ suâ degerent; vereturque ne ob id apud Cæsaream majestatem unicum ejus Dominum et alios male audiret,

in a few hours was not to be mistaken, however disguised in courteous language. The English emissary saw that he was an unwelcome visitor, and that he must depart with the utmost celerity. 'The Elector,' he wrote,[1] 'thirsted to have me gone from him, which I right well perceived by evident tokens which declared unto me the same.' He had no anxiety to expose to hazard the toleration which the Protestant dukedoms as yet enjoyed from the Emperor, by committing himself to a connection with a prince with whose present policy he had no sympathy, and whose conversion to the cause of the Reformation he had as yet no reason to believe sincere.[2]

The reception which Vaughan met with at Weimar satisfied him that he need go no further; neither the Landgrave nor the Duke of Lunenberg would be likely to venture on a course which the Elector so obviously feared. He, therefore, gave up his mission, and returned to England.

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possetque sinistre tale institutum interpretari.—Reply of the Elector: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 503.

[1] Vaughan to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 509.

[2] I consider the man, with other two—that is to say, the Landgrave von Hesse and the Duke of Lunenberg—to be the chief and principal defenders and maintainers of the Lutheran sect: who considering the same with no small difficulty to be defended as well against the Emperor and the bishops of Germany, his nigh and shrewd neighbours, as against the most opinion of all Christian men, feareth to raise any other new matter whereby they should take a larger and peradventure a better occasion to revenge the same. The King's Highness seeketh to have intelligence with them, as they conjecture to have them confederate with him; yea, and that against the Emperor, if he would anything pretend against the King.—Here is the thing which I think feareth the duke.—Vaughan to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 509-10.

The first overtures in this direction issued in complete failure, nor was the result wholly to be regretted. It taught Henry (or it was a first commencement of the lesson) that so long as he pursued a merely English policy he might not expect that other nations would embroil themselves in his defence. He must allow the Reformation a wider scope, he must permit it to comprehend within its possible consequences the breaking of the chains by which his subjects' minds were bound —not merely a change of jailers. Then perhaps the German princes might return some other answer.

The disappointment, however, fell lightly; for before the account of the failure had reached England, an event had happened, which, poor as the King might be in foreign alliances, had added most material strength to his position in England. The full moment of that event he had no means of knowing. In its immediate bearing it was matter for most abundant satisfaction. On the seventh of September, between three and four in the afternoon, at the palace of Greenwich, was born a princess, named three days later in her baptism, after the King's mother, Elizabeth.[1] A son had been hoped for. The child was a daughter only; yet at least Providence had not pronounced against the marriage by a sentence of barrenness; at least there was now an heir whose legitimacy the nation had agreed to accept. Te Deums were sung in all the churches; again the river decked itself in splendour;

Sept. 7.

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[1] Hall, p. 805.

again all London steeples were musical with bells. A font of gold was presented for the christening. Francis in compensation for his backslidings, had consented to be godfather; and the infant, who was soon to find her country so rude a stepmother, was received with all the outward signs of exulting welcome. To Catherine's friends the offspring of the rival marriage was not welcome, but was an object rather of bitter hatred; and the black cloud of a sister's jealousy gathered over the cradle whose innocent occupant had robbed her of her title and her expectations. To the King, to the Parliament, to the healthy heart of England, she was an object of eager hope and an occasion for thankful gratitude; but the seeds were sown with her birth of those misfortunes which were soon to overshadow her, and to form the school of the singular nature which in its maturity would exercise so vast an influence on the destinies of the world.

September.

Leaving Elizabeth for the present, we return to the continent, and to the long-promised interview, which was now at last approaching. Henry made no further attempt to remonstrate with Francis; and Francis assured him, and with all sincerity, that he would use his best efforts to move the Pope to make the necessary concessions. The English embassy meanwhile was withdrawn. The excommunication had been received as an act of hostility, of which Henry would not even condescend to complain; and it was to be understood distinctly that in any exertions which might be made by the French King, the latter was acting with-

out commission on his own responsibility. The intercession was to be the spontaneous act of a mutual friend, who, for the interests of Christendom, desired to heal a dangerous wound; but neither directly nor indirectly was it to be interpreted as an expression of a desire for reconciliation on the English side.

It was determined further, on the recall of the Duke of Norfolk, that the opportunity of the meeting should be taken to give a notice to the Pope of the King's appeal to the council; and for this purpose, Bennet and Bonner were directed to follow the Papal Court from Rome. Bennet never accomplished this journey, dying on the route, worn out with much service.[1] His death delayed Bonner, and the conferences had opened for many days before his arrival. Clement had reached Marseilles by ship from Genoa, about the 20th of October. As if pointedly to irritate Henry, he had placed himself under the conduct of the Duke of Albany.[2] He was followed two days later by his fair niece, Catherine de Medici; and the preparations for the marriage were commenced with the utmost swiftness and secrecy. The conditions of the contract were not allowed to transpire, but they were concluded in three days; and on the

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[1] *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 512.

[2] The Duke of Albany, during the minority of James V., had headed the party in Scotland most opposed to the English. He expelled the queen-mother, Margaret, sister of Henry; he seized the persons of the two young princes, whom he shut up in Stirling, where the younger brother died under suspicion of foul play. (*Despatches of* GIUSTINIANI, vol. i. p. 157); and subsequently, in his genius for intrigue, he gained over the queen dowager herself in a manner which touched her honour.—Lord Thomas Dacre to Queen Margaret: ELLIS, second series, vol. i. p. 279.

Oct. 25th. 25th of October the Pope bestowed his precious present on the Duke of Orleans, he himself performing the nuptial ceremony, and accompanying it with his paternal benediction on the young pair, and on the happy country which was to possess them for its king and queen. France being thus securely riveted to Rome, other matters could be talked of more easily. Francis made all decent overtures to the Pope in behalf of Henry; if the Pope was to be believed, indeed, he was vehemently urgent.[1] Clement in turn made suggestions for terms of alliance between Francis and Charles, 'to the advantage of the Most Christian King;'[2] and thus parried the remonstrances. The only point positively clear to the observers, was the perfect understanding which existed between the King of France and his spiritual father.[3] Unusual activity was remarked in the dockyards; Italian soldiers of fortune were about the Court in unusual numbers, and apparently in favour.[4] An invasion of Lombardy was talked of among the palace retinue; and the Emperor was said to distrust the intentions of the conference. Possibly experience had taught all parties to doubt each other's faith. Possibly they were all in some degree waiting upon events, and had not yet resolved upon their conduct.

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[1] Ex his tamen, qui hæc a Pontifice, audierunt, intelligo regem vehementissime instare, ut vestræ majestatis expectationi satisfiat Pontifex. — Peter Vannes to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 518.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 520.

[3] Hoc dico quod video inter regem et pontificem conjunctissime et amicissime hic agi.—Vannes to Cromwell: Ibid.

[4] Vannes to Cromwell: Ibid. pp. 522-3.

In the midst of this scene arrived Doctor Bonner, in the beginning of November, with Henry's appeal. He was a strange figure to appear in such a society. There was little probity, perhaps, either in the Court of France or in their Italian visitors; but of refinement, of culture, of those graces which enable men to dispense with the more austere excellences of character—which transform licentiousness into elegant frailty, and treachery and falsehood into pardonable finesse—of these there was very much: and when a rough, coarse, vulgar Englishman was plunged among these delicate ladies and gentlemen, he formed an element which contrasted strongly with the general environment. Yet Bonner, perhaps, was not without qualifications which fitted him for his mission. He was not, indeed, virtuous; but he had a certain downright honesty about him, joined with an entire insensibility to those finer perceptions which would have interfered with plain speaking, where plain speaking was desirable; he had a broad, not ungenial humour, which showed him things and persons in their genuine light, and enabled him to picture them for us with a distinctness for which we owe him lasting thanks.

Nov. 7.

He appeared at Marseilles on the 7th of November, and had much difficulty in procuring an interview. At length, weary of waiting, and regardless of the hot lead with which he had been lately threatened, he forced his way into the room where 'the Pope was standing, with the Cardinals of Lorraine and Medici, ready apparelled with his stole to go to the consistory.'

'Incontinently upon my coming thither,' he wrote to Henry,[1] 'the Pope, whose sight is incredulous quick, eyed me, and that divers times; making a good pause in one place; at which time I desired the datary to advertise his Holiness that I would speak with him; and albeit the datary made no little difficulty therein, yet perceiving that upon refusal I would have gone forthwith to the Pope, he advertised the Pope of my said desire. His Holiness dismissing as then the said cardinals, and letting his vesture fall, went to a window in the said chamber, calling me unto him. At which time I showed unto his Holiness how that your Highness had given me express and strait commandment to intimate unto him how that your Grace had solemnly provoked and appealed unto the general council; submitting yourself to the tuition and defence thereof; which provocation and appeal I had under authentic writings then with me, to show for that purpose. And herewithal I drew out the said writing, showing his said Holiness that I brought the same in proof of the premises, and that his Holiness might see and perceive all the same. The Pope having this for a breakfast, only pulled down his head to his shoulders, after the Italian fashion, and said that because he was as then fully ready to go into the consistory, he would not tarry to hear or see the said writings, but willed me to come at afternoon.'

The afternoon came, and Bonner returned, and was admitted. There was some conversation upon indifferent

[1] BURNET, *Collectanea*, p. 436.

matters; the Pope making good-natured inquiries about Bennet, and speaking warmly and kindly of him.

'Presently,' Bonner continues, 'falling out of that, he said that he marvelled your Highness would use his Holiness after such sort as it appears ye did. I said that your Highness no less did marvel that his Holiness, having found so much benevolence and kindness at your hands in all times past, would for acquittal show such unkindness as of late he did. And here we entered in communication upon two points: one was that his Holiness, having committed in times past, and in most ample form, the cause into the realm, promising not to revoke the said commission, and over that, to confirm the process and sentence of the commissaries, should not at the point of sentence have advoked the cause, retaining it at Rome—forasmuch as Rome was a place whither your Highness could not, ne yet ought, personally to come unto, and also was not bound to send thither your proctor. The second point was, that your Highness's cause being, in the opinion of the best learned men in Christendom, approved good and just, and so [in] many ways known unto his Holiness, the same should not so long have retained it in his hands without judgment.

'His Holiness answering the same, as touching the first point, said that if the Queen (meaning the late wife of Prince Arthur, calling her always in his conversation the Queen) had not given an oath refusing the judges as suspect, he would not have advoked the matter at all, but been content that it should have been determined and ended in your realm. But seeing she gave that

oath, appealing also to his court, he might and ought to hear her, his promise made to your Highness, which was qualified, notwithstanding. As touching the second point, his Holiness said that your Highness only was the default thereof, because ye would not send a proxy to the cause. These matters, however, he said, had been many times fully talked upon at Rome; and therefore [he] willed me to omit further communication thereupon, and to proceed to the doing of such things that I was specially sent for.

'Whereupon making protestation of your Highness's mind and intent towards the See Apostolic—not intending anything to do in contempt of the same—I exhibited unto his Holiness the commission which your Highness had sent unto me; and his Holiness delivering it to the datary, commanded him to read it; and hearing in the same the words (referring to the injuries which he had done to your Highness), he began to look up after a new sort, and said, 'O questo et multo vero! (this is much true!)' meaning that it was not true indeed. And verily, sure not only in this, but also in many parts of the said commission, he showed himself grievously offended; insomuch that, when those words, 'To the next general council which shall be lawfully held in place convenient,' were read, he fell in a marvellous great choler and rage, not only declaring the same by his gesture and manner, but also by words: speaking with great vehemence, and saying, 'Why did not the King, when I wrote to my nuncio this year past, to speak unto him for this general council, give no answer unto my

said nuncio, but referred him for answer to the French King? at what time he might perceive by my doing, that I was very well disposed, and much spake for it.' 'The thing so standing, now to speak of a general council! Oh, good Lord! but well! his commission and all his other writings cannot be but welcome unto me;' which words methought he spake willing to hide his choler, and make me believe that he was nothing angry with their doings, when in very deed I perceived, by many arguments, that it was otherwise. And one among others was taken here for infallible with them that knoweth the Pope's conditions, that he was continually folding up and unwinding of his handkerchief, which he never doth but when he is tickled to the very heart with great choler.'

Nov. 10.

At length the appeal was read through; and at the close of it Francis entered, and talked to the Pope for some time, but in so low a voice that Bonner could not hear what was passing. When he had gone, his Holiness said that he would deliberate upon the appeal with the consistory, and after hearing their judgments would return his answer.

Three days passed, and then the English agent was informed that he might again present himself. The Pope had recovered his calmness. When he had time to collect himself, Clement could speak well and with dignity; and if we could forget that his conduct was substantially unjust, and that in his conscience he knew it to be unjust, he would almost persuade us to believe him honest. 'He said,' wrote Bonner, 'that his mind to-

wards your Highness always had been to minister justice, and to do pleasure to you; albeit it hath not been so taken: and he never unjustly grieved your Grace that he knoweth, nor intendeth hereafter to do. As concerning the appeal, he said that, forasmuch as there was a constitution of Pope Pius, his predecessor, that did condemn and reprove all such appeals, he did therefore reject your Grace's appeal as frivolous, forbidden, and unlawful.' As touching the council, he said generally, that he would do his best that it should meet; but it was to be understood that the calling a general council belonged to him, and not to the King of England.

The audience ended, and Bonner left the Pope, convinced that he intended, on his return to Rome, to execute the censures and continue the process without delay. That the sentence which he would pronounce would be against the King appeared equally certain.

It appeared certain, yet after all no certain conclusion is possible. Francis I., though not choosing to quarrel with the See of Rome to do a pleasure to Henry, was anxious to please his ally to the extent of his convenience; at any rate, he would not have gratuitously deceived him; and still less would he have been party to an act of deliberate treachery. When Bonner was gone he had a last interview with the Pope, in which he urged upon him the necessity of complying with Henry's demands; and the Pope on this occasion said that he was satisfied that the King of England was right; that his cause was good; and that he had only

to acknowledge the Papal jurisdiction by some formal act, to find sentence immediately pronounced in his favour. Except for his precipitation, and his refusal to depute a proxy to plead for him, his wishes would have been complied with long before. In the existing posture of affairs, and after the measures which had been passed in England with respect to the See of Rome, he himself, the Pope said, could not make advances without some kind of submission; but a single act of acknowledgment was all which he required.[1]

Extraordinary as it must seem, the Pope certainly bound himself by this engagement: and who can tell with what intention?[2] To believe him sincere and to believe him false seems equally impossible. If he was persuaded that Henry's cause *was* good, why did he in the following year pronounce finally for Catherine? why had he imperilled so needlessly the interests of the Papacy in England? why had his conduct from the beginning pointed steadily to the conclusion at which he at last arrived? and why throughout Europe were the ultramontane party, to a man, on Catherine's side? On the other hand, what object at such a time can be conceived for falsehood? Can we suppose that he designed to dupe Henry into submission by a promise which he had predetermined to break? It is hard to suppose even Clement capable of so elaborate an act of perfidy; and it is, perhaps, idle to waste conjectures on the motives of a weak, much-agitated man. He was, pro-

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[1] Letter of the King of France: LEGRAND, vol. iii. Reply of Henry: FOXE, vol. v. p. 110. [2] *Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*, p. 276.

bably, but giving a fresh example of his disposition to say at each moment whatever would be most agreeable to his hearers. This was his unhappy habit, by which he earned for himself a character for dishonesty, I labour to think, but half deserved.

If, however, Clement meant to deceive, he succeeded, undoubtedly, in deceiving the French King. Francis, in communicating to Henry the language which the Pope had used, entreated him to reconsider his resolution. The objection to pleading at Rome might be overcome; for the Pope would meet him in a middle course. Judges could be appointed, who should sit at Cambray, and pass a sentence in condemnation of the original marriage; with a definite promise that their sentence should not again be called in question. To this arrangement there could be no reasonable objection; and Francis implored that a proposal so liberal should not be rejected. Sufficient danger already threatened Christendom, from heretics within and from the Turks without; and although the English Parliament were agreed to maintain the second marriage, it was unwise to provoke the displeasure of foreign princes. To allow time for the preliminary arrangements, the execution of the censures had been further postponed; and if Henry would make up the quarrel, the French monarch was commissioned to offer a league, offensive and defensive, between England, France, and the Papacy. He himself only desired to be faithful to his engagements to his good brother; and as a proof of his good faith, he said that he had been offered the Duchy

of Milan, if he would look on while the Emperor and the Pope attacked England.[1]

This language bears all the character of sincerity; and when we remember that it followed immediately upon a close and intimate communication of three weeks with Clement, it is not easy to believe that he could have mistaken the extent of the Pope's promises. We may suppose Clement for the moment to have been honest, or wavering between honesty and falsehood; we may suppose further that Francis trusted him because it was undesirable to be suspicious, in the belief that he was discharging the duty of a friend to Henry, and of a friend to the Church, in offering to mediate upon these terms.

But Henry was far advanced beyond the point at which fair words could move him. He had trusted many times, and had been many times deceived. It was not easy to entangle him again. It mattered little whether Clement was weak or false; the result was the same—he could not be trusted. To an open English understanding there was something monstrous in the

[1] Commission of the Bishop of Paris: LEGRAND, vol. iii.; BURNET, vol. iii. p. 128; FOXE, vol. v. pp. 106—111. The commission of the Bishop of Bayonne is not explicit on the extent to which the Pope had bound himself with respect to the sentence. Yet either in some other despatch, or verbally through the Bishop, Francis certainly informed Henry that the Pope had promised that sentence should be given in his favour. We shall find Henry assuming this in his reply; and the Archbishop of York declared to Catherine that the Pope 'said at Marseilles, that if his Grace would send a proxy thither he would give sentence for his Highness against her, because that he knew his cause to be good and just.'—*State Papers*, vol. i. p. 421.

position of a person professing to be a judge, who admitted that a cause which lay before him was so clear that he could bind himself to a sentence upon it, and could yet refuse to pronounce that sentence, except upon conditions. It was scarcely for the interests of justice to leave the distribution of it in hands so questionable.

Instead, therefore, of coming forward, as Francis hoped, instead of consenting to entangle himself again in the meshes of diplomatic intrigue, the King returned a peremptory refusal.

The Duke of Norfolk, and such of the council as dreaded the completion of the schism, assured D'Inteville, the French ambassador, that for themselves they considered Francis was doing the best for England which could be done, and that they deprecated violent measures as much as possible; but in all this party there was a secret leaning to Queen Catherine, a dislike of Queen Anne and the whole Boleyn race, and a private hope and belief that the Pope would after all be firm. Their tongues were therefore tied. They durst not speak except alone in whispers to each other; and the French ambassador, who did dare, only drew from Henry a more determined expression of his resolution.

As to his measures in England, the King said, the Pope had begun the quarrel by issuing censures and by refusing to admit his reasons for declining to plead at Rome. He was required to send a proctor, and was told that the cause should be decided in favour of whichever party was so represented there. For the sake of all other princes as well as himself, he would send no

proctor, nor would he seem to acquiesce in the pretences of the Papal See. The King of France told him that the Pope admitted the justice of his cause. Let the Pope do justice, then. The laws passed in Parliament were for the benefit of the commonwealth, and he would never revoke them. He demanded no reparation, and could make no reparation. He asked only for his right, and if he could not obtain it, he had God and truth on his side, and that was enough. In vain D'Inteville answered feebly, that his master had done all that was in his power; the King replied that 'the French council wished to entangle him with the Pope; but for his own part he would never more acknowledge the Pope in his pretended capacity. He might be Bishop of Rome, or Pope also, if he preferred the name; but the See of Rome should have no more jurisdiction in England, and he thought he would be none the worse Christian on that account, but rather the better. Jesus Christ he would acknowledge, and him only, as the true Lord of Christian men, and Christ's word only should be preached in England. The Spaniards might invade him as they threatened. He did not fear them. They might come, but they might not find it so easy to return.'[1]

The King had taken his position, and was prepared for the consequences. He had foreseen for more than a year the possibility of an attempted invasion; and since his marriage, he had been aware that the chances of success in the adventure had been discussed on the

[1] MS. Bibl. Impér. Paris: *The Pilgrim*, pp. 97, 98. Cf. Foxe, vol. v. p. 110.

Continent by the Papal and Imperial party. The Pope had spoken of his censures being enforced, and Francis had revealed to Henry the nature of the dangerous overtures which had been made to himself. The Lutheran princes had hurriedly declined to connect themselves in any kind of alliance with England; and on the 25th of September, Stephen Vaughan had reported that troops were being raised in Germany, which rumour destined for Catherine's service.[1] Ireland, too, as we shall hear in the next chapter, was on the verge of an insurrection, which had been fomented by Papal agents.

Nevertheless, there was no real danger from an invasion, unless it was accompanied with an insurrection at home, or with a simultaneous attack from Scotland; and while of the first there appeared upon the surface no probability, with Scotland a truce for a year had been concluded on the 1st of October.[2] The King, therefore, had felt himself reasonably secure. Parliament had seemed unanimous; the clergy were submissive; the nation acquiescent or openly approving;[3] and as late as

[1] I hear of a number of Gelders which be lately reared; and the opinion of the people here is that they shall go into England. All men there speak evil of England, and threaten it in their foolish manner.—Vaughan to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 511.

[2] RYMER, vol. vi. part 2, p. 189.

[3] Parties were so divided in England that lookers-on who reported any one sentiment as general there, reported in fact by their own wishes and sympathies. D'Inteville, the French ambassador, a strong Catholic, declares the feeling to have been against the revolt. Chastillon, on the other hand, writing at the same time from the same place (for he had returned from France, and was present with D'Inteville at the last interview), says, 'The King has made up his mind to a complete separation from Rome; and the lords and the majority of the people go along with him.'—Chastillon to the Bishop of Paris: *The Pilgrim*, p. 99.

the beginning of November, 1533, no suspicion seems to have been entertained of the spread of serious disaffection. A great internal revolution had been accomplished; a conflict of centuries between the civil and spiritual powers had been terminated without a life lost or a blow struck. Partial murmurs there had been, but murmurs were inevitable, and, so far as the Government yet knew, were harmless. The Scotch war had threatened to be dangerous, but it had been extinguished. Impatient monks had denounced the King from the pulpits, and disloyal language had been reported from other quarters, which had roused vigilance, but had not created alarm. The Nun of Kent had forced herself into the royal presence with menacing prophecies; but she had appeared to be a harmless dreamer, who could only be made of importance by punishment. The surface of the nation was in profound repose. Cromwell, like Walsingham after him, may perhaps have known of the fire which was smouldering below, and have watched it silently till the moment came at which to trample it out; but no symptom of uneasiness appears either in the conduct of the Government or in the official correspondence. The organization of the friars, the secret communication of the Nun with Catherine and the Princess Mary, with the Papal nuncio, or with noble lords and reverend bishops, was either unknown, or the character of those communications was not suspected. That a serious political conspiracy should have shaped itself round the ravings of a seeming lunatic, to all appearance had not occurred as a

possibility to a single member of the council, except to those whose silence was ensured by their complicity.

So far as we are able to trace the story (for the links of the chain which led to the discovery of the designs which were entertained, are something imperfect), the suspicions of the Government were first roused in the following manner:

Queen Catherine, as we have already seen, had been called upon, at the coronation of Anne Boleyn, to renounce her title, and she had refused. Mary had been similarly deprived of her rank as princess; but either her disgrace was held to be involved in that of her mother, or some other cause, perhaps the absence of immediate necessity, had postponed the demand for her own personal submission. As, however, on the publication of the second marriage, it had been urged on Catherine that there could not be two queens in England, so on the birth of the Princess Elizabeth, an analogous argument required the disinheritance of Mary. It was a hard thing; but her mother's conduct obliged the King to be peremptory. She might have been legitimatized by Act of Parliament, if Catherine would have submitted. The consequences of Catherine's refusal might be cruel, but they were unavoidable.

Mary was not with her mother. It had been held desirable to remove her from an influence which would encourage her in a useless opposition; and she was residing at Beaulieu, afterwards New Hall, in Essex, under the care of Lord Hussey and the Countess of Salisbury. Lord Hussey was a dangerous guardian; he

was subsequently executed for his complicity in the Pilgrimage of Grace, the avowed object of which was the restoration of Mary to her place as heir-apparent. We may believe, therefore, that while under his surveillance she experienced no severe restraint, nor received that advice with respect to her conduct which prudence would have dictated. Lord Hussey, however, for the present enjoyed the confidence of the King, and was directed to inform his charge, that for the future she was to consider herself not as princess, but as the King's natural daughter, the Lady Mary Tudor. The message was a painful one; painful, we will hope, more on her mother's account than on her own; but her answer implied that, as yet, Henry VIII. was no object of especial terror to his children.

'Her Grace replied,' wrote Lord Hussey to the Council in communicating the result of his undertaking,[1] that 'she could not a little marvel that I being alone, and not associate with some other the King's most honourable council, nor yet sufficiently authorized neither by commission nor by any other writing from the King's Highness, would attempt to declare such a high enterprise and matter of no little weight and importance unto her Grace, in diminishing her said estate and name; her Grace not doubting that she is the King's true and legitimate daughter and heir procreate in good and lawful matrimony; [and] further adding, that unless she were advertised from his Highness by

[1] STRYPE, *Eccles. Memor.*, vol. i. p. 224.

his writing that his Grace was so minded to diminish her estate, name, and dignity, which she trusteth his Highness will never do, she would not believe it.'

Inasmuch as Mary was but sixteen at this time, the resolution which she displayed in sending such a message was considerable. The early English held almost Roman notions on the nature of parental authority, and the tone of a child to a father was usually that of the most submissive reverence. Nor was she contented with replying indirectly through her guardian. She wrote herself to the King, saying that she neither could nor would in her conscience think the contrary, but that she was his lawful daughter born in true matrimony, and that she thought that he in his own conscience did judge the same.[1]

Such an attitude in so young a girl was singular, yet not necessarily censurable. Henry was not her only parent, and if we suppose her to have been actuated by affection for her mother, her conduct may appear not pardonable only, but spirited and creditable. In insisting upon her legitimacy, nevertheless, she was not only asserting the good name and fame of Catherine of Arragon, but unhappily her own claim to the succession to the throne. It was natural that under the circumstances she should have felt her right to assert that claim; for the injury which she had suffered was patent not only to herself, but to Europe. Catherine might have been required to give way that the King might

[1] Instructions to the Earls of Oxford, Essex, and Sussex, to remonstrate with the Lady Mary: *Rolls House MS.*

have a son, and that the succession might be established in a prince; but so long as the child of the second marriage was a daughter only, it seemed substantially monstrous to set aside the elder for the younger. Yet the measure was a harsh necessity; a link in the chain which could not be broken. The harassed nation insisted above all things that no doubt should hang over the future, and it was impossible in the existing complications to recognize the daughter of Catherine without excluding Elizabeth, and excluding the prince who was expected to follow her. By asserting her title Mary was making herself the nucleus of sedition, which on her father's death would lead to a convulsion in the realm. She might not mean it, but the result would not be affected by a want of purpose in herself; and it was possible that her resolution might create immediate and far more painful complications. The King's excommunication was imminent, and if the censures were enforced by the Emperor, she would be thrust into the unpermitted position of her father's rival.

The political consequences of her conduct, notwith standing, although evident to statesmen, might well be concealed from a headstrong, passionate girl. There was no suspicion that she herself was encouraging any of these dangerous thoughts, and Henry looked upon her answer to Lord Hussey and her letter to himself as expressions of petulant folly. Lord Oxford, the Earl of Essex, and the Earl of Sussex were directed to repair to Beaulieu, and explain to her the situation in which she had placed herself.

'Considering,' wrote the King to them, 'how highly such contempt and rebellion done by our daughter and her servants doth touch not only us, and the surety of our honour and person, but also the tranquillity of our realm; and not minding to suffer the pernicious example hereof to spread far abroad, but to put remedy to the same in due time, we have given you commandment to declare to her the great folly, temerity, and indiscretion that she hath used herein, with the peril she hath incurred by reason of her so doing. By these her ungodly doings hitherto she hath most worthily deserved our high indignation and displeasure, and thereto no less pain and punition than by the order of the laws of our realm doth appertain in case of high treason, unless our mercy and clemency should be showed in that behalf. [If, however, after] understanding our mind and plea sure, [she will] conform herself humbly and obediently to the observation of the same, according to the office and duty of a natural daughter, and of a true and faithful subject, she may give us cause hereafter to incline our fatherly pity to her reconciliation, her benefit and advancement.'[1]

The reply of Mary to this message is not discoverable; but it is certain that she persisted in her resolution, and clung either to her mother's 'cause' or to her own rank and privilege, in sturdy defiance of her father. To punish her insubordination or to tolerate it was equally difficult; and the Government might have been

[1] Instructions to the Earls of Oxford, Essex, and Sussex, to remonstrate with the Lady Mary: *Rolls House MS*

in serious embarrassment had not a series of discoveries, following rapidly one upon the other, explained the mystery of these proceedings, and opened a view with alarming clearness into the under-currents of the feeling of the country.

Information from time to time had reached Henry from Rome, relating to the correspondence between Catherine and the Pope. Perhaps, too, he knew how assiduously she had importuned the Emperor to force Clement to a decision.[1] No effort, however, had been hitherto made to interfere with her hospitalities, or to oblige her visitors to submit to scrutiny before they could be admitted to her presence. She was the mis-

[1] On the 15th of November, Queen Catherine wrote to the Emperor, and after congratulating him on his successes against the Turks, she continued—

'And as our Lord in his mercy has worked so great a good for Christendom by your Highness's hands, so has he enlightened also his Holiness; and I and all this realm have now a sure hope that, with the grace of God, his Holiness will slay this second Turk, this affair between the King my Lord and me. Second Turk, I call it, from the misfortunes which, through his Holiness's long delay, have grown out of it, and are now so vast and of so ill example that I know not whether this or the Turk be the worst. Sorry am I to have been compelled to importune your Majesty so often in this matter, for sure I am you do not need my pressing. But I see delay to be so calamitous, my own life is so unquiet and so painful, and the opportunity to make an end now so convenient, that it seems as if God of his goodness had brought his Holiness and your Majesty together to bring about so great a good. I am forced to be importunate, and I implore your Highness for the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, that in return for the signal benefits which God each day is heaping on you, you will accomplish for me this great blessing, and bring his Holiness to a decision. Let him remember what he promised you at Bologna. The truth here is known, and he will thus destroy the hopes of those who persuade the King my Lord that he will never pass judgment.'—Queen Catherine to Charles V.: *MS. Simancas*, November 15, 1533.

tress of her own Court and of her own actions; and confidential agents, both from Rome, Brussels, and Spain, had undoubtedly passed and repassed with reciprocal instructions and directions.

The crisis which was clearly approaching had obliged Henry, in the course of this autumn, to be more watchful; and about the end of October, or the beginning of November,[1] two friars were reported as having been at Bugden, whose movements attracted suspicion from their anxiety to escape observation. Secret agents of the Government, who had been 'set' for the purpose, followed the friars to London, and notwithstanding 'many wiles and cautells by them invented to escape,' the suspected persons were arrested and brought before Cromwell. Cromwell, 'upon examination, could gather nothing from them of any moment or great importance;' but, 'entering on further communication,' he said, 'he found one of them a very seditious person, and so committed them to ward.' The King was absent from London, but had left directions that, in the event of any important occurrence of the kind, Archbishop Cranmer should be sent for; but Cranmer not being immediately at hand, Cromwell wrote to Henry for instructions; inasmuch as, he said, 'it is undoubted that they (the monks) have intended, and would confess, some great matter, if they might be examined as they ought to be—that is to say, by pains.'

The curtain here falls over the two prisoners; we do

[1] Letter to the King, giving an account of certain Friars Observants who had been about the Princess Dowager: *Rolls House MS.*

not know whether they were tortured, whether they confessed, or what they confessed; but we may naturally connect this letter, directly or indirectly, with the events which immediately followed. In the middle of November we find a commission sitting at Lambeth, composed of Cromwell, Cranmer, and Latimer, ravelling out the threads of a story, from which, when the whole was disentangled, it appeared that by Queen Catherine, the Princess Mary, and a large and formidable party in the country, the King, on the faith of a pretended revelation, was supposed to have forfeited the crown; that his death, either by visitation of God or by visitation of man, was daily expected; and that whether his death took place or not, a revolution was immediately looked for, which would place the princess on the throne.

The Nun of Kent,[1] as we remember, had declared that if Henry persisted in his resolution of marrying Anne, she was commissioned by God to tell him that he should lose his power and authority. She had not specified the manner in which the sentence would be carried into effect against him. The form of her threats had been also varied occasionally; she said that he should die, but whether by the hands of his subjects, or by a providential judgment, she left to conjecture;[2] and the period within which his punishment was to fall upon him was stated variously at one month

December.

[1] *Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*, p. 280.

[2] We remember the northern prophecy, 'In England shall be slain the decorate Rose in his mother's belly,' which the monks of Furness interpreted as meaning that 'the King's Grace should die by the hands of priests.'—Vol. i. cap. 4.

or at six.[1] She had attempted no secrecy with these prophecies; she had confined herself in appearance to words; and the publicity which she courted having prevented suspicion of secret conspiracy, Henry quietly accepted the issue, and left the truth of the prophecy to be confuted by the event. He married. The one month passed; the six months passed; eight—nine months. His child was born and was baptized, and no divine thunder had interposed; only a mere harmless verbal thunder, from a poor old man at Rome. The illusion, as he imagined, had been lived down, and had expired of its own vanity.

But the Nun and her friar advisers were counting on other methods of securing the fulfilment of the prophecy than supernatural assistance. It is remarkable that, hypocrites and impostors as they knew themselves to be, they were not without a half-belief that some supernatural intervention was imminent; but the career on which they had entered was too fascinating to allow them to forsake it when their expectation failed them. They were swept into the stream which was swelling to resist the Reformation, and allowed themselves to be hurried forward either to victory or to destruction.

The first revelation being apparently confuted by facts, a second was produced as an interpretation of it; which, however, was not published like the other, but whispered in secret to persons whose dispositions were known.[2]

Statutes of the Realm, 25 Henry VIII. cap. 12. State Papers relating to Elizabeth Barton: *Rolls House MS.* Prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 20.

[2] Thus Cromwell writes to Fisher: 'My Lord, [the outward evi-

'When the King's Grace,' says the report of the commissioners, 'had continued in good health, honour, and prosperity more than a month, Dr Bocking showed the said Nun, that as King Saul, abjected from his kingdom by God, yet continued king in the sight of the world, so her said revelations might be taken. And therefore the said Nun, upon this information, forged another revelation, that her words should be understanded to mean that the King's Grace should not be king in the reputation or acceptation of God, not one month or one hour after that he married the Queen's Grace that now is. The first revelation had moved a great number of the King's subjects, both high and low, to grudge against the said marriage before it was concluded and perfected; and also induced such as were stiffly bent against that marriage, daily to look for the destruction of the King's Grace within a month after he married the Queen's Grace that now is. And when they were deluded in that expectation, the second revelation was devised not only as an interpretation of the former, but to the intent to induce the King's subjects to believe that God took the King's Grace for no king of this realm; and that they should likewise take him for no righteous king, and themselves not bounden to be his subjects; which might have put the King and the Queen's Grace in jeopardy of their crown and of

dences that she was speaking truth] moved you not to give credence to her, but only the very matter whereupon she made her false prophecies, to which matter ye were so affected —as ye be noted to be on all matters which ye once enter into—that nothing could come amiss that made for that purpose.'—*Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 30.

their issue, and the people of this realm in great danger of destruction.'[1]

It was no light matter to pronounce the King to be in the position of Saul after his rejection; and read by the light of the impending excommunication, the Nun's words could mean nothing but treason. The speaker herself was in correspondence with the Pope; she had attested her divine commission by miracles, and had been recognized as a saint by an Archbishop of Canterbury; the regular orders of the clergy throughout the realm were known to regard her as inspired; and when the commission recollected that the King was threatened further with dying 'a villain's death;' and that these and similar prophecies were carefully written out, and were in private circulation through the country, the matter assumed a dangerous complexion: it became at once essential to ascertain how far, and among what classes of the State, these things had penetrated. The Friars Mendicant were discovered to be in league with her, and these itinerants were ready-made missionaries of sedition. They had privilege of vagrancy without check or limit; and owing to their universal distribution and the freemasonry among themselves, the secret disposition of every family in England was intimately known to them. No movement, therefore, could be securely overlooked in which these orders had a share; the country might be undermined in secret; and the Government might only learn their danger at the moment of explosion.

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[1] Papers relating to the Nun of Kent: *Rolls House MS.*

No sooner, therefore, were the commissioners in possession of the general facts, than the principal parties—that is to say, the Nun herself and five of the monks of Christ Church at Canterbury, with whom her intercourse was most constant—were sent to the Tower to be 'examined'—the monks it is likely by 'torture,' if they could not otherwise be brought to confession. The Nun was certainly not tortured. On her first arrest, she was obstinate in maintaining her prophetic character; and she was detected in sending messages to her friends, 'to animate them to adhere to her and to her prophecies.'[1] But her courage ebbed away under the hard reality of her position. She soon made a full confession, in which her accomplices joined her; and the half-completed web of conspiracy was ravelled out. They did not attempt to conceal that they had intended, if possible, to create an insurrection. The five monks — Father Bocking, Father Rich, Father Rysby, Father Dering, and Father Goold—had assisted the Nun in inventing her 'Revelations;' and as apostles, they had travelled about the country to communicate them in whatever quarters they were likely to be welcome. When we remember that Archbishop Warham had been a dupe of this woman, and that even Wolsey's experience and ability had not prevented him from believing in her power, we are not surprised to find high names among those who were implicated. Vast numbers of abbots and priors, and of regular and secular clergy, had listened eagerly; coun-

[1] Papers relating to the Nun of Kent: *Rolls House MS.*

try gentlemen also, and London merchants. The Bishop of Rochester had 'wept for joy' at the first utterances of the inspired prophetess; and Sir Thomas More, 'who at first did little regard the said revelations, afterwards did greatly rejoice to hear of them.'[1] We learn, also, that the Nun had continued to *communicate with 'the Lady Princess Dowager' and 'the Lady Mary, her daughter.'*[2]

These were names which might have furnished cause for regret, but little for surprise or alarm. The commissioners must have found occasion for other feelings, however, when among the persons implicated were found the Countess of Salisbury and the Marchioness of Exeter, with their chaplains, households, and servants; Sir Thomas Arundel, Sir George Carew, and 'many of the nobles of England.'[3] A combination headed by the Countess of Salisbury, if she were supported even by a small section of the nobility, would under any circumstances have been dangerous; and if such a combination was formed in support of an invasion, and was backed by the blessings of the Pope and the fanaticism of the clergy, the result might be serious indeed. So careful a silence is observed in the official papers on this feature of the Nun's conspiracy, that it is uncertain how far the Countess had committed herself; but she had listened certainly to avowals of treasonable intentions

[1] Papers relating to the Nun of Kent.

[2] 25 Henry VIII. cap. 12.

[3] Papers relating to the Nun of Kent: *Rolls House MS.* 25 Henry VIII. cap. 12. The 'many' nobles are not more particularly designated in the official papers. It was not desirable to mention names when the offence was to be passed over.

without revealing them, which of itself was no slight evidence of disloyalty; and that the Government were really alarmed may be gathered from the simultaneous arrest of Sir William and Sir George Neville, the brothers of Lord Latimer. The connection and significance of these names I shall explain presently; in the mean time I return to the preparations which had been made by the Nun.

As the final judgment drew near—which, unless the King submitted, would be accompanied with excommunication, and a declaration that the English nation was absolved from allegiance—'the said false Nun,' says the report, 'surmised herself to have made a petition to God to know, when fearful war should come, whether any man should take my Lady Mary's part or no; and she feigned herself to have answer by revelation that no man should fear but that she should have succour and help enough; and that no man should put her from her right that she was born unto. And petitioning next to know when it was the pleasure of God that her revelations should be put forth to the world, she had answer that knowledge should be given to her ghostly father when it should be time.'[1]

With this information Father Goold had hastened down to Bugden, encouraging Catherine to persevere in her resistance;[2] and while the Imperialists at Rome

[1] Report of the Commissioners—Papers relating to the Nun of Kent: *Rolls House MS.*

[2] Goold, says the Act of the Nun's attainder, travelled to Bugden, 'to animate the said Lady Princess to make commotion in the realm against our sovereign lord; surmitting that the said Nun should hear by revelation of God that the said

were pressing the Pope for sentence (we cannot doubt at Catherine's instance), the Nun had placed herself in readiness to seize the opportunity when it offered, and to blow the trumpet of insurrection in the panic which might be surely looked for when that sentence should be published.

For this purpose she had organized, with considerable skill, a corps of fanatical friars, who, when the signal was given, were simultaneously to throw themselves into the midst of the people, and call upon them to rise in the name of God. 'To the intent,' says the report, 'to set forth this matter, certain spiritual and religious persons were appointed, as they had been chosen of God, to preach the false revelations of the said Nun, when the time should require, if warning were given them; and some of these preachers have confessed openly, and subscribed their names to their confessions, that if the Nun had so sent them word, they would have preached to the King's subjects that the pleasure of God was that they should take him no longer for their King; and some of these preachers were such as gave themselves to great fasting, watching, long prayers, wearing of shirts of hair and great chains of iron about their middle, whereby the people had them in high estimation of their great holiness,—and this strait life they took on them by the counsel and exhortation of the said Nun.' [1]

Lady Catherine should prosper and do well, and that her issue, the Lady Mary, should prosper and reign in the realm.'—25 Henry VIII. cap. 13.

[1] Report of the Proceedings of the Nun of Kent: *Rolls House MS.*

Here, then, was the explanation of the attitude of Catherine and Mary. Smarting under injustice, and most naturally blending their private quarrel with the cause of the Church, they had listened to these disordered visions as to a message from heaven, and they had lent themselves to the first of those religious conspiracies which held England in chronic agitation for three-quarters of a century. The innocent Saint at Bugden was the forerunner of the prisoner at Fotheringay; and the Observant friars, with their chain girdles and shirts of hair, were the antitypes of Parsons and Campion. How critical the situation of England really was, appears from the following letter of the French ambassador. The project for the marriage of the Princess Mary with the Dauphin had been revived by the Catholic party; and a private arrangement, of which this marriage was to form the connecting link, was contemplated between the Ultramontanes in France, the Pope, and the Emperor.

November.

D'Inteville to Cardinal Tournon.[1]

'My Lord,—You will be so good as to tell the Most Christian King that the Emperor's ambassador has communicated with the old Queen. The Emperor sends a message to her and to her daughter, that he will not return to Spain till he has seen them restored to their rights.

'The people are so much attached to the said ladies

[1] MS. Bibliot. Impér., Paris. The letter is undated. It was apparently written in the autumn of 1533.

that they will rise in rebellion, and join any prince who will undertake their quarrel. You probably know from other quarters the intensity of this feeling. It is shared by all classes, high and low, and penetrates even into the royal household.

'The nation is in marvellous discontent. Every one but the relations of the present Queen, is indignant on the ladies' account. Some fear the overthrow of religion; others fear war and injury to trade. Up to this time, the cloth, hides, wool, lead, and other merchandise of England have found markets in Flanders, Spain, and Italy; now it is thought navigation will be so dangerous that English merchants must equip their ships for war if they trade to foreign countries; and besides the risk of losing all to the enemy, the expense of the armament will swallow the profits of the voyage. In like manner, the Emperor's subjects and the Pope's subjects will not be able to trade with England. The coasts will be blockaded by the ships of the Emperor and his allies; and at this moment men's fears are aggravated by the unseasonable weather throughout the summer, and the failure of the crops. There is not corn enough for half the ordinary consumption.

'The common people, foreseeing these inconveniences, are so violent against the Queen, that they say a thousand shameful things of her, and of all who have supported her in her intrigues. On them is cast the odium of all the calamities anticipated from the war.

'When the war comes, no one doubts that the people will rebel as much from fear of the dangers which I

have mentioned, as from the love which is felt for the two ladies, and especially for the Princess. She is so entirely beloved that, notwithstanding the law made at the last Parliament, and the menace of death contained in it, they persist in regarding her as Princess. No Parliament, they say, can make her anything but the King's daughter, born in marriage; and so the King and every one else regarded her before that Parliament.

'Lately, when she was removed from Greenwich, a vast crowd of women, wives of citizens and others, walked before her at their husbands' desire, weeping and crying that notwithstanding all she was Princess. Some of them were sent to the Tower, but they would not retract.

'Things are now so critical, and the fear of war is so general, that many of the greatest merchants in London have placed themselves in communication with the Emperor's ambassador, telling him, that if the Emperor will declare war, the English nation will join him for the love they bear the Lady Mary.

'You, my Lord, will remember that when you were here, it was said you were come to tell the King that he was excommunicated, and to demand the hand of the Princess for the Dauphin. The people were so delighted that they have never ceased to pray for you. We too, when we arrived in London, were told that the people were praying for us. They thought our embassy was to the Princess. They imagined her marriage with the Dauphin had been determined on by the two kings, and the satisfaction was intense and universal.

'They believe that, except by this marriage, they cannot possibly escape war; whereas, can it be brought about, they will have peace with the Emperor and all other Christian princes. They are now so disturbed and so desperate that, although at one time they would have preferred a husband for her from among themselves, that they might not have a foreign king, there now is nothing which they desire more. Unless the Dauphin will take her, they say she will continue disinherited; or, if she come to her rights, it can only be by battle, to the great incommodity of the country. The Princess herself says publicly that the Dauphin is her husband, and that she has no hope but in him. I have been told this by persons who have heard it from her own lips.

'The Emperor's ambassador inquired, after you came, whether we had seen her. He said he knew she was most anxious to speak with us; she thought we had permission to visit her, and she looked for good news. He told us among other things, that she had been more strictly guarded of late, by the orders of the Queen that now is, who, knowing her feeling for the Dauphin, feared there might be some practice with her, or some attempt to carry her off.

'The Princess's ladies say that she calls herself the Dauphin's wife. A time will come, she says, when God will see that she has suffered pain and tribulation sufficient; the Dauphin will then demand her of the King her father, and the King her father will not be able to refuse.

'The lady who was my informant heard, also, from

the Princess, that her governess, and the other attendants whom the Queen had set to watch her, had assured her that the Dauphin was married to the daughter of the Emperor; but she, the Princess, had answered it was not true—the Dauphin could not have two wives, and they well knew that she was his wife; they told her that story, she said, to make her despair, and agree to give up her rights; but she would never part with her hopes.

'You may have heard of the storm that broke out between her and her governess when we went to visit her little sister. She was carried off by force to her room, that she might not speak with us; and they could neither pacify her nor keep her still, till the gentleman who escorted us told her he had the King's commands that she was not to show herself while we were in the house. You remember the message the same gentleman brought to you from her, and the charge which was given by the Queen.

'Could the King be brought to consent to the marriage, it would be a fair union of two realms, and to annex Britain to the Crown of France would be a great honour to our Sovereign; the English party desire nothing better; the Pope will be glad of it; the Pope fears that, if war break out again, France will draw closer to England on the terms which the King of England desires; and he may thus lose the French tribute as he has lost the English. He therefore will urge the Emperor to agree, and the Emperor will assist gladly for the love which he bears to his cousin.

'If the Emperor be willing, the King of England

can then be informed; and he can be made to feel that, if he will avoid war, he must not refuse his consent. The King, in fact, has no wish to disown the Princess, and he knows well that the marriage with the Dauphin was once agreed on.

'Should he be unwilling, and should his wife's persuasions still have influence with him, he will hesitate before he will defy, for her sake, the King of France and the Emperor united. His regard for the Queen is less than it was, and diminishes every day. He has a new fancy,[1] as you are aware.'

The actual conspiracy, in the form which it had so far assumed, was rather an appeal to fanaticism than a plot which could have laid hold of the deeper mind of the country; but as an indication of the unrest which was stealing over the minds of men, it assumed an importance which it would not have received from its intrinsic character.

The guilt of the principal offenders admitted of no doubt. As soon as the commissioners were satisfied that there was nothing further to be discovered, the

[1] Il a des nouvelles amours. In a paper at Simancas, containing Nuevas de Inglaterra, written about this time, is a similar account of the dislike of Anne and her family, as well as of the King's altered feelings towards her. Dicano anchora che la Anna è mal voluta degli S[i] di Inghilterra si per la sua superbia, si anche per l'insolentia e mali portamenti che fanno nel regno li fratelli e parenti di Anna; e che per questo il Re non la porta la affezione que soleva per che il Re festeggia una altra Donna della quale se mostra esser inamorato, e molti S[i] di Inghilterra lo ajutano nel seguir el preditto amor per deviar questo Re dalla pratica di Anna.

Nun, with the monks, was brought to trial before the Star Chamber; and conviction followed as a matter of course.[1]

December.

The unhappy girl finding herself at this conclusion, after seven years of vanity, in which she had played with popes, and queens, and princesses, and archbishops, now, when the dream was thus rudely broken, in the revulsion of feeling could see nothing in herself but a convicted impostor. We need not refuse to pity her. The misfortunes of her sickness had exposed her to temptations far beyond the strength of an ordinary woman; and the guilt which she passionately claimed for herself rested far more truly with the knavery of the Christ Church monks and the incredible folly of Archbishop Warham.[2] But the times were too stern to admit of nice distinctions. No immediate sentence was pronounced, but it was thought desirable for the satisfaction of the people that a confession should be made in public by the Nun and her companions. The Sunday following their trial they were placed on a raised platform at Paul's Cross by the side of the pulpit, and when the sermon was over they one by one delivered their

[1] Hall.

[2] 'I, dame Elizabeth Barton,' she said, 'do confess that I, most miserable and wretched person, have been the original of all this mischief, and by my falsehood I have deceived all these persons (the monks who were her accomplices), and many more; whereby I have most grievously offended Almighty God, and my most noble sovereign the King's Grace. Wherefore I humbly, and with heart most sorrowful, desire you to pray to Almighty God for my miserable sins, and make supplication for me to my sovereign for his gracious mercy and pardon.'—Confession of Elizabeth Barton: *Rolls House MS. Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*, p. 281.

'bills' to the preacher, which by him were read to the crowd.[1]

After an acknowledgment of their imposture the prisoners were remanded to the Tower, and their ultimate fate reserved for the consideration of Parliament, which was to meet in the middle of January.

The chief offenders being thus disposed of, the council resolved next that peremptory measures should be taken with respect to the Princess Mary.[2] Her establishment was broken up, and she was sent to reside as the Lady Mary in the household of the Princess Elizabeth—a hard but not unwholesome discipline.[3] As soon as this was done, being satisfied that the leading shoot of the conspiracy was broken, and that no immediate danger was now to be feared, they proceeded leisurely to follow the clue of the Nun's confession, and to extend their inquiries. The Countess of Salisbury was mentioned as one of the persons with whom the woman had been in correspondence. This lady was the daughter of the Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward IV. Her mother was a Neville, a child of Richard the King-maker, the famous Earl of Warwick, and her only brother had been murdered to secure the shaking throne of Henry VII. Margaret Plantagenet, in recompense for the lost honours of the

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[1] Papers relating to Elizabeth Barton: Ibid.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 415.

[3] A curious trait in Mary's character may be mentioned in connection with this transfer. She had a voracious appetite; and in Elizabeth's household expenses an extra charge was made necessary of 26*l.* a-year for the meat breakfasts and meat suppers 'served into the Lady Mary's chamber.'—Statement of the Expenses of the Household of the Princess Elizabeth: *Rolls House MS.*

house, was made Countess of Salisbury in her own right. The title descended from her grandfather, who was Earl of Salisbury and Warwick; but the prouder name had been dropped as suggestive of dangerous associations. The Earldom of Warwick remained in abeyance, and the castle and the estates attached to it were forfeited to the Crown. The Countess was married after her brother's death to a Sir Richard Pole, a supporter and relation [1] of the King; and when left a widow she received from Henry VIII. the respectful honour which was due to the most nobly born of his subjects, the only remaining Plantagenet of unblemished descent. In his kindness to her children the King had attempted to obliterate the recollection of her brother's wrongs, and she had been herself selected to preside over the household of the Princess Mary. During the first twenty years of Henry's reign the Countess seems to have acknowledged his attentions with royal regard, and if she had not forgotten her birth and her childhood, she never connected herself with the attempts which during that time were made to revive the feuds of the houses. Richard de la Pole, nephew of Edward IV.,[2] and called while he lived 'the White Rose,' had more than once endeavoured to excite an insurrection in the eastern counties; but Lady Salisbury was never suspected of holding intercourse with him; she remained aloof from political disputes, and in lofty retirement she was contented to forget her great-

[1] He is called *frater consobrinus*. See FULLER'S *Worthies*, vol. iii. p. 128.

[2] He was killed at the battle of Pavia.

ness for the sake of the Princess Mary, to whom she and her family were deeply attached. Her relations with the King had thus continued undisturbed until his second marriage. As the representative of the House of York she was the object of the hopes and affections of the remnants of their party, but she had betrayed no disposition to abuse her influence, or to disturb the quiet of the nation for personal ambition of her own.

If it be lawful to interpret symptoms in themselves trifling by the light of later events, it would seem as if her attitude now underwent a material change. Her son Reginald had already quarrelled with the King upon the divorce. He was in suspicious connection with the Pope, and having been required to return home upon his allegiance, had refused obedience. His mother, and his mother's attached friend, the Marchioness of Exeter, we now find among those to whom the Nun of Kent communicated her prophecies and her plans. It does not seem that the Countess thought at any time of reviving her own pretensions; it does seem that she was ready to build a throne for the Princess Mary out of the ruined supporters of her father's family. The power which she could wield might at any moment become formidable. She had two sons in England, Lord Montague and Sir Geoffrey Pole. Her cousin, the Marquis of Exeter, a grandson himself of Edward IV.,[1] was, with the exception of the Duke of Norfolk, the most powerful nobleman in the realm; and he, to judge by events, was

[1] Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire, married Catherine, daughter of Edward.

beginning to look coldly on the King.[1] We find her surrounded also by the representatives of her mother's family—Lord Abergavenny, who had been under suspicion when the Duke of Buckingham was executed, Sir Edward Neville, afterwards executed, Lord Latimer, Sir George and Sir William Neville—all of them were her near connections, all collateral heirs of the King-maker, inheriting the pride of their birth, and resentfully conscious of their fallen fortunes. The support of a party so composed would have added formidable strength to the preaching friars of the Nun of Kent; and as I cannot doubt that the Nun was endeavouring to press her intrigues in a quarter where disaffection if created would be most dangerous, so the lady who ruled this party with a patriarchal authority had listened to her suggestions; and the repeated interviews with her which were sought by the Marchioness of Exeter were rendered more than suspicious by the secrecy with which these interviews were conducted.[2]

These circumstances explain the arrest, to which I alluded above, of Sir William and Sir George Neville, brothers of Lord Latimer. They were not among 'the many noblemen' to whom the commissioners referred; for their confessions remain, and contain no allusion to the Nun; but they were examined at this particular

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[1] Believe me, my lord, there are some here, and those of the greatest in the land, who will be indignant if the Pope confirm the sentence against the late Queen.—D'Inteville to Montmorency: *The Pilgrim*, p. 97.

[2] She once rode to Canterbury, disguised as a servant, with only a young girl for a companion.—Depositions of Sir Geoffrey Pole *Rolls House MS.*

time on general suspicion; and the arrest, under such circumstances, of two near relatives of Lady Salisbury, indicates clearly an alarm in the council, lest she might be contemplating some serious movements. At any rate, either on her account or on their own, the Nevilles fell under suspicion, and while they had no crimes to reveal, their depositions, especially that of Sir William Neville, furnish singular evidence of the temper of the times.

The confession of the latter begins with an account of the loss of certain silver spoons, for the recovery of which Sir William sent to a wizard who resided in Cirencester. The wizard took the opportunity of telling Sir William's fortune: his wife was to die, and he himself was to marry an heiress, and be made a baron; with other prospective splendours. The wizard concluded, however, with recommending him to pay a visit to another dealer in the dark art more learned than himself, whose name was Jones, at Oxford.

'So after that,' said Sir William [Midsummer, 1532], 'I went to Oxford, intending that my brother George and I should kill a buck with Sir Simon Harcourt, which he had promised me; and there at Oxford, in the said Jones's chamber, I did see certain stillatories, alembics, and other instruments of glass, and also a sceptre and other things, which he said did appertain to the conjuration of the four kings; and also an image of white metal; and in a box, a serpent's skin, as he said, and divers books and things, whereof one was a book which he said was my Lord Cardinal's, having pictures in it

like angels. He told me he could make rings of gold, to obtain favour of great men; and said that my Lord Cardinal had such; and promised my said brother and me, either of us, one of them; and also he showed me a round thing like a ball of crystal.

'He said that if the King's Grace went over to France [the Calais visit of October, 1532], his Grace should marry my Lady Marchioness of Pembroke before that his Highness returned again; and that it would be dangerous to his Grace, and to the most part of the noblemen that should go with him; saying also that he had written to one of the King's council to advise his Highness not to go over, for if he did, it should not be for his Grace's profit.'

The wizard next pretended that he had seen a vision of a certain room in a tower, in which a spirit had appeared with a coat of arms in his hand, and had 'delivered the same to Sir William Neville.' The arms being described as those of the Warwick family, Sir William, his brother, and Jones rode down from Oxford to Warwick, where they went over the castle. The wizard professed to recognize in a turret chamber the room in which he had seen the spirit, and he prophesied that Sir William should recover the earldom, the long-coveted prize of all the Neville family.

On their return to Oxford, Jones, continues Sir William, said further, 'That there should be a field in the north about se'nnight before Christmas, in which my Lord my brother [Lord Latimer] should be slain; the realm should be long without a king; and much robbery

would be within the realm, specially of abbeys and religious houses, and of rich men, as merchants, graziers, and others; so that, if I would, he at that time would advise me to find the means to enter into the said castle for mine own safeguard, and divers persons would resort unto me. *None of Cadwallader's blood,* he told me, *should reign more than twenty-four years;* and also that Prince Edward [son of Henry VI. and Margaret of Anjou, killed at Tewkesbury], had issue a son which was conveyed over sea; and there had issue a son which was yet alive, either in Saxony or Almayne; and that either he or the King of Scots should reign next after the King's Grace that now is. To all which I answered,' Sir William concluded, 'that there is nothing which the will of God is that a man shall obtain, but that he of his goodness will put in his mind the way whereby he shall come by it; and that surely I had no mind to follow any such fashion; and that, also, the late Duke of Buckingham and others had cast themselves away by too much trust in prophecies, and other jeoparding of themselves, and therefore I would in no wise follow any such way. He answered, if I would not, it would be long ere I obtained it. Then I said I believed that well, and if it never came, I trusted to God to live well enough.'[1]

Sir George Neville confirmed generally his brother's story, protesting that they had never intended treason,

[1] Confession of Sir William Neville: *Rolls House MS.*

and that 'at no time had he been of counsel' when any treason was thought of.[1]

The wizard himself was next sent for. The prophecies about the King he denied wholly. He admitted that he had seen an angel in a dream giving Sir William Neville the shield of the earldom in Warwick Castle, and that he had accompanied the two brothers to Warwick, to examine the tower. Beyond that, he said that he knew nothing either of them or of their intentions. He declared himself a good subject, and he would 'jeopard his life' to make the philosopher's stone for the King in twelve months if the King pleased to command him. He desired 'no longer space than twelve months upon silver and twelve and a half upon gold;' to be kept in prison till he had done it; and it would be 'better to the King's Grace than a thousand men.'[2]

The result of these examinations does not appear, except it be that the Nevilles were dismissed without punishment; and the story itself may be thought too trifling to have deserved a grave notice. I see in it, however, an illustration very notice-worthy of the temper which was working in the country. The suspicion of treason in the Neville family may not have been confirmed, although we see them casting longing looks on the lost inheritance of Warwick; but their confessions betray the visions of impending change, anarchy, and confusion, which were haunting the popular imagination.

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[1] Confession of Sir George Neville: *Rolls House MS.*

[2] Confession of the Oxford Wizard: Ibid.

A craving after prophecies, a restless eagerness to search into the future by abnormal means, had infected all ranks from the highest to the lowest; and such symptoms, when they appear, are a sure evidence of approaching disorder, for they are an evidence of a present madness which has brought down wisdom to a common level with folly. At such times, the idlest fancy is more potent with the mind than the soundest arguments of reason. The understanding abdicates its functions; and men are given over, as if by magic, to the enchantments of insanity.

Phenomena of this eccentric kind always accompany periods of intellectual change. Most men live and think by habit; and when habit fails them, they are like unskilful sailors who have lost the landmarks of their course, and have no compass and no celestial charts by which to steer. In the years which preceded the French Revolution, Cagliostro was the companion of princes—at the dissolution of paganism the practisers of curious arts, the witches and the necromancers, were the sole objects of reverence in the Roman world;—and so, before the Reformation, archbishops and cardinals saw an inspired prophetess in a Kentish servant girl; Oxford heads of colleges sought out heretics with the help of astrology; Anne Boleyn blessed a basin of rings, her royal fingers pouring such virtue into the metal that no disorder could resist it;[1] Wolsey had a magic crystal; and Cromwell, while in Wolsey's household, 'did

[1] Queen Anne Boleyn to Gardiner; BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 355. Office for the Consecration of Cramp Rings · Ibid.

haunt to the company of a wizard.'[1] These things were the counterpart of a religion which taught that slips of paper, duly paid for, could secure indemnity for sin. It was well for England that the chief captain at least was proof against the epidemic—no random scandal seems ever to have whispered that such delusions had touched the mind of the King.[2]

While the Government were prosecuting these inquiries at home, the law at the Vatican had run its course; November passed, and as no submission had arrived, the sentence of the 12th of July came into force, and the King, the Queen, and the Archbishop of Canterbury were declared to have incurred the threatened censures.

The privy council met on the 2nd of December, and it was determined in consequence that copies of the 'Act of Appeals,' and of the King's 'provocation' to a general council, should be fixed without delay on every church door in England. Protests were at the same time to be drawn up and sent into Flanders, and to the other Courts in Europe, 'to the intent the falsehood and injustice of the Bishop of Rome might appear to all the world.' The defences of the country were to be looked to; and 'spies' to be sent into Scotland to see 'what they intended there,' 'and whether they would confeder themselves with any outward princes.' Finally, it was

[1] So at least the Oxford Wizard said that Sir William Neville had told him. — Confession of the Wizard: *Rolls House MS.* But the authority is not good.'

[2] Henry alone never listened seriously to the Nun of Kent.

proposed that the attempt to form an alliance with the Lutheran powers should be renewed on a larger scale; that certain discreet and grave persons should be appointed to conclude 'some league or amity with the princes of Germany'—'that is to say, the King of Poland, the King of Hungary,[1] the Duke of Saxony, the Duke of Bavaria, the Duke of Brandenburg, the Landgrave of Hesse, and other potentates.'[2] Vaughan's mission had been merely tentative, and had failed. Yet the offer of a league, offensive and defensive, the immediate and avowed object of which was a general council at which the Protestants should be represented, might easily succeed where vague offers of amity had come to nothing. The formation of a Protestant alliance, however, would have been equivalent to a declaration of war against Catholic Europe; and it was a step which could not be taken, consistently with the treaty of Calais, without first communicating with Francis.

Henry, therefore, by the advice of the council, wrote a despatch to Sir John Wallop, the ambassador at Paris, which was to be laid before the French Court. He explained the circumstances in which he was placed, with the suggestion which the council had made to him. He gave a list of the princes with whom he had been desired by his ministers to connect himself—and the object was

[1] John of Transylvania, the rival of Ferdinand. His designation by the title of king in an English state paper was a menace that, if driven to extremities, Henry would support him against the empire.

[2] Acts of Council: *State Papers*, vol. i. pp. 414-15.

nothing less than a coalition of Northern Europe. He recapitulated the injuries which he had received from the Pope, who at length was studying 'to subvert the rest and peace of the realm;' 'yea, and so much as in him was, utterly to destroy the same.' The nobles and council, he said, for their own sake as well as for the sake of the kingdom, had entreated him to put an end, once for all, to the Pope's usurpation; and to invite the Protestant princes, for the universal weal of Christendom, to unite in a common alliance. In his present situation he was inclined to act upon this advice. 'As concerning his own realm, he had already taken such order with his nobles and subjects, as he would shortly be able to give to the Pope such a buffet as he never had heretofore;' but as a German alliance was a matter of great weight and importance, 'although,' he concluded, 'we consider it to be right expedient to set forth the same with all diligence, yet we intend nothing to do therein without making our good brother first privy thereunto. And for this cause and consideration only, you may say that we have at this time addressed these letters unto you, commanding you to declare our said purpose unto our good brother, and to require of him on our behalf his good address and best advice. Of his answer we require you to advertise us with all diligence, for according thereunto we intend to attemper our proceedings. We have lately had advertisements how that our said good brother should, by the labour of divers affectionate Papists, be minded to set forth some-

Dec. 2.

December.

thing with his clergy in advancement of the Pope and his desires. This we cannot believe that he will do.'[1]

The meaning of this letter lies upon the surface. If the European powers were determined to leave him no alternative, the King was prepared to ally himself with the Lutherans. But however he might profess to desire that alliance, it was evident that he would prefer, if possible, a less extreme resource. The Pope had ceased to be an object of concern to him; but he could not contemplate, without extreme unwillingness, a separation from the orderly Governments who professed the Catholic faith. The Pope had injured him; Francis had deceived him; they had tempted his patience because they knew his disposition. The limit of endurance had been reached at length; yet, on the verge of the concluding rupture, he turned once more, as if to offer a last opportunity of peace.

The reply of Francis was an immediate mission of the Bishop of Bayonne (now Bishop of Paris), first into England, and from England to Rome, where he was to endeavour, to the best of his ability, to seam together the already gaping rent in the Church with fair words —a hopeless task—the results of which, however, were unexpectedly considerable, as will be presently seen.

Meanwhile, on the side of Flanders, the atmosphere was dubious and menacing. The refugee friars, who were reported to be well supplied with money from England, were labouring to exasperate the people,

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[1] Henry VIII. to Sir John Wallop: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 524.

Father Peto especially distinguishing himself upon this service.[1] The English ambassador, Sir John Hacket, still remained at Brussels, and the two Governments were formally at peace; but when Hacket required the Queen-regent to forbid the publication of the brief of July in the Netherlands, he was met with a positive refusal. 'M. Ambassador,' she said, 'the Emperor, the King of Hungary, the Queen of France, the King of Portugal, and I, understand what are the rights of our aunt—our duty is to her—and such letters of the Pope as come hither in her favour we shall obey. Your master has no right to complain either of the Emperor or of myself, if we support our aunt in a just cause.'[2] At the same time, formal complaints were made by Charles of the personal treatment of Queen Catherine, and the clouds appeared to be gathering for a storm. Yet here, too, there was an evident shrinking from extremities. A Welsh gentleman had been at Brussels, to offer his services against Henry, and had met with apparent coldness. Sir John Hacket wrote, on the 15th of December, that he was assured by

Dec. 15.

[1] Stephen Vaughan to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 517. Vaughan describes Peto with Shakespearian raciness:—'Peto is an ipocrite knave, as the most part of his brethren be; a wolf; a tiger clad in a sheep's skin. It is a perilous knave—a raiser of sedition—an evil reporter of the King's Highness—a prophecyer of mischief—a fellow I would wish to be in the King's hands, and to be shamefully punished. Would God I could get him by any policy—I will work what I can. Be sure he shall do nothing, nor pretend to do nothing, in these parts, that I will not find means to cause the King's Highness to know. I have laid a bait for him. He is not able to wear the clokys and cucullys that be sent him out of England, they be so many.'

[2] Hacket to Henry VIII.: *Stat Papers*, vol. vii. p. 528.

well-informed persons, that so long as Charles lived, he would never be the first to begin a war with England, 'which would rebound to the destruction of the Low Countries.'[1] A week later, when the Queen-regent was suffering from an alarming illness, he said it was reported that, should she die, Catherine or Mary, if either of them was allowed to leave England, would be held 'meet to have governance of the Low Countries.'[2] This was a generous step, if the Emperor seriously contemplated it. The failure of the Nun of Kent had perhaps taught him that there was no present prospect of a successful insurrection. In his conduct towards England, he was seemingly governing himself by the prospect which might open for a successful attack upon it. If occasion offered to strike the Government in connection with an efficient Catholic party in the nation itself, he would not fail to avail himself of it.[3] Otherwise, he would perhaps content himself with an attitude of inactive menace; unless menaced himself by a Protestant confederation.

Dec. 23.

Amidst these uneasy symptoms at home and abroad, Parliament re-assembled on the 15th of January. It was a changed England since these

Jan. 15.

[1] Hacket to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 530.

[2] Hacket to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 531.

[3] So at least Henry supposed, if we may judge by the resolutions of the council 'for the fortification of all the frontiers of the realm, as well upon the coasts of the sea as the frontiers foreanenst Scotland.' The fortresses and havens were to be 'fortefyed and munited;' and money to be sent to York to be in readiness 'if any business should happen.'—Ibid. vol. i. p. 411.

men first came together on the fall of Wolsey. Season after season had been spent in clipping the roots of the old tree which had overshadowed them for centuries. On their present meeting they were to finish their work, and lay it prostrate for ever. Negotiations were still pending with the See of Rome, and this momentous session had closed before the final catastrophe. The measures which were passed in the course of it are not, therefore, to be looked upon as adopted hastily, in a spirit of retaliation, but as the consistent accomplishment of a course which had been deliberately adopted, to reverse the positions of the civil and spiritual authority within the realm, and to withdraw the realm itself from all dependence on a foreign power.

The Annates and Firstfruits' Bill had not yet received the royal assent; but the Pope had refused to grant the bulls for bishops recently appointed, and he was no longer to receive payment for services which he refused to render. Peter's pence were still paid, and might continue to be paid, if the Pope would recollect himself; but, like the Sibyl of Cuma, Henry destroyed some fresh privilege with each delay of justice, demanding the same price for the preservation of what remained. The secondary streams of tribute now only remained to the Roman See; and communion with the English Church, which it was for Clement to accept or refuse.

The circumstances under which the session opened were, however, grave and saddening. January.

Simultaneously with the concluding legislation on the Church, the succession to the throne was to be determined in terms which might, perhaps, be accepted as a declaration of war by the Emperor; and the affair of the Nun of Kent had rendered necessary an inquiry into the conduct of honoured members of the two Houses, who were lying under the shadow of high treason. The conditions were for the first time to be plainly seen under which the Reformation was to fight its way. The road which lay before it was beset not merely with external obstacles, which a strong will and a strong hand could crush, but with the phantoms of dying faiths, which haunted the hearts of all living men; the superstitions, the prejudices, the hopes, the fears, the passions, which swayed stormily and fitfully through the minds of every actor in the great drama.

The uniformity of action in the Parliament of 1529, during the seven years which it continued, is due to the one man who saw his way distinctly, Thomas Cromwell. The nation was substantially united on the divorce question, could the divorce be secured without a rupture with the European powers. It was united also on the necessity of limiting the jurisdiction of the clergy, and cutting short the powers of the consistory courts. But in questions of 'opinion' there was the most sensitive jealousy; and from the combined instincts of prejudice and conservatism, the majority of the country in a count of heads would undoubtedly have been against a separation from Rome.

The clergy professed to approve the acts of the Go-

vernment, but it was for the most part with the unwilling acquiescence of men who were without courage to refuse. The King was divided against himself. Nine days in ten he was the clear-headed, energetic, powerful statesman; on the tenth he was looking wistfully to the superstition which he had left, and the clear sunshine was darkened with theological clouds, which broke in lightning and persecution. Thus there was danger at any moment of a reaction, unless opportunity was taken at the flood, unless the work was executed too completely to admit of re-consideration, and the nation committed to a course from which it was impossible to recede. The action of the conservatives was paralyzed for the time by the want of a fixed purpose. The various parts of the movement were so skilfully linked together, that partial opposition to it was impossible; and so long as the people had to choose between the Pope and the King, their loyalty would not allow them to hesitate. But very few men actively adhered to Cromwell. Cromwell had struck the line on which the forces of nature were truly moving—the resultant, not of the victory of either of the extreme parties, but of the joint action of their opposing forces. To him belonged the rare privilege of genius, to see what other men could not see; and therefore he was condemned to rule a generation which hated him, to accomplish the work which was to be done, and to perish in his success. He had no party. By the nobles he was regarded with the same mixed contempt and fear which had been felt for Wolsey. The Protestants, perhaps, knew what he was, but he

could only purchase their toleration by himself checking their extravagance. Latimer was the only person of real power on whose friendship he could calculate, and Latimer was too plain spoken on dangerous questions to be useful as a political supporter.

The session commenced on the 15th of January.

The first step was to receive the final submission of Convocation. The undignified resistance was at last over, and the clergy had promised to abstain for the future from unlicensed legislation. To secure their adherence to their engagements, an Act[1] was passed to make the breach of that engagement penal; and a commission of thirty-two persons, half of whom were to be laymen, was designed for the revision of the Canon law.[2]

The next most important movement was to assimilate the trials for heresy with the trials for other criminal offences. I have already explained at length the manner in which the bishops abused their judicial powers. These powers were not absolutely taken away, but ecclesiastics were no longer permitted to arrest *ex officio* and examine at their pleasure. Where a charge of heresy was to be brought against a man, presentments were to be made by lawful witnesses before justices of the peace; and then, and not otherwise, he might fall under the authority of the 'ordinary.' Secret examinations were declared illegal. The offender was to be

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[1] 25 Hen. VIII. cap. 19.

[2] A design which unfortunately was not put in effect. In the hurry of the time it was allowed to drop.

tried in open court, and, previous to his trial, had a right to be admitted to bail, unless the bishop could show cause to the contrary to the satisfaction of two magistrates.[1]

This was but a slight instalment of lenity; but it was an indication of the turning tide. Limited as it was, the Act operated as an effective check upon persecution till the passing of the Six Articles Bill.

Turning next to the relations between England and Rome, the Parliament reviewed the Annates Act,[2] which had been left unratified in the hope that the Pope might have consented to a compromise, and that 'by some gentle ways the said exaction might have been redressed and reformed.' The expectation had been disappointed. The Pope had not condescended to reply to the communication which had been made to him, and the Act had in consequence received the royal assent. An alteration had thus become necessary in the manner of presentation to vacant bishoprics. The anomalies of the existing practice have been already described. By the Great Charter the chapters had acquired the right of free election. A *congé d' élire* was granted by the King on the occurrence of a vacancy, with no attempt at a nomination. The chapters were supposed to make their choice freely, and the name of the bishop-elect was forwarded to the Pope, who returned the Pallium and the Bulls, receiving the Annates in exchange. The Pope's part in the matter was now terminated. No Annates

[1] 25 Henry VIII. cap. 14. [2] 23 Henry VIII. cap. 20.

would be sent any longer to Rome, and no Bulls would be returned from Rome. The appointments lay between the chapters and the Crown; and it might have seemed, at first sight, as if it would have been sufficient to omit the reference to the Papacy, and as if the remaining forms might continue as they were. The chapters, however, had virtually long ceased to elect freely; the Crown had absorbed the entire functions of presentation, sometimes appointing foreigners,[1] sometimes allowing the great ecclesiastical ministers to nominate themselves;[2] while the rights of the chapters, though existing in theory, were not officially recognized either by the Pope or by the Crown. The King affected to accept the names of the prelates-elect, when returned to him from Rome, as nominations by the Pope; and the Pope, in communicating with the chapters, presented them with their bishops as from himself.[3] The Papal share in the matter was a shadow, but it was acknowledged

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[1] At this very time Campeggio was Bishop of Salisbury, and Ghinucci, who had been acting for Henry at Rome, was Bishop of Worcester. The Act by which they were deprived speaks of these two appointments as *nominations* by the King.—25 Henry VIII. cap. 27.

[2] Wolsey held two bishoprics and one archbishopric, besides the abbey of St Albans.

[3] Thus when Wolsey was presented, in 1514, to the See of Lincoln, Leo X. writes to his beloved son Thomas Wolsey how that in his great care for the interests of the Church, 'Nos hodie Ecclesiæ Lincolniensi, te in episcopum et pastorem præficere intendimus.' He then informs the chapter of Lincoln of the appointment; and the King, in granting the temporalities, continues the fiction without seeming to recognize it:—'Cum dominus summus Pontifex nuper vacante Ecclesiâ cathedrali personam fidelis clerici nostri Thomæ Wolsey, in ipsius Ecclesiæ episcopum præfecerit, nos,' &c.—See the Acts in RYMER, vol. vi. part 1, pp. 55-7.

under the forms of courtesy; the share of the chapters was wholly and absolutely ignored. The crisis of a revolution was not the moment at which their legal privileges could be safely restored to them. The problem of re-arrangement was a difficult one, and it was met in a manner peculiarly English. The practice of granting the *congé d'élire* to the chapters on the occurrence of a vacancy, which had fallen into desuetude, was again adopted, and the Church resumed the forms of liberty: but the license to elect a bishop was to be accompanied with the name of the person whom the chapter was required to elect; and if within twelve days the person so named had not been chosen, the nomination of the Crown was to become absolute, and the chapter would incur a premunire.[1]

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[1] 25 Henry VIII. cap. 20. The pre-existing unrealities with respect to the election of bishops explain the unreality of the new arrangement, and divest it of the character of wanton tyranny with which it appeared *primâ facie* to press upon the chapters. The history of this statute is curious, and perhaps explains the intentions with which it was originally passed. It was repealed by the 2nd of the 1st of Edward VI. on the ground that the liberty of election was merely nominal, and that the chapters ought to be relieved of responsibility when they had no power of choice. Direct nomination by the Crown was substituted for the *congé d'élire*, and remained the practice till the reaction under Mary, when the indefinite system was resumed which had existed before the Reformation. On the accession of Elizabeth, the statute of 25 Henry VIII. was again enacted. The more complicated process of Henry was preferred to the more simple one of Edward, and we are naturally led to ask the reason of so singular a preference. I cannot but think that it was this. The Council of Regency under Edward VI. treated the Church as an institution of the State, while Henry and Elizabeth endeavoured (under difficulties) to regard it under its more Catholic aspect of an organic body. So long as the Reformation was in progress, it was necessary to prevent the intrusion upon the bench of bishops of Romanizing tendencies,

This Act, which I conceive to have been more arbitrary in form than in intention, was followed by a closing attack upon the remaining 'exactions' of the Bishop of Rome. The Annates were gone. There were yet to go, 'Pensions, Censes, Peter's Pence, Procurations, Fruits, Suits for Provision, Delegacies and Rescripts in causes of Contention and Appeals, Jurisdictions legatine—also Dispensations, Licenses, Faculties, Grants, Relaxations, Writs called Perinde valere, Rehabilitations, Abolitions,' with other unnamed (the Parliament being wearied of naming them) 'infinite sorts of Rules, Briefs, and instruments of sundry natures, names, and kinds.' All these were perennially open sluices, which had drained England of its wealth for centuries, returning only in showers of paper, and the Commons were determined that streams so unremunerative should flow no longer. They conceived that they had been all along imposed upon, and that the 'Bishop of Rome was to be blamed for having allured and beguiled the English nation, persuading them that he had power to dispense with human laws, uses, and customs, contrary to right and conscience.' If the King so pleased, therefore, they would not be so beguiled any more. These and all similar exactions should cease; and all powers claimed by the Bishop of Rome within

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and the deans and chapters were therefore protected by a strong hand from their own possible mistakes. But the form of liberty was conceded to them, not, perhaps, to place deliberately a body of clergymen in a degrading position, but in the belief that at no distant time the Church might be allowed without danger to resume some degree of self-government.

the realm should cease, and should be transferred to the Crown. At the same time they would not press upon the Pope too hardly; they would repeat the same conditions which they had offered with the Annates. He had received these revenues as the supreme judge in the highest court in Europe, and he might retain his revenues or receive compensation for them, if he dared to be just. It was for himself to resolve, and three months were allowed for a final decision.

In conclusion, the Commons thought it well to assert that they were separating, not from the Church of Christ, but only from the Papacy. A judge who allowed himself to be overawed against his conscience by a secular power, could not any longer be recognized; but no thing or things contained in the Act should be afterwards 'interpreted or expounded, that his Grace (the King), his nobles and subjects, intended by the same to decline or vary from the congregation of Christ's Church in anything concerning the articles of the Catholic faith of Christendom, or in any other things declared by the Holy Scripture and the Word of God necessary for salvation; but only to make an ordinance, by policies necessary and convenient, to repress vice, and for the good conservation of the realm in peace, unity, and tranquillity, from ravin and spoil—ensuing much the old antient customs of the realm in that behalf.'[1]

The most arduous business was thus finished —the most painful remained. The Nun of

Feb. 18.

[1] 25 Henry VIII. cap. 21.

Kent and her accomplices were to be proceeded against by Act of Parliament; and the bill of their attainder was presented for the first time in the House of Lords on the 18th of February. The offence of the principal conspirators was plainly high treason; their own confessions removed uncertainty; the guilt was clear—the sentence was inevitable. But the fault of those who had been listeners only was less easy of measurement, and might vary from comparative innocence to a definite breach of allegiance.

The Government were unwilling to press with severity on the noble lords and ladies whose names had been unexpectedly brought to light; and there were two men of high rank only, whose complicity it was thought necessary to notice. The Bishop of Rochester's connection with the Nun had been culpably encouraging; and the responsibility of Sir Thomas More was held also to be very great in having countenanced, however lightly, such perilous schemers.

In the bill, therefore, as it was first read, More and Fisher found themselves declared guilty of misprision of treason. But the object of this measure was rather to warn than to punish, nor was there any real intention of continuing their prosecution. Cromwell, under instructions from the King, had communicated privately with both of them. He had sent a message to Fisher through his brother, telling him that he had only to ask for forgiveness to receive it;[1] and he had begged More,

[1] I sent you no heavy words, but words of great comfort; willing your brother to show you how benign and merciful the prince was; and

through his son-in-law, Mr Roper, to furnish him with an explicit account of what had passed at any time between himself and the Nun,[1] with an intimation that, if honestly made, it would be accepted in his favour.

These advances were met by More in the spirit in which they were offered. He heartily thanked Cromwell, 'reckoning himself right deeply beholden to him;'[2] and replied with a long, minute, and evidently veracious story, detailing an interview which he had held with the woman in the chapel of Sion Monastery. He sent at the same time a copy of a letter which he had written to her, and described various conversations with the friars who were concerned in the forgery. He did not deny that he had believed the Nun to have been inspired, or that he had heard of the language which she was in the habit of using respecting the King. He protested, however, that he had himself never entertained a treasonable thought. He told Cromwell that 'he had done a very meritorious deed in bringing forth to light such detestable hypocrisy, whereby every other wretch might take warning, and be feared to set forth their devilish dissembled falsehoods under the manner and colour of the wonderful work of God.'[3] More's offence had not been great. His acknowledgments were open and unreserved; and Cromwell laid his

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that I thought it expedient for you to write unto his Highness, and to recognize your offence and to desire his pardon, which his Grace would not deny you now in your age and sickness. — Cromwell to Fisher: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 27.

[1] Sir Thomas More to Cromwell: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 350.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

letter before the King, adding his own intercession that the matter might be passed over. Henry consented, expressing only his grief and concern that Sir Thomas More should have acted so unwisely.[1] He required, nevertheless, as Cromwell suggested, that a formal letter should be written, with a confession of fault, and a request for forgiveness. More obeyed; he wrote, gracefully reminding the King of a promise when he resigned the chancellorship, that in any suit which he might afterwards have to his Grace, either touching his honour or his profit, he should find his Highness his good and gracious lord.[2] Henry acknowledged his claim; his name was struck out of the bill, and the prosecution against him was dropped.

Fisher's conduct was very different; his fault had been far greater than More's, and promises more explicit had been held out to him of forgiveness. He replied to these promises by an elaborate and ridiculous defence —not writing to the King, as Cromwell desired him, but vindicating himself as having committed no fault; although he had listened eagerly to language which was only pardonable on the assumption that it was inspired, and had encouraged a nest of fanatics by his childish credulity. The Nun 'had showed him not,' he said, 'that any prince or temporal lord should put the King in danger of his crown.' He knew nothing of the intended insurrection.[3] He believed the woman to have been a saint; he supposed that she had herself told the

[1] More to Cromwell: STRYPE's *Memorials*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 195.

[2] More to the King: ELLIS, first series, vol. ii. p. 47.

[3] *Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*, p. 274.

King all which she had told to him; and therefore he said that he had done nothing for which to reproach himself.[1] He was unable to see that the exposure of the imposture had imparted a fresh character to his conduct, which he was bound to regret. Knowingly or unknowingly, he had lent his countenance to a conspiracy; and so long as he refused to acknowledge his indiscretion, the Government necessarily would interpret his actions in the manner least to his advantage.

If he desired that his conduct should be forgotten, it was indispensable that he should change his attitude, and so Cromwell warned him. 'Ye desire,' the latter wrote, 'for the passion of Christ, that ye be no more quickened in this matter; for if ye be put to that strait ye will not lose your soul, but ye will speak as your conscience leadeth you; with many more words of great courage. My Lord, if ye had taken my counsel sent unto you by your brother, and followed the same, submitting yourself by your letter to the King's Grace for your offences in this behalf, I would have trusted that ye should never be quickened in the matter more. But now where ye take upon you to defy the whole matter as ye were in no default, I cannot so far promise you. Wherefore, my Lord, I would eftsoons advise you that, laying apart all such excuses as ye have alleged in your letters, which in my opinion be of small effect, ye beseech the King's Grace to be your gracious lord, and to remit unto you your negligence, oversight, and offence

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[1] Cromwell to Fisher: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 27 et seq.

committed against his Highness in this behalf; and I dare undertake that his Highness shall benignly accept you into his gracious favour, all matter of displeasure past afore this time forgotten and forgiven.'[1]

Fisher must have been a hopelessly impracticable person. Instead of following More's example, and accepting well-meant advice, he persisted in the same tone, and drew up an address to the House of Lords, in which he repeated the defence which he had made to Cromwell. He expressed no sorrow that he had been engaged in a criminal intrigue, no pleasure that the intrigue had been discovered; and he doggedly adhered to his assertions of his own innocence.[2]

March 6.

There was nothing to be done except to proceed with his attainder. The bill passed three readings, and the various prisoners were summoned to the Star Chamber to be heard in arrest of judgment. The Bishop of Rochester's attendance was dispensed with on the ground of illness, and because he had made his defence in writing.[3] Nothing of consequence was urged by either of the accused. The bill was most explicit in its details, going carefully through the history of the imposture, and dwelling on the separate acts of each offender. They were able to disprove no one of its clauses, and on the 12th of March it was read a last time. On the 21st it received the royal assent, and there remained only to execute the sentence. The Nun

[1] *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 27 et seq.

[2] John Fisher to the Lords in Parliament: ELLIS, third series, vol. ii. p. 289.

[3] *Lords' Journals*, p. 72.

herself, Richard Masters, and the five friars, being found guilty of high treason, were to die; the Bishop of Rochester, Father Abel, Queen Catherine's confessor, and four more, were sentenced for misprision of treason to forfeiture of goods and imprisonment. All other persons implicated whose names did not appear, were declared pardoned at the intercession of Queen Anne.[1]

April 21.

The chief offenders suffered at Tyburn on the 21st of April, meeting death calmly, as it appears; receiving a fate most necessary and most deserved,[2] yet claiming from us that partial respect which is due to all persons who will risk their lives in an unselfish cause. For the Nun herself, we may feel even a less qualified regret. Before her death she was permitted to speak a few words to the people, which at the distance of three centuries will not be read without emotion.

'Hither am I come to die,' she said, 'and I have not been the only cause of mine own death, which most justly I have deserved; but also I am the cause of the

[1] 25 Hen. VIII. cap. 12.

[2] In a tract written by a Dr Moryson in defence of the Government, three years later, I find evidence that a distinction was made among the prisoners, and that Dr Bocking was executed with peculiar cruelty. 'Solus in crucem actus est Bockingus,' are Moryson's words, though I feel uncertain of the nature of the punishment which he meant to designate. 'Crucifixion' was unknown to the English law; and an event so peculiar as the 'crucifixion' of a monk would hardly have escaped the notice of the contemporary chroniclers. In a careful diary kept by a London merchant during these years, which is in MS. in the Library of Balliol College, Oxford, the whole party are said to have been hanged.—See, however, *Morysini Apomaxis*, printed by Berthelet, 1537.

death of all these persons which at this time here suffer. And yet I am not so much to be blamed, considering that it was well known unto these learned men that I was a poor wench without learning; and therefore they might have easily perceived that the things which were done by me could not proceed in no such sort; but their capacities and learning could right well judge that they were altogether feigned. But because the things which I feigned were profitable unto them, therefore they much praised me, and bare me in hand that it was the Holy Ghost and not I that did them. And I being puffed up with their praises, fell into a pride and foolish fantasye with myself, and thought I might feign what I would, which thing hath brought me to this case, and for the which I now cry God and the King's Highness most heartily mercy, and desire all you good people to pray to God to have mercy on me, and on all them that here suffer with me.'[1]

The inferior confederates were committed to their prisons with the exception only of Fisher, who, though sentenced, found mercy thrust upon him, till by fresh provocation the miserable old man forced himself upon his fate.[2]

March.

And now the closing seal was to be affixed to the agitation of the great question of the preceding years. I have said that throughout these

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[1] HALL, p. 814.

[2] LORD HERBERT says he was pardoned; I do not find, however, on what authority: but he was certainly not imprisoned, nor was the sentence of forfeiture enforced against him.

years the uncertainty of the succession had been the continual anxiety of the nation. The birth of a prince or princess could alone provide an absolute security; and to beget a prince appeared to be the single feat which Henry was unable to accomplish. The marriage so dearly bought had been followed as yet only by a girl; and if the King were to die, leaving two daughters circumstanced as Mary and Elizabeth were circumstanced, a dispute would open which the sword only could decide. To escape the certainty of civil war, therefore, it was necessary to lay down the line of inheritance by a peremptory order; to cut off resolutely all rival claims; and in legislating upon a matter so vital, and hitherto so uncertain and indeterminate, to enforce the decision with the most stringent and exacting penalties. From the Heptarchy downwards English history furnished no fixed rule of inheritance, but only a series of precedents of uncertainty; and while at no previous time had the circumstances of the succession been of a nature so legitimately embarrassing, the relations of England with the Pope and with foreign powers doubly enhanced the danger. But I will not use my own language on so important a subject. The preamble of the Act of Succession is the best interpreter of the provisions of that Act.

'In their most humble wise show unto your Majesty your most humble and obedient subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons, in this present Parliament assembled; that since it is the natural inclination of every man gladly and willingly

to provide for the safety of both his title and succession, although it touch only his private cause; we therefore, most rightful and dreadful Sovereign Lord, reckon ourselves much more bounden to beseech and intreat your Highness (although we doubt not of your princely heart and wisdom, mixed with a natural affection to the same) to foresee and provide for the most perfect surety of both you and of your most lawful successors and heirs, upon which dependeth all our joy and wealth; in whom also is united and knit the only mere true inheritance and title of this realm without any contradiction. We, your said most humble and obedient servants, call to our remembrance the great divisions which in times past hath been in this realm by reason of several titles pretended to the imperial crown of the same; which some time and for the most part ensued by occasion of ambiguity, and [by] doubts then not so perfectly declared but that men might upon froward intents expound them to every man's sinister appetite and affection after their senses; whereof hath ensued great destruction and effusion of man's blood, as well of a great number of the nobles as of other the subjects and specially inheritors in the same. The greatest occasion thereof hath been because no perfect and substantial provision by law hath been made within this realm itself when doubts and questions have been moved; by reason whereof the Bishops of Rome and See Apostolic have presumed in times past to invest who should please them to inherit in other men's kingdoms and dominions, which thing we your most humble subjects, both

spiritual and temporal, do much abhor and detest. And sometimes other foreign princes and potentates of sundry degrees, minding rather dissension and discord to continue in the realm than charity, equity, or unity, have many times supported wrong titles, whereby they might the more easily and facilly aspire to the superiority of the same.

'The continuance and sufferance of these things, deeply considered and pondered, is too dangerous and perilous to be suffered any longer; and too much contrary to unity, peace, and tranquillity, being greatly reproachable and dishonourable to the whole realm. And in consideration thereof, your said subjects, calling further to their remembrance, that the good unity, peace, and wealth of the realm, specially and principally, above all worldly things, consisteth in the surety and certainty of the procreation and posterity of your Highness, in whose most Royal person at this time is no manner of doubt, do therefore most humbly beseech your Highness that it may be enacted, with the consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons in this present Parliament assembled—

'1. That the marriage between your Highness and the Lady Catherine, widow of the late Prince Arthur, be declared to have been from the beginning, null, the issue of it illegitimate, and the separation pronounced by the Archbishop of Canterbury good and valid.

'2. That the marriage between your Highness and your most dear and entirely beloved wife, Queen Anne,

be established and held good, and taken for undoubtful, true, sincere, and perfect, ever hereafter.'[1]

The Act then assumed a general character, laying down a table of prohibited degrees, within which marriage might not under any pretence be in future contracted; and demanding that any marriage which might already exist within those degrees should be at once dissolved. After this provision, it again returned to the King, and fixed the order in which his children by Queen Anne were to succeed. The details of the regulations were minute and elaborate, and the rule to be observed was the same as that which exists at present. First, the sons were to succeed, with their heirs. If sons failed, then the daughters, with their heirs; and, in conclusion, it was resolved that any person who should maliciously do anything by writing, printing, or other external act or deed, to the peril of the King, or to the prejudice of his marriage with Queen Anne, or to the derogation of the issue of that marriage, should be held guilty of high treason; and whoever should speak against that marriage, should be held guilty of misprision of treason—severe enactments, such as could not be justified at ordinary times, and such as, if the times had been ordinary, would not have been thought necessary—but the exigencies of the country could not tolerate an uncertainty of title in the heir to the crown; and the title could only be secured by prohibiting absolutely the discussion of dangerous questions.

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[1] This is the substance of the provisions, which are, of course, much abridged.

The mere enactment of a statute, whatever penalties were attached to the violation of it, was still, however, an insufficient safeguard. The recent investigation had revealed a spirit of disloyalty, where such a spirit had not been expected. The deeper the inquiry had penetrated, the more clearly appeared tokens, if not of conspiracy, yet of excitement, of doubt, of agitation, of alienated feeling, if not of alienated act. All the symptoms were abroad which provide disaffection with its opportunity; and in the natural confusion which attended the revolt from the Papacy, the obligations of duty, both political and religious, had become indefinite and contradictory, pointing in all directions, like the magnetic needle in a thunderstorm.

It was thought well, therefore, to vest a power in the Crown, of trying the tempers of suspected persons, and examining them upon oath, as to their willingness to maintain the decision of Parliament. This measure was a natural corollary of the statute, and depended for its justification on the extent of the danger to which the State was exposed. If a difference of opinion on the legitimacy of the King's children, or of the Pope's power in England, was not dangerous, it was unjust to interfere with the natural liberty of speech or thought. If it was dangerous, and if the State had cause for supposing that opinions of the kind might spread in secret so long as no opportunity was offered for detecting their progress, to require the oath was a measure of reasonable self-defence, not permissible only, but in a high degree necessary and right.

Under the impression, then, that the circumstances of the country demanded extraordinary precautions, a commission was appointed, consisting of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, the Duke of Norfolk, and the Duke of Suffolk; and these four, or any three of them, were empowered to administer, at the pleasure of the King, 'to all and singular liege subjects of the realm,' the following oath:—

'Ye shall swear to bear your faith, truth, and obedience only to the King's Majesty, and to the heirs of his body, according to the limitation and rehearsal within the Statute of Succession; and not to any other within this realm, or foreign authority, prince, or potentate: and in case any oath be made or hath been made by you to any other person or persons, that then you do repute the same as vain and annihilate: and that to your cunning, wit, and utmost of your power, without guile, fraud, or other undue means, ye shall observe, keep, maintain, and defend this Act above specified, and all the whole contents and effects thereof; and all other Acts and statutes made since the beginning of this present Parliament, in confirmation or due execution of the same, or of anything therein contained. And thus ye shall do against all manner of persons, of what estate, dignity, degree, or condition soever they be; and in no wise do or attempt, or to your power suffer to be done or attempted, directly or indirectly, any thing or things, privily or apertly, to the let, hindrance, damage, or derogation thereof, by any manner

March 30.

of means, or for any pretence or cause, so help you God and all saints.'[1]

With this last resolution the House rose, having sat seventy-five days, and despatched their business swiftly. A week later, the news arrived from Rome that there too all was at length over; that the cause was decided, and decided against the King. The history of the closing catastrophe is as obscure as it is strange, and the account of the manner in which it was brought about is unfortunately incomplete in many important particulars. The outline only can be apprehended, and that very imperfectly.

April 7.

On the receipt in Paris of the letter in which Henry threatened to organize a Protestant confederacy, Du Bellay, in genuine anxiety for the welfare of Christendom, had volunteered his services for a final effort. Not a moment was to be lost, for the courts at Rome were already busy with the great cause; but the King's evident reluctance to break with the Catholic powers,

April.

[1] *Lords' Journals*, vol. i. p. 82. An Act was also passed in this session 'against the usurped power of the Bishop of Rome.' We trace it in its progress through the House of Lords. (*Lords' Journals*, Parliament of 1533-4.) It received the royal assent (ibid.), and is subsequently alluded to in the 10th of the 28th of Henry VIII., as well as in a Royal Proclamation dated June, 1534; and yet it is not on the Roll, nor do I anywhere find traces of it. It is not to be confounded with the Act against payment of Peter's Pence, for in the *Lords' Journals* the two Acts are separately mentioned. It received the royal assent on the 30th of March, while that against Peter's Pence was suspended till the 7th of April. It contained, also, an indirect assertion that the King was Head of the English Church, according to the title which had been given him by Convocation. (King's Proclamation: FOXE, vol. v. p. 69.) For some cause or other, the Act at the last moment must have been withdrawn.

gave room for hope that something might still be done; and going in person to England, the Bishop had induced Henry, at the last extremity, either to entrust him with representative powers, or else to allow him after all to make some kind of concession. I am unable to learn the extent to which Henry yielded, but that an offer was made of some kind is evident from the form of the story.[1] The winter was very cold, but the Bishop made his way to Rome with the haste of good will, and arrived in time to stay judgment, which was on the point of being pronounced. It seemed, for the moment, as if he would succeed. He was permitted to make engagements on the part of Henry; and that time might be allowed for communication with England, the Pope agreed to delay sentence till the 23rd of March. The Bishop's terms were approved by the King, and a courier was sent off with letters of confirmation; Sir Edward Karne and Dr Revett following leisurely, with a more ample commission. The stone which had been laboriously rolled to the summit of the hill was trembling on the brink, and in a moment might rebound into the plain.

But this was not to be the end. Some accidental cause delayed the courier; the 23rd of March came, and he had not arrived. Du Bellay implored a further re-

[1] See BURNET, vol. i. pp. 220-1: vol. iii. p. 135; and LORD HERBERT. Du Bellay's brother, the author of the memoirs, says that the King, at the Bishop's entreaty, promised that if the Pope would delay sentence, and send 'judges to hear the matter, he would himself forbear to do what he proposed to do'—that is, separate wholly from the See of Rome. If this is true, the sending 'judges' must allude to the 'sending them to Cambray,' which had been proposed at Marseilles.

spite. The King of England, he said, had waited six years; it was not a great thing for the Papal council to wait six days. The cardinals were divided; but the Spanish party were the strongest, and when the votes were taken carried the day. The die was cast, and the Pope, in spite of himself, his promises, and his conscience, drove at length upon the rocks to which he had been so long drifting.[1] In deference to the opinion of the majority of the cardinals, he pronounced the original marriage to have been valid, the dispensation by which it was permitted to have been legal; and, as a natural consequence, Henry, King of England, should he fail in obedience to this judgment, was declared to be excommunicate from the fellowship of the Church, and to have forfeited the allegiance of his subjects.

Lest the censures should be discredited by a blank discharge, engagements were entered into, that within four months of the promulgation of the sentence, the Emperor would invade England, and Henry should be deposed.[2] The Imperialists illuminated Rome; cannon were fired; bonfires blazed; and great bodies of men paraded the streets with shouts of 'the Empire and Spain.'[3] Already, in their eager expectation, England was a second Netherlands, a captured province under the regency of Catherine or Mary.

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[1] See the letter of the Bishop of Bayonne, dated March 23, in LEGRAND. A paraphrase is given by BURNET, vol. iii. p. 132.

[2] Promisistis predecessori meo quod si sententiam contra regem Angliæ tulisset, Cæsar illum infra quatuor menses erat invasurus, et regno expulsurus.—*State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 579.

[3] Letter of Du Bellay in LE GRAND.

Two days later, the courier arrived. The Pope, at the entreaties of the Bishop of Paris, re-assembled the consistory, to consider whether the steps which had been taken should be undone. They sat debating all night, and the result was nothing. No dependence could be placed on the cardinals, Du Bellay said, for they spoke one way, and voted another.[1]

Thus all was over. In a scene of general helplessness the long drama closed, and, what we call accident, for want of some better word, cut the knot at last over which human incapacity had so vainly laboured. The Bishop of Paris retired from Rome in despair. On his way back, he met the English commissioners at Bologna, and told them that their errand was hopeless, and that they need not proceed. 'When we asked him,' wrote Sir Edward Karne to the King, 'the cause of such hasty process, he made answer that the Imperialists at Rome had strengthened themselves in such a manner, that they coacted the said Bishop of Rome to give sentence contrary to his own mind, and the expectation of himself and of the French King. He showed us also that the Lady Princess Dowager sent lately, in the month of March past, letters to the Bishop of Rome, and also to her proctors, whereby the Bishop of Rome was much moved for her part. The Imperials, before the sentence was given, promised, in the Emperor's behalf, that he would be the executor of the sentence.'[2]

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[1] Letter of Du Bellay in LEGRAND.

[2] Sir Edward Karne and Dr Revett to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 553-4.

This is all which we are able to say of the immediate catastrophe which decided the fate of England, and through England, of the world. The deep impenetrable falsehood of the Roman ecclesiastics prevents us from discovering with what intentions the game of the last few weeks or months had been played; it is sufficient for Englishmen to remember that, whatever may have been the explanation of his conduct, the Pope, in the concluding passage of his connection with this country, furnished the most signal justification which was ever given for the revolt from an abused authority. The supreme judge in Christendom had for six years trifled with the obligations of his office, out of fear of an earthly prince; he concluded these years with uniting the extreme of folly with the extreme of improbity, and pronounced a sentence, willingly or unwillingly, which he had acknowledged to be unjust.

Charity may possibly acquit Clement of conscious duplicity. He was one of those men who waited upon fortune, and waited always without success; who gave his word as the interest of the moment suggested, trusting that it might be convenient to observe it; and who was too long accustomed to break his promises to look with any particular alarm on that contingency. It is possible, also,—for of this Clement was capable—that he knew from the beginning the conclusion to which he would at last be driven; that he had engaged himself with Charles to decide in Catherine's favour as distinctly as he had engaged himself with Francis to decide against her; and that all his tortuous scheming was intended

either to weary out the patience of the King of England, or to entangle him in acknowledgments from which he would not be able to extricate himself.

He was mistaken, certainly, in the temper of the English nation; he believed what the friars told him; and trusting to the promises of disaffection, insurrection, invasion—those *ignes fatui* which for sixty years floated so delusively before the Italian imagination, he conceived, perhaps, that he might trifle with Henry with impunity. This only is impossible, that, if he had seriously intended to fulfil the promises which he had made to the French King, the accidental delay of a courier could have made so large a difference in his determination. It is not possible that, if he had assured himself, as he pretended, that justice was on the side against which he had declared, he would not have availed himself of any pretext to retreat from a position which ought to have been intolerable to him.

The question, however, had ended, 'as all things in this world do have their end.' The news of the sentence arrived in England at the beginning of April, with an intimation of the engagements which had been entered upon by the Imperial ambassador for an invasion. Du Bellay returned to Paris at the same time, to report the failure of his undertaking; and Francis, disappointed, angry, and alarmed, sent the Duke of Guise to London with promises of support if an attempt to invade was really made, and with a warning at the same time to Henry to prepare for danger. Troops were gathering in Flanders; detachments were on their way out of

Italy, Germany, and Bohemia, to be followed by three thousand Spaniards, and perhaps many more; and the object avowed for these preparations was wholly incommensurate with their magnitude.[1] For his own sake Francis could not permit a successful invasion of England, unless, indeed, he himself was to take part in it; and therefore, with entire sincerity, he offered his services. The cordial understanding for which Henry had hoped was at an end; but the political confederacy remained, which the interests of the two countries combined for the present to preserve unbroken.

Guise proposed another interview at Calais between the sovereigns. The King for the moment was afraid to leave England,[2] lest the opportunity should be made use of for an insurrection; but prudence taught him, though disappointed in Francis, to make the best of a connection too convenient to be sacrificed. The German league was left in abeyance till the immediate danger was passed, and till the effect of the shock in England itself had been first experienced. He gladly accepted, in lieu of it, an offer that the French fleet should guard the Channel through the summer; and meanwhile, he

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[1] *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 560 et seq.

[2] His Highness, considering the time and the malice of the Emperour, cannot conveniently pass out of the realm—since he leaveth behind him another daughter and a mother, with their friends, maligning his enterprises in this behalf—who bearing no small grudge against his most entirely beloved Queen Anne, and his young daughter the princess, might perchance in his absence take occasion to excogitate and practise with their said friends matters of no small peril to his royal person, realm, and subjects.—*State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 559.

collected himself resolutely, to abide the issue, whatever the issue was to be.

The Tudor spirit was at length awake in the English sovereign. He had exhausted the resources of patience; he had stooped even to indignity to avoid the conclusion which had come at last. There was nothing left but to meet defiance by defiance, and accept the position to which the Pope had driven him. In quiet times occasionally wayward and capricious, Henry, like Elizabeth after him, reserved his noblest nature for the moments of danger, and was ever greatest when peril was most immediate. Woe to those who crossed him now, for the time was grown stern, and to trifle further was to be lost. The suspended Act of Parliament was made law on the day (it would seem) of the arrival of the sentence. Convocation, which was still sitting, hurried through a declaration that the Pope had no more power in England than any other Bishop.[1] Five years before, if a heretic had ventured so desperate an opinion, the clergy would have shut their ears and run upon him: now they only contended with each other in precipitate obsequiousness. The houses of the Observants at Canterbury and Greenwich, which had been implicated with the Nun of Kent, were suppressed, and the brethren were scattered among monasteries where they could be under surveillance. The Nun and her friends were sent to execution.[2] The

April 7.

[1] LORD HERBERT.

[2] I mentioned their execution in connection with their sentence; but it did not take place till the 20th of April, a month after their attainder: and delay of this kind was very unusual in cases of high treason. I have little doubt that their final

ordnance stores were examined, the repairs of the navy were hastened, and the garrisons were strengthened along the coast. Everywhere the realm armed itself for the struggle, looking well to the joints of its harness and to the temper of its weapons.

The commission appointed under the Statute of Succession opened its sittings to receive the oaths of allegiance. Now, more than ever, was it necessary to try men's dispositions, when the Pope had challenged their obedience. In words all went well: the peers swore; bishops, abbots, priors, heads of colleges, swore[1] with scarcely an exception,—the nation seemed to unite in an unanimous declaration of freedom. In one quarter only, and that a very painful one, was there refusal. It was found solely among the persons who had been implicated in the late conspiracy. Neither Sir Thomas More nor the Bishop of Rochester could expect that their recent conduct would exempt them from an obligation which the people generally accepted with good will. They had connected themselves, perhaps unintentionally, with a body of confessed traitors. An opportunity was offered them of giving evidence of their loyalty, and escaping from the shadow of distrust. More had been treated leniently; Fisher had been treated far more than leniently. It was both fair and natural that they should be called upon to give proof that their lesson had not been learnt in vain; and, in

sentence was in fact pronounced by the Pope.

[1] The oaths of a great many are in Rymer, vol. vi. part 2, p. 195 et seq.

fact, no other persons, if they had been passed over, could have been called upon to swear, for no other persons had laid themselves open to so just suspicion.

Their conduct so exactly tallied, that they must have agreed beforehand on the course which they would adopt; and in following the details, we need concern ourselves only with the nobler figure.

The commissioners sat at the Archbishop's palace at Lambeth; and at the end of April, Sir Thomas More received a summons to appear before them.[1] He was at his house at Chelsea, where for the last two years he had lived in deep retirement, making ready for evil times. Those times at length were come. On the morning on which he was to present himself, he confessed and received the sacrament in Chelsea church; and 'whereas,' says his great-grandson, 'at other times, before he parted from his wife and children, they used to bring him to his boat, and he there kissing them bade them farewell, at this time he suffered none of them to follow him forth of his gate, but pulled the wicket after him, and with a heavy heart he took boat with his son Roper.'[2] He was leaving his home for the last time, and he knew it. He sat silent for some minutes, and then, with a sudden start, said, 'I thank

April 25.

[1] His great-grandson's history of him (*Life of Sir Thomas More*, by CRESACRE MORE, written about 1620, published 1627, with a dedication to Henrietta Maria) is incorrect in so many instances that I follow it with hesitation; but the account of the present matter is derived from Mr Roper, More's son-in-law, who accompanied him to Lambeth, and it is incidentally confirmed in various details by More himself.

[2] MORE'S *Life of More*, p. 232.

our Lord, the field is won.' Lambeth Palace was crowded with people who had come on the same errand with himself. More was called in early, and found Cromwell present with the four commissioners, and also the Abbot of Westminster. The oath was read to him. It implied that he should keep the Statute of Succession in all its parts, and he desired to see the Statute itself. He read it through, and at once replied that others might do as they pleased; he would blame no one for taking the oath; but for himself it was impossible. He would swear willingly to the part of it which secured the succession to the children of Queen Anne.[1] That was a matter on which Parliament was competent to decide, and he had no right to make objections. If he might be allowed to take an oath to this portion of the Statute in language of his own, he would do it; but as the words stood, he would 'peril his soul' by using them. The Lord Chancellor desired him to re-consider his answer. He retired to the garden, and in his absence others were called in; among them the Bishop of Rochester, who refused in the same terms. More was then recalled. He was asked if he persisted in his resolution; and when he replied that he did, he was requested to state his reasons. He said that he was afraid of increasing the King's displeasure, but if he could be assured that he might explain himself safely he was ready to do so. If his objection could then be answered to his satisfac-

[1] More held extreme republican opinions on the tenure of kings, holding that they might be deposed by Act of Parliament.

tion, he would swear; in the mean time, he repeated, very explicitly, that he judged no one—he spoke only for himself.

An opening seemed to be offered in these expressions which was caught at by Cranmer's kind-hearted casuistry. If Sir Thomas More could not condemn others for taking the oath, the Archbishop said, Sir Thomas More could not be sure that it was sin to take it; while his duty to his King and to the Parliament was open and unquestioned.

More hesitated for an instant, but he speedily recovered his firmness. He had considered what he ought to do, he said; his conscience was clear about it, and he could say no more than he had said already. They continued to argue with him, but without effect; he had made up his mind; the victory, as he said, had been won.

Cromwell was deeply affected. In his passionate regret, he exclaimed that he had rather his only son had lost his head than that More should have refused the oath. No one knew better than Cromwell that intercession would be of no further use; that he could not himself advise the King to give way. The Parliament, after grave consideration, had passed a law which they held necessary to secure the peace of the country; and two persons of high rank refused obedience to it, whose example would tell in every English household. Either, therefore, the Act was not worth the parchment on which it was written, or the penalties of it must be enforced: no middle way, no compromise, no acquiescent

reservations, could in such a case be admitted. The law must take its course.

The recusants were committed for four days to the keeping of the Abbot of Westminster; and the Council met to determine on the course to be pursued. Their offence, by the Act, was misprision of treason. On the other hand, they had both offered to acknowledge the Princess Elizabeth as the lawful heir to the throne; and the question was raised whether this offer should be accepted. It was equivalent to a demand that the form should be altered, not for them only, but for every man. If persons of their rank and notoriety were permitted to swear with a qualification, the same privilege must be conceded to all. But there was so much anxiety to avoid extremities, and so warm a regard was personally felt for Sir Thomas More, that this objection was not allowed to be fatal. It was thought that possibly an exception might be made, yet kept a secret from the world; and the fact that they had sworn under any form might go far to silence objectors and reconcile the better class of the disaffected.[1] This view was particularly urged by Cranmer, always gentle, hoping, and illogical.[2] But, in fact, secrecy was impossible. If More's discretion could have been relied upon, Fisher's babbling tongue would have trumpeted his victory to all the winds. Nor would the Government consent to pass censure on its own conduct by evading the question whether the Act was or was not *just*. If it was not just, it ought not to

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[1] More's *Life of More*, p. 237. [2] Burnet, vol. i. p. 255.

be maintained at all; if it was just, there must be no respect of persons.

The clauses to which the Bishop and the ex-chancellor declined to bind themselves were those which declared illegal the marriage of the King with Catherine, and the marriage legal between the King and Queen Anne. To refuse these was to declare Mary legitimate, to declare Elizabeth illegitimate, and would do more to strengthen Mary's claims than could be undone by a thousand oaths. However large might be More's estimate of the power of Parliament, he could have given no clear answer—and far less could Fisher have given a clear answer—if they had been required to say the part which they would take, should the Emperor invade the kingdom under the Pope's sanction. The Emperor would come to execute a sentence which in their consciences they believed to be just; how could they retain their allegiance to Henry, when their convictions must be with the invading army?

What ought to have been done let those say who disapprove of what was actually done. The high character of the prisoners, while it increased the desire, increased the difficulty of sparing them; and to have given way would have been a confession of a doubtful cause, which at such a time would not have been dangerous, but would have been fatal. Anne Boleyn is said to have urged the King to remain peremptory;[1] but the following letter of Cromwell's explains the ultimate

[1] MORE'S *Life of More*, p. 237.

resolution of the council in a very reasonable manner. It was written to Cranmer, in reply to his arguments for concession.

'My Lord, after mine humble commendation, it may please your Grace to be advertised that I have received your letter, and showed the same to the King's Highness; who, perceiving that your mind and opinion is, that it were good that the Bishop of Rochester and Master More should be sworn to the Act of the King's succession, and not to the preamble of the same, thinketh that if their oaths should be taken, it were an occasion to all men to refuse the whole, or at least the like. For, in case they be sworn to the succession, and not to the preamble, it is to be thought that it might be taken not only as a confirmation of the Bishop of Rome's authority, but also as a reprobation of the King's second marriage. Wherefore, to the intent that no such things should be brought into the heads of the people, by the example of the said Bishop of Rochester and Master More, the King's Highness in no wise willeth but that they shall be sworn as well to the preamble as to the Act. Wherefore his Grace specially trusteth that ye will in no wise attempt to move him to the contrary; for as his Grace supposeth, that manner of swearing, if it shall be suffered, may be an utter destruction to his whole cause, and also to the effect of the law made for the same.' [1]

Thus, therefore, with much regret the council de-

[1] Cromwell to the Archbishop of Canterbury: *Rolls House MS.*

cided—and, in fact, why should they have decided otherwise? They were satisfied that they were right in requiring the oath; and their duty to the English nation obliged them to persevere. They must go their way; and those who thought them wrong must go theirs; and the great God would judge between them. It was a hard thing to suffer for an opinion; but there are times when opinions are as dangerous as acts; and liberty of conscience was a plea which could be urged with a bad grace for men who, while in power, had fed the stake with heretics. They were summoned for a last time, to return the same answer as they had returned before; and nothing remained but to pronounce against them the penalties of the Statute, imprisonment at the King's pleasure, and forfeiture. The latter part of the sentence was not enforced. More's family were left in the enjoyment of his property. Fisher's bishopric was not taken from him. They were sent to the Tower, where for the present we leave them.

Meanwhile, in accordance with the resolution taken in council on the 2nd of December,[1] but which seems to have been suspended till the issue of the trial at Rome was decided, the bishops, who had been examined severally on the nature of the Papal authority, and whose answers had been embodied in the last Act of Parliament, were now required to instruct the clergy throughout their dioceses—and the clergy in turn to instruct the people—in the nature of the changes which

[1] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 411 et seq.

had taken place. A bishop was to preach each Sunday at Paul's Cross, on the Pope's usurpation. Every secular priest was directed to preach on the same subject week after week, in his parish church. Abbots and priors were to teach their convents; noblemen and gentlemen their families and servants; mayors and aldermen the boroughs. In town and country, in all houses, at all dinner-tables, the conduct of the Pope and the causes of the separation from Rome were to be the one subject of conversation; that the whole nation might be informed accurately and faithfully of the grounds on which the Government had acted. No wiser method could have been adopted. The Imperial agents would be busy under the surface; and the mendicant friars, and all the missionaries of insurrection. The machinery of order was set in force to counteract the machinery of sedition.

Further, every bishop, in addition to the oath of allegiance, had sworn obedience to the King as Supreme Head of the Church;[1] and this was the title under which he was to be spoken of in all churches of the realm. A royal order had been issued, 'that all manner of prayers, rubrics, canons of Mass books, and all other books in the churches wherein the Bishop of Rome was named, or his presumptuous and proud pomp and authority preferred, should utterly be abolished, eradicated, and rased out, and his name and memory should be never more, except to his contumely and reproach,

[1] Royal Proclamation, June, 1534.

remembered; but perpetually be suppressed and obscured.'[1]

Nor were these mere idle sounds, like the bellow of unshotted cannon; but words with a sharp, prompt meaning, which the King intended to be obeyed. He had addressed his orders to the clergy, because the clergy were the officials who had possession of the pulpits from which the people were to be taught; but he knew their nature too well to trust them. They were too well schooled in the tricks of reservation; and, for the nonce, it was necessary to reverse the posture of the priest and of his flock, and to set the honest laymen to overlook their pastors.

June 9.

With the instructions to the bishops, circulars went round to the sheriffs of the counties, containing a full account of these instructions, and an appeal to their loyalty to see that the royal orders were obeyed. 'We,' the King wrote to them, 'seeing, esteeming, and reputing you to be of such singular and vehement zeal and affection towards the glory of Almighty God, and of so faithful, loving, and obedient heart towards us, as you will accomplish, with all power, diligence, and labour, whatsoever shall be to the preferment and setting forth of God's word, have thought good, not only to signify unto you by these our letters, the particulars of the charge given by us to the bishops, but also to require and straitly charge you, upon pain of your allegiance, and as ye shall avoid our high indignation

[1] Royal Proclamation, June, 1534.

and displeasure, [that] at your uttermost peril, laying aside all vain affections, respects, and other carnal considerations, and setting only before your eyes the mirrour of the truth, the glory of God, the dignity of your Sovereign Lord and King, and the great concord and unity, and inestimable profit and utility, that shall by the due execution of the premises ensue to yourselves and to all other faithful and loving subjects, ye make or cause to be made diligent search and wait, whether the said bishops do truly and sincerely, without all manner of cloke, colour, or dissimulation, execute and accomplish our will and commandment, as is aforesaid. And in case ye shall hear that the said bishops, or any other ecclesiastical person, do omit and leave undone any part or parcel of the premises, or else in the execution and setting forth of the same, do coldly and feignedly use any manner of sinister addition, wrong interpretation, or painted colour, then we straitly charge and command you that you do make, undelayedly, and with all speed and diligence, declaration and advertisement to us and to our council of the said default.

'And forasmuch as we upon the singular trust which we have in you, and for the special love which we suppose you bear towards us, and the weal and tranquillity of this our realm, have specially elected and chosen you among so many for this purpose, and have reputed you such men as unto whose wisdom and fidelity we might commit a matter of such great weight and importance: if ye should, contrary to our expectation and trust which we have in you, and against your duty and allegiance

towards us, neglect, or omit to do with all your diligence, whatsoever shall be in your power for the due performance of our pleasure to you declared, or halt or stumble at any part or speciality of the same ; Be ye assured that we, like a prince of justice, will so extremely punish you for the same, that all the world beside shall take by you example, and beware contrary to their allegiance to disobey the lawful commandment of their Sovereign Lord and Prince.

'Given under our signet, at our Palace of Westminster, the 9th day of June, 1534.'[1]

So Henry spoke at last. There was no place any more for nice distinctions and care of tender consciences. The general, when the shot is flying, cannot qualify his orders with dainty periods. Swift command and swift obedience can alone be tolerated; and martial law for those who hesitate.

This chapter has brought many things to a close. Before ending it we will leap over three months, to the termination of the career of the Pope who has been so far our companion. Not any more was the distracted Clement to twist his handkerchief, or weep, or flatter, or wildly wave his arms in angry impotence; he was to lie down in his long rest, and vex the world no more. He had lived to set England free—an exploit which, in the face of so persevering an anxiety to escape a separation, required a rare genius and a combination of singular

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[1] FOXE, vol. v. p. 70.

qualities. He had finished his work, and now he was allowed to depart.

In him, infinite insincerity was accompanied with a grace of manner which regained confidence as rapidly as it was forfeited. Desiring sincerely, so far as he could be sincere in anything, to please every one by turns, and reckless of truth to a degree in which he was without a rival in the world, he sought only to escape his difficulties by inactivity, and he trusted to provide himself with a refuge against all contingencies by waiting upon time. Even when at length he was compelled to act, and to act in a distinct direction, his plausibility long enabled him to explain away his conduct; and, honest in the excess of his dishonesty, he wore his falsehood with so easy a grace that it assumed the character of truth. He was false, deceitful, treacherous; yet he had the virtue of not pretending to be virtuous. He was a real man, though but an indifferent one; and we can refuse to no one, however grave his faults, a certain ambiguous sympathy, when in his perplexities he shows us features so truly human in their weakness as those of Clement VII.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE IRISH REBELLION.

'THE Pander[1] sheweth, in the first chapter of his book, called *Salus Populi*, that the holy woman, Brigitta, used to inquire of her good angel many questions of secrets divine; and among all other she inquired, 'Of what Christian land was most souls damned?' The angel shewed her a land in the west part of the world. She inquired the cause why? The angel said, for there is most continual war, root of hate and envy, and of vices contrary to charity; and without charity the souls cannot be saved. And the angel did shew to her the lapse of the souls of Christian folk of that land, how they fell down into hell, as thick as any hail showers. And pity thereof moved the Pander to conceive his said book, as in the said chapter plainly doth appear; for after his opinion, this [Ireland] is the land that the angel understood; for there is no land in

[1] 'Panderus, or the author of a book, *De Salute Populi*, flourished in the reigns of Edward IV., Edward V., Richard III., and Henry VII.; perhaps also in the reign of Henry VIII.'—SIR JAMES WARE, *Writers of Ireland*, p. 90.

this world of so continual war within itself; ne of so great shedding of Christian blood; ne of so great robbing, spoiling, preying, and burning; ne of so great wrongful extortion continually, as Ireland. Wherefore it cannot be denied by very estimation of man but that the angel did understand the land of Ireland.'[1]

Nine hundred years had passed away since the vision of the Holy Brigitta, and four hundred since the custody of the unfortunate country had been undertaken by the most orderly nation in the world; yet, at the close of all those centuries, 'it could not be denied by very estimation of man' that poor Irish souls were still descending, thick as hail showers, into the general abyss of worthlessness. The Pander's satire upon the English enterprise was a heavy one.

When the wave of the Norman invasion first rolled across St George's Channel, the success was as easy and appeared as complete as William's conquest of the Saxons. There was no unity of purpose among the Irish chieftains, no national spirit which could support a sustained resistance. The country was open and undefended,[2] and after a few feeble struggles the contest ceased. Ireland is a basin, the centre a fertile undulat-

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[1] State of Ireland, and plan for its reformation, 1515: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 11.

[2] Some men have the opinion that this land is harder to be reformed now than it was to be conquered at the first Conquest; considering that Irishmen have more hardiness and policy and war, and more arms and artillery than they had at the Conquest. At that time there was not in all Ireland, out of cities, five Castles ne Piles, and now there be five hundred Castles and Piles.—BARON FINGLAS'S *Breviate of Ireland*, written circa 1535. HARRIS'S *Hibernica*, p. 88.

ing plain, the edges a fringe of mountains that form an almost unbroken coast line. Into these highlands the Irish tribes were driven, where they were allowed to retain a partial independence, under condition of paying tribute; the Norman immigrants dividing among themselves the inheritance of the dispossessed inhabitants.[1] Strongbow and his companions became the feudal sovereigns of the island, holding their estates under the English Crown. The common law of England was introduced; the King's writ passed current from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear;[2] and if the leading Norman families had remained on the estates which they had conquered, or if those who did remain had retained the character which they brought with them, the entire country would, in all likelihood, have settled

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[1] In every of the said five portions, Ulster, Connaught, Leinster, South Munster, and West Munster, that was conquered by King Henry Fitz-Empress, [there were] left under tribute certain Irishmen of the principal blood of the Irish nation, that were before the Conquest inhabitants within every of the said portions; as in Leinster, the Cavanaghs of the blood of M'Morough, sometime king of the same; in South Munster, the M'Carties, of the blood of the Carties, sometime kings of Cork; in the other portions of Munster, west of the river Shannon (Clare), where O'Brien is, which was never conquered in obedience to the King's laws, O'Brien and his blood have continued there still, which O'Brien gave tribute to King Henry Fitz-Empress, and to his heirs, by the space of one hundred years. In Connaught was left under tribute certain of the blood of O'Connor, sometime king of the same; certain of the Kellies, and others. In Ulster were left certain of the Neales, of the blood of the O'Neale. In Meath were left certain of the blood of O'Melaghlin, sometime king of the same; and divers others of Irish nations. — BARON FINGLAS'S *Breviate.* HARRIS, p. 83.

[2] Thomond seems to have been an exception.

down obediently, and at length willingly, under a rule which it would have been without power to resist.

An expectation so natural was defeated by two causes, alike unforeseen and perplexing. The Northern nations, when they overran the Roman Empire, were in search of homes; and they subdued only to colonize. The feudal system bound the noble to the lands which he possessed; and a theory of ownership of estates, as consisting merely in the receipt of rents from other occupants, was alike unheard of in fact, and repugnant to the principles of feudal society. To Ireland belongs, among its other misfortunes, the credit of having first given birth to absentees. The descendants of the first invaders preferred to regard their inheritance, not as a theatre of duty on which they were to reside, but as a possession which they might farm for their individual advantage. They managed their properties by agents, as sources of revenue, leasing them even among the Irish themselves; and the tenantry, deprived of the supporting presence of their lords, and governed only in a merely mercenary spirit, transferred back their allegiance to the exiled chiefs of the old race.[1] This was one grave

[1] See FINGLAS'S *Breviate.* 23 Henry VI. cap. 9: *Irish Statute Book.* 28 Henry VIII. cap. 3: Ibid. It seems in many cases to have been the result of accident, Irish lands descending to heiresses who married into English families. In other instances, forfeited estates were granted by the Crown to English favourites. The receiving rents, however, even though by unwilling absentees, was treated as a crime by Henry VIII.; and English noblemen, to whom estates in Ireland had fallen, either by marriage or descent, on which they were unable to reside, were expected to grant such estates to other persons who were able to reside upon them, and willing. The wording of the Act of Absentees, passed in 1536, is very remarkable. 'Forasmuch as it is

cause of the English failure; but serious as it was, it would not have sufficed alone to explain the full extent of the evil. Some most powerful families rooted themselves in the soil, and never forsook it; the Geraldines, of Munster and Kildare; the Butlers, of Kilkenny; the De Burghs, the Birminghams, the De Courcies, and many others. If these had been united among themselves, or had retained their allegiance to England, their influence could not have been long opposed successfully. Their several principalities would have formed separate centres of civilization; and the strong system of order

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notorious and manifest that this the King's land of Ireland, heretofore being inhabited, and in due obedience and subjection unto the King's most noble progenitors, hath principally grown unto ruin, dissolution, rebellion, and decay, by occasion that great dominions, lands, and possessions within the same, as well by the King's grants as by course of inheritance and otherwise have descended to noblemen of the realm of England, who having the same, demouring within the said realm of England . . . . taking the profits of their said lands and possessions for a season, without provision making for any defence or keeping thereof in good order . . . . in their absence, and by their negligence have suffered the wild Irishrie, being mortal and natural enemies to the Kings of England, to enter and hold the same without resistance; the conquest and winning whereof in the beginning not only cost the King's noble progenitors charges inestimable, but also those to whom the land was given, then and many years after abiding within the said land, nobly and valiantly defended the same, and kept such tranquillity and good order, as the Kings of England had due subjection of the inhabitants thereof, and the laws were obeyed . . . . and after the gift or descent of the lands to the persons aforesaid, they and their heirs absented themselves out of the said land of Ireland, not pondering nor regarding the preservation thereof . . . the King's Majesty that now is, intending the reformation of the said land, to foresee that the like shall not ensue hereafter, with the consent of his Parliament,' pronounces FORFEITED the estates of all absentee proprietors, and their right and title gone.

would have absorbed and superseded the most obstinate resistance which could have been offered by the scattered anarchy of the Celts.

Unfortunately, the materials of good were converted into the worst instruments of evil. If an objection had been raised to the colonization of America, or to the conquest of India, on the ground that the character of Englishmen would be too weak to contend successfully against that of the races with whom they would be brought into contact, and that they would relapse into barbarism, such an alarm would have seemed too preposterous to be entertained; yet, prior to experience, it would have been equally reasonable to expect that the modern Englishman would adopt the habits of the Hindoo or the Mohican, as that the fiery knights of Normandy would have stooped to imitate a race whom they despised as slaves; that they would have flung away their very knightly names to assume a barbarous equivalent;[1] and would so utterly have cast aside the commanding features of their Northern extraction, that their children's children could be distinguished neither in soul nor body, neither in look, in dress, in language, nor in disposition, from the Celts whom they had

[1] 'The MacMahons in the north were anciently English, to wit, descended from the Fitz-Ursulas, which was a noble family in England; and the same appeareth by the significance of their Irish names. Likewise the M'Sweenies, now in Ulster, were recently of the Veres in England; but that they themselves, for hatred of the English, so disguised their names.' — SPENSER'S *View of the State of Ireland.* So the De Burghs became Bourkes or Burkes; the Munster Geraldines merged their family names in that of Desmond; and a younger branch of them called themselves M'Shehies.

subdued. Such, however, was the extraordinary fact. The Irish who had been conquered in the field revenged their defeat on the minds and hearts of their conquerors; and in yielding, yielded only to fling over their new masters the subtle spell of the Celtic disposition. In vain the Government attempted to stem the evil. Statute was passed after statute forbidding the 'Englishry' of Ireland to use the Irish language, or intermarry with Irish families, or copy Irish habits.[1] Penalties were multiplied on penalties; fines, forfeitures, and at last death itself, were threatened for such offences. But all in vain. The stealthy evil crept on irresistibly.[2] Fresh colonists were sent over to restore the system, but only for themselves or their children to be swept into the stream; and from the century which succeeded the Conquest till the reign of the eighth Henry, the strange phenomenon repeated itself, generation after generation, baffling the wisdom of statesmen, and paralyzing every effort at a remedy.

Here was a difficulty which no skill could contend

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[1] *Statutes of Kilkenny.* Printed by the Irish Antiquarian Society. FINGLAS'S *Breviate.*

[2] The phenomenon must have been observed, and the inevitable consequence of it foreseen, very close upon the Conquest, when the observation digested itself into a prophecy. No story less than three hundred years old could easily have been reported to Baron Finglas as having originated with St Patrick and St Columb. The Baron says—'The four Saints, St Patrick, St Columb, St Braghan, and St Moling, many hundred years agone, made prophecy that Englishmen should conquer Ireland; and said that the said Englishmen should keep the land in prosperity as long as they should keep their own laws; and as soon as they should leave and fall to Irish order, then they should decay.'—HARRIS, p. 88.

against, and which was increased by the exertions which were made to oppose it. The healthy elements which were introduced to leaven the old became themselves infected, and swelled the mass of evil; and the clearest observers were those who were most disposed to despair. Popery has been the scapegoat which, for the last three centuries, has borne the reproach of Ireland; but before Popery had ceased to be the faith of the world, the problem had long presented itself in all its hopelessness. 'Some say' (this is the language of 1515), 'and for the most part every man, that to find the antidotum for this disease is impossible—for what remedy can be had now more than hath been had unto this time? And there was never remedy found in this two hundred year that could prosper; and no medicine can be had now for this infirmity but such as hath been had afore this time. And folk were as wise that time as they be now; and since they could never find remedy, how should remedy be found by us? And the Pander maketh answer and saith, that it is no marvel that our fathers that were of more wit and wisdom than we, could not find remedy in the premises, *for the herbs did never grow.* And also he saith that the wealth and prosperity of every land is the common wealth of the same, and not the private wealth; and all the English noble folk of this land passeth always their private weal; and in regard thereof setteth little or nought by the common weal; insomuch as there is no common folk in all this world so little set by, so greatly despised, so feeble, so poor, so greatly trodden under foot, as the king's poor

common folk be of Ireland.'[1] There was no true care for the common weal—that was the especial peculiarity by which the higher classes in Ireland were unfortunately distinguished. In England, the last consideration of a noble-minded man was his personal advantage; Ireland was a theatre for a universal scramble of selfishness, and the invaders caught the national contagion, and became, as the phrase went, *ipsis Hibernis Hiberniores.*

The explanation of this disastrous phenomenon lay partly in the circumstances in which they were placed, partly in the inherent tendencies of human nature itself. The Norman nobles entered Ireland as independent adventurers, who, each for himself, carved out his fortune with his sword; and, unsupported as they were from home, or supported only at precarious intervals, divided from one another by large tracts of country, and surrounded by Irish dependents, it was doubtless more convenient for them to govern by humouring the habits and traditions to which their vassals would most readily submit. The English Government, occupied with Scotland and France, had no leisure to maintain a powerful central authority; and a central disciplinarian rule enforced by the sword was contrary to the genius of the age. Under the feudal system, the kings governed only by the consent and with the support of the nobility; and the maintenance at Dublin of a standing military force would have been regarded with extreme suspicion in

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[1] Report on the State of Ireland, 1515: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 17, 18.

England, as well as in Ireland. Hence the affairs of both countries were, for the most part, administered under the same forms, forms which were as ill suited to the waywardness of the Celt, as they met exactly the stronger nature of the Saxon. At intervals, when the Government was exasperated by unusual outrages, some prince of the blood was sent across as viceroy; and half a century of acquiescence in disorder would be followed by a spasmodic severity, which irritated without subduing, and forfeited affection while it failed to terrify. At all other times, Ireland was governed by the Norman Irish, and these, as the years went on, were tempted by their convenience to strengthen themselves by Irish alliances, to identify their interests with those of the native chiefs, in order to conciliate their support; to prefer the position of wild and independent sovereigns, resting on the attachment of a people whose affections they had gained by learning to resemble them, to that of military lords over a hostile population, the representatives of a distant authority, on which they could not rely.

This is a partial account of the Irish difficulty. We must look deeper, however, for the full interpretation of it; and outward circumstances never alone suffice to explain a moral transformation. The Roman military colonists remained Roman alike on the Rhine and on the Euphrates. The Turkish conquerors caught no infection from Greece, or from the provinces on the Danube. The Celts in England were absorbed by the Saxon invaders; and the Mogul and the Anglo-Indian alike have shown

no tendency to assimilate with the Hindoo. When a marked type of human character yields before another, the change is owing to some element of power in that other, which coming in contact with elements weaker than itself, subdues and absorbs them. The Irish spirit, which exercised so fatal a fascination, was enabled to triumph over the Norman in virtue of representing certain perennial tendencies of humanity, which are latent in all mankind, and which opportunity may at any moment develope. It was not a national spirit—the clans were never united, except by some common hatred; and the normal relation of the chiefs towards each other was a relation of chronic war and hostility. It was rather an impatience of control, a deliberate preference for disorder, a determination in each individual man to go his own way, whether it was a good way or a bad, and a reckless hatred of industry. The result was the inevitable one—oppression, misery, and wrong. But in detail faults and graces were so interwoven, that the offensiveness of the evil was disguised by the charm of the good; and even the Irish vices were the counterfeit of virtues, contrived so cunningly that it was hard to distinguish their true texture. The fidelity of the clansmen to their leaders was faultlessly beautiful; extravagance appeared like generosity, and improvidence like unselfishness: anarchy disguised itself under the name of liberty; and war and plunder were decorated by poetry as the honourable occupation of heroic natures. Such were the Irish with whom the Norman conquerors found themselves in contact; and over them all was thrown a peculiar ima-

ginative grace, a careless atmosphere of humour, sometimes gay, sometimes melancholy, always attractive, which at once disarmed the hand which was raised to strike or punish them. These spirits were dangerous neighbours. Men who first entered the country at mature age might be fortified by experience against their influence, but on the young they must have exerted a charm of fatal potency. The foster-nurse first chanted the spell over the cradle in wild passionate melodies.[1] It was breathed in the ears of the growing boy by the minstrels who haunted the halls,[2] and the lawless attractions of disorder proved too strong for the manhood which was trained among so perilous associations.

For such a country, therefore, but one form of government could succeed—an efficient military despotism. The people could be wholesomely controlled only by an English deputy, sustained by an English army, and armed with arbitrary power, till the inveterate turbulence of their tempers had died away under repression, and they had learnt in their improved condition the value of order and rule. This was the opinion of all statesmen who possessed any real knowledge of Ireland,

[1] Some sayeth that the English noble folk useth to deliver their children to the King's Irish enemies to foster, and therewith maketh bands.—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 13.

[2] 'Harpers, rhymers, Irish chroniclers, bards, and ishallyn (ballad singers) commonly go with praises to gentlemen in the English pale, praising in rhymes, otherwise called 'danes,' their extortions, robberies, and abuses as valiantness; which rejoiceth them in their evil doings, and procures a talent of Irish disposition and conversation in them.'—Cowley to Cromwell: Ibid. vol. ii. p. 450. There is a remarkable passage to the same effect in SPENSER'S *View of the State of Ireland.*

from Lord Talbot under Henry VI. to the latest viceroy who attempted a milder method and found it fail. 'If the King were as wise as Solomon the Sage,' said the report of 1515, 'he shall never subdue the wild Irish to his obedience without dread of the sword and of the might and strength of his power. As long as they may resist and save their lives, they will not obey the King.'[1] Unfortunately, although English statesmen were able to see the course which ought to be followed, it had been too inconvenient to pursue that course. They had put off the evil day, preferring to close their eyes against the mischief instead of grappling with it resolutely; and thus, at the opening of the sixteenth century, when the hitherto neglected barbarians were about to become a sword in the Pope's hands to fight the battle against the Reformation, the 'King's Irish enemies' had recovered all but absolute possession of the island, and nothing remained of Strongbow's conquests save the shadow of a titular sovereignty, and a country strengthened in hostility by the means which had been used to subdue it.

The events on which we are about to enter require for their understanding a sketch of the position of the various chiefs, as they were at this time scattered over the island. The English pale, originally comprising 'the four shires,' as they were called, of Dublin, Kildare, Meath, and Uriel, or Louth, had been shorn down to half its old dimensions. The line extended from

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[1] State of Ireland, and plan for its reformation: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 28.

Dundalk to Ardee; from Ardee by Castletown to Kells; thence through Athboy and Trim to the Castle of Maynooth; from Maynooth it crossed to Claine upon the Liffey, and then followed up the line of the river to Baltimore Eustace, from which place it skirted back at the rear of the Wicklow and Dublin mountains to the forts at Dalkey, seven miles south of Dublin.[1] This narrow strip alone, some fifty miles long and twenty broad, was in any sense English. Beyond the borders the common law of England was of no authority; the King's writ was but a strip of parchment; and the country was parcelled among a multitude of independent chiefs, who acknowledged no sovereignty but that of strength, who levied tribute on the inhabitants of the pale as a reward for a nominal protection of their rights, and as a compensation for abstaining from the plunder of their farms.[2] Their swords were their sceptres; their codes of right, the Brehon traditions—a convenient system, which was called law, but which in practice was a happy contrivance for the composition of felonies.[3]

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[1] Report on the State of Ireland: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 22.

[2] Baron Finglas, in his suggestions for a reformation, urges that 'no black rent be given ne paid to any Irishman upon any of the four shires from henceforward.' —HARRIS, p. 101. 'Many an Irish captain keepeth and preserveth the King's subjects in peace without hurt of the enemies; inasmuch as some of those hath tribute yearly of English men . . . . not to the intent that they should escape harmless; but to the intent to devour them, as the greedy hound delivereth the sheep from the wolf.'—*State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 16, 17.

[3] EUDOXUS—What is that which you call the Brehon Law? It is a word unto us altogether unknown.

IRENÆUS—It is a rule of right, unwritten, but delivered by tradition from one to another, in which often-

These chiefs, with their dependent clans, were distributed over the four provinces in the following order. The Geraldines, the most powerful of the remaining Normans, were divided into two branches. The Geraldines of the south, under the Earls of Desmond, held Limerick, Cork, and Kerry; the Geraldines of Leinster lay along the frontiers of the English pale; and the heads of the house, the Earls of Kildare, were the feudal superiors of the greater portion of the English counties. To the Butlers, Earls of Ormond and Ossory, belonged Kilkenny, Carlow, and Tipperary. The De Burghs, or Bourkes, as they called themselves, were scattered over Galway, Roscommon, and the south of Sligo, occupying the broad plains which lie between the Shannon and the mountains of Connemara and Mayo. This was the relative position into which these clans had settled at the Conquest, and it had been maintained with little variation.

The north, which had fallen to the Lacies and the

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times there appeareth great show of equity in determining the right between parties, but in many things repugning quite both to God's law and man's. As, for example, in the case of murder, the Brehon, that is, their judge, will compound between the murderer and the friends of the party murdered, which prosecute the action, that the malefactor shall give unto them or unto the child or wife of him that is slain, a recompense which they call an Eriarch. By which vile law of theirs many murders are made up and smothered. And this judge being, as he is called, the Lord's Brehon, adjudgeth, for the most part, a better share unto his Lord, that is the Lord of the soil, or the head of that sept, and also unto himself for his judgment, a greater portion than unto the plaintiffs or parties grieved.—SPENSER'S *View of the State of Ireland.* Spenser describes the system as he experienced it in active operation. Ancient written collections of the Brehon laws, however, existed and still exist.

De Courcies, had been wholly recovered by the Irish. The Lacies had become extinct. The De Courcies, once Earls of Ulster, had migrated to the south, and were reduced to the petty fief of Kinsale, which they held under the Desmonds. The Celtic chieftains had returned from the mountains to which they had been driven, bringing back with them, more intensely than ever, the Irish habits and traditions. Old men, who were alive in 1533, remembered a time when the Norman families attempted to live in something of an English manner,[1] and when there were towns in the middle of Ireland with decent municipal institutions. The wars of the Roses had destroyed the remnants of English influence by calling away a number of leading nobles, such especially as were least infected by the Irish character; and the native chiefs had reoccupied the lands of their ancestors, unresisted, if not welcomed as allies. The O'Neils and O'Donnells had spread down over Ulster to the frontiers of the pale. The O'Connors and O'Carrolls had recrossed the Shannon, and pushed forwards into Kildare; the O'Connor Don was established in a castle near Portarlington, said to be one of the strongest in Ireland; and the O'Carroll had seized

[1] By relation of ancient men in times past within remembrance, all the English lords and gentills within the pale heretofore kept retinues of English yeomen in their houses, after the English fashion, according to the extent of their lands, to the great strength and succour of their neighbours the King's subjects. And now for the most part they keep horsemen and knaves, which live upon the King's subjects; and keep in manner no hospitality, but live upon the poor.—The Council of Ireland to the Master of the Rolls, 1533: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 163.

Leap, an ancient Danish fortress, surrounded by bog and forest, a few miles from Parsonstown. O'Brien of Inchiquin, Prince—as he styled himself—of Thomond, no longer contented with his principality of Clare, had thrown a bridge across the Shannon five miles above Limerick, and was thus enabled to enter Munster at his pleasure and spread his authority towards the south; while the M'Carties and O'Sullivans, in Cork and Kerry, were only not dangerous to the Earls of Desmond, because the Desmonds were more Irish than themselves, and were accepted as their natural chiefs.

In Tipperary and Kilkenny only the Celtic reaction was held in check. The Earls of Ormond, although they were obliged themselves to live as Irish chieftains, and to govern by the Irish law, yet partly from an inherent nobility of nature, partly through family alliances and a more sustained intercourse with their English kindred, partly perhaps from the inveterate feud of their house with both branches of the Geraldines, remained true to their allegiance, and maintained the English authority so far as their power extended. That power, unfortunately, was incommensurate with their good will, and their situation prevented them from rendering the assistance to the Crown which they desired. Wexford, Wicklow, and the mountains of Dublin, were occupied by the highland tribes of O'Bryne and O'Toole, who, in their wild glens and dangerous gorges, defied attempts to conquer them, and who were able, at all times, issuing down out of the passes of the hills, to cut off communication with the pale. Thus the Butlers had no

means of reaching Dublin except through the county of Kildare, the home of their hereditary rivals and foes.

This is a general account of the situation of the various parties in Ireland at the beginning of the sixteenth century. I have spoken only of the leading families; and I have spoken of them as if they possessed some feudal supremacy—yet even this slight thread of order was in many cases without real consistency, and was recognized only when fear, or passion, or interest, prompted. 'There be sixty counties, called regions, in Ireland,' says the report of 1515, 'inhabited with the King's Irish enemies, some regions as big as a shire, some more, some less, where reigneth more than sixty chief captains, whereof some calleth themselves kings, some king's peers in their language, some princes, some dukes, that liveth only by the sword, and obeyeth to no other temporal person save only to himself that is strong. And every of the said captains maketh war and peace for himself, and holdeth by the sword, and hath imperial jurisdiction, and obeyeth no other person, English or Irish, except only to such persons as may subdue him by the sword. . . . . Also, in every of the said regions, there be divers petty captains, and every of them maketh war and peace for himself, without license of his chief captain. . . . . And there be more than thirty of the English noble folk that followeth this same Irish order, and keepeth the same rule.'[1] Every man, in short, who could raise himself to that dishon-

[1] *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 1, 5, 6.

ourable position, was captain of a troop of banditti, and counted it his chief honour to live upon the plunder of his neighbour.

This condition of things might have been expected to work its own cure. The earth will not support human life uncultivated, and men will not labour without some reasonable hope that they will enjoy the fruit of their labour. Anarchy, therefore, is usually shortlived, and perishes of inanition. Unruly persons must either comply with the terms on which alone they are permitted to subsist, and consent to submit to some kind of order, or they must die. The Irish, however, were enabled to escape from this most wholesome provision by the recklessness of the people, who preferred any extremity of suffering to the endurance of the least restraint, and by the tyranny under which the labouring poor were oppressed. In England, the same hands were trained to hold the sword and to hold the plough. The labourers and the artisans in peace were the soldiers in war. In Ireland, labour was treated as disgraceful; the chiefs picked out the strongest and fiercest of their subjects, and trained them only to fight; the labourers were driven to the field as beasts of burden, and compelled to work on the chance that the harvest might be secured. By this precarious means, with the addition of the wild cattle which roamed in thousands among the woods and bogs, sufficient sustenance was extracted from the soil to support a scanty population, the majority of whom were supposed to be the most wretched specimens of human nature which could be found upon the globe. 'What

common folk in all this world,' the report says, 'is so poor, so feeble, so evil beseen in town and field, so bestial, so greatly oppressed and trodden under foot, fares so evil, with so great misery, and with so wretched life, as the common folk of Ireland? What pity is here, what ruth is to report, there is no tongue that can tell, ne person that can write. It passeth far the orators and muses all to shew the order of the nobles, and how cruel they entreateth the poor common people. What danger it is to the King against God to suffer his land, whereof he bears the charge and the cure temporal, to be in the said misorder so long without remedy. It were more honour to surrender his claim thereto, and to make no longer prosecution thereof, than to suffer his poor subjects always to be so oppressed, and all the nobles of the land to be at war within themselves, always shedding of Christian blood without remedy. The herd must render account for his fold; and the King for his.'[1]

The English writer did not exaggerate the picture, for his description is too abundantly confirmed in every page of the Celtic Annalists, with only but a single difference. To the Englishman the perpetual disturbance appeared a dishonour and disgrace; to the Celt it was the normal and natural employment of human beings, in the pursuit of which lay the only glory and the only manly pleasure.

A population of such a character presented in itself a difficulty sufficiently formidable; and this difficulty

[1] *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 14.

was increased by the character of the family on whom the circumstances of their position most obliged the English Government to rely. There were two methods of maintaining the show of English sovereignty. Either an English deputy might reside in Dublin, supported by a standing army; or it was necessary to place confidence in one or other of the great Irish noblemen, and to govern through him. Either method had its disadvantages. The expense of the first was enormous, for the pay of the common soldier was sixpence or eightpence a day—an equivalent of six or eight shillings; and as the arrival of an English deputy was the signal for a union throughout Ireland of all septs and clans against a common enemy, his presence was worse than useless, unless he could maintain a body of efficient troops numerous enough to cope with the coalition. At the same time the cost must have fallen wholly on the Crown, for the Parliaments would make no grants of money for the support of a mercenary army, except on extraordinary emergencies.

On the other hand, to choose an Irish deputy was to acquiesce in disorder, and to lend a kind of official sanction to it. It was inexpensive, however, and therefore convenient; and evils which were not actually felt in perpetual demands for money, and in uncomfortable reports, could for a time be forgotten or ignored. In this direction lay all the temptations. The condition of the country was only made known to the English Government through the deputy, who could represent it in such colours as he pleased; and the Government

could persuade themselves that evils no longer complained of had ceased to exist.

This latter method, therefore, found most favour in London. Irish noblemen were glad to accept the office of deputy, and to discharge it at a low salary or none; but it was in order to abuse their authority for their personal advantage. They indemnified themselves for their exertions to keep order, which was not kept, by the extortion which they practised in the name of the Government which they represented; and thus deservedly made the English rule more than ever detested. Instead of receiving payment, they were allowed while deputies what was called 'coyne and livery;' that is to say, they were allowed to levy military service, and to quarter their followers on the farmers and poor gentlemen of the pale; or else to raise fines in composition, under pretence that they were engaged in the service of the Crown. The entire cost of this system was estimated at the enormous sum of a hundred pounds a day.[1] The

[1] The deputy useth to make great rodes, journeys, and hostings, now in the north parts of Ulster, now in the south parts of Munster, now in the west parts of Connaught, and taketh the King's subjects with him by compulsion oft times, with victual for three or four weeks, and chargeth the common people with carriage of the same, and giveth licence to all the noble folk to cesse and rear their costs on the common people and on the King's poor subjects; and the end of that journey is commonly no other in effect, but that the deputy useth to receive a reward of one or two hundred kyne to himself, and so depart, without any more hurt to the King's enemies, after that he hath turned the King's subjects and the poor common folk to their charge and costs of two or three thousand pounds. And over that, the deputy, on his progress and regress, oppresseth the King's poor common folk with horse meat and man's meat to all his host. And over that, in summer, when grass is most plenty, they must have oats or malt to their horse at will, or else money therefore.

exactions might have been tolerated if the people had been repaid by protection; but forced as they were to pay black mail at the same time to the Irish borderers, the double burdens had the effect of driving every energetic settler out of the pale, and his place was filled by some poor Irishman whom use had made acquainted with misery.[1]

Nor was extortion the only advantage which the Irish deputies obtained from their office. They prosecuted their private feuds with the revenues of the State. They connived at the crimes of any chieftain who would join their faction. Every conceivable abuse in the administration of the Government attended the possession of power by the Geraldines of Kildare, and yet by the Geraldines it was almost inevitable that the power should be held. The choice lay between the Kildares and the Ormonds. No other nobleman could pretend to compete with these two. The Earls of Desmond

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The premises considered, some saith the King's deputy, by extortion, chargeth the King's poor subjects and common folk, in horse meat and man's meat, by estimation, to the value of a hundred pound every day in the year, one day counted with another, which cometh to the sum of 36,000 pounds yearly.—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 13. Finglas says that coyne and livery would destroy hell itself, if it was used there.—FINGLAS'S *Breviate*.

[1] The wretchedness of the country drove the Irish to emigrate in multitudes. In 1524, twenty thousand of them had settled themselves in Pembrokeshire; and the majority of these had crossed in a single twelvemonth. They brought with them Irish manners, and caused no little trouble. 'The King's town of Tenby,' wrote a Welsh gentleman to Wolsey, 'is almost clean Irish, as well the head men and rulers as the commons of the said town; and of their high and presumptuous minds [they] do disobey all manner the King's process that cometh to them out of the King's exchequer of Pembroke.'—R. Gryffith to Cardinal Wolsey: ELLIS, first series, vol. i. p. 191, &c.

only could take rank as their equals; and the lordships of Desmond were at the opposite extremity of the island. The services of the Earls of Ormond were almost equally unavailable. When an Earl of Ormond was residing at Dublin as deputy, he was separated from his clan by fifty miles of dangerous road. The policy of the Geraldines was to secure the Government for themselves by making it impossible for any other person to govern; and the appointment of their rival was a signal for the revolt of the entire sept, both in Leinster and Munster. The Butlers were too weak to resist this combination; and inasmuch as they were themselves always loyal when a Geraldine was in power, and the Geraldines were disloyal when a Butler was in power, the desire to hush up the difficulty, and to secure a show of quiet, led to the consistent preference of the more convenient chief.

There were qualities also in the Kildare family which gave them peculiar influence, not in Ireland only, but at the English Court. Living like wild Irish in their castle at Maynooth, they appeared in London with the address of polished courtiers. When the complaints against them became too serious to neglect, they were summoned to give account of their conduct. They had only to present themselves before the council, and it was at once impossible to believe that the frank, humorous, high-minded gentlemen at the bar could be the monsters who were charged with so fearful crimes. Their ever-ready wit and fluent words, their show of bluntness and pretence of simplicity, disarmed anger

and dispersed calumny; and they returned on all such occasions to Ireland more trusted than ever, to laugh at the folly which they had duped.

The farce had already continued through two generations at the opening of the Reformation. Gerald, the eighth earl, was twice in rebellion against Henry VII. He crowned Lambert Simnel with his own hand; when Lambert Simnel fell, he took up Perkin Warbeck; and under pretence of supporting a competitor for the crown, carried fire and sword through Ireland. At length, when England was quiet, Sir Edward Poynings was sent to Dublin to put down this new King-maker. He took the Earl prisoner, with some difficulty, and despatched him to London, where he appeared at the council-board, hot-handed from murder and treason. The King told him that heavy accusations would be laid to his charge, and that he had better choose some counsel to plead his cause. The Earl looked at him with a smile of simplicity. 'I will choose the ablest in England,' he said; 'your Highness I take for my counsel against these false knaves.'[1] The accusations were proceeded with. Among other enormities, Kildare had burnt the cathedral at Cashel, and the Archbishop was present as witness and prosecutor. The Earl confessed his offence: 'but by Jasus,' he added, 'I would not have done it if I had not been told that my lord Archbishop was inside.'[2] The insolent wit, and the danger of punishing so popular a nobleman, passed

[1] LELAND, vol. ii. p. 110.

[2] CAMPION'S *History of Ireland*. LELAND, vol. ii. p. 111.

the reply as sufficient. The council laughed. 'All Ireland cannot govern this Earl,' said one. 'Then let this Earl govern all Ireland,' was the prompt answer of Henry VII.[1] He was sent over a convicted traitor—he returned a knight of the Garter, lord deputy, and the representative of the Crown. Rebellion was a successful policy, and a lesson which corresponded so closely to the Irish temper was not forgotten.

'What, thou fool,' said Sir Gerald Shaneson to a younger son of this nobleman, thirty years later, when he found him slow to join the rebellion against Henry VIII. 'What, thou fool, thou shalt be the more esteemed for it. For what hadst thou, if thy father had not done so? What was he until he crowned a king here, took Garth, the King's captain, prisoner, hanged his son, resisted Poynings and all deputies; killed them of Dublin upon Oxmantown Green; would suffer no man to rule here for the King but himself! Then the King regarded him, and made him deputy, and married thy mother to him;[2] or else thou shouldst never have had a foot of land, where now thou mayest dispend four hundred marks by the year.'[3]

These scornful words express too truly the position of the Earl of Kildare, which, however, he found it convenient to disguise under a decent exterior. The borders of the pale were partially extended; the O'Tooles were

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[1] CAMPION. LELAND.

[2] The Earl married Elizabeth, daughter of Oliver St John, while in London.

[3] Report to Cromwell, apparently by Allen, Master of the Rolls: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 175.

driven further into the Wicklow mountains, and an outlying castle was built to overawe them at Powerscourt. Some shadow of a revenue was occasionally raised; and by this show of service, and because change would involve the Crown in expense, he was allowed to go his own way. He held his ground till the close of his life, and dying, he left behind him a son trained on his father's model, and who followed with the utmost faithfulness in his father's steps.

Gerald, son of Gerald, ninth earl, became deputy, almost it seemed by right of inheritance, in 1513; and things were allowed to continue in their old course for another five years; when at length Henry VIII. awoke to the disgrace which the condition of the country reflected upon him. The report of 1515 was the first step gained; the Earl of Ormond contributed to the effect produced by the report, with representations of the conduct of the deputy, who had been fortifying his own castle with Government stores; and the result was a resolution to undertake measures of real vigour. In 1520, the Earl of Kildare was deprived of his office, and sent for to England. His place was taken by the Earl of Surrey, who of all living Englishmen combined in the highest degree the necessary qualities of soldier and statesman. It seemed as if the old weak forbearance was to last no longer, and as if Ireland was now finally to learn the needful lesson of obedience.

1513.

1520.

But the first efforts to cure an inveterate evil rarely succeed; and Henry VIII., like every other statesman

who has undertaken to reform Ireland, was to purchase experience by failure. The report had declared emphatically that the Irish chiefs would never submit so long as they might resist, and escape with their lives; that conciliation would be only interpreted as weakness; and that the tyrannical lords and gentlemen must be coerced into equity by the sword freely used.

The King, however, was young and sanguine; he was unable to accept so hard a conclusion; he could not believe that any body of human beings were so hopelessly inaccessible to the ordinary means of influence, as the Irish gentlemen were represented to be. He would first try persuasion, and have recourse to extremity only if persuasion failed.

His directions to the Earl of Surrey, therefore, were that at the earliest opportunity he should call an assembly of so many of the Irish chiefs as he could induce to come to him, and to discourse to them upon the elementary principles of social order and government.

'We think it expedient,' he wrote, 'that when ye shall call the lords and other captains of that our land before you, as of good congruence ye must needs do; ye, after and amongst other overtures by your wisdom then to be made, shall declare unto them the great decay, ruin, and desolation of that commodious and fertile land, for lack of politic governance and good justice; which can never be brought in order unless the unbridled sensualities of insolent folk be brought under the rule of the laws. For realms without justice be but tyrannies and robberies, more consonant to beastly

appetites than to the laudable life of reasonable creatures. And whereas wilfulness doth reign by strength without law or justice, there is no distinction of propriety in dominion; ne yet any man may say this is mine, but by strength the weaker is subdued and oppressed, which is contrary to all laws, both of God and man. . . . . Howbeit, our mind is, not that ye shall impress on them any opinion by fearful words, that we intend to expel them from their lands and dominions lawfully possessed; ne yet that we be minded to constrain them precisely to obey our laws, ministered by our justices there; but under good manner to show unto them that of necessity it is requisite that every reasonable creature be governed by *a* law. And therefore, if they shall allege that our laws there used be too extreme and rigorous; and that it should be very hard for them to observe the same; then ye may further ensearch of them under what manners, and by what laws, they will be ordered and governed, to the intent that if their laws be good and reasonable, they may be approved; and the rigour of our laws, if they shall think them too hard, be mitigated and brought to such moderation as they may conveniently live under the same. By which means ye shall finally induce them of necessity to conform their order of living to the observance of some reasonable law, and not to live at will as they have used heretofore.'[1]

So wrote Henry in 1520, being then twenty-eight

[1] Henry VIII to the Earl of Surrey: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 52, 53.

years old, in his inexperience of human nature, and especially of the Irish form of it. No words could be truer, wiser, or more generous; but those only listen effectively to words of wisdom and generosity, who themselves possess something of the same qualities; and the Irish would not have required that such an address should be made to them if they had been capable of profiting by it. If Surrey was sanguine of any good result, he was soon undeceived. He had no sooner landed than the whole country was in arms against him —O'Neile, O'Carroll, O'Connor, O'Brien, Desmond, broke into simultaneous rebellion, acting, as was proved by intercepted letters,[1] under instructions which Kildare had sent from England. Surrey saw at a glance the justice of the language of the report. He informed Wolsey briefly of the state of the country, and advised that unless the King was prepared for extreme measures, he should not waste money in partial efforts.[2] Writing subsequently to Henry himself, he said that the work to be done was a repetition of the conquest of Wales by Edward I., and it would prove at least as

[1] This is one of them, and another of similar import was found to have been sent to O'Neile. 'Life and health to O'Carroll, from the Earl of Kildare. There is none Irishman in Ireland that I am better content with than with you; and whenever I come into Ireland, I shall do you good for anything that ye shall do for me; and any displeasure that I have done to you, I shall make you amends therefore, desiring you to keep good peace to Englishmen till an English deputy shall come there; and when an English deputy shall come thither, do your best to make war upon Englishmen then, except such as be toward me, whom you know well yourself.'—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 45.

[2] Ibid. p. 62.

tedious and as expensive. Nevertheless, if the King could make up his mind to desire it, there was no insuperable difficulty. He would undertake the work himself with six thousand men. The difficulty would be then, however, but half overcome, for the habits of the people were incurable. Strong castles must be built up and down the island, like those at Conway and Carnarvon; and a large immigration would be necessary of English colonists.[1] Either as much as this should be done, the Earl thought, or nothing. Half measures only made bad into worse; and a policy of repression, if not consistently maintained, was unjust and pernicious. It encouraged the better affected of the inhabitants to show their good will to the Government; and when the Irish were again in power, these persons were marked for vengeance.

Practical experience was thus laid against Henry's philosophy; and it would have been well if the King could have discerned clearly on which side the truth was likely to lie. For the misfortune of Ireland, this was not the case. It was inconvenient at the moment to undertake a costly conquest. Surrey was maintained with a short retinue, and from want of power could only enter upon a few partial expeditions. He inflicted a heavy defeat upon O'Neil; he stormed a castle of O'Connor's; and showed, with the small means at his disposal, what he might have done with far less support than he had required. He went where he pleased

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[1] Surrey to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 72,-3,-4.

through the country. But his course was 'as the way of a ship through the sea, or as the way of a bird through the air.' The elements yielded without resistance, and closed in behind him; and after eighteen months of manful exertion, feeling the uselessness of further enterprises conducted on so small a scale, to the sorrow and alarm of the Irish council, he desired and obtained his recall.[1]

Meanwhile, in England, the Earl of Kildare had made good use of his opportunities. In spite of his detected letters, he had won his way into favour. He accompanied Henry to the Field of the Cloth of Gold, where he distinguished himself by his brilliant bearing; and instead of punishing him as a traitor, the King allowed him to marry Lady Elizabeth Grey, daughter of the Marquis of Dorset, and nearly related to the blood royal. He was then permitted to return to Ireland; not, however, immediately as deputy. An intermediate effort was made to govern through Lord Ormond, whose intentions were excellent, but unfortunately the Irish refused to submit to him. The Earl of Desmond remained in rebellion, and invaded Kilkenny from the south; and two years followed of universal insurrection, pillage, and murder. Kildare accused Ormond to the English council as responsible;[2] Ormond retorted with similar charges against Kildare, and commissioners were

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[1] Council of Ireland to Wolsey: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 92,-3.

[2] Campion says Kildare had a friend in the Duke of Suffolk. *History of Ireland*, by EDWARD CAMPION, p. 161.

sent over to 'investigate,' with instructions, if they saw reason, to replace Kildare in his old office.

The permission was sufficient; in 1524 he was again deputy; and no deliberate purpose of misrule could have led to results more fatal. The Earl, made bold by impunity, at once prepared for a revolt from the English Crown. Hitherto he had been contented to make himself essential to the maintenance of the English sovereignty; he now launched out into bolder measures, and encouraged by Henry's weakness, resolved to dare the worst extremity. On the breaking out of the French war of 1523-24, his kinsman, the Earl of Desmond, opened a negotiation with Francis I. for the landing of a French army in Munster.[1] Kildare, while professing that he was endeavouring to take Desmond prisoner, was holding secret interviews with him to concert plans for a united move,[2] and was strengthening himself at the same time with alliances among the native chiefs. One of his daughters became the wife of the O'Connor; another married O'Carroll, of Leap Castle; and a third the Baron of Slane;[3] and to leave no doubt of his intentions, he transferred the cannon and military stores from Dublin Castle to his own fortress at Maynooth. Lord Ormond sent information to England of these proceedings, but he could gain no

[1] Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare: *Irish Statute Book*, 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 1. An account of this negotiation is to be seen in a paper in the British Museum, Titus, B. xi. fol. 352.

[2] Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare: Ibid.

[3] The elder sisters of the 'fair Geraldine' of Lord Surrey.

hearing. For three years the Geraldines were allowed to continue their preparations undisturbed; and perhaps they might have matured their plans at leisure, so odious had become the mention of Ireland to the English statesmen, had not the King's divorce, by embroiling him with the Pope and Emperor, made the danger serious.

The alliance of England and France had disconcerted the first scheme. No sooner was this new opportunity opened than, with Kildare's consent, Desmond applied to Charles V. with similar overtures.[1] This danger was

[1] The Emperor's chaplain, Gonzalvo Fernandez, was the agent through whom the correspondence with Desmond was conducted.—*State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 186. And see *Cotton. MS.* Vespasian, c. iv. fol. 264, 276, 285, 288, 297.—'He sent unto the Emperour, provoking and enticing him to send an army unto this said land.'—Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare. See also LELAND, vol. ii. p. 136.

The account given by Gonzalvo Fernandez of his visit to Desmond is among the Archives at Brussels, and supplies a curious picture of the state of the country.

Report of Gonzalvo Fernandez.

'April 28, 1529.

'On arriving at the coast of Ireland we touched at a port belonging to the King of England named Cork. Many of the Irish people came on board the ship, and told me that the gentleman of the Earl of Desmond had just returned from Spain with presents from the Emperor to the Earl.

'Leaving Cork, we were driven by bad weather into another harbour called Beran,* from whence I sent one of my servants to inform the Earl of my arrival. In four days the Earl's answer came, telling me that I was welcome, and that he was at a place called Dingle, where he hoped to see me. He addressed his letter to me as 'Chaplain of *our* Sovereign Lord the Emperor;' and this, I understand, is his usual mode of expression when speaking of his Majesty. He had also sent to some of the other noblemen of the country, with whom he proposed to form a league, to tell them of my arrival.

'I set out again, and on the way five of the Earl's people came to me to say that their master had gone to a harbour a few miles off to capture

* Beerhaven, perhaps.

too serious to be neglected; and in 1527 Kildare was a second time summoned to London. He went, so con-

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some French and English vessels there, and would be glad of my assistance. This I declined, and the Earl, I understand, was satisfied with my excuses.

'The day after, the 21st of April, we reached the said harbour of Dingle, and were honourably received by the townspeople, and by a party of the Earl's attendants. About four o'clock the Earl returned himself, attended by fifty horse and as many halberdiers. He came at once to my quarters, and asked after the welfare of 'our Lord the Emperor.' I replied that, by the grace of God, his Majesty was well, and I had sent his commendations to his lordship.

'We then dined; and afterwards the Earl and his council repaired to my chamber, where we presented him with his Majesty's letter. He read it and his council read it. His Majesty, he said, referred him to me. I was commissioned to make known his Majesty's pleasure to him. I at once declared my instructions, first in English to the Earl, and afterward in Latin to his council; which I said were to this effect.

' 'One Godfrey, a friend of their 'lord, had lately presented himself 'to the Emperor with their lord's 'letter, in which their lord, after 'speaking of the good will and affec- 'tion which he entertained towards 'the Emperor's Majesty, had ex- 'pressed a desire to enter into close 'alliance with his Majesty, as friend 'to friend and enemy to enemy, de- 'claring himself ready, in all things 'and at all times, to obey his Ma- 'jesty's commands.

' 'Further, the said Godfrey had 'requested the Emperor to send a 'confidential person to Ireland, to 'learn more particularly their lord's 'intentions, and his resources and 'power; and further, to negotiate a 'treaty and establish a firm and 'complete alliance. For these pur- 'poses the Emperor commissioned 'myself. I was the bearer to them 'of his Majesty's thanks for their 'proposals, and I said I was so far in 'my master's confidence that I was 'assured their lord might expect all 'possible assistance at the Emperor's 'hands.'

'When I had done, the Earl spoke a few words to his council. He then took off his cap, and said he thanked his Majesty for his gracious condescension. He had addressed himself to his Majesty as to his sovereign lord, to entreat his protection. His Majesty was placed in this world in his high position, in order that no one prince might oppress or injure another. He related his descent to me. He said that, between his family and the English, there had ever existed a mortal enmity, and he explained the cause to me.

fident was he of the weakness of the Government, and

'I replied that his Majesty never failed to support his allies and his subjects, and should he claim assistance in that capacity, his Majesty would help him as he helped all his other good friends. I advised the Earl to put in writing the words which he had used to me. He thought it would be enough if I repeated them; but when I said the story was too long, and my memory might not retain it with accuracy, he said he would do as I desired.

'We then spoke of the support for which he was looking, of his projects and resources, and of the places in which he proposed to serve. He said he wanted from his Majesty four large vessels, two hundred tons each, six pinnaces well provided with artillery, and five hundred Flemings to work them. I said at once and earnestly, that such a demand was out of all reason, before he, on his part, had achieved something in his Majesty's service. I remonstrated fully and largely, although, to avoid being tedious, I omit the details. In the end his council were satisfied that he must reduce his demands till his Majesty had more reason to know what was to be expected from him, and he consented, as will be seen by his own memoir.

'Of all men in the world the Earl hates most deeply the Cardinal of York. He told me he had been in alliance with France, and had a relation called De Quindel, now with the French army in Italy. In future, he said, he would have no dealings with the French. As your Majesty's enemies, they were his enemies.

'Your Majesty will be pleased to understand that there are in Ireland four principal cities. The city of Dublin is the largest and richest in the island, and neither in the town nor in the neighbourhood has the Earl of Desmond land or subjects. The Earl of Kildare is sovereign in that district, but that Earl is a kinsman of the Earl of Desmond, and has married his cousin.

'The Earl of Kildare, however, is at present a prisoner in the Tower of London.

'Of the other three cities, one is called Waterford, the second Cork, the third Limerick; and in all of these the Earl of Desmond has lordships and vassals. He has dominions, also, among the wild tribes; he has lords and knights on his estates who pay him tribute. He has some allies, but not so many, by a great deal, as he has enemies.

'He has ten castles of his own, some of which are strong and well-built, especially one named Dungarvan, which the King has often attempted to take without success.

'The Earl himself is from thirty to forty years old, and is rather above the middle height. He keeps better justice throughout his dominions than any other chief in Ireland. Robbers and homicides find no mercy, and are executed out of hand. His people are in high order and dis-

again he was found to have calculated justly. He was

cipline. They are armed with short bows and swords. The Earl's guard are in a mail from neck to heel, and carry halberds. He has also a number of horse, some of whom know how to break a lance. They all ride admirably without saddle or stirrup.'

After the report of Gonzalvo Fernandez, Desmond himself continues in Latin.

'Hereunto be added informations addressed to the invincible and most sacred Cæsar, ever august, by the Earl of Desmond, Lord of Ogonyll and the liberties of Kilcrygge.

'I, James Earl of Desmond, am of royal blood, and of the race of the Conqueror who did lawfully subdue Britain, great and small, and did reduce Scotland and Ireland under his yoke.

'The first cause of the enmity between myself and the King of England is an ancient prophecy or prediction, believed by the English nation, and written in their books and chronicles, that all England will be conquered by an Earl of Desmond, which enterprise I have not yet undertaken.

'The second cause is that, through fear of this prophecy, the King of England has committed his powers to my predecessors who have borne rule in Ireland; and when Thomas Earl of Desmond, my grandfather, in peaceable manner attended Parliament in Ireland, no cause being alleged against him, but merely in dread of the prophecy, they struck off his head.

'The third cause is that, when Richard, son of the King of England [*sic*], heard that there were ancient feuds between the English and my predecessors, he came to Ireland with an army and a great fleet in the time of my father; and then did my father make all Ireland to be subdued unto himself, some few towns only excepted.

'The fourth cause is that, by reason of the aforesaid feuds, the King of England did cause Gerald Earl of Kildare, my father's kinsman, to be destroyed in prison [*destrui in carceribus*] until that my father, by might and power, did liberate the said Earl of Kildare, and did obtain his own purposes, and did make his kinsman viceroy of Ireland.

'The fifth cause is that, when peace was hardly begun between my aforesaid father and the King of England, a certain sickness fell upon my father, I myself being then eight years old.

'The King, when he heard this, made a league of Irish and English to kill my father; he being then, as they thought, unable to take the field. They, being banded together, made war against my father for twenty-four years, wherein, by God's grace, they had small success.

'The sixth cause is that, when peace was made at last between the King that now is and myself, I, in faith of the said peace, sent certain

arraigned before the council, overwhelmed with in-

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of my servants to the parts beyond the seas to Flanders and France, and the attorneys of the King of England did despoil my servants of the sum of 9000*l.*, and threw them into prison, where they now remain.

'Hereon follows my supplication:—

'These things premised, I, the aforesaid Earl, do implore and entreat the invincible and most sacred Majesty of Cæsar Augustus that he will deign to provide me with remedy, and I, with all my horses and people, do devote myself to your Majesty's service, seeing that your Majesty is appointed for the welfare of the oppressed, and to be lord paramount of all the earth.

'To revenge the injuries done to myself and my family by the King of England, I have the following powers; that is to say, 16,500 foot and 1500 horse. Also I have friends confederate with me, whose names be these—

'1. The Prince O'Brien, who can make	600 horse	and	1000 foot.		
2. Trobal de Burgh	"	100	"	600	"
3. Sir Richard Poer	"	40	"	200	"
4. Lord Thomas Butler	"	60	"	240	"
5. Sir John Galty	"	80	"	400	"
6. Sir Gerald Fitzgerald	"	40	"	200	"
7. The White Knight	"	400	"	800	"
8. O'Donnell, Prince of Ulster	"	800	"	4000	"
9. The Knight of the Valley	"	40	"	240	"
10. Baron MacMys	"	40	"	500	"
11. Captain Macguire	"	30	"	200	"

'With divers others whose names be here omitted.

'Moreover, I, the aforesaid James Earl of Desmond, do make known to the Majesty of Cæsar august, that there is an alliance between me and the King of Scotland, and, by frequent embassies, we understand each other's purposes and intentions.

'Finally, divine grace permitting, I intend to gather together my own and my friends' powers, and lead them in person against Piers Butler, deputy of the King of England, and against Limerick, Wexford, and Dublin, the cities which the King holds in Ireland.

'For the aid for which I look from your Majesty, I desire especially cannon available for land service and fit for breaching castles. May it please your Majesty, therefore, to send me cannon, that I may be the better able to do your Majesty service.

'And for myself, I promise on my faith to obey your Majesty in all things. I will be friend of your friends; enemy of your enemies; and your Majesty's especial and particular subject. If ever I chance to dis-

vectives by Wolsey,[1] and sent to the Tower. But he escaped by his old arts. No sooner was he committed, than Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, who had accompanied him to England, hurried back across the Channel to the castle of her brother-in-law, O'Connor.[2] The robber chief instantly rose and attacked the pale. The Marchers opened their lines to give his banditti free passage into the interior;[3] and he seized and carried off prisoner the Baron of Delvin, who had been made vice-deputy on Kildare's departure. Desmond meanwhile held Ormond in check at Kilkenny, and prevented him from sending assistance to Dublin; and the Irish council were at once prostrate and helpless.

Henry VIII., on receipt of this intelligence, instead of sending Kildare to the block and equipping an army, condescended to write a letter of remonstrance to

please you, I will submit myself to your correction and chastisement.

'Written in my town, this 28th day of April, 1529, in the presence of Gonzalvo Fernandez, Denys Mac D——c, Doctor of Arms and Medicine, Denys Fathe, Maurice Herly.

'JAMES OF DESMOND.'

—*The Pilgrim*, pp. 171-5.

[1] 'You remember how the lewd Earl your kinsman,' he said to him, 'who passeth not whom he serve, might he change his master, sent his confederates with letters of credence to Francis the French King, and to Charles the Emperor, proffering the help of Munster and Connaught towards the conquest of Ireland, if either of them would help to win it from our King. What precepts, what messages have been sent you to apprehend him? and yet not done. Why so? Forsooth I could not catch him. Yea, sir, it will be sworn and deposed to your face, that for fear of meeting him, you have winked, wilfully shunned his sight, altered your course, warned his friends, stopped both eyes and ears against his detection. Surely this juggling and false play little became an honest man called to such honour, or a nobleman put in such trust.'—CAMPION, p. 165.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 146-7.

[3] Norfolk to Wolsey: Ibid. p. 135.

O'Connor. 'A letter from the King!' said the insolent chieftain when it was brought to him, 'what king? If I may live one year, I trust to see Ireland in that case that there shall be no more mention here of the King of England than of the King of Spain.'[1] Still, however, it was thought inconvenient to venture extremities. Henry allowed himself to make use of Kildare's assistance to soothe the immediate storm.[2] An old desire of the Irish had been that some prince of the blood should govern them;[3] he nominated, therefore, his natural son, the Duke of Richmond, as viceroy; and having no adequate force in Ireland to resist an insurrection, and no immediate means of despatching any such force, he was once more obliged to pardon and restore the traitorous Geraldine; appointing, at the same time, Sir William Skeffington, a moderately able man, though too old for duty, as the Duke of Richmond's deputy, and directing him to govern with the advice and co-operation of the Earl of Kildare.

To this disastrous weakness there was but one counterpoise—that the English party in the council of Ireland was strengthened by the appointment of John Allen to the archbishopric of Dublin and the office of chancellor. Allen was one of the many men of talent who owed their elevation to Wolsey. He was now sent over to keep watch on Kildare, and to supply the Go-

[1] Norfolk to Wolsey: Ibid. p. 146.

[2] It had been partially subdued by Lord James Butler.—Irish statute, 28 Henry VIII. cap. 1.

[3] O'Brien of Thomond to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii.

vernment with accurate information which might be relied upon as a ground for action. Till this time (and the fact is one which ought to be borne in mind), the Government had been forced to depend for their knowledge of the state of the country either on the representations of the deputy, or the private accusations of his personal enemies; both of them exceedingly untrustworthy sources. Henceforward there runs a clear stream of light through the fog and night of confusion, furnished either by the Archbishop or by Allen, Master of the Rolls, who was most likely his kinsman.

The policy of conciliation, if conduct so feeble deserves to be called a policy at all, had now reached its limit; and it amounted to confessed imbecility. Twice deposed from power on clear evidence of high treason, Lord Kildare was once more restored. It cost him but a little time to deliver himself of the presence of Skeffington; and in 1532 he was again sole deputy. All which the Earl of Surrey had foretold came to pass. Archbishop Allen was deprived of the chancellorship, and the Archbishop of Armagh, a creature of the Geraldines, was substituted in his place. Those noblemen and gentlemen who had lent themselves to the interests of the English in the Earl's absence were persecuted, imprisoned, or murdered. They had ventured to be loyal from a belief in the assurances which had been made to them; but the Government was far off and Kildare was near; and such of them as he condescended to spare 'were now driven in self-defence, maugre their wills, to

follow with the rest.'[1] The wind which filled the sails of the ship in which Kildare returned, blew into flames the fires of insurrection; and in a very Saturnalia of Irish madness the whole people, with no object that could be discovered but for very delight in disorder itself, began to tear themselves to pieces. Lord Thomas Butler was murdered by the Geraldines; Kildare himself was shot through the body in a skirmish; Powerscourt was burnt by the O'Tooles; and Dublin Castle was sacked in a sudden foray by O'Brien Oge. O'Neil was out in the north; Desmond in the south; and the English pale was overrun by brigands.[2] Ireland had found its way into its ideal condition—that condition towards which its instincts perpetually tended, and which at length it had undisputedly reached. The Allens furnished the King with a very plain report of the effect of his leniency. They dwelt boldly on the mistakes which had been made. Re-echoing the words of the Report of 1515, they declared that the only hope for the country was to govern by English deputies; and that to grudge the cost seemed 'consonant to the nature of him that rather than he will depart with fourpence he will jeopard to lose twenty shillings—which fourpence, disbursed in time, might have saved the other.'[3] They spoke well of the common Irish. 'If well governed,' they said, 'the Irish would be found as civil, politic, and active, as any other nation. But what subjects under any prince in the world,' they asked, 'would love or defend the rights of that prince

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[1] Report of 1533: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 163—179.
[2] *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 180. [3] Ibid. vol. ii. p. 177.

who, notwithstanding their true hearts and obedience, would afterwards put them under the governance of such as would persecute and destroy them?' Faith must be kept with those to whom promises had been made, and the habit of rewarding treason with concessions must be brought to an end. 'Till great men suffer for their offences,' they added, significantly, 'your subjects within the English pale shall never live in quietness, nor stand sure of their goods and lives. Therefore, let your deputy have in commandment to do justice upon great thieves and malefactors, and to spare your pardons.'[1]

These were but words, and such words had been already spoken too often to deaf ears; but the circumstances of the time were each day growing more perilous, and necessity, the true mother of statesmanship, was doing its work at last.

The winter months passed away, bringing only an increase of wretchedness. At length opened the eventful year of 1534, and Henry learnt that excommunication was hanging over him—that a struggle for life or death had commenced—and that the Imperial armies were preparing to strike in the quarrel. From that time onward the King of England became a new man. Hitherto he had hesitated, temporized, delayed—not with Ireland only, but with the manifold labours which were thrust upon him. At last he was awake. And, indeed, it was high time. With a religious war appar-

[1] *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 192.

ently on the eve of explosion, he could ill tolerate a hot-bed of sedition at his door; and Irish sedition was about to receive into itself a new element, which was to make it trebly dangerous.

Until that moment the disorders in Ireland had arisen out of a natural preference for anarchy. Every man's hand was against his neighbour, and the clans made war on each other only for revenge and plunder, and the wild delight of the game. These private quarrels were now to be merged in a single cause—a cause which was to lend a fresh stimulus to their hatred of England, and was at once to create and consecrate a national Irish spirit.

The Irish were eminently Catholic; not in the high sense of the word—for 'the noble folk' could 'oppress and spoil the prelates of the Church of Christ of their possessions and liberties' without particular scruple[1]—but the country was covered with churches and monasteries in a proportion to the population far beyond what would have been found in any other country in Europe; and there are forms of superstition which can walk hand in hand with any depth of crime, when that superstition is provided with a talisman which will wash away the stains of guilt. The love of fighting was inherent, at the same time, in the Celtic nature. And such a people, when invited to indulge their humour in the cause of the Church, were an army of insurrection ready made to the hands of the popes, the value of which their Holi-

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[1] *State Papers*, vol. iii. p. 10.

nesses were not slow to learn, as they have not been quick to forget.[1]

Henry was aware of the correspondence of Desmond with the Emperor. He, perhaps, also expected that the fiction might be retorted upon him (as it actually was) which had been invented to justify the first conquest of the island. If Ireland was a fief of the Pope, the same power which had made a present of it to Henry II. might as justly take it away from Henry VIII.; and the peril of his position roused him at length to an effort. It was an effort still clogged by fatality, and less than the emergency required: but it was a beginning, and it was something.

February. In February, 1534, a month before Clement pronounced his sentence, the Earl of Kildare was required, for the third and last time, to appear and answer for his offences; and a third time he ventured to obey. But England had become a changed country in the four years which had passed since his last presence there, and the brazen face and fluent lips were to serve him no more. On his arrival in London he was sent to the Tower, and discovered that he had overstepped his limits at last.[2] He was now shrewd enough to see that if a revolt was contemplated no time was to be lost. He must play his last card, or his influence was gone

[1] It is remarkable that, as I believe, there is no instance of the Act of heresy having been put in force in Ireland. The Irish Protestant Church counts many martyrs; but they were martyrs who fell by murder in the later massacres. So far as I can learn, no Protestant was ever tried and executed there as such by form of law.

[2] 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 1, Irish statutes.

for ever. Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, his eldest son, who in his boyhood had resided in England,[1] had been left as vice-deputy in his father's absence. The Earl before his departure had taken precautions to place the fortresses of the pale, with the arms and ammunition belonging to the Government, in the hands of dependents whom he could absolutely trust. No sooner was his arrest known than, in compliance with secret instructions which had been left with them, or were sent from England, his friends determined upon rebellion.[2]

April.

The opportunity was well chosen. The Government of Ireland was in disorder. Skeffington was designed for Kildare's successor, but he was not yet appointed; nor was he to cross the Channel till he had collected a strong body of troops, which was necessarily a work of time. The conditional excommunication of the King was then freshly published; and counsels, there is reason to think,[3] were guiding the Irish movement, which had originated in a less distempered brain than that of an Irish chieftain. Rumours were flying in the southern counties in the middle of June that a Spanish invasion might be immediately looked for, and the Emperor's chaplain was with the Earl of Desmond. His mission, it was said, was to prepare the way for an Imperial army; and Desmond himself was fortifying Dungarvan, the port at which an

[1] Cowley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 198.

[2] Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare: 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 1. The Act is explicit that the rebellion was in consequence of Kildare discovering that the King would not again trust him; and that he had carefully prepared for it before he left Ireland.

[3] The best of reasons. Fitzgerald was in direct communication with the Spanish ambassador in London.—*Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*, p. 305.

invading force could most conveniently land.[1] There is, therefore, a strong probability that Charles V., who had almost promised to execute the Papal sentence in the course of the summer, was looking for the most vulnerable point at which to strike; and, not venturing to invade England, was encouraging an Irish rebellion, with a view to following up his success if the commencement proved auspicious.[2]

June.

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[1] Cork and Waterford continued loyal. The mayor of the latter place wrote, on the 12th of July, to Cromwell as follows: 'This instant day, report is made by the Vicar of Dungarvan, that the Emperour hath sent certain letters unto the Earl of Desmond, by the same chaplain or ambassador that was sent to James the late Earl. And the common bruit is, that his practice is to win the Geraltynes and the Breenes; and that the Emperour intendeth shortly to send an army to invade the cities and towns by the sea-coasts of this land. This thing was spoken by a Spaniard more than a month agone to one of the inhabitants of this city; and because I thought it then somewhat incredible, I forbare at that time to write unto your wisdom thereof. The chaplain arrived more than fifteen days past at the Dingle, in the dominion of the said Earl, which Earl hath, for the victualling of his castle of Dungarvan, taken a ship charged with Spanish wines, that was bound to the town of Galway; and albeit that his years requireth quietness and rest, yet intendeth he as much trouble as ever did any of his nation.'—William Wise, Mayor of Waterford, to Cromwell, July 12, 1534: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 198.

[2] On the 21st of July, O'Brien of Thomond wrote the following characteristic letter to Charles:—

Corny O'Brien, Prince of Ireland, to the Emperor Charles V.

'July 21, 1534.

'To the most sacred and most invincible Cæsar, Charles Emperor of the Romans, Most Catholic King of Spain, health with all submission.—Most sacred Cæsar, lord most clement, we give your Majesty to know that our predecessors for a long time quietly and peacefully occupied Ireland, with constancy, force, and courage, and without rebellion. They possessed and governed this country in manner royal, as by our ancient chronicles doth plainly appear. Our said predecessors and ancestry did come from your Majesty's realm of Spain, where they were of the blood of a Spanish prince, and many kings of that lineage, in long succession, governed all Ireland

Simultaneously with the arrival of these unwelcome news, the English Government were informed by letters from Dublin, that Lord Thomas Fitzgerald had thrown off his allegiance, and had committed infinite murders, burnings, and robbings in the English pale; making 'his avaunt and boast that he was of the Pope's sect and band, and that him he would serve, against the King and all his partakers; that the King of England was accursed, and as many as took his part.'[1] The signal for the explosion was given with a theatrical

happily, until it was conquered by the English. The last king of this land was of my blood and name; and ever since that time our ancestors, and we ourselves, have ceased not to oppose the English intruders; we have never been subject to English rule, or yielded up our ancient rights and liberties; and there is, at this present, and for ever will be, perpetual discord between us, and we will harass them with continual war.

'For this cause, we, who till this present have sworn fealty to no man, submit ourselves, our lands, our families, our followers, to the protection and defence of your Majesty, and of free will and deliberate purpose we promise to obey your Majesty's orders and commands in all honest behests. We will serve your Majesty with all our force; that is to say, with 1660 horse and 2440 foot, equipped and armed. Further, we will levy and direct for your Majesty's use 13,000 men, well armed with harquebuss, bows, arrows, and swords. We will submit to your Majesty's will and jurisdiction more than a hundred castles, and they and all else shall be at your Majesty's disposition to be employed as you shall direct.

'We can undertake also for the assistance and support of our good brother the Earl of Desmond, whose cousin, the daughter of the late Earl James, your Majesty's friend, is our wife.

'Our further pleasure will be declared to you by our servants and friends, Robert and Dominic de Paul, to whom your Majesty will deign to give credence. May your Majesty be ever prosperous.

'Written at our Castle at Clare, witness, our daughter, July 21, 1534, by your humble servant and unfailing friend,

'CORNY O'BRIEN, Prince of Ireland.'

—MS. Archives at Brussels: *The Pilgrim*, pp. 175-6.

[1] Cowley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 198.

bravado suited to the novel dignity of the cause. Never before had an Irish massacre been graced by a Papal sanction, and it was necessary to mark the occasion by unusual form. The young lord, Silken Thomas, as he was called, was twenty-one years old, and an accomplished Irish cavalier. He was vice-deputy, or so he considered himself: and, unwilling to tarnish the honour of his loyal house by any action which could be interpreted into treachery, he commenced with a formal surrender of his office, and a declaration of war. On the eleventh of June the council were sitting in St Mary's abbey, when a galloping of horses was heard, and Lord Thomas, at the head of a hundred and forty of the young Geraldines, dashed up to the gate, and springing off his horse, strode into the assembly. The council rose, but he ordered them to sit still, and, taking the sword of state in his hand, he spoke in Irish to the following effect :—

June 11.

'However injuriously we be handled, and forced to defend ourselves in arms, when neither our service nor our good meaning towards our prince's crown availeth, yet say not hereafter, but in this open hostility which we profess here, and proclaim, we have showed ourselves no villains nor churls, but warriors and gentlemen. This sword of state is yours, and not mine; I received it with an oath, and have used it to your benefit. I should offend mine honour if I turned the same to your annoyance. Now I have need of mine own sword which I dare trust. As for this common sword, it flattereth me with a golden scabbard; but it hath in it a pestilent

edge, and whetteth itself in hope of a destruction. Save yourselves from us, as from open enemies. I am none of Henry's deputy; I am his foe; I have more mind to conquer than to govern, to meet him in the field than to serve him in office. If all the hearts of England and Ireland that have cause thereto would join in this quarrel, as I trust they will, then should he be a by-word, as I trust he shall, for his heresy, lechery, and tyranny; wherein the age to come may score him among the ancient princes of most abominable and hateful memory.'[1] 'With that,' says Campion, 'he rendered up his sword, adding to his shameful oration many other slanderous and foul terms.'

Cromer, Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of Armagh, a creature of Kildare, 'more like his parish priest or chaplain, than king's chancellor,'[2] who had been prepared beforehand, rose, and affected remonstrance; but, speaking in English, his words were not understood by the crowd. A bard in the Geraldine train cut short his speech with an Irish battle chant; and the wild troop rushed, shouting, out of the abbey, and galloped from the town.

In these mock heroics there need not have been anything worse than folly; but Irish heroism, like Irish religion, was unfortunately limited to words and feelings. The generous defiance in the cause of the Catholic faith was followed by pillage and murder, the usual accompaniments of Irish insurrection, as a sort of initial

[1] CAMPION'S *History of Ireland*, p. 175. LELAND, vol. ii. p. 143.
[2] *State Papers*, vol ii. p. 168.

holocaust to propitiate success. The open country was at the mercy of the rebels. Fitzgerald, joined by O'Connor, proceeded to swear-in all such of the inhabitants of the pale as would unite against England; promising protection if they would consent, but inflicting fire and sword wherever he met refusal. The unfortunate people, warned by experience that no service was worse requited in Ireland than loyalty, had no spirit to resist. The few who were obnoxious were killed; the remainder submitted; and the growing corn was destroyed, and the farms were burnt, up to the gates of Dublin, that when the English army arrived, they might find neither food to maintain, nor houses to shelter them.[1] The first object of Fitzgerald, however, was to seize Dublin itself, where a portion of the citizens were in his favour. In the last week in July he appeared with his followers under the walls; a small force which had attempted to resist was defeated and driven in; and, under a threat of burning the city, if he was refused, he demanded the surrender of town and castle. The danger was immediate. The provident treachery of Kildare, in stripping the castle of its stores and cannon, had made defence all but impossible. Ormond was far off, and weeks must pass before relief could arrive from England. Sir John White, an English gentleman, with a handful of men-at-arms, had military command of the city; and the Archbishop of Armagh implored him to have pity on the citizens, and not to expose them

[1] Thomas Finglas to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 200.

to the consequences of a storm.[1] White was too stout a soldier to listen to such timid counsels; yet his position was one of extreme difficulty; his little garrison was too weak to defend the lines of the town without the assistance of the citizens, and the citizens were divided and dispirited. He resolved at length to surrender the city, and defend the castle to the last. Fitzgerald threatened that he would hold the townsmen responsible for the submission of the troops; but, savage as the English commander knew him to be, he calculated, with justice, that he would not ruin his popularity by cutting the throats of an unresisting crowd.

Hastily gathering together sufficient stores to enable him to hold out for a few weeks, and such arms and ammunition as could be collected in the emergency, White withdrew into the fortress, taking with him the Master of the Rolls, the Chief Baron, and such other of the council as desired to be his companions. The inhabitants of Dublin were then empowered to make terms with the rebels. The gates were opened on Fitzgerald's promise to respect life and property, the city was occupied, and siege was immediately laid to the castle. This was on the 27th of July. The morning which followed was marked by one of those atrocities which have so often unfortunately distinguished Irish rebellions. Archbishop Allen, to whose exertions the exposure of Kildare's proceedings had been principally due, either fearing the possible consequences to himself if the

July 27.

[1] Agard to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 245.

castle was taken, as the Irish writers say,[1] or more probably to hasten in person the arrival of the deputy and his troops, instead of remaining with White, volunteered to cross to England; and before the gates were opened, he went on board a vessel and dropped down the river. He had placed himself unknowingly in the hands of traitors, for the ship was commanded by a Geraldine,[2] and in the night which followed was run aground at Clontarf, close to the mouth of the Liffey. The country was in possession of the insurgents, the crew were accomplices, and the stranded vessel, on the retreat of the tide, was soon surrounded. The Archbishop was partly persuaded, partly compelled to go on shore, and was taken by two dependents of the Earl of Kildare to a farm-house in the village of Artayne. Here he was permitted to retire to bed; but if he slept, it was for an early and a cruel wakening. The news of his capture was carried to Fitzgerald, who was then in the city, but a few miles distant, and the young lord, with three of his uncles, was on the spot by daybreak. They entered the house and ordered Allen to be brought before them. The Archbishop was dragged from his bed; and in his shirt as he was, bare-legged and bare-headed, he dropped upon his knees, and begged for mercy. As well might the sheep have asked mercy of the famished wolf. He had but time to bequeath his soul to heaven, and his skull was cloven as he knelt; and, to make clean work, his chaplains, his servants, all of English blood who were with him, were slaughtered over his

July 28.

[1] LELAND, vol. ii. p. 145. [2] Ibid.

body.[1] Such was the pious offering to God and holy Church on which the sun looked down as it rose that fair summer's morning over Dublin Bay; and such were the men whose cause the Mores and the Fishers, the saintly monks of the Charterhouse and the holy martyrs of the Catholic faith, believed to be the cause of the Almighty Father of the world.[2]

The morning's work was still but half completed. To massacre a heretic archbishop was a meritorious, or at least a venial act; but it was desirable that an opinion in favour of it should be pronounced by authority; or that the guilt, if guilt there was, should be washed off without delay. The Archdeacon of Kells,[3] therefore, was despatched to the Pope and to the Emperor, to press the latter to send assistance on this happy success, and to bring back absolution from his Holiness,[4] if the murder required it. The next object was to prevent news from reaching England before the castle should be taken. The river was watched, the timely assistance of an English pirate enabled Fitzgerald to blockade the bay; and Dublin was effectively sealed. But the report of the murder spread rapidly through Ireland. In three days it was known at Waterford, and the Prior of Kilmain-

[1] Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare: 28 Henry VIII. cap. 1. The Prior of Kilmainham to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 501. CAMPION, p. 178.

[2] *Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*, p. 323.

[3] Call McGravyll, or Charles Reynolds: Act of Attainder, 28 Henry VIII. c. 1. CAMPION, p. 176.

[4] Such, at least, one of Fitzgerald's attendants, who was present at the murder, understood to be one of the objects of the Archdeacon's mission. (*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 201, note.) The Act of Attainder says merely that he was sent to beg for assistance.

ham,[1] who had taken refuge there, crossed into Wales on the instant, intending to ride post to London.[2] He was delayed at St David's by an attack of paralysis; but he sent forward a companion who had left Ireland with him; and the death of the Archbishop was made known to Henry in the second week in August.

If Skeffington could set out on the instant, the castle might be saved, and Dublin recovered. Couriers were despatched to urge him to make haste; and others were sent to Ireland to communicate with Ormond, and, if possible, with the party in the castle. But Skeffington, who was too old for his work, had loitered over his preparations, and was not ready; and the delay would have been fatal, except for the Earl of Ormond, the loyalty of whose noble house at that crisis alone saved the English authority in Ireland. On the arrival of Henry's courier, he collected his people and invaded Kildare. The country was unenclosed—not a fence nor a hedge broke the broad surface of moor and meadow, save where at intervals a few small patches were enclosed for corn crops. Infinite herds of cattle grazed at will over the expanse of pasture, and these cattle were the chief dependence of the people. Ormond, by the suddenness of his inroad, and the absence of the owners, was enabled to sweep clear the whole tract which was occupied by the Geraldines; and Fitzgerald was forced to retire from Dublin to defend or recover his property. He left a detachment in the city, to prevent the troops in the

August.

[1] Rawson, one of the Irish Council.
[2] *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 201.

castle from obtaining supplies,[1] and then hurried off to revenge the foray. Entering Carlow, he took a castle on the Slaney, and murdered the garrison. Thence he turned towards Kilkenny, and was bearing down upon Ormond with a strength which it would have been hard for the Butlers to resist, when he learnt that the citizens of Dublin, encouraged by the news that an English army was actually coming, had repented of their patriotism, and to earn their pardon from Henry, had closed their gates, and had seized and imprisoned the party who were left before the castle. The prize for which he had played so deeply was slipping from his hands at the moment when it was all but won. He was forced to return in haste; but before he left Kilkenny, he made an effort to induce Ormond to join him. He promised, that if the Earl would assist him in driving out the English, he would 'take him as his father,' that he would make a present to his son, Lord James, of half the inheritance of the Kildares, and that they two should together rule Ireland.[2]

Promises when extorted by presence of danger from a Geraldine were of indifferent value; but if Fitzgerald's engagements had been as sure as they were false and fleeting, they would have weighed little with this gallant old nobleman. Ormond replied, that if the rebels would lay down their arms and sue for mercy, they might perhaps find it; but for himself, 'if his country

[1] LELAND, vol. ii. p. 146.

[2] Instructions to Walter Cowley to be declared to the King's Highness in behalf of the Earl of Ossory: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 250.

were wasted, his castles won or prostrate, and himself exiled, yet would he never shrink to persevere in his duty to the King to the death.'[1] Failing here, and having at the same time received a check in a skirmish, Fitzgerald next endeavoured to gain time. The Irish clans were gathering, but they were still at a distance, and his own presence was instantly required elsewhere. He offered a truce, therefore; and to this Ormond, being hard pressed by the Earl of Desmond, was ready to consent. But it was only treachery. Ormond broke up his camp, and his people were scattered; and within three days, O'Neile having joined Fitzgerald, he was taken at a disadvantage; his son, Lord James, was severely wounded; and a cordon of Irish being drawn round him, to prevent him from relieving Dublin, the rebel army hastened back to renew the siege.[2] They had the cannon with them which Kildare had taken from the castle,[3] but were happily ill-provided with ammunition, or resistance would have been desperate. The siege opened at the beginning of September. The month passed away, and the place was still untaken. If the deputy would only arrive, there was still time to save it. Each hour he was looked for, yet through these priceless days he was loitering at

September.

[1] *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 250. CAMPION, pp. 177-8.

[2] M'Morrough, O'More, O'Connor, O'Brien, in September, with the greatest part of the gentlemen of the county of Kildare, were retained and sat at Carlow, Castledermot, Athye, Kilkea, and thereabout, with victualls during three weeks, to resist the Earl of Ossory from invading of the county of Kildare.—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 251.

[3] The rebel chiefly trusteth in his ordnance, which he hath of the King's.—Allen to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 202.

Beaumaris. From the fatality which has for ever haunted the dealings of English statesmen with Ireland, an old man past work, weak in health, and with all the moral deficiencies of a failing constitution, had been selected to encounter a dangerous rebellion. The insurrection had broken out in June; every moment was precious, the loss of a day might be the loss of the whole country; yet it was now the fourth of October; the ships were loaded; the horses were on board; they had been on board a fortnight, and were sickening from confinement. The wind was fair, at that critical season of the year a matter of incalculable importance. Yet Skeffington was still 'not ready.'[1] All would have been lost but for the Earl of Ormond. The city was at the last extremity, when he contrived to force his way through the Irish into Kildare; he again laid waste the country, and destroyed the newly-gathered harvests.[2] On the 14th of October Fitzgerald was forced finally to raise

Oct. 4.

October 14.

[1] Allen, Master of the Rolls, had gone over to quicken his sluggish movements, and wrote from Chester to Cromwell, in despair: 'Please your goodness to be advertised, that as yet the deputy is at Beaumaris, and the Northern men's horses have been on shipboard these twelve days, which is the danger of their destruction. They have lost such a wind and fair weather, as I doubt they shall not have again for this winter season. Mr Brereton (Sir William Brereton, Skeffington's second in command) lieth here at the sea-side in a readiness. If their first appointment to Dublin had been kept, they might have been there; but now they tarry to pass with the deputy. Sir, for the love of God, let some aid be sent to Dublin; for the loss of that city and the castle were the plain subversion of the land.'—Allen to Cromwell, Oct. 4: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 202.

[2] Instructions to Walter Cowley on behalf of the Earl of Ossory: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 251.

the siege, that his followers might save the remnant of their property from destruction. The relief was but just in time, for the resources of Dublin were exhausted. Before retreating, the rebel lord exacted from the corporation an engagement that at the end of six weeks they should either have procured his pardon from the King, with the deputation of Ireland for his life, or else should surrender the city. For the fulfilment of these insolent terms he took as pledges sixteen of the children of the most important families of the city, with three of the corporation themselves.[1]

And now, at length, on the same 14th of October, the English anchors were finally raised, and the deputy, with Sir William Brereton and Sir John Salisbury, several hundred Northumberland horse trained in the Border wars, and a number not specified, but probably from two to three thousand archers and men-at-arms,[2] were under way. Whether the blame of the delay lay with the incompetency of Skeffington, or the contempt of the English, which would not allow them to make haste into the presence of an enemy who never dared to encounter them in the field, but carried on war by perjury, and pillage, and midnight murder—whatever the cause was, they were at length on their way, and, through the devotion of Ormond, not too late to be of use.

The fleet crossed the Channel in a single night, and

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[1] Sir William Brereton to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 204.

[2] Two thousand five hundred was the smallest number which Lord Surrey previously mentioned as sufficient to do good.—Ibid. p. 73.

the next morning were under Lambay Island,[1] where they had run in for shelter. Here news was brought them that Dublin Castle was taken. They did not believe it; but a council of war was held, and Skeffington resolved that for himself he might not risk the attempt to land; Brereton and Salisbury might try it, if they could do so 'without casting themselves away;' the deputy would go on to Waterford with the body of the army, and join Sir John St Loo, who had crossed to that port in the week preceding from Bristol.

Accordingly, on the morning of the 17th of October, Sir William Brereton, with five hundred men, sailed into the mouth of the Liffey; and running up the river, instead of an enemy drawn up to oppose his landing, he found the mayor and corporation waiting at the quay, with drums, and flags, and trumpets to welcome him as a deliverer.[2]

Skeffington was less successful; he remained under Lambay waiting for a wind for Waterford, and in the mean time Fitzgerald, hearing of the arrival of the fleet, was in force upon the hills overlooking the anchorage. The English commander, though aware that the insurgents were in the neighbourhood, allowed himself, with extreme imprudence, to land a detachment of troops, with directions to march to Dublin. He himself went with the fleet to the Skerries,[3] where he conceived, under

[1] Fifteen miles north of Dublin; immediately off Malahide.

[2] Sir William Brereton and Sir John Salisbury to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 203.

[3] A small harbour near Drogheda.

false information, that a party of the rebels were lying. He found nothing there but a few fishing-boats; and while he was engaged in burning these, Fitzgerald attacked the division which had been sent on shore, and cut them off to a man. Nor was this the only misfortune. The pirate ships which had been watching Dublin Bay hovered round the fleet, cutting off straggling transports; and although one of them was chased and driven on shore, the small success poorly counterbalanced the injury which had been inflicted.[1]

After a week of this trifling, Skeffington consented to resign his intention of going to Waterford, and followed Brereton into Dublin. Why he had delayed a day after discovering that the river and the city were open to him, it is impossible to conjecture.

October 21.

[1] Skeffington was prudently reserved in his report of these things to Henry. He mentions having set a party on shore, but says nothing of their having been destroyed; and he could not have been ignorant of their fate, for he was writing three weeks after it, from Dublin. He was silent, too, of the injury which he had received from the pirates, though eloquent on the boats which he burnt at the Skerries.—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 205. On first reading Skeffington's despatch, I had supposed that the 'brilliant victory' claimed by the Irish historians (see LELAND, vol. ii. p. 148) must have been imaginary. The Irish Statute Book, however, is too explicit to allow of such a hope. 'He [Fitzgerald] not only fortified and manned divers ships at sea, for keeping and letting, destroying and taking the King's deputy, army, and subjects, that they should not land within the said land; but also at the arrival of the said army, the same Thomas, accompanied with his uncles, servants, adherents, &c., falsely and traitorously assembled themselves together upon the sea coast, for keeping and resisting the King's deputy and army; and the same time they shamefully murdered divers of the said army coming to land. And Edward Rowkes, pirate at the sea, captain to the said Thomas, destroyed and took many of them.—Act of Attainder of the Earl of Kildare: 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 1.

But his presence was of little benefit, and only paralyzed his abler subordinates. As soon as he had brought his army into the city, he conceived that he had done as much as the lateness of the season would allow. The November weather having set in wild and wet, he gave up all thought of active measures till the return of spring; and he wrote to inform the King, with much self-approbation, that he was busy writing letters to the Irish chiefs, and making arrangements for a better government; that Lord Thomas Fitzgerald had been proclaimed traitor at the market-cross; and that he hoped, as soon as the chancellor and the vicar-general could come to an understanding, the said traitor might be pronounced excommunicated.[1] All this was very well, and we learn to our comfort that in due time the excommunication was pronounced; but it was not putting down the rebellion—it was not the work for which he was sent to Ireland with three thousand English soldiers.

November.

Fitzgerald, as soon as the army was landed, retired into the interior; but, finding that the deputy lay idle within the walls, he recovered heart, and at the head of a party of light horse reappeared within six miles of Dublin. Trim and Dunboyne, two populous villages, were sacked and burnt, and the blazing ruins must have been seen from the battlements of the Castle. Yet neither the insults of the rebels nor the entreaty of the inhabitants could move the imperturbable Skeffington.

[1] Skeffington to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii. pp. 206-7.

He lay still within the city walls;[1] and Fitzgerald, still further encouraged, despatched a fresh party of ecclesiastics to the Pope and the Emperor, with offers of allegiance and promises of tribute,[2] giving out meanwhile in Ireland that he would be supported in the spring or summer by the long-talked-of Spanish army. Promises costing Charles V. nothing, he was probably liberal of them, and waited for the issue to decide how far they should be observed.

If this was so, the English deputy seemed to be determined to give the rebellion every chance of issuing as the Emperor desired. The soldiers were eager for employment, but Skeffington refused to give his officers an opportunity for distinction in which he did not share,[3] and a few ineffectual skirmishes in the neighbourhood were the sole exploits which for five months they were

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[1] Accompanied with the number of sixty or eighty horsemen, and about three hundred kerne and gallowglass, the traitor came to the town of Trim, and there not only robbed the same, but also burnt a great part thereof, and took all the cattle of the country thereabouts; and after that assaulted Dunboyne, within six miles to Dublin; and the inhabitants of the town defending themselves by the space of two days, and sending for succour to Dublin . . . . in default of relief, he utterly destroyed and burnt the whole town. —Allen to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 220.

[2] He hath sent divers muniments and precedents which should prove that the King held this land of the See of Rome; alledging the King and his realm to be heretics digressed from the obedience of the same, and of the faith Catholic. Wherefore his desire is to the Emperour and the Bishop of Rome, that they will aid him in defence of the faith Catholic against the King, promising that he will hold the said land of them, and pay tribute for the same, yearly.—Ibid. p. 222.

[3] My lord deputy desireth so much his own glory, that he would no man should make an enterprise except he were at it.—Ibid. p. 227.

allowed to achieve. One expedition, as far as Drogheda, the deputy indeed ventured, towards the end of November; and in the account of it which he sent to England, he wrote as if it were a matter of congratulation that he had brought his army back in safety. Nor were his congratulations, at least to himself, without reason, for he owed that safety to God and to fortune. He had allowed the archers to neglect the old precaution of taking cases for their bows. They were overtaken by a storm, which wetted the strings and loosened the feathers of the arrows; and thus, at disadvantage, they were intercepted in a narrow defile,[1] and escaped only because the Irish were weak in numbers.

He excused himself for his shortcomings on the plea that he was in bad health—an adequate apology for his own inaction, but none for his appointment on a service so dangerous. Yet perhaps his failure is explained by the scene of it. Elsewhere, Sir William Skeffington may have been a gallant soldier and a reasonable man; but the fatal atmosphere of Ireland seems at all times to have had a power of prostrating English intellect. The Protector Cromwell alone was cased in armour which could defy its enchantments. An active officer might have kept the field without difficulty. The Master of the Rolls, to prove that the country, even in mid-winter, was practicable without danger, rode to Waterford in November with only three hundred horse, through the heart of the disturbed districts, and returned

[1] Skeffington to Sir Edmund Walsingham: Ibid. p. 233.

unmolested.[1] The Earl of Ossory, with Sir John St Loo, made an appointment to meet Skeffington at Kilcaa,[2] where, if he brought cannon, they might recover the castles of the Government which were held by the Geraldines. He promised to go, and he might have done so without danger or difficulty; but he neither went nor sent; only a rumour came that the deputy was ill;[3] and in these delays, and with this ostentation of imbecility, the winter passed away, as if to convince every wavering Irishman that, strong as the English might be in their own land, the sword dropped from their nerveless hands when their feet were on Irish soil. Nor was this the only or the worst consequence. The army, lying idle in Dublin, grew disorganized; many of the soldiers deserted; and an impression spread abroad that Henry, after all, intended to return to the old policy, to pardon Fitzgerald, and to restore him to power.[4]

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[1] Allen to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 220.

[2] In Kildare county, on the frontiers of the pale.

[3] The captains and I, the Earl (of Ossory), directed letters to the deputy to meet us in the county of Kildare, at Kilcaa, bringing with him ordnance accordingly, when the deputy appointed without fail to meet. At which day and place the said Earl, with the army (of) Waterford failed not to be, and there did abide three days continually for the deputy; where he, neither any of the army, came not, ne any letter or word was had from him; but only that Sir James Fitzgerald told that he heard say he was sick.—Ossory to W. Cowley: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 251.

[4] Allen certainly thought so, or at least was unable to assure himself that it was not so. 'My simple advice shall be,' he wrote, 'that if ever the King intend to show his grace (which himself demandeth not in due manner) and to pardon him, to withdraw his charges and to pardon him out of hand; or else to send hither a proclamation under the Great Seal of England, that the King never intends to pardon him ne any that shall take part with

1534-5. Feb. 16.

The clear pen of the indefatigable Allen lays the state of affairs before us with the most painful distinctness. 'My lord deputy,' he wrote to Cromwell on the 16th of February, 'now by the space of twelve or thirteen weeks hath continued in sickness, never once going out of his house; he as yet is not recovered. In the mean time the rebel hath burnt much of the country, trusting, if he may be suffered, to waste and desolate the Inglishry, [and thus] to enforce this army to depart. Sirs, as I heretofore advertised you, this rebel had been banished out of all these parts or now, if all men had done their duties. But, to be plain with you, except there be a marshal appointed, which must do strait correction, and the army prohibited from resorting to Dublin (but ordered to keep the field), the King shall never be well served, but his purpose shall long be delayed.[1]

February.

The wages, also, were ill-paid, though money in abundance had been provided. The men were mutinous, and indemnified themselves at the expense of the wretched citizens, whose houses they pillaged at will under pretence that the owners were in league with the rebels.[2] The arms, also, which had

him, but utterly to prosecute both him and them to their utter confusion. For the gentlemen of the country hath said plainly to divers of the council, that until this be done, they dare not be earnest in resisting him, in doubt he should have his pardon hereafter, as his grandfather, his father, and divers his ancestors have had; and then would prosecute them for the same.'—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 222.

[1] Allen to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 226.

[2] 'Restraint must be had that this army shall not spoil ne rob any person, but as the deputy and council shall appoint; and that the

been supplied to the troops, were of the worst kind: they had been furnished out of ordnance which had been long on hand, and were worthless.[1]

The conduct of the King, when the representations of Allen were laid before him, was very unlike what the popular conception of his character would have led us to expect. We imagine him impatient and irritable; and supposing him to have been (as he certainly was) most anxious to see the rebellion crushed, we should have looked for some explosion of temper; or, at least, for some imperious or arbitrary message to the unfortunate deputy. He contented himself, however, with calmly sending some one whom he could trust to make inquiries; and even when the result confirmed the language of the Master of the Rolls, and the deputy's recall was in consequence urged upon him, he still refused to pass an affront upon an old servant. He appointed Lord Leonard Grey, brother of the Countess of Kildare, chief marshal of the army; but he would not even send Grey over till the summer, and he left Skeffington an opportunity of recovering his reputation in the campaign which was to open with the spring.[2] The

captains be obedient to their orders, or it shall not be well. Ne it is not meet that every soldier shall make a man a traitor for to have his goods. They be so nusselled in this robbery, that now they almost will not go forth to defend the country, except they may have gain.' — Allen to Cromwell, Feb. 16.

[1] 'The bows which came out of the stores at Ludlow Castle were naught; many of them would not hold the bending.—*State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 228.

[2] The King, a few months later, wrote to him a letter of warm thanks for his services, and admitted his plea of ill-health with peculiar kindness.—Henry VIII. to Skeffington: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 280.

army, however, was ordered to leave Dublin without delay; and the first move, which was made early in February, was followed by immediate fruits. Two of the pirates who had been acting with Fitzgerald were taken, and hanged.[1] Several other offenders of note were also caught and thrown into prison; and in two instances, as if the human ministers of justice had not been sufficiently prompt, the higher powers thought fit to inflict the necessary punishment. John Teling, one of the archbishop's murderers, died of a foul disorder at Maynooth;[2] and the Earl of Kildare, the contriver of the whole mischief, closed his evil career in the Tower of London 'for thought and pain.'[3] He was attainted by the Parliament which sat in the autumn, and lay under sentence of death when death came unbidden to spare the executioner his labour.

Meantime, the spring opened at last, and affairs further improved. Skeffington's health continued weak; but with the advance of the season he was able to take the field; and on the 14th of March he appeared under the walls of Maynooth. This castle was the strongest in the possession of the Geraldines. Vast labour had been recently expended on its fortifications, for which the King's subjects had been forced to pay. It was defended by the ordnance from Dublin, and held by a small but adequate garrison. It was thought to be impregnable, and in the earlier stages

March 14.

[1] Brabazon to Cromwell: Ibid. p. 224.

[2] Allen to Cromwell: Ibid. p. 230.

[3] Campion, p. 179.

of the science of gunnery it might possibly have defied the ordinary methods of attack. Nay, with a retrospective confidence in the strength of its defences, the Irish historians have been unable to believe that it could have been fairly taken; they insist that it resisted the efforts of the besiegers, and was on the point of being saved by Fitzgerald,[1] when it was delivered to the English commander by treachery. A despatch to the King, which was written from the spot, and signed by the deputy and all the members of the Irish council, leaves but little remaining of this romance.

An authentic account of an attack by cannon on a fortified place at that era, will scarcely fail to be interesting. The castle, says this document, was so strongly defended both with men and ordnance, 'as the like had not been seen in Ireland since the Conquest.' The garrison consisted of a hundred men, of which sixty were gunners. On the third day of the siege the English batteries opened on the north-west side of the donjon, and destroying the battlements, buried the cannon on that part of the wall under the ruins. The siege lines were then moved 'to the north side of the base court of the castle, at the north-east end whereof there was a new-made, very strong, and fast bulwark, well garrisoned with men and ordnance.' Here a continual fire was sustained for five days, 'on that wise that a breach and entry was made there.' Whereupon, continues the despatch, 'The twenty-

March 23.

[1] LELAND, COXE, WARE.

third day, being Tuesday next before Easter-day, there was a galiard assault given before five o'clock in the morning, and the base court entered; at which entry there were slain of the ward of the castle about sixty, and of your Grace's army no more but John Griffin, yeoman of your most honourable guard, and six others which were killed with ordnance of the castle at the entry. Howbeit, if it had not pleased God to preserve us, it were to be marvelled that we had no more slain. After the base court was thus won, we assaulted the great castle, which within a while yielded.' Thirty-seven of the remaining garrison were taken prisoners, with two officers, two Irish ecclesiastics who had distinguished themselves in promoting the insurrection, and one of the murderers of the Archbishop.

The place was taken by fair fighting, it seems, without need of treachery; and the capture by storm of a fortified castle was a phenomenon altogether new to the Irish, who had yet to learn the effect of well-served cannon upon walls.[1]

[1] Henry VIII. was one of the first men to foresee and value the power of artillery. Sebastiani mentions experiments on the range of guns which were made by him, in Southampton water; and it is likely that the cannon used in the siege of Maynooth were the large-sized brass guns which were first cast in England in the year of its capture.—Stow, p. 572. When the history of artillery is written, Henry VIII.'s labours in this department must not be forgotten. Two foreign engineers whom he tempted into his service, first invented 'shells.' 'One Peter Baud, a Frenchman born,' says Stow, 'and another alien, called Peter Van Collen, a gunsmith, both the King's feed men, conferring together, devised and caused to be made certain mortar pieces, being at the mouth from eleven inches unto nineteen inches wide, for the use whereof they [also] caused to be made certain hollow shot of cast

The work was at length begun in earnest, and in order to drive the lesson home into the understanding of the people, and to instruct them clearly that rebellion and murder were not any longer to be tolerated, the prisoners were promptly brought up before the provost-marshal, and twenty-six of them there and then, under the ruins of their own den, were hung up for a sign to the whole nation.[1]

A judicial operation of this kind had never before been witnessed in Ireland within the known cycle of its history, and the effect of it was proportionately startling. In the presence of this 'Pardon of Maynooth,' as it was called, the phantom of rebellion vanished on the spot. It was the first serious blow which was struck in the war, and there was no occasion for a second. In a moment the noise and bravado which had roared from Donegal to Cork was hushed into a supplication for forgiveness. Fitzgerald was hastening out of Thomond to the relief of his fortress. When they heard of the execution, his army melted from him like a snowdrift. The confederacy of the chiefs was broken up; first one fell away from it, and then another; and before the summer had come, O'Brien of Inchiquin, O'Connor, who had married Fitzgerald's sister, and the few scattered banditti of the Wicklow mountains, were all who

iron, to be stuffed with firework or wildfire; whereof the bigger sort for the same had screws of iron to receive a match to carry fire kindled, that the firework might be set on fire for to break in pieces the same hollow shot, whereof the smallest piece hitting any man would kill or spoil him.'—STOW, *Chronicle*, p. 584.

[1] *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 237.

remained of the grand association which was to place the Island of Saints at the feet of the Father of Christendom.

Sadder history in the compass of the world's great chronicle there is none than the history of the Irish: so courageous, yet so like cowards; so interesting, yet so resolute to forfeit all honourable claims to interest. In thinking of them, we can but shake our heads with Lord Chancellor Audeley, when meditating on this rebellion, and repeat after him, 'they be a people of strange nature, and of much inconstancy.'[1]

Lord Fitzgerald was now a fugitive, with a price upon his head. He retreated into Thomond, intending to sail for Spain, and to attempt with his own lips to work persuasion with the Emperor.[2] There was an expectation, however, that the Spaniards might be already on their way; and O'Brien persuaded him to remain, to prevent the complete disintegration of his party. Sir James de la Hyde was therefore sent to Charles; and the wretched young nobleman himself wandered from place to place, venturing, while Skeffington still lay at Maynooth, into the neighbourhood of his home, among his own people, yet unable to do more than evade the attempts which were made to capture him. The life of the rebellion was gone from it.

There was no danger that he would be betrayed. The Irish had many faults—we may not refuse them credit for their virtues. However treacherous they were

[1] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 446. [2] Ibid. vol. ii. p. 253.

to their enemies, however inconstant in their engagements, uncertain, untrue in ordinary obligations, they were without rivals in the world in their passionate attachments among themselves; and of all the chiefs who fell from Fitzgerald's banner, and hastened with submission to the English deputy, there was perhaps not one who, though steeped in the blood of a hundred murders, would not have been torn limb from limb rather than have listened to a temptation to betray him.

At length, after a narrow escape from a surprise, from which he rescued himself only by the connivance of the Irish kerne who were with the party sent to take him, the young earl, as he now called himself, weary of his wandering life, and when no Spaniards came, seeing that his cause was for the present hopeless, offered to surrender. It was by this time August, and Lord Leonard Grey, his father's brother-in-law, was present with the army. To him he wrote from O'Connor's Castle, in King's County, apologizing for what he had done, desiring pardon 'for his life and lands,' and begging his kinsman to interest himself in his behalf. If he could obtain his forgiveness, he promised to deserve it. If it was refused, he said that he 'must shift for himself the best that he could.'[1]

August.

In reply to this overture, Grey suggested an interview. The appointment of so near a relative of the Kildares to high office in Ireland, had been determined, we may be sure, by the Geraldine influence in the Eng-

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[1] Lord Thomas Fitzgerald to Lord Leonard Grey: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 273.

lish council. The marshal was personally acquainted with Fitzgerald, and it is to be observed that the latter in writing to him signed himself his 'loving friend.' That Lord Leonard was anxious to save him does not admit of a doubt; he had been his father's chief advocate with the King, and his natural sympathy with the representative of an ancient and noble house was strengthened by family connection. He is not to be suspected, therefore, of treachery, at least towards his kinsman. The interview was agreed upon, and on the eighteenth of August, Grey, with Sir Rice Mansell, Chief Justice Aylmer, Lord James Butler, and Sir William St Loo, rode from Maynooth into King's County, where, on the borders of the Bog of Allen, Fitzgerald met them. Here he repeated the conditions upon which he was ready to surrender. Lord Grey said that he had no authority to entertain such conditions; but he encouraged the hope that an unconditional surrender would tell in his favour, and he promised himself to accompany his prisoner to the King's presence. Fitzgerald interpreting expressions confessedly intended 'to allure him to yield,'[1] in the manner most favourable to himself, placed himself in the hands of the marshal, and rode back with him to the camp.

August 18.

[1] The Lord Leonard repayreth at this season to your Majesty, bringing with him the said Thomas, beseeching your Highness most humbly, that according to the comfort of our words spoken to the same Thomas to allure him to yield him, ye would be merciful to the said Thomas, especially concerning his life.—The Council of Ireland to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 275.

The deputy wrote immediately to announce the capture. Either the terms on which it had been effected had not been communicated to him, or he thought it prudent to conceal them, for he informed Henry that the traitor had yielded without conditions, either of pardon, life, lands, or goods, 'but only submitting to his Grace's mercy.'[1] The truth, however, was soon known; and it occasioned the gravest embarrassment. How far a Government is bound at any time to respect the unauthorized engagements of its subordinates, is one of those intricate questions which cannot be absolutely answered;[2] and it was still less easy to decide, where the object of such engagements had run a career so infamous as Lord Thomas Fitzgerald. No pirate who ever swung on a well-earned gallows had committed darker crimes, and the King was called upon to grant a pardon in virtue of certain unpermitted hopes which had been held out in his name. He had resolved to forgive no more noble traitors in Ireland, and if the Archbishop's murder was passed over, he had no right to affect authority in a country where he was so unable to exert it. On the other hand, the capture of so considerable a person was of great importance; his escape abroad, if he had desired to leave the country, could not have been prevented; and while the Government retained the

[1] *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 274.

[2] The conditions promised to Napoleon by the captain of the *Bellerophon* created a similar difficulty. If Nana Sahib had by any chance been connected by marriage with an English officer, and had that officer induced him to surrender by a promise of pardon, would the English Government have respected that promise?

benefit which they derived from his surrender, their honour seemed to be involved in observing the conditions, however made, by which it had been secured.

It is likely, though it is not certain, that Lord Leonard foresaw the dilemma in which Henry would be placed, and hoped by means of it to secure the escape of his kinsman. His own ultimate treason throws a shadow on his earlier loyalty; and his talent was fully equal to so ingenious a fraud. He had placed the King in a position from which no escape was possible that was not open to grave objection. To pardon so heavy an offender was to violate the first duty of Government, and to grant a general license to Irish criminality; to execute him was to throw a shadow indirectly on the King's good faith, and lay his generals open to a charge of treachery. Henry resolved to err on the side on which error was least injurious. The difficulty was submitted to the Duke of Norfolk, as of most experience in Irish matters. The Duke advised that execution should be delayed; but added significantly, 'quod defertur non aufertur.'—Pardon was not to be thought of; the example would be fatal.[1] Immediate punishment would injure the credit of Lord Grey, and would give occasion for slander against the council.[2] The best course would be to keep 'the traitor' in safe prison, and execute him, should it seem good, at a future time.[3] This advice was

[1] It were the worst example that ever was; and especially for these ungracious people of Ireland.—Norfolk to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 276.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 276.

[3] Ibid. The Duke, throughout his letter, takes a remarkably business-like view of the situation. He does not allow the question of

followed. Fitzgerald, with his uncles, who had all been implicated in the insurrection, was committed to the Tower; and in the year following they were hanged at Tyburn.

So ended the rebellion in Ireland; significant chiefly because it was the first in which an outbreak against England assumed the features of a war of religion, the first which the Pope was especially invited to bless, and the Catholic powers, as such, to assist. The features of it, on a narrow scale, were identical with those of the later risings. Fostered by the hesitation of the home authorities, it commenced in bravado and murder; it vanished before the first blows of substantial resistance. Yet the suppression of the insurrection was attended by the usual Irish fatality—mistake and incompleteness followed the proceedings from the beginning to the end; and the consciousness remained that a wound so closed would not heal, that the moral temper of the country remained unaffected, and that the same evils would again germinate.

'right' to be raised, or suppose at all that the Government could lie under any kind of obligation to a person in the position of Fitzgerald.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CATHOLIC MARTYRS.

WHILE the disturbance in Ireland was at its height, affairs in England had been scarcely less critical. The surface indeed remained unbroken. The summer of 1534 passed away, and the threatened invasion had not taken place. The disaffection which had appeared in the preceding year had been smothered for a time; Francis I. held the Emperor in check by menacing Flanders, and through French influence the rupture with Scotland had been seemingly healed. In appearance the excommunication had passed off as a *brutum fulmen,* a flash of harmless sheet lightning, serving only to dazzle feeble eyes. The oath of succession, too, had been taken generally through the country; Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher having alone ventured to refuse. The Pope had been abjured by the Universities and by the Convocation in both the provinces, and to these collective Acts the bishops and the higher clergy had added each their separate consent.

1534.

But the Government knew too well the temper of the clergy to trust to outward compliance, or to feel

assured that they acquiesced at heart either in the separation from Rome, or in the loss of their treasured privileges. The theory of an Anglican Erastianism found favour with some of the higher Church dignitaries, and with a section perhaps of the secular priests; but the transfer to the Crown of the first-fruits, which, in their original zeal for a free Church of England, the ecclesiastics had hoped to preserve for themselves, the abrupt limitation of the powers of Convocation, and the termination of so many time-honoured and lucrative abuses, had interfered with the popularity of a view which might have been otherwise broadly welcomed; and while growing vigorously among the country gentlemen and the middle classes in the towns, among the clergy it throve only within the sunshine of the Court. The rest were overawed for the moment, and stunned by the suddenness of the blows which had fallen upon them. As far as they thought at all, they believed that the storm would be but of brief duration, that it would pass away as it had risen, and that for the moment they had only to bend. The modern Englishman looks back upon the time with the light of after-history. He has been inured by three centuries of division to the spectacle of a divided Church, and sees nothing in it either embarrassing or fearful. The ministers of a faith which had been for fifteen centuries as the seamless vesture of Christ, the priests of a Church supposed to be founded on the everlasting rock against which no power could prevail, were in a very different position. They obeyed for the time the strong hand which was upon them,

trusting to the interference of accident or providence. They comforted themselves with the hope that the world would speedily fall back into its old ways, that Christ and the saints would defend the Church against sacrilege, and that in the mean time there was no occasion for them to thrust themselves upon voluntary martyrdom.[1] But this position, natural as it was, became difficult to maintain when they were called upon not only themselves to consent to the changes, but to justify their consent to their congregations, and to explain to the people the grounds on which the Government had acted. The kingdom was by implication under an interdict,[2] yet the services went on as usual; the King was excommunicated; doubt hung over the succession; the facts were imperfectly known; and the never-resting friars mendicant were busy scattering falsehood and misrepresentation. It was of the highest moment that on all these important matters the mind of the nation should if possible be set at rest; and the clergy, whose loyalty was presumed rather than trusted, furnished the only means by which the Government

March.

[1] 'These be no causes to die for,' was the favourite phrase of the time. It was the expression which the Bishop of London used to the Carthusian monks (*Historia Martyrum Anglorum*), and the Archbishop of York in his diocese generally—ELLIS, third series, vol. ii. p. 375.

[2] Si Rex Præfatus, vel alii, inhibitioni ac prohibitioni et interdicto hujusmodi contravenerint, Regem ipsum ac alios omnes supradictos, sententias censuras et pœnas prædictas ex nunc prout ex tunc incurrisse declaramus, et ut tales publicari ac publice nunciari et evitari—ac interdictum per totum regnum Angliæ sub dictis pœnis observari debere, volumus atque mandamus.—*First Brief of Clement:* LEGRAND, vol. iii. pp. 451-52. The Church of Rome, however, draws a distinction between a sentence implied and a sentence directly pronounced.

could generally and simultaneously reach the people. The clergy therefore, as we have seen, were called upon for their services; the Pope's name was erased from the mass books; the Statute of Appeals and the Statute of Succession were fixed against the doors of every parish church in England, and the rectors and curates were directed to explain the meaning of these Acts every week in their sermons. The bishops were held responsible for the obedience of the clergy; the sheriffs and the magistrates had been directed to keep an eye upon the bishops; and all the machinery of centralization was put in force to compel the fulfilment of a duty which was well known to be unwelcome.

That as little latitude as possible might be left for resistance or evasion, books were printed by order of council, and distributed through the hands of the bishops, containing a minute account of the whole proceedings on the divorce, the promises and falsehoods of the Pope, the opinions of the European universities, and a general epitome of the course which had been pursued.[1] These were to be read aloud to the congregations; and an order for preaching was at the same time circulated, in which the minuteness of the directions is as remarkable as the prudence of them. Every preacher was to deliver one sermon at least ('and after at his liberty') on the encroachments and usurpations of the Papal power. He was to preach against it, to expose and refute it to the best of his ability, and to

[1] STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 292. ELLIS, third series, vol. ii. p. 336.

declare that it was done away, and might neither be obeyed nor defended further. Again, in all places 'where the King's just cause in his matter of matrimony had been detracted, and the incestuous and unjust [matrimony] had been set forth [and extolled],' the clergy were generally directed 'to open and declare the mere verity and justness' of the matter, declaring it 'neither doubtful nor disputable, but to be a thing of mere verity, and so to be allowed of all men's opinions.' They were to relate in detail the Pope's conduct, his many declarations in the King's favour; the first decretal, which was withheld by Campeggio, in which he had pronounced the marriage with Catherine invalid; his unjust avocation of the cause to Rome; his promises to the King of France; and finally, his engagement at Marseilles to pronounce in the King of England's favour, if only he would acknowledge the Papal jurisdiction.[1] They were therefore to represent the King's conduct as the just and necessary result of the Pope's duplicity. These things the clergy were required to teach, not as matters of doubt and question, but as vital certainties on which no difference of opinion could be tolerated. Finally, there were added a few wholesome

[1] It is remarkable that in this paper it seems to be assumed, that the Pope would have fulfilled this engagement if Henry had fully submitted. 'He openly confessed,' it says, 'that our master had the right; but because our prince and master would not prejudicate for his jurisdictions, and uphold his usurped power by sending a proctor, ye may evidently here see that this was only the cause why the judgment of the Bishop of Rome was not given in his favour; whereby it may appear that there lacked not any justice in our prince's cause, but vain ambition, vain glory, and too much mundanity were the lets thereof.'

admonitions on other subjects, which mark the turning of the tide from Catholic orthodoxy. The clergy were interdicted from indulging any longer in the polemics of theology. 'To keep unity and quietness in the realm it' was 'ordained that no preachers' should 'contend openly in the pulpit one against another, nor uncharitably deprave one another in open audience. If any of them' were 'grieved one with another,' they were to 'complain to the King's Highness or the Archbishop or Bishop of the diocese.' They were 'purely, sincerely, and justly' to 'preach the Scripture and words of Christ, and not mix them with men's institutions, or make men believe that the force of God's law and man's law was the like.' On subjects such as purgatory, worship of saints and relics, marriage of the clergy, justification by faith, pilgrimages and miracles, they were to keep silence for one whole year, and not to preach at all.[1]

These instructions express distinctly the convictions of the Government. It would have been well if the clergy could have accepted them as they were given, and submitted their understandings once for all to statesmen who were wiser than themselves. The majority (of the parish clergy at least) were perhaps outwardly obedient; but the surveillance which the magistrates were directed to exercise proves that the exceptions were expected to be extensive; and in many quarters these precautions themselves were rapidly discovered to be inadequate. Several even of the most

[1] An Order for Preaching: printed in BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 447.

trusted among the bishops attempted an obstructive resistance. The clergy of the north were notoriously disobedient. The Archbishop of York was reported to have talked loosely of 'standing against' the King 'unto death.'[1] The Bishop of Durham fell under suspicion, and was summoned to London. His palace was searched and his papers examined in his absence; and the result, though inconclusive, was unsatisfactory.[2] The religious orders again (especially the monks of such houses as had been implicated with the Nun of Kent) were openly recusant. At the convent at Sion, near Richmond, a certain Father Ricot preached as he was commanded, 'but he made this addition, that he which commanded him to preach should discharge his conscience: and as soon,' it was said, 'as the said Ricot began to declare the King's title,' 'nine of the brethren departed from the sermon, contrary to the rule of their religion, to the great slander of the audience.'[3] Indeed it soon became evident that among the regular clergy no compliance whatever was to be looked for; and the agents of the Government began to contemplate the possible consequences, with a tenderness not indeed for the prospective sufferers, but for the authorities whom

[1] ELLIS, third series, vol. ii. p. 373.

[2] John ap Rice to Secretary Cromwell, with an account of the search of the Bishop of Durham's chamber: *Rolls House MS.*

[3] Bedyll to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 422. Bedyll had been directed by Cromwell to observe how the injunctions were obeyed. He said that he was 'in much despair of the reformation of the friars by any gentle or favourable means;' and advised, 'that fellows who leave sermons should be put in prison, and made a terrible example of.'

they would so cruelly compel to punish them. 'I am right sorry,' wrote Cromwell's secretary to him, 'to see the foolishness and obstinacy of divers religious men, so addict to the Bishop of Rome and his usurped power, that they contemn counsel as careless men and willing to die. If it were not for the opinion which men had, and some yet have, in their apparent holiness, it made no great matter what became of them, so their souls were saved. And for my part, I would that all such obstinate persons of them as be ready to die for the advancement of the Bishop of Rome's authority were dead indeed by God's hand, that no man should run wrongfully into obloquy for their just punishment.'[1]

But the open resistance of mistaken honesty was not the danger which the Government most feared. Another peril threatened their authority, deeper and more alarming by far. The clergy possessed in the confessional a power of secret influence over the masses of the people, by which they were able at once (if they so pleased) to grant their penitents licenses for insincerity, to permit them to perjure themselves under mental reservations, and to encourage them to expiate a venial falsehood by concealed disaffection. The secrets of confession were inviolable. Anathemas the most fearful forbade their disclosure; and, secured behind this impenetrable shield, the Church might defy the most stringent provisions, and baffle every precaution.

From the nature of the case but little could transpire

[1] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 422 et seq.

of the use or the abuse which was made at such a time of so vast a power; but Cromwell, whose especial gift it was to wind himself into the secrets of the clergy, had his sleuth-hounds abroad, whose scent was not easily baffled. The long tyranny of the priesthood produced also its natural retribution in the informations which were too gladly volunteered in the hour of revenge; and more than one singular disclosure remains among the *State Papers*, of language used in this mysterious intercourse. Every man who doubted whether he might lawfully abjure the Pope, consulted his priest. Haughton, the Prior of Charterhouse, in all such cases, declared absolutely that the abjuration might not be made.[1] He himself refused openly; and it is likely that he directed others to be as open as himself. But Haughton's advice was as exceptional as his conduct. Father Forest, of Greenwich, who was a brave man, and afterwards met nobly a cruel death, took the oath to the King as he was required; while he told a penitent that he had abjured the Pope in the outward, but not in the inward man, that he 'owed an obedience to the Pope which he could not shake off,' and that it was 'his use and practice in confession, to induce men to hold and stick to the old fashion of belief.'[2]

Here, again, is a conversation which a treacherous penitent revealed to Cromwell; the persons in the dia-

[1] STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 305.

[2] Confessions of Father Forest: *Rolls House MS.* This seems to have been generally known at the time. Latimer alludes to it in one of his sermons.

logue being the informer, John Staunton, and the confessor of Sion Monastery, who had professed the most excessive loyalty to the Crown.[1] The informer, it must be allowed, was a good-for-nothing person. He had gone to the confessor, he said, to be shriven, and had commenced his confession with acknowledging 'the seven deadly sins particularly,' 'and next the misspending of his five wits.' As an instance of the latter, he then in detail had confessed to heresy; he could not persuade himself that the priest had power to forgive him. 'Sir,' he professed to have said to the confessor, 'there is one thing in my stomach which grieveth my conscience very sore; and that is by reason of a sermon I heard yesterday of Master Latimer, saying that no man of himself had authority to forgive sins, and that the Pope had no more authority than another bishop; and therefore I am in doubt whether I shall have remission of my sins of you or not, and that the pardon is of no effect.'

The priest answered, 'That Latimer is a false knave;' and seven or eight times he called him false knave, and said he was an eretycke. 'Marry, this I heard Latimer say,' the confessor continued, 'that if a man come to confession, and be not sorry for his sins, the priest hath no power to forgive him. I say the Pope's pardon is as

[1] 'The confessor can do no good with them (the monks), and the obstinate persons be not in fear of him; but he in great fear and danger of his life, by reason of their malice, for that he hath consented to the King's title, and hath preached the same.'—Bedyll to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 424.

good as ever it was; and he is the head of the Universal Church, and so I will take him. Here in England the King and his Parliament hath put him out; but be of good comfort, and steadfast in your faith; this thing will not last long, I warrant you. You shall see the world change shortly.'

To this the informer said that he had replied, 'You know how that we be sworn unto the King's Grace, and he hath already abjured the Pope.'

'As for that,' said the priest, 'an oath loosely made may be loosely broken; and by this example be ye in ease. I had an enemy come unto this church, and one of his friends and mine came unto me and said, 'Sir, I pray you let us go drink with yonder man.' And the said friend maketh such importunate suit unto me to drink with my enemy, that I promise him by my faith that I will go and drink with him; and so indeed doth drink with him. But what then,' said the priest; 'though I go and drink with him upon this promise, trow you that I will forgive him with my heart? Nay, nay, I warrant you. And so in like wise in this oath concerning the abjuration of the Pope. I will not abjure him in my heart,' said the priest, 'for these words were not spoken unto Peter for nought—'I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven'—and the Pope is Peter's successor. Of this matter,' said the priest, 'I communed once with the Bishop of Canterbury,[1] and I

[1] Cranmer: but we will hope the story is coloured. It is characteristic, however, of the mild, tender-hearted man who desired to glide round difficulties rather than scale and conquer them.

told the Bishop I would pray for the Pope as the chief and Papal head of Christ's Church. And the Bishop told me it was the King's pleasure that I should not. I said unto him I would do it; and though I did it not openly, yet would I do it secretly. And he said I might pray for him secretly, but in any wise do it not openly.'[1]

Trifles of this kind may seem unimportant; but at the time they were of moment, for their weight was cumulative; and we can only now recover but a few out of many. Such as they are, however, they show the spirit in which the injunctions were received by a section at least of the English clergy. Nor was this the worst. We find language reported, which shows that many among the monks were watching for symptoms of the promised Imperial invasion, and the progress of the Irish insurgents. A Doctor Maitland, of the order of Black Friars in London, had been 'heard divers times to say, he trusted to see every man's head that was of the new learning, and the maintainers of them, to stand upon a stake, and Cranmer's to be one of them. The King,' he hoped, might suffer 'a violent and shameful death;' and 'the Queen, that mischievous whore, might be brent.' 'He said further, that he knew by his science, which was nigromancy, that all men of the new learning should be suppressed and suffer death, and the *people of the old learning should be set up again by the*

[1] A Deposition concerning the Popish Conduct of a Priest: *Rolls House MS.*

power of the King's enemies from the parts beyond the sea.'[1]

In the May weather of 1534, two Middlesex clergy, 'walking to and fro in the cloyster garden at Sion, were there overheard compassing sedition and rebellion.' John Hale, an eager, tumultuous person, was prompting his brother priest, Robert Feron, with matter for a pamphlet, which Feron was to write against the King.[2] 'Syth the realm of England was first a realm,' said Hale, 'was there never in it so great a robber and piller of the commonwealth read of nor heard of as is our King. . . . He is the most cruellest capital heretic, defacer and treader under foot of Christ and of his Church, continually applying and minding to extinct the same; whose death, I beseech God, may be like to the death of the most wicked John, sometime King of this realm, or rather to be called a great tyrant than a King; and that his death may be not much unlike to the end of that manqueller Richard, sometime usurper of this imperial realm. And if thou wilt deeply look upon his life, thou shalt find it more foul and more stinking than a sow wallowing and defiling herself in any filthy place.'

These words were spoken in English; Feron translated them into Latin, and wrote them down. Hale then continued: 'Until the King and the rulers of this realm be plucked by the pates, and brought, as we say,

[1] Information given by John Maydwell, of treasonable Words spoken against Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn: *Rolls House MS.*

[2] In this instance we need not doubt that the words were truly reported, for the offenders were tried and pleaded guilty.

to the pot, shall we never live merrily in England, which, I pray God, may chance, and now shortly come to pass. Ireland is set against him, which will never shrink in their quarrel to die in it; and what think ye of Wales? The noble and gentle Ap Ryce,[1] so cruelly put to death, and he innocent, as they say, in the cause. *I think not contrary, but they will join and take part with the Irish, and so invade our realm. If they do so, doubt ye not but they shall have aid and strength enough in England. For this is truth: three parts of England be against the King, as he shall find if he need.* For of truth, they go about to bring this realm into such miserable condition as is France; which the commons see, *and perceive well enough a sufficient cause of rebellion and insurrection in this realm. And truly we of the Church shall never live merrily until that day come.*[2]

These informations may assist us in understanding, if we cannot forgive, the severe enactments—severely to be executed—which were passed in the ensuing Parliament.

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[1] The conspiracy of 'young Ryce,' or Richard ap Griffyth, is one of the most obscure passages in the history of this reign. It was a Welsh plot, conducted at Islington. [Act of Attainder of Richard ap Griffyth, 23 Hen. VIII. cap. 24.] The particulars of it I am unable to discover further, than that it was a desperate undertaking, encouraged by the uncertainty of the succession, and by a faith in prophecies (Confession of Sir William Neville: *Rolls House MS.*), to murder the King. Ryce was tried in Michaelmas term, 1531, and executed. His uncle, who passed under the name of Brancetor, was an active revolutionary agent on the Continent in the later years of Henry's reign.—See *State Papers*, vol. iv. pp. 647, 651, 653; vol. viii. pp. 219, 227, &c.

[2] Trial and Conviction of John Feron, clerk, and John Hale, clerk BAGA DE SECRETIS; Appendix II to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records.*

It is a maxim of sound policy, that actions only are a proper subject of punishment—that to treat men as offenders for their words, their intentions, or their opinions, is not justice, but tyranny. But there is no rule which is universally applicable. The policy of a state of war is not the policy of a state of peace. And as a soldier in a campaign is not at liberty to criticise openly the cause for which he is fighting; as no general, on his army going into action, can permit a subordinate to decline from his duty in the moment of danger, on the plea that he is dissatisfied with the grounds of the quarrel, and that his conscience forbids him to take part in it; so there are times when whole nations are in a position analogous to that of an army so circumstanced; when the safety of the State depends upon unity of purpose, and when private persons must be compelled to reserve their opinions to themselves; when they must be compelled neither to express them in words, nor to act upon them in their capacity of citizens, except at their utmost peril. At such times the *salus populi* overrides all other considerations; and the maxims and laws of calmer periods for awhile consent to be suspended. The circumstances of the year 1848 will enable us, if we reflect, not upon what those circumstances actually were, but on what they easily might have been, to understand the position of Henry VIII.'s Government at the moment of the separation from Rome. If the danger in 1848 had ceased to be imaginary—if Ireland had broken into a real insurrection — if half the population of England had been Socialist,

and had been in secret league with the leaders of the Revolution in Paris for a combined attack upon the State by insurrection and invasion—the mere passing of a law, making the use of seditious language an act of treason, would not have been adequate to the danger. Influential persons would have been justly submitted to question on their allegiance, and insufficient answers would have been interpreted as justifying suspicion. Not the expression, only, of opinions subversive of society, but the holding such opinions, however discovered, would have been regarded and treated as a crime, with the full consent of what is called the common sense and educated judgment of the nation.[1]

If for 'opinions subversive of society,' we substitute allegiance to the Papacy, the parallel is complete between the year 1848, as it would then have been, and the time when the penal laws which are considered the reproach of the Tudor Governments were passed against the Roman Catholics. I assume that the Reformation was in itself right; that the claims of the Pope to an English supremacy were unjust; and that it was good and wise to resist those claims. If this be allowed, those laws will not be found to deserve the reproach of tyranny. We shall see in them but the natural re-

[1] History is never weary of repeating its warnings against narrow judgments. A year ago we believed that the age of arbitrary severity was past. In the interval we have seen the rebellion in India; the forms of law have been suspended, and Hindoo rajahs have been executed for no greater crime than the possession of letters from the insurgents. The evidence of a treasonable animus has been sufficient to ensure condemnation; and in the presence of necessity the principles of the sixteenth century have been instantly revived. —April, 1858.

source of a vigorous Government placed in circumstances of extreme peril. The Romanism of the present day is a harmless opinion, no more productive of evil than any other superstition, and without tendency, or shadow of tendency, to impair the allegiance of those who profess it. But we must not confound a phantom with a substance; or gather from modern experience the temper of a time when words implied realities, when Catholics really believed that they owed no allegiance to an heretical sovereign, and that the first duty of their lives was to a foreign potentate. This perilous doctrine was waning, indeed, but it was not dead. By many it was actively professed; and among those by whom it was denied there were few except the Protestants whom it did not in some degree embarrass and perplex.

The Government, therefore, in the close of 1534, having clear evidence before them of intended treason, determined to put it down with a high hand; and with this purpose Parliament met again on the 3rd of November. The first Act of the session was to give the sanction of the legislature to the title which had been conceded by Convocation, and to declare the King supreme Head of the Church of England. As affirmed by the legislature, this designation meant something more than when it was granted three years previously by the clergy. It then implied that the spiritual body were no longer to be an *imperium in imperio* within the realm, but should hold their powers subordinate to the Crown. It was now an assertion of independence of foreign jurisdiction; it was the complement of the Act

Nov. 3.

of Appeals, rounding off into completeness the constitution in Church and State of the English nation. The Act is short, and being of so great importance, I insert it entire.

'Albeit,' it runs, 'the King's Majesty justly and rightfully is and ought to be the supreme Head of the Church of England, and so is recognized by the clergy of this realm in their Convocation, yet nevertheless, for corroboration and confirmation thereof, and for increase of virtue in Christ's religion within this realm of England, and to repress and extirp all errours, heresies, and other enormities and abuses heretofore used in the same: Be it enacted, by authority of this present Parliament, that the King our Sovereign Lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only supreme Head in earth of the Church of England, called *Anglicana Ecclesia*, and shall have and enjoy, annexed and united to the imperial crown of this realm, as well the title and style thereof as all the honours, dignities, pre-eminences, jurisdictions, authorities, immunities, profits, and commodities, to the said dignity belonging and appertaining; and that our said Sovereign Lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall have full power and authority to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errours, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction ought or may lawfully be reformed—most to the pleasure of Almighty God, the increase of virtue in Christ's religion, and for

the conservation of the peace, unity, and tranquillity of this realm—any usage, custom, foreign lawes, foreign authority, prescription, or any other thing or things to the contrary hereof notwithstanding.'[1]

Considerable sarcasm has been levelled at the assumption by Henry of this title; and on the accession of Elizabeth, the Crown, while reclaiming the authority, thought it prudent to retire from the designation. Yet it answered a purpose in marking the nature of the revolution, and the emphasis of the name carried home the change into the mind of the country. It was the epitome of all the measures which had been passed against the encroachments of the spiritual powers within and without the realm; it was at once the symbol of the independence of England, and the declaration that thenceforth the civil magistrate was supreme within the English dominions over Church as well as State.[2]

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[1] Act of Supremacy, 26 Hen. VIII. cap. 1.

[2] To guard against misconception, an explanatory document was drawn up by the Government at the time of the passing of the Act, which is highly curious and significant. 'The King's Grace,' says this paper, 'hath no new authority given hereby that he is recognized as supreme Head of the Church of England; for in that recognition is included only that he have such power as to a king of right appertaineth by the law of God; and not that he should take any spiritual power from spiritual ministers that is given to them by the Gospel. So that these words, that the King is supreme Head of the Church, serve rather to declare and make open to the world, that the King hath power to suppress all such extorted powers, as well of the Bishop of Rome as of any other within this realm, whereby his subjects might be grieved; and to correct and remove all things whereby any unquietness might arise amongst the people; rather than to prove that he should pretend thereby to take any powers from the successors of the apostles that was given to them by God. And forasmuch as, in the session of this former Parliament

Whether the King was or was not Head of the Church, became now therefore the rallying point of the struggle; and the denial or acceptance of his title the test of allegiance or disloyalty. To accept it was to go along with the movement heartily and completely; to deny it was to admit the rival sovereignty of the Pope, and with his sovereignty the lawfulness of the sentence of excommuni-

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holden in the twenty-fifth year of this reign, whereby great exactions done to the King's subjects by a power from Rome was put away, and thereupon the promise was made that nothing should be interpreted and expounded upon that statute, that the King's Grace, his nobles or subjects, intended to decline or vary from the congregation of Christ's Church in anything concerning the articles of the Catholic faith, or anything declared by Holy Scripture and the Word of God necessary for his Grace's salvation and his subjects'; it is not, therefore, meet lightly to think that the self-same persons, continuing the self-same Parliament, would in the next year following make an Act whereby the King, his nobles and subjects, should so vary. And no man may with conscience judge that they did so, except they can prove that the words of the statute, whereby the King is recognized to be the supreme Head of the Church of England, should show expressly that they intended to do so; as it is apparent that they do not.

'There is none authority of Scripture that will prove that any one of the apostles should be head of the Universal Church of Christendom. And if any of the doctors of the Church or the clergy have, by any of their laws or decrees, declared any Scripture to be of that effect, kings and princes, taking to them their counsellors, and such of their clergy as they shall think most indifferent, ought to be judges whether those declarations and laws be made according to the truth of Scripture or not; because it is said in the Psalms, 'Et nunc Reges intelligite, erudimini qui judicatis terram': that is, 'O kings! understand ye, be ye learned that judge the world.' And certain it is that the Scripture is always true; and there is nothing that the doctors and clergy might, through dread and affection, [so well] be deceived in, as in things concerning the honour, dignity, power, liberty, jurisdiction, and riches of the bishops and clergy; and some of them have of likelihood been deceived therein.' —Heads of Arguments concerning the Power of the Pope and the Royal Supremacy: *Rolls House MS.*

cation. It was to imply that Henry was not only not Head of the Church, but that he was no longer lawful King of England, and that the allegiance of the country must be transferred to the Princess Mary when the Pope and the Emperor should give the word. There might be no intention of treason; the motive of the opposition might be purely religious; but from the nature of the case opposition of any kind would abet the treason of others; and no honesty of meaning could render possible any longer a double loyalty to the Crown and to the Papacy.

The Act conferring the title was in consequence followed by another, declaring the denial of it to be treason. It was necessary to stop the tongues of the noisy mutinous monks, to show them once for all that these high matters were no subjects for trifling. The oath to the succession of the Princess Elizabeth partially answered this purpose; and the obligation to take that oath had been extended to all classes of the King's subjects;[1] but to refuse to swear to the succession was misprision of treason only, not high treason; and the ecclesiastics (it had been seen) found no difficulty in swearing oaths which they did not mean to observe. The Parliament therefore now attached to the Statute of Supremacy the following imperious corollary:—

'Forasmuch as it is most necessary, both for common policy and duty of subjects, above all things to prohibit, provide, restrain, and extinct all manner of

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[1] 26 Hen. VIII. cap. 2.

shameful slanders, perils, or imminent danger or dangers, which might grow, happen, or arise to their sovereign lord the King, the Queen, or their heirs, which, when they be heard, seen, or understood, cannot be but odible and also abhorred of all those sorts that be true and loving subjects, if in any point they may, do, or shall touch the King, the Queen, their heirs or successors, upon which dependeth the whole unity and universal weal of this realm; without providing wherefore, too great a scope should be given to all cankered and traitorous hearts, willers and workers of the same; and also the King's loving subjects should not declare unto their sovereign lord now being, which unto them both hath been and is most entirely beloved and esteemed, their undoubted sincerity and truth: Be it therefore enacted, that if any person or persons, after the first day of February next coming, do maliciously wish, will, or desire, by words or writing, or by craft imagine, invent, practise, or attempt any bodily harm to be done or committed to the King's most royal person, the Queen's, or their heirs apparent, or to *deprive them or any of them of the dignity, title, or name of their royal estates,* or slanderously and maliciously publish and pronounce by express writing or words that the King our sovereign lord should be heretic, schismatic, tyrant, infidel, or usurper of the crown, &c., &c., that all such persons, their aiders, counsellors, concertors, or abettors, being thereof lawfully convict according to the laws and customs of the realm, shall be adjudged traitors, and that every such

offence in any of the premises shall be adjudged high treason.'[1]

The terrible powers which were thus committed to the Government lie on the surface of this language; but comprehensive as the statute appears, it was still further extended by the interpretation of the lawyers. In order to fall under its penalties it was held not to be necessary that positive guilt should be proved in any one of the specified offences; it was enough if a man refused to give satisfactory answers when subjected to official examination.[2] At the discretion of the King or his ministers the active consent to the supremacy might be required of any person on whom they pleased to call, under penalty to the recusant of the dreadful death of a traitor. So extreme a measure can only be regarded as a remedy for an evil which was also extreme; and as on the return of quiet times the Parliament made haste to repeal a law which was no longer required, so in the enactment of that law we are bound to believe that they were not betraying English liberties in a spirit of careless complacency; but that they believed truly that the security of the State required unusual precautions. The nation was standing with its sword half drawn in the face of an armed Europe, and it was no time to permit

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[1] 26 Hen. VIII. c. 13.

[2] More warned Fisher of this. He 'did send Mr Fisher word by a letter that Mr Solicitor had showed him, that it was all one not to answer, and to say against the statute what a man would, as all the learned men in England would justify.'—*State Papers*, vol. i. p. 434.

dissensions in the camp.[1] Toleration is good—but even the best things must abide their opportunity; and although we may regret that in this grand struggle for freedom, success could only be won by the aid of measures which bordered upon oppression, yet here also the even hand of justice was but commending the chalice to the lips of those who had made others drink it to the dregs. They only were likely to fall under the Treason Act who for centuries had fed the rack and the stake with sufferers for 'opinion.'

Having thus made provision for public safety, the Parliament voted a supply of money for the fortifications on the coast and for the expenses of the Irish war; and after transferring to the Crown the first-fruits of Church benefices, which had been previously paid to the See of Rome, and passing at the same time a large and liberal measure for the appointment of twenty-six suffragan bishops,[2] they separated, not to meet again for more than a year.

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[1] The Act was repealed in 1547, 1 Edw. VI. cap. 12. The explanation which is there given of the causes which led to the enactment of it is temperate and reasonable. Subjects, says that statute, should obey rather for love of their prince than for fear of his laws: 'yet such times at some time cometh in the commonwealth, that it is necessary and expedient for the repressing of the insolence and unruliness of men, and for the foreseeing and providing of remedies against rebellions, insurrections, or such mischiefs as God, sometime with us displeased, doth inflict and lay upon us, or the devil, at God's permission, to assay the good and God's elect, doth sow and set among us,—the which Almighty God and man's policy hath always been content to have stayed—that sharper laws as a harder bridle should be made.'

[2] 26 Henry VIII. cap. 14: 'An Act for Nomination and Consecration of Suffragans within the Realm.' I have already stated my impression

Meanwhile, at Rome a change had taken place which for the moment seemed to promise that the storm after all might pass away. The conclave had elected as a successor to Clement a man who, of all the Italian ecclesiastics, was the most likely to recompose the quarrels in the Church; and who, if the genius or the destiny of the Papacy had not been too strong for any individual will, would perhaps have succeeded in restoring peace to Christendom. In the debates upon the divorce the Cardinal Farnese had been steadily upon Henry's side. He had maintained from the first the general justice of the King's demands. After the final sentence was passed, he had urged, though vainly, the reconsideration of that fatal step; and though slow and cautious, although he was a person who, as Sir Gregory Cassalis described him, 'would accomplish little, but would make few mistakes,'[1] he had allowed his opinion upon this, as on other matters connected with the English quarrel, to be generally known. He was elected therefore by French influence[2] as the person most likely to meet the difficulties of Europe in a catholic and conciliating spirit. He had announced his intention, immediately on Clement's death, of calling a general council

that the method of nomination to bishoprics by the Crown, as fixed by the 20th of the 25th of Henry VIII., was not intended to be perpetual. A further evidence of what I said will be found in the arrangements under the present Act for the appointment of suffragans. The King made no attempt to retain the patronage. The Bishop of each diocese was to nominate two persons, and between these the Crown was bound to choose.

[1] Parum erraturus sed pauca facturus.—*State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 581.

[2] Ibid. p. 573.

at the earliest moment, in the event of his being chosen to fill the Papal chair; and as he was the friend rather of Francis I. than of the Emperor, and as Francis was actively supporting Henry, and was negotiating at the same moment with the Protestant princes in Germany, it seemed as if a council summoned under such auspices would endeavour to compose the general discords in a temper of wise liberality, and that some terms of compromise would be discovered where by mutual concessions Catholic and Protestant might meet upon a common ground.

The moment was propitious for such a hope; for the accession of a moderate Pope coincided with the reaction in Germany which followed the scandals at Munster and the excesses of John of Leyden; and Francis pictured to himself a coalition between France, England, and the Lutherans, which, if the Papacy was attached to their side, would be strong enough to bear down opposition, and reconstitute the Churches of Europe upon the basis of liberality which he seemed to have secured for the Church of France. The flattering vision in the autumn of the following year dazzled the German princes. Perhaps in the novelty of hope it was encouraged even by the Pope, before he had felt the strong hand of fate which ruled his will.

To Charles V. the danger of some such termination of the great question at issue appeared most near and real. Charles, whose resentment at the conduct of England united with a desire to assert his authority over his subjects in Germany, beheld with the utmost alarm

a scheme growing to maturity which menaced alike his honour, his desire of revenge, his supremacy in Europe, and perhaps his religious convictions. A liberal coalition would be fatal to order, to policy, to truth; and on the election of Cardinal Farnese, the Count de Nassau was sent on a secret mission to Paris with overtures, the elaborate condescension of which betrays the anxiety that must have dictated them. The Emperor, in his self-constituted capacity of the Princess Mary's guardian, offered her hand with the English succession to the Duke of Angoulesme. From the terms on which he was supposed to stand with Anne Boleyn, it was thought possible that Henry might consent;[1] he might not dare, as D'Inteville before suggested, to oppose the united demands of France and the Empire.[2] To Mar-

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[1] Nota qu'il ne sera pas paraventure si fort malayse à gaigner ceroy.—*Note on the margin of the Comte de Nassau's Instructions.*

[2] *Charles V. to his Ambassador at Paris.*

'November, 1534.

'. . . In addition, the Count de Nassau and yourself may go further in sounding the King about the Count's proposal—I mean for the marriage of our cousin the Princess of England with the Duke d'Angoulesme. The Grand Master, I understand, when the Count spoke of it, seemed to enter into the suggestion, and mentioned the displeasure which the King of England had conceived against Anne Boleyn. I am therefore sincerely desirous that the proposal should be well considered, and you will bring it forward as you shall see opportunity. You will make the King and the Grand Master feel the importance of the connection, the greatness which it would confer on the Duke d'Angoulesme, the release of the English debt, which can be easily arranged, and the assurance of the realm of France.

'Such a marriage will be, beyond comparison, more advantageous to the King, his realm, and his children, than any benefit for which he could hope from Milan; while it can be brought about with no considerable difficulty. But be careful what you say, and how you say it. Speak alone to the King and alone

garet de Valois the Count was to propose the splendid temptation of a marriage with Philip.[1] If Francis would surrender the English alliance, the Emperor would make over to him the passionately coveted Duchy of Milan,[2] to be annexed to France on the death of the reigning Duke. In the mean time he would pay to the French King, as 'tribute for Milan,' a hundred thousand crowns a year, as an acknowledgment of the right of the house of Valois. Offers such as these might well have tempted the light ambition of Francis. If sincere, they were equivalent to a surrender of the prize for which the Emperor's life had been spent in contending, and perilous indeed it would have been for England if this intrigue had been permitted to succeed. But whether it was that Francis too deeply distrusted Charles, that he preferred the more hazardous scheme of the German alliance, or that he supposed he could gain his object more surely with the help of England, the Count de

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to the Grand Master, letting neither of them know that you have spoken to the other. Observe carefully how the King is inclined, and, at all events, be secret; so that if he does not like the thing, the world need not know that it has been thought of.

'Should it be suggested to you —as it may be—that Anne Boleyn may be driven desperate, and may contrive something against the Princess's life, we answer that we can hardly believe her so utterly abandoned by conscience; or, again, the Duke of Anjou may possibly object to the exaltation of his brother; in which case we shall consent willingly to have our cousin marry the Duke of Anjou; and, in that case, beyond the right which appertains to the Duke and Princess from their fathers and mothers, they and either of them shall have the kingdom of Denmark, and we will exert ourselves to compose any difficulties with our Holy Father the Pope.'—*MS. Archives at Brussels.*

[1] *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 584-5.

[2] Ibid.

Nassau left Paris with a decisive rejection of the Emperor's advances; and in the beginning of January, De Bryon, the High Admiral of France, was sent to England, to inform Henry of what had passed, and to propose for Elizabeth the marriage which Charles had desired for the Princess Mary.

De Bryon's instructions were remarkable. To consolidate the alliance of the two nations, he was to entreat Henry at length to surrender the claim to the Crown of France, which had been the cause of so many centuries of war. In return for this concession, Francis would make over to England, Gravelines, Newport, Dunkirk, a province of Flanders, and 'the title of the Duke of Lorrayne to the town of Antwerp, with sufficient assistance for the recovery of the same.' Henry was not to press Francis to part from the Papacy; and De Bryon seems to have indicated a hope that the English King might retrace his own steps. The weight of French influence, meanwhile, was to be pressed, to induce the Pope to revoke and denounce, voyd and frustrate the unjust and slanderous sentence[1] given by his predecessor; and the terms of this new league were to be completed by the betrothal of the Princess Elizabeth to the Duke of Angoulesme.[2]

There had been a time when these proposals would have answered all which Henry desired. In the early days of his reign he had indulged himself in visions of

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[1] This is Cromwell's paraphrase. Francis is not responsible for the language

[2] *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 584—590.

empire, and of repeating the old glories of the Plantagenet kings. But in the peace which was concluded after the defeat of Pavia, he showed that he had resigned himself to a wiser policy,[1] and the surrender of a barren designation would cost him little. In his quarrel with the Pope, also, he had professed an extreme reluctance to impair the unity of the Church; and the sacrifices which he had made, and the years of persevering struggle which he had endured, had proved that in those professions he had not been insincere. But Henry's character was not what it had been when he won his title of Defender of the Faith. In the experience of the last few years he had learnt to conceive some broader sense of the meaning of the Reformation; and he had gathered from Cromwell and Latimer a more noble conception of the Protestant doctrines. He had entered upon an active course of legislation for the putting away the injustices, the falsehoods, the oppressions of a degenerate establishment; and in the strong sense that he had done right, and nothing else but right, in these measures, he was not now disposed to submit to a compromise, or to consent to undo anything which he was satisfied had been justly done, in consideration of any supposed benefit which he could receive from the Pope. He was anxious to remain in communion with the See of Rome. He was willing to acknowledge in some innocuous form the Roman supremacy. But it could be only on his own terms. The Pope must come to him; he could not go

[1] See the long and curious correspondence between the English and Spanish Courts in the *State Papers*, vol. vi.

to the Pope. And the Papal precedency should only again be admitted in England on conditions which should leave untouched the Act of Appeals, and should preserve the sovereignty of the Crown unimpaired.

He replied, therefore, to the overtures of Francis, that he was ready to enter into negotiations for the resignation of his title to the crown of France, and for the proposed marriage.[1] Before any other step was taken, however, he desired his good brother to insist that 'the Bishop of Rome' should revoke the sentence, and 'declare his pretended marriage with the Lady Catherine naught;' 'which to do,' Henry wrote (and this portion of his reply is written by his own hand), 'we think it very facile for our good brother; since we do perceive by letters [from Rome] both the opinions of the learned men there to be of that opinion that we be of; and also a somewhat disposition to that purpose in the Bishop of Rome's self, according to equity, reason, and the laws both positive and divine.' If there was to be a reconciliation with the Holy See, the first advance must be made on the Bishop of Rome's side; and Cromwell, in a simultaneous despatch, warned Francis not 'to move or desire his Grace to the violation of any laws recently passed, as a thing whereunto he would in no wise condescend or agree.'[2]

Henry, however, felt no confidence either in the sincerity of the Pope, or in the sincerity of the French King, as he haughtily showed. He did not even trust

[1] *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 587-8. [2] Ibid. p. 587.

De Bryon's account of the rejection of the overtures of the Emperor. 'If it happeneth,' he wrote, 'that the said Bishop will obstinately follow the steps of his predecessor, and be more inclined to the maintenance of the actions and sentences of his See than to equity and justice, then we trust that our good brother—perceiving the right to stand on our side, and that not only the universities of his whole realm and dominions hath so defined, but also the most part of the rest of Christendom, and also the best learned men of the Bishop of Rome's own council, now being called for that purpose—will fully and wholly, both he and his whole realm, adhere and cleave to us and our doings in this behalf; and we herein desire shortly to have answer, which we would be right loth should be such as whereupon we might take any occasion of suspicion; trusting, further, that our said good brother will both promise unto us upon his word, and indeed perform, that in the mean time, before the meeting of our deputies,[1] he nor directly nor indirectly shall practise or set forth any mean or intelligence of marriage, or of other practices with the Emperour.'[2]

So cold an answer could have arisen only from deep distrust; it is difficult to say whether the distrust was wholly deserved. Analogous advances made indirectly from the Pope were met with the same reserve. Sir Gregory Cassalis wrote to Cromwell, that Farnese, or Paul III., as he was now called, had expressed the

[1] Who were to arrange the betrothal of Elizabeth to the Duke of Angoulesme.

[2] Henry VIII. to De Bryon: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 589.

greatest desire to please the King. He had sent for lawyers out of Tuscany, on whose judgment he had great reliance, and these lawyers had given an opinion that the Pope might *ex officio* annul the first marriage as Henry desired, and pronounce the second valid.[1] This was well, but it did not go beyond words; and of these there had been too many. The English Government had fed upon 'the cameleon's dish,' 'eating the air promise crammed,' till they were weary of so weak a diet, and they desired something more substantial. If the Pope, replied Cromwell, be really well disposed, let him show his disposition in some public manner, 'of his own accord, with a desire only for the truth, and without waiting till the King's Majesty entreat him.'[2] It would have been more courteous, and perhaps it would have been more just, if the French overtures had been met in a warmer spirit; for the policy of Francis required for the time a cordial understanding with England; and his conduct seems to prove that he was sincerely anxious to win the Pope to complacency.[3] But Henry's experience guided him wisely with the Roman Bishop; and if he had been entangled into confidence in Farnese, he would have been entangled to his ruin.

Jan.

The spring of 1535 was consumed in promises, nego-

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[1] *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 591.

[2] 'Suâ sponte solius veritatis propagandæ studio; nullâ regiæ Majestatis intercessione expectatâ.' — Cromwell to Cassalis: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 592.

[3] Language can scarcely be stronger than that which he directed his ambassador at Rome to use—short, at least, of absolute menace. —*State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 593-4.

tiations, and a repetition of the profitless story of the preceding years. Suddenly, in the midst of the unreality, it became clear that one man at least was serious. Henry, with an insurgent Ireland and a mutinous England upon his hands, had no leisure for diplomatic finesse; he had learnt his lesson with Clement, and was not to be again deceived. The language of the Roman See had been inconsistent, but the actions of it had been always uniform. From the first beginning of the dispute to the final break and excommunication, in the teeth of his promises, his flatteries, his acknowledgments, Clement had been the partisan of Catherine. When the English agents were collecting the opinions of the Italian universities, they were thwarted by his emissaries. He had intrigued against Henry in Scotland; he had tampered with Henry's English and Irish subjects; he had maintained a secret correspondence with Catherine herself. And so well had his true feelings and the true position of the question been understood by the Papal party in England, that at the very time when at Marseilles and elsewhere the Pope himself was admitting the justice of the King's demand, the religious orders who were most unwavering in their allegiance to the Papacy, were pressing their opposition to the divorce into rebellion.

When, therefore, the Chair of St Peter was filled by a new occupant, and language of the same smooth kind began again to issue from it, the English Government could not for so light a cause consent to arrest their measures, or suspend the action of laws which had been

passed from a conviction of their necessity. Whatever might become of French marriages, or of the cession of a corner of the Netherlands and a few towns upon the coast in exchange for a gaudy title, the English Reformation must continue its way; the nation must be steered clear among the reefs and shoals of treason. The late statutes had not been passed without a cause; and when occasion came to enforce them, were not to pass off, like the thunders of the Vatican, in impotent noise.

Here, therefore, we are to enter upon one of the grand scenes of history; a solemn battle fought out to the death, yet fought without ferocity, by the champions of rival principles. Heroic men had fallen, and were still fast falling, for what was called heresy; and now those who had inflicted death on others were called upon to bear the same witness to their own sincerity. England became the theatre of a war between two armies of martyrs, to be waged, not upon the open field, in open action, but on the stake and on the scaffold, with the nobler weapons of passive endurance. Each party were ready to give their blood; each party were ready to shed the blood of their antagonists; and the sword was to single out its victims in the rival ranks, not as in peace among those whose crimes made them dangerous to society, but, as on the field of battle, where the most conspicuous courage most challenges the aim of the enemy. It was war, though under the form of peace; and if we would understand the true spirit of the time, we must regard Catholics and Protestants as gallant soldiers, whose deaths, when they fall, are not painful,

but glorious; and whose devotion we are equally able to admire, even where we cannot equally approve their cause. Courage and self-sacrifice are beautiful alike in an enemy and in a friend. And while we exult in that chivalry with which the Smithfield martyrs bought England's freedom with their blood, so we will not refuse our admiration to those other gallant men whose high forms, in the sunset of the old faith, stand transfigured on the horizon, tinged with the light of its dying glory.

Secretary Bedyll, as we saw above, complained to Cromwell of the obstinacy of certain friars and monks, who, he thought, would confer a service on the country by dying quietly, lest honest men should incur unmerited obloquy in putting them to death. Among these, the brethren of the London Charterhouse were especially mentioned as recalcitrant, and they were said at the same time to bear a high reputation for holiness. In a narrative written by a member of this body, we are brought face to face, at their time of trial, with one of the few religious establishments in England which continued to deserve the name; and we may see, in the scenes which are there described, the highest representation of struggles which graduated variously according to character and temper, and, without the tragical result, may have been witnessed in very many of the monastic houses. The writer was a certain Maurice Channey, probably an Irishman. He went through the same sufferings with the rest of the brethren, and was one of the small fraction who finally gave way under the trial. He was set at liberty, and escaped abroad;

and in penance for his weakness, he left on record the touching story of his fall, and of the triumph of his bolder companions.

He commences with his own confession. He had fallen when others stood. He was, as he says, an unworthy brother, a Saul among the prophets, a Judas among the apostles, a child of Ephraim turning himself back in the day of battle—for which his cowardice, while his brother monks were saints in heaven, he was doing penance in sorrow, tossing on the waves of the wide world. The early chapters contain a loving lingering picture of his cloister life—to him the perfection of earthly happiness. It is placed before us, in all its superstition, its devotion, and its simplicity, the counterpart, even in minute details, of the stories of the Saxon recluses when monasticism was in the young vigour of its life. St Bede or St Cuthbert might have found himself in the house of the London Carthusians, and he would have had few questions to ask, and no duties to learn or to unlearn. The form of the buildings would have seemed more elaborate; the notes of the organ would have added richer solemnity to the services; but the salient features of the scene would have been all familiar. He would have lived in a cell of the same shape, he would have thought the same thoughts, spoken the same words in the same language. The prayers, the daily life, almost the very faces with which he was surrounded, would have seemed all unaltered. A thousand years of the world's history had rolled by, and these lonely islands of prayer had remained still anchored in the

stream; the strands of the ropes which held them, wearing now to a thread, and very near their last parting, but still unbroken. What they had been they were; and, if Maurice Channey's description had come down to us as the account of the monastery in which Offa of Mercia did penance for his crimes, we could have detected no internal symptoms of a later age.

His pages are filled with the old familiar stories of visions and miracles; of strange adventures befalling the chalices and holy wafers;[1] of angels with wax candles; innocent phantoms which flitted round brains and minds fevered by asceticism. There are accounts of certain *fratres reprobi et eorum terribilis punitio*—frail brethren and the frightful catastrophes which ensued to them.[2] Brother Thomas, who told stories out of doors, *apud sæculares*, was attacked one night by the devil; and the fiend would have strangled him but for the prayers of a companion. Brother George, who craved after the fleshpots of Egypt, was walking one day about the cloister when he ought to have been at chapel, and the great figure upon the cross at the end of the gallery turned its back upon him as it hung, and drove him all but mad. Brother John Daly found fault with his dinner, and said that he would as soon eat toads—*Mira res! Justus Deus non fraudavit eum desiderio suo*—his cell was for three months filled with toads. If he threw them into the fire, they hopped back to him unscorched; if he killed them, others came to take their place.

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[1] *Historia Martyrum Anglorum*, cap. 2.
[2] Ibid. cap. 8.

But these bad brothers were rare exceptions. In general the house was perhaps the best ordered in England. The hospitality was well sustained, the charities were profuse, and whatever we may think of the intellect which could busy itself with fancies seemingly so childish, the monks were true to their vows, and true to their duty, as far as they comprehended what duty meant. Among many good, the prior John Haughton was the best. He was of an old English family, and had been educated at Cambridge, where he must have been the contemporary of Latimer. At the age of twenty-eight he took the vows as a monk, and had been twenty years a Carthusian at the opening of the troubles of the Reformation. He is described as 'small in stature, in figure graceful, in countenance dignified.' 'In manner he was most modest; in eloquence most sweet; in chastity without stain.' We may readily imagine his appearance; with that feminine austerity of expression which, as has been well said, belongs so peculiarly to the features of the mediæval ecclesiastics.

Such was the society of the monks of the Charterhouse, who, in an era too late for their continuance, and guilty of being unable to read the signs of the times, were summoned to wage unequal battle with the world. From the commencement of the divorce cause they had espoused instinctively the Queen's side; they had probably, in common with their affiliated house at Sion, believed unwisely in the Nun of Kent; and, as pious Catholics, they regarded the reforming measures of the Parliament with dismay and consternation. The year

1533, says Maurice,[1] was ushered in with signs in heaven and prodigies upon earth, as if the end of the world was at hand; as indeed of the monks and the monks' world the end was truly at hand. And then came the spring of 1534, when the Act was passed cutting off the Princess Mary from the succession, and requiring of all subjects of the realm an oath of allegiance to Elizabeth, and a recognition of the King's marriage with Queen Anne. Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher went to the Tower, as we saw, rather than swear; and about the same time the royal commissioners appeared at the Charterhouse to require the submission of the brethren. The regular clergy through the kingdom had bent to the storm. The conscience of the London Carthusians was less elastic; they were the first and, with the exception of More and Fisher, the only recusants. 'The prior did answer to the commissioners,'[2] Maurice tells us, 'that he knew nothing of such matters, and could not meddle with them; and they continuing to insist, and the prior being still unable to give other answer, he was sent with Father Humphrey, our proctor, to the Tower.' There he remained for a month; and at the end of it he was persuaded by 'certain good and learned men'[3] that the cause was not one for which it was lawful to suffer. He undertook to comply, *sub conditione*, with some necessary reservations, and was sent home to the cloister. As soon as he returned the brethren as-

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[1] *Historia Martyrum*, cap. 9.

[2] See *Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*, p. 370.

[3] Stokesley, Bishop of London, among others: *State Papers*, vol. i. pp. 423-4.

sembled in their chapter-house 'in confusion and great perplexity,' and Haughton told them what he had promised. He would submit, he said, and yet his misgivings foretold to him that a submission so made could not long avail. 'Our hour, dear brethren,' he continued, 'is not yet come. In the same night in which we were set free I had a dream that I should not escape thus. Within a year I shall be brought again to that place, and then I shall finish my course.' If martyrdom was so near and so inevitable, the remainder of the monks were at first reluctant to purchase a useless delay at the price of their convictions. The commissioners came with the lord mayor for the oath, and it was refused. They came again, with the threat of instant imprisonment for the whole fraternity; 'and then,' says Maurice, 'they prevailed with us. We all swore as we were required, making one condition, that we submitted only so far as was lawful for us so to do. Thus, like Jonah, we were delivered from the belly of this monster, this immanis ceta, and began again to rejoice like him, under the shadow of the gourd of our home. But it is better to trust in the Lord than in princes, in whom is no salvation; God had prepared a worm that smote our gourd and made it to perish.'[1]

This worm, as may be supposed, was the Act of Supremacy, with the Statute of Treasons which was attached to it. It was ruled, as I have said, that inadequate answers to official inquiry formed sufficient

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[1] *Historia Martyrum*, cap. 9.

ground for prosecution under these Acts. But this interpretation was not generally known; nor among those who knew it was it certain whether the Crown would avail itself of the powers which it thus possessed, or whether it would proceed only against such offenders as had voluntarily committed themselves to opposition. In the opening of the following year [1535] the first uncertainty was at an end; it was publicly understood that persons who had previously given cause for suspicion might be submitted to question. When this bitter news was no longer doubtful, the prior called the convent together, and gave them notice to prepare for what was coming. They lay already under the shadow of treason; and he anticipated, among other evil consequences of disobedience, the immediate dissolution of the house. Even he, with all his forebodings, was unprepared for the course which would really be taken with them. 'When we were all in great consternation,' writes our author, 'he said to us:—

''Very sorry am I, and my heart is heavy, especially for you, my younger friends, of whom I see so many round me. Here you are living in your innocence. The yoke will not be laid on your necks, nor the rod of persecution. But if you are taken hence, and mingle among the Gentiles, you may learn the works of them, and having begun in the spirit you may be consumed in the flesh. And there may be others among us whose hearts are still infirm. If these mix again with the world, I fear how it may be with them; and what shall I say, and what shall I do, if I cannot save those whom God has trusted to my charge?'

'Then all who were present,' says Channey, 'burst into tears, and cried with one voice, 'Let us die together in our integrity, and heaven and earth shall witness for us how unjustly we are cut off.'

'The Prior answered, sadly—'Would, indeed, that it might be so; that so dying we might live, as living we die—but they will not do to us so great a kindness, nor to themselves so great an injury. Many of you are of noble blood; and what I think they will do is this: Me and the elder brethren they will kill; and they will dismiss you that are young into a world which is not for you. *If, therefore, it depend on me alone—if my oath will suffice for the house—I will throw myself for your sakes on the mercy of God. I will make myself anathema; and to preserve you from these dangers, I will consent to the King's will.* If, however, they have determined otherwise—if they choose to have the consent of us all—the will of God be done. If one death will not avail, we will die all.'

'So then, bidding us prepare for the worst, that the Lord when he knocked might find us ready, he desired us to choose each our confessor, and to confess our sins one to another, giving us power to grant each other absolution.

'The day after he preached a sermon in the chapel on the 59th Psalm,—'O God, Thou hast cast us off, Thou hast destroyed us;'[1] concluding with the words, 'It is better that we should suffer here a short penance for our faults, than be reserved for the eternal pains of

[1] The 60th in the English version.

hell hereafter;'—and so ending, he turned to us and bade us all do as we saw him do. Then rising from his place he went direct to the eldest of the brethren, who was sitting nearest to himself, and kneeling before him, begged his forgiveness for any offence which in heart, word, or deed, he might have committed against him. Thence he proceeded to the next, and said the same; and so to the next, through us all, we following him and saying as he did, each from each imploring pardon.'

Thus, with unobtrusive nobleness, did these poor men prepare themselves for their end; not less beautiful in their resolution, not less deserving the everlasting remembrance of mankind, than those three hundred who in the summer morning sat combing their golden hair in the passes of Thermopylæ. We will not regret their cause; there is no cause for which any man can more nobly suffer than to witness that it is better for him to die than to speak words which he does not mean. Nor, in this their hour of trial, were they left without higher comfort.

'The third day after,' the story goes on, 'was the mass of the Holy Ghost, and God made known his presence among us. For when the host was lifted up, there came as it were a whisper of air, which breathed upon our faces as we knelt. Some perceived it with the bodily senses; all felt it as it thrilled into their hearts. And then followed a sweet, soft sound of music, at which our venerable father was so moved, God being thus abundantly manifest among us, that he sank down in tears, and for a long time could not continue

the service—we all remaining stupified, hearing the melody, and feeling the marvellous effects of it upon our spirits, but knowing neither whence it came nor whither it went. Only our hearts rejoiced as we perceived that God was with us indeed.'

Comforted and resolute, the brotherhood awaited patiently the approach of the commissioners; and they waited long, for the Crown was in no haste to be severe. The statutes had been passed in no spirit of cruelty; they were weapons to be used in case of extremity; and there was no attempt to enforce them until forbearance was misconstrued into fear. Sir Thomas More and the Bishop of Rochester remained unquestioned in the Tower, and were allowed free intercourse with their friends. The Carthusian monks were left undisturbed, although the attitude which they had assumed was notorious, and although the prior was known to forbid his penitents in confession to acknowledge the King's supremacy. If the Government was at length driven to severity, it was because the clergy forced them to it in spite of themselves.

The clergy had taken the oath, but they held themselves under no obligation to observe it; or if they observed the orders of the Crown in the letter, they thwarted those orders in the spirit. The Treason Act had for awhile overawed them; but finding that its threats were confined to language, that months passed away, and that no person had as yet been prosecuted, they fell back into open opposition, either careless of the consequences, or believing that the Government did not

dare to exert its powers. The details of their conduct during the spring months of this year I am unable to discover; but it was such as at length, on the 17th of April, provoked the following circular to the lords-lieutenant of the various counties:[1]—

April 17.

'Right trusty and well-beloved cousin, we greet you well; and whereas it has come to our knowledge that sundry persons, as well religious as secular priests and curates in their parishes and in divers places within this our realm, do daily, as much as in them is, set forth and extol the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, otherwise called the Pope; sowing their seditious, pestilent, and false doctrines; praying for him in the pulpit and making him a god; to the great deceit of our subjects, bringing them into errours and evil opinions; more preferring the power, laws, and jurisdiction of the said Bishop of Rome than the most holy laws and precepts of Almighty God: We therefore, minding not only to proceed for an unity and quietness among our said subjects, but also greatly coveting and desiring them to be brought to a knowledge of the mere verity and truth, and no longer to be seduced with any such superstitious and false doctrines of any earthly usurper of God's laws—will, therefore, and command you, that whensoever ye shall hear of any such seditious persons, ye indelayedly do take and apprehend them, or cause them to be apprehended and taken, and so committed to ward, there to

[1] Printed in STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 208.

remain without bail or main-prize, until, upon your advertisement thereof to us and to our council, ye shall know our further pleasure.

'HENRY R.'

In obvious connection with the issue of this publication, the monks of the Charterhouse were at length informed that they would be questioned on the supremacy. The great body of the religious houses had volunteered an outward submission. The London Carthusians, with other affiliated establishments, had remained passive, and had thus furnished an open encouragement to disobedience. We are instinctively inclined to censure an interference with persons who at worst were but dreamers of the cloister; and whose innocence of outward offences we imagine might have served them for a shield. Unhappily, behind the screen-work of these poor saints a whole Irish insurrection was blazing in madness and fury; and in the northern English counties were some sixty thousand persons ready to rise in arms. In these great struggles men are formidable in proportion to their virtues. The noblest Protestants were chosen by the Catholics for the stake. The fagots were already growing which were to burn Tyndal, the translator of the Bible. It was the habit of the time, as it is the habit of all times of real danger, to spare the multitude but to strike the leaders, to make responsibility the shadow of power, to choose for punishment the most efficacious representatives of the spirit which it was necessary to subdue.

The influence of the Carthusians, with that of the two great men who were following the same road to the same goal, determined multitudes in the attitude which they would assume, and in the duty which they would choose. The Carthusians, therefore, were to be made to bend; or if they could not be bent, to be made examples in their punishment, as they had made themselves examples in their resistance. They were noble and good; but there were others in England good and noble as they, who were not of their fold; and whose virtues, thenceforward more required by England than cloistered asceticisms, had been blighted under the shadow of the Papacy. The Catholics had chosen the alternative, either to crush the free thought which was bursting from the soil, or else to be crushed by it; and the future of the world could not be sacrificed to preserve the exotic graces of mediæval saints. They fell, gloriously and not unprofitably. They were not allowed to stay the course of the Reformation; but their sufferings, nobly borne, sufficed to recover the sympathy of after-ages for the faith which they professed. Ten righteous men were found in the midst of the corruption to purchase for Romanism a few more centuries of tolerated endurance.

To return to the narrative of Maurice Channey. Notice of the intention of the Government having been signified to the Order, Father Webster and Father Lawrence, the priors of the two daughter houses of Axholm and Belville, came up to London three weeks after Easter, and, with Haughton, presented themselves

before Cromwell with an entreaty to be excused the submission. For answer to their petition they were sent to the Tower, where they were soon after joined by Father Reynolds, one of the recalcitrant monks of Sion. These four were brought on the 26th of April before a committee of the privy council, of which Cromwell was one. The Act of Supremacy was laid before them, and they were required to signify their acceptance of it. They refused, and two days after they were brought to trial before a special commission. They pleaded all 'not guilty.' They had of course broken the Act; but they would not acknowledge that guilt could be involved in disobedience to a law which was itself unlawful. Their words in the Tower to the privy council formed the matter of the charge against them. It appears from the record that on their examination, 'they, treacherously machinating and desiring to deprive the King our sovereign lord of his title of supreme Head of the Church of England, did openly declare, and say, the King our sovereign lord is not supreme Head on earth of the Church of England.'[1]

Wednesday, April 28.

But their conduct on the trial, or at least the conduct of Haughton spared all difficulty in securing a conviction. The judges pressed the prior 'not to show so little wisdom as to maintain his own opinion against the consent of the realm.' He replied, that he had resolved originally to imitate the example of his Master

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[1] Baga de Secretis; Appendix II. to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records.*

before Herod, and say nothing. 'But since you urge me,' he continued, 'that I may satisfy my own conscience and the consciences of these who are present, I will say that our opinion, if it might go by the suffrages of men, would have more witnesses than yours. You can produce on your side but the Parliament of a single kingdom; I, on mine, have the whole Christian world except that kingdom. Nor have you all even of your own people. The lesser part is with you. The majority, who seem to be with you, do but dissemble, to gain favour with the King, or for fear they should lose their honours and their dignities.'

Cromwell asked him of whom he was speaking. 'Of all the good men in the realm,' he replied; 'and when his Majesty knows the truth, I know well he will be beyond measure offended with those of his bishops who have given him the counsel which he now follows.'

'Why,' said another of the judges, 'have you, contrary to the King's authority within the realm, persuaded so many persons as you have done to disobey the King and Parliament?'

'I have declared my opinion,' he answered, 'to no man living but to those who came to me in confession, which in discharge of my conscience I could not refuse. But if I did not declare it then, I will declare it now, because I am thereto obliged to God.'[1] He neither looked for mercy nor desired it. A writ was issued for

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[1] STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 305; *Historia Martyrum Anglorum.*

the return of a petty jury the following day. The prisoners were taken back to the Tower, and the next morning were brought again to the bar. Feron and Hale, the two priests whose conversation had been overheard at Sion, were placed on their trial at the same time. The two latter threw themselves on the mercy of the court. A verdict of guilty was returned against the other four. The sentence was for the usual punishment of high treason. Feron was pardoned; I do not find on what account. Hale and the Carthusians were to suffer together. When Haughton heard the sentence, he merely said, 'This is the judgment of the world.'[1]

Thursday, April 29.

An interval of five days was allowed after the trial. On the 4th of May, the execution took place at Tyburn, under circumstances which marked the occasion with peculiar meaning. The punishment in cases of high treason was very terrible. I need not dwell upon the form of it. The English were a hard, fierce people; and with these poor sufferers the law of

May 4.

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[1] Father Maurice says that the jury desired to acquit; and after debating for a night, were preparing a verdict of Not Guilty; when Cromwell, hearing of their intention, went in person to the room where they were assembled, and threatened them with death unless they did what he called their duty. The story is internally improbable. The conditions of the case did not admit of an acquittal; and the conduct attributed to Cromwell is inconsistent with his character. Any doubt which might remain, in the absence of opposing testimony, is removed by the record of the trial, from which it appears clearly that the jury were not returned until the 29th of April, and *that the verdict was given in on the same day.*—BAGA DE SECRETIS; Appendix to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records.*

the land took its course without alleviation or interference. But another feature distinguished the present execution. For the first time in English history, ecclesiastics were brought out to suffer in their habits, without undergoing the previous ceremony of degradation. Thenceforward the world were to know, that as no sanctuary any more should protect traitors, so the sacred office should avail as little; and the hardest blow which it had yet received was thus dealt to superstition, shaking from its place in the minds of all men the key-stone of the whole system.

To the last moment escape was left open, if the prisoners would submit. Several members of the council attended them to the closing scene, for a final effort of kindness; but they had chosen their course, and were not to be moved from it. Haughton, as first in rank, had the privilege of first dying. When on the scaffold, in compliance with the usual custom, he spoke a few touching and simple words to the people. 'I call to witness Almighty God,' he said, 'and all good people, and I beseech you all here present to bear witness for me in the day of judgment, that being here to die, I declare that it is from no obstinate rebellious spirit that I do not obey the King, but because I fear to offend the Majesty of God. Our holy mother the Church has decreed otherwise than the King and the Parliament have decreed, and therefore, rather than disobey the Church, I am ready to suffer. Pray for me, and have mercy on my brethren, of whom I have been the unworthy prior.' He then knelt down, repeating the first few verses of

the 31st Psalm,[1] and after a few moments delivered himself to the executioner. The others followed, undaunted. As one by one they went to their death, the council, at each fresh horrible spectacle, urged the survivors to have pity on themselves; but they urged them in vain. The faces of these men did not grow pale; their voices did not shake; they declared themselves liege subjects of the King, and obedient children of holy Church; 'giving God thanks that they were held worthy to suffer for the truth.'[2] All died without a murmur. The stern work was ended with quartering the bodies; and the arm of Haughton was hung up as a bloody sign over the archway of the Charterhouse, to awe the remaining brothers into submission.

But the spirit of the old martyrs was in these friars. One of them, like the Theban sister, bore away the honoured relic and buried it; and all resolved to persist in their resigned opposition. Six weeks were allowed them to consider. At the end of that time three more were taken, tried, and hanged;[3] and this still proving ineffectual, Cromwell hesitated to proceed.

June 10.

The end of the story is very touching and may be

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[1] 'In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; make haste to deliver me. And be thou my strong rock and house of defence, that thou mayest save me. For thou art my strong rock, and my castle; be thou also my guide, and lead me for thy name's sake. Draw me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength. Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth!'

[2] *Historia Martyrum Anglorum.*

[3] On the 19th of June. Hall says they were insolent to Cromwell on their trial.

told briefly, that I may not have occasion to return to it. Maurice's account is probably exaggerated, and is written in a tone of strong emotion; but it has all the substantial features of truth. The remaining monks were left in the house; and two secular priests were sent to take charge of the establishment, who starved and ill-used them; and were themselves, according to Maurice, sensual and profligate. From time to time they were called before the privy council. Their friends and relatives were ordered to work upon them. No effort either of severity or kindness was spared to induce them to submit; as if their attitude, so long as it was maintained, was felt as a reproach by the Government. At last, four were carried down to Westminster Abbey, to hear the Bishop of Durham deliver his famous sermon against the Pope; and when this rhetorical inanity had also failed, and as they were thought to confirm one another in their obstinacy, they were dispersed among other houses the temper of which could be depended upon. Some were sent to the north; others to Sion, where a new prior had been appointed of zealous loyalty; others were left at home to be disciplined by the questionable seculars. But nothing answered. Two found their way into active rebellion, and being concerned in the Pilgrimage of Grace, were hung in chains at York. Ten were sent to Newgate, where nine died miserably of prison fever and filth;[1] the tenth survivor was exe-

[1] 'By the hand of God,' according to Mr Secretary Bedyll. 'My very good Lord, after my most hearty commendations, it shall please your lordship to understand that the monks of the Charterhouse here in

cuted. The remainder, of whom Maurice was one, went through a form of submission, with a mental reservation, and escaped abroad.

So fell the monks of the London Charterhouse, splintered to pieces—for so only could their resistance be overcome—by the iron sceptre and the iron hand which held it. They were, however, alone of their kind. There were many perhaps who wished to resemble them, who would have imitated their example had they dared. But all bent except these. If it had been otherwise, the Reformation would have been impossible, and perhaps it would not have been needed. Their story claims from us that sympathy which is the due of their exalted courage. But we cannot blame the Government. Those who know what the condition of the country really was, must feel their inability to suggest, with any tolerable reasonableness, what else could have been done. They may regret so hard a necessity, but they will regret in silence. The King, too, was not without feeling. It was no matter of indifference to him that he found himself driven to such stern courses with his subjects; and as the golden splendour of his manhood was thus suddenly clouding, 'he commanded all about his Court to poll their heads,'

May 8.

London which were committed to Newgate for their traitorous behaviour, long time continued against the King's Grace, be almost dispatched by the hand of God, as may appear to you by this bill enclosed; whereof, considering their behaviour and the whole matter, I am not sorry, but would that all such as love not the King's Highness and his worldly honour were in like case.'—Bedyll to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 162.

in public token of mourning; 'and to give them example, he caused his own head to be polled; and from thenceforth his beard to be knotted, and to be no more shaven.'[1]

The friars of Charterhouse suffered for the Catholic faith, as Protestants had suffered, and were still to suffer, for a faith fairer than theirs. In this same month of May, in the same year, the English annals contain another entry of no less sad significance. The bishops, as each day they parted further from their old allegiance, and were called in consequence by the hateful name of heretics, were increasingly anxious to prove by evident tokens their zeal for the true faith; and although the late act of heresy had moderated their powers, yet power enough remained to enable them to work their will upon all extreme offenders. Henry, also, it is likely, was not sorry of an opportunity of showing that his justice was even-handed, and that a schism from the Papacy was not a lapse into heterodoxy. His mind was moving. Latimer and Shaxton, who three years before had been on trial for their lives, were soon to be upon the bench; and in the late injunctions, the Bible, and not the decrees of the Church, had been held up as the canon of truth. But heresy, though the definition of it was changing, remained a crime; and although the limits of permitted belief were imperceptibly enlarging, to transgress the recognized boundaries was an offence enormous as ever.

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[1] Stow, p. 571. And see the Diary of Richard Hilles, merchant, of London, *MS.*, Balliol College, Oxford.

If we can conceive the temper with which the reasonable and practical English at present regard the Socialists of the continent, deepened by an intensity of conviction, of which these later ages have had but little experience, we can then imagine the light in which the Anabaptists of the Netherlands appeared in the eyes of orthodox Europe. If some opinions, once thought heretical, were regarded with less agitated repugnance, the heresy of these enemies of mankind was patent to the world. On them the laws of the country might take their natural course, and no voice was raised to speak for them.

We find, therefore, in Stow's *Chronicle*, the following brief entry: 'The five and twentieth day of May were, in St Paul's church, London, examined nineteen men and six women, born in Holland, whose opinions were—first, that in Christ is not two natures, God and man; secondly, that Christ took neither flesh nor blood of the Virgin Mary; thirdly, that children born of infidels may be saved; fourthly, that baptism of children is of none effect; fifthly, that the sacrament of Christ's body is but bread only; sixthly, that he who after baptism sinneth wittingly, sinneth deadly, and cannot be saved. Fourteen of them were condemned: a man and a woman were burnt at Smithfield. The remaining twelve were scattered among other towns, there to be burnt.'[1] The details are gone[2]—the

May 25.

[1] Stow's *Chronicle*, p. 571.

[2] Latimer alludes to the story with no disapproval of the execution of these men—as we should not have disapproved of it, if we had lived then, unless we had been Anabap-

names are gone. Poor Hollanders they were, and that is all. Scarcely the fact seemed worth the mention, so shortly it is told in a passing paragraph. For them no Europe was agitated, no Courts were ordered into mourning, no Papal hearts trembled with indignation. At their deaths the world looked on complacent, indifferent, or exulting. Yet here, too, out of twenty-five common men and women were found fourteen who, by no terror of stake or torture, could be tempted to say that they believed what they did not believe. History for them has no word of praise; yet they, too, were not giving their blood in vain. Their lives might have been as useless as the lives of most of us. In their deaths they assisted to pay the purchase-money for England's freedom.

After the execution of the Carthusians, it became a question what should be done with the Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More. They had remained for a year in the Tower, undisturbed; and there is no reason to think that they would have been further troubled, except for the fault of one, if not of both. It appeared, however, on the trial of Father Reynolds, that Fisher's

tists ourselves. A brave death, Latimer says, is no proof of a good cause. 'This is no good argument, my friends; this is a deceivable argument: he went to his death boldly—ergo, he standeth in a just quarrel. The Anabaptists that were burnt here in divers towns in England (as I heard of credible men—I saw them not myself), went to their death intrepide, as you will say; without any fear in the world—cheerfully: well, let them go. There was in the old times another kind of poisoned heretics that were called Donatists; and these heretics went to their execution as they should have gone to some jolly recreation or banquet.'—LATIMER'S *Sermons*, p. 160.

imprudence or zeal had tempted him again to meddle with dangerous matters. A correspondence had passed between the Bishop and the King,[1] on the Act of Supremacy, or on some subject connected with it. The King had taken no public notice of Fisher's words, but he had required a promise that the letter should not be shown to any other person. The unwise old man gave his word, but he did not observe it; he sent copies both of what he had himself written and of the King's answer to the Sion monks,[2] furnishing them at the same time with a copy of the book which he had written against the divorce, and two other books, written by Abel, the Queen's confessor, and the Spanish ambassador. Whether he was discovered to have held any other correspondence, or whether anything of an analogous kind was proved against More, I am unable to discover. Both he and Fisher had been treated with greater indulgence than was usual with prisoners.[3] Their

[1] He wrote to the King on the 14th of June, in consequence of an examination at the Tower; but that letter could not have been spoken of on the trial of the Carthusians.—See *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 431.

[2] 'I had the confessor alone in very secret communication concerning certain letters of Mr Fisher's, of which Father Reynolds made mention in his examination; which the said Fisher promised the King's Grace that he never showed to any other man, neither would. The said confessor hath confessed to me that the said Fisher sent to him, to the said Reynolds, and to one other brother of them, the copy of his said letters directed to the King's Grace, and the copy of the King's answer also. He hath knowledged to me also that the said Fisher sent unto them with the said copies a book of his, made in defence of the King's Grace's first marriage, and also Abel's book, and one other book made by the Emperour's ambassador, as I suppose.'—Bedyll to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, pp. 45, 46.

[3] The accounts are consistent on this subject with a single exception.

own attendants had waited on them; they were allowed to receive visits from their relatives within the Tower walls, and to correspond with their families and friends.[1] As a matter of course, under such circumstances, they must have expressed their opinions on the great subject of the day; and those opinions were made known throughout England, and, indeed, throughout Europe. Whether they did more than this, or whether they had only indirectly allowed their influence to be used against the Government, must be left to conjecture. But the language of a document under the King's hand speaks of their having given some cause of provocation, of no common kind; and this is confirmed by Cromwell, who was once deeply attached to More. 'When they were in strait keeping,' say the instructions to the Bishop of Hereford, 'having nevertheless the prison at their liberties, they ceased not both to practise an insurrection within the realm, and also to use all the devices to them

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A letter is extant from Fisher, in which he complained of suffering from the cold and from want of clothes. This must have been an accident. More was evidently treated well (see MORE'S *Life of More*); and all the circumstances imply that they were allowed to communicate freely with their friends, and to receive whatever comforts their friends were pleased to send them. The official statements on this subject are too positive and too minute to admit of a doubt. Cromwell writes thus to Cassalis: 'Carceribus mancipati tractabantur humanius atque mitius quam par fuisset pro eorum demeritis; per Regem illis licebat proximorum colloquio et consuetudine frui. Ii fuerant illis appositi præscriptique ministri quos a vinclis immunes antea fidos charosque habebant; id cibi genus eaque condimenta et vestitus eis concedebantur quæ eorum habitudini ac tuendæ sanitati, ipsi consanguinei, nepotes atque affines et amici judicabant esse magis accommoda.'—*State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 634.

[1] MORE'S *Life of More*.

possible in outward parts, as well to defame and slander his Majesty. and his most virtuous doings and proceedings, as also to procure the impeachment and other destruction of his most royal person.'[1] Cromwell speaks also of their having been engaged in definite schemes, the object of which was rebellion;[2] and although we have here the *ex parte* statement of the Government, and although such a charge would have been held to be justified by a proof that they had spoken generally against the Act of Supremacy, it may be allowed to prove that so far they were really guilty; and it is equally certain that for these two men to have spoken against the Act was to have lent encouragement to the party of insurrection, the most powerful which that party could have received.

Thus, by another necessity, Fisher and More, at the beginning of May, were called upon for their submission. It was a hard case, for the Bishop was sinking into the grave with age and sickness, and More had the highest reputation of any living man. But they had chosen to make themselves conspicuous as confessors for Catholic truth; though prisoners in the Tower, they were in fact the most effectual champions of the Papal claims; and if their disobedience had been passed over, the statute could have been enforced against no one.

The same course was followed as with the Carthusian

[1] 'Instructions given by the King's Majesty to the Right Reverend Father in God, his right trusty and well-beloved counsellor the Bishop of Hereford, whom his Majesty at this time sendeth unto the Princes of Germany.'—*Rolls House MS.*

[2] *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 635.

May 7. monks. On the 7th of May a deputation of the council waited on the prisoners in the Tower, for an acknowledgment of the supremacy. They refused: Fisher, after a brief hesitation, peremptorily; More declining to answer, but also giving an indirect denial. After repeated efforts had been made to move them, and made in vain, their own language, as in the preceding trials, furnished material for their indictment; and the law officers of the Crown who were to conduct the prosecution were the witnesses under whose evidence they were to be tried. It was a strange proceeding, to be excused only, if excused at all, by the pressure of the times.[1]

Either the King or his ministers, however, were slow in making up their minds. With the Carthusians, nine days only were allowed to elapse between the first examination and the final close at Tyburn. The case against More and Fisher was no less clear than against June. the monks; yet five weeks elapsed and the Government still hesitated. Perhaps they were influenced by the high position of the greater offenders—

[1] Compare *State Papers*, vol. i. pp. 431-36, with the Reports of the trials in the Baga de Secretis. Burnet has hastily stated that no Catholic was ever punished for merely denying the supremacy in official examinations. He has gone so far, indeed, as to call the assertions of Catholic writers to this effect 'impudent falsehoods.' Whether any Catholic was prosecuted who had not given other cause for suspicion, I do not know; but it is quite certain that Haughton and Fisher were condemned solely on the ground of their answers on these occasions, and that no other evidence was brought against them. The Government clearly preferred this evidence as the most direct and unanswerable, for in both those cases they might have produced other witnesses had they cared to do so.

perhaps there was some fear of the world's opinion, which, though it might be indifferent to the sacrifice of a few obscure ecclesiastics, yet would surely not pass over lightly the execution of men who stood out with so marked preeminence. The council-board was unevenly composed. Cromwell, who divides with the King the responsibility of these prosecutions, had succeeded, not to the authority only of Wolsey, but to the hatred with which the ignoble plebeian was regarded by the patricians who were compelled to stoop before him. Lord Exeter was already looking with a cold eye on the revolution; and Norfolk and Suffolk, though zealous as the King himself for the independence of England, yet had all the instincts of aristocratic conservatism. Even Cromwell may have desired the triumph of winning over converts so distinguished, or may have shrunk from the odium which their deaths would bring upon him. Whatever was the cause of the delay, the privy council, who had been contented with a single examination of Haughton and his companions, struggled with their present difficulty week after week; and it is possible that, except from an extraneous impulse, some mode of escape might have been discovered. But as the sentence of Clement sealed the fate of the Nun of Kent, so the unwisdom of his successor bore similarly fatal fruits.

Paul III. had throughout the spring flattered Henry with expressions of sympathy, and had held out hopes of an approaching change of policy. He chose the present unfortunate juncture to expose the vanity of these professions; and as an intimation of the course which

he intended to follow, he named the Bishop of Rochester, the one Bishop who remained attached to Catherine's cause, a Cardinal. Henry had appealed to a council, which the Pope had promised to call; and Fisher, of all Englishmen, was chosen as the person whom the Pope desired to represent the nation on its assembly. Even the very conclave at Rome were taken by surprise, and expressed themselves in no measured terms at the impolicy of this most foolish action. Cassalis, aware of the effect which the news would produce in England, hurried to such friends as he possessed in the conclave to protest against the appointment. The King, he said, would inevitably regard it as injurious to the realm and insulting to himself;[1] and it was madness at such a moment to trifle with Henry's displeasure.

The Pope, alarmed at the expressions which he was told that Cassalis had used, sent in haste to urge him, if possible, to allay the storm. He was not ashamed to stoop to falsehood—but falsehood too awkward to deceive even the most willing credulity. He had thought, he said, of nothing but to please Henry. He had been urged by the King of France to seek a reconciliation with England, and in sending a hat to an English bishop he had meant nothing but a compliment. The

[1] 'Omnes Cardinales amicos nostros adivi; eisque demonstravi quam temere ac stulte fecerint in Roffensi in Cardinalem eligendo unde et potentissimum Regem et universum Regnum Angliæ mirum in modum lædunt et injuriâ afficiunt; Roffensem enim virum esse gloriosum ut propter vanam gloriam in suâ opinione contra Regem adhuc sit permansurus; quâ etiam de causâ in carcere est et morti condemnatus.'—Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 604.

general council would be held immediately; and it was desirable, according to the constitution of the Church, that a cardinal of every nation should be present. He had no especial reason for choosing the Bishop of Rochester, except that he had a high reputation for learning, and he imagined, therefore, that the King would be gratified.[1] 'He implored me,' Cassalis wrote, 'to make his excuses to his Majesty, and to assure him how deeply he regretted his mistake, especially when I assured him that the step was of a kind which admitted of no excuse.'[2]

Cassalis himself was afterwards disposed to believe that the appointment was made in thoughtlessness, and that the Pope at the moment had really forgotten Fisher's position.[3] But this could gain no credit in England. The news reached the Government in the middle of June, and determined the fate of the unfortunate Bishop; and with it the fate, also, of his nobler companion. To the King, the Pope's conduct appeared a defiance; and as a defiance he accepted it. In vain Fisher declared that he had not sought his ill-timed honours, and would not accept them. Neither his ignorance nor his refusal could avail him. Once more he was called upon to submit, with the intimation, that if he refused he must bear the consequences. His reply

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[1] *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 604.

[2] Pontifex me vehementer rogavit, ut vias omnes tentare velim, quibus apud Regiam Majestatem excusatam hanc rem faciam, unde se plurimum dolere dixit, cum præsertim ego affirmaverim rem esse ejusmodi ut excusationem non recipiat. —Cassalis to Cromwell: Ibid.

[3] Ibid. p. 616.

June 17.

remained what it had been; and on the 17th of June he was taken[1] down in a boat to Westminster Hall, where the special commission was sitting. The proceedings at his trial are thus briefly summed up in the official record:—'Thursday after the feast of St Barnabas, John Fisher was brought to the bar by Sir William Kingston, Constable of the Tower. Pleads not guilty. Venire awarded. Verdict—guilty. Judgment as usual in cases of treason.'[2]

It was a swift sentence, and swiftly to be executed. Five days were allowed him to prepare himself; and the more austere features of the penalty were remitted with some show of pity. He was to die by the axe.

Mercy was not to be hoped for. It does not seem to have been sought. He was past eighty. The earth on the edge of the grave was already crumbling under his feet; and death had little to make it fearful. When the last morning dawned, he dressed himself carefully—as he said, for his marriage-day. The distance to Tower Hill was short. He was able to walk; and he tottered out of the prison-gates, holding in his hand a closed volume of the New Testament. The crowd flocked about him, and he was heard to pray that, as this book had been his best comfort and companion, so in that hour it might give him some special strength, and speak to him as from his Lord. Then opening it at a venture, he read: 'This is life eternal,

June 22.

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[1] *Historia Martyrum Anglorum.*

[2] Report of the Trial of John Fisher: BAGA DE SECRETIS; Appendix to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Records.*

to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.' It was the answer to his prayer; and he continued to repeat the words as he was led forward. On the scaffold he chanted the *Te Deum*, and then, after a few prayers, knelt down, and meekly laid his head upon a pillow where neither care nor fear nor sickness would ever vex it more. Many a spectacle of sorrow had been witnessed on that tragic spot, but never one more sad than this; never one more painful to think or speak of. When a nation is in the throes of revolution, wild spirits are abroad in the storm; and poor human nature presses blindly forward with the burden which is laid upon it, tossing aside the obstacles in its path with a recklessness which, in calmer hours, it would fear to contemplate.

Sir Thomas More followed,[1] his fortunes linked in death as in life to those of his friend. He was left to the last—in the hope, perhaps, that the example might produce an effect which persuasion could not. But the example, if that was the object, worked to far other purpose. From More's high-tempered nature, such terrors fell harmless, as from enchanted armour. Death to him was but a passing from one country to another; and he had all along anticipated that his prison was the antechamber of the scaffold. He had, indeed, taken no pains to avoid it. The King, according to the unsuspicious evidence of his daughter, Margaret Roper, had not accused him without cause of exciting a spirit of resistance. He had spent his time in encouraging Catholics to persevere to martyrdom for their faith. In

[1] Fisher's treason is distinctly proved by the letters of Chapuys.

his many conversations with herself, he had expressed himself with all freedom, and to others he had doubtless spoken as plainly as to her.[1]

On the 7th of May he was examined by the same persons who examined Fisher; and he was interrogated again and again in subsequent interviews. His humour did not allow him to answer questions directly: he played with his catechists, and did not readily furnish them with materials for a charge. He had corresponded with Fisher in prison, on the conduct which he meant to pursue. Some of these letters had heen burnt; but others were in the hands of the Government, and would have been sufficient to sustain the prosecution, but they preferred his own words from his own lips. At length sufficient evidence was obtained. On the 26th of June, a true bill was found against him by the grand jury of Middlesex; and on the 1st of July the High Commission sat again in Westminster Hall, to try the most illustrious prisoner who ever listened to his sentence there.[2] He walked from the Tower—feebly, however, and with a stick,

June 26.

July 1.

[1] If his opinions had been insufficient for his destruction, there was an influence at Court which left no hope to him; the influence of one whose ways and doings were better known then than they have been known to her modern admirers. 'On a time,' writes his grandson, 'when he had questioned my aunt Roper of his wife and children, and the state of his house in his absence, he asked her at last how Queen Anne did. 'In faith, father,' said she, 'never better. There is nothing else at the Court but dancing and sporting.' 'Never better?' said he; 'alas, Meg, alas, it pitieth me to remember unto what misery she will shortly come. These dances of hers will prove such dances that she will spurn our heads off like footballs, but it will not be long ere her head will dance the like dance.' '—MORE'S *Life of More*, p. 244.

[2] The composition of the commission is remarkable. When Fisher

for he was weak from long confinement. On appearing at the bar, a chair was brought for him, and he was allowed to sit. The indictment was then read by the attorney-general. It set forth that Sir Thomas More, traitorously imagining and attempting to deprive the King of his title as supreme Head of the Church, did, on the 7th of May, when examined before Thomas Cromwell, the King's principal secretary, and divers other persons, whether he would accept the King as Head on earth of the Church of England, pursuant to the statute, refuse to give a direct answer, but replied, 'I will not meddle with any such matters, for I am fully determined to serve God and to think upon His passion, and my passage out of this world.'[1] He was then charged with having written to Fisher that 'The Act of Parliament was like a sword with two edges; for if a man answered one way it would confound his soul, and if the other way it would confound his body.'[2] Finally and chiefly, he had spoken treasonable words in the Tower to Rich, the solicitor-general. Rich had endeavoured to persuade him, as Cranmer had endeavoured in his previous difficulty at Lambeth, that it was his duty as a subject to obey the law of the land. 'Supposing it was enacted by Act of

was tried, Lord Exeter sat upon it. On the trial of More, Lord Exeter was absent, but his place was taken by his cousin, Lord Montague, Reginald Pole's eldest brother, and Lady Salisbury's son. Willingly or unwillingly, the opposition nobles were made *participes criminis* in both these executions.

[1] I take my account of the indictment from the Government record. It is, therefore, their own statement of their own case.—Trial of Sir Thomas More: BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouch 7, bundle 3.

[2] Fisher had unhappily used these words on his own examination; and the identity of language was held a proof of traitorous confederacy.

Parliament,' the solicitor-general had said, 'that I, Richard Rich, should be King, and that it should be treason to deny it, what would be the offence if you, Sir Thomas More, were to say that I was King?' More had answered that, in his conscience, he would be bound by the Act of Parliament, and would be obliged to accept Rich as King. He would put another case, however. 'Suppose it should be enacted by Parliament, *Quod Deus non esset Deus*, and that opposing the Act should be treason, if it were asked of him, Richard Rich, whether he would say *Quod Deus non erat Deus*, according to this statute, and if he were to say No, would he not offend?' Rich had replied, 'Certainly, because it is impossible, *Quod Deus non esset Deus;* but why, Master More, can you not accept the King as chief Head of the Church of England, just as you would that I should be made King, in which case you agree that you would be obliged to acknowledge me as King?' 'To which More, persevering in his treasons, had answered to Rich, that the cases were not similar, because the King could be made by Parliament and deprived by Parliament;[1] but in the first case the subject could not be obliged, because his consent could not be given for that in Parliament.'

This was the substance of the indictment. As soon as it was read, the lord chancellor rose, and told the prisoner that he saw how grievously he had offended the King; it was not too late to ask for mercy, however, which his Majesty desired to show.

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[1] If this was the constitutional theory, 'divine right' was a Stuart fiction.

'My lord,' More replied, 'I have great cause to thank your honour for your courtesy, but I beseech Almighty God that I may continue in the mind that I am in through His grace unto death.' To the charges against him he pleaded 'not guilty,' and answered them at length. He could not say indeed that the facts were not true; for although he denied that he had 'practised' against the supremacy, he could not say that he had consented to it, or that he ever would consent; but like the prior of the Charterhouse, he could not admit himself guilty when he had only obeyed his conscience. The jury retired to consider, and in a quarter of an hour returned with their verdict. The chancellor, after receiving it, put the usual question, what the prisoner could say in arrest of judgment. More replied, but replied with a plea which it was impossible to recognize, by denouncing the statute under which he was tried, and insisting on the obligation of obedience to the See of Rome. Thus the sentence was inevitable. It was pronounced in the ordinary form; but the usual punishment for treason was commuted, as it had been with Fisher, to death upon the scaffold; and this last favour was communicated as a special instance of the royal clemency. More's wit was always ready. 'God forbid,' he answered, 'that the King should show any more such mercy unto any of my friends; and God bless all my posterity from such pardons.'[1]

The pageant was over, for such a trial was little

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[1] More's *Life of More*, p. 271.

more. As the procession formed to lead back the 'condemned traitor' to the Tower, the commissioners once more adjured him to have pity on himself, and offered to re-open the court if he would reconsider his resolution. More smiled, and replied only a few words of graceful farewell.

'My lords,' he said, 'I have but to say that, like as the blessed Apostle St Paul was present at the death of the martyr Stephen, keeping their clothes that stoned him, and yet they be now both saints in heaven, and there shall continue friends for ever, so I trust, and shall therefore pray, that though your lordships have been on earth my judges, yet we may hereafter meet in heaven together to our everlasting salvation; and God preserve you all, especially my sovereign lord the King, and grant him faithful councillors.'

He then left the Hall, and to spare him the exertion of the walk he was allowed to return by water. At the Tower stairs one of those scenes occurred which have cast so rich a pathos round the closing story of this illustrious man. 'When Sir Thomas,' writes the grandson, 'was now come to the Tower wharf, his best beloved child, my aunt Roper, desirous to see her father, whom she feared she should never see in this world after, to have his last blessing, gave there attendance to meet him; whom as soon as she had espied she ran hastily unto him, and without consideration or care for herself, passing through the midst of the throng and guard of men, who with bills and halberts compassed him round, there openly in the sight of them all embraced him, and

took him about the neck and kissed him, not able to say any word but 'Oh, my father! oh, my father!' He, liking well her most natural and dear affection towards him, gave her his fatherly blessing; telling her that whatsoever he should suffer, though he were innocent, yet it was not without the will of God; and that He knew well enough all the secrets of her heart, counselling her to accommodate her will to God's blessed pleasure, and to be patient for his loss.

'She was no sooner parted from him, and had gone scarce ten steps, when she, not satisfied with the former farewell, like one who had forgot herself, ravished with the entire love of so worthy a father, having neither respect to herself nor to the press of people about him, suddenly turned back, and ran hastily to him, and took him about the neck and divers times together kissed him; whereat he spoke not a word, but carrying still his gravity, tears fell also from his eyes; yea, there were very few in all the troop who could refrain hereat from weeping, no, not the guard themselves. Yet at last with a full heart she was severed from him, at which time another of our women embraced him; and my aunt's maid Dorothy Collis did the like, of whom he said after, it was homely but very lovingly done. All these and also my grandfather witnessed that they smelt a most odoriferous smell to come from him, according to that of Isaac, 'The scent of my son is as the scent of a field which the Lord has blessed.'[1]

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[1] More's *Life of More*, pp. 276-7.

More's relation with this daughter forms the most beautiful feature in his history. His letters to her in early life are of unequalled grace, and she was perhaps the only person whom he very deeply loved. He never saw her again. The four days which remained to him he spent in prayer and in severe bodily discipline. On the night of the 5th of July, although he did not know the time which had been fixed for his execution, yet with an instinctive feeling that it was near, he sent her his hair shirt and whip, as having no more need for them, with a parting blessing of affection.

He then lay down and slept quietly. At daybreak he was awakened by the entrance of Sir Thomas Pope, who had come to confirm his anticipations, and to tell him it was the King's pleasure that he should suffer at nine o'clock that morning. He received the news with utter composure. 'I am much bounden to the King,' he said, 'for the benefits and honours he has bestowed upon me; and so help me God, most of all am I bounden to him that it pleaseth his Majesty to rid me so shortly out of the miseries of this present world.'

Pope told him the King desired that he would not 'use many words on the scaffold.' 'Mr Pope,' he answered, 'you do well to give me warning, for otherwise I had purposed somewhat to have spoken; but no matter wherewith his Grace should have cause to be offended. Howbeit, whatever I intended, I shall obey his Highness's command.'

He afterwards discussed the arrangements for his funeral, at which he begged that his family might be

present; and when all was settled, Pope rose to leave him. He was an old friend. He took More's hand and wrung it, and, quite overcome, burst into tears.

'Quiet yourself, Mr Pope,' More said, 'and be not discomfited, for I trust we shall once see each other full merrily, when we shall live and love together in eternal bliss.'[1]

As soon as he was alone, he dressed in his most elaborate costume. It was for the benefit, he said, of the executioner who was to do him so great a service. Sir William Kingston remonstrated, and with some difficulty induced him to put on a plainer suit; but that his intended liberality should not fail, he sent the man a gold angel in compensation, 'as a token that he maliced him nothing, but rather loved him extremely.'

'So about nine of the clock he was brought by the lieutenant out of the Tower, his beard being long, which fashion he had never before used, his face pale and lean, carrying in his hands a red cross, casting his eyes often towards heaven.' He had been unpopular as a judge, and one or two persons in the crowd were insolent to him; but the distance was short and soon over, as all else was nearly over now.

The scaffold had been awkwardly erected, and shook as he placed his foot upon the ladder. 'See me safe up,'

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[1] 'And, further to put him from his melancholy, Sir Thomas More did take his urinal, and cast his water, saying merrily, 'I see no danger but the man that owns this water may live longer, if it please the King.''—MORE'S *Life*, p. 283. I cannot allow myself to suppress a trait so eminently characteristic.

he said to Kingston. 'For my coming down I can shift for myself.' He began to speak to the people, but the sheriff begged him not to proceed, and he contented himself with asking for their prayers, and desiring them to bear witness for him that he died in the faith of the holy Catholic Church, and a faithful servant of God and the King. He then repeated the Miserere psalm on his knees; and when he had ended and had risen, the executioner, with an emotion which promised ill for the manner in which his part in the tragedy would be accomplished, begged his forgiveness. More kissed him. 'Thou art to do me the greatest benefit that I can receive,' he said. 'Pluck up thy spirit, man, and be not afraid to do thine office. My neck is very short. Take heed therefore that thou strike not awry for saving of thine honesty.' The executioner offered to tie his eyes. 'I will cover them myself,' he said; and binding them in a cloth which he had brought with him, he knelt and laid his head upon the block. The fatal stroke was about to fall, when he signed for a moment's delay while he moved aside his beard. 'Pity that should be cut,' he murmured; 'that has not committed treason.' With which strange words, the strangest perhaps ever uttered at such a time, the lips most famous through Europe for eloquence and wisdom closed for ever.

'So,' concludes his biographer, 'with alacrity and spiritual joy he received the fatal axe, which no sooner had severed the head from the body, but his soul was carried by angels into everlasting glory, where a crown of martyrdom was placed upon him which can

never fade nor decay; and then he found those words true which he had often spoken, that a man may lose his head and have no harm.'[1]

This was the execution of Sir Thomas More, an act which was sounded out into the far corners of the earth, and was the world's wonder as well for the circumstances under which it was perpetrated, as for the preternatural composure with which it was borne. Something of his calmness may have been due to his natural temperament, something to an unaffected weariness of a world which in his eyes was plunging into the ruin of the latter days. But those fair hues of sunny cheerfulness caught their colour from the simplicity of his faith; and never was there a Christian's victory over death more grandly evidenced than in that last scene lighted with its lambent humour.

History will rather dwell upon the incidents of the execution than attempt a sentence upon those who willed that it should be. It was at once most piteous and most inevitable. The hour of retribution had come at length, when at the hands of the Roman Church was to be required all the righteous blood which it had shed, from the blood of Raymond of Toulouse to the blood of the last victim who had blackened into ashes at Smithfield. The voices crying underneath the altar had been heard upon the throne of the Most High, and woe to the generation of which the dark account had been demanded.

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[1] More's *Life of More*, p. 287.

In whatever light, however, we may now think of these things, the effect in Europe was instantaneous and electrical. The irritation which had accompanied the excommunication by Clement had died away in the difficulty of executing the censures. The Papal party had endeavoured to persuade themselves that the King was acting under a passing caprice. They had believed that the body of the people remained essentially Catholic; and they had trusted to time, to discontent, to mutiny, to the consequences of what they chose to regard as the mere indulgence of criminal passion, to bring Henry to his senses. To threats and and anathemas, therefore, had again succeeded fair words and promises, and intrigues and flatteries; and the Pope and his advisers, so long accustomed themselves to promise and to mean nothing, to fulminate censures in form, and to treat human life as a foolish farce upon the stage, had dreamed that others were like themselves. In the rough awakening out of their delusion, as with a stroke of lightning, popes, cardinals, kings, emperors, ambassadors, were startled into seriousness; and, the diplomatic meshwork all rent and broken, they fell at once each into their places, with a sense suddenly forced upon them that it was no child's play any longer. The King of England was in earnest, it seemed. The assumption of the supremacy was a fixed purpose, which he was prepared to make a question of life and death; and with this resolution they must thenceforward make their account.

On the 1st of June, Cassalis wrote[1] from Rome that the French ambassador had received a letter concerning certain friars who had been put to death in England for denying the King to be Head of the Church. The letter had been read in the consistory, and was reported to be written in a tone of the deepest commiseration. There had been much conversation about it, the French bishops having been louder than any in their denunciations; and the form of the execution was described as having been most barbarous. Some of the cardinals had said that they envied the monks their deaths in such a cause, and wished that they had been with them. 'I desired my informant,' Cassalis said, 'to suggest to these cardinals, that if they were so anxious on the subject, they had better pay a visit to England.' And he concluded, in cipher, 'I cannot tell very well what to think of the French. An Italian told me he had heard the Most Christian King himself say, that although he was obliged to press upon the Pope the requests of the King of England, yet that these requests were preposterous, and could not be granted.'

The deaths of a few poor monks would soon have been forgiven; the execution of Fisher first really revealed the truth. No sooner was the terrible reply of Henry to his promotion to the cardinalate made known than the conclave was instantly summoned. Cardinal Tournon described the scene upon the scaffold in language which moved all his audience to tears.[2] The

[1] *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 606.

[2] Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 620-21.

Pope, in a paroxysm of anger, declared that if he had seen his own nephews murdered in his presence, it would not have so much affected him; and Cassalis said he heard, from good authority, that they would do their worst, and intended to make the Bishop of Rochester's death of more account than that of the martyr St Thomas.[1]

Nor was the anger or the surprise confined to Rome. Through England, through France, through Flanders, even among the Protestants of Germany, there rose a simultaneous outcry of astonishment. Rumour flew to and fro with a thousand falsehoods; and the unfortunate leaven of the Anne Boleyn marriage told fatally to destroy that appearance of probity of motive so indispensable to the defence of the Government. Even Francis I. forgot his caution, and dared to remonstrate. He wrote to entreat his good brother to content himself for the future with banishing such offenders, and sparing the extremity of his penalties.

Unfortunately, the question which was at issue was European as well as English; and every exile who was driven from England would have become, like Reginald Pole, a missionary of a holy war against the infidel King. Whatever else might have been possible, banishment was more perilous than pardon.

But the indignation was so general and so serious, that Henry thought it well to offer an explanation of his conduct, both at home and abroad. With his own

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[1] Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. pp. 620-21.

people, he communicated through the lay authorities, not choosing to trust himself on this occasion to the clergy. The magistrates at the quarter sessions were directed 'to declare to the people the treasons committed by the late Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More; who thereby, and by divers secret practices, of their malicious minds intended to seminate, engender, and breed a most mischievous and seditious opinion, not only to their own confusion, but also of divers others, who have lately suffered execution according to their demerits.'[1] To Francis, Cromwell instructed Gardiner, who was ambassador in Paris, to reply very haughtily. The English Government, he said, had acted on clear proof of treason; treason so manifest, and tending so clearly to the total destruction of the commonwealth of the realm, that the condemned persons 'were well worthy, if they had a thousand lives, to have suffered ten times a more terrible death and execution than any of them did suffer.' The laws which the King had made were 'not without substantial grounds;' but had been passed 'by great and mature advice, counsel, and deliberation of the whole policy of the realm, and' were 'indeed no new laws, but of great antiquity, now renovate and renewed in respect to the common weal of the same realm.'

With respect to the letter of the King of France, Gardiner was to say, it was 'not a little to his High-

[1] STRYPE'S *Memor. Eccles.*, vol. i., Appendix, p. 211. These words are curious as directly attributing the conduct of the monks to the influence of More and Fisher.

ness's marvel that the French King would ever counsel or advise him, if in case hereafter any such like offenders should happen to be in the realm, that he should rather banish them, than in such wise execute them, . . . supposing it to be neither the office of a friend nor a brother, that he would counsel the King's Highness to banish his traitors into strange parts, where they might have good occasion, time, place, and opportunity to work their feats of treason and conspiracy the better against the King and this his realm. In which part,' concluded Cromwell, 'ye shall somewhat engrieve the matter, after such sort that it may well appear to the French King that the King's Highness may take those his counsels both strangely and unkindly.'[1]

With the German princes Henry was scarcely less imperious;[2] and it is noteworthy, that the most elabor-

[1] Cromwell to Gardiner: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, pp. 460-1.

[2] 'If the Duke of Saxe, or any of the other princes, shall in their conference with him expostulate or show themselves displeased with such information as they may percase have had, touching the attainder and execution of the late Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More, the said Bishop shall thereunto answer and say, that the same were by order of his laws found to be false traitors and rebels to his Highness and his crown. The order of whose attainder with the causes thereof, he may declare unto them, saying that in case the King's Highness should know that they would conceive any sinister opinion of his Grace, for the doing of any act within his realm, his Grace should not only have cause to think they used not with him the office of friendship, which would not by any report conceive other opinion of so noble a prince as he is than were both just and honourable; but also to note in them less constancy of judgment than he verily thinketh they have. And hereupon the said Bishop shall dissuade them from giving credit to any such report, as whereby they shall offend God in the judgment of evil upon their neighbour; and cause his Majesty to muse that they would of him, being a prince of honour, conceive any other opinion than his honour and

ate defence which he condescended to make, is that which was sent to Sir Gregory Cassalis, to be laid before the Pope. He chose that the Roman Court should understand distinctly the grounds on which he had acted; and this despatch (which was written by Cromwell) shows more clearly than any other state paper which remains to us, the light in which the reforming party desired their conduct to be regarded.

It was written in reply to the letter in which Cassalis reported the irritation of the Roman Court, and enters into the whole ground of complaint against More and Fisher.

'I have signified,' wrote Cromwell, 'to the King's Highness the purport of your late letters, and as they contained many things which were very welcome to his Majesty, so he could not sufficiently marvel that the Pope should have conceived so great offence at the deaths of the Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More. And albeit his Majesty is not bound to render account of his actions except to God, whom in thought and deed he is ever desirous to obey; nevertheless, that his royal name may not be evil spoken of by malicious tongues, from want of knowledge of the truth, I will tell you briefly what has been done in this matter.

'After that his Majesty, with the favour and assist-

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friendship towards them doth require. Setting this forth with such a stomach and courage as they may not only perceive the false traitorous dealings of the said persons; but consider what folly it were in them upon light report to judge of another prince's proceedings otherwise than they would a foreign prince should judge of them.'—Instructions to the Bishop of Hereford by the King's Highness: *Rolls House MS.*

ance of Almighty God, had brought his cause to an end, by the consent and authority of unprejudiced persons of the most approved learning in Christendom, —and after he had confirmed it by the very rule of truth, these men, who had looked to see a far different conclusion, finding now no hopes of disturbing the settlement thus made, began to meditate other purposes. And when our good King, according to his princely duty, was devising measures for the quiet and good order of the realm, and for the correction of manners now largely fallen to decay, this, so great a benefit to the commonweal, they did, so far as in them lay, endeavour, though without effect, under pretence of dissembled honesty, to obstruct and oppose. Manifest proofs of their wicked designs were in the hands of the King's Grace; but his Majesty consented rather to pass over their offence without notice, hoping to recall them to a better mind, as having before been in some good estimation with him.

'But they in whom ambition, love of self, and a peculiar conceit of wisdom had bred another persuasion, obstinately abused this kindness of their most noble prince. And when on a certain day there was order issued for the assembly of the great council of the realm, they made secret inquiry to learn the measures which would there be treated of. Whatsoever they discovered or conjectured, forthwith they debated in private council among themselves, arriving upon each point at conclusions other than those which the interests of the realm did require; and they fortified those con-

clusions with such array of arguments and reasons, that with no great labour the ignorant people might have been dangerously deceived.

'At length knowing that they had incurred the King's displeasure, and fearing lest they might fail of accomplishing their purposes, they chose out persons on whose courage, readiness, and devotion to themselves they could depend; and taking these men into their councils, they fed them with the poison which they had conceived, forgetting their allegiance to their King, and their duty to their country.[1] Thus were their seditious opinions scattered over the country. And when his Highness began to trace this impious conspiracy to its source, Sir Thomas More and the Bishop of Rochester were found to be the undoubted authors of the same; and their guilt was proved against them by the evidence of their own handwrit, and the confessions of their own lips. For these causes, therefore, and for many others of like kind, our most gracious sovereign was compelled to imprison them as rebellious subjects, as disturbers of the public peace, and as movers of sedition and tumult. Nor was it possible for him to do other than punish them, unless, after their crimes had been detected, he had so far forgotten his duty as to leave the contagion to spread unchecked, to the utter destruction of the nation. They were in consequence thrown into the Tower, where, however, their treatment was far different from what their demerits had deserved;

[1] It will be observed that many important facts are alluded to in this letter of which we have no other knowledge.

they were allowed the society of their friends; their own servants were admitted to attend upon them, and they received all such indulgences in food and dress as their families desired. Clemency, however, produced no effect on persons in whom duty and allegiance had given place to treason and malice. They chose rather to persist in their wicked courses than to make trial by repentance of the King's goodness. For after that certain laws had been decreed by authority of Parliament, and had been by the whole nation admitted and accepted as expedient for the realm, and agreeable to true religion, they alone refused their consent to these laws, hoping that something might occur to sustain them in their impiety; and while professing to have left all care and thought for human things, they were considering by what arguments, in furtherance of their seditious purposes, they might, to the common hurt, elude, refute, and disturb the said laws.

'Of this their treason there are proofs extant—letters written, when ink failed them, with chalk or charcoal, and passed secretly from one to the other. Our most merciful King could therefore no longer tolerate their grievous faults. He allowed them to be tried by process of ordinary law. They were found guilty of high treason, and sentenced to death. Their punishment was milder than that which the law prescribed, or which their crimes had deserved; and many persons have by this example been brought to a better mind.'[1]

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[1] Cromwell to Cassalis: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 633.

To Cromwell evidently the case appeared so clear as to require no apology. To modern writers it has appeared so clear as to admit of none. The value of the defence turns upon the point of the actual danger to the State, and the extent to which the conduct of the sufferers imperilled the progress of the Reformation. As written for the eyes of the Pope and cardinals, however, such a letter could be understood only as daring them to do their worst. It ignored the very existence of such rules of judgment as the heads of the Roman Church would alone acknowledge, and represented the story as it appeared from the position which England had assumed on its revolt from its old allegiance.

There were no more false efforts at conciliation, and open war thenceforth appeared to be the only possible relation between the Papacy and Henry VIII. Paul III. replied, or designed to reply, with his far-famed bull of interdict and deposition, which, though reserved at the moment in deference to Francis of France, and not issued till three years later, was composed in the first burst of his displeasure.[1] The substance of his

[1] Paul himself said that it was reserved at the intercession of the princes of Europe. Intercession is too mild a word for the species of interference which was exerted. The Pope sent a draft of the intended bull to France; and the King having no disposition to countenance exaggerated views of Papal authority, spoke of it as *impudentissimum quoddam breve;* and said that he must send the Cardinal of Lorraine to Rome, to warn his Holiness that his pretence of setting himself above princes could by no means be allowed; by such impotent threats he might not only do no good, but he would make himself a laughing-stock to all the world.—Christopher Mount to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 628.

voluminous anathemas may be thus briefly epitomized.

The Pope, quoting and applying to himself the words of Jeremiah, 'Behold, I have set thee over nations and kingdoms, that thou mayest root out and destroy, and that thou mayest plant and build again,' addressed Henry as a disobedient vassal. Already lying under the censures of the Church, he had gone on to heap crime on crime; and therefore, a specific number of days being allowed him to repent and make his submission, at the expiration of this period of respite the following sentence was to take effect.

The King, with all who abetted him in his crimes, was pronounced accursed—cut off from the body of Christ, to perish. When he died, his body should lie without burial; his soul, blasted with anathema, should be cast into hell for ever. The lands of his subjects who remained faithful to him were laid under an interdict; their children were disinherited, their marriages illegal, their wills invalid; only by one condition could they escape their fate—by instant rebellion against the apostate prince. All officers of the Crown were absolved from their oaths; all subjects, secular or ecclesiastic, from their allegiance. The entire nation, under penalty of excommunication, was commanded no longer to acknowledge Henry as their sovereign.[1] No true son of the Church should hold intercourse with him or his

[1] His sub excommunicationis pœnâ mandamus ut ab ejusdem Henrici regis, suorumque officialium judicium et magistratuum quorumcunque obedientiâ, penitus et omnino recedant, nec illos in superiores recognoscant neque illorum mandatis obtemperent.—Bull of Pope Paul against Henry VIII.

adherents. They must neither trade with them, speak with them, nor give them food. The clergy, leaving behind a few of their number to baptize the new-born infants, were to withdraw from the accursed land, and return no more till it had submitted. If the King, trusting to force, persevered in his iniquity, the lords and commons of England, dukes, marquises, earls, and all other persons, were required, under the same penalty of excommunication, to expel him from the throne; and the Christian princes of Europe were called on to show their fidelity to the Holy See, by aiding in so godly a work.

In conclusion, as the King had commanded his clergy to preach against the Pope in their churches, so the Pope commanded them to retaliate upon the King, and with bell, book, and candle declare him cursed.

This was loud thunder; nor, when abetted by Irish massacres and English treasons, was it altogether impotent. If Henry's conceptions of the royal supremacy were something imperious, the Papal supremacy was not more modest in its self-assertion; and the language of Paul III. went far to justify the rough measures by which his menaces were parried. If any misgiving had remained in the King's mind on the legitimacy of the course which he had pursued, the last trace of it must have been obliterated by the perusal of this preposterous bombast.

For the moment, as I said, the bull was suspended through the interference of Francis. But Francis remained in communion with the See of Rome: Francis

was at that moment labouring to persuade the Lutheran States in Germany to return to communion with it: and Henry knew that, although in their hearts the European powers might estimate the Pope's pretences at their true value, yet the bull of excommunication might furnish a convenient and dangerous pretext against him in the event of a Catholic combination. His position was full of peril; and in spite of himself, he was driven once more to seek for an alliance among the foreign Protestants before the French intrigues should finally anticipate him.

That he really might be too late appeared an immediate likelihood. The quarrel between the Lutherans and the followers of Zwingle, the Anabaptist anarchy, and the increasing confusion throughout the Protestant States, had so weighed on Luther's spirit that he was looking for the end of all things and the coming of Christ; and although Luther himself never quailed, too many 'murmurers in the wilderness' were looking wistfully back into Egypt. The French King, availing himself skilfully of the turning tide, had sent the Bishop of Paris to the courts of Saxony and Bavaria, in the beginning of August, to feel his way towards a reconciliation; and his efforts had been attended with remarkable success.

The Bishop had been in communication with Melancthon and many of the leading Lutheran theologians upon the terms on which they would return to the Church. The Protestant divines had drawn up a series of articles, the first of which was a profession of readi-

ness to recognize the authority of the Pope;[1] accompanying this statement with a declaration that they would accept any terms not plainly unjust and impious. These articles were transmitted to Paris, and again retransmitted to Germany, with every prospect of a mutually satisfactory result; and Melancthon was waiting only till the Bishop could accompany him, to go in person to Paris, and consult with the Sorbonne.[2]

This momentary (for it was only momentary) weakness of the German Protestants was in part owing to their want of confidence in Henry VIII.[3] The King had learnt to entertain a respect for the foreign Reformers, far unlike the repugnance of earlier years; but

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[1] The Venetian ambassador told Mount that the first article stood thus: 'Admittitur Protestas Pontificis Maximi absolute;' to which Mount says he answered, 'Hoc Latinum magis sapit Sorbonam Parisiensem quam Witenbergensem Minervam.' Du Bellay afterwards said that the saving clause was attached to it, 'Modo secundum verbum Dei omnia judicet;' and that this had been added at the desire of the French King; which Mount did not believe—and indeed found great difficulty in discovering any credible account of what was really taking place, beyond the fact that the Lutherans were so anxious for an agreement, that they were walking with open eyes into a net which would strangle them.—See *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 630, &c.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ego colendissime Patrone (si scribere licet quod sentio) non nihil nocere puto amicitiæ ineundæ et confirmandæ inter serenissimum Regem nostrum et Principes Germanos, nimiam serenissimi Regis nostri prudentiam. Germanorum animi tales sunt ut apertam et simplicem amicitiam colant et expetant. Ego quoque Germanos Principes super hâc causâ sæpius expostulantes audivi, ut qui suspensam hanc et causariam amicitiam non satis probarent. Dixerunt enim hâc re fieri ut plerique alii fœdus secum inire detrectarent et refugerent qui id ultro factum fuerant si serenissimum Angliæ Regem aperte stare cernerent.—Mount to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 625.

the prospect of an alliance with them had hitherto been too much used by him as a weapon with which to menace the Catholic powers, whose friendship he had not concealed that he would prefer. The Protestant princes had shrunk therefore, and wisely, from allowing themselves to be made the instruments of worldly policy; and the efforts at a combination had hitherto been illusive and ineffectual. Danger now compelled the King to change his hesitation into more honest advances. If Germany accepted the mediation of Francis, and returned to communion with Rome; and if, under the circumstances of a re-union, a general council were assembled; there could be little doubt of the attitude in which a council, called together under such auspices, would place itself towards the movement in England. To escape so imminent a peril, Henry was obliged (as Elizabeth after him) to seek the support of a party from which he had shrunk: he was forced, in spite of himself, to identify his cause with the true cause of freedom, and consequently to admit an enlarged toleration of the Reformed doctrines in his own dominions. There could be little doubt of the support of the Germans, if they could be once assured that they would not again be trifled with; and a Protestant league, the steady object of Cromwell's efforts, seemed likely at length to be realized.

Different indeed would have been the future, both of England and for Germany, if such a league had been possible, if the pressure which compelled this most natural alliance had continued till it had cemented into

rock. But the Tudors, representatives in this, as in so many other features of their character, of the people whom they governed, could never cordially unite themselves with a form of thought which permitted resistance to authority, and which they regarded as anarchic and revolutionary. They consented, when no alternative was left them, to endure for short periods a state of doubtful cordiality; but the connection was terminated at the earliest moment which safety permitted; in their hatred of disorder (for this feeling is the key alike to the strength and to the weakness of the Tudor family), they preferred the incongruities of Anglicanism to a complete reformation; and a 'midgemadge'[1] of contradictory formularies to the simplicity of the Protestant faith. In essentials, the English movement was political rather than spiritual. What was gained for the faith, we owe first to Providence, and then to those accidents, one of which had now arisen, which compelled at intervals a deeper and a broader policy. To counteract the French emissaries, Christopher Mount, in August, and in September, Fox, Bishop of Hereford, were despatched to warn the Lutheran princes against their intrigues, and to point out the course which the interests of Northern Europe in the existing conjuncture required. The Bishop's instructions were drawn by the King. He was to proceed direct to the Court of Saxony, and, after presenting his

August.

[1] This was Lord Burleigh's word for the constitution of the English Church.

letters of credit, was to address the Elector to the following effect:

'Besides and beyond the love, amity, and friendship which noble blood and progeny had carnally caused and continued in the heart of the King's Highness towards the said duke and his progenitors, and besides that kindness also which of late by mutual communication of gratuities had been not a little augmented and increased between them, there was also stirred up in the heart of the King's Highness a spiritual love and favour towards the said duke and his virtuous intents and proceedings; for that the said duke persisted and continued in his most virtuous mind to set forth, maintain, and defend the sincere teaching of the Gospel and the perfect true understanding of the word of God. In that matter the King's Highness, also illuminated with the same spirit of truth, and wholly addict and dedicate to the advancement thereof, had employed great pain and travail to bring the same to the knowledge of his people and subjects, intending also further and further to proceed therein, as his Grace by good consultation should perceive might tend to the augmentation of the glory of God and the true knowledge of His word. His said Majesty was of such sincere meaning in the advancing [hereof] as his Grace would neither headily, without good advisement, and consultation, and conference with his friends, go in any part beyond the said truth, ne for any respect tarry or stay on this side the truth, but would proceed in the right straight mean way assuredly agreed upon. He had known of certainty divers who

by their immoderate zeal or the excessive appetite to novelties had from darkness proceeded to much more darkness, wherein the Anabaptists and Sacramentarians were guilty; so by secret report he had been advertised, that upon private communications and conferences, the learned men there [in Germany] had in certain points and articles yielded and relented from their first asseveration; by reason whereof it was much doubted whether by other degrees they might be dissuaded in some of the rest. The King's Highness therefore, being very desirous to know the truth therein, and to be ascertained in what points and articles the learned men there were so assuredly and constantly resolved as by no persuasion of man they could be turned from the same, had sent the Bishop of Hereford to the said duke, desiring and praying him in respect of the premises to entertain the said Bishop friendly and familiarly concerning the matter aforesaid, as the mutual love carnally, and the zeal of both princes to the increase of the glory of God spiritually, did require.'[1]

September.

The Bishop was then to speak of the council, the assembling of which he understood that the German princes so much desired. He was to dissuade them from pressing it, to the extent of his ability. They would find themselves opposed inevitably in all essential matters by the Pope, the Emperor, and the French King, whose factions united would outnumber and outvote them; and in the existing state of Europe,

[1] Instructions to the Bishop of Hereford: *Rolls House MS.*

a general council would only compromise their position and embarrass their movements. If, however, notwithstanding his remonstrances, the princes persisted in their wish, then the Bishop was to urge them to come to some understanding with England on the resolutions which they desired to maintain. Let them communicate to the English bishops such points 'as they would stick to without relenting;' and the two countries, 'standing together, would be so much stronger to withstand their adversaries.' Without definitely promising to sign the Confession of Augsburg, Henry held out stronger hopes that he might sign that Confession, if they would send representatives to London to discuss the articles of it with himself.[1] The Bishop was to apologize for any previous slackness on the King's part in his communications with the Elector, and to express his hopes that for the future their relations might be those of cordial unanimity. He was especially to warn the Elector to beware of re-admitting the Papal supremacy under any pretext. The English had shaken off the Pope, 'provoked thereunto in such wise as would have provoked

[1] In case they shall require that the King's Majesty shall receive the whole confession of Germany as it is imprinted, the Bishop shall say that when the King's Highness shall have seen and perused the articles of the league, and shall perceive that there is in it contained none other articles but such as may be agreeable with the Gospel, and such as his Highness ought and conveniently may maintain, it is not to be doubted, and also, 'I durst boldly affirm,' the said Bishop shall say, 'that the King's Highness will enter the same [league].' But it shall be necessary for the said duke and the princes confederate to send to the King's Highness such personages as might devise, conclude, and condescend in every article.—Instructions to the Bishop of Hereford: *Rolls House MS.*

them rather to have expelled him from them by wrong, than to suffer him so to oppress them with injuries.' If in Germany they 'opened the great gate' to let him in again he would rebuild 'the fortresses that were thrown down, and by little and little bring all to the former estate again.' Finally, with respect to the council—if a council there was to be—they must take care that it was held in a place indifferent, where truth might be heard or spoken; 'considering that else in a council, were not the remedy that all good men sought, but the mischief that all good men did abhor.'

These advances, consented to by Henry, were the act of Cromwell, and were designed as the commencement of a *Fœdus Evangelicum*—a league of the great Reforming nations of Europe. It was a grand scheme, and history can never cease to regret that it was grasped at with too faint a hand. The Bishop succeeded in neutralizing partially the scheming of the French, partially in attracting the sympathies of the German powers towards England; but the two great streams of the Teutonic race, though separated by but a narrow ridge of difference, were unable to reach a common channel. Their genius drove them into courses which were to run side by side for centuries, yet ever to remain divided. And if the lines in which their minds have flowed seem to be converging at last, and if hereafter Germans and English are again to unite in a single faith, the remote meeting-point is still invisible, and the terms of possible agreement can be but faintly conjectured.

CHAPTER X.

THE VISITATION OF THE MONASTERIES.

MANY high interests in England had been injured by the Papal jurisdiction; but none had suffered more vitally than those of the monastic establishments. These establishments had been injured, not by fines and exactions—for oppression of this kind had been terminated by the statutes of provisors,—but because, except at rare and remote intervals, they had been left to themselves, without interference and without surveillance. They were deprived of those salutary checks which all human institutions require if they are to be saved from sliding into corruption. The religious houses, almost without exception, were not amenable to the authority of the bishops. The several societies acknowledged obedience only to the heads of their order, who resided abroad; or to the Pope, or to some Papal delegate. Thus any regularly conducted visitation was all but impossible. The foreign superiors, who were forbidden by statute to receive for their services more than certain limited and reasonable fees, would not undertake a gratuitous labour; and the visitations, attempted with im-

perfect powers[1] by the English archbishops, could be resisted successfully under pleas of exemption and obedience to the rules of the orders.[2] Thus the abbeys had gone their own way, careless of the gathering indignation with which they were regarded by the people, and believing that in their position they held a sacred shield which would protect them for ever. In them, as throughout the Catholic system, the sadness of the condition into which they had fallen, was enhanced by the contrast between the theory and the degenerate reality. Originally, and for many hundred years after their foundation, the regular clergy were the finest body of men of which mankind in their chequered history can boast. They lived to illustrate, in systematic simplicity, the universal law of sacrifice. In their three chief vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, they surrendered everything which makes life delightful. Their business on earth was to labour and to pray: to labour for other men's bodies, to pray for other men's souls. Wealth flowed in upon them; the world, in its instinctive loyalty to greatness, laid its lands and its possessions at their feet; and for a time was seen the notable spectacle of property administered as a trust, from which the owners reaped no benefit, except increase of toil. The genius of the age expended its highest efforts to provide fitting

[1] The English archbishops were embarrassed by the statutes of provisors in applying for plenary powers to Rome. If they accepted commissions they accepted them at their peril, and were compelled to caution in their manner of proceeding.

[2] 27 Hen. VIII. cap. 28. The statute says that many visitations had been made in the two hundred years preceding the Reformation, but had failed wholly of success.

tabernacles for the divine spirit which they enshrined; and alike in village and city, the majestic houses of the Father of mankind and his especial servants towered up in sovereign beauty, symbols of the civil supremacy of the Church, and of the moral sublimity of life and character which had won the homage and the admiration of the Christian nations. Ever at the sacred gates sat Mercy, pouring out relief from a never-failing store to the poor and the suffering; ever within the sacred aisles the voices of holy men were pealing heavenwards, in intercession for the sins of mankind; and influences so blessed were thought to exhale around those mysterious precincts, that the outcasts of society—the debtor, the felon, and the outlaw—gathered round the walls, as the sick men sought the shadow of the apostle, and lay there sheltered from the avenging hand till their sins were washed from off their souls. Through the storms of war and conquest the abbeys of the middle ages floated, like the ark upon the waves of the flood, inviolate in the midst of violence, through the awful reverence which surrounded them.

The soul of 'religion,'[1] however, had died out of it for many generations before the Reformation. At the close of the fourteenth century, Wycliffe had cried that the rotting trunk cumbered the ground, and should be cut down. It had not been cut down; it had been allowed to stand for a hundred and fifty more years; and now it was indeed plain that it could remain no

[1] To enter 'religion' was the technical expression for taking the vows.

longer. The boughs were bare, the stem was withered, the veins were choked with corruption; the ancient life-tree of monasticism would blossom and bear fruit no more. Faith had sunk into superstition; duty had died into routine; and the monks, whose technical discipline was forgotten, and who were set free by their position from the discipline of ordinary duty, had travelled swiftly on the downhill road of human corruption.

Only light reference will be made in this place to the darker scandals by which the abbeys were dishonoured. Such things there really were, to an extent which it may be painful to believe, but which evidence too abundantly proves. It is better, however, to bury the recollection of the more odious forms of human depravity; and so soon as those who condemn the Reformation have ceased to deny what the painfulness of the subject only has allowed to remain disputed, the sins of the last English monks will sleep with them in their tombs. Here, in spite of such denials, the most offensive pictures shall continue to be left in the shade; and persons who wish to gratify their curiosity, or satisfy their unbelief, may consult the authorities for themselves.[1] I shall confine my own efforts rather to

[1] A summary of the condition of the Religious Houses, in the Cotton Library, Cleopatra, E 4; MS. Letters of the Visitors, in the same collection; three volumes of the correspondence of Richard Leyton with Cromwell, in the State Paper Office; and the reports of the Visitations of 1489 and 1511, in the *Registers* of Archbishops Morton and Warham. For printed authorities, see *Suppression of the Monasteries*, published by the Camden Society; STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i., Appendix; FULLER'S *Ecclesiastical History;* and WILKINS'S *Concilia*, vol. iii.

the explanation of the practical, and, in the highest sense of the word, political, abuses, which, on the whole, perhaps, told most weightily on the serious judgment of the age.

The abbeys, then, as the State regarded them, existed for the benefit of the poor. The occupants for the time being were themselves under vows of poverty; they might appropriate to their personal use no portion of the revenues of their estates; they were to labour with their own hands, and administer their property for the public advantage. The surplus proceeds of the lands, when their own modest requirements had been supplied, were to be devoted to the maintenance of learning, to the exercise of a liberal hospitality, and to the relief of the aged, the impotent, and the helpless. The popular clamour of the day declared that these duties were systematically neglected; that two-thirds, at least, of the religious bodies abused their opportunities unfairly for their own advantage; and this at a time when the obligations of all property were defined as strictly as its rights, and negligent lay owners were promptly corrected by the State whenever occasion required. The monks, it was believed, lived in idleness, keeping vast retinues of servants to do the work which they ought to have done themselves.[1] They were accused of sharing dividends by mutual connivance, al-

[1] At Tewkesbury, where there was an abbot and thirty-two monks, I find payment made to a hundred and forty-four servants in livery, who were wholly engaged in the service of the abbey.—Particulars relating to the Dissolution of the Monasteries, section 5: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 86.

though they were forbidden by their rule to possess any private property whatever, and of wandering about the country in the disguise of laymen in pursuit of forbidden indulgences.[1] They were bound by their statutes to keep their houses full, and if their means were enlarged, to increase their numbers; they were supposed to have allowed their complement to fall to half, and sometimes to a third, of the original foundation, fraudulently reserving the enlarged profits to themselves. It was thought, too, that they had racked their estates; that having a life-interest only, they had encumbered them with debts, mortgages, and fines; that in some cases they had wholly alienated lands, of which they had less right to dispose than a modern rector of his glebe.[2] In the mean time, it was said that the poor were not fed, that hospitality was neglected, that the buildings and houses were falling to waste, that fraud and simony prevailed among them from the highest to the lowest, that the abbots sold the presentations to the benefices which were in their gift, or dishonestly retained the cures of souls in their own hands, careless whether the duties of the parishes could or could not be discharged; and that, finally, the vast majority of the monks themselves were ignorant, self-indulgent, profligate, worthless, dissolute.

These, in addition to the heavier accusations, were the charges which the popular voice had for more than

[1] See the Directions to the Visitors: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 74.

[2] See, for instance, *Suppression of the Monasteries* p. 86.

a century brought against the monasteries, which had led Wycliffe to denounce their existence as intolerable, the House of Commons to petition Henry IV. for the secularization of their property, and Henry V. to appease the outcry, by the suppression of more than a hundred, as an ineffectual warning to the rest.[1] At length, in the year 1489, at the instigation of Cardinal Morton, then Archbishop of Canterbury, a commission was issued by Innocent VIII. for a general investigation throughout England into the behaviour of the regular clergy. The Pope said that he had heard, from persons worthy of credit, that abbots and monks in many places were systematically faithless to their vows; he conferred on the Archbishop a special power of visitation, and directed him to admonish, to correct, to punish, as might seem to him to be desirable.[2] On the receipt of these instructions, Morton addressed the following letter to the superior of an abbey within a few miles of London—a peer of the realm, living in the full glare of notoriety—a person whose offences, such as they were, had been committed openly, palpably, and conspicuously in the face of the world:—

'John, by Divine permission, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England, Legate of the Apostolic See, to William, Abbot of the Monastery of St Alban's, greeting.

[1] 'In a Parliament held at Leicester, in 1414, the priories alien in England were given to the King; all their possessions to remain to the King and to his heirs for ever. And these priories were suppressed, to the number of more than a hundred houses.'—STOW'S *Chronicle*, p. 345.

[2] The commission is in MORTON'S *Register*, MS., Lambeth Library.

'We have received certain letters under lead, the copies whereof we herewith send you, from our most holy Lord and Father in Christ, Innocent, by Divine Providence Pope, the eighth of that name. We therefore, John, the Archbishop, the visitor, reformer, inquisitor, and judge therein mentioned, in reverence for the Apostolic See, have taken upon ourselves the burden of enforcing the said commission; and have determined that we will proceed by, and according to, the full force, tenour, and effect of the same.

'And it has come to our ears, being at once publicly notorious and brought before us upon the testimony of many witnesses worthy of credit, that you, the abbot aforementioned, have been of long time noted and diffamed, and do yet continue so noted, of simony, of usury, of dilapidation and waste of the goods, revenues, and possessions of the said monastery, and of certain other enormous crimes and excesses hereafter written. In the rule, custody, and administration of the goods, spiritual and temporal, of the said monastery, you are so remiss, so negligent, so prodigal, that whereas the said monastery was of old times founded and endowed by the pious devotion of illustrious princes of famous memory, heretofore kings of this land, the most noble progenitors of our most serene Lord and King that now is, in order that true religion might flourish there, that the name of the Most High, in whose honour and glory it was instituted, might be duly celebrated there;

'And whereas, in days heretofore the regular observ-

ance of the said rule was greatly regarded, and hospitality was diligently kept;

'Nevertheless, for no little time, during which you have presided in the same monastery, you and certain of your fellow monks and brethren (whose blood, it is feared, through your neglect, a severe Judge will require at your hand) have relaxed the measure and form of religious life; you have laid aside the pleasant yoke of contemplation, and all regular observances; hospitality, alms, and those other offices of piety which of old time were exercised and ministered therein have decreased, and by your faults, your carelessness, your neglect and deed, do daily decrease more and more, and cease to be regarded—the pious vows of the founders are defrauded of their just intent; the antient rule of your order is deserted; and not a few of your fellow monks and brethren, as we most deeply grieve to learn, giving themselves over to a reprobate mind, laying aside the fear of God, do lead only a life of lasciviousness—nay, as is horrible to relate, be not afraid to defile the holy places, even the very churches of God, by infamous intercourse with nuns.

'You yourself, moreover, among other grave enormities and abominable crimes whereof you are guilty, and for which you are noted and diffamed, have, in the first place, admitted a certain married woman, named Elena Germyn, who has separated herself without just cause from her husband, and for some time past has lived in adultery with another man, to be a nun or sister in the house or Priory of Pray, lying, as you pretend,

within your jurisdiction. You have next appointed the same woman to be prioress of the said house, notwithstanding that her said husband was living at the time, and is still alive. And finally, Father Thomas Sudbury, one of your brother monks, publicly, notoriously, and without interference or punishment from you, has associated, and still associates, with this woman as an adulterer with his harlot.

'Moreover, divers other of your brethren and fellow monks have resorted, and do resort, continually to her and other women at the same place, as to a public brothel or receiving house, and have received no correction therefor.

'Nor is Pray the only house into which you have introduced disorder. At the nunnery of Sapwell, which you also contend to be under your jurisdiction, you change the prioresses and superiors again and again at your own will and caprice. Here, as well as at Pray, you depose those who are good and religious; you promote to the highest dignities the worthless and the vicious. The duties of the order are cast aside; virtue is neglected; and by these means so much cost and extravagance has been caused, that to provide means for your indulgence you have introduced certain of your brethren to preside in their houses under the name of guardians, when in fact they are no guardians, but thieves and notorious villains; and with their help you have caused and permitted the goods of the same priories to be dispensed, or to speak more truly to be dissipated, in the above-described corruptions and other enormous

and accursed offences. Those places once religious are rendered and reputed as it were profane and impious; and by your own and your creatures' conduct are so impoverished as to be reduced to the verge of ruin.

'In like manner, also, you have dealt with certain other cells of monks, which you say are subject to you, even within the monastery of the glorious proto-martyr, Alban himself. You have dilapidated the common property; you have made away with the jewels; the copses, the woods, the underwood, almost all the oaks and other forest trees, to the value of eight thousand marks and more, you have made to be cut down without distinction, and they have by you been sold and alienated. The brethren of the abbey, some of whom, as is reported, are given over to all the evil things of the world, neglect the service of God altogether. They live with harlots and mistresses publicly and continuously, within the precincts of the monastery and without. Some of them, who are covetous of honour and promotion, and desirous therefore of pleasing your cupidity, have stolen and made away with the chalices and other jewels of the church. They have even sacrilegiously extracted the precious stones from the very shrine of St Alban; and you have not punished these men, but have rather knowingly supported and maintained them. If any of your brethren be living justly and religiously, if any be wise and virtuous, these you straightway depress and hold in hatred. . . . . You . . . . '

But this overwhelming document need not be transcribed further. It pursues its way through mire and

filth to its most lame and impotent conclusion. The abbot was not deposed; he was invited merely to reconsider his conduct, and, if possible, amend it.

Offences similar in kind and scarcely less gross were exposed at Waltham, at St Andrew's, Northampton, at Calais, and at other places.[1] Again, a reprimand was considered to be an adequate punishment.

Evils so deep and so abominable would not yield to languid treatment; the visitation had been feeble in its execution and limited in extent. In 1511 a second was attempted by Archbishop Warham.[2] This inquiry was more partial than the first, yet similar practices were brought to light: women introduced to religious houses; nuns and abbesses accusing one another of incontinency, the alms collected in the chapels squandered by the monks in licentiousness. Once more, no cure was attempted beyond a paternal admonition.[3] A third effort was made by Wolsey twelve years later: again exposure followed, and again no remedy was found.

If the condition of the abbeys had appeared intolerable before investigation, still less could it be endured when the justice of the accusations against them had been ascertained. But the Church was unequal to the work of self-reformation. Parliament alone could decide on the measures which the emergency made necessary; and preparatory to legislation, the true circumstances and present character of the religious bodies throughout

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[1] Morton's *Register*, MS., Lambeth.

[2] Warham's *Register*, MS., Lambeth. [3] Ibid.

the whole country were to be ascertained accurately and completely.

Accordingly, in the summer of 1535, directly after Sir Thomas More's execution, Cromwell, now 'vicegerent of the King in all his ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the realm,'[1] issued a commission for a general visitation of the religious houses, the Universities, and other spiritual corporations. The persons appointed to conduct the inquiry were Doctors Legh, Leyton, and Ap Rice, ecclesiastical lawyers in holy orders, with various subordinates. Legh and Leyton, the two principal commissioners, were young, impetuous men, likely to execute their work rather thoroughly than delicately; but, to judge by the surviving evidence, they were as upright and plain-dealing as they were assuredly able and efficient. It is pretended by some writers that the inquiry was set on foot with a preconceived purpose of spoliation; that the duty of the visitors was rather to defame roundly than to report truly; and that the object of the commission was merely to justify an act of appropriation which had been already determined. The commission of Pope Innocent, with the previous inquiries, puts to silence so gratuitous a supposition; while it is certain that antecedent to the presentation of the report, an extensive measure of suppression was not so much as contemplated. The directions to the visitors,[2] the injunctions which they were to carry with them to the various houses, the private letters to the

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[1] See Injunctions to the Clergy: FOXE, vol. v. p. 165.

[2] BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 74.

superiors, which were written by the King and by Cromwell,[1] show plainly that the first object was to reform and not to destroy; and it was only when reformation was found to be conclusively hopeless, that the harder alternative was resolved upon. The report itself is no longer extant. Bonner was directed by Queen Mary to destroy all discoverable copies of it, and his work was fatally well executed. We are able, however, to replace its contents to some extent, out of the despatches of the commissioners.

Their discretionary powers were unusually large, as appears from the first act with which the visitors commenced operations. On their own responsibility, they issued an inhibition against the bishops, forbidding them to exercise any portion of their jurisdiction while the visitation was in progress. The sees themselves were to be inspected; and they desired to make the ground clear before they moved. When the amazed bishops exclaimed against so unheard-of an innovation, Doctor Legh justified the order by saying, that it was well to compel the prelates to know and feel their new position; and in the fact of their suspension by a royal commission, to 'agnize' the King as the source of episcopal authority.[2]

Sept. 12.

Truly it was an altered world since the bishops sent in their answer to the complaints of the House of Commons. The visitors, in this haughty

[1] STRYPE'S *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 214.

[2] Legh to Cromwell, Sept. 24th: STRYPE'S *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 216.—*Cotton. MS.* Cleopatra, E 4, fol. 225.

style, having established their powers, began work with the University of Oxford. Their time was short, for Parliament was to meet early in the spring, when their report was to be submitted to it; and their business meanwhile was not only to observe and inquire, but any reforms which were plainly useful and good, they were themselves to execute. They had no time for hesitation, therefore; and they laid their hands to the task before them with a promptitude at which we can only wonder. The heads of houses, as may be supposed, saw little around them which was in need of reform. A few students of high genius and high purposes had been introduced into the University, as we have seen, by Wolsey; and these had been assiduously exiled or imprisoned. All suspected books had been hunted out. There had been fagot processions in High-street, and bonfires of New Testaments at Carfax. The daily chapels, we suppose, had gone forward as usual, and the drowsy lectures on the Schoolmen; while 'towardly young men' who were venturing stealthily into the perilous heresy of Greek, were eyed askance by the authorities, and taught to tremble at their temerity. All this we might have looked for; and among the authorities themselves, also, the world went forward in a very natural manner. There was comfortable living in the colleges; so comfortable, that many of the country clergy preferred Oxford and Cambridge to the monotony of their parishes, and took advantage of a clause in a late Act of Parliament, which recognized a residence at either of the Universities as an excuse for absence from

tedious duties. 'Divers and many persons,' it was found, 'beneficed with cure of souls, and being not apt to study by reason of their age or otherwise, ne never intending before the making of the said Act to travel in study, but rather minding their own ease and pleasure, colourably to defraud the same good statute, did daily and commonly resort to the said Universities, where, under pretence of study, they continued and abode, living dissolutely; nothing profiting themselves in learning, but consumed the time in idleness and pastimes and insolent pleasures, giving occasion and evil example thereby to the young men and students within the Universities, and occupying such rooms and commodities as were instituted for the maintenance and relief of poor scholars.'[1] These persons were not driven away by the heads of houses as the Christian Brothers had been; they were welcomed rather as pleasant companions. In comfortable conservatism they had no tendencies to heresy, but only to a reasonable indulgence of their five bodily senses. Doubtless, therefore, the visitors found Oxford a pleasant place, and cruelly they marred the enjoyments of it. Like a sudden storm of rain, they dropt down into its quiet precincts. Heedless of rights of fellows and founders' bequests, of sleepy dignities and established indolences, they re-established long-dormant lectures in the colleges. In a few little days (for so long only they remained) they poured new life into education. They founded fresh professorships—pro-

[1] 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 13.

fessorships of Polite Latin, Professorships of Philosophy, Divinity, Canon Law, Natural Sciences—above all of the dreaded Greek; confiscating funds to support them. For the old threadbare text-books, some real teaching was swiftly substituted. The idle residents were noted down, soon to be sent home by Parliament to their benefices, under pain of being compelled, like all other students, to attend lectures, and, in their proper persons 'keep sophisms, problems, disputations, and all other exercises of learning.' [1]

The discipline was not neglected: 'We have enjoined the religious students,' [2] Leyton wrote to Cromwell, 'that none of them, for no manner of cause, shall come within any tavern, inn, or alehouse, or any other house, whatsoever it be, within the town and suburbs; [each offender] once so taken, to be sent home to his cloyster. Without doubt, this act is greatly lamented of all honest women of the town; and especially of their laundresses, that may not now once enter within the gates, much less within the chambers, whereunto they were right well accustomed. I doubt not, but for this thing, only the honest matrons will sue to you for redress.' [3] These were sharp measures; we lose our breath at their rapidity and violence. The saddest vicissitude was that which befell the famous Duns—Duns Scotus, the greatest of the Schoolmen, the constructor of the *memoria*

[1] 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 13.

[2] That is, the exhibitioners sent up to the University from the monasteries.

[3] Strype, *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 323. Leyton to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 71 et seq.

technica of ignorance, the ancient text-book of *à priori* knowledge, established for centuries the supreme despot in the Oxford lecture-rooms. 'We have set Duns in Bocardo,' says Leyton. He was thrown down from his high estate, and from being lord of the Oxford intellect, was 'made the common servant of all men;' condemned by official sentence to the lowest degradation to which book can be submitted.[1] Some copies escaped this worst fate; but for changed uses thenceforward. The second occasion on which the visitors came to New College, they 'found the great Quadrant Court full of the leaves of Duns, the wind blowing them into every corner; and one Mr Greenfield, a gentleman of Buckinghamshire, gathering up part of the same book leaves, as he said, to make him sewers of blawnsheres, to keep the deer within his wood, thereby to have the better cry with his hounds.'[2]

To such base uses all things return at last; dust unto dust, when the life has died out of them, and the living world needs their companionship no longer.

On leaving Oxford, the visitors spread over England, north, south, east, and west. We trace Legh in rapid progress through Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Lincoln, Yorkshire, and Northumberland; Leyton through Middlesex, Kent, Sussex, Hants, Somersetshire, and Devon. They appeared at monastery after monastery, with prompt, decisive questions; and if the truth was concealed, with expedients for discovering it, in which

[1] Id quod meis oculis vidi, Leyton writes: Ibid.

[2] Leyton to Cromwell: Ib. p. 71 et seq.

practice soon made them skilful. All but everywhere the result was the same. At intervals a light breaks through, and symptoms appear of some efforts after decency; but in the vast majority of the smaller houses, the previous results were repeated, the popular suspicions were more than confirmed. Wolsey, when writing to the Pope of his intended reformation, had spoken of the *animus improbus,* and the frightful symptoms which existed of it. He was accused, in his attempted impeachment, of having defamed the character of the English clergy. Yet Wolsey had written no more than the truth, as was too plainly discovered. I do not know what to say on this matter, or what to leave unsaid. If I am to relate the suppression of the monasteries, I should relate also why they were suppressed. If I were to tell the truth, I should have first to warn all modest eyes to close the book, and read no further. It will perhaps be sufficient if I introduce a few superficial stories, suggestive rather than illustrative of the dark matter which remains in the shade.

I have spoken more than once of the monastery of Sion. It was the scene of the Nun of Kent's intrigues. It furnished more than one martyr for the Catholic cause; and the order was Carthusian—one of the strictest in England. There were two houses attached to the same establishment—one of monks, another of nuns. The confessors of the women were chosen from the friars, and they were found to have abused their opportunities in the most infamous manner. With a hateful mixture of sensuality and superstition, the offence and the abso-

lution went hand-in-hand. One of these confessors, so zealous for the Pope that he professed himself ready to die for the Roman cause, was in the habit of using language so filthy to his penitents, that it was necessary to 'sequester him from hearing ladies' confessions.' The nuns petitioned the visitors, on the exposure of the seduction of a sister, that he and his companion might come to them no more; and the friar was told that his abominable conduct might be the occasion that 'shrift should be laid down in England.'[1]

This is one instance of an evil found fatally prevalent.

Again, the clergy were suspected of obtaining dispensations from their superiors indulging them in a breach of their vows. The laxity of the Church courts in dealing with clerical delinquents had perhaps given rise to this belief; but the accusation was confirmed by a discovery at Maiden Bradley, in Wiltshire. The prior of this house had a family of illegitimate children, whom he brought up and provided for in a very comfortable manner;[2] and the visitor wrote that '*the Pope, considering his fragility*,' had granted him a license in this little matter; that he had, in fact, 'a good writing *sub plumbo*, to discharge his conscience.' I do not easily

[1] Leyton to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 48. Let it not be thought that the Papal party were worse than the other. The second confessor, if anything the more profligate of the two, gave his services to the King.

[2] The prior is an holy man, and hath but six children; and but one daughter married yet of the goods of the monastery. His sons be tall men, waiting upon him.—Leyton to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 58.

believe that *authentic* dispensations of such a kind were obtained from Rome, or were obtainable from it; but of forged dispensations, invented by reverend offenders or fraudulently issued by the local ecclesiastical authorities, to keep appearances smooth, there were probably enough, and too many.[1]

The more ordinary experiences of the commissioners may be described by Leyton himself, in an account which he wrote of his visit to Langden Abbey, near Dover. The style is graphic, and the picture of the scene one of the most complete which remains. The letter is to Cromwell.

Oct. 22.

'Please it your goodness to understand that on Friday, the 22nd of October, I rode back with speed to take an inventory of Folkstone, and from thence I went to Langden. Whereat immediately descending from my horse, I sent Bartlett, your servant, with all my servants, to circumspect the abbey, and surely to keep all back-doors and starting-holes. I myself went alone to the abbot's lodging, joining upon the fields and wood, even like a cony clapper, full of starting-holes. [I was] a good space knocking at the abbot's door; *nec vox nec sensus apparuit*, saving the abbot's little dog that within his door fast locked bayed and barked. I found a short poleaxe standing behind the door, and with it I dashed the abbot's door in pieces, *ictu oculi*,

[1] I leave this passage as it stands. The acquittal of the Papal courts of actual complicity becomes, however, increasingly difficult to me. I discovered among the MSS. in the Rolls House a list of eighteen clergy and laymen in one diocese who had, or professed to have, dispensations to keep concubines.—Note to Second Edition.

and set one of my men to keep that door; and about the house I go, with that poleaxe in my hand, *ne forte*, for the abbot is a dangerous desperate knave, and a hardy. But for a conclusion, his gentlewoman bestirred her stumps towards her starting-holes; and then Bartlett, watching the pursuit, took the tender damoisel; and, after I had examined her, [brought her] to Dover to the Mayor, to set her in some cage or prison for eight days; and I brought holy father abbot to Canterbury, and here in Christchurch I will leave him in prison. In this sudden doing *ex tempore*, to circumspect the house, and to search, your servant John Antony's men marvelled what fellow I was, and so did the rest of the abbey, for I was unknown there of all men. I found her apparel in the abbot's coffer. To tell you all this comedy (but for the abbot a tragedy), it were too long. Now it shall appear to gentlemen of this country, and other the commons, that ye shall not deprive or visit, but upon substantial grounds. The rest of all this knavery I shall defer till my coming unto you, which shall be with as much speed as I can possible.'[1]

Towards the close of the year, Leyton went north to join Legh; and together they visited a nunnery at Lichfield. The religious orders were bound by oaths similar to those which have recently created difficulty in Oxford. They were sworn to divulge nothing which might prejudice the interests of the houses. The superior at Lichfield availed herself of this plea. When

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[1] Leyton to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, pp. 75-6.

questioned as to the state of the convent, she and the sisterhood refused to allow that there was any disorder, or any irregularity, which could give occasion for inquiry. Her assertions were not implicitly credited; the inspection proceeded, and at length two of the sisters were discovered to be 'not barren;' a priest in one instance having been the occasion of the misfortune, and a serving-man in the other. No confession could be obtained either from the offenders themselves, or from the society. The secret was betrayed by an 'old beldame;' 'and when,' says Leyton, 'I objected against the prioresses, that if they could not show me a cause reasonable of their concealment, I must needs, and would, punish them for their manifest perjury,—their answer was, that they were bound by their religion never to confess the secret faults done amongst them, but only to a visitor of their own religion, and to that they were sworn, every one of them, on their first admission.'[1]

A little later the commissioners were at Fountains Abbey; and tourists, who in their day-dreams amongst those fair ruins are inclined to complain of the sacrilege which wasted the houses of prayer, may study with advantage the following account of that house in the year which preceded its dissolution. The outward beautiful ruin was but the symbol and consequence of a moral ruin not so beautiful. 'The Abbot of Fountains,' we read in a joint letter of Legh and Leyton, had

[1] Leyton to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 91.

'greatly dilapidated his house, [and] wasted the woods, notoriously keeping six women. [He is] defamed here,' they say, '*a toto populo,* one day denying these articles, with many more, the next day confessing the same, thus manifestly incurring perjury.' Six days before the visitors' access to his monastery 'he committed theft and sacrilege, confessing the same. At midnight he caused his chaplain to seize the sexton's keys, and took out a jewel, a cross of gold with stones. One Warren, a goldsmith in the Chepe, was with him in his chamber at that hour, and there they stole out a great emerald, with a ruby. The said Warren made the abbot believe the ruby to be but a garnet, so that for this he paid nothing. For the emerald he paid but twenty pounds. He sold him also the plate without weight or ounces; how much the abbot was deceived therein he cannot tell, for he is a very fool and miserable idiot.'[1]

Under an impression that frauds of this description were becoming frequent, the Government had instructed the commissioners to take inventories of the plate and jewels; and where they saw occasion for suspicion, to bring away whatever seemed superfluous, after leaving a supply sufficient for the services of the house and chapel. The misdemeanour of the Abbot of Fountains was not the only justification of these directions. Sometimes the plate was secreted. The Prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, was accused of having

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[1] Leyton and Legh to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries,* p. 100.

sent in a false return,[1] keeping back gold and precious stones valued at a thousand pounds. Information was given by some of the brethren, who professed to fear that the prior would poison them in revenge.

Occasionally the monks ventured on rougher methods to defend themselves. Here is a small spark of English life while the investigation was in progress, lighted by a stray letter from an English gentleman of Cheshire. The lord chancellor was informed by Sir Piers Dutton, justice of the peace, that the visitors had been at Norton Abbey. They had concluded their inspection, had packed up such jewels and plate as they purposed to remove, and were going away; when, the day being late and the weather foul, they changed their minds, and resolved to spend the night where they were. In the evening, 'the abbot,' says Sir Piers, 'gathered together a great company, to the number of two or three hundred persons, so that the commissioners were in fear of their lives, and were fain to take a tower there; and therefrom sent a letter unto me, ascertaining me what danger they were in, and desiring me to come and assist them, or they were never likely to come thence. Which letter came to me about nine of the clock, and about two o'clock on the same night I came thither with such of my tenants as I had near about me, and found divers fires made, as well within the gates as without; and the said abbot had caused an ox to be killed, with other victuals, and prepared for such

[1] Christopher Levyns to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 90. But in this instance I doubt the truth of the charge.

of his company as he had there. I used some policy, and came suddenly upon them. Some of them took to the pools and water, and it was so dark that I could not find them. Howbeit I took the abbot and three of his canons, and brought them to the King's castle of Hatton.'[1]

If, however, the appropriation of the jewels led to occasional resistance, another duty which the commissioners were to discharge secured them as often a warm and eager welcome. It was believed that the monastic institutions had furnished an opportunity, in many quarters, for the disposal of inconvenient members of families. Children of both sexes, it was thought, had been forced into abbeys and convents, at an age too young to have allowed them a free choice in the sacrifice of their lives. To all such, therefore, the doors of their prison house were thrown open. On the day of visitation, when the brethren, or the sisterhood, were assembled, the visitors informed everywhere such monks as were under twenty-four, and such nuns as were under twenty-one, that they might go where they pleased. To those among them who preferred to return to the world, a secular dress was given, and forty shillings in money, and they were restored to the full privileges of the laity.

The opportunity so justly offered was passionately embraced. It was attended only with this misfortune, that the line was arbitrarily drawn, and many poor

[1] Sir Piers Dutton to the Lord Chancellor: ELLIS, third series, vol. iii. p. 42.

wretches who found themselves condemned by the accident of a few more days or months of life to perpetual imprisonment, made piteous entreaties for an extension of the terms of freedom. At Fordham, in Cambridgeshire, Dr Legh wrote to Cromwell, 'the religious persons kneeling on their knees, instantly with humble petition desire of God and the King and you, to be dismissed from their religion, saying they live in it contrary to God's law and their consciences; trusting that the King, of his gracious goodness, and you, will set them at liberty out of their bondage, which they are not able to endure, but should fall into desperation, or else run away.' 'It were a deed of charity,' he continued, fresh from the scene where he had witnessed the full misery of their condition, 'that they might live in that kind of living which might be most to the glory of God, the quietness of their consciences, and most to the commonwealth, *whosoever hath informed you to the contrary*.'[1] Similar expressions of sympathy are frequent in the visitors' letters. Sometimes the poor monks sued directly to the vicar-general, and Cromwell must have received many petitions as strange, as helpless, and as graphic, as this which follows. The writer was a certain Brother Beerley, a Benedictine monk of Pershore, in Worcestershire. It is amusing to find him addressing the vicar-general as his 'most reverend lord

[1] Legh to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 82. The last words are curious, as implying that Cromwell, who is always supposed to have urged upon the King the dissolution of the abbeys and the marriage of the clergy, at this time inclined the other way.

in God.' I preserve the spelling, which, however, will with some difficulty be found intelligible.

'We do nothing seyrch,' says this good brother, 'for the doctryn of Chryst, but all fowloys owr owne sensyaly and plesure. Also most gracyus Lord, there is a secrett thynge in my conchons whych doth move mee to go owt of the relygyon, an yt were never so perfytt, whych no man may know but my gostly fader; the wych I supposs yf a man mothe guge [is] yn other yong persons as in me selfe. But Chryst saye *nolite judicare et non judicabimini,* therefore y wyll guge my nowne conschons fyrst—the wych fault ye shall know of me heyrafter more largyously—and many other fowll vycys done amonckst relygyus men—not relygyus men, as y thynck they owt not to be cald, but dyssemblars wyth God.

'Now, most gracyus Lord and most worthyst vycytar that ever cam amonckes us, help me owt of thys vayne relygyon, and macke me your servant handmayd and beydman, and save my sowlle, wych shold be lost yf ye helpe yt not—the wych ye may save wyth one word speking—and mayck me wych am nowe nawtt to cum unto grace and goodness.

'Now y wyll ynstrux your Grace sumwatt of relygyus men, and how the Kyng's Gracis commandment is keyp yn puttyng forth of bockys the Beyschatt of Rome's userpt pour. Monckes drynke an bowll after collatyon tyll ten or twelve of the clok, and cum to matyns as dronck as myss—and sum at cardys, sum at dycys, and at tabulles; sum cum to mattyns begenying

at the mydes, and sum wen yt ys almost dun, and wold not cum there so only for boddly punyshment, nothyng for Goddis sayck. Also abbettes, monckes, prests, dun lyttyl or nothyng to put owtte of bockys the Beyschatt of Rome's name—for y myself do know yn dyvers bockys where ys name ys, and hys userpt powor upon us.'[1]

In reply to these and similar evidences of the state of the monasteries, it will be easy to say, that in the best ages there were monks impatient of their vows, and abbots negligent of their duties; that human weakness and human wickedness may throw a stain over the noblest institutions; that nothing is proved by collecting instances which may be merely exceptions, and that no evidence is more fallacious than that which rests upon isolated facts.

It is true; and the difficulty is felt as keenly by the accuser who brings forward charges which it is discreditable to have urged, if they cannot be substantiated, as by those who would avail themselves of the easy opening to evade the weight of the indictment. I have to say only, that if the extracts which I have made lead persons disposed to differ with me to examine the documents which are extant upon the subject, they will learn what I have concealed as well as what I have alleged; and I believe that, if they begin the inquiry (as I began it myself) with believing that the religious orders had been over-hardly judged, they will close it with but one

[1] Richard Beerley to Cromwell: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 132.

desire—that the subject shall never more be mentioned.

Leaving, then, the moral condition in which the visitors found these houses, we will now turn to the regulations which they were directed to enforce for the future. When the investigation at each of the houses had been completed, when the young monks and nuns had been dismissed, the accounts audited, the property examined, and the necessary inquiries had been made into the manners and habits of the establishment; the remaining fraternity were then assembled in the chapter-house, and the commissioners delivered to them their closing directions. No differences were made between the orders. The same language was used everywhere. The Statute of Supremacy was first touched upon; and the injunction was repeated for the detailed observance of it. Certain broad rules of moral obedience were then laid down, to which all 'religious' men without exception were expected to submit.[1]

No monks, thenceforward, were to leave the precincts of the monastery to which they belonged, under any pretext; they were to confine themselves within the walls, to the house, the gardens, and the grounds.

No women were to come within the walls, without license from the King or the visitor; and, to prevent all unpermitted ingress or egress, private doors and posterns were to be walled up. There was, in future,

[1] These rules must be remembered. The impossibility of enforcing obedience to them was the cause of the ultimate resolution to break up the system.

to be but one entrance only, by the great foregate; and this was to be diligently watched by a porter. The 'brethren' were to take their meals decently in the common hall. They were not to clamour, as they had been in the habit of doing, 'for any certain, usual, or accustomed portion of meat;' but were to be content with what was set before them, giving thanks to God.

To ensure gravity and decency, one of the brethren, at every refection, was to read aloud a chapter of the Old or New Testament.

The abbot was 'to keep an honest and hospitable table;' and an almoner was to be appointed in each house, to collect the broken meats, and to distribute them among the deserving poor.

Special care was to be taken in this last article, and '*by no means should such alms be given to valiant, mighty, and idle beggars and vagabonds, such as commonly use to resort to such places; which rather as drove beasts and mychers should be driven away and compelled to labour, than in their idleness and lewdness be cherished and maintained, to the great hindrance and damage of the common-weal.*'

All other alms and distributions, either prescribed by the statutes of the foundations, or established by the customs of the abbeys, were to be made and given as largely as at any past time.

The abbots were to make no waste of the woods or lands. They were to keep their accounts with an annual audit, faithfully and truly.

No fairs nor markets were any more to be held within the precincts.[1]

Every monk was to have a separate bed, and not to have any child or boy lying with him, or otherwise haunting unto him.

The 'brethren' were to occupy themselves in daily reading or other honest and laudable exercises. Especially there was to be every day one general lesson in Holy Scripture, at which every member of the house was bound to be present.

Finally, that they might all understand the meaning of their position in the world, and the intention, which they had so miserably forgotten, of the foundations to which they belonged, the abbot, prior, or president, was every day to explain in English some portion of the rule which they had professed; 'applying the same always to the doctrine of Christ.' The language of the injunctions is either Cromwell's or the King's; and the passage upon this subject is exceedingly beautiful.

'The abbot shall teach them that the said rule, and other their principles of religion (so far as they be laudable), be taken out of Holy Scripture: and he shall shew them the places from whence they be derived: and that their ceremonies and other observances be none other things than as the first letters or principles, and certain introductions to true Christianity: and that true religion is not contained in apparel, manner of going, shaven heads, and such other marks; nor in silence

[1] At one time fairs and markets were held in churchyards.—Stat. Wynton, 13 Ed. I. cap. 6.

fasting, uprising in the night, singing, and such other kind of ceremonies; but in cleanness of mind, pureness of living, Christ's faith not feigned, and brotherly charity, and true honouring of God in spirit and verity: and that those abovesaid things were instituted and begun, that they being first exercised in these, in process of time might ascend to those as by certain steps—that is to say, to the chief point and end of religion. And therefore, let them be exhorted that they do not continually stick and surcease in such ceremonies and observances, as though they had perfectly fulfilled the chief and outmost of the whole of true religion; but that when they have once passed such things, they should endeavour themselves after higher things, and convert their minds from such external matters to more inward and deeper considerations, as the law of God and Christian religion doth teach and shew: and that they assure not themselves of any reward or commodity by reason of such ceremonies and observances, except they refer all such to Christ, and for his sake observe them.'[1]

Certainly, no Government which intended to make the irregularities of an institution an excuse for destroying it, ever laboured more assiduously to defeat its own objects. Those who most warmly disapprove of the treatment of the monasteries, have so far no reason to complain; and except in the one point of the Papal supremacy, under which, be it remembered, the religious

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[1] General Injunctions to be given on the King's Highness's behalf, in all Monasteries and other houses of whatsoever order or religion they be: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 77.

orders had luxuriated in corruption, Becket or Hildebrand would scarcely have done less or more than what had as yet been attempted by Henry.

But the time had now arrived when the results of the investigation were to be submitted to the nation. The Parliament—the same old Parliament of 1529, which had commenced the struggle with the bishops—was now meeting for its last session, to deal with this its greatest and concluding difficulty. It assembled on the 4th of February, and the preliminaries of the great question being not yet completed, the Houses were first occupied with simplifying justice and abolishing the obsolete privileges of the Northern palatinates.[1] Other minor matters were also disposed of. Certain questionable people, who were taking advantage of the confusion of the times to 'withhold tythes,' were animadverted upon.[2] The treason law was further extended to comprehend the forging of the King's sign-manual, signet, and privy seal, 'divers light and evil-disposed persons having of late had the courage to commit such offences.' The scale of fees at the courts of law was fixed by statute;[3] and felons having protection of sanctuary were no longer to be permitted to leave the precincts, and return at their pleasure. When they went abroad, they were to wear badges, declaring who and what they were; and they were to be within bounds after sunset. In these and similar regulations the early weeks of the session were consumed. At

February, 1536.

[1] 27-8 Hen. VIII. cap. 24. [2] Ibid. cap. 20.
[3] Ibid. cap. 9.

length the visitors had finished their work, and the famous *Black Book* of the monasteries was laid on the table of the House of Commons.

This book, I have said, unhappily no longer exists. Persons however who read it have left on record emphatic descriptions of its contents; and the preamble of the Act of Parliament of which it formed the foundation, dwells upon its character with much distinctness. I cannot discuss the insoluble question whether the stories which it contained were true. History is ill occupied with discussing probabilities on *à priori* grounds, when the scale of likelihood is graduated by antecedent prejudice. It is enough that the report was drawn up by men who had the means of knowing the truth, and who were apparently under no temptation to misrepresent what they had seen; that the description coincides with the authentic letters of the visitors; and that the account was generally accepted as true by the English Parliament.

It appeared, then, on this authority, that two-thirds of the monks in England were living in habits which may not be described. The facts were related in great detail. The confessions of parties implicated were produced, signed by their own hands.[1] The vows were not observed. The lands were wasted, sold, and mortgaged. The foundations were incomplete. The houses were falling to waste; within and without, the monastic sys-

[1] STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 387; *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 114.

tem was in ruins. In the smaller abbeys especially, where, from the limitation of numbers, the members were able to connive securely at each other's misdemeanours, they were saturated with profligacy, with simony, with drunkenness.[1] The case against the monasteries was complete; and there is no occasion either to be surprised or peculiarly horrified at the discovery. The demoralization which was exposed was nothing less and nothing more than the condition into which men of average nature compelled to celibacy, and living as the exponents of a system which they disbelieved, were certain to fall.

There were exceptions. In the great monasteries, or in many of them, there was decency and honourable management; but when all the establishments, large and small, had been examined, a third only could claim to be exempted from the darkest schedule. This was the burden of the report which was submitted to the legislature. So long as the extent of the evil was unknown, it could be tolerated; when it had been exposed to the world, honour and justice alike required a stronger remedy than an archiepiscopal remonstrance. A 'great debate' followed.[2] The journals of the session are lost, and we cannot replace the various arguments; but there was not a member of either House who was not connected, either by personal interest, or by

March.

[1] When their enormities were first read in the Parliament house, they were so great and abominable, that there was nothing but 'Down with them!'—LATIMER'S *Sermons*, p. 123.

[2] 27 Hen. VIII. cap. 28.

sacred associations, with one or other of the religious houses; there was not one whose own experience could not test in some degree the accuracy of the *Black Book;* and there was no disposition to trifle with institutions which were the cherished dependencies of the great English families.

The instincts of conservatism, association, sympathy, respect for ancient bequests, and a sense of the sacredness of property set apart for holy uses, and guarded by anathemas, all must have been against a dissolution; yet, so far as we can supply the loss of the journals from other accounts of the feeling of the time, there seems to have been neither hope nor desire of preserving the old system—of preserving the houses, that is, collectively under their existing statutes as foundations in themselves inviolate. The visitation had been commenced with a hope that extremities might still be avoided. But all expectation of this kind vanished before the fatal evidence which had been produced. The House of Commons had for a century and a half been familiar with the thought of suppression as a possible necessity. The time was come when, if not suppression, yet some analogous measure had become imperative. The smaller establishments, at least, could not and might not continue. Yet while, so far, there was general agreement, it was no easy matter to resolve upon a satisfactory remedy. The representatives of the founders considered that, if houses were suppressed which had been established out of estates which had belonged to their forefathers, those estates should revert to their heirs; or at

least, that the heirs should recover them upon moderate terms.[1] In the Reforming party there was difference of opinion on the legality of secularizing property which had been given to God. Latimer, and partially Cromwell, inherited the designs of Wolsey; instead of taking away from the Church the lands of the abbeys, they were desirous of seeing those lands transferred to the high and true interests of religion. They wished to convert the houses into places of education, and to reform, wherever possible, the ecclesiastical bodies themselves.[2] This, too, was the dream, the 'devout imagination,' as it was called, of Knox, in Scotland, as it has been since the dream of many other good men who have not rightly understood why the moment at which the Church was washed clean from its stains, and came out fresh robed in the wedding-garment of purity, should have been chosen to strip it of its resources, and depose it from power and pre-eminence. Cranmer, on the other hand, less imaginative but more practical, was re-

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[1] Many letters from country gentlemen to this effect are in the collection made by Sir Henry Ellis.

[2] Latimer at first even objected to monks leaving their profession. Speaking of racking Scripture, he says, 'I myself have been one of them that hath racked it; and the text, 'He that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back,' I have believed and expounded against religious persons that would forsake their order, and would go out of their cloyster.'—*Sermons*, p. 60. We find him entreating Cromwell to prevent the suppression of Great Malvern, and begging that it may be allowed to remain — 'Not in monkery, but any other ways as should seem good to the King's Majesty, as to maintain teaching, preaching, study, with praying and good housekeeping.' — *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 149. Late in his life, under Edw. VI., he alluded bitterly to the decay of education, and the misuse of the appropriated abbey lands.—*Sermons*, p. 291.

luctant that clerical corporations should be continued under any pretext—even under the mild form of cathedral chapters. Cranmer desired to see the secular system of the Church made as efficient as possible; the religious system, in its technical sense, he believed to have become a nursery of idleness, and believed that no measures of reform could restore the old tone to institutions which the world had outgrown.[1] In the present age it will perhaps be considered that Cranmer's sagacity was more right than Latimer's enthusiasm, however at the moment men's warmer instincts might seem to have pleaded for the latter. The subsequent history both of the Scotch and English Church permits the belief that neither would have been benefited by the possession of larger wealth than was left to them. A purer doctrine has not corrected those careless and questionable habits in the management of property which were exposed by the visitors of 1535. Whether the cause of the phenomenon lies in an indifference to the things of the world, or in the more dubious palliation, that successive incumbents have only a life-interest in their incomes, the experience of three centuries has proved the singular unfitness of spiritual persons for the administration

[1] 'This is my consideration; for having experience, both in times past and also in our days, how the sect of prebendaries have not only spent their time in much idleness, and their substance in superfluous belly cheer, I think it not to be a convenient state or degree to be maintained and established: considering that commonly a prebendary is neither a learner nor teacher, but a good viander.'—Cranmer to Cromwell, on the New Foundation at Canterbury: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 498.

of secular trusts; and the friends of the establishment may be grateful that the judgment of the English laity ultimately guided them to this conclusion. They were influenced, it is likely, by a principle which they showed rather in their deeds than in their words. They would not recognize any longer the distinction on which the claims of the abbeys were rested. Property given to God, it was urged, might not be again taken from God, but must remain for ever in his service. It was replied in substance that God's service was not divided, but one; that all duties honestly done were religious duties; that the person of the layman was as sacred as the person of the priest; and the liturgy of obedience as acceptable as the liturgy of words.

Yet if, in the end, men found their way clearly, they moved towards it with slow steps; and the first resolution at which they arrived, embodied partially the schemes of each of the honest reformers. In touching institutions with which the feelings of the nation were deeply connected, prudence and principle alike dictated caution. However bitterly the people might exclaim against the abbeys while they continued to stand, their faults, if they were destroyed, would soon be forgotten. Institutions which had been rooted in the country for so many centuries, retained a hold too deep to be torn away without wounding a thousand associations; and a reaction of regret would inevitably follow among men so conservative as the English, so possessed with reverence for the old traditions of their fathers. This was to be considered; or rather the Par-

liament, the Crown, and the council felt as the people felt. Vast as the changes were which had been effected, there had been as yet no sweeping measures. At each successive step, Henry had never moved without reluctance. He hated anarchy; he hated change: in the true spirit of an Englishman, he never surrendered an institution or a doctrine till every means had been exhausted of retaining it, consistently with allegiance to truth. The larger monasteries, therefore, with many of the rest, had yet four years allowed them to demonstrate the hopelessness of their amendment, the impossibility of their renovation. The remainder were to reap the consequences of their iniquities; and the judicial sentence was pronounced at last in a spirit as rational as ever animated the English legislature.

'Forasmuch,' says the preamble of the Act of Dissolution, 'as manifest sin, vicious, carnal, and abominable living, is daily used and committed among the little and small abbeys, priories, and other religious houses of monks, canons, and nuns, where the congregation of such religious persons is under the number of twelve, whereby the governors of such religious houses and their convents, spoil, consume, destroy, and utterly waste their churches, monasteries, principal houses, farms, and granges, to the high displeasure of Almighty God, the slander of true religion, and to the great infamy of the King's Highness and of the realm, if redress should not be had thereof; and albeit that many continual visitations hath been heretofore had by the space of two hundred years and more, for an honest and char-

itable reformation of such unthrifty, carnal, and abominable living; yet, nevertheless, little or none amendment is hitherto had, but their vicious living shamelessly increaseth and augmenteth, and by a cursed custom is so rooted and infested, that a great multitude of the religious persons in such small houses do rather choose to rove abroad in apostacy than to conform them to the observation of true religion; so that without such small houses be utterly suppressed, and the religious persons therein committed to great and honourable monasteries of religion in this realm, where they may be compelled to live religiously for the reformation of their lives, there can be no reformation in this behalf: in consideration hereof the King's most royal Majesty, being supreme head on earth, under God, of the Church of England, daily finding and devising the increase, advancement, and exaltation of true doctrine and virtue in the said Church, to the only glory of God, and the total extirping and destruction of vice and sin; having knowledge that the premises be true, as well by accounts of his late visitation as by sundry credible informations; considering also that divers great monasteries of this realm, wherein, thanks be to God, religion is right well kept and observed, be destitute of such full number of religious persons as they ought and may keep; hath thought good that a plain declaration should be made of the premises, as well to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal as to other his loving subjects the Commons in this present Parliament assembled. Whereupon, the said Lords and Commons, by a great deliberation, finally

be resolved that it is and shall be much more to the pleasure of Almighty God, and for the honour of this His realm, that the possessions of such spiritual houses, now spent, and spoiled, and wasted for increase and maintenance of sin, should be converted to better uses; and the unthrifty religious persons so spending the same be compelled to reform their lives.'[1]

The Parliament went on to declare, that the lands of all monasteries the incomes of which were less than two hundred pounds a-year, should be 'given to the King.'[2] The monks were either to be distributed in the great abbeys, 'or to be dismissed with a permission,' if they desired it, 'to live honestly and virtuously abroad.' 'Some convenient charity' was to be allowed them for their living; and the chief head or governor was to have 'such pension as should be commensurate with his degree or quality.'[3] All debts, whether of the houses or of the brothers individually, were to be carefully paid; and finally, one more clause was added, sufficient in itself to show the temper in which the suppression had been resolved upon. The visitors had reported a few of the smaller abbeys as free from stain. The King was empowered, at his discretion, to permit them to

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[1] 27 Hen. VIII. cap. 28.

[2] Either to be held under the Crown itself for purposes of State, or to be granted out as fiefs among the nobles and gentlemen of England, under such conditions as should secure the discharge of those duties which by the laws were attached to landed tenures.

[3] The monks generally were allowed from four to eight pounds a-year, being the income of an ordinary parish priest. The principals in many cases had from seventy to eighty pounds a-year.

survive; and under this permission thirty-two houses were refounded *in perpetuam eleemosynam*.[1]

This is the history of the first suppression of the monasteries under Henry VIII. We regret the depravity by which it was occasioned; but the measure itself, in the absence of any preferable alternative, was bravely and wisely resolved. In the general imperfection of human things, no measure affecting the interests of large bodies of men was ever yet devised which has not pressed unequally, and is not in some respects open to objection. We can but choose the best among many doubtful courses, when we would be gladly spared, if we might be spared, from choosing at all.

In this great transaction, it is well to observe that the laity alone saw their way clearly. The majority of the bishops, writhing under the inhibitions, looked on in sullen acquiescence, submitting in a forced conformity, and believing, not without cause, that a tide which flowed so hotly would before long turn and ebb back again. Among the Reforming clergy there was neither union nor prudence; and the Protestants, in the sudden sunshine, were becoming unmanageable and extravagant. On the bench there were but four prelates who were on the moving side—Cranmer, Latimer, Shaxton, and Barlow[2]—and among these Cranmer only approved the policy of the Government. Shaxton was an arrogant braggart, and Barlow a feeble enthusiast. Shaxton,

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[1] BURNET'S *Collect.*, p. 80.

[2] In the autumn of 1535 Latimer had been made Bishop of Worcester, Shaxton of Salisbury, and Barlow of St David's.

who had flinched from the stake when Bilney was burnt, Shaxton, who subsequently relapsed under Mary, and became himself a Romanist persecutor, was now strutting in his new authority, and punishing, suspending, and inhibiting in behalf of Protestant doctrines which were not yet tolerated by the law.[1] Barlow had been openly preaching that purgatory was a delusion; that a layman might be a bishop; that where two or three, it might be, 'cobblers or weavers,' 'were in company in the name of God, there was the Church of God.'[2] Such ill-judged precipitancy was of darker omen to the Reformation than Papal excommunications or Imperial menaces, and would soon be dearly paid for in fresh martyr-fires. Latimer, too, notwithstanding his clear perception and gallant heart, looked with bitterness on the confiscation of establishments which his mind had pictured to him as garrisoned with a Reforming army, as nurseries of apostles of the truth. Like most fiery-natured men, he was ill-pleased to see the stream flowing in a channel other than that which he had marked for it; and the state of his feeling, and the state of the English world, with all its confused imaginings, in these months, is described with some distinctness in a letter written by a London curate to the Mayor of Plymouth, on the 13th of March, 1535-6, while the bill for the suppression of the abbeys was in progress through Parliament.

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[1] STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 222; BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 92.

[2] STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 273.

'Right Worshipful,—On the morrow after that Master Hawkins departed from hence, I, having nothing to do, as an idler went to Lambeth to the Bishop's palace, to see what news; and I took a wherry at Paul's Wharf, wherein also was already a doctor named Crewkhorne, which was sent for to come to the Bishop of Canterbury. And he, before the three Bishops of Canterbury, Worcester, and Salisbury, confessed that he was rapt into heaven, where he saw the Trinity sitting in a pall or mantle or cope of blew colour; and from the middle upward they were three bodies, and from the middle downward were they closed all three into one body. And he spake with Our Lady, and she took him by the hand, and bade him serve her as he had done in time past; and bade him preach abroad that she would be honoured at Ipswich and Willesdon as she hath been in old times.

'On Tuesday in Ember week, the Bishop of Rochester[1] came to Crutched Friars, and inhibited a doctor and three or four more to hear confession; and so in Cardmaker and other places. Then the Bishop of London's apparitor came and railed on the other bishops, and said that he, nor no such as he, should have jurisdiction within his Lord's precincts. Then was the Bishop of London sent for to make answer; but he was sick and might not come. On Friday, the clergy sat on it in Convocation House a long time, and left off till another day; and in the mean time, all men that

March 13.

[1] John Hilsey.

have taken loss or wrong at his hands, must bring in their bills, and shall have recompense.

'On Sunday last, the Bishop of Worcester preached at Paul's Cross, and he said that bishops, abbots, priors, parsons, canons, resident priests, and all, were strong thieves; yea, dukes, lords, and all. The King, quoth he, made a marvellous good Act of Parliament, that certain men should sow every of them two acres of hemp; but it were all too little, even if so much more, to hang the thieves that be in England. Bishops, abbots, with such others, should not have so many servants, nor so many dishes; but to go to their first foundation; and keep hospitality to feed the needy people—not jolly fellows, with golden chains and velvet gowns; ne let these not once come into houses of religion for repast. Let them call knave bishop, knave abbot, knave prior, yet feed none of them all, nor their horses, nor their dogs. Also, to eat flesh and white meat in Lent, so it be done without hurting weak consciences, and without sedition; and likewise on Fridays and all days.

'The Bishop of Canterbury saith that the King's Grace is at full point for friars and chauntry priests, that they shall away all, saving them that can preach. Then one said to the Bishop, that they had good trust that they should serve forth their life-times; and he said they should serve it out at a cart, then, for any other service they should have by that.'

The concluding paragraph of this letter is of still greater interest. It refers to the famous Vagrant Act,

of which I have spoken in the first chapter of this work.[1]

'On Saturday in the Ember week, the King's Grace came in among the burgesses of the Parliament, and delivered them a bill, and bade them look upon it, and weigh it in conscience; for he would not, he said, have them pass either it or any other thing because his Grace giveth in the bill; but they to see if it be for the commonweal of his subjects, and have an eye thitherwards; and on Wednesday next he will be there again to hear their minds. There shall be a proviso made for the poor people. The gaols shall be rid; the faulty shall die; and the others shall be rid by proclamation or by jury, and shall be set at liberty, and pay no fees. Sturdy beggars and such prisoners as cannot be set at work, shall be set at work at the King's charge; some at Dover, and some at places where the water hath broken over the lands. Then, if they fall to idleness, the idler shall be had before a justice of the peace, and his fault written. If he be taken idle again in another place, he shall be known where his dwelling is; and so at the second mention he shall be burned in the hand; and if he fail the third time, he shall die for it.'[2]

The King, as it appeared, had now the means at his disposal to find work for the unemployed; and the lands bequeathed for the benefit of the poor were re-applied, under altered forms, to their real intention. The antithesis which we sometimes hear between the charity of

[1] 27 Hen. VIII. cap. 25.

[2] Letter of Thomas Dorset to the Mayor of Plymouth: *Suppression of the Monasteries*, p. 36.

the monasteries—which relieved poverty for the love of God—and the worldly harshness of a poor-law, will not endure inspection. The monasteries, which had been the support of 'valiant beggary,' had long before transferred to the nation the maintenance of the impotent and the deserving; and the resumption of an abused trust was no more than the natural consequence of their dishonesty. I have already discussed[1] the penal clauses of this Act, and I need not enter again upon that much-questioned subject. Never, however, at any period, were the labouring classes in England more generously protected than in the reign of Henry VIII.; never did any Government strain the power of legislation more resolutely in their favour; and, I suppose, they would not themselves object to the re-enactment of Henry's penalties against dishonesty, if they might have with them the shelter of Henry's laws.

The session was drawing to an end. At the close of it, the Government gave one more proof of their good-will towards any portion of the Church establishment which showed signs of being alive. Duns Scotus being disposed of in Bocardo, the idle residents being driven away, or compelled to employ themselves, and the professors' lectures having recovered their energy, there were hopes of good from Oxford and Cambridge; and the King conceded for them what the Pope had never conceded, when the power rested with the See of Rome; he remitted formally by statute the tenths and first-fruits,

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[1] Vol. i. chap. 1.

which the colleges had paid in common with all other Church corporations. 'His Majesty is conscious,' says the Act which was passed on this occasion,[1] that the enforcing of the payment of first-fruits against the Universities 'may prejudice learning, and cause the students to give their minds to other things, which might not be acceptable to God;' and 'he has conceived such hearty love and tender affection to the continuance of honest and virtuous living, and of the arts and sciences (wherewith it hath pleased Almighty God abundantly to endow his Highness), as that his Grace cannot compare the same to any law, constitution, or statute; nor tolerate any such ordinance, though the commodity and benefit thereof should never so much redound to his own profit or pleasure, if it may hinder the advancement and setting forth of the lively word of God, wherewith his people must be fed; or if it may imperil the knowledge of such other good letters as in Christian realms is expedient to be learned. He has therefore—(for that the students should the more gladly bend their wits to the attaining of learning, and, before all things, the learning of the wholesome doctrines of Almighty God, and the three tongues, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, which be requisite for the understanding of Scripture)—thought it convenient' to exonerate the Universities from the payment of first-fruits for ever.

So closed the first great Parliament of the Reformation, which was now dissolved. The

April 4.

[1] 27 Hen. VIII. cap. 42.

Lower House is known to us only as an abstraction. The debates are lost; and the details of its proceedings are visible only in faint transient gleams. We have an epitome of two sessions in the Lords' journals; but even this partial assistance fails us with the Commons; and the Lords in this matter were a body of secondary moment. The Lords had ceased to be the leaders of the English people; they existed as an ornament rather than a power; and under the direction of the council they followed as the stream drew them, when individually, if they had so dared, they would have chosen a far other course. The work was done by the Commons; by them the first move was made; by them and the King the campaign was carried through to victory. And this one body of men, dim as they now seem to us, who assembled on the wreck of the administration of Wolsey, had commenced and had concluded a revolution which had reversed the foundations of the State. They found England in dependency upon a foreign power; they left it a free nation. They found it under the despotism of a Church establishment saturated with disease; and they had bound the hands of that establishment; they had laid it down under the knife, and carved away its putrid members; and stripping off its Nessus robe of splendour and power, they had awakened in it some forced remembrance of its higher calling. The elements of a far deeper change were seething; a change, not in the disposition of outward authority, but in the beliefs and convictions which touched the life of the soul. This was yet to come; and the work so far was but

the initial step or prelude leading up to the more solemn struggle. Yet where the enemy who is to be conquered is strong, not in vital force, but in the prestige of authority, and in the enchanted defences of superstition, those truly win the battle who strike the first blow, who deprive the idol of its terrors by daring to defy it.

CHAPTER XI.

TRIAL AND DEATH OF ANNE BOLEYN.[1]

THE first act of the great drama appeared to have closed. No further changes were for the present in contemplation. The Church was re-established under its altered constitution; and the Parliament had been dissolved under the impression that it would be unnecessary to summon another for an indefinite time.[2] Within four weeks of the dissolution, writs were issued for a fresh election, under the pressure of a misfortune which is alike calamitous, under whatever aspect we regard it; and which blotted the Reformation with a black and frightful stain. The guilt must rest where it is due; but under any hypothesis, guilt there was, dark, mysterious, and most miserable.

The fate of Queen Catherine had by this time completed itself. She had taken her leave of a world

[1] The letters of Eustace Chapuys which I have discovered at Vienna throw fresh light upon the story of Anne Boleyn's fall, and almost wholly clear up the mystery attaching to it. I leave the text of this chapter unaltered, but refer the reader to Chapuys's account, *Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*, cap. 21.

[2] Speech of the Lord Chancellor: *Lords' Journals*, p. 84.

which she had small cause to thank for the entertainment which it had provided for her; and she died, as she had lived, resolute, haughty, and unbending. In the preceding October (1535), she was in bad health; her house, she imagined, disagreed with her, and at her own desire she was removed to Kimbolton. But there were no symptoms of immediate danger. She revived under the change, and was in better spirits than she had shown for many previous months, especially after she heard of the new Pope's resolution to maintain her cause. 'Much resort of people came daily to her.'[1] The vexatious dispute upon her title had been dropped, from an inability to press it; and it seemed as if life had become at least endurable to her, if it never could be more. But the repose was but the stillness of evening as night is hastening down. The royal officers of the household were not admitted into her presence; the Queen lived wholly among her own friends and her own people; she sank unperceived; and so effectually had she withdrawn from the observation of those whom she desired to exclude, that the King was left to learn from the Spanish ambassador that she was at the point of death, before her chamberlain was aware that she was more than indisposed.[2] In the last week of December Henry learnt that she was in danger. On the 2nd of January the ambassador went down from London to Kimbolton, and spent the day with her.[3] On the 5th Sir Edmund Bedingfield wrote that she was very ill, and that the

[1] STRYPE'S *Mem.*, vol. i. p. 370.

[2] Sir Edmund Bedingfield to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 451. For particulars of Catherine's death, see *Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*, p. 424 et seq.

[3] STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i., and see Appendix, p. 241 et seq.

issue was doubtful. On the morning of the 7th she received the last sacrament, and at two o'clock on that day she died.[1] On her deathbed she dictated the following letter of farewell to him whom she still called her most dear lord and husband.

Jan. 7.

'The hour of my death now approaching, I cannot choose but, out of the love I bear you, advise you of your soul's health, which you ought to prefer before all considerations of the world or flesh whatsoever; for which yet you have cast me into many calamities, and yourself into many troubles. But I forgive you all, and pray God to do so likewise. For the rest I commend unto you Mary our daughter, beseeching you to be a good father to her, as I have heretofore desired. I must entreat you also to respect my maids, and give them in marriage, which is not much, they being but three; and to all my other servants a year's pay besides their due, lest otherwise they should be unprovided for. Lastly, I make this vow, that mine eyes desire you above all things. Farewell.'[2]

This letter reached Henry with the intimation that she was gone. He was much affected, and is said to have shed tears.[3]

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[1] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 452.

[2] Lord Herbert, p. 188.

[3] Lord Herbert, p. 188. It will have been observed, that neither in this letter, nor in the other authentic papers connected with her death, is there any allusion to Cardinal Pole's famous story, that being on her death-bed, Queen Catherine prayed the King to allow her to see her daughter for the last time, and that the request was refused. Pole was not in England at the time. He drew his information from Catholic rumour, as vindictive as it was credulous; and in the many letters from members of the privy council to him which we possess, his nar-

The Court was ordered into mourning—a command which Anne Boleyn distinguished herself by imperfectly obeying.[1] Catherine was buried at Peterborough, with the estate of Princess Royal;[2] and shortly after, on the foundation of the new bishoprics, the See of Peterborough was established in her memory. We may welcome, however late, these acts of tardy respect.[3] Henry, in the few last years, had grown wiser in the ways of women; and had learnt to prize more deeply the austerity of virtue, even in its unloveliest aspect.

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rative is treated as throughout a mere wild collection of fables. Reasons of state had obliged the King to separate Mary from her mother, during the preceding year. The ambassador applied for leave to take her with him to Kimbolton at the end of November, when the illness was first considered serious. The King then said that he would think about it. Catherine afterwards rallied, and it does not appear that the request was renewed.

[1] See Lingard, vol. v. p. 30. Hall says—'Queen Anne wore yellow for mourning.'

[2] The directions for the funeral are printed in Lingard, vol. v. Appendix, p. 267.

[3] It ought not to be necessary to say that her will was respected—Lord Herbert, p. 188; but the King's conduct to Catherine of Aragon has provoked suspicion even where suspicion is unjust; and much mistaken declamation has been wasted in connection with this matter upon an offence wholly imaginary.

In making her bequests, Catherine continued to regard herself as the King's wife, in which capacity she professed to have no power to dispose of her property. She left her legacies in the form of a petition to her husband. She had named no executors; and being in the eyes of the law 'a sole woman,' the administration lapsed in consequence to the nearest of kin, the Emperor. Some embarrassment was thus created, and the attorney-general was obliged to evade the difficulty by a legal artifice, before the King could take possession, and give effect to the bequests. — See Strype's *Memor.*, vol. i. Appendix, pp. 252-5.

The death of Catherine was followed, four months later, by the tragedy which I have now to relate. The ground on which I am about to tread is so critical, and the issues at stake affect so deeply the honour of many of our most eminent English statesmen, that I must be pardoned if I cannot here step boldly out with a flowing narrative, but must pick my way slowly as I can: and I, on my part, must ask my readers to move slowly also, and be content to allow their judgment, for a few pages, to remain in suspense.

And first, I have to say that, as with all the great events of Henry's reign, so especially with this, we must trust to no evidence which is not strictly contemporary. During periods of revolution, years do the work of centuries in colouring actions and disturbing forms; and events are transferred swiftly from the deliberation of the judgment to the precipitate arrogance of party spirit. When the great powers of Europe were united against Elizabeth, and when Elizabeth's own character was vilely and wantonly assailed, the Catholic writers dipped their pens in the stains which blotted her mother's name; and, more careless of truth than even theological passion can excuse, they poured out over both alike a stream of indiscriminate calumny. On the other hand, as Elizabeth's lordly nature was the pride of all true-hearted Englishmen, so the Reformers laboured to reflect her virtues backwards. Like the Catholics, they linked the daughter with the parent; and became no less extravagant in their panegyrics than their antagonists in their gratuitous invective. But

the Anne Boleyn, as she appears in contemporary letters, is not the Anne Boleyn of Foxe, or Wyatt, or the other champions of Protestantism, who saw in her the counterpart of her child. These writers, though living so near to the events which they described, yet were divided from the preceding generation by an impassable gulf. They were surrounded with the heat and flame of a controversy, in which public and private questions were wrapped inseparably together; and the more closely we scrutinize their narratives, the graver occasion there appears for doing so.

While, therefore, in following out this miserable subject, I decline so much as to entertain the stories of Sanders, who has represented Queen Anne as steeped in profligacy from her childhood; so I may not any more accept those late memorials of her saintliness, which are alike unsupported by the evidence of those who knew her. If Protestant legends are admitted as of authority, the Catholic legends must enter with them, and we shall only deepen the confusion. I cannot follow Burnet, in reporting out of Meteren a version of Anne Boleyn's trial, unknown in England. The subject is one on which rhetoric and rumour are alike unprofitable. We must confine ourselves to accounts written at the time by persons to whom not the outline of the facts only was known, but the circumstances which surrounded them; by persons who had seen the evidence upon the alleged offences, which, though now lost irrecoverably, can be proved to have once existed.

We are unable, as I early observed, to form any

trustworthy judgment of Anne Boleyn before her marriage. Her education had been in the worst school in Europe. On her return from the French Court to England, we have seen her entangled in an unintelligible connection with Lord Percy; and if the account sent to the Emperor was true, she was Lord Percy's actual wife; and her conduct was so criminal as to make any after-charges against her credible.[1]

If the Protestants, again, found in her a friend and supporter, she was capable, as Wolsey experienced, of inveterate hatred; and although among the Reformers she had a reputation for generosity which is widely confirmed,[2] yet it was exercised always in the direction in which her interests pointed; and kindness of feeling is not incompatible, happily, with seriously melancholy faults.

The strongest general evidence in her favour is that of Cranmer, who must have known her intimately, and who, at the crisis of her life, declared that he 'never had better opinion in woman than he had in her.'[3] Yet there had been circumstances in her conduct, as by her own after-confessions was amply evident, which justified Sir Thomas More in foretelling a stormy end to her splendour;[4] and her relations with the King, whether the fault rested with him, or rested with her, grew rapidly cool when she was his wife. In 1534, perhaps

[1] See vol. i. p. 183.

[2] FOXE speaks very strongly on this point. In ELLIS's Letters we find many detailed instances, and indeed in all contemporary authorities.

[3] Cranmer's Letter to the King: BURNET, vol. i. p. 323.

[4] MORE's *Life of More*, and see p. 268, *note*.

sooner, both she herself, her brother, and her relations had made themselves odious by their insolence; her overbearing manners had caused a decline in the King's affection for her; and on one side it was reported that he was likely to return to Catherine,[1] on the other that he had transferred his attention to some other lady, and that the Court encouraged his inconstancy to separate him from Anne's influence.[2] D'Inteville confirms the account of a new love affair, particularising nothing, but saying merely that Anne was falling out of favour; and that the person alluded to as taking her place was Jane Seymour, appears from a letter written after Anne's execution, by the Regent Mary to the Emperor of Austria, and from the letter written (supposing it genuine) by Anne herself to the King before her trial.[3]

On the other hand, it is equally clear that whether provoked or not by infidelity on the part of Henry, her own conduct had been singularly questionable. We know very little, but waiving for the present the exposures at her trial, we know, by her own confession, that

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[1] Il Re de Inghilterra haveva fatto venire in la Corte sua il majordomo de la Regina et mostrava esserse mitigato alquanto. La causa della mitigation procede del buon negotiar ha fatto et fa la Catolica Ma[ta] con lo Ambaxiatore del Re de Inghilterra con persuadirle con buoni paroli et pregeri che debbia restituir la Regina in la antigua dignita.

Dicano anchore che la Anna e mal voluta degli S[i] di Inghilterra si per la sua superbia, si anche per l' insolentia et mali portementi che fanno nel regno li fratelli e parenti di Anna e che per questo il Re non la porta la affezione que soleva.—'Nuevas de Inglaterra': *MS. Archives of Simancas.*

[2] Il Re festeggia una altra donna della quale se mostra esser inamorato; e molti S di Inghilterra lo ajutano nel seguir el preditto amore per desviar questo Re de la pratica di Anna.—*Ibid.*

[3] BURNET's *Collectanea*, p. 87.

arrogance and vanity had not been her only faults, and that she had permitted the gentlemen who were the supposed partners of her guilt, to speak to her of their passion for herself.[1]

In January, 1535, Henry's mind had been filled with 'doubts and strange suspicions' about his wife. There had been a misunderstanding, in which she had implored the intercession of Francis I.[2]

In February, 1536, she miscarried, with a dead boy, which later rumour dwelt on as the cause of Henry's displeasure. But conversations such as those which she described with her supposed paramours, lay bare far deeper wounds of domestic unhappiness; and assure us, that if we could look behind the scenes, we should see there estrangements, quarrels, jealousies, the thousand dreary incidents that, if we knew them, would break the suddenness with which at present the catastrophe bursts upon us. It is the want of preparation, the blank ignorance in which we are left of the daily life and daily occurrences of the Court, which places us at such disadvantage for recovering the truth. We are unable to form any estimate whatever of those antecedent likelihoods which, in the events of our own ordinary lives, guide our judgment so imperceptibly, yet so surely. Henry is said to have been inconstant, but those who most suspected Henry's motives charge Anne at the same time with a long notorious profligacy.[3]

[1] *Pilgrim*, p. 117.

[2] *Le Laboureur*, i. 405: quoted in LINGARD, vol. v. p. 30.

[3] Quoy qu'il en soit l'on me luy peult faire grand tort quand cires l'on a reputé pour meschante. Car

We cannot say what is probable or what is improbable; except, indeed, that the guilt of every person is improbable antecedent to evidence; and in the present instance, since, either on the side of the Queen or of the King, there was and must have been most terrible guilt, these opposite presumptions neutralize each other.

April.

To proceed with the story. Towards the middle of April, 1536, certain members of the privy council were engaged secretly in receiving evidence which implicated the Queen in adultery. Nothing is known of the quarter from which the information came which led to the inquiry.[1] Something, however, there was to call for inquiry, or something there was thought to be; and on the 24th of April the case was considered sufficiently complete to make necessary a public trial. On that day an order was issued for a special commission. The members of the tribunal were selected with a care proportioned to the solemnity of the occasion.[2] It was composed of the lord chancellor, the first noblemen of the realm, and of the judges. The investigation had, however, been conducted so far with profound secrecy; and the object for which it was to assemble was unknown even to Cranmer, himself a member of the privy council.[3] With the same mys-

ce a este des longtemps son stile.—The Regent Mary to Ferdinand: *MS. Brussels*.

[1] Later writers point to the ladies of the Court, but report could not agree upon any single person: and *nothing* is really known. But see Appendix.

[2] BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouch 8: Appendix II. to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*.

[3] Cranmer to the King: BURNET, vol. i. p. 322.

terious silence on the cause of so unexpected a measure, the writs were issued for a general election, and Parliament was required to assemble as soon as possible.[1] On Thursday, the 27th, the first arrest was made. Sir William Brereton,[2] a gentleman of the King's household, was sent suddenly to the Tower; and on the Sunday after, Mark Smeton, of whom we know only that he was a musician high in favour at the Court, apparently a spoilt favourite of royal bounty.[3] The day following was the 1st of May. It was the day on which the annual festival was held at Greenwich, and the Queen appeared as usual, with her husband and the Court at the tournament. Lord Rochford, the Queen's brother, and Sir Henry Norris, both of them implicated in the fatal charge, were defender and challenger. The tilting had commenced when the King rose suddenly with signs of disturbance in his manner, left the Court, and rode off with a small company to London. Rumour, which delights in dramatic explanations of great occurrences, has discovered that a handkerchief dropped by the

Thursday, April 27.

Sunday, April 30.

May 1.

[1] I must draw particular attention to this. Parliament had been just dissolved, and a fresh body of untried men were called together for no other purpose than to take cognizance of the supposed discovery.—See the Speech of the Lord Chancellor: *Lords' Journals*, p. 84. If the accusations were intentionally forged by the King, to go out of the way to court so needless publicity was an act most strange and most incomprehensible.

[2] Constantyne says, Smeton was arrested first on Saturday evening, at Stepney; but he seems inconsistent with himself. See his Memorial, *Archæologia*, vol. xxiii. p. 63.

[3] His name repeatedly occurs in 'the Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII.'

Queen, and caught by Norris, roused Henry's jealousy; and that his after-conduct was the result of a momentary anger. The incidents of the preceding week are a sufficient reply to this romantic story. The mine was already laid, the match was ready for the fire.

The King did not return: he passed the night in London, and Anne remained at Greenwich. On the morning of Tuesday the privy council assembled in the palace under the presidency of the Duke of Norfolk, and she was summoned to appear before it. The Duke of Norfolk, her uncle, was anxious, as Burnet insinuates, on political grounds that his niece should be made away with. Such accusations are easily brought, especially when unsupported by evidence. She was unpopular from her manner. The London merchants looked on her with no favour as having caused a breach in the alliance with Flanders, and the duke was an Imperialist and at heart a friend of Queen Catherine; but he had grown old in the service of the State with an unblemished reputation; and he felt too keenly the disgrace which Anne's conduct had brought upon her family, to have contrived a scheme for her removal at once so awkward and so ignominious.[1]

Tuesday, May 2.

[1] Five years later, after the similar misbehaviour of Catherine Howard, the duke wrote to the King of '*the abominable deeds done by two of my nieces against your Highness;*' which he said have 'brought me into the greatest perplexity that ever poor wretch was in, fearing that your Majesty, having so often and by so many of my kyn been thus falsely and traitorously handled, might not only conceive a displeasure in your heart against me and all other of that kyn, but also in manner abhor to hear speak of any of the same.'—Norfolk to Henry VIII.: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 721.

On her examination, she declared herself innocent; the details of what passed are unknown; only she told Sir William Kingston that she was cruelly handled at Greenwich with the King's council; 'and that the Duke of Norfolk, in answer to her defence, had said, 'Tut, tut, tut,' shaking his head three or four times.'[1] The other prisoners were then examined; not Brereton, it would seem, but Smeton, who must have been brought down from the Tower, and Sir Henry Norris, and Sir Francis Weston, two young courtiers, who had both of them been the trusted friends of the King. Each day the shadow was stretching further. The worst was yet to come.

On being first questioned, these three made general admissions, but denied resolutely that any actual offence had been committed. On being pressed further and cross-examined, Smeton confessed to actual adultery.[2] Norris hesitated: being pressed, however, by Sir William Fitzwilliam to speak the truth, he also made a similar acknowledgment, although he afterwards withdrew from what he had said.[3] Weston persisted in de-

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[1] Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER'S CAVENDISH, p. 456 et seq., in STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. i.

[2] Sir Edward Baynton to the Lord Treasurer, from Greenwich: SINGER'S CAVENDISH, p. 458.

[3] See LINGARD, vol. v. p. 33. It is not certain whether the examination of the prisoners was at Greenwich or at the Tower. Baynton's letter is dated from Greenwich, but that is not conclusive. CONSTANTYNE says (*Archæologia*, vol. xxiii. p. 63) that the King took Norris with him to London, and, as he heard say, urged him all the way to confess, with promises of pardon if he would be honest with him. Norris persisted in his denial, however, and was committed to the Tower. Afterwards, before the council, he confessed. On his trial

claring himself innocent. The result was unsatisfactory, and it was thought that it would 'much touch the King's honour' if the guilt of the accused was not proved more clearly. 'Only Mark,' Sir Edward Baynton said, would confess 'of any actual thing;'[1] although he had no doubt 'the other two' were 'as fully culpable as ever was he.' They were, however, for the present, recommitted to the Tower; whither also in the afternoon the council conducted the Queen, and left her in the custody of Sir William Kingston.

She was brought up the river; the same river along which she sailed in splendour only three short years before. She landed at the same Tower Stairs; and, as if to complete the misery of the change, she was taken 'to her own lodgings in which she lay at her coronation.' She had feared that she was to go to a dungeon. When Kingston told her that these rooms had been prepared for her, 'It is too good for me,' she said, 'Jesu have mercy on me;' 'and kneeled down, weeping a great space; and in the same sorrow fell into a great laughing.'[2] She then begged that she might have the sacrament in the closet by her chamber, that she might pray for mercy, declaring 'that she was free from the company of man as for sin,' and was 'the King's true wedded wife.'

She was aware that the other prisoners were in the Tower, or, at least, that Smeton, Weston, and Norris

his confession was read to him, and he said he was deceived into making it by Sir W. Fitzwilliam.

[1] Letter to the Lord Treasurer.

[2] Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER'S CAVENDISH, p. 451.

were there. Whether she knew at that time of the further dreadful accusation which was hanging over her, does not appear; but she asked anxiously for her brother; and, if she had suspected anything, her fears must have been confirmed by Kingston's evasive replies. It is so painful to dwell upon the words and actions of a poor woman in her moments of wretchedness, that Kingston may describe his conversation with her in his own words. Lord Rochford had returned to London at liberty; he seems to have been arrested the same Tuesday afternoon. 'I pray you,' she said, 'to tell me where my Lord Rochford is?' 'I told her,' Kingston wrote, that 'I saw him afore dinner, in the court.' 'Oh, where is my sweet brother?' she went on. 'I said I left him at York-place; and so I did.' 'I hear say,' said she, 'that I should be accused with three men; and I can say no more but nay, without I should open my body,'—and therewith she opened her gown, saying, 'Oh, Norris, hast thou accused me? Thou art in the Tower with me, and thou and I shall die together. And, Mark, thou art here too. Oh, my mother, thou wilt die for sorrow.' And much she lamented my Lady of Worcester, for because her child did not stir in her body. And my wife said, 'What should be the cause?' She said, 'For the sorrow she took for me.' And then she said, 'Mr Kingston, shall I die without justice?' And I said, 'The poorest subject the King hath, had justice;' and therewith she laughed.'[1]

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[1] Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER'S CAVENDISH, p. 451.

Lady Boleyn, her aunt, had been sent for, with a Mrs Cousins, and two other ladies, selected by the King. They were ordered to attend upon the Queen, but to observe a strict silence; and to hold no communication with her, except in the presence of Lady Kingston. This regulation, it was found, could not be insisted on. Lady Boleyn and Mrs Cousins slept in the Queen's room, and conversation could not be prevented. Mrs Cousins undertook, on her part, to inform Kingston if anything was said which 'it was meet that he should know.'[2]

Wednesday, May 3.

In compliance with this promise, she told him, the next morning, that the Queen had been speaking to her about Norris. On the preceding Sunday, she said that Norris had offered to 'swear for the Queen, that she was a good woman.' 'But how,' asked Mrs Cousins, very naturally, 'how came any such things to be spoken of at all?' 'Marry,' the Queen said, 'I bade him do so: for I asked him why he went not through with his marriage; and he made answer, that he would tarry a time. Then, I said, You look for dead men's shoes; for if aught came to the King but good, you would look to have me.[3] And he said, if he should have any such thought, he would his head were off. And then she said she could undo him, if she would.

[1] She said, 'I think it much unkindness in the King to put such about me as I never loved.' I showed her that the King took them to be honest and good women. 'But I would have had of mine own privy chamber,' she said, 'which I favour most.'—Kingston to Cromwell: Ibid. p. 457.

[2] Ibid. p. 453.

[3] The disorder of which the King ultimately died—ulceration in the legs—had already begun to show itself.

And therewith they fell out.' 'But she said she more feared Weston; for on Whitsun Tuesday last, Weston told her that Norris came more unto her chamber for her than for Mage.'[1] Afterwards, 'The Queen spake of Weston, that she had spoken to him, because he did love her kinswoman, Mrs Skelton, and that she said he loved not his wife; and he made answer to her again, that he loved one in her house better than them both. She asked him who is that? to which he answered, that it is yourself. 'And then,' she said, 'she defied him.''[2]

So passed Wednesday at the Tower. Let us feel our very utmost commiseration for this unhappy woman; if she was guilty, it is the more reason that we should pity her; but I am obliged to say, that conversations of this kind, admitted by herself, disentitle her to plead her character in answer to the charges against her.

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[1] The lady, perhaps, to whom Norris was to have been married. Sir Edward Baynton makes an allusion to a Mistress Margery. The passage is so injured as to be almost unintelligible:—'I have mused much et . . . . of Mistress Margery, which hath used her . . . . strangely towards me of late, being her friend as I have been. But no doubt it cannot be but she must be of councell therewith. There hath been great friendship between the Queen and her of late.'—Sir E. Baynton to the Lord Treasurer: SINGER, p. 458.

[2] Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER, pp. 452-3. Of Smeton she said—'He was never in my chamber but at Winchester;' she had sent for him 'to play on the virginals,' for there her lodging was above the King's. . . . . 'I never spoke with him since,' she added, 'but upon Saturday before May day, and then I found him standing in the round window in my chamber of presence, and I asked why he was so sad, and he answered and said it was no matter; and then she said, 'You may not look to have me speak to you as I should to a nobleman, because you be an inferior person.' 'No, no, madam; a look sufficeth me [he said], and thus fare you well.''—Ibid. p. 455.

Young men do not speak of love to young and beautiful married women, still less to ladies of so high rank, unless something more than levity has encouraged them; and although to have permitted such language is no proof of guilt, yet it is a proof of the absence of innocence.

Meanwhile, on the Tuesday morning, a rumour of the Queen's arrest was rife in London; and the news for the first time reached the ears of Cranmer. The Archbishop was absent from home, but in the course of the day he received an order, through Cromwell, to repair to his palace, and remain there till he heard further. With what thoughts he obeyed this command may be gathered from the letter which, on the following morning, he wrote to Henry. The fortunes of the Reformation had been so closely linked to those of the Queen, that he trembled for the consequences to the Church of the King's too just indignation. If the barren womb of Catherine had seemed a judgment against the first marriage, the shameful issue of the second might be regarded too probably as a witness against that and against every act which had been connected with it. Full of these forebodings, yet not too wholly occupied with them to forget the unhappy Queen, he addressed the King, early on Wednesday, in the following language:—

'Please it your most noble Grace to be advertised, that at your Grace's commandment, by Mr Secretary's letter, written in your Grace's name, I came to Lambeth yesterday, and there I do remain to know your Grace's further pleasure. And forasmuch as without

your Grace's commandment, I dare not, contrary to the contents of the said letter, presume to come unto your Grace's presence; nevertheless, of my most bounden duty, I can do no less than most humbly to desire your Grace, by your great wisdom, and by the assistance of God's help, somewhat to suppress the deep sorrows of your Grace's heart, and to take all adversities of God's hands both patiently and thankfully. I cannot deny but your Grace hath good cause many ways of lamentable heaviness; and also, that in the wrongful estimation of the world, your Grace's honour of every part is so highly touched (whether the things that commonly be spoken of be true or not), that I remember not that ever Almighty God sent unto your Grace any like occasion to try your Grace's constancy throughout, whether your Highness can be content to take of God's hands as well things displeasant as pleasant. And if He find in your most noble heart such an obedience unto his will, that your Grace, without murmuration and over-much heaviness, do accept all adversities, not less thanking Him than when all things succeed after your Grace's will and pleasure, then I suppose your Grace did never thing more acceptable unto Him since your first governance of this your realm. And moreover, your Grace shall give unto Him occasion to multiply and increase his graces and benefits unto your Highness, as He did unto his most faithful servant Job; unto whom, after his great calamities and heaviness, for his obedient heart, and willing acceptation of God's scourge and rod, addidit Dominus cuncta duplicia. And if it be true that is

openly reported of the Queen's Grace, if men had a right estimation of things, they should not esteem any part of your Grace's honour to be touched thereby; but her honour to be clean disparaged. And I am in such perplexity, that my mind is clean amazed; for I never had better opinion in woman than I had in her; which maketh me to think that she should not be culpable. And again, I think your Highness would not have gone so far, except she had been surely culpable.

'Now I think that your Grace best knoweth that, next unto your Grace, I was most bound unto her of all creatures living. Wherefore, I most humbly beseech your Grace to suffer me in that which both God's law, nature, and also her kindness bindeth me unto: that is, that I may with your Grace's favour wish and pray for her that she may declare herself inculpable and innocent. And if she be found culpable, considering your Grace's goodness to her, and from what condition your Grace of your only mere goodness took her, and set the crown upon her head, I repute him not your Grace's faithful servant and subject, nor true unto the realm, that would not desire the offence without mercy to be punished, to the example of all other. And as I loved her not a little for the love which I judged her to bear towards God and his gospel; so if she be proved culpable, there is not one that loveth God and his gospel, that will ever favour her, but must hate her above all other; and the more they favour the gospel, the more they will hate her; for there never was creature in our time that so much slandered the gospel. And God hath sent her

this punishment for that she feignedly hath professed his gospel in her mouth, and not in heart and deed. And though she hath offended so that she hath deserved never to be reconciled to your Grace's favour, yet Almighty God hath manifoldly declared his goodness towards your Grace, and never offended you. But your Grace, I am sure, acknowledgeth that you have offended Him. Wherefore I trust that your Grace will bear no less entire favour unto the truth of the gospel than you did before; forasmuch as your Grace's favour to the gospel was not led by affection unto her, but by zeal unto the truth. And thus I beseech Almighty God, whose gospel he hath ordained your Grace to be defender of, ever to preserve your Grace from all evil, and give you at the end the promise of his gospel. From Lambeth, the third of May.'

The letter was written; it was not, however, sent upon the instant; and in the course of the morning the Archbishop was requested to meet the Lord Chancellor, Lord Oxford, Lord Sussex, and the Lord Chamberlain, in the Star Chamber. He went, and on his return to Lambeth he added a few words in a postscript. In the interview from which he had at the moment returned, those noblemen, he said, had declared unto him such things as his Grace's pleasure was they should make him privy unto; for the which he was most bounden unto his Grace. 'What communications we had together,' he added, 'I doubt not but they will make the true report thereof unto your Grace. *I am exceedingly*

sorry that such faults can be proved by the Queen, as I heard of their relation.'[1]

If we may believe, as I suppose we may, that Cranmer was a man of sound understanding, and of not less than ordinary probity, this letter is of the greatest value; it shows the impression which was made upon a sensible person by the first rumours of the discovery; it shows also the Archbishop's opinion of the King's character, with the effect upon his own mind of the evidence which the chancellor, at the King's command, had laid before him.

We return to the prisoners in the Tower. Mark Smeton, who had confessed his guilt, was ironed.[2] The other gentlemen, not in consideration of their silence, but of their rank, were treated more leniently. To the Queen, with an object which may be variously interpreted, Henry wrote the Friday succeeding her arrest, holding out hopes of forgiveness if she would be honest and open with him. Persons who assume that the whole transaction was the scheme of a wicked husband to dispose of a wife of whom he was weary, will believe that he was practising upon her terror to obtain his freedom by a lighter crime

Friday, May 5.

[1] Printed in Burnet, vol. i. p. 322 et seq.

[2] 'Mark is the worst cherished of any man in the house, for he wears irons.'—Kingston to Cromwell. Later writers have assured themselves that Smeton's confession was extorted from him by promises of pardon. Why, then, was the Government so impolitic as to treat him with especial harshness so early in the transaction? When he found himself 'ironed,' he must have been assured that faith would not be kept with him; and he had abundant time to withdraw what he had said.

than murder. Those who consider that he possessed the ordinary qualities of humanity, and that he was really convinced of her guilt, may explain his offer as the result of natural feeling. But in whatever motive his conduct originated, it was ineffectual. Anne, either knowing that she was innocent, or trusting that her guilt could not be proved, trusting, as Sir Edmund Baynton thought, to the constancy of Weston and Norris,[1] declined to confess anything. '*If any man accuse me,*' she said to Kingston, '*I can but say nay; and they can bring no witness.*'[2] Instead of acknowledging any guilt in herself, she perhaps retaliated upon the King in the celebrated letter which has been thought a proof both of her own innocence, and of the conspiracy by which she was destroyed.[3] This letter also, although at once so well known and of so dubious authority, it is fair to give entire.

Saturday, May 6.

'Sir,—Your Grace's displeasure and my imprisonment are things so strange unto me,

[1] The sentence is mutilated, but the meaning seems intelligible: 'The Queen standeth stiffly in her opinion that she wo . . . . which I think is in the trust that she [hath in the] other two'—i.e. Norris and Weston. — Baynton to the Lord Treasurer. The Government seems to have been aware of some secret communication between her and Norris.—Ibid.: SINGER, p. 458.

[2] Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER, p. 457.

[3] My first impression of this letter was strongly in favour of its authenticity. I still allow it to stand in the text because it exists, and because there is no evidence, external or internal, to prove it to be a forgery. The more carefully I have examined the MS., however, the greater uncertainty I have felt about it. It is not an original. It is not an official copy. It does not appear, though here I cannot speak conclusively, to be even a contemporary copy. The only guide to the date is the watermark on the paper, and in this instance the evidence is indecisive.—Note to the 2nd edition.

as what to write, or what to excuse, I am altogether ignorant. Whereas you send unto me (willing [me] to confess a truth, and to obtain your favour) by such an one whom you know to be mine antient professed enemy, I no sooner conceived this message by him, than I rightly conceived your meaning; and if, as you say, confessing a truth indeed may procure my safety, I shall with all willingness and duty perform your command.

'But let not your Grace ever imagine that your poor wife will ever be brought to acknowledge a fault where not so much as a thought thereof proceeded. And to speak a truth, never prince had wife more loyal in all duty, and in all true affection, than you have ever found in Anne Boleyn; with which name and place I could willingly have contented myself, if God and your Grace's pleasure had been so pleased. Neither did I at any time so far forget myself in my exaltation or received queenship, but that I always looked for such an alteration as now I find: for the ground of my preferment being on no surer foundation than your Grace's fancy, the least alteration I knew was fit and sufficient to draw that fancy to some other subject. You have chosen me from a low estate to be your queen and companion, far beyond my desert or desire. If then you found me worthy of such honour, good your Grace, let not any light fancy or bad counsel of mine enemies withdraw your princely favour from me; neither let that stain, that unworthy stain, of a disloyal heart towards your good Grace, ever cast so foul a blot on your

most dutiful wife, and the infant princess, your daughter.

'Try me, good King, but let me have a lawful trial; and let not my sworn enemies sit as my accusers and my judges; yea, let me receive an open trial, for my truth shall fear no open shame. Then shall you see either mine innocency cleared, your suspicions and conscience satisfied, the ignominy and slander of the world stopped, or my guilt openly declared; so that, whatsoever God or you may determine of me, your Grace may be freed from an open censure; and mine offence being so lawfully proved, your Grace is at liberty, both before God and man, not only to execute worthy punishment on me, as an unlawful wife, but to follow your affection already settled on that party for whose sake I am now as I am, whose name I could some good while since have pointed unto; your Grace not being ignorant of my suspicion therein.

'But if you have already determined of me; and that not only my death, but an infamous slander, must bring you the enjoying of your desired happiness; then I desire of God that He will pardon your great sin therein, and likewise my enemies the instruments thereof; and that He will not call you to a strict account for your unprincely and cruel usage of me, at His general judgment-seat, where both you and myself must shortly appear; and in whose judgment, I doubt not, whatsoever the world may think of me, mine innocence shall be openly known and sufficiently cleared.

'My last and only request shall be, that myself may only bear the burden of your Grace's displeasure, and

that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen who, as I understand, are likewise in strait imprisonment for my sake. If ever I have found favour in your sight, if ever the name of Anne Boleyn hath been pleasing in your ears, then let me obtain this request; and I will so leave to trouble your Grace any further; with mine earnest prayers to the Trinity, to have your Grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all your actions. From my doleful prison in the Tower, this 6th of May. Your most loyal and ever faithful wife,

'ANNE BOLEYN.'[1]

This letter is most affecting; and although it is better calculated to plead the Queen's cause with posterity than with the King, whom it could only exasperate, yet if it is genuine it tells (so far as such a composition can tell at all) powerfully in her favour. On the same page of the manuscript, carrying the same authority, and subject to the same doubt, is a fragment of another letter, supposed to have been written subsequently, and therefore in answer to a second invitation to confess. In this she replied again, that she could confess no more than she had already spoken; that she might conceal nothing from the King, to whom she did acknowledge herself so much bound for so many favours; for raising her first from a mean woman to be a marchioness; next to be his queen; and now, seeing he could bestow no

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[1] BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 87; *Cotton. MS.*

further honours upon her on earth, for purposing by martyrdom to make her a saint in heaven.[1] This answer also was unwise in point of worldly prudence; and I am obliged to add, that the tone which was assumed, both in this and in her first letter, was unbecoming (even if she was innocent of actual sin) in a wife who, on her own showing, was so gravely to blame. It is to be remembered that she had betrayed from the first the King's confidence; and she knew at the moment at which she was writing that she had never been legally married to him.

Her spirits meanwhile had something rallied, though still violently fluctuating. 'One hour,' wrote Kingston,[2] 'she is determined to die, and the next hour much contrary to that.' Sometimes she talked in a wild, wandering way, wondering whether any one made the prisoners' beds, with other of those light trifles which women's minds dwell upon so strangely, when strained beyond their strength. 'There would be no rain,' she said, 'till she was out of the Tower; and if she died, they would see the greatest punishment for her that ever came to England.' 'And then,' she added, 'I shall be a saint in heaven, for I have done many good deeds in my days; but I think it much unkindness in the King to put such about me as I never loved.'[3] Kingston was a hard chronicler, too convinced of the Queen's guilt to feel compassion for her; and yet these rambling fancies

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[1] STRYPE'S *Eccles. Memorials*, vol. i. Lord Bacon speaks of these words as a message sent by the Queen on the morning of the execution.

[2] Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER, p. 456. [3] Ibid. p. 457.

are as touching as Ophelia's; and, unlike hers, are no creation of a poet's imagination, but words once truly uttered by a poor human being in her hour of agony. Yet they prove nothing. And if her wanderings seem to breathe of innocence, they are yet compatible with the absence of it. We must remind ourselves, that two of the prisoners had already confessed both their own guilt and hers.

The Queen demanded a trial; it was not necessary to ask for it. Both she and her supposed accomplices were tried with a scrupulousness without a parallel, so far as I am aware, in the criminal records of the time. The substance of the proceedings is preserved in an official summary;[1] and distressing as it is to read of such sad matters, the importance of arriving at a fair judgment must excuse the details which will be entered into. The crime was alike hideous, whether it was the crime of the Queen or of Henry; we may not attempt to hide from ourselves the full deformity of it.

On the 24th of April, then, a special commission was appointed, to try certain persons for offences committed at London, at Hampton Court, and at the palace at Greenwich. The offences in question having been committed in Middlesex and in Kent, bills were first to be returned by the grand juries of both counties.

Men are apt to pass vaguely over the words 'a commission' or 'a jury,' regarding them rather as mechan-

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[1] BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouches 8 and 9: Appendix II. to the *Third Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records.*

ical abstractions than as bodies of responsible men. I shall therefore give the list of the persons who, in these or any other capacities, were engaged upon the trials. The special commission consisted of Sir Thomas Audeley, the lord chancellor; the Duke of Norfolk, uncle of the Queen and of Lord Rochford; the Duke of Suffolk, the King's brother-in-law; the Earl of Wiltshire, the Queen's father; the Earls of Oxford, Westmoreland, and Sussex; Lord Sandys; Thomas Cromwell; Sir William Fitzwilliam, the lord high admiral, an old man whose career had been of the most distinguished brilliancy; Sir William Paulet, lord treasurer, afterwards Marquis of Winchester; and, finally, the nine judges of the courts of Westminster, Sir John Fitzjames, Sir John Baldewyn, Sir Richard Lister, Sir John Porte, Sir John Spelman, Sir Walter Luke, Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, Sir Thomas Englefield, and Sir William Shelley. The duty of this tribunal was to try the four commoners accused of adultery with the Queen. She herself, with her brother, would be tried by the House of Lords. Of the seven peers, three were her own nearest connections; the remaining commissioners were those who, individually and professionally, might have been considered competent for the conduct of the cause above all other persons in the realm. Antecedently to experience, we should not have expected that a commission so constituted would have lent itself to a conspiracy; and if foul play had been intended, we should have looked to see some baser instruments selected for so iniquitous a purpose.

In the middle of the second week in May, the grand juries had completed their work. On the 10th, a true bill was found at Westminster, by the oaths of Giles Heron, Esq.; Roger More, Esq.; Richard Awnsham, Esq.; Thomas Byllyngton, Esq.; Gregory Lovel, Esq.; John Worsop, Esq.; William Goddard, gentleman; William Blakwall, gentleman; John Wylford, gentleman; William Berd, gentleman; Henry Hubbylthorne, gentleman; William Huning, gentleman; Robert Walys, gentleman; John Englond, gentleman; Henry Lodysman, gentleman; and John Averey, gentleman.

Wednesday, May 10.

On the 11th a true bill was found at Deptford by the oaths of Sir Richard Clement, Sir William Fynche, Sir Edward Boughton, Anthony St Leger, Esq.;[1] John Cromer, Esq.; John Fogg, Esq.; Thomas Wylleford, Esq.; John Norton, Esq.; Humphrey Style, Esq.; Robert Fisher, gentleman; Thomas Sybbell, gentleman; John Lovelace, gentleman; Walter Harrington, gentleman; Edmund Page, gentleman; Thomas Fereby, gentleman; and Lionel Ansty, gentleman.

Thursday, May 11.

I am thus particular in recording the names of these jurors, before I relate the indictment which was found by them, because, if that indictment was unjust, it stamps their memory with infamy; and with the

[1] We shall meet him again in Ireland: he was the Queen's cousin, and a man of good character and some ability. The grand jury of Kent were nominated by Sir Thomas Wyatt, who was sheriff for that year. This is not unimportant, for Wyatt in past times had been Anne's intimate friend, if not her lover.

judges, the commissioners, the privy council, the King, with every living person who was a party, active or passive, to so enormous a calumny, they must be remembered with shame for ever.

The indictment, then, found by the grand jury of Middlesex was to the following effect:[1]

1. That the Lady Anne, Queen of England, having been the wife of the King for the space of three years and more, she, the said Lady Anne, contemning the marriage so solemnized between her and the King, and bearing malice in her heart against the King, and following her frail and carnal lust, did falsely and traitorously procure, by means of indecent language, gifts, and other acts therein stated, divers of the King's daily and familiar servants to be her adulterers and concubines; so that several of the King's servants, by the said Queen's most vile provocation and invitation, became given and inclined to the said Queen.

'2. That the Queen [on the] 6th of October, 25 Hen. VIII. [1533], at Westminster, by words, &c., procured and incited one Henry Norris, Esq., one of the gentlemen of the King's privy chamber, to have illicit intercourse with her; and that the act was committed at Westminster, 12th October, 25 Hen. VIII.

'3. That the Queen, 2nd of November, 27 Hen. VIII. [1535], by the means therein stated, procured and incited George Boleyn, knight, Lord Rochford, her

[1] The indictment found at Deptford was exactly similar: referring to other acts of the same kind, committed by the same persons at Greenwich.

own natural brother, to have illicit intercourse with ner; and that the act was committed 5th of November in the same year, at Westminster, against the commands of Almighty God, and all laws human and divine.

'4. That the Queen, 3rd December, 25 Hen. VIII., procured and incited William Brereton, Esq., one of the gentlemen of the King's privy chamber, to have illicit intercourse with her; and that the act was committed at Hampton Court, 25th December, 25 Hen. VIII.

'5. That the Queen, 8th of May, 26 Hen. VIII., procured and incited Francis Weston, one of the gentlemen of the King's privy chamber, to have illicit intercourse with her; and that the act was committed at Westminster, 20th May, 26 Hen. VIII.

'6. That the Queen, 12th of April, 26 Hen. VIII., procured and incited Mark Smeton, Esq., one of the grometers of the King's chamber, to have illicit intercourse with her; and that the act was committed at Westminster, 26th April, 26 Hen. VIII.

'7. Furthermore, that the said George, Lord Rochford, Henry Norris, William Brereton, Sir Francis Weston, and Mark Smeton, being thus inflamed by carnal love of the Queen, and having become very jealous of each other, did, in order to secure her affections, satisfy her inordinate desires; and that the Queen was equally jealous of the Lord Rochford and other the beforementioned traitors; and she would not allow them to show any familiarity with any other woman, without her exceeding displeasure and indignation; and that on the 27th day of November, 27 Hen. VIII., and other days,

at Westminster, she gave them gifts and great rewards, to inveigle them to her will.

'8. Furthermore, that the Queen, and other the said traitors, jointly and severally, 31st of October, 27 Hen. VIII., and at various times before and after, compassed and imagined the King's death; and that the Queen had frequently promised to marry some one of the traitors, whenever the King should depart this life, affirming she never would love the King in her heart.

'9. Furthermore, that the King, having within a short time before become acquainted with the before-mentioned crimes, vices, and treasons, had been so grieved that certain harms and dangers had happened to his royal body.'[1]

I suppose that persons who have made up their minds conclusively, and are resolved to abide by the popular verdict of English historians, will turn with disgust from these hideous charges; seeming, as they do, to overstep all ordinary bounds of credibility. On one side or the other there was indeed no common guilt. The colours deepen at every step. But it is to be remembered that if the improbability of crimes so revolting is becoming greater, the opposite improbability increases with equal strength—that English noblemen and gentlemen could have made themselves a party to the invention of the story. For invention is unfortunately the only word; would indeed that any other were admissible! The discovery of the indictment disposes at once of Burnet's legend, that the Queen was con-

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[1] BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouch 9.

demned on hearsay evidence; or that her guilt was conjectured from an exaggerated report of foolish conversations. But see the account of the trial in the Appendix. It cuts off all hope, too, of possible mistake. I have heard the name of Leontes mentioned as a parallel to Henry; and if the question lay only between the King and his wife, we would gladly welcome the alternative. Charity would persuade us that a husband had been madly blind, sooner far than that a queen had been madly wicked. But this road for escape is closed. The mistake of Leontes was transparent to every eye but his own. The charges against Anne Boleyn were presented by two grand juries before the highest judicial tribunal in the realm. There was nothing vague, nothing conjectural. The detail was given of acts and conversations stretching over a period of two years and more; and either there was evidence for these things or there was none. If there was evidence, it must have been close, elaborate, and minute; if there was none, these judges, these juries and noblemen, were the accomplices of the King in a murder perhaps the most revolting which was ever committed.

It may be thought that the evidence was pieced together in the secrets of the cabinet; that the juries found their bills on a case presented to them by the council. This would transfer the infamy to a higher stage; but if we try to imagine how the council proceeded in such a business, we shall not find it an easy task. The council, at least, could not have been deceived. The evidence, whatever it was, must have been

examined by them; and though we stretch our belief in the complacency of statesmen to the furthest limit of credulity, can we believe that Cromwell would have invented that dark indictment,—Cromwell who was, and who remained till his death, the dearest friend of Latimer? Or the Duke of Norfolk, the veteran who had won his spurs at Flodden? Or the Duke of Suffolk and Sir William Fitzwilliam, the Wellington and the Nelson of the sixteenth century? Scarcely among the picked scoundrels of Newgate could men be found for such work; and shall we believe it of men like these? It is to me impossible. Yet, if it was done at all, it was done by those four ministers.

Even if we could believe that they forged the accusations, yet they would at least limit the dimensions of them. The most audacious villain will not extend his crimes beyond what he requires for his object; and if the King desired only to rid himself of his wife, to what purpose the multiplication of offenders, and the long list of acts of guilt, when a single offence with the one accomplice who was ready to abide by a confession, would have sufficed? The four gentlemen gratuitously, on this hypothesis, entangled in the indictment, were nobly connected; one of them, Lord Rochford, was himself a peer; they had lived, all four, several years at the Court, and were personally known to every member of the council. Are we to suppose that evidence was invented with no imaginable purpose, for wanton and needless murders?—that the council risked the success of their scheme, by multiplying charges which only

increased difficulty of proof, and provoked the interference of the powerful relations of the accused?[1]

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[1] Sir Francis Bryan, the Queen's cousin, was at first suspected. He was absent from the Court, and received a message from Cromwell to appear instantly on his allegiance. The following extract is from the Deposition of the Abbot of Woburn.—*MS. Cotton.* Cleopatra, E iv.:

'The said abbot remembereth that at the fall of Queen Anne, whom God pardon, Master Bryan, being in the country, was suddenly sent for by the Lord Privy Seal, as the said Master Bryan afterwards showed me, charging him upon his allegiance to come to him wheresoever he was within this realm upon the sight of his letter, and so he did with all speed. And at his next repair to Ampthill, I came to visit him there, at what time the Lord Grey of Wilton, with many other men of worship, was with him in the great court at Ampthill aforesaid. And at my coming in at the outer gate Master Bryan perceived me, and of his much gentleness came towards meeting me; to whom I said, 'Now welcome home and never so welcome.' He, astonished, said unto me, 'Why so?' The said abbot said, 'Sir, I shall show you that at leisure,' and walked up into the great chamber with the men of worship. And after a pause it pleased him to sit down upon a bench and willed me to sit by him, and after that demanded of me what I meant when I said, 'Never so welcome as then;' to whom I said thus: 'Sir, Almighty God in his first creation made an order of angels, and among all made one principal, which was the ——, who would not be content with his estate, but affected the celsitude and rule of Creator, for the which he was divested from the altitude of heaven into the profundity of hell into everlasting darkness, without repair or return, with those that consented unto his pride. So it now lately befell in this our worldly hierarchy of the Court by the fall of Queen Anne as a worldly Lucifer, not content with her estate to be true unto her creator, making her his queen, but affected unlawful concupiscence, fell suddenly out of that felicity wherein she was set, irrecoverably with all those that consented unto her lust, whereof I am glad that ye were never; and, therefore, now welcome and never so welcome, here is the end of my tale.' And then he said unto me: 'Sir, indeed, as you say, I was suddenly sent for, marvelling thereof and debating the matter in my mind why this should be; at the last I considered and knew myself true and clear in conscience unto my prince, and with all speed and without fear [hastily set] me forward and came to my Lord Privy Seal, and after that to the King's Grace, and nothing found in me, nor never shall be, but just and true to my master the King's Grace.'

Such are the difficulties in which, at this early stage of the transaction, we are already implicated. They will not diminish as we proceed.

Friday, May 12.

Friday, the 12th of May, was fixed for the opening of the Court. On that day, a petty jury was returned at Westminster, for the trial of Sir Henry Norris, Sir Francis Weston, Sir William Brereton, and Mark Smeton. The commission sat—the Earl of Wiltshire sitting with them [1]—and the four prisoners were brought to the bar. On their arraignment, Mark Smeton, we are told, pleaded guilty of adultery with the Queen; not guilty of the other charges. Norris, Weston, and Brereton severally pleaded not guilty. Verdict, guilty. The King's sergeant and attorney pray judgment. Judgment upon Smeton, Norris, Weston, and Brereton as usual in cases of high treason. This is all which the record contains. The nature of the evidence is not mentioned. But again there was a jury; and if we have not the evidence which convinced that jury, we have the evidence that they were, or professed to be, convinced.

And then I said 'Benedictus, but this was a marvellous peremptory commandment,' said I, 'and would have astonished the wisest man in this realm.' And he said, 'What then, he must needs do his master's commandment, and I assure you there never was a man wiser to order the King's causes than he is; I pray God save his life.''

The language both of Sir Francis Bryan and the abbot is irreconcileable with any other supposition, except that they at least were satisfied of the Queen's guilt.

[1] BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouch 8. The discovery of these papers sets at rest the controversy whether the Earl of Wiltshire took part in the trial. He was absent at the trial of his children; he was present at the trial of the other prisoners.

The Queen and her brother were to be tried on the following Monday. Their crime was not adultery only, but was coloured with the deeper stain of incest. On the Friday, while the other prisoners were at the bar, 'Letters patent were addressed to Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, Treasurer and Earl Marshal of England, setting forth that the Lady Anne, Queen of England, and Sir George Boleyn, knight, Lord Rochford, had been indicted of certain capital crimes; and that the King, considering that justice was a most excellent virtue, and pleasing to the Most Highest; and inasmuch as the office of High Steward of England, whose presence for the administration of the law in this case is required, was vacant, the King therefore appointed the said duke Lord High Steward of England, with full powers to receive the indictments found against Queen Anne and the Lord Rochford, and calling them before him, for the purpose of hearing and examining them, and compelling them to answer thereto.' The duke was to collect also 'such and so many lords, peers, and magnates of the kingdom of England, peers of the said Queen Anne and Lord Rochford, by whom the truth could be better known; and the truth being known, to give judgment according to the laws and customs of England, and to give sentence and judgment, and to direct execution, with the other usual powers.'[1] As a certain number only of the peers were summoned, it may be imagined that some fraud was practised in

[1] Baca de Secretis, pouch 9.

the selection, and that those only were admitted whose subserviency could be relied upon. I will therefore give the names as before.

The two English Dukes, of Norfolk and Suffolk.[1] The one English Marquis, of Exeter. The Earls of Arundel, Oxford, Northumberland (the Queen's early lover), Westmoreland, Derby, Worcester, Rutland, Sussex, and Huntingdon; all the Earls in the peerage except four—those of Shrewsbury, Essex, Cumberland, and Wiltshire. Why the first three were omitted I do not know. Lord Wiltshire had already fulfilled his share of the miserable duty; he was not compelled to play the part of Brutus, and condemn, in person, his two children.[2] The remaining peers were the Lords Audeley, De la Ware, Montague, Morley, Dacre, Cobham, Maltravers, Powis, Mounteagle, Clinton, Sandys, Windsor, Wentworth, Burgh, and Mordaunt: twenty-seven in all: men hitherto of unblemished honour—the noblest blood in the realm.

Monday, May 15.

These noblemen assembled in the Tower on the 15th of May. The Queen was brought before them; and the record in the Baga de Secretis relates the proceedings as follows:—

'Before the Lord High Steward at the Tower, Anne, Queen of England, comes in the custody of Sir William Kingston, Constable of the Tower, and is brought to the bar. Being arraigned of the before-mentioned treasons, she pleads not guilty, and puts herself upon

[1] The Duke of Richmond was under age.

[2] Lord Wiltshire offered to attend, and was spared. See Appendix.

her peers; whereupon the Duke of Suffolk, Marquis of Exeter, and others the before-mentioned earls and barons, peers of the said Queen, being charged by the said Lord High Steward to say the truth, and afterwards being examined severally by the Lord High Steward, from the lowest peer to the highest, each of them severally saith that she is guilty.

'Judgment—that the Queen be taken by the said Constable back to the King's prison within the Tower; and then, as the King shall command, be brought to the green within the said Tower, and there burned or beheaded, as shall please the King.'[1]

In such cold lines is the story of this tragedy unrolling itself to its close. The course which it followed, however, was less hard in the actual life; and men's hearts, even in those stern times, could beat with human emotions. The Duke of Norfolk was in tears as he passed sentence.[2] The Earl of Northumberland 'was obliged by a sudden illness to leave the Court.'[3] The sight of the woman whom he had once loved, and to whom he was perhaps married, in that dreadful position, had been more than he could bear; and the remainder of the work of the day went forward without him.

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[1] BAGA DE SECRETIS, pouch 9.

[2] CONSTANTYNE, *Archæologia*, vol. xxiii. p. 66.

[3] BAGA DE SECRETIS. When the Pilgrimage of Grace broke out four months later, Northumberland was the only nobleman in the power of the insurgents who refused to join in the rebellion. They threatened to kill him; but 'at that and all times the Earl was very earnest against the commons in the King's behalf and the Lord Privy Seal's.'—Confession of William Stapleton: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 2. See chap. xiii. of this work.

The Queen withdrew. Her brother took his place at the bar. Like Anne, he declared himself innocent. Like Anne, he was found guilty, and sentenced to die.[1]

We can form no estimate of the evidence; for we do not know what it was. We cannot especially accuse the form of the trial; for it was the form which was always observed. But the fact remains to us, that these twenty-seven peers, who were not ignorant, as we are, but were fully acquainted with the grounds of the prosecution, did deliberately, after hearing the Queen's defence, pronounce against her a unanimous verdict. If there was foul play, they had advantages infinitely greater than any to which we can pretend for detecting it. The Boleyns were unpopular, and Anne herself was obnoxious to the Imperialists and Catholics; but

[1] I know not whether I should here add the details which Meteren gives of these trials. His authority, a Flemish gentleman, was in London at the time, but was not present in the court. The Lord of Milherve (that was this gentleman's name) was persuaded that the Queen was unjustly accused, and he worked out of the rumours which he heard an interesting picture, touched with natural sympathy. It has been often repeated, however. It may be read elsewhere; and as an authority it is but of faint importance. If we allow it its fullest weight, it proves that a foreigner then in England believed the Queen innocent, and that she defended herself with an eloquence which deeply touched her hearers. His further assertion, that 'Smeton's confession was all which was alleged' against her, is certainly inaccurate; and his complaint, which has been so often echoed, of the absence of witnesses, implies only a want of knowledge of the forms which were observed in trials for high treason. The witnesses were not brought into Court and confronted with the prisoner: their depositions were taken on oath before the grand juries and the privy council, and on the trial were read out for the accused to answer as they could.

all parties, Catholic and Protestant alike, united in the sentence.

Looking at the case, then, as it now stands, we have the report for some time current, that the Queen was out of favour, and that the King's affection was turned in another direction, a report, be it observed, which had arisen before the catastrophe, and was not, therefore, an afterthought, or legend; we have also the antecedent improbability, which is very great, that a lady in the Queen's position could have been guilty of the offences with which the indictment charges her. We have also the improbability, which is great, that the King, now forty-four years old, who in his earlier years had been distinguished for the absence of those vices in which contemporary princes indulged themselves, in wanton weariness of a woman for whom he had revolutionized the kingdom, and quarrelled with half Christendom, suddenly resolved to murder her; that, instead of resorting to poison, or to the less obtrusive methods of criminality, he invented, and persuaded his council to assist him in inventing, a series of accusations which reflected dishonour on himself, and which involved the gratuitous death of five persons, with whom he had no quarrel, who were attached to his Court and person. To maintain these accusations, he would have to overawe into an active participation in his crime, judges, juries, peers, the dearest relations of those whom he was destroying, and this with no standing army, no prætorians or janissaries at his back, with no force but the yeomen of the guard, who could be scattered by a rising

of the apprentices. He had gone out of his way, moreover, to call a Parliament; and the summons had been so hasty that no time was left to control the elections; while again to fail was ruin; and the generation of Englishmen to whom we owe the Reformation were not so wholly lost to all principles of honour, that Henry could have counted beforehand upon success in so desperate a scheme with that absolute certainty without which he would scarcely have risked the experiment. Certainly there is some improbability here. Unlikely as it is that queens should disgrace themselves, history contains unfortunately more than one instance that it is not impossible. That queens in that very age were capable of profligacy was proved, but a few years later, by the confessions of Catherine Howard. I believe history will be ransacked vainly to find a parallel for conduct at once so dastardly, so audacious, and so foolishly wicked as that which the popular hypothesis attributes to Henry VIII.

This is a fair statement of the probabilities; not, I believe, exaggerated on either side. Turning to the positive facts which are known to us, we have amongst those which make for the Queen her own denial of her guilt; her supposed letter to the King, which wears the complexion of innocence; the assertions of three out of the five other persons who were accused, up to the moment of their execution; and the sympathizing story of a Flemish gentleman who believed her innocent, and who says that many other people in England believed the same. On the other side, we have the judicial ver-

dict of more than seventy noblemen and gentlemen,[1] no one of whom had any interest in the deaths of the accused, and some of whom had interests the most tender in their acquittal; we have the assent of the judges who sat on the commission, and who passed sentence, after full opportunities of examination, with all the evidence before their eyes; the partial confession of one of the prisoners, though afterwards withdrawn; and the complete confession of another, maintained till the end, and not withdrawn upon the scaffold. Mr Hallam must pardon me for saying that this is not a matter in which doubt is unpermitted.

A brief interval only was allowed between the judgment and the final close. On Wednesday, the 17th, the five gentlemen were taken to execution. Smeton was hanged; the others were beheaded. Smeton and Brereton acknowledged the justice of their sentence. Brereton said that if he had to die a thousand deaths, he deserved them all; and Brereton was the only one of the five whose guilt at the time was doubted.[2] Norris died silent; Weston, with a few general lamentations on the wickedness of his past life. None denied the

Wednesday, May 17.

[1] Two grand juries, the petty jury, and the twenty-seven peers.

[2] CONSTANTYNE'S *Memor.*, *Archæol.*, vol. xxiii. pp. 63—66. Constantyne was an attendant of Sir Henry Norris at this time, and a friend and schoolfellow of Sir W. Brereton. He was a resolute Protestant, and he says that at first he and all other friends of the gospel were unable to believe that the Queen had behaved so abominably. 'As I may be saved before God,' he says, 'I could not believe it, afore I heard them speak at their death.' . . . . But on the scaffold, he adds, 'In a manner all confessed but Mr Norris, who said almost nothing at all.'

crime for which they suffered; all but one were considered by the spectators to have confessed. Rochford had shown some feeling while in the Tower. Kingston on one occasion found him weeping bitterly. The day of the trial he sent a petition to the King, to what effect I do not learn; and on the Tuesday he begged to see Cromwell, having something on his conscience, as he said, which he wished to tell him.[1] His desire, however, does not seem to have been complied with; he spoke sorrowfully on the scaffold of the shame which he had brought upon the gospel, and died with words which appeared to the spectators, if not a confession, yet something very nearly resembling it. 'This said lord,' wrote a spectator to the Court at Brussels, 'made a good Catholic address to the people. He said that he had not come there to preach to them, but rather to serve as a mirror and an example. He acknowledged the crimes which he had committed against God, and against the King his sovereign; there was no occasion for him, he said, to repeat the cause for which he was condemned; they would have little pleasure in hearing him tell it. He prayed God, and he prayed the King, to pardon his offences; and all others whom he might have injured he also prayed to forgive him as heartily as he forgave every one. He bade his hearers avoid the vanities of the world, and the flatteries of the Court, which had brought him to the shameful end which had overtaken him. Had he obeyed the lessons of that gospel which

[1] Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER, p. 459.

he had so often read, he said he should not have fallen so far; it was worth more to be a good doer than a good reader. Finally, he forgave those who had adjudged him to die, and he desired them to pray God for his soul.'[1]

The Queen was left till a further mystery had perplexed yet deeper the disgraceful exposure. Henry had desired Cranmer to be her confessor. The Archbishop was with her on the day after her trial,[2] and she then made an extraordinary avowal,[3] either that she had been married or contracted in early life, or had been entangled in some connection which invalidated her marriage with the King. The letter to the Emperor which I have already quoted,[4] furnishes the solitary explanation of the mystery which remains. Some one, apparently the Imperial ambassador, informed Charles that she was discovered to have been nine years before married to Lord Percy, not formally only, but really and completely. If this be true, her fate need scarcely excite further sympathy.

On Wednesday she made a confession to Cranmer, and the Archbishop, sitting judicially in court at Lambeth

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[1] *The Pilgrim:* Appendix, p. 116.

[2] Kingston to Cromwell; and see CONSTANTYNE'S *Memorial.*

[3] 'Now of late, God, of his infinite goodness, from whom no secret things can be hid, hath caused to be brought to light, evident and open knowledge of certain just, true, and lawful impediments, unknown at the making of the said Acts [by which the marriage had been declared legitimate], and since that time confessed by the Lady Anne, by the which it plainly appeareth that the said marriage was never good nor consonant to the laws.'—28 Henry VIII. cap. 7.

[4] Vol. i. p. 184.

to consider the effect of it, pronounced her marriage with the King to have been null and void. The supposition, that this business was a freak of caprice or passion, is too puerile to be considered. It is certain that she acknowledged something; and it is certain also that Lord Northumberland was examined upon the subject before the Archbishop. In person upon oath indeed, and also in a letter to Cromwell, Northumberland denied that he had ever been legally connected with her; but perhaps Northumberland was afraid to make an admission so dangerous to himself, or perhaps the confession itself was a vague effort which she made to save her life.[1] But whatever she said, and whether she spoke truth or falsehood, she was pronounced divorced, and the divorce did not save her.[2] Friday, the 19th, was fixed for her death; and when she found that there was no hope she recovered her spirits. The last scene was to be on the green inside the Tower. The public were to be admitted; but Kingston suggested that to avoid a crowd it was desirable not to fix the hour, since it was supposed that she would make no further confession.

Thursday, May 18. 'This morning she sent for me,' he added, 'that I might be with her at such time as she

[1] On the day on which she first saw the Archbishop, she said, at dinner, that she expected to be spared, and that she would retire to a nunnery.—Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER, p. 460.

[2] Burnet raises a dilemma here. If, he says, the Queen was not married to the King, there was no adultery; and the sentence of death and the sentence of divorce mutually neutralize each other. It is possible that in the general horror at so complicated a delinquency, the technical defence was overlooked

received the good Lord, to the intent that I should hear her speak as touching her innocency always to be clear. 'Mr Kingston,' she said, 'I hear say I shall not die before noon, and I am very sorry therefore, for I thought to be dead by this time, and past my pain.' I told her it should be no pain, it was so subtle; and then she said, 'I heard say the executioner was very good, and I have a little neck,' and put her hands about it, laughing heartily. I have seen many men, and also women, executed, and they have been in great sorrow; and to my knowledge, this lady hath much joy and pleasure in death.'[1]

We are very near the termination of the tragedy. On the 19th of May, at nine in the morning, Anne Boleyn, Queen of England, was led down to the green. Foreigners were not admitted, but the scene was public to all native-born Englishmen. The yeomen of the guard were there, and a crowd of citizens; the lord mayor in his robes, the deputies of the guilds, the sheriffs, and the aldermen; they were come to see a spectacle which England had never seen before—a head which had worn the crown falling under the sword of an executioner.

Friday, May 19.

On the scaffold, by the King's desire, there were present Cromwell, the Lord Chancellor, the Duke of Suffolk, and lastly, the Duke of Richmond, who might now, when both his sisters were illegitimized, be considered

[1] Kingston to Cromwell: SINGER. 461.

heir presumptive to the throne. As in the choice of the commission, as in the conduct of the trial, as in the summons of Parliament, as in every detail through which the cause was passed, Henry had shown outwardly but one desire to do all which the most strict equity prescribed; so around this last scene he had placed those who were nearest in blood to himself, and nearest in rank to the Crown. If she who was to suffer was falling under a forged charge, he acted his part with horrible completeness.

The Queen appeared walking feebly, supported by the Lieutenant of the Tower. She seemed half stupified, and looked back from time to time at the ladies by whom she was followed. On reaching the platform, she asked if she might say a few words,[1] and permission being granted she turned to the spectators and said: 'Christian people, I am come to die. And according to law, and by law, I am judged to death; and therefore I will speak nothing against it. I am come hither to accuse no man, nor to speak anything of that whereof I am accused and condemned to die. But I pray God save the King, and send him long to reign over you; for a gentler and more merciful prince was there never; and to me he was ever a good, a gentle, and sovereign lord. If any person will meddle of my cause, I require him to judge the best. And thus I take my leave of the world and of you; and I heartily desire you all to pray for me. Oh, Lord, have mercy on me. To God I com-

[1] Letter of —— to ——: *The Pilgrim*, p. 116.

mend my soul.'[1] 'These words,' says Stow, 'she spoke with a smiling countenance.' She wore an ermine cloak which was then taken off. She herself removed her headdress, and one of her attendants gave her a cap into which she gathered her hair. She then knelt, and breathing faintly a commendation of her soul to Christ, the executioner with a single blow struck off her head. A white handkerchief was thrown over it as it fell, and one of the ladies took it up and carried it away. The other women lifted the body and bore it into the Chapel of the Tower, where it was buried in the choir.[2]

Thus she too died without denying the crime for which she suffered. Smeton confessed from the first. Brereton, Weston, Rochford, virtually confessed on the scaffold. Norris said nothing. Of all the sufferers not one ventured to declare that he or she was innocent—and that six human beings should leave the world with the undeserved stain of so odious a charge on them, without attempting to clear themselves, is credible only to those who form opinions by their wills, and believe or disbelieve as they choose.

To this end the Queen had come at last, and silence is the best comment which charity has to offer upon it. Better far it would have been if the dust had been allowed to settle down over the grave of Anne Boleyn, and her remembrance buried in forgetfulness. Strange

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[1] WYATT'S *Memoirs*, HALL, STOW, CONSTANTYNE'S *Memorial*. There is some little variation in the different accounts, but none of importance.

[2] *Pilgrim*, p. 116.

it is that a spot which ought to have been sacred to pity, should have been made the arena for the blind wrestling of controversial duellists. Blind, whatever was the truth; for there has been little clearness of judgment, little even of common prudence in the choice of sides. If the Catholics could have fastened the stain of murder on the King and the statesmen of England, they would have struck the faith of the establishment a harder blow, than by a poor tale of scandal against a weak, erring, suffering woman: and the Protestants, in mistaken generosity, have courted an infamy for the names of those to whom they owe their being, which, staining the fountain, must stain for ever the stream which flows from it. It has been no pleasure to me to rake among the evil memories of the past, to prove a human being sinful whom the world has ruled to have been innocent. Let the blame rest with those who have forced upon our history the alternative of a re-assertion of the truth, or the shame of noble names which have not deserved it at our hands.

No sooner had the result of the trial appeared to be certain, than the prospects of the succession to the throne were seen to be more perplexed than ever. The prince so earnestly longed for had not been born. The disgrace of Anne Boleyn, even before her last confession, strengthened the friends of the Princess Mary. Elizabeth, the child of a doubtful marriage which had terminated in adultery and incest, would have had slight chance of being maintained, even if her birth had suffered no further stain; and by the Lambeth sentence she was liter-

ally and legally illegitimate. The King of Scotland was now the nearest heir; and next to him stood Lady Margaret Douglas, his sister, who had been born in England, and was therefore looked upon with better favour by the people. As if to make confusion worse confounded, in the midst of the uncertainty Lord Thomas Howard, taking advantage of the moment, and, as the Act of his attainder says,[1] 'being seduced by the devil, and not having the fear of God before his eyes,' persuaded this lady into a contract of marriage with him; 'The presumption being,' says the same Act, 'that he aspired to the crown by reason of so high a marriage; or, at least, to the making division for the same; having a firm hope and trust *that the subjects of this realm*[2] *would incline and bear affection to the said Lady Margaret, being born in this realm; and not to the King of Scots, her brother, to whom this realm hath not, nor ever had, any affection; but would resist his attempt to the crown of this realm to the uttermost of their powers.*'[3]

Before the discovery of this proceeding, but in anticipation of inevitable intrigues of the kind, the privy council and the peers, on the same grounds which had before led them to favour the divorce from Catherine, petitioned the King to save the country from the perils which menaced it, and to take a fresh wife without an hour's delay. Henry's experience of matrimony had been so discouraging, that they feared he might be re-

[1] 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 24.

[2] This paragraph is of great importance: it throws a light on many of the most perplexing passages in this and the succeeding reigns.

[3] 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 24.

luctant to venture upon it again. Nevertheless, for his country's sake, they trusted that he would not refuse.[1]

Henry, professedly in obedience to this request, was married, immediately after the execution, to Jane, daughter of Sir John Seymour. The indecent haste is usually considered a proof entirely conclusive of the cause of Anne Boleyn's ruin. Under any aspect it was an extraordinary step, which requires to be gravely considered. Henry, who waited seven years for Anne Boleyn, to whom he was violently attached, was not without control over his passions; and if appetite had been the moving influence with him, he would scarcely, with the eyes of all the world upon him, have passed so extravagant an insult upon the nation of which he was the sovereign. If Jane Sey-

May 20.

[1] Speech of the Lord Chancellor: *Lords' Journals*, p. 84. Statutes of the Realm; 28 Henry VIII. cap. 7. Similarly, on the death of Jane Seymour, the council urged immediate re-marriage on the King, considering a single prince an insufficient security for the future. In a letter of Cromwell's to the English ambassador at Paris, *on the day of Jane Seymour's death*, there is the following passage:—

'And forasmuch as, though his Majesty is not anything disposed to marry again—albeit his Highness, God be thanked, taketh this chance as a man that by reason with force overcometh his affections may take such an extreme adventure—yet as sundry of his Grace's council here have thought it meet for us to be most humble suitors to his Majesty to consider the state of his realm, and to enter eftsoons into another matrimony: so his tender zeal to us his subjects hath already so much overcome his Grace's said disposition, and framed his mind both to be indifferent to the thing and to the election of any person from any part that, with deliberation, shall be thought meet for him, that we live in hope that his Grace will again couple himself to our comforts.'—*State Papers*, vol. viii. p. 1.

mour had really been the object of a previous unlawful attachment, her conduct in accepting so instantly a position so frightfully made vacant, can scarcely be painted in too revolting colours. Yet Jane Seymour's name, at home and abroad, by Catholic and Protestant, was alike honoured and respected. Among all Henry's wives she stands out distinguished by a stainless name, untarnished with the breath of reproach.

If we could conceive the English nation so tongue-tied that they dared not whisper their feelings, there were Brussels, Paris, Rome, where the truth could be told; yet, with the exception of a single passage in a letter of Mary of Hungary,[1] there is no hint in the correspondence, either in Paris, Simancas, or Brussels, that there was a suspicion of foul play. If Charles or Francis had believed Henry really capable of so deep atrocity, no political temptation would have induced either of them to commit their cousins or nieces to the embrace of a monster, yet no sooner was Jane Seymour dead,

[1] 'The King has, I understand, already married another woman, who, they say, is a good Imperialist. I know not whether she will so continue. He had shown an inclination for her before the other's death; and as neither that other herself, nor any of the rest who were put to death, confessed their guilt, except one who was a musician, some people think he invented the charge to get rid of her. However it be, no great wrong can have been done to the woman herself. She is known to have been a worthless person. It has been her character for a long time.

'I suppose, if one may speak so lightly of such things, that when he is tired of his new wife he will find some occasion to quit himself of her also. Our sex will not be too well satisfied if these practices come into vogue; and, though I have no fancy to expose myself to danger, yet, being a woman, I will pray with the rest that God will have mercy on us.'—*The Pilgrim*, p. 117.

than we shall find them competing eagerly with each other to secure his hand.

It is quite possible that when Anne Boleyn was growing licentious the King may have distinguished a lady of acknowledged excellence by some in no way improper preference, and that when desired by the council to choose a wife immediately, he should have taken a person as unlike as possible to the one who had disgraced him. This was the interpretation which was given to his conduct by the Lords and Commons of England. In the absence of any evidence, or shadow of evidence, that among contemporaries who had means of knowing the truth, another judgment was passed upon it, the deliberate assertion of an Act of Parliament must be considered a safer guide than modern unsupported conjecture.[1]

This matter having been accomplished, the King returned to London to meet Parliament. The Houses assembled on the 8th of June; the Peers had hastened up in unusual numbers, as if sensible of the greatness of the occasion. The Commons were untried and unknown; and if Anne Boleyn was an innocent victim, no King of England was ever in so terrible a position as Henry VIII. when he entered the Great Chamber fresh from his new bridal. He took his seat

June 8.

[1] Within four months the northern counties were in arms. Castle and cottage and village pulpit rang with outcries against the Government. Yet, in the countless reports of the complaints of the insurgents, there is no hint of a suspicion of foul play in the late tragedy. If the criminality of the King is self-evident to us, how could it have been less than evident to Aske and Lord Darcy?

upon the throne; and then Audeley, the Lord Chancellor, rose and spoke:[1]

'At the dissolution of the late Parliament, the King's Highness had not thought so soon to meet you here again. He has called you together now, being moved thereunto by causes of grave moment, affecting both his own person and the interests of the commonwealth. You will have again to consider the succession to the crown of this realm. His Highness knows himself to be but mortal, liable to fall sick, and to die.[2] At present he perceives the peace and welfare of the kingdom to depend upon his single life; and he is anxious to leave it, at his death, free from peril. He desires you therefore to nominate some person as his heir-apparent, who, should it so befall him (which God forbid!) to depart out of this world without children lawfully begotten, may rule in peace over this land, with the consent and the goodwill of the inhabitants thereof.

'You will also deliberate upon the repeal of a certain Act passed in the late Parliament, by which the realm is bound to obedience to the Lady Anne Boleyn, late wife of the King, and the heirs lawfully begotten of them twain, and which declares all persons who shall, by word or deed, have offended against this lady or her offspring, to have incurred the penalties of treason.

'These are the causes for which you are assembled; and if you will be advised by me, you will act in these matters according to the words of Solomon, with whom

[1] *Lords' Journals*, p. 84.

[2] He had been very ill.

our most gracious King may deservedly be compared. The 'wise man' counsels us to bear in mind such things as be past, to weigh well such things as be present, and provide prudently for the things which be to come. And you I would bid to remember, first, those sorrows and those burdens which the King's Highness did endure on the occasion of his first unlawful marriage—a marriage not only judged unlawful by the most famous universities in Christendom, but so determined by the consent of this realm; and to remember further the great perils which have threatened his most royal Majesty from the time when he entered on his second marriage.

'Then, turning to the present, you will consider in what state the realm now standeth with respect to the oath by which we be bound to the Lady Anne and to her offspring; the which Lady Anne, with her accomplices, has been found guilty of high treason, and has met the due reward of her conspiracies. And then you will ask yourselves, what man of common condition would not have been deterred by such calamities from venturing a third time into the state of matrimony. Nevertheless, our most excellent prince, not in any carnal concupiscence, but at the humble entreaty of his nobility, hath consented once more to accept that condition, and has taken to himself a wife who in age and form is deemed to be meet and apt for the procreation of children.

'Lastly, according to the third injunction, let us now do our part in providing for the things to come.

According to the desire of his most gracious Highness, let us name some person to be his heir; who, in case (*quod absit*) that he depart this life leaving no offspring lawfully begotten, may be our lawful sovereign. But let us pray Almighty God that He will graciously not leave our prince thus childless; and let us give Him thanks for that He hath preserved his Highness to us out of so many dangers; seeing that his Grace's care and efforts be directed only to the ruling his subjects in peace and charity so long as his life endures, and to the leaving us, when he shall come to die, in sure possession of these blessings.'

Three weeks after Anne Boleyn's death and the King's third marriage, the chancellor dared to address the English legislature in these terms: and either he spoke like a reasonable man, which he may have done, or else he was making an exhibition of effrontery to be paralleled only by Seneca's letter to the Roman Senate after the murder of Agrippina. The legislature adopted the first interpretation, and the heads of the speech were embodied in an Act of Parliament. While the statute was in preparation, they made use of the interval in continuing the business of the Reformation. They abolished finally the protection of sanctuary in cases of felony, extending the new provisions even to persons in holy orders:[1] they calmed the alarms of Cranmer and the Protestants by re-asserting the extinction of the authority of the Pope;[2] and they passed various other

[1] 26 Hen. VIII. cap. I.

[2] 26 Hen. VIII. cap. 10.

July 1.

laws of economic and social moment. At length, on the 1st of July, in a crowded house, composed, of fourteen bishops,[1] eighteen abbots, and thirty-nine lay peers,[2] a bill was read a first time of such importance that I must quote at length its own most noticeable words.

The preamble commenced with reciting those provisions of the late Acts which were no longer to remain in force. It then proceeded, in the form of an address to the King, to adopt and endorse the divorce and the execution. 'Albeit,' it ran, 'most dread Sovereign Lord, that these Acts were made, as it was then thought, upon a pure, perfect, and clear foundation; your Majesty's nobles and commons, thinking the said marriage then had between your Highness and the Lady Anne in their consciences to have been pure, sincere, perfect, and good, and so was reputed and taken in the realm; [yet] now of late God, of his infinite goodness, from whom no secret things can be hid, hath caused to be brought to light evident and open knowledge of certain just, true, and lawful impediments, unknown at the making of the said Acts; and since that time confessed by the Lady Anne, before the Most Reverend Father in God, Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, sitting judicially for the same; by the which it plainly appeareth that the said marriage was never good, nor consonant to the laws, but utterly void and of none effect; by reason whereof your Highness was and is lawfully divorced from the bonds of the said marriage in the life of the said Lady Anne:

[1] Including Latimer and Cranmer.

[2] *Lords' Journals.*

'And over this, most dread Lord, albeit that your Majesty, not knowing of any lawful impediments, entered into the bonds of the said unlawful marriage, and advanced the same Lady Anne to the honour of the sovereign estate of the Queen of this realm; yet she, nevertheless, inflamed with pride and carnal desires of her body, putting apart the dread of God and excellent benefits received of your Highness, confederated herself with George Boleyn, late Lord Rochford, her natural brother, Henry Norris, Esq., Francis Weston, Esq., William Brereton, Esq., gentlemen of your privy chamber, and Mark Smeton, groom of your said privy chamber; and so being confederate, she and they most traitorously committed and perpetrated divers detestable and abominable treasons, to the fearful peril and danger of your royal person, and to the utter loss, disherison, and desolation of this realm, if God of his goodness had not in due time brought their said treasons to light; for the which, being plainly and manifestly proved, they were convict and attainted by due course and order of your common law of this realm, and have suffered according to the merits:'

In consequence of these treasons, and to lend, if possible, further weight to the sentence against her, the late Queen was declared attainted by authority of Parliament, as she already was by the common law. The Act then proceeded:

'And forasmuch, most gracious Sovereign, as it hath pleased your royal Majesty—(notwithstanding the great intolerable perils and occasions which your Highness hath suffered and sustained, as well by occasion of your

first unlawful marriage, as by occasion of your second); at the most humble petition and intercession of us your nobles of this realm, for the ardent love and fervent affection which your Highness beareth to the conservation of the peace and amity of the same, and of the good and quiet governance thereof, of your most excellent goodness to enter into marriage again; and [forasmuch as you] have chosen and taken a right noble, virtuous, and excellent lady, Queen Jane, to your true and lawful wife; who, for her convenient years, excellent beauty, and pureness of flesh and blood, is apt to conceive issue by your Highness; which marriage is so pure and sincere, without spot, doubt, or impediment, that the issue presented under the same, when it shall please Almighty God to send it, cannot be truly, lawfully, nor justly interrupted or disturbed of the right and title in the succession of your crown: May it now please your Majesty, for the extinguishment of all doubts, and for the pure and perfect unity of us your subjects, and all our posterities, that inasmuch as the marriage with the Lady Catherine having been invalid, the issue of that marriage is therefore illegitimate; and the marriage with the Lady Anne Boleyn having been upon true and just causes deemed of no value nor effect, the issue of this marriage is also illegitimate; the succession to the throne be now therefore determined to the issue of the marriage with Queen Jane.'[1]

Thus was every step which had been taken in this

[1] 28 Henry VIII. cap. 7. The three last paragraphs, I need scarcely say, are a very brief epitome of very copious language.

great matter deliberately sanctioned[1] by Parliament. The criminality of the Queen was considered to have been proved; the sentence upon her to have been just. The King was thanked in the name of the nation for having made haste with the marriage which has been regarded as the temptation to his crime. It is wholly impossible to dismiss facts like these with a few contemptuous phrases; and when I remember that the purity of Elizabeth is an open question among our historians, although the foulest kennels must be swept to find the filth with which to defile it; while Anne Boleyn is ruled to have been a saint, notwithstanding the solemn verdict of the Lords and Commons, the clergy, the council, judges, and juries, pronounced against her,—I feel that with such a judgment caprice has had more to do than a just appreciation of evidence.

The Parliament had not yet, however, completed their work. It was possible, as the lord chancellor had said, that the last marriage might prove unfruitful, and this contingency was still unprovided for. The King had desired the Lords and Commons to name his successor; they replied with an act which showed the highest confidence in his patriotism; they conferred a privilege upon him unknown to the constitution, yet a power which, if honestly exercised, offered by far the happiest solution of the difficulty.

Henry had three children. The Duke of Richmond was illegitimate in the strictest sense, but he had been

[1] The Archbishop's sentence of divorce was at the same time submitted to Convocation and approved by it.

bred as a prince; and I have shown that, in default of a legitimate heir, the King had thought of him as his possible successor. Mary and Elizabeth were illegitimate also, according to law and form; but the illegitimacy of neither the one nor the other could be pressed to its literal consequences. They were the children, each of them, of connections which were held legal at the period of their birth. They had each received the rank of a princess; and the instincts of justice demanded that they should be allowed a place in the line of inheritance. Yet, while this feeling was distinctly entertained, it was difficult to give effect to it by statute, without a further complication of questions already too complicated, and without provoking intrigue and jealousy in other quarters. The Princess Mary also had not yet receded from the defiant attitude which she had assumed. She had lent herself to conspiracy, she had broken her allegiance, and had as yet made no submission. To her no favour could be shown while she remained in this position; and it was equally undesirable to give Elizabeth, under the altered circumstances, a permanent preference to her sister.

The Parliament, therefore, with as much boldness as good sense, cut the knot, by granting Henry the power to bequeath the crown by will. He could thus advance the Duke of Richmond, if Richmond's character as a man fulfilled the promise of his youth; and he could rescue his daughters from the consequences of their mother's misfortunes or their mother's faults. It was an expression of confidence, as honourable to the coun-

try as to the King; and if we may believe, as the records say, that the tragedy of the past month had indeed grieved and saddened Henry, the generous language in which the legislature committed the future of the nation into his hands, may have something soothed his wounds.

Forasmuch as it standeth,' they said, 'in the only pleasure and will of Almighty God, whether your Majesty shall have heirs begotten and procreated from this (late) marriage, or else any lawful heirs or issues hereafter of your own body, begotten by any other lawful wife; and if such heirs should fail (as God defend), and no provision be made in your life who should rule and govern this realm, then this realm, after your transitory life, shall be destitute of a governor, or else percase [be] encumbered with a person that would count to aspire to the same, whom the subjects of this realm shall not find in their hearts to love, dread, and obediently serve[1] as their sovereign lord; and if your Grace, before it be certainly known whether ye shall have heirs or not, should suddenly name and declare any person or persons to succeed after your decease, then it is to be doubted that such person so named might happen to take great heart and courage, and by presumption fall to inobedience and rebellion; by occasion of which premises, divisions and dissensions are likely to arise and spring in this realm, to the great peril and destruction of us, your most humble and obedient servants, and all our posterities: For reformation and remedy hereof, we,

[1] The King of Scots: 28 Hen. VIII. c. 24.

your most bounden and loving subjects, most obediently acknowledging that your Majesty, prudently, victoriously, politicly, and indifferently, hath maintained this realm in peace and quietness during all the time of your most gracious reign, putting our trust and confidence in your Highness, and nothing doubting but that your Majesty, if you should fail of heirs lawfully begotten, for the love and affection that ye bear to this realm, and for avoiding all the occasions of divisions afore rehearsed, so earnestly mindeth the wealth of the same, that ye can best and most prudently provide such a governour for us and this your realm, as will succeed and follow in the just and right tract of all your proceedings, and maintain, keep, and defend the same and all the laws and ordinances established in your Grace's time for the wealth of the realm, which we all desire, do therefore most humbly beseech your Highness, that it may be enacted, for avoiding all ambiguities, doubts, and divisions, that your Highness shall have full and plenary power and authority to dispose, by your letters patent under your great seal, or else by your last will made in writing, and signed with your hand, the imperial crown of this realm, and all other the premises thereunto belonging, to such person or persons as shall please your Highness.

'And we, your humble and obedient subjects, do faithfully promise to your Majesty, by one common assent, that after your decease, we, our heirs and successors, shall accept and take, love, dread, and only

obey such person or persons, male or female, as your Majesty shall give your imperial crown unto; and wholly to stick to them as true and faithful subjects ought to do.'[1]

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[1] 28 Hen. VIII. cap. 7. For the whole story of Anne Boleyn's fall and the re-marriage of the King, I must again refer the reader to the minute narrative of Chapuys, *Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*, cap. 21, 22.

CHAPTER XII.

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC ASPECTS OF THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

IN the sensitive condition of Europe the effect of events was not limited to their natural consequences. The death of Catherine of Arragon led to the renewal of the war between France and the Empire. Paul III., in real or pretended reluctance to proceed to the last extremity, had for a time suspended the Bull of Deposition which he had drawn against the King of England.[1] It was idle to menace while he was unable to strike; and the two great Catholic powers had declined, when his intention was first made known to them, to furnish him with the necessary support. Francis I., who trifled, as it suited his convenience, with the Court of London, the See of Rome, the Smalcaldic League, and the Divan at Constantinople, had protested against a step which would have compelled

[1] He told Sir Gregory Cassalis that he had been compelled by external pressure to issue threats, 'quæ tamen nunquam in animo habuit ad exitum perducere.' — Sir Gregory Cassalis to Henry VIII.: *MS. Cotton. Vitellius*, B 14, fol. 215.

him to a definite course of action. The Emperor, so long as Solyman was unchecked upon the Danube, and Moorish corsairs swept the Mediterranean and ravaged the coasts of Italy, had shrunk from the cost and peril of a new contest.

A declaration of war, in revenge for the injuries of the divorced Queen, would indeed have been welcomed with enthusiasm by the gentlemen of Spain. A London merchant residing at Cadiz, furnished his Government with unwelcome evidence of the spirit which was abroad in the Peninsula.

'I have perceived,' wrote Mr Ebbes to Cromwell, 'the views and manners of these countries, and the favour that these Spaniards do bear towards the King's Grace and his subjects, which is very tedious in their hearts both in word and deed, with their great Popish naughty slanderous words in all parts. And truly the King's Grace hath little or no favour now. We be all taken in derision and hated as Turks, and called heretics, and Luterians, and other spiteful words; and they say here plainly they trust shortly to have war with England, and to set in the Bishop of Rome with all his disciples again in England.'[1]

The affront to a Castilian princess had wounded the national honour; the bigotry of a people to whom alone in Europe their creed remained a passion, was shocked by the religious revolution with which that affront had been attended; and the English and Irish

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[1] Richard Ebbes to Cromwell: *MS Cotton. Vespasian*, B. 7, fol. 87.

refugees, who flocked to their harbours, found willing listeners when they presented themselves as the missionaries of a crusade.[1] Charles himself was withheld only by prudence from indulging the inclination of his subjects. He shared to the full their haughty sensitiveness; again and again in his private consultations with the Pope he had spoken of the revenge which he would one day exact against his uncle; and one of the best informed statesmen of the age, whose memoirs have descended to us, declares that every person who understood anything of the condition of Europe, believed assuredly that he would at last execute his threat.[2]

But as yet no favourable opportunity had offered itself. His arms were occupied with other enemies; the Irish rebellion had collapsed; the disaffection in England seemed unable to coalesce with sufficient firmness to encourage an invasion in its support. It was not till the close of the year 1535, when Charles returned to Naples covered with glory from his first expedition into Africa, that means and leisure for

October, 1535.

[1] 'There be here both Englishmen and Irishmen many that doth daily invent slander to the realm of England, with as many naughty Popish practices as they can and may do, and especially Irishmen.'—Richard Ebbes to Cromwell: *MS. Cotton. Vespasian*, B. 7. fol. 87.

[2] 'L'Empéreur a deux fois qu'il avoit parlè audit Evesque luy avoit faict un discours long et plein de grande passion de la cruelle guerre qu'il entendoit faire contre le dit Roy d'Angleterre, au cas qu'il ne reprinst et restituast en ses honneurs la Reyne Catherine sa tante, et luy avoit declarè les moyens qu'il avoit executer vivement icelle guerre, et principalement au moyen de la bonne intelligence ce qu'il disoit avoir avec le Roy d'Ecosse.'—MARTIN DU BELLAY: *Memoirs*, p. 110.

his larger object at length offered themselves. His power and his fame were now at their zenith. He had destroyed the Moslem fleet; he had wrested Tunis from the dreaded Barbarossa; he had earned the gratitude of the Catholic world by the delivery of twenty thousand Christian slaves. The last ornament might now be added to his wreath of glory, if he would hush down the tumults of heresy as he had restored peace to the waters of the Mediterranean.

With this intention Charles remained in Italy for the winter. The Pope again meditated the publication of the Bull of Deposition;[1] a circular was issued from the Vatican, copies of which were sent even to the Lutheran princes, inviting a crusade against England,[2] and Cardinal Granvelle was instructed to sound the disposition of Francis, and persuade his co-operation. The Emperor would be moderate in his demands; an active participation would not be required of him;[3] it would be sufficient if he would forget his engagement with an excommunicated sovereign to whom promises were no longer binding, and would remain passive.

There was reason to believe that Granvelle's mission would be successful. The year preceding Charles had played off a hope of Milan as a bribe to disunite the French from England; he was ready now to make a definite promise. With the first slight inducement Francis had wavered; while again, in point of religion

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[1] Reginald Pole states that the issue was only prevented by the news of Queen Catherine's death.—Pole to Prioli, *Epistles*, vol. i. p. 442.

[2] SLEIDAN.

[3] DU BELLAY'S *Memoirs*, p. 135.

his conduct was more satisfactory than had been expected. He adhered in appearance to the English alliance, but he had deceived Henry's hopes that he would unite in a rupture with Rome; he had resisted all entreaties to declare the independence of the Gallican Church; he had laboured to win back the Germans out of schism, partly to consolidate the French influence in Europe as opposed to the Imperial, but partly also, as he had taken pains to prove, that no doubt might be entertained of the position of France in the great question of the Reformation. He had allowed himself, indeed, as a convenience, to open negotiations for a treaty with Solyman; but the Turks, in the eyes of devout Catholics, were less obnoxious than heretics;[1] and the scandal was obscured by an open repentance for past short-comings, and a declaration that for the future he would eschew the crime of toleration, and show no mercy to any Protestant who might fall within his grasp. An English stranger saw Francis of France march through the streets of Paris with the princes of the blood, the Queen, the princesses, the bishops, cardinals, dukes, lords, counts, the 'blue blood' of the nobility.

[1] 'The Turks do not compel others to adopt their belief. He who does not attack their religion may profess among them what religion he will; he is safe. But where this pestilent seed is sown, those who do not accept, and those who openly oppose, are in equal peril.'—REGINALD POLE: *De Unitate Ecclesiæ.* For the arch-enemy of England even the name of heretic was too good. 'They err,' says the same writer, elsewhere, 'who call the King of England heretic or schismatic. He has no claims to name so honourable. The heretics and schismatics acknowledge the power and providence of God. He takes God utterly away.' — *Apology to Charles the Fifth.*

They had torches, and banners, and relics of the saints, the whole machinery of the faith: and in the presence of the august assemblage six heretics were burnt at a single fire; the King gave thanks to God that he had learnt his obligations as a Christian sovereign; and, imploring the Divine forgiveness because in past years he had spared the lives of some few of these wretches whom it was his duty to have destroyed, he swore that thenceforward they should go all, as many as he could discover, to the flames.[1]

Thus, therefore, good hopes were entertained of Francis; but inasmuch as it was known with what a passion he had set his heart on Milan, Charles resolved not to trust too entirely to his zeal for orthodoxy; and, either through Granvelle or through his ambassadors, he signified his consent to an arrangement which would have consigned Italy conclusively to a Gallican supremacy. Sforza, the last reigning duke, whose claims had hitherto been supported by the Imperialists, had died

[1] 'Sire, je pense que vous avez entendu du supplication que le Roy fit, estant la present luy même allant en ordre apres les reliques neu teste portant ung torche en son mayn avecques ses filz, ses evesques, et cardinaulz devant luy, et les ducs, contes, seigneurs, seneschals, esquieres, et aultres nobles gens apres luy; et la Reyne portée par deux hommes avecques la fille du Roy et ses propres. Apres touts les grosses dames et demoiselles suivants a pié. Quant tout ceci fit fayt on brûlait vi. a ung feu. Et le Roy pour sa part remercioit Dieu qu'il avoit donne cognoissance de si grand mal le priant de pardon qu'il avoit pardonne a ung ou deux le en passé; et qu'il na pas este plus diligente en faysant execution; et fit apres serment que dicy en avant il les brulerait tous tous tant qu'il en trouveroit.'—Andrew Baynton to Henry VIII.: *MS. State Paper Office*, temp. Henry VIII. second series, vol. iv.

childless in the previous October. The settlement which had been made in the treaty of Cambray had thus been rendered nugatory; and Francis desired the duchy for his second son, the Duke of Orleans, who, in right of his wife, Catherine de' Medici, would inherit also the dukedoms of Florence and Urbino. If the Emperor was acting in good faith, if he had no intention of escaping from his agreement when the observance of it should no longer be necessary, he was making no common sacrifice in acquiescing in a disposition the consequence of which to the House of Austria he so clearly foresaw.[1] He, however, seemed for the present to have surrendered himself to the interests of the Church;[2] and, in return for the concession, Francis, who had himself advised Henry VIII. to marry Anne Boleyn,—Francis, who had declared that Henry's resistance to the Papacy was in the common interest of all Christian princes,—Francis, who had promised to make Henry's cause his own, and, three years previously, had signed a treaty, offensive and defensive, for the protection of France and England against Imperial and

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[1] 'The Duke of Orleans is married to the niece of Clement the Seventh. If I give him Milan, and he be dependent only on his father, he will be altogether French . . . . he will be detached wholly from the confederacy of the Empire.'—Speech of Charles the Fifth in the Consistory at Rome: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 641.

[2] Charles certainly did give a promise, and the date of it is fixed for the middle of the winter of 1535-6 by the protest of the French Court, when it was subsequently withdrawn. 'Your Majesty,' Count de Vigny said, on the 18th of April, 1536, 'promised a few months ago that you would give Milan to the Duke of Orleans, and not to his brother the Duke of Angoulesme.'—Ibid.: *State Papers*, vol. vii.

Papal usurpations,—sank before the temptation. He professed his willingness to join hand and heart with the Emperor in restoring unity to Christendom and crushing the Reformation. Anticipating and exceeding the requests which had been proposed to him, he volunteered his services to urge in his own person on Henry the necessity of submitting to the universal opinion of Christendom; and, to excuse or soften the effrontery of the demand, he suggested, that, in addition to the censures, a formal notice should be served upon all Christian princes and potentates, summoning them to the assistance of the Papacy to compel the King of England with the strong hand to obey the sentence of the See of Rome.[1] A Catholic league was now on the point of completion. The good understanding so much dreaded by English ministers, between France, the Empire, and the Papacy, seemed to be achieved. A council, the decision of which could not be doubtful, would be immediately convoked by Paul, under the protectorate of the two powers; and the Reformation would become a question no longer of argument, but of strength.

Happily, the triple cord was not yet too secure to be broken by an accident. The confederacy promised favourably till the new year. At the end of January it became known in Italy that the

1536. January.

[1] 'Bien estoit d'advis quant au faict d'Angleterre, afin qu'il eust plus de couleur de presser le Roy dudit pays a se condescendre a l'opinion universelle des Chrêtiens, que l'Empereur fist que notre Sainct Pere sommast de ce faire tous les princes et potentats Chrêtiens; et a luy assister, et donner main forte pour faire obeir le dit Roy à la sentence et determination de l'Eglise.' —Du Bellay: *Memoirs*, p. 136.

original cause of the English quarrel existed no longer —that Queen Catherine was no more. On the first arrival of the news there was an outburst of indignation. Stories of the circumstances of her death were spread abroad with strange and frightful details. Even Charles himself hinted his suspicions to the Pope that she had been unfairly dealt with, and fears were openly expressed for the safety of the Princess Mary.[1] But, in a short time, calmer counsels began to prevail. Authentic accounts of the Queen's last hours must have been received early in February from the Spanish ambassador, who was with her to the end; and as her decease gave no fresh cause for legitimate complaint, so it was possible that an embarrassing difficulty was peacefully removed. On both sides there might now, it was thought, be some relaxation without compromise of principle; an attempt at a reconciliation might at least be made before venturing on the extremity of war.

March.

Once more the Pope allowed the censures to sleep.[2] The Emperor, no longer compelled by honour to treat Henry as an enemy, felt himself released from the necessity of making sacrifices to Francis. He allowed his offer of Milan to the Duke of Orleans to melt into a proposal which would have left uninjured the Imperial influence in Italy; and Francis,

[1] Du Bellay: *Memoirs.* 'Hic palam obloquuntur de morte illius ac verentur de Puellâ regiâ ne brevi sequatur.' 'I assure you men speak here tragice of these matters which is not to be touched by letters.'—Harvel to Starkey, from Venice, Feb. 5, 1535-6: Ellis, second series, vol. ii.

[2] Pole to Prioli: *Epist.* vol. i. p. 442.

who had regarded the duchy at last as his own, was furious at his disappointment, and prepared for immediate war. So slight a cause produced effects so weighty. Henry, but a few weeks before menaced with destruction, found himself at once an object of courteous solicitation from each of the late confederates. The Pope found a means of communicating to him the change in his sentiments.[1] Francis, careless of all considerations beyond revenge, laboured to piece together the fragments of a friendship which his own treachery had dissolved: and Charles, through his resident at the Court of London, and even with his own hand in a letter to Cromwell, condescended to request that his good brother would forget and forgive what was past. The occasion of their disagreement being removed, he desired to return to the old terms of amity. The Princess Mary might be declared legitimate, having been at least born *in bonâ fide parentum;* and as soon as this difficulty should have been overcome, he promised to use his good offices with the Pope, that, at the impending council, his good brother's present marriage should be declared valid, and the succession arranged as he desired.[2] Finally, that he might lose no time in reaping the benefit of his advances, he reminded Henry that the old treaties remained in force by which they had bound themselves to assist each other in the event of

[1] 'There hath been means made unto us by the Bishop of Rome himself for a reconciliation.'—Henry VIII. to Pace: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 476.

[2] Henry VIII. to Pace: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 476. LORD HERBERT, p. 196. DU BELLAY'S *Memoirs*.

invasion; that he looked to his good offices and his assistance in the now imminent irruption of the French into Italy.

The English Government lavished large sums as secret service money in the European Courts. Though occasionally misled in reports from other quarters, they were always admirably informed by their agents at Rome.[1] Henry knew precisely the history of the late coalition against him, and the value which he might attach to these new professions. He had no intention of retracing any step which he had taken. For his separation from the rest of Christendom, Rome and the other powers were alone responsible.

Events would now work for him. He had only to stand still. To the Pope he sent no answer; but he allowed Sir Gregory Cassalis to hold an indirect commission as his representative at the Papal Court. To Francis he remained indifferent. The application on the part of the Emperor had been the most elaborate, and to him his answer was the most explicit. He received the Spanish ambassador in an audience at Greenwich, and, after a formal declaration had been made of Charles's message, he replied with the terms on which he would consent to forget the events of the preceding years. The interruption of friendly relations between England and Spain was the fault wholly and entirely, he said, of the Emperor. When the crown of the

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[1] DU BELLAY.

Cæsars was last vacant, it had been at the disposal of himself; and he it was who had permitted the choice to fall on its present wearer. In Charles's difficulties he had lent him money: to him Charles was indebted for his power, his influence, and his fame; and, in return, he had met only with ingratitude. To remember injuries, however, was not in his nature. 'We can continue our displeasure to no man,' he said, 'if he do once remove the cause thereof; so if he which is a prince of honour, and a personage whom we once chose and thought worthy for his virtue and qualities to be advanced, will, by his express writings, either desire us to put his doings towards us in oblivion, or by the same purge himself and declare that such things wherein we have noted unkindness at his hands have been unjustly imputed to him, we shall gladly embrace his offer touching the reconciliation.' Being the injured party, he could receive no advance and treat of no conditions unless with this necessary preliminary. Let the Emperor deal with him frankly, and he should receive a reasonable answer to all his reasonable requests.

'For the Bishop of Rome, he had not,' he continued, 'proceeded on so slight grounds as he would alter any one piece of his doings. In all his causes he had laid his foundation upon the laws of God, nature, and honesty, and established his works made upon the same with consent of the states of the realm in open and high court of Parliament.' The Bishop, however, had himself made known a desire for a return to a better under-

standing with him, and he did not think it expedient that a third party should interfere.[1]

The haughty answer concealed a less indifferent feeling. Henry was seriously conscious of the danger of the isolation of the country; and though he chose in words to defend his self-respect, though he saw, perhaps, in a high bearing the surest means to command the respect of others, he was anxious from his heart to resume his old relations with Spain and Flanders, so important for English commerce, and still more important for the tacit sanction of his past conduct, which would be implied in a renewed treaty with the nephew of Catherine. He directed the English resident at the Imperial Court to report the manner in which his reply had been received: he desired him at the same time to lose no opportunity of impressing, both on Charles and on his ministers, the benefits which would accrue to all Christendom, as well as to themselves, if they were again on good terms.[2]

So matters hung uncertain through the spring. The Court of Rome continued hopeful,[3] although at that very time the English Parliaments were debating the contents of the Black Book, and decreeing the dissolution of the smaller monasteries. Rumour was still favourable to a reconciliation, when, for the moment, all other considerations were absorbed in the breaking out of the French war.

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1 Henry VIII. to Pace: BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 476.

2 Ibid.

3 Pole to Prioli, March, 1536; *Epis. Reg. Poli*, vol. i.

Francis had not waited for the declaration of a change of policy on the part of Charles to collect an army. On the first hint of a difficulty he saw what was intended. Milan, after all, was not to be surrendered. His chief military successes had been gained by a suddenness of movement which approached to treachery. Instantly that he knew Charles to be hesitating, he took advantage of some trifling Border differences to open a quarrel; and he declared war and struck his first blow at the same moment. His troops entered Savoy, and the brilliant d'Annebault, who commanded in chief, sweeping all before him, had overrun Piedmont and had secured and fortified Turin, before a man had been raised to oppose him.

This unwelcome news found the Emperor at Naples in the middle of March. Report slightly, but only slightly, anticipating the reality, brought information at the same time of a Franco-Turkish alliance, and of the approach of a fresh Ottoman fleet; and in the first burst of anger and mortification Charles swore that this time he would not lay down his arms till either he or his rival had ceased to wear a crown.[1] Antonio da Leyva was left to collect and equip an army; Charles himself went in the first week in April to Rome, to make a public protest against the French aggression. On the seventeenth of that month, Pope, prelates, cardinals, and foreign ambassadors being all assembled in the consistory, he rose, and with his

April 17.

[1] Sir Gregory Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 641.

bonnet in his hand poured out in Spanish a long and passionate invective, denouncing the King of France as the enemy of God and man—the wanton and wicked disturber of the world. When peace was necessary before all things to compose schism, and to repel the Turks, Francis was breaking that peace—was bringing in the Turks—was confounding heaven and earth only for his own ambition. In the interests of Europe, even now he would give Milan to the Duke of Angoulesme; the union of the duchies was too formidable a danger to allow him to bestow it on the Duke of Orleans. This was his last concession: if it was refused, he challenged Francis to decide their differences in single combat, laying Burgundy in gage against Lombardy, the victor to have both in undisputed possession.

Explosions of passion were not unfrequent with Charles, and formed the most genuine feature in his character. His audience, however, were fluttered by his violence. His own prudence taught him the necessity of some explanation. On the following day the consistory reassembled, when, in calmer tones, he reaffirmed his accusations, and renewed his proposals.

'I am not against peace,' he said; 'those who so accuse me slander me. The Pope is the common friend of myself and the King of France. Without his Holiness's permission I should not have spoken as I spoke yesterday. I bear no personal malice. I received the sacrament before I entered your assembly, and many as are my errors and infirmities, I am not so bad a Christian as to communicate while in mortal sin. But a

confederate of the Empire is attacked—it is my duty to defend him. The Duke of Savoy is my near relative; but were he a stranger, so long as he is one of my lieges, I must expose my life for him, as he would expose his life for me. I have challenged the King of France to mortal combat; but not in malice, not in vain bravado or appetite for glory. Wise men do not thrust themselves into desperate duels, least of all with an antagonist so strong and skilful. I offered him the alternative of this combat only if peace was impossible, that the terrible evils which menace Christendom might be thus avoided. For here I say it, and while I say it I do but claim my proper privilege as an honest sovereign, not only would I expose my person to peril, but gladly would I sacrifice my life for the welfare of the Christian world.'[1]

The challenge might naturally have touched Francis, whose one sound quality was personal courage; but on this occasion the competitors had exchanged their characters. Francis had the start in the field; he had twelve thousand picked troops in Turin; the remainder of the invading force was distributed in impregnable positions over Piedmont and Savoy.[2] For once he determined to win a reputation for prudence as well as daring, and he left Charles to seek his remedy where he could find it. The Pope entreated, but in vain; and

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[1] An interesting account of these speeches and of the proceedings in the consistory is printed in the *State Papers*, vol. vii. p. 646. It was probably furnished by Sir Gregory Cassalis.

[2] Sir Gregory Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii.

the campaign followed which was so disastrous to the Empire, which for a time reversed so signally the relative position of the two princes, and defeated the expectations of the keenest statesmen.

Finding himself too late, without delay and difficulty, to expel the French out of their Italian conquests, Charles, in spite of the remonstrance of his generals, and relying, as was thought, on a repetition of the treason of the Duke of Bourbon, by one or more of the Gallican nobility,[1] led his army into Provence. He trusted either that he would find the country undefended, or that the French chivalry, when attacked in their homes, would, with their usual recklessness, risk a decisive battle; or, at least, that in a fertile district he would find no difficulty in procuring provisions. In each of his calculations he found himself fatally mistaken. The inhabitants of Provence had themselves destroyed their crops, and driven away their cattle. In his front, Montmorency lay intrenched at Avignon, and Francis between Lyons and Valence, in a fortified camp. Time and necessity had on this occasion been enlisted as the allies of France; and with the garrison of Marseilles in his rear intercepting his supplies, unable to advance, and shut up in a country which had been left barren as an Arabian desert, the Emperor sat still in the sultry

June.

August.

[1] 'Omnes qui sollerti judicio ista pensitare solent, ita statuunt aliquid proditionis in Galliâ esse paratum non dissimile Ducis Borboniæ proditioni. Non enim aliud vident quod Cæsarem illuc trahere posset.' —Sir Gregory Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. vii.

summer heats, while his army melted away from him with famine and disease. Da Leyva, his ablest commander, and thirty thousand veterans, miserably perished. He escaped only from being driven into the sea by a retreat; and crept back into Italy with the broken remnant of his forces, baffled and humiliated in the only European war into which no fault of his own had plunged him.

Of the feelings with which these events were regarded by Henry, we have little evidence. No positive results followed from the first interchange of messages; but Charles so far endured the tone in which his advances had been received, that fresh communications of moderate friendliness were interchanged through Sir Gregory Cassalis at the beginning of the summer.[1] In July, Henry offered his services as a mediator with the Court of France both to the Emperor and to the Queen Regent of the Netherlands.[2] At the same time English engineers were in the French camp in Provence, perhaps as professional students of the art of war, perhaps as volunteers indirectly countenanced by the Government.[3] The quarrel, in reality, admitted of no

[1] See Cassalis's Correspondence with Cromwell in May, 1536: *State Papers*, vol. vii.

[2] The clearest account which I have seen of the point in dispute between Charles V. and Francis I. is contained in a paper drawn by some English statesman apparently for Henry's use.—*Rolls House MSS.* first series, No. 757.

[3] When the English army was in the Netherlands, in 1543, the Emperor especially admired the disposition of their intrenchments. Sir John Wallop, the commander-in-chief, told him he had learnt that art some years before in a campaign, of which the Emperor himself must remember something, in the south of France.

solution except by the sword; and if the English felt no absolute satisfaction in seeing two powers crippling each other's strength, who, a few months previously, were in league for their own ruin, the Government at least saw no reason to co-operate with either side, in a cause which did not concern them, or assist in bringing a dispute to a close which had broken out so opportunely for themselves.

Meanwhile the probabilities of a reunion with Rome had for a moment brightened. It was stated in the last chapter that, on the discovery of the adulteries of the Queen, a panic arose among the Reformers, lest the King should regard her crime as a judgment upon the divorce, and in the sudden revulsion retrace his steps. It was seen, too, that after her punishment their fears were allayed by an Act of Parliament against the Papal usurpations, the most emphatic which had yet been passed, and that the country settled back into an equilibrium of permanent hostility to the See of Rome. There are circumstances remaining to be explained both with respect to the first alarm and to the statute by which it was dispelled.

The partial advances which had been made by the Pope had been neither accepted nor rejected, when, on the 20th of May, a courier from England brought the news of Anne's misdemeanours to Rome. The consistory would have been more than mortal if they had not been delighted. From the first they had ascribed the King's conduct to the infatuating beauty of Catherine's rival. It was she who, tigress-

May.

like, had thirsted for the blood of their martyrs, and at her shrine they had been sacrificed.[1] Her character appeared at last in its true colours; the enchantment was broken, and the abhorrence with which Henry's name had so lately been regarded was changed throughout Italy to a general feeling of pity.[2] The precious sheep who had been lost to the Church would now return to the fold, and the Holy Father would welcome back his erring child with paternal affection.[3] This seems to have been the general expectation; unquestionably it was the expectation of the Pope himself. Paul sent again for Sir Gregory Cassalis, and after expressing his delight that God had delivered the King from his unhappy connection, he told him that he waited only for the most trifling intimation of a desire for reunion to send a nuntio to England to compose all differences and to grant everything which

May 27.

[1] Pole, in writing to Charles V., says that Henry's cruelties to the Romanists had been attributed wholly to the 'Leæna' at his side; and 'when he had shed the blood of her whom he had fed with the blood of others,' every one expected that he would have recovered his senses.—POLI *Apologia ad Carolum Quintum.*

[2] 'The news, which some days passed were divulged of the Queen's case, made a great tragedy, which was celebrated by all men's voices with admiration and great infamy to that woman to have betrayed that noble prince after such a manner, who had exalted her so high, and put himself to peril not without perturbation of all the world for her cause. But God showed Himself a rightful judge to discover such treason and iniquity. All is for the best. And I reckon this to the King's great fortune, that God would give him grace to see and touch with his hand what great enemies and traitors he lived withal.'—Harvel to Starkey, from Venice, May 26: ELLIS, second series, vol. ii. p. 77.

[3] Pole to Contarini: *Epist.* vol. i. p. 457.

the King could reasonably demand.[1] Limiting, like a man of business, the advantages which he had to offer to the present world, the Pope suggested that Henry, in connection with himself, might now become the arbiter of Europe and prescribe terms to the Empire as well as to France. For himself and for his office he said he had no ambition. The honour and the profit should alike be for England. An accession of either to the pontificate might prove its ruin.[2] He lauded the King's early character, his magnanimity, his generous assistance in times past to the Holy See, his devotion to the Catholic faith. Forgetting the Holy League, glossing over the Bull of Deposition as an official form which there had been no thought of enforcing, he ventured to say that for himself he had been Henry's friend from the beginning. He had urged his predecessor to permit the divorce; at Bologna he had laboured to persuade the Emperor to consent to it.[3] He had sent a red hat to the Bishop of Rochester only that he might have the benefit of his assistance at the approaching

[1] 'Dicerem in ipso me adeo bonum animum reperisse ut procul dubio vestra Majestas omnia de ipso sibi polliceri possit.'—Sir Gregory Cassalis to Henry VIII.: *MS. Cotton. Vitellius*, B 14, fol. 215.

[2] Neque ea cupiditate laborare ut suas fortunas in immensum augeat aut Pontificales fines propaget unde accidere posset ut ab hâc . . . institutâ ratione recederet.—Ibid. The MS. has been injured by fire—words and paragraphs are in places wanting. In the present passage it is not clear whether Paul was speaking of the Papal authority generally, or of the Pontifical States in France and Italy.

[3] Causâ vero matrimonii et in consistoriis et publice et privatim apud Clementem VII. se omnia quæ [potuerit pro] vestrâ Majestate egisse; et Bononiæ Imperatori per [horas] quatuor accurate persuadere conatum fuisse.—Ibid.

council; and when he heard of his death, being surrounded by solicitations and clamours for vengeance, he had but seemed for a time to consent to measures which would never have been executed.

A warmer overture could scarcely have been conceived, and Cassalis ventured to undertake that it was made in good faith.[1] It was true that, as Cardinal of Ravenna, Paul III. had been an advocate for Henry; and his abrupt change on his election to the See proves remarkably how the genius of the Papacy could control the inclination of the individual. Now, however, the Pope availed himself gladly of his earlier conduct, and for a month at least nothing transpired at Rome to damp his expectation. On the 5th of June, Cardinal Campeggio wrote to the Duke of Suffolk to feel his way towards the recovery of his lost bishopric of Salisbury.[2] As late as St John's day (June 24th) the Papal council were rejoicing in the happy prospect which seemed to be reopening. Strange it was, that so many times in this long struggle some accident or some mistake occurred at a critical contingency to ruin hopes which promised fairly, and which, if realized, would have changed the fortunes of England. Neither the King nor the country would have surrendered their conquered liberties; the Act of Appeals would have been maintained, and, in substance if not in name, the Act of Supremacy. It is possible, however, that if at this

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[1] Sir Gregory Cassalis to Henry VIII.: *MS. Cotton. Vitellius*, B 14. fol. 215.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. vii. June 5, 1536.

juncture the Pope would have relinquished the high pretensions which touched the allegiance of subjects, Henry, for the sake of peace, would have acknowledged in the Bishop of Rome a titular primacy.

Many times a good cause has been ruined by the over-zeal of its friends. If there really existed such a danger, England may thank a young nobleman for its escape, who was permitted to do his country a service far different from his intentions. Once already we have seen Reginald Pole in reluctant employment in Paris, receiving opinions on the divorce. Henceforth for some years he will fill a prominent place in this history, and he must be introduced with a brief account of his life.

Reginald, second son of Margaret Plantagenet, Countess of Salisbury, was born in the year 1500. His mother, so long as the first of the Tudor princes was on the throne, remained in obscurity. The titles and estates of the Nevilles being afterwards restored to her and to her eldest son, Reginald shared the benefits of the revival of his family, and was selected by Henry VIII. for particular favour.

He was educated under the King's eye, and at the King's expense; he was pensioned and endowed, according to the fashion of the time, while still a boy, with an ecclesiastical benefice; and he was designed, should his inclination permit him, for the highest office in the English Church. These general kindnesses he himself gratefully acknowledges; and he professes to have repaid Henry's care with a child's affection. He says that he loved the King for his generosity to himself and his

family; that he loved him for his own high and noble qualities, his liberality, his gentleness, his piety, his princely and illustrious nature.[1] Nor did he fail to

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[1] Since Pole, when it suited his convenience, could represent the King's early career in very different colours, it is well to quote some specimens of his more favourable testimony. Addressing Henry himself, he says: 'Quid non promittebant præclaræ illæ virtutes quæ primis annis principatûs tui in te maxime elucebant. In quibus primum pietas quæ una omnium aliarum, et totius humanæ felicitatis quasi fundamentum est, se proferebat. Cui adjunctæ erant quæ maxime in oculis hominum elucere solent, justitia, clementia, liberalitas, prudentia, denique tanta quanta in illâ tenerâ ætate esse potuit. Ut dixit Ezechiel de Rege Assyriorum, in paradiso Dei cedrus te pulcrior non inveniebatur.'—*De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, lib. 3.

Again, writing to Charles V., after speaking of the golden splendour of Henry's early reign, his wealth, his moderation, the happiness of the people, and the circle of illustrious men who surrounded his throne, he goes on—

'Hi vero illam indolem sequebantur quam Regi Deus ipsi prius dederat, cujus exemplar in Rege suo viderunt. Fuit enim indoles ejus aliquando prorsus regia. Summum in eo pietatis studium apparebat et religionis cultus; magnus amor justitiæ, non abhorrens tamen natura ut tum quidem videbatur a clementia.'

And the time at which the supposed change took place is also marked distinctly:—

'Satanas in carne adhuc manentem naturâ hominis jam videtur spoliasse . . . . suâ induisse . . . . in quâ nihil præter formam videtur reliquisse quod sit hominis; . . . . ne vitia quidem . . . sed cum omni virtute et donis illis Dei cœlestibus quibus cum optimis Regum comparari poterat, antequam in vicariatum Filii ejus se ingereret [præditus est]; postquam illum honorem impie ambivit et arripuit, non solum virtutibus omnibus privatus est sed etiam,' etc. — POLI *Apologia ad Carolum Quintum.*

It was 'necessary to the position' of Romanist writers to find the promise of evil in Henry's early life, after his separation from the Papacy; and stories like those which we read in SANDERS grew like mushrooms in the compost of hatred. But it is certain that so long as he was orthodox he was regarded as a model of a Catholic prince. Cardinal Contarini laments his fall, as a fall like Lucifer's: 'Quî fieri potuit per Deum immortalem,' he wrote to Pole, 'ut animus ille, tam mitis, tam mansuetus ut ad bene merendum de hominum genere a naturâ factus esse videatur, sit adeo immutatus.' —*Epist. Reg. Poli*, vol. ii. p. 31.

profit by the advantages which were heaped upon him. He studied industriously at Paris, and at Padua, acquiring, as he believed, all knowledge which living teachers could impart to him; and he was himself so well satisfied with the result, that at the mature age of thirty-six he could describe himself to Henry as one who, although a young man, 'had long been conversant with old men; had long judged the eldest man that lived too young for him to learn wisdom from.'[1] Many ambitious youths have experienced the same opinion of themselves; few have ventured on so confident an expression of it. But for his family's sake, as much as for his own, the King continued to regard him with favour; and could he have prevailed upon himself to acquiesce in the divorce of Queen Catherine, it is possible that he would have succeeded Warham in the English primacy.

From conviction, however, or from the tendency to contradiction characteristic of a peculiar kind of talent, Pole was unable to adopt an opinion so desirable for his interests. First doubtfully, and afterwards emphatically and positively, he declared his dissent from the resolutions of Parliament and Convocation. He had witnessed with his own eyes the means by which the sentences had been obtained of the universities abroad. He was satisfied of the injustice of the cause. He assured himself that to proceed in it would be perilous to the realm.

His birth and the King's regard for him gave an

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[1] Pole to Henry VIII.: STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 305.

importance to his judgment which it would not otherwise have obtained. Repeated efforts were made to gain him. His brother, Lord Montague, the Duke of Norfolk, even Henry himself, exerted all their powers of persuasion. On the death of Wolsey the archbishopric of York was held out to him as the reward of compliance.[1] Once only he wavered. He had discovered, as he imagined, a means of making a compromise with his conscience, and he went down to Whitehall to communicate his change. But, as he rather theatrically relates, when he found himself in the presence-chamber he could not utter the words which he had intended to use; either he was restrained by a Higher Power, or the sight of that Henry whom he loved so tenderly paralyzed his tongue; he burst into tears, and the King left him in displeasure.[2] On retiring from the palace he wrote a letter of apology; accompanying it, perhaps, with the formal statement of the grounds of his opposition, which about this time he submitted to the Government.[3] His defence was received kindly; but though clever, it was little to the purpose. The arguments were chiefly political; and Henry, who listened patiently to any objection on the ground of principle, paid no very high respect to the opinion of a university student in matters of state. Pole, finding his position increasingly uneasy, in 1532 applied for and obtained permission to

[1] Pole to the English Council: *Epist.* vol. i.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Said by Cranmer to have been an able paper: 'He suadeth with such goodly eloquence, both of words and sentences, that he is like to persuade many.'—CRANMER'S *Works* edit. JENKYNS, vol. i. p. 2.

reside for a time at Avignon. In his absence the divorce was completed; and England becoming more than ever distasteful to him, he removed to the monastery of Carpentras, and thence to his old quarters at Padua. Meantime Henry's personal kindness towards him remained undiminished. His leave of absence was indefinitely extended. His pension was continued to him; the revenues of the deanery of Exeter were regularly paid to his account; and he was exempted specially from the general condition required of all holders of ecclesiastical benefices, the swearing allegiance to the children of Queen Anne. He could himself neither have desired nor expected a larger measure of forbearance.[1]

This was his position in the year 1535, when, in common with all other English noblemen and gentlemen, he was requested to send in his opinion on the authority in foreign countries claimed by the See of Rome, and at the same time to state whether his sentiments on the previous question remained unchanged. The application was not formally made through the council. A civilian, a Mr Starkey, a personal acquaintance, was entrusted with the commission of sending it; and Starkey took the opportunity of advising his friend to avoid the errors into which he had previously fallen. Pole's opinion on political perils, foreign invasions, internal commotions, was not wanted. 'As touching the *policy* of the separation from Rome, and the divorce, and of the bringing them to effect, whether it were done well

[1] PHILLIPS' *Life of Cardinal Pole.*

or ill,' Starkey ironically wrote, 'his Grace requireth no judgment of you, as of one that of such things hath no great experience as yet. Whether it should be *convenient* that there should be one head in the Church, and that the Bishop of Rome . . . . set this aside . . . . and in the matrimony, whether the policy he hath used therein be profitable to the realm or no . . . . leave that aside . . . . only show you whether the supremacy which the Bishop of Rome has for many ages claimed be of Divine right or no . . . . . and if the first matrimony were to make, you would approve it then or no . . . . and the cause why you would not.'

Finally, as Pole once before had been tempted to give an opinion against his conscience, Starkey warned him to reply sincerely and honestly; to think first of God and the truth; and only when his conscience would permit him, to consider how he could satisfy the King. 'His Grace said to me,' the letter concluded, 'that he would rather you were buried there than you should, for any worldly promotion or profit to yourself, dissemble with him in these great and weighty causes.' [1]

The tone of this concluding passage teaches us not to rely too absolutely on Pole's own version of the attempts which had before been made upon his constancy. Perhaps the admonition, perhaps the irony, of his correspondent galled him. At any rate, the King desired the truth, and the truth he should have. Other things had been in rapid development since Pole left England. He,

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[1] STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 281.

too, had chosen his course, and his mind had not stood still. It was now the winter of 1535, when the scheme of the crusade was first taking shape. At this juncture he sat down to comply with the King's demands. Instead of brief answers to brief questions, he composed a considerable volume; and as the several parts were completed, they were submitted to the inspection of Cardinal Contarini. Had the project of war gone forward, and had other matters remained unchanged, it is possible that Contarini would have found no fault with a composition which afterwards was regarded in the Catholic world with so much complacency. Under the actual circumstances, his language alarmed by its violence. The Cardinal protested against an invective which could only irritate, and entreated Pole to reconsider what he had written.

If Pole had been honest—if he had desired only the interests of the Catholic Church—he would have listened to advice; but he replied that he well knew the King's character, and that the evil had risen to its present height because no one had ventured to speak the truth to him. Henry was not a man who could be moved by gentleness. Long ago the heaviest censures of the Church ought to have been launched upon him, and by that time he would have returned to his obedience. He said also (and this is especially to be noticed), that he was not so much addressing the King as addressing the English nation, who were impassive and hard to move. He was determined to open their eyes to the delusion into which they were betrayed, and he must

go beyond the matter and beside it, and insinuate when he was unable to assert.[1]

In this mood, and while the book was still unsent, he learnt with utter mortification of the relinquishment of the Emperor's intended enterprise and the possible peaceful close of the quarrel. He had proposed to himself a far different solution. It may be that he was convinced that no such peaceful close could lead to good. It may have been, that the white rose was twining pure before his imagination, with no red blossoms intermixed, round the pillars of a regenerated Church. Or, perhaps, many motives, distinct and indistinct, were working upon him. Only the fact is certain, that he might have mediated, but that he was determined rather to make mediation impossible; the broken limb should not be set in its existing posture.

March.

In March he heard that the Pope was softening. He wrote, urgently entreating that

[1] 'Quibus si rem persuadere velis multa præter rem sunt dicenda, multa insinuanda.'—*Epist. Reg. Pol.*, vol. i. p. 434. And again: 'Illum librum scribo non tam Regis causâ quam gregis Christi qui est universus Regni populus, quem sic deludi vix ferendum est.'—Ibid. p. 437. I draw attention to these words, because in a subsequent defence of himself to the English Privy Council, Pole assured them that his book was a private letter privately sent to the King; that he had written as a confessor to a penitent, under the same obligations of secrecy: 'Hoc genere dicendi Regem omnibus dedecorosum et probrosum reddo? Quibus tandem, illustrissimi Domini? Hisne qui libellum nunquam viderunt, an his ad quos legendum dedi? Quod si hic solus sit Rex ipse, utinam ipse sibi probrosus videretur Ad eum certe solum misi; quocum ita egi ut nemo unquam a confessionibus illi secretior esse potuisset, hoc tantum spectans quod confessores ut illi tantum sua peccata ostenderem.' — Apologia ad Ang. Parl.: *Epist.* vol. i. p. . So considerable an inconsistency might tempt a hasty person to use hard words of Pole.

his Holiness would commit himself in nothing till in possession of secrets which he could communicate.[1] Contarini having desired that he might show the book to Paul, he refused, under the plea that others might see it, and that he was bound to give Henry the first perusal; an honourable answer, if his other insincerity allowed us to accept his word. We may believe, with no want of charity, that his real fear was, lest Paul should share the feelings of Contarini, and for the present discourage its despatch.[2] His letters at this time display an unveiled anxiety for immediate open hostility. His advice to the Pope was to send out his bull without more delay. He passionately deplored the change which the death of Catherine had worked upon Charles. 'Alas!' he said, 'that the interests of the Church should be affected by the life or death of a single woman! Oh that his Holiness could but convince the Emperor of his blessed privileges as the champion of the Catholic faith!'[3] 'The Emperor preferred to fight against the Turks. What were the Turks compared with the antichrist of England? What advantages would be gained if the Crescent were driven out of Europe, and England were lost? Let him strike at once while the wound was green: it would soon gangrene and mortify, and then it would be too late.'

This language, under some aspects, may appear pardonable—may, perhaps, be admired as the expression of a fine enthusiasm. Those whose sympathy with

[1] Pole to Prioli: *Epist.*, vol. i. p. 441.
[2] Ibid. p. 442
[3] Ibid. p. 445.

sentimental emotions is restrained within the prosaic limits of ordinary law, would call it by a harder name. High treason, if it be not a virtue, is the worst of crimes; and for a subject to invite a foreign power to invade his country is the darkest form of treason. An unjust exile might be pleaded as a faint palliation—a distinct religious obligation might convert the traitor into a patriot. Neither of these pretexts could be urged at the existing crisis in defence of Reginald Pole.

The book was completed in the middle of the winter; the correspondence connected with it extended through February, March, and April. In May came the news of Anne Boleyn's crimes, and the fresh impulse which I have described to the hopes of the Pope and his more moderate advisers. The expectation of a reconciliation was approaching to a certainty, and if he waited longer it might be too late. That particular time he selected to despatch his composition, and rouse again (it is idle to suppose that he was blind to the inevitable consequence) the full storm of indignation and suspicion.[1]

May.

A production, the effect of which was so considerable, requires some analysis. It shall be as brief as is consistent with the due understanding of the feeling which the book created.[2]

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[1] Tunc statim misi cum ille e medio jam sustulisset illam quæ illi et regno totius hujus calamitatis causa existimabatur.—*Apolog. ad Carol. Quint.*

[2] A *MS.* copy of this book, apparently the original which was sent by Pole, is preserved among the *Records* in the Rolls House, scored and underlined in various places, perhaps by members of the Privy Council. A comparison of the MS.

'Whether to write or not to write,' commenced the youthful champion of the faith, 'I cannot tell; when to write has cost the lives of so many and so noble men, and the service of God is counted for the worst of crimes. Duty urges me to write; yet what shall I write? The most faithful servant may hesitate in what language to address his sick master, when those who so far have approached his bed have forfeited their lives. Yet speak I will—I will cry in your ears as in the ears of a dead man—dead in your sins. I love you —wicked as you are, I love you. I hope for you, and may God hear my prayer. You desire the truth; I should be a traitor, then, did I conceal from you the truth. I owe my learning to your care. I will use against yourself the weapons with which you yourself have armed me.

'You have done no wrong, you say. Come, then, I will show you your wrong. You have changed the constitution of your country, and that is wrong. When the Church had but one head, you have made her a monster with a separate head in every realm, and that is wrong. You, of all princes (bad and impious as many

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with the printed version, shows that the whole work was carefully re-written for publication, and that various calumnies in detail, which have derived their weight from being addressed directly to the King, in what appeared to be a private communication by a credible accuser—which have, therefore, been related without hesitation by late writers as ascertained facts—are not in the first copy. So long as Pole was speaking only to the King, he prudently avoided statements which might be immediately contradicted, and confined himself to general invective. When he gave his book to the world he poured into it the indiscriminate slanders which were floating in popular rumour.

of them have been), are the first who has ventured so enormous an impiety. Your flatterers have filled your heart with folly; you have made yourself abhorred among the rulers of Christendom. Do you suppose that in all these centuries the Church has failed to learn how best she should be governed? What insolence to the bride of Christ! What insolence to Christ himself! You pretend to follow Scripture! So say all heretics, and with equal justice. No word in Scripture makes for you, except it be the single sentence, "Honour the King." How frail a foundation for so huge a superstructure!'

Having thus opened the indictment, he proceeded to dissect a book which had been written on the Supremacy by Dr Sampson. Here he for some time expatiated, and having disposed of his theological antagonist, opened his parallels upon the King by a discussion of the principles of a commonwealth.

'What is a king?' he asked. 'A king exists for the sake of his people; he is an outcome from Nature in labour;[1] an institution for the defence of material and temporal interests. But inasmuch as there are interests beyond the temporal, so there is a jurisdiction beyond the king's. The glory of a king is the welfare of his people; and if he knew himself, and knew his office, he would lay his crown and kingdom at the feet of the priesthood, as in a haven and quiet resting-place. To priests it was said, "Ye are gods, and ye are the

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[1] Partus Naturæ laborantis.

children of the Most High." Who, then, can doubt that priests are higher in dignity than kings? In human society are three grades—the people—the priesthood, the head and husband of the people—the king, who is the child, the creature, and minister of the other two.'[1]

From these premises it followed that Henry was a traitor, a rebel against his true superior; and the first section closed with a fine rhetorical peroration.

'Oh, Henry!' he exclaimed, 'more wicked than Ozias, who was smitten with leprosy when he despised the warnings of Azariah—more wicked than Saul, who slew the priests of the Lord—more wicked than Dathan and Abiram, who rose in rebellion against Aaron—what hast thou done? What! but that which is written in the Scripture of the prince of pride—"I will climb up into heaven; I will set my throne above the stars; I will sit me down on the mount of the covenant: I will make myself even with the most High." . . . . He shall send his vengeance upon thee—vengeance sudden, swift, and terrible. It shall come; nor can I pray that it may longer tarry. Rather may it come and come quickly, to the glory of his name. I will say, like Elijah, "Oh, Lord! they have slain thy prophets with the edge of the sword; they have thrown down thine altars; and I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away. Up, Lord, and avenge the blood of thy holy ones."'

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[1] Populus enim regem procreat.

He now paused for a moment in his denunciation of Henry, and took up his parable against the English bishops, who had betrayed the flock of Christ, and driven them into the den of the villain King. 'You thought,' he said to these learned prelates, 'that the Roman pontiff slept—that you might spoil him with impunity, as the robber Cacus spoiled the sleeping Hercules. Ah! but the Lord of the sheep sees you. He sees you from his throne in heaven. Not we only who are left yet alive tell, with our bleating voices, whither you have driven us; but, in louder tones than ours, the blood of those whom ye have slain, because they would not hear your hireling voices, cries out of the dust to Christ. Oh, horrible!—most horrible! No penalty which human justice could devise can reach your crimes. Men look to see when some unwonted vengeance shall light upon you, like that which fell on Korah and his company, in whose footsteps ye now are following. If the earth open her mouth and swallow you up quick, every Christian man will applaud the righteous judgment of the Almighty.'

Again he passed back to the King, assailing him in pages of alternate argument and reprobation. In most modern language he asserted the responsibility of sovereigns, calling English history to witness for him in the just rebellions provoked by tyranny; and Henry, he said, had broken his coronation oath and forfeited his crown. This and similar matter occupied the second part. It had been tolerably immoderate even so far, but the main torrent had yet to flow.

The third and most important section divides itself into an address, first to the King and then to England; finally to the foreign powers—the Emperor particularly, and the Spanish army.

'I have spoken,' he commenced, 'but, after all, I have spoken in vain. Wine turns to vinegar in a foul vessel; and to little purpose have I poured my truth into a mind defiled with falsehood and impurity. How shall I purify you? How, indeed! when you imagine that yourself, and not I, are in possession of the truth; when you undertake to be a teacher of others; when, forsooth, you are head of a Church. But, come, listen to me. I will be your physician. I will thrust a probe into those envenomed wounds. If I cause you pain, believe that it is for your good. You do not know that you have a wound to probe. You pretend that you have only sought to do the will of God. You will say so. I know it. But, I beseech you, listen to me. Was it indeed your conscience which moved you? Not so. You lusted after a woman who was not your wife. You would make the Word of God bear false witness for you; and God's providence has permitted you to overwhelm yourself in infamy. I say, you desire to fulfil your lusts. And how, you ask, do I know this? How can I see your heart? Who but God can read those secrets? Yes, oh prince; he also knows—to whom God will reveal the heart. And I tell you that I am he to whom God has revealed yours. You will cry out against my arrogance. How should God open your heart to me? But contain yourself a little. I do not

say that God has shown more to me than he has shown to any man who will use his understanding.[1] You think that the offspring of your harlot will be allowed to sit on the throne, that the pure blood of England will endure to be her subjects. No, truly. If you dream thus, you have little of your father's wisdom. There is not a peer in all the land who will not hold his title better than the title of a harlot's bastard. Like Cadmus, you have flung a spear among your people, and armed them for mutual slaughter. And you—you the vilest of plunderers—a thief—a robber—you call yourself supreme head of the Church! I acquit the nation of the infamy of their consent. They have not consented. The few suffrages which you can claim have been extorted by terror. Again, how do I know this? I, who was absent from my country? Yes, I was absent. Nor have I heard one word of it from any creature. And yet so it is. I have a more sure testimony than the testimony of eyes and ears, which forbids me to be mistaken.'

The witness was the death of Sir Thomas More, Bishop Fisher, and the Charterhouse monks; and the story of their martyrdom was told with some power and passion.

The remedy for all its evils rested with England. England must rebel. He called on it with solemn earnestness, to consider its position: its Church infected with heresy, its saints slaughtered, its laws uprooted, its

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[1] In the copy subsequently printed the King is here accused of having intrigued with Mary Boleyn before his marriage with Anne.

succession shattered; sedition within, and foreign war imminent from without; and the single cause of these accumulated miseries a licentious tyrant. 'And oh! my country,' he exclaimed, 'if any memory remains to you of your antient liberties, remember—remember the time when kings who ruled over you unjustly were called to account by the authority of your laws. They tell you that all is the King's. I tell you that all is the commonwealth's. You, oh! my country, are all. The King is but your servant and minister. Wipe away your tears, and turn to the Lord your God.'

Of his own intended conduct he would give Henry fair warning. 'I myself,' he said, once more addressing him, 'I myself shall approach the throne of your last ally, the King of France. I shall demand that he assist you no longer; that, remembering the honour of his father, with his own past fidelity to the Church of Christ, he will turn against you and strike you down. And think you that he will refuse my petition? How long dream you that God will bear with you? Your company shall be broken up. The scourge shall come down upon you like a wave. The pirates who waste the shores of the Mediterranean are less the servants of Satan than you. The pirates murder but the bodies of men. You murder their souls. Satan alone, of all created beings, may fitly be compared with you.'

So far I have endeavoured to condense the voluminous language into a paraphrase, which but languidly approaches the blaze and fury of the original. Vituperation, notwithstanding, would have been of trifling con-

sequence; and the safe exhortations of refugees, inciting domestic rebellions, the dangers of which they have no intention of sharing, are a form of treason which may usually be despised. But it is otherwise when the refugee becomes a foreign agent of his faction, and not only threatens to invite invasion, but converts his menace into act. When the pages which follow were printed, they seemed of such grave moment that they were extracted and circulated as a pamphlet in the German States. The translation, therefore, will now adhere closely to the text.

'I call to witness,' he went on, 'that love of my country which is engrafted in me by nature—that love of the Church which is given to me by the Son of God —did I hear that the Emperor was on the seas, on his way against Constantinople, I would know no rest till I was at his feet—I would call to him were he in the very narrows of the Bosphorus—I would force myself into his presence—I would address him thus: 'Cæsar,' I would say, 'what is this which you are doing? Whither are you leading this mighty army? Would you subdue the enemies of Christendom? Oh! then, turn, turn your sails. Go where a worse peril is threatening—where the wound is fresh, and where a foe presses more fearful far than the Turk. You count it a noble thing to break the chains of Christian captives; and noble, indeed, it is. But more glorious is it to rescue from eternal damnation the many thousand souls who are torn from the Church's bosom, and to bring them back to the faith of Christ. What will you have gained when

you have driven back the Turks, if other Turks be sprung up meanwhile amidst ourselves? What are Turks save a sect of Christians revolted from the Church? The beginning of the Turks is the beginning of all heretics. They rejected the Head which was set over them by Christ, and thus by degrees they fell away from the doctrine of Christ. What then? See you not the seed of these self-same Turks scattered at home before your doors? Would, indeed, it were so scanty that there was any difficulty in discerning its presence! Yes; you see it, sad to say, in your own Germany. The disease is there, though not as yet in its worst form. It is not yet set forth by authority. The German Church may even now cast forth the seed of the adulterers, and bear again the true fruit of Catholic truth. But for England! Alas! in England that seed is sown thick and broad; and by the sovereign's hand. It is sown, and it is quickening, and the growing blade is defended by the sword. The sword is the answer to all opponents. Nay, even silence is an equal crime. Thomas More, the wisest, the most virtuous of living men, was slain for silence. Among the monks, the more holy, the more devout they be, the greater is the peril. All lips are closed by fear of death. If these fine beginnings do not prove to you what it is to forsake the head of the Church, what other evidence do you desire? The Turks might teach you: they, too, forsook him—they, too, brought in the power of the sword; by the sword these many ages they have maintained themselves, and now the memory of their mother has perished, and

too late the Church cries to her lost children to return to her.[1] Or, again, Germany may teach you. How calm, how tranquil, how full of piety was Germany! How did Germany flourish while it held steadfast by the faith! How has it been torn with wars, distracted with mutinies, since it has revolted from its allegiance! There is no hope for Germany, unless, which God grant, it return to the Church—our Supreme Head. This is the Church's surest bulwark; this is the first mark for the assaults of heretics; this the first rallying point of true Catholics; this, Cæsar, those heroic children of the Church in England have lately died to defend, choosing rather to give their naked bodies to the swords of their enemies than desert a post which was the key to the sanctuary.

''That post was stormed—those valiant soldiers were slain. What wonder, when the champion of the foemen's host was a king! Oh, misery; worse than the worst which ever yet has befallen the spouse of Christ! The poison of heresy has reached a king, and, like the Turk, he shakes his drawn sword in the face of

[1] Elsewhere in his letters Pole touches on this string. If England was to be recovered, he was never weary of saying, it must be recovered at once, while the generation survived which had been educated in the Catholic faith. The poison of heresy was instilled with so deadly skill into schools and churches, into every lesson which the English youth were taught, that in a few years the evil would be past cure. He was altogether right. The few years in fact were made to pass before Pole and his friends were able to interfere; and then it *was* too late; the prophecy was entirely verified. But, indeed, the most successful preachers of the Reformation were neither Cranmer nor Parker, Cromwell nor Burghley, Henry nor Elizabeth, but Pole himself and the race of traitors who followed him.

all who resist him. If he affect now some show of moderation, it is but to gain time and strength, that he may strike the deadlier blows; and strike he will, doubt it not, if he obtain his desire. Will you then, Cæsar—you who profess that you love the faith—will you grant him that time? When the servants of Christ cry to you, in their agony, for help,—when you must aid them now, or your aid will be for ever useless,—will you turn your arms on other foes? will you be found wanting to the passionate hope of your friends, when that hope alone, that simple hope, has held them back from using their own strength and striking for themselves? Dream not, Cæsar, that all generous hearts are quenched in England—that faith and piety are dead. Judge rather those who are alive by the deaths of those who have gone to the scaffold for religion's sake. If God reserved for Himself seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal, when Ahab and his cursed Jezebel slew his prophets, think not that, in these days of greater light, our Jezebel, with all her scent for blood, has destroyed the whole defenders of the truth. There are legions in England yet unbroken who have never yet bent their knees. Go thither, and God, who has been their Saviour, will bid them rally to your banners. They are the same English, Cæsar, who, unaided, and in slighter causes, have brought their princes to their judgment bar—have bidden them give account for moneys wasted to the prejudice of the commonwealth, and when they could not pass their audit, have stripped them of crown and sceptre. They are the

same; and long ago, in like manner, would they have punished this king also, but that they looked to you. In you is their trust—in your noble nature, and in your zeal for God. Their cause is yours, peculiarly yours; by you they think the evil can be remedied with less hurt to England than by themselves. Wisely, therefore, they hold their hand till you shall come.

' 'And you—you will leave them desolate; you turn your back upon this glorious cause; you waste yourself in a distant enterprise. Is it that your soldiers demand this unhappy preference? are your soldiers so eager to face their old eastern enemies? But what soldiers, Cæsar! Your Spaniards?—your own Spaniards? Ah! if they could hear the noble daughter of Isabella, wasted with misery, appealing in her most righteous cause to their faithful hearts! The memory of that illustrious lady, well I know, is not yet so blotted from their recollection that a daughter worthy of so great a mother could pray to them in vain. Were they told that a princess of Spain, child of the proudest sovereign of that proud empire, after twenty years of marriage, had been driven out as if she had been the bastard of some clown or huckster that had crept from her filth into the royal bed, and to make room for a vile harlot—think you they would tamely bear an injury which the basest of mankind would wash out in blood? Think you that, when there scarce breathes a man so poor of soul who would not risk his life to requite so deep an indignity, the gentlemen of Spain will hesitate to revenge the daughter of their sovereign? Shall it go out among the nations

to your shame and everlasting ignominy, that Spain sits down under the insult because she is faint-hearted—because she is feeble, and dares not move? It cannot be. Gather them together, Cæsar. Call your musters; I will speak to them—I will tell them that the child and grandchild of Isabella of Castille are dishonoured and robbed of their inheritance, and at the mention of that name you shall see them reverse their sails, and turn back of themselves their vessels' prows.

"But not for Catherine's sake do I now stand a suitor either to you or them. For herself she desires nothing; she utters no complaint over her most unrighteous fate. You are now in the meridian of your glory, and some portion of its lustre should be hers; yet she is miserable, and she endures her misery. Each fresh triumph of your arms entails on her some fresh oppression; but hers is no selfish sorrow for herself or for her cause. She implores you, Cæsar, for the sake of England, of that England into which from her own noble stem she was once engrafted, which she loves and must love as her second country. Her private interests are nothing to her; but if it so happen that the cause of this illustrious and most dear land is so bound up in hers—that if she be neglected, England must forfeit her place among the nations—must be torn with civil distractions, and be plunged in ruin and disaster irretrievable—if the cause of religion be so joined to her cause that her desertion is the desertion of the Holy Church, that the ancient faith will be destroyed, new sects will spring up, not in that island only, which at her coming

she found so true to its creed, but spreading like contagion, and bringing to confusion the entire communion of the faithful (and this is no conjectural danger: it is even now come—it is among us; already, in England, to be a friend to the old customs of the Church is fraught with deadly peril)—finally, if in this matter there be every motive which ought to affect a prince who loves the name of Christ—then—then she does entreat you not to delay longer in hastening to deliverance of the Christian commonwealth, because it happens that the common cause is her cause—because Ferdinand of Spain was her father—because Isabella was her mother — because she is your own aunt — because her most ruthless enemies have never dared to hint that in word or deed she has been unworthy of her ancestors, or of the noble realm from which she sprang.

"She implores you, if God has given you strength to defy so powerful an enemy as the Turk, in that case, not to shrink from marching against a foe more malignant than the Turk, where the peril is nothing, and victory is sure. By the ties of blood, which are so close between you and her—by the honour of Spain, which is compromised—by the welfare of Christendom, which ought to be so dear to us all—she beseeches you, on her knees, that you will permit no mean object to divert you from so holy, so grand, so brilliant an enterprise, when you can vindicate at once the honour of your family and the glory of that realm which has made you famous by so many victories, and simultaneously you can shield

the Christian commonwealth from the worst disasters which have menaced it for centuries.'’

Here terminated this grand apostrophe, too exquisite a composition to be lost—too useful when hereafter it was to be thrown out as a firebrand into Europe, although Catherine, happily for herself, had passed away before her chivalrous knight flung down his cartel for her. A few more words were, however, in reserve for Henry.

‘I have spoken of Cæsar,’ he turned and said to him; ‘I might have spoken of all Christian princes. Do you seriously think that the King of France will refuse obedience when the Pope bids him make peace with the Emperor, and undertake your chastisement? He will obey, doubt it not; and when you are trampled down under their feet there will be more joy in Christendom than if the Turks were driven from Constantinople. What will you do? What will become of your subjects when the ports of the Continent are closed, as closed they will be, against them and their commerce? How will they loathe you then! How will you be cast out among the curses of mankind![1] When you die you shall have no lawful burial, and what will happen to your soul I forbear to say. Man is against you; God is against you; the universe is against you. What can you look for but destruction?’

The hurricane had reached its height; it spent its fury in its last gusts. The note changed, the threats

[1] These paragraphs are a condensation of five pages of invective.

ceased, and the beauty of humiliation and the promises of forgiveness to the penitent closed the volume.

Thus wrote an English subject to his sovereign, and professed afterwards to be overwhelmed with astonishment when he learnt that his behaviour was considered unbecoming. As Samuel to Saul, as Nathan to David, as Elijah to Ahab, so was Reginald Pole to Henry the Eighth, the immediate messenger of Heaven, making, however, one central and serious assumption; that whereas between Henry the Eighth and the Papacy there lay to be contended for, on the one side, liberty, light, and justice—on the other, tyranny, darkness, and iniquity, the Pope was God's champion, and Henry was the devil's. Facts answered otherwise. No pit opened its mouth to swallow the English bishops; no civil wars wrecked the prosperity of the country; no foreign power overwhelmed it; no dishonour touched its arms, except in the short interval when Catherine's daughter restored the authority of the Papacy, and Pole was Archbishop of Canterbury, and the last relic of the empire of the Plantagenets in France was lost for ever. He was pleased with his composition, however. He determined, in spite of Contarini, to send it. He expected the English council to believe him when he declared that he had no sinister intention, that he seriously imagined that a monarch who had taken the Pope by the beard and hurled him out of the kingdom, would be frightened by the lectures and threats of a petulant youth.

On the 27th of May the book was despatched to England by a messenger from Venice, and with it Pole

sent two letters, one to the King, the other to his friend Cuthbert Tunstall, the Bishop of Durham. The first contained little more than the credentials of the bearer. The letter to Tunstall, as well as a verbal message by which it was accompanied, was to the effect, that the book was long, too long for the King himself to read; he desired his friend to undertake, and the King to permit him to undertake, the first perusal. The contents were to be looked upon as a secret communication between himself and his Majesty; no eye had seen more than a small portion of what he had written, and that against his own will. The addresses and apostrophes inserted here and there, which might seem at first sight questionable, were dramatically introduced only to give effect to his argument.[1] These statements seem somewhat adventurous when we think of the correspondence with Cardinal Contarini, and of Pole's assertion that he was writing less for the King than to undeceive the English people; nor do we readily acquiesce in the belief that the invocation to Charles was not intended for Charles's eyes, when the writer very soon after submitted it to those eyes, and devoted the energies of years to bring the Spaniards into England.

June.

The messenger arrived early in June. Parliament had just met to receive the report of the Queen's crimes and execution, and the King, occupied

[1] Reginald Pole to the King, Venice, May 27th. MS. *penes me.* Instructions to one whom he sent to King Henry by Reginald Pole.—BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 478.

with other business, gladly complied with Pole's request, and left to others the examination of so bulky a volume. It was placed in the hands of Tunstall and Starkey. Whether Henry ever read it is not certain. If he saw it at all, it was at a later period.[1] At once, if any hope or thought had existed of a return to communion with the Papacy, that hope was at an end. Written from Italy, the book was accepted as representing the feeling if not dictated by the instructions of the Ultra-Catholics; and in such a mood they could only be treated as enemies So much of its character as was necessary was laid before Henry, and, on the 14th of June, within a day or two therefore of its receipt, a courier was despatched with replies both from Henry himself, from the Bishop of Durham, Starkey, and Cromwell. If Pole expected to be regarded as a formidable person his vanity was seriously mortified. The substance of what he had written was seen to be sufficiently venomous, but the writer himself was treated rather as foolish than as wicked, and by the King was regarded with some kind of pity. Henry wrote (it would seem briefly) commanding him on his allegiance, all excuses set apart, to return to England and explain himself.[2]

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[1] Starkey to Pole: STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 282.

[2] In his *Apology to Charles the Fifth* Pole says that Henry in his answer to the book said that he was not displeased with him for what he had written, but that the subject was a grave one, and that he wished to see and speak with him. He, however, remembered the fable of the fox and the sick lion, and would not show himself less sagacious than a brute. Upon this LINGARD and other writers have built a charge of treachery against Henry, and urged it, as might be expected, with much eloquent force. It did not occur to them that if Henry had really said

The summons was more fully explained by Starkey and Tunstall. The former declared that at the first reading of the book he was so much amazed and astonished that he knew not what to think except that he was in a dream.[1] The Bishop of Durham, on whose support Pole seems to have calculated, condescended to his arguments, and replied in formal Anglican language, that to separate from the Pope was not to separate from the unity of the Church: the Head of the Church was Christ, and unity was unity of doctrine, to which England adhered as truly as Rome: Pole had made a preposterous mistake, and it had led him into conduct which at present, if properly atoned for, might be passed over as folly, and covered and forgotten: if persevered in it would become a crime; but it was a secret so far, and if promptly repented of should remain a secret from all eyes for ever.[2] He was commanded by the Government, he was implored by his friends, to return to England, to make his peace in person, and entreat the King's forgiveness.

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anything so incredible, and had intended treachery, the letters of Tunstall and Starkey would have been in keeping with the King's; they would not have been allowed to betray the secret and show Pole their true opinions. Henry's letter was sent on the 14th of June; the other letters bore the same date, and went by the same post. But, indeed, the King made no mystery of his displeasure. He may have written generally, as knowing only so much of the book as others had communicated to him. That he affected not to be displeased is as absurd in itself as it is contradicted by the terms of the refusal to return, which Pole himself sent in reply.—STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 295.

[1] Starkey to Pole: STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 282.

[2] Tunstall to Pole: *Rolls House MS.* BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 479.

But neither his friends nor the King understood Pole's character or comprehended his purpose. He was less foolish, he was more malicious, than they supposed. When the letters reached him he professed to be utterly surprised at the reception which his book had met with. He regretted that the Supremacy Act made it impossible for him to comply with a command to present himself in England; but he protested so loudly that he had meant neither injury nor disrespect, he declared so emphatically that his book was a *bonâ fide* letter addressed to the King only, and written for his own eyes and no other's, that at last Henry believed him, accepted his assurance, and consented to pass over his impertinence. In July or August he was informed by Starkey 'that the King took the intolerable sharpness of his writings even as they that most friendly could interpret them. He thought, as few would think, that the exaggerations, the oft-returning to the same faults, the vehement exclamations, the hot sentences, the uncomely bitings, the despiteful comparisons and likenings, all came of error, and not of evil intent. His Grace supposed his benefits not forgotten, and Pole's love towards his Highness not utterly quenched. His Majesty was one that forgave and forgot displeasure, both at once.' For his own part, however, Starkey implored his friend, as he valued his country, his honour, his good name, to repent himself, as he had desired the King to repent; the King would not press him or force his conscience; if he could be brought to reconsider his conduct, he might be as-

July.

sured that it would not be remembered against him.[1] Simultaneously with, or soon after this letter, the Bishop of Durham wrote also by the King's order, saying that, as he objected to return, it should not be insisted on; inasmuch, however, as he had affirmed so positively that his book was a private communication, there could be no further reason for preserving any other copies of it, and if he had such copies in his possession he was called upon to prove his sincerity by burning them. On his compliance, his property, which would be forfeited under the Supremacy Act, should remain in his hands, and he was free to reside in any country which he might choose.

August.

Pole did not burn his book, nor was it long before he gave the Government reason to regret their forbearance towards him. For the time he continued in receipt of his income, and the stir which he had created died away.

There are many scenes in human life which, as a great poet teaches us, are either sad or beautiful, cheerless or refreshing, according to the direction from which we approach them.[3] If, on a morning in spring, we behold the ridges of a fresh-turned ploughed field from their northern side, our eyes, catching only the shadowed slopes of the successive furrows, see an expanse of white, the unmelted remains of the night's hail-storm, or the

[1] Starkey to Pole: *Rolls House MS.*

[2] PHILLIPS' *Life of Cardinal Pole*, vol. i. p. 148. Reginald Pole to Edward VI.: *Epist.* REG. POL.

[3] WORDSWORTH'S *Excursion*, book v.

hoarfrost of the dawn. We make a circuit, or we cross over and look behind us, and on the very same ground there is nothing to be seen but the rich brown soil swelling in the sunshine, warm with promise, and chequered perhaps here and there with a green blade bursting through the surface. Both images are true to the facts of nature. Both pictures are created by real objects really existing. The pleasant certainty, however, remains with us, that the winter is passing away and summer is coming; the promise of the future is not with the ice and the sleet, but with the sunshine, with gladness, and hope.

Reginald Pole has shown us the form in which England appeared to him, and to the Catholic world beyond its shores, bound under an iron yoke, and sinking down in despair and desolation. To us who have seen the golden harvests waving over her fields, his loud raving has a sound of delirium: we perceive only the happy symptoms of lengthening daylight, bringing with it once more the season of life, and health, and fertility. But there is a third aspect—and it is this which we must now endeavour to present to ourselves—of England as it appeared to its own toiling children in the hour of their trial, with its lights and shadows, its frozen prejudices and sunny gleams of faith; when day followed day, and brought no certain change, and men knew not whether night would prevail or day, or which of the two was most divine—night, with its starry firmament of saints and ceremonies, or day, with its single lustre of the Gospel sun. It is idle to try to reproduce such a

time in any single shape or uniform colour. The reader must call his imagination to his aid, and endeavour, if he can, to see the same object in many shapes and many colours, to sympathize successively with those to whom the Reformation was a terror, with those to whom it was the dearest hope, and those others—the multitude—whose minds could give them no certain answer, who shifted from day to day, as the impulse of the moment swayed them.

When Parliament met in June, 1536, Convocation as usual assembled with it. On Sunday, the ninth of the month, the two houses of the clergy were gathered for the opening of their session in the aisles of St Paul's—high and low, hot and cold, brave and cowardly. The great question of the day, the Reformation of the Church, was one in which they, the spiritualty of England, might be expected to bear some useful part. They had as yet borne no part but a part of obstruction. They had been compelled to sit impatiently, with tied hands, while the lay legislature prescribed their duties and shaped their laws for them. Whether they would assume a more becoming posture, was the problem which they were now met to solve. Gardiner was there, and Bonner, Tunstall, and Hilsey, Lee, Latimer, and Cranmer; mitred abbots, meditating the treason for which, before many months were passed, their quartered trunks would be rotting by the highways; earnest sacramentaries, making ready for the stake: the spirits of the two ages—the past and the future—were meeting there in fierce collision; and

Sunday, June 9.

above them all, in his vicar-general's chair, sat Cromwell, proud and powerful, lording over the scowling crowd. The present hour was his. His enemies' turn in due time would come, also.

The mass had been sung, the roll of the organ had died away. It was the time for the sermon, and Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, rose into the pulpit. Nine-tenths of all those eyes which were then fixed on him would have glistened with delight, could they have looked instead upon his burning. The whole multitude of passionate men were compelled, by a changed world, to listen quietly while he shot his bitter arrows among them.

We have heard Pole; we will now hear the heretic leader. His object on the present occasion was to tell the clergy what especially he thought of themselves; and Latimer was a plain speaker. They had no good opinion of him. His opinion of them was very bad indeed. His text was from the sixteenth chapter of St Luke's Gospel: 'The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.'

The race and parentage of all living things, he said, were known by their fruits. He desired by this test to try the parentage of the present Convocation. They had sat—the men that he saw before him—for seven years, more or less, session after session. What measures had come from them? They were the spiritualty—the teachers of the people, divinely commissioned; said to be, and believed to be, children of light; what had they done? . . . . Mighty evils in those years had been

swept away in England . . . . but whose hands had been at the work?—was it theirs? For his part, he knew that they had burned a dead man's bones; he knew that they had done their best to burn the living man who was then speaking to them. . . . . What else they had done he knew not.

'The end of your Convocation shall show what ye are,' he said, turning direct upon them; 'the fruit of your consultations shall show what generation ye be of. What now have ye engendered? what have ye brought forth? What fruit has come of your long and great assembly? What one thing that the people have been the better of a hair? That the people be better learned and taught now than they were in time past, should we attribute it to your industry, or to the providence of God and the foreseeing of the King's Grace? Ought we to thank you or the King's Highness? Whether stirred the other first?—you the King, that ye might preach, or he you, by his letters, that ye should preach more often? Is it unknown, think you, how both ye and your curates were in manner by violence enforced to let books be made, not by you, but by profane and lay persons? I am bold with you; but I speak to the clergy, not to the laity. I speak to your faces, not behind your backs.'

If, then, they had produced no good thing, what had they produced? There was false money instead of true. There were dead images instead of a living Saviour. There was redemption purchased by money, not redemption purchased by Christ. Abundance of these things

were to be found among them . . . . and all those pleasant fictions which had been bred at Rome, the canonizations and beatifications, the totquots and dispensations, the pardons of marvellous variety, stationaries and jubilaries, manuaries and oscularies, pedaries, and such other vanities — these had gracious reception; these were welcomed gladly in all their multiplicity. There was the ancient purgatory pickpurse—that which was suaged and cooled with a Franciscan's cowl laid upon a dead man's back, to the fourth part of his sins; that which was utterly to be spoiled, but of none other but the most prudent father the Pope, and of him as oft as he listed—a pleasant invention, and one so profitable to the feigners, that no emperor had taken more by taxes of his living subjects than those truly begotten children of the world obtained by dead men's tributes.

This was the modern gospel—the present Catholic faith,—which the English clergy loved and taught as faithfully as their brothers in Italy. 'Ye know the proverb,' the preacher continued, '"An evil crow an evil egg." The children of this world that are known to have so evil a father the world, so evil a grandfather the devil, cannot choose but be evil—the devil being such an one as never can be unlike himself. So of Envy, his well-beloved leman, he begot the World, and left it with Discord at nurse; which World, after it came to man's estate, had of many concubines many sons. These are our holy, holy men that say they are dead to the world; and none are more lively to the world. God is taking account of his stewards, as though he should

say, 'All good men in all places accuse your avarice, your exactions, your tyranny. I commanded you that ye should feed my sheep, and ye earnestly feed yourselves from day to day, wallowing in delights and idleness. I commanded you to teach my law; you teach your own traditions, and seek your own glory. I taught openly, that he that should hear you should hear Me; he that should despise you should despise Me. I gave you also keys—not earthly keys, but heavenly. I left my goods, that I have evermore esteemed, my Word and sacraments, to be dispensed by you. Ye have not deceived Me, but yourselves: my gifts and my benefits shall be to your greater damnation. Because ye have despised the clemency of the Master of the house, ye have deserved the severity of the Judge. Come forth; let us see an account of your stewardship.'

'And He will visit you; in his good time God will visit you. He will come; He will not tarry long. In the day in which we look not for Him, and in the hour which we do not know, He will come and will cut us in pieces, and will give us our portion with the hypocrites. He will set us, my brethren, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth; and here, if ye will, shall be the end of our tragedy.' [1]

Our glimpses into these scenes fall but fitfully. The sermon has reached us; but the audience—the five hundred fierce vindictive men who suffered under the preacher's irony—what they thought of it; with what

[1] *Sermons of Bishop Latimer*, Parker Society's edition, p. 33.

feelings on that summer day the heated crowd scattered out of the cathedral, dispersing to their dinners among the taverns in Fleet-street and Cheapside—all this is gone, gone without a sound. Here no friendly informer comes to help us; no penitent malcontent breaks confidence or lifts the curtain. All is silent.

Yet, although the special acts of this body were of no mighty moment, although rarely have so many men been gathered together whose actual importance has borne so small a proportion to their estimate of themselves, yet not often, perhaps, has an assembly collected where there was such heat of passion, such malignity of hatred. For the last three years the clergy had remained torpid and half stunned, doggedly obeying the proclamations for the alterations of the service, and keeping beyond the grasp of the law. But, although too demoralized by their defeat to attempt resistance, the great body of them still detested the changes which had been forced upon their acceptance, and longed for a change which as yet they had not dared to attempt actively to compass.[1] The keener among the leaders had, however, by this time, in some degree collected themselves. They had been already watching their enemies, to strike, if they could see a vulnerable point, and had masked batteries prepared to unveil. Latimer taunted them with their inefficiency: he should find, perhaps to his cost, that their arms had not wholly lost

[1] In the State Paper Office and the Rolls House there are numerous 'depositions' as to language used by the clergy, showing their general temper.

their ancient sinew. To keep clear of suspicion of favouring heresy, in their duel with the Pope and Papal idolatries, they knew to be essential to the position of the Government. When taunted with breaking the unity of the Church, the Privy Council were proud of being able to point to the purity of their doctrines; and although fighting against a stream too strong for them —contending, in fact, against Providence itself—the King, Cromwell, and Cranmer struggled resolutely to maintain this phantom stronghold, which they imagined to be the key of their defences. The moving party, on the other hand, inevitably transgressed an unreal and arbitrary boundary; and through the known sensitiveness of the King on the real presence, with the defence of which he regarded himself as especially entrusted by the supremacy, the clergy hoped to recover their advantage, and in striking heresy to reach the hated vicar-general.

The sermon was preached on the 9th of June; on the 23rd the Lower House of Convocation indirectly replied to it, by presenting a list of complaints on the doctrines which were spreading among the people, the open blasphemy of holy things, and the tacit or avowed sanction extended by certain members of the council to the circulation of heretical books. As an evidence of the progress in the change of opinion, this document is one of the most remarkable which has come down to us.[1]

June 23.

[1] Printed in STRYPE'S *Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 260. The complaints are not exaggerated. There is not one which could not be illustrated or strengthened from depositions among the *Records*.

After a preface, in which the clergy professed their sincere allegiance to the Crown, the renunciation, utter and complete, of the Bishop of Rome and all his usurpations and injustices, the abuses which they were going to describe had, nevertheless, they said, created great disquiet in the realm, and required immediate attention.

To the slander of this noble realm, the disquietness of the people, and damage of Christian souls, it was commonly preached, thought, and spoke, that the sacrament of the altar was lightly to be esteemed.

Lewd persons were not afraid to say, 'Why should I see the sacring of the high mass? Is it anything but a piece of bread or a little pretty piece Round Robin?'

Of baptism it was said that 'It was as lawful to baptize in a tub of water at home or in a ditch by the wayside as in a font of stone in the church. The water in the font was but a thing conjured.'

Priests, again, were thought to have no more authority to minister sacraments than laymen. Extreme unction was not a sacrament at all, and the hallowed oil 'no better than the Bishop of Rome's grease and butter.' Confession, absolution, penance, were considered neither necessary nor useful. Confession 'had been invented' (here a stroke was aimed at Latimer) 'to have the secret knowledge of men's hearts and to pull money out of their purses.' 'It were enough for men each to confess his own sins to God in public.' The sinner should allow himself to be a sinner and sin no more. The priest had no concern with him. Purgatory was a delusion. The soul went straight from the body to heaven or to hell. Dirige, commendations,

masses, suffrages, prayers, almsdeeds, oblations done for the souls departed out of the world, were vain and profitless. All sins were put away through Christ. If there were a place of purgatory Christ was not yet born.

The Church was the congregation of good men, and prayer was of the same efficacy in the air as in a church or chapel. The building called the church was made to keep the people from the rain and wind, a place where they might assemble to hear the Word of God. Mass and matins were but a fraud. The saints had no power to help departed souls. To pray to them, or to burn candles before their images, was mere idolatry. The saints could not be mediators. There was one Mediator, Christ. Our Lady was but a woman, 'like a bag of saffron or pepper when the spice was out.'[1] It was as much available to pray to saints 'as to whirl a stone against the wind.' Hallowed water, hallowed bread, hallowed candles, hallowed ashes, were but vanities. Priests were like other men, and might marry and have wives like other men.'[2]

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[1] This, again, was intended for Latimer. The illustration was said to be his; but he denied it.

[2] Many of the clergy and even of the monks had already taken the permission of their own authority. Cranmer himself was said to be secretly married; and in some cases women, whom we find reported in this letter of Cromwell's visitors as concubines of priests, were really and literally their wives, and had been formally married to them. I have discovered one singular instance of this kind.

Ap Rice, writing to Cromwell in the year 1535 or 6, says:

'As we were of late at Walden, the abbot, then being a man of good learning and right sincere judgment, as I examined him alone, shewed me secretly, upon stipulation of silence, but only unto you, as our judge, that he had contracted matrimony with a certain woman secretly, having present thereat but one trusty witness;

'The saying and singing of mass, matins, and even-song, was but roaring, howling, whistling, mumming, conjuring, and juggling,' and 'the playing of the organs a foolish vanity.' It was enough for a man to believe what was written in the Gospel—Christ's blood was shed for man's redemption, let every man believe in Christ and repent of his sins. Finally, as a special charge against Cromwell, the Convocation declared that these heresies were not only taught by word of mouth, but were set out in books which were printed and published *cum privilegio*, under the apparent sanction of the Crown.

Thus were the two parties face to face, and the King had either to make his choice between them, or with Cromwell's help to coerce them both into moderation. The modern reader may imagine that he should have left both alone, have allowed opinion to correct opinion, and truth to win its own victory. But this 'remedy for controversy,' so easy now, was then impossible—it

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because he, not being able, as he said, to contain, though he could not be suffered by the laws of man, saw he might do it lawfully by the laws of God; and for the avoiding of more inconvenience, which before he was provoked unto, he did thus, having confidence in you that this act should not be anything prejudicial unto him.'—*MS. State Paper Office*, temp. Henry VIII., second series, vol. xxxv.

Cromwell acquiesced in the reasonableness of the abbot's proceeding; he wrote to tell him 'to use his remedy,' but to avoid, as far as possible, creating a scandal.—*MS.* ibid. vol. xlvi.

The Government, however, found generally a difficulty in knowing what to resolve in such cases. The King's first declaration was a reasonable one, that all clergy who had taken wives should forfeit their orders, 'and be had and reputed as lay persons to all purposes and intents.'—Royal Proclamation: Wilkins's *Concilia*, vol. iii. p. 776.

would have been rejected equally by the governors and the governed. Deep in the hearts of all Englishmen in that century lay the conviction, that it was the duty of the magistrate to maintain truth, as well as to execute justice. Toleration was neither understood nor desired. The Protestants clamoured against persecution, not because it was persecution, but because truth was persecuted by falsehood; and, however furiously the hostile factions exclaimed each that the truth was with them and the falsehood with their enemies, neither the one nor the other disputed the obligation of the ruling powers to support the truth in itself. So close the religious convictions of men lay to their hearts and passions, that if opinion had been left alone in their own hands, they would themselves have fought the battle of their beliefs with sharper weapons than argument. Religion to them was a thing to die for, or it was nothing. It was therefore fortunate, most fortunate, for the peace of England, that it possessed in the King a person whose mind, to a certain extent, sympathized with both parties; to whom both, so long as they were moderate, appeared to be right; to whom the extravagancies of both were wrong and to be repressed. Protestant and Anglican alike might look to him with confidence—alike were obliged to fear him; neither could take him for their enemy, neither for their partisan. He possessed the peculiarity which has always distinguished practically effective men, of being advanced, as it is called, only slightly beyond his contemporaries. The giddy or imaginative genius soars

on its own wings, it may be to cleave its course into the sunlight, and be the wonder of after-times, but more often to fall like Icarus. The man of working ability tempers his judgment by the opinion of others. He leads his age—he bears the brunt of the battle—he wins the victory; but the motive force which bears him forward is not in himself, but in the great tidal wave of human progress. He is the guide of a great movement, not the creator of it; and he represents in his own person the highest average wisdom, combined necessarily in some measure with the mistakes and prejudices of the period to which he belongs.[1]

On receiving the list of grievances, the King, then three weeks married to Jane Seymour, in the first enjoyment, as some historians require us to believe, of a guilty pleasure purchased by an infamous murder, drew up with his own hand,[2] and submitted to the two Houses of Convocation, a body of articles, interesting as throwing light upon his state of mind, and of deeper moment as the first authoritative statement of doctrine in the Anglican Church.

By the duties of his princely office, he said, he held himself obliged, not only to see God's Word and commandment sincerely believed and reverently kept and observed, but to prevent also, as far as possible, conten-

[1] Luther, by far the greatest man of the sixteenth century, was as rigid a believer in the real presence as Aquinas or St Bernard.

[2] We were constrained to put our own pen to the book, and to conceive certain articles which were by you, the bishops, and the whole of the clergy of this our realm, agreed on as Catholic.—Henry VIII. to the Bishops and Clergy: WILKINS'S *Concilia*, vol. iii. p. 825.

tions and differences of opinion. To his regret he was informed that there was no such concord in the realm as he desired, but violent disagreement, not only in matters of usage and ceremony, but in the essentials of the Christian faith. To avoid the dangerous unquietness, therefore, which might, perhaps, ensue, and also the great peril to the souls of his subjects, he had arrived at the following resolutions, to which he required and commanded obedience.

I. As concerning the faith, all things were to be held and defended as true which were comprehended in the whole body and canon of the Bible, and in the three creeds or symbols. The creeds, as well as the Scripture, were to be received as the most holy, most sure and infallible words of God, and as such, 'neither to be altered nor cavilled' by any contrary opinion. Whoever refused to accept their authority 'was no member of Christ, or of his spouse the Church,' 'but a very infidel, or heretic, or member of the devil, with whom he should be eternally damned.'

II. Of sacraments generally necessary to all men there were three—baptism, penance, and the sacrament of the altar.[1]

[*a*] Of baptism the people were to be taught that it was ordained in the New Testament as a thing necessary for everlasting salvation, according to the saying of Christ, 'No man can enter into the kingdom of heaven

[1] Whether marriage and ordination were sacraments was thus left an open question. The sacramental character of confirmation and extreme unction is *implicitly* denied.

except he be born again of water and the Holy Ghost.' The promises of grace attached to the sacrament of baptism appertained not only to such as had the use of reason, but also to infants, innocents, and children, who, therefore, ought to be baptized, and by baptism obtain remission of sin, and be made thereby sons and children of God.

[*b*] Penance was instituted in the New Testament, and no man who, after baptism, had fallen into deadly sin, could, without the same, be saved. As a sacrament it consisted of three parts—contrition, confession, and amendment. Contrition was the acknowledgment of the filthiness and abomination of sin, a sorrow and inward shame for having offended God, and a certain faith, trust, and confidence in the mercy and goodness of God, whereby the penitent man must conceive certain hope that God would forgive him his sins, and repute him justified, of the number of his elect children, not for any worthiness of any merit or work done by the penitent, but for the only merits of the blood and passion of Jesus Christ. This faith was strengthened by the special application of Christ's words and promises, and therefore, to attain such certain faith, the second part of penance was necessary; that is to say, confession to a priest (if it might be had), for the absolution given by a priest was instituted of Christ, to apply the promises of God's grace to the penitent. Although Christ's death was a full, sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for which God forgave sinners their sin and the punishment of it; yet all men ought to bring

forth the fruits of penance, prayer, fasting, and almsdeeds, and make restitution in will and deed to their neighbour if they had done him any wrong, and to do all other good works of mercy and charity.

[*c*] In the sacrament of the altar, under the form and figure of bread and wine, was verily, substantially, and really contained and comprehended the very self-same body and blood of our Saviour Christ, which was born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered upon the cross for man's redemption; and under the same form and figure of bread and wine that body was corporeally, really, and in very substance exhibited, distributed, and received of all them which receive the said sacrament.

III. By justification was signified remission of sin and acceptance into the favour of God; that is to say, man's perfect renovation in Christ. Sinners obtained justification by contrition and faith, joined with charity; not as though contrition, or faith, or works proceeding therefrom, could worthily merit the said justification; for the only mercy and grace of the Father promised freely unto us for the Son's sake, and the merits of his blood and passion, were the only sufficient and worthy causes thereof; notwithstanding God required us to show good works in fulfilling his commands, and those who lived after the flesh would be undoubtedly damned.

In these articles, which exhausted the essential doctrines of the faith, the principles of the two religions are seen linked together, in connection yet without combination, a first effort at the compromise between the old and the new which was only successfully completed in

the English Prayer-book. The King next went on to those matters of custom and ritual, which, under the late system, had constituted the whole of religion, and which the Reformers were now trampling upon and insulting. Under mediæval Catholicism the cycle of life had been enveloped in symbolism; each epoch from birth to death was attended with its sacrament, each act of every hour with its special consecration: the days were all anniversaries; the weeks, the months, the seasons, as they revolved, brought with them their sacred associations and holy memories; and out of imagery and legend, simply taught and simply believed, innocent and beautiful practices had expanded as never-fading flowers by the road-side of existence.

Concerning these Henry wrote: 'As to having vestments in doing God's service, such as be and have been most part used—the sprinkling of holy water to put us in remembrance of our baptism, and the blood of Christ sprinkled for our redemption on the cross—the giving of holy bread, to put us in remembrance of the sacrament of the altar, that all Christians be one body mystical in Christ, as the bread is made of many grains, and yet but one loaf—the bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, in memory of Christ the spiritual light—the giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday, to put in remembrance every Christian man, in the beginning of Lent and penance, that he is but ashes and earth, and thereto shall return—the bearing of palms on Palm Sunday, in memory of the receiving of Christ into Jerusalem a little before his death, that we may have the same desire to re-

ceive Him into our hearts—creeping to the cross, and humbling ourselves on Good Friday before the cross, and there offering unto Christ before the same, and kissing of it in memory of our redemption by Christ made upon the cross—setting up the sepulture of Christ, whose body, after his death, was buried—the hallowing of the font, and other like exorcisms and benedictions by the ministers of Christ's Church, and all other like laudable customs, rites, and ceremonies—these things were not to be contemned and cast away, but to be used and continued as good and laudable, to put men in remembrance of those spiritual things that they did signify, not suffering them to be forgot, or to be put in oblivion, but renewing them in our memories. But none of these ceremonies had power to remit sin, but only to stir and lift up our minds unto God, by whom only our sins were forgiven.'

So, too, of the saints. 'The saints might be honoured because they were with Christ in glory; and though Christ was the only Mediator, yet men might pray to the saints to pray for them and with them unto Almighty God; we might say to them, "All holy angels and saints in heaven, pray for us and with us unto the Father, that for his dear Son Jesus Christ's sake we might have grace of Him and remission of our sins, with an earnest purpose to keep his holy commandments, and never to decline from the same again unto our lives' end."'

Finally, on the great vexed question of purgatory. 'Forasmuch as the due order of charity requireth, and

the books of Maccabees and divers antient doctors plainly showed, that it was a very good, charitable deed to pray for souls departed; and forasmuch as such usage had continued in the Church for many years, no man ought to be grieved with the continuance of the same. But forasmuch as the place where they were, the name thereof, and kind of pains there, were to us uncertain by Scripture, therefore this with all other things was to be remitted unto Almighty God, unto whose mercy it was meet and convenient to commend them, trusting that God accepted our prayers for them. Wherefore it was much necessary that such abuses should be clearly put away, which, under the name of purgatory, had been advanced; as to make men believe that through the Bishop of Rome's pardons men might be delivered out of purgatory and all the pains of it, or that masses said at any place or before any image might deliver them from their pain and send them straight to heaven.'[1]

We have now before us the stormy eloquence of Pole, the iconoclasm of Latimer, the superstitions of the complaining clergy—representing three principles struggling one against the other, and the voice of the pilot heard above the tempest. Each of these contained some element which the other needed; they were to fret and chafe till the dust was beaten off, and the grains of gold could meet and fuse.

The articles were debated in Convocation, and passed

[1] *Formularies of Faith*, temp. Henry VIII., Oxford edition, 1825. Articles devised by the King's Majesty to stablish Christian quietness and unity, and to avoid contentious opinions.

because it was the King's will. No party was pleased. The Protestants exclaimed against the countenance given to superstition; the Anglo-Catholics lamented the visible taint of heresy, the reduced number of the sacraments, the doubtful language upon purgatory, and the silence —dangerously significant—on the nature of the priesthood. They were signed, however, by all sides; and by Cromwell, now Lord Cromwell, lord privy seal, and not vicar-general only, but appointed vicegerent of the King in all matters ecclesiastical, they were sent round through the English counties, to be obeyed by every man at his peril.[1]

The great matters being thus disposed of, the business of the session concluded with a resolution passed on the 20th of July, respecting general councils. The Pope, at the beginning of June, had issued notice of a council to be assembled, if possible, at Mantua, in the following year. The English Government were contented to recognize a council called *ad locum indifferentem*, with the consent of the great powers of Europe. They would send no delegates to a petty Italian principality, where the decrees would be dictated by the Pope and the Emperor. The Convocation pronounced that the Pope had gone beyond his authority: a general council could not legally be called without the consent of all Christian princes; to princes the right belonged of determining the time and place of such an assembly, of

[1] Cromwell's patent as lord privy seal is dated the 2nd of July, 1536. On the 9th he was created Baron Cromwell, and in the same month vicegerent *in rebus ecclesiasticis*.

appointing the judges, of fixing the order of proceeding, and of deciding even upon the doctrines which might lawfully be allowed and defended.[1]

This was the last Act of the year; immediately after, the Convocation was prorogued. From the temper which had been displayed, it was easy to see that trouble was impending. The form which it would assume was soon to show itself.

Meanwhile, an event occurred of deeper importance than decrees of councils, Convocation quarrels, and moves and counter-moves on the political chessboard; an event not to be passed by in silence, though I can only glance at it.

The agitation caused by the Queen's trial had suspended hitherto the fate of the monasteries. On the dispersion of the clergy a commission was appointed by Cromwell, to put in force the Act of dissolution;[2] and a series of injunctions were simultaneously issued, one of which related to the articles of faith, another to the observance of the order diminishing the number of holydays; a third forbade the extolling the special virtue of images and relics, as things which had caused much folly and superstition; the people should learn that God would be better pleased to see them providing for their families by honest labour, than by idling upon pilgrimages; if they had money to spare, they might give it in charity to the poor.

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[1] The judgment of the Convocation concerning general councils, July 20, 28 Henry VIII. BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 88.

[2] BURNET'S *Collectanea*, p. 89.

The paternoster, the apostles' creed, and the ten commandments had been lately published in English. Fathers of families, schoolmasters, and heads of households were to take care that these fundamental elements of the Christian faith should be learnt by the children and servants under their care; and the law of the land was to be better observed, which directed that every child should be brought up either to learning or to some honest occupation, 'lest they should fall to sloth and idleness, and being brought after to calamity and misery, impute their ruin to those who suffered them to be brought up idly in their youth.'

An order follows of more significance: 'Every parson or proprietary of every parish church within this realm shall, on this side of the feast of St Peter ad Vincula next coming,[1] provide a book of the whole Bible, both in Latin and also in English, and lay the same in the quire, for every man that will to read and look therein; and shall discourage no man from reading any part of the Bible, but rather comfort, exhort, and admonish every man to read the same, as the very word of God and the spiritual food of man's soul; ever gently and charitably exhorting them, that using a sober and modest behaviour in the reading and inquisition of the true sense of the same, they do in nowise stiffly or eagerly contend or strive one with another about the

[1] The feast of St Peter ad Vincula was on the 1st of August. These injunctions conld hardly have been issued before August, 1536; nor could they have been later than September. The clergy were, therefore, allowed nearly a year to provide themselves.

same, but refer the declaration of those places that be in controversy to the judgment of the learned.'

The publication of the English translation of the Bible, with the permission for its free use among the people—the greatest, because the purest victory so far gained by the Reformers—was at length accomplished; a few words will explain how, and by whom. Before the Reformation, two versions existed of the Bible in English—two certainly, perhaps three. One was Wicliffe's; another, based on Wicliffe's, but tinted more strongly with the peculiar opinions of the Lollards, followed at the beginning of the fifteenth century; and there is said to have been a third, but no copy of *this* is known to survive, and the history of it is vague.[1] The possession or the use of these translations was prohibited by the Church, under pain of death. They were extremely rare, and little read; and it was not till Luther's great movement began in Germany, and his tracts and commentaries found their way into England, that a practical determination was awakened among the people, to have before them, in their own tongue, the book on which their faith was built.

I have already described how William Tyndal felt his heart burn in him to accomplish this great work for his country; how he applied for assistance to a learned bishop; how he discovered rapidly that the assistance which he would receive from the Church authorities would be a speedy elevation to martyrdom; how he

[1] Lewis's *History of the English Bible.*

went across the Channel to Luther, and thence to Antwerp; and how he there, in the year 1526, achieved and printed the first edition of the New Testament. It was seen how copies were carried over secretly to London and circulated in thousands by the Christian Brothers. The council threatened; the bishops anathematized. They opened subscriptions to buy up the hated and dreaded volumes. They burnt them publicly in St Paul's. The whip, the gaol, the stake, did their worst; and their worst was nothing. The high dignitaries of the earth were fighting against Heaven, and met the success which ever attends such contests. Three editions were sold before 1530; and in that year a fresh instalment was completed. The Pentateuch was added to the New Testament; and afterwards, by Tyndal himself, or under Tyndal's eyes, the historical books, the Psalms, and Prophets. At length the whole canon was translated, and published in separate portions.

All these were condemned with equal emphasis and all continued to spread. The progress of the work of propagation had, in 1531, become so considerable as to be the subject of an anxious protest to the Crown from the episcopal bench. The bishops complained of the translations as inaccurate—of unbecoming reflections on themselves in the prefaces and side notes. They required stronger powers of repression, more frequent holocausts, a more efficient inquisitorial police. In Henry's reply they found that the waters of their life were poisoned at the spring. The King, too, was infected with the madness. The King would have the Bible in English; he directed them, if the translation

was unsound, to prepare a better translation without delay. If they had been wise in their generation they would have secured the ground when it was offered to them, and gladly complied. But the work of Reformation in England was not to be accomplished, in any one of its purer details, by the official clergy; it was to be done by volunteers from the ranks, and forced upon the Church by the secular arm. The bishops remained for two years inactive. In 1533, the King becoming more peremptory, Cranmer carried a resolution for a translation through Convocation. The resolution, however, would not advance into act. The next year he brought the subject forward again; and finding his brother prelates fixed in their neglect, he divided Tyndal's work into ten parts, sending one part to each bishop to correct. The Bishop of London alone ventured an open refusal; the remainder complied in words, and did nothing.[1]

Finally, the King's patience was exhausted. The legitimate methods having been tried in vain, he acted on his own responsibility. Miles Coverdale, a member of the same Cambridge circle which had given birth to Cranmer, to Latimer, to Barnes, to the Scotch Wishart, silently went abroad with a license from Cromwell; with Tyndal's help[2] he collected and edited the scattered portions; and in 1536[3] there appeared in London, published *cum privilegio* and dedicated to Henry VIII., the

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[1] Lewis's *History of the English Bible.*

[2] This is denied by Mr Westcott. Strype, writing from documents which no longer survive, says that Tyndal translated every part of the Bible except the Apocrypha, and that he had Coverdale's assistance in preparing the Bible which was printed in 1535. *Life of Cranmer*, p. 83.

[3] The printing was completed in October, 1535.

first complete copy of the English Bible. The separate translations, still anomalously prohibited in detail, were exposed freely to sale in a single volume, under the royal sanction. The canon and text book of the new opinions — so long dreaded, so long execrated — was thenceforth to lie open in every church in England; and the clergy were ordered not to permit only, but to exhort and encourage, all men to resort to it and read.[1]

In this act was laid the foundation-stone on which the whole later history of England, civil as well as ecclesiastical, has been reared; and the most minute incidents become interesting, connected with an event of so mighty moment.

'Caiaphas,' said Coverdale in the dedicatory preface, 'being bishop of his year, prophesied that it was better to put Christ to death than that all the people should perish: he meaning that Christ was a heretic and a deceiver of the people, when in truth he was the Saviour of the world, sent by his Father to suffer death for man's redemption.'

After the same manner the Bishop of Rome conferred on King Henry VIII. the title of Defender of the Faith, because his Highness suffered the bishops to burn God's Word, the root of faith, and to persecute the lovers and ministers of the same; where in very deed the Bishop, though he knew not what he did, prophesied that, by the righteous administration of his Grace, the faith should be so defended that God's Word,

[1] There is an excellent copy of this edition in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

the mother of faith, should have free course through all Christendom, but especially in his own realm.

'The Bishop of Rome has studied long to keep the Bible from the people, and specially from princes, lest they should find out his tricks and his falsehoods, lest they should turn from his false obedience to the true obedience commanded by God; knowing well enough that, if the clear sun of God's Word came over the heat of the day, it would drive away the foul mist of his devilish doctrines. The Scripture was lost before the time of that noble King Josiah, as it hath also been among us unto the time of his Grace. Through the merciful goodness of God it is now found again as it was in the days of that virtuous King; and praised be the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, world without end, which so excellently hath endowed the princely heart of his Highness with such ferventness to his honour and the wealth of his subjects, that he may be compared worthily unto that noble king, that lantern among princes, who commanded straitly, as his Grace doth, that the law of God should be read and taught unto all the people.

'May it be found a general comfort to all Christian hearts—a continual subject of thankfulness, both of old and young, unto God and to his Grace, who, being our Moses, has brought us out of the old Ægypt, and from the cruel hands of our spiritual Pharaoh. Not by the thousandth part were the Jews so much bound unto King David for subduing of great Goliah as we are to his Grace for delivering us out of our old Babylonish

captivity. For the which deliverance and victory I beseech our only Mediator, Jesus Christ, to make such mean with us unto his heavenly Father, that we may never be unthankful unto Him nor unto his Grace, but increase in fear of God, in obedience to the King's Highness, in love unfeigned to our neighbours, and in all virtue that cometh of God, to whom, for the defending of his blessed Word, be honour and thanks, glory and dominion, world without end.'[1]

Equally remarkable, and even more emphatic in the recognition of the share in the work borne by the King, was the frontispiece of a subsequent edition, published five years later.

This was divided into four compartments.

In the first, the Almighty was seen in the clouds with outstretched arms. Two scrolls proceeded out of his mouth, to the right and the left. On the former was the verse, 'The word which goeth forth from me shall not return to me empty, but shall accomplish whatsoever I will have done.' The other was addressed to Henry, who was kneeling at a distance bare-headed, with his crown lying at his feet. The scroll said, 'I have found me a man after my own heart, who shall fulfil all my will.' Henry answered, 'Thy word is a lantern unto my feet.'

Immediately below, the King was seated on his throne, holding in each hand a book, on which was written 'the Word of God.' One of these he was giv-

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[1] Preface to COVERDALE'S *Bible.*

ing to Cranmer and another bishop, who with a group of priests were on the right of the picture, saying, 'Take this and teach;' the other on the opposite side he held to Cromwell and the lay peers, and the words were, 'I make a decree that, in all my kingdom, men shall tremble and fear before the living God.' A third scroll, falling downwards over his feet, said alike to peer and prelate, 'Judge righteous judgment. Turn not away your ear from the prayer of the poor man.' The King's face was directed sternly towards the bishops, with a look which said, 'Obey at last, or worse will befall you.'

In the third compartment, Cranmer and Cromwell were distributing the Bible to kneeling priests and laymen; and, at the bottom, a preacher with a benevolent beautiful face was addressing a crowd from a pulpit in the open air. He was apparently commencing a sermon with the text, 'I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men—for kings'—and at the word 'kings' the people were shouting 'Vivat Rex!—Vivat Rex!' children who knew no Latin lisping 'God save the King!' and, at the extreme left, at a gaol window, a prisoner was joining in the cry of delight, as if he, too, were delivered from a worse bondage.

This was the introduction of the English Bible—this the seeming acknowledgment of Henry's services. Of the translation itself, though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are all familiar.

The peculiar genius—if such a word may be permitted—which breathes through it—the mingled tenderness and majesty—the Saxon simplicity—the preternatural grandeur—unequalled, unapproached, in the attempted improvements of modern scholars—all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man—William Tyndal. Lying, while engaged in that great office, under the shadow of death, the sword above his head and ready at any moment to fall, he worked, under circumstances alone perhaps truly worthy of the task which was laid upon him—his spirit, as it were divorced from the world, moved in a purer element than common air.

His work was done. He lived to see the Bible no longer carried by stealth into his country, where the possession of it was a crime, but borne in by the solemn will of the King—solemnly recognized as the word of the Most High God. And then his occupation in this earth was gone. His eyes saw the salvation for which he had longed, and he might depart to his place. He was denounced to the Regent of Flanders; he was enticed by the suborned treachery of a miserable English fanatic beyond the town under whose liberties he had been secure; and with the reward which, at other times as well as those, has been held fitting by human justice for the earth's great ones, he passed away in smoke and flame to his rest.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE.

THE Nun of Kent's conspiracy, the recent humour of Convocation, the menaces of Reginald Pole, alike revealed a dangerous feeling in the country. A religious revolution in the midst of an armed population intensely interested in the event, could not be accomplished without an appeal being made at some period of its course to force; and religion was at this time but one out of many elements of confusion. Society, within and without, from the heart of its creed to its outward organization, was passing through a transition, and the records of the Pilgrimage of Grace cast their light far down into the structure and inmost constitution of English life.

The organic changes introduced by the Parliament of 1529 had been the work of the King and the second house in the legislature; and the Peers had not only seen measures pass into law which they would gladly have rejected had they dared, but their supremacy was slipping away from them; the Commons, who in times past had confined themselves to voting supplies and

passing without inquiry such measures as were sent down to them, had started suddenly into new proportions, and had taken upon themselves to discuss questions sacred hitherto to Convocation. The Upper House had been treated in the disputes which had arisen with significant disrespect; ancient and honoured customs had been discontinued among them against their desire;[1] and, constitutionally averse to change, they were hurried powerless along by a force which was bearing them they knew not where. Hating heretics with true English conservatism, they found men who but a few years before would have been in the dungeons of Lollards' Tower, now high in Court favour, high in office, and with seats in their own body. They had learnt to endure the presence of self-raised men when as ecclesiastics such men represented the respectable dignity of the Church; but the proud English nobles had now for the

[1] 'The Lord Darcy declared unto me that the custom among the Lords before that time had been that matters touching spiritual authority should always be referred unto the Convocation house, and not for the Parliament house: and that before this last Parliament it was accustomed among the Lords, the first matter they always communed of, after the mass of the Holy Ghost, was to affirm and allow the first chapter of Magna Charta touching the rights and liberties of the Church; and it was not so now. Also the Lord Darcy did say that in any matter which touched the prerogative of the King's crown, or any matter that touched the prejudice of the same, the custom of the Lords' House was that they should have, upon their requests, a copy of the bill of the same, to the intent that they might have their council learned to scan the same; or if it were betwixt party and party, if the bill were not prejudicial to the commonwealth. And now they could have no such copy upon their suit, or at the least so readily as they were wont to have in Parliament before.' —Examination of Robert Aske in the Tower: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29, p. 197.

first time to tolerate the society and submit to the dictation of a lay peer who had been a tradesman's orphan and a homeless vagabond. The Reformation in their minds was associated with the exaltation of base blood, the levelling of ranks, the breaking down the old rule and order of the land. Eager to check so dangerous a movement, they had listened, some of them, to the revelations of the Nun. Fifteen great men and lords, Lord Darcy stated, had confederated secretly to force the Government to change their policy;[1] and Darcy himself had been in communication for the same purpose with the Spanish ambassador, and was of course made aware of the intended invasion in the preceding winter.[2] The discontent extended to the county families, who shared or imitated the prejudices of their feudal leaders; and those families had again their peculiar grievances. On the suppression of the abbeys the peers obtained grants, or expected to obtain them, from the forfeited estates. The country gentlemen saw only the desecration of the familiar scenes of their daily life, the violation of the tombs of their ancestors, and the buildings themselves, the beauty of which was the admiration of foreigners who visited England, reduced to ruins.[3] The abbots had been their personal friends, 'the trustees

[1] 'The said Aske saith he well remembereth that the Lord Darcy told them that there were divers great men and lords which, before the time of the insurrection, had promised to do their best to suppress heresies and the authors and maintainers of them, and he saith they were in number fifteen persons.'—*Rolls House Miscellaneous MSS.* first series, 414.

[2] Richard Coren to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 558.

[3] 'The abbeys were one of the

for their children and the executors of their wills;'[1] the monks had been the teachers of their children; the free tables and free lodgings in these houses had made them attractive and convenient places of resort in distant journeys; and in remote districts the trade of the neighbourhood, from the wholesale purchases of the corndealer to the huckstering of the wandering pedlar, had been mainly carried on within their walls.[2]

'The Statute of Uses,' again, an important but insufficient measure of reform, passed in the last session of Parliament but one,[3] had created not unreasonable irritation. Previous to the modification of the feudal law in the year 1540, land was not subject to testamentary disposition; and it had been usual to evade the prohibition of direct bequest, in making provision for younger children, by leaving estates in 'use,' charged with payments so considerable as to amount virtually to a transfer of the property. The injustice of the common law was in this way remedied, but remedied so awkwardly as to embarrass and complicate the titles of estates beyond extrication. A 'use' might be erected on a 'use;' it might be extended to the descendants of those in whose behalf it first was made; it might be mortgaged,

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beauties of the realm to all strangers passing through.'—Examination of Aske: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29.

[1] Examination of Aske: MS. ibid. I am glad to have discovered this most considerable evidence in favour of some at least of the superiors of the religious houses.

[2] 'Strangers and buyers of corn were also greatly refreshed, horse and man, at the abbeys; and merchandise was well carried on through their help.'—Examination of Aske: ibid.

[3] 27 Henry VIII. cap. 10.

or transferred as a security to raise money. The apparent owner of a property might effect a sale, and the buyer find his purchase so encumbered as to be useless to him. The intricacies of tenure thus often passed the skill of judges to unravel;[1] while, again, the lords of the fiefs were unable to claim their fines or fees or liveries, and the Crown, in cases of treason, could not enforce its forfeitures. The Statute of Uses terminated the immediate difficulty by creating, like the recent Irish Encumbered Estates Act, parliamentary titles. All persons entitled to the use of lands were declared to be to all intents and purposes the lawful possessors, as much as if the lands had been made over to them by formal grant or conveyance. They became actual owners, with all the rights and all the liabilities of their special tenures. The embarrassed titles were in this way simplified; but now, the common law remaining as yet unchanged, the original evil returned in full force. Since a trust was equivalent to a conveyance, and land could not be bequeathed by will, the system of trusts was virtually terminated. Charges could not be created upon estates, and the landowners complained that they could no longer raise money if they wanted it; their estates must go wholly to the eldest sons; and, unless they were allowed to divide their properties by

[1] Among the unarranged MSS. in the State Paper Office is a long and most elaborate explanation of the evils which had been created by the system of uses. It is a paper which ought to find its place in the history of English landed tenure; and when the arrangement of these MSS. now in progress is completed, it will be accessible to any inquirer.

will, their younger children would be left portionless.[1]

Small grievances are readily magnified in seasons of general disruption. A wicked spirit in the person of Cromwell was said to rule the King, and everything which he did was evil, and every evil of the commonwealth was due to his malignant influence.

The discontent of the noblemen and gentlemen would in itself have been formidable. Their armed retinues were considerable. The constitutional power of the counties was in their hands. But the commons, again, had their own grounds of complaint, for the most part just, though arising from causes over which the Government had no control, from social changes deeper than the Reformation itself. In early times each petty district in England had been self-supporting, raising its own corn, feeding its own cattle, producing by women's hands in the cottages and farmhouses its own manufactures. There were few or no large roads, no canals, small means of transport of any kind, and from this condition of things had arisen the laws which we call

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[1] 'Masters, there is a statute made whereby all persons be restrained to make their will upon their lands; for now the eldest son must have all his father's lands; and no person, to the payment of his debts, neither to the advancement of his daughters' marriages, can do nothing with their lands, nor cannot give to his youngest son any lands.'—Speech of Mr Sheriff Dymock, at Horncastle: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29.

'They want the Statute of Uses qualified, that a man be allowed to bequeath part of his lands by will. It will invade the old accustomed law in many things.'—Examination of Aske: MS. ibid. 'Divers things should be reformed, and especially the Act of Uses. Younger brothers would none of that in no wise.'—Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *Miscellaneous MSS.* State Paper Office, second series, vol. i.

short-sighted, against engrossers of grain. Wealthy speculators, watching their opportunity, might buy up the produce not immediately needed, of an abundant harvest, and when the stock which was left was exhausted, they could make their own market, unchecked by a danger of competition. In time no doubt the mischief would have righted itself, but only with the assistance of a coercive police which had no existence, who would have held down the people while they learnt their lesson by starvation. The habits of a great nation could only change slowly. Each estate or each township for the most part grew its own food, and (the average of seasons compensating each other) food adequate for the mouths dependent upon it.

The development of trade at the close of the fifteenth century gave the first shock to the system. The demand for English wool in Flanders had increased largely, and holders of property found they could make their own advantage by turning their corn-land into pasture, breaking up the farms, enclosing the commons, and becoming graziers on a gigantic scale.

I have described in the first chapter of this work the manner in which the Tudor sovereigns had attempted to check this tendency, but interest had so far proved too strong for legislation. The statutes prohibiting enclosures had remained, especially in the northern counties, unenforced; and the small farmers and petty copyholders, hitherto thriving and independent, found themselves at once turned out of their farms and deprived of the resource of the common lands. They had suffered

frightfully, and they saw no reason for their sufferings. From the Trent northward a deep and angry spirit of discontent had arisen which could be stirred easily into mutiny.[1]

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[1] The depositions of prisoners taken after the rebellion are full of evidence on this point. George Gisborne says: 'We were in mind and will to meet for certain causes, the which concerned the living of the poor people and commons, the which they say be sore oppressed by gentlemen, because their livings is taken away.'—*Rolls House MS.* miscellaneous, first series, 132.

Wm. Stapleton says: 'Among the causes of the insurrection were pulling down of villages and farms, raising of rents, enclosures, intakes of the commons, worshipful men taking yeomen's offices, that is, becoming dealers in farm produce.'—*Rolls House MS.*

I am tempted to add a petition sent from one of the discontented districts to the Crown, which betrays great ignorance of political economy, although it exhibits also a clear understanding both of the petitioners' sufferings and of the immediate causes of those sufferings.

'Please it your noble Grace to consider the great indigence and scarcity of all manner of victual necessary to your subjects within this realm of England, which doth grow daily more and more, by reason of the great and covetous misusages of the farms within this your realm; which misusages and the inconveniences thereof hath not only been begun and risen by divers gentlemen of the same your realm, but also by divers and many merchant adventurers, cloth makers, goldsmiths, butchers, tanners, and other artificers and unreasonable covetous persons, which doth encroach daily many farms more than they can occupy in tilth of corn; ten, twelve, fourteen, or sixteen farms in one man's hands at once; when in time past there hath been in every farm of them a good house kept, and in some of them three, four, five, or six ploughs kept and daily occupied to the great comfort and relief of your subjects of your realm, poor and rich. For when every man was contented with one farm, and occupied that well, there was plenty and reasonable price of everything that belonged to man's sustenance by reason of tillage; forasmuch as every acre of land tilled and ploughed bore the straw and the chaff besides the corn, able and sufficient with the help of the shakke in the stubbe to succour and feed as many great beasts (as horses, oxen, and kine) as the land would keep: and further, by reason of the hinderflight of the crops and seeds tried out in cleansing, winnowing, and sifting the corn, there was brought up at every barn-door hens, capons, geese, ducks, swine, and

Nor were these the only grievances of the northern populace. The Yorkshire knights, squires, sheriffs, and justices of the peace, intent, as we see, on their own interests, had been overbearing and tyrannical in their offices. The Abbot of York, interceding with Cromwell in behalf of some poor man who had been needlessly arrested and troubled, declared that 'there was such a company of wilful gentlemen within Yorkshire as he thought there were not in all England besides;'[1] and Cromwell in consequence had 'roughly handled the grand jury.' Courts of arbitration had sat from immemorial time in the northern baronies where disputes between landlords and tenants had been equitably and cheaply adjusted. The growing inequality of fortunes had broken through this useful custom. Small farmers and petty leaseholders now found themselves sued or compelled to sue in the courts at Westminster, and the expenses of a journey to London, or of the employment of London advocates, placed them virtually at the mercy of their landlords. Thus the law itself had been made an instrument of oppression, and the better order of gentlemen, who would have seen justice enforced, had

other poultry, to the great comfort of your people. And now by reason of so many farms engrossed in one man's hands, which cannot till them, the ploughs be decayed, and the farmhouses and other dwelling-houses; so that when there was in a town twenty or thirty dwelling-houses they be now decayed, ploughs and all the people clean gone, and the churches down, and no more parishioners in many parishes, but a neatherd and a shepherd instead of three score or four score persons.'—*Rolls House MS.* miscellaneous, second series, 854.

[1] Abbot of York to Cromwell.—*Miscellaneous MS.* State Paper Office, second series, vol. lii.

they been able, found themselves assailed daily with 'piteous complaints' which they had no power to satisfy.[1] The occupation of the council with the larger questions of the Church, had left statesmen too little leisure to attend to these disorders. Cromwell's occasional and abrupt interference had created irritation, but no improvement; and mischiefs of all kinds had grown unheeded till the summer of 1536, when a fresh list of grievances, some real, some imaginary, brought the crisis to a head.

The Convocation of York, composed of rougher materials than the representatives of the southern counties, had acquiesced but tardily in the measures of the late years. Abuses of all kinds instinctively sympathize, and the clergy of the north, who were the most ignorant in England, and the laity whose social irregularities where the greatest, united resolutely in their attachment to the Pope, were most alarmed at the progress of heresy, and were most anxious for a reaction. The deciding Act against Rome and the King's articles of religion struck down the hopes which had been excited there and elsewhere by the disgrace of Queen Anne. Men saw the Papacy finally abandoned, they saw heresy encouraged, and they were proportionately disappointed and enraged.

At this moment three commissions were issued by the Crown, each of which would have tried the patience

[1] See a very remarkable letter of Sir William Parr to Cromwell, dated April 8, 1536, a few months only before the outbreak of the rebellion: *Miscellaneous MS.* State Paper Office, second series, vol. xxxi.

of the people, if conducted with the greatest prudence, and at the happiest opportunity.

The second portion of the subsidy (an income-tax of two and a half per cent. on all incomes above twenty pounds a year), which had been voted in the autumn of 1534, had fallen due. The money had been required for the Irish war, and the disaffected party in England had wished well to the insurgents, so that the collectors found the greatest difficulty either in enforcing the tax, or obtaining correct accounts of the properties on which it was to be paid.

Simultaneously Legh and Layton, the two most active and most unpopular of the monastic visitors, were sent to Yorkshire to carry out the Act of Suppression. Others went into Lincolnshire, others to Cheshire and Lancashire, while a third set carried round the injunctions of Cromwell to the clergy, with directions further to summon before them every individual parish priest, to examine into his character, his habits and qualifications, and eject summarily all inefficient persons from their offices and emoluments.

The dissolution of the religious houses commenced in the midst of an ominous and sullen silence. The Act extended only to houses whose incomes were under two hundred pounds a year, and among these the commissioners were to use their discretion. They were to visit every abbey and priory, to examine the books, examine the monks—when the income fell short, or when the character of the house was vicious, to eject the occupants, and place the lands and farm-buildings in the

hands of lay tenants for the Crown. The discharge of an unpopular office, however conducted, would have exposed those who undertook it to great odium. It is likely that those who did undertake it were men who felt bitterly on the monastic vices, and did their work with little scruple or sympathy. Legh and Layton were accused subsequently of having conducted themselves with overbearing insolence; they were said also to have taken bribes, and where bribes were not offered, to have extorted them from the houses which they spared. That they went through their business roughly is exceedingly probable; whether needlessly so must not be concluded from the report of persons to whom their entire occupation was sacrilege. That they received money is evident from their own reports to the Government; but it is evident also that they did not attempt to conceal that they received it. When the revenues of the Crown were irregular and small, the salaries even of ministers of state were derived in great measure from fees and presents; the visitors of the monasteries, travelling with large retinues, were expected to make their duties self-supporting, to inflict themselves as guests on the houses to which they went, and to pay their own and their servants' 'wages' from the funds of the establishments. Sums of money would be frequently offered them in lieu of a painful hospitality; and whether they took unfair advantage of their opportunities for extortion, or whether they exercised a proper moderation, cannot be concluded from the mere fact that there was a clamour against them. But beyond doubt their other proceed-

ings were both rash and blameable. Their servants, with the hot puritan blood already in their veins, trained in the exposure of the impostures and profligacies of which they had seen so many, scorning and hating the whole monastic race, had paraded their contempt before the world; they had ridden along the highways decked in the spoils of the desecrated chapels, with copes for doublets, tunics for saddle-cloths,[1] and the silver relic cases hammered into sheaths for their daggers.[2] They had been directed to enforce an abrogation of the superfluous holydays; they had shown such excessive zeal that in some places common markets had been held under their direction on Sundays.[3]

Scenes like these working upon tempers already inflamed, gave point to discontent. Heresy, that word of dread and horror to English ears, rang from lip to lip. Their hated enemy was at the people's doors, and their other sufferings were the just vengeance of an angry God.[4] Imagination, as usual, hastened to assist and expand the nucleus of truth. Cromwell had formed the excellent design, which two years later he carried into effect, of instituting parish registers. A report of his intention had gone abroad, and mingling with the irritating inquiries of the subsidy commissioners into the value of men's properties, gave rise to a rumour that a

[1] It was said that the visitors' servants had made apparel, doublets, yea, even saddlecloths, of the churches' vestments.—Examination of John Dakyn: *Rolls House MS.* miscellaneous, first series, 402.

[2] *Rolls House MS.*

[3] Ibid. miscellaneous, first series, 402.

[4] Aske's Deposition: *Rolls House MS.*

fine was to be paid to the Crown on every wedding, funeral, or christening; that a tax would be levied on every head of cattle, or the cattle should be forfeited; that no man should eat in his house white meat, pig, goose, nor capon, but that he should pay certain dues to the King's Grace.'

In the desecration of the abbey chapels and altar-plate a design was imagined against all religion. The clergy were to be despoiled; the parish churches pulled down, one only to be left for every seven or eight miles; the church plate to be confiscated, and 'chalices of tin' supplied for the priest to sing with.[1]

Every element necessary for a great revolt was thus in motion—wounded superstition, real suffering, caused by real injustice, with their attendant train of phantoms. The clergy in the north were disaffected to a man;[2] the people were in the angry humour which looks eagerly for an enemy, and flies at the first which seems to offer. If to a spirit of revolt there had been added a unity of purpose, the results would have been far other than they were. Happily, the discontents of the nobility, the gentlemen, the clergy, the commons, were different, and in many respects, opposite; and although, in the first heat of the commotion, a combination threatened to be possible, jealousy and suspicion rapidly accomplished the work of disintegration. The noble lords

[1] Depositions on the Rebellion, *passim*, among the MSS. in the State Paper Office and the Rolls House.

[2] George Lumley, the eldest son of Lord Lumley, said in his evidence that there was not a spiritual man in the whole north of England who had not assisted the rebellion with arms or money.—*Rolls House MS.*

were in the interest of Pole, of European Catholicism, the Empire, and the Papacy; the country gentlemen desired only the quiet enjoyment of a right to do as they would with their own, and the quiet maintenance of a Church which was too corrupt to interfere with them. The working people had a just cause, though disguised by folly; but all honest sufferers soon learnt, that in rising against the Government, they had mistaken their best friends for foes.

It was Michaelmas then, in the year 1536. Towards the fall of the summer, clergy from the southern counties had been flitting northward, and on their return had talked mysteriously to their parishioners of impending insurrections in which honest men would bear their part.[1] In Yorkshire and Lincolnshire the stories of the intended destruction of parish churches had been vociferously circulated; and Lord Hussey, at his castle at Sleford, had been heard to say to one of the gentlemen of the county, that 'the world would never mend until they fought for it.'[2] September passed away; at the end of the month, the nunnery of Legbourne, near Louth, was suppressed by the visitors, and two servants of Cromwell were left in the house, to complete the dis-

September.

[1] The parish priest of Wyley, in Essex, had been absent for three weeks in the north, in the month of August, and on returning about the 2nd of September, said to one of his villagers, Thomas Rogers, 'There shall be business shortly in the north, and I trust to help and strengthen my countrymen with ten thousand such as I am myself; and I shall be one of the worst of them all. The King shall not reign long.'—Confession of Thomas Rogers: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xxx. p. 112.

[2] Deposition of Thomas Brian: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29.

solution. On Monday, the 2nd of October, Heneage, one of the examiners under the clerical commission, was coming, with the chancellor of the Bishop of Lincoln, into Louth itself, and the clergy of the neighbourhood were to appear and submit themselves to inspection.

Sunday, October 1. The evening before being Sunday, a knot of people gathered on the green in the town. They had the great silver cross belonging to the parish with them; and as a crowd collected about them, a voice cried, 'Masters, let us follow the Cross; God knows whether ever we shall follow it hereafter or nay.' They formed in procession, and went round the streets; and after vespers, a party, headed 'by one Nicholas Melton, who, being a shoemaker, was called Captain Cobler,' appeared at the doors of the church, and required the churchwardens to give them the key of the jewel chamber. The chancellor, they said, was coming the next morning, and intended to seize the plate. The churchwardens hesitating, the keys were taken by force. The chests were opened, the crosses, chalices, and candlesticks 'were showed openly in the sight of every man,' and then, lest they should be stolen in the night, an armed watch kept guard till daybreak in the church aisles.

October 2. At nine o'clock on Monday morning Heneage entered the town, with a single servant. The chancellor was ill, and could not attend. As he rode in, the alarm-bell pealed out from Louth Tower. The inhabitants swarmed into the streets with bills and staves; 'the stir and the noise arising hideous. The

commissioner, in panic at the disturbance, hurried into the church for sanctuary; but the protection was not allowed to avail him. He was brought out into the market-place, a sword was held to his breast, and he was sworn at an extemporized tribunal to be true to the commons, upon pain of death. 'Let us swear! let us all swear!' was then the cry. A general oath was drawn. The townsmen swore—all strangers resident swore, that they would be faithful to the King, the commonwealth, and to Holy Church.

In the heat of the enthusiasm appeared the registrar of the diocese, who had followed Heneage with his books, in which was enrolled Cromwell's commission. Instantly clutched, he was dragged to the market-cross. A priest was mounted on the stone steps, and commanded him to read the commission aloud. He began; but the 'hideous clamour' drowned his voice. The crowd climbing on his shoulders, to overlook the pages, bore him down. He flung the book among the mob, and it was torn leaf from leaf and burnt upon the spot. The registrar barely escaped with his life: he was rescued by friends, and hurried beyond the gates.

Meanwhile, a party of the rioters had gone out to Legbourne, and returned, bringing Cromwell's servants, who were first set in the stocks, and thrust afterwards into the town gaol.

So passed Monday. The next morning, early, the common-bell was again ringing. Other commissioners were reported to be at Castre, a few miles distant; and Melton the shoemaker, and 'one great James,' a tailor,

with a volunteer army of horse and foot, harnessed and unharnessed, set out to seize them. The alarm had spread; the people from the neighbouring villages joined them as they passed, or had already risen and were in marching order. At Castre they found the commissioners fled; but a thousand horse were waiting for them, and the number was every moment increasing. Whole parishes marched in, headed by their clergy. A rendezvous was fixed at Rotherwell; and at Rotherwell, on that day, or the next, besides the commons, 'there were priests and monks' (the latter fresh ejected from their monasteries—pensioned, but furious) 'to the number of seven or eight hundred.'[1] Some were 'bidding their bedes,' and praying for the Pope and cardinals; some were in full harness, or armed with such weapons as they could find: all were urging on the people. They had, as yet, no plans. What would the gentlemen do? was the question. 'Kill the gentlemen,' the priests answered; 'if they will not join us, they shall all be hanged.'[2] This difficulty was soon

[1] We find curious and humorous instances of monastic rage at this time. One monk was seen following a plough, and cursing the day that he should have to work for his bread. Another, a Welshman, 'wished he had the King on Snowdon, that he might souse his head against the stones.'—Depositions on the Rebellion: *Rolls House MS.*

[2] Sir Robert Dighton and Sir Edward Dymmock said they heard many of the priests cry, 'Kill the gentlemen.' The parson of Cowbridge said that the lords of the council were false harlots; and the worst was Cromwell. 'The vicar of Haynton, having a great club in his hand, said that if he had Cromwell there he would beat out his guts.' 'Robert Brownwhite, one of the parsons of Nether Teynton, was with bow and arrows, sword and buckler by his side, and sallet on his head; and when he was demanded how he did, he said, 'None so well;' and

settled. They were swept up from their halls, or wherever they could be found. The oath was offered them, with the alternative of instant death; and they swore against their will, as all afterwards pretended, and as some perhaps sincerely felt; but when the oath was once taken, they joined with a hearty unanimity, and brought in with them their own armed retainers, and the stores from their houses.[1] Sir Edward Madyson came in, Sir Thomas Tyrwhit and Sir William Ascue. Lord Borough, who was in Ascue's company when the insurgents caught him, rode for his life, and escaped. One of his servants was overtaken in the pursuit, was wounded mortally, and shriven on the field.

October 3.

So matters went at Louth and Castre. On Tuesday, October 3rd, the country rose at Horncastle, in the same manner, only on an even larger scale. On a heath in that neighbourhood there was 'a great muster;' the gentlemen of the county coming in, in large numbers, with 'Mr Dymmock,' the sheriff, at their head. Dr Mackarel, the Abbot of Barlings, was present, with his canons, in full armour; from the

said 'it was the best world that ever he did see.' My story, so far, is taken from the Miscellaneous Depositions, *Rolls MS.* A 2, 28; from the Examination of William Moreland, *MS.* A 2, 29; and from the Confession of John Brown, *Rolls House MS.* first series, 892.

[1] Very opposite stories were told of the behaviour of the gentlemen. On one side it was said that they were the great movers of the insurrection; on the other, that they were forced into it in fear of their lives. There were many, doubtless, of both kinds; but it seems to me as if they had all been taken by surprise. Their conduct was that of men who wished well to the rising, but believed it had exploded inopportunely.

abbey came a waggon-load of victuals; oxen and sheep were driven in from the neighbourhood; and a retainer of the house carried a banner, on which was worked a plough, a chalice and a host, a horn, and the five wounds of Christ.[1] The sheriff, with his brother, rode up and down the heath, scattering money among the crowd and the insurrection now gaining point, another gentle man 'wrote on the field upon his saddle bow,' a series of articles, which were to form the ground of the rising.

Six demands were to be made upon the Crown: 1. The religious houses should be restored. 2. The subsidy should be remitted. 3. The clergy should pay no more tenths and first-fruits to the Crown. 4. The Statute of Uses should be repealed. 5. The villein blood should be removed from the privy council. 6. The heretic bishops, Cranmer and Latimer, Hilsey Bishop of Rochester, Brown Archbishop of Dublin, and their own Bishop Longlands the persecuting Erastian, should be deprived and punished.

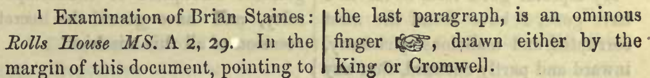
The deviser and the sheriff sat on their horses side by side, and read these articles, one by one, aloud, to the people. 'Do they please you or not?' they said, when they had done. 'Yea, yea, yea!' the people shouted, waving their staves above their heads; and messengers were chosen instantly, and despatched upon the spot, to carry to Windsor to the King the demands

[1] The plough was to encourage the husbandmen; the chalice and host in remembrance of the spoiling of the Church; the five wounds to the couraging of the people to fight in Christ's cause; the horn to signify the taking of Horncastle.—Philip Trotter's Examination: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29.

of the inhabitants of Lincolnshire. Nothing was required more but that the rebellion should be cemented by a common crime; and this, too, was speedily accomplished.

The rebellion in Ireland had been inaugurated with the murder of Archbishop Allen; the insurgents of Lincolnshire found a lower victim, but they sacrificed him with the same savageness. The chancellor of Lincoln had been the instrument through whom Cromwell had communicated with the diocese, and was a special object of hatred. It does not appear how he fell into the people's hands. We find only that 'he was very sick,' and in this condition he was brought up on horseback into the field at Horncastle. As he appeared he was received by 'the parsons and vicars' with a loud long yell—'Kill him! kill him!' 'Whereupon two of the rebels, by procurement of the said parsons and vicars, pulled him violently off his horse, and, as he knelt upon his knees, with their staves they slew him, the parsons crying continually, 'Kill him! kill him!''

As the body lay on the ground it was stripped bare, and the garments were parted among the murderers. The sheriff distributed the money that was in the chancellor's purse. 'And every parson and every vicar in the field counselled their parishioners, with many comfortable words, to proceed in their journey, saying unto them that they should lack neither gold nor silver.'[1] These, we presume, were Pole's seven thousand children



[1] Examination of Brian Staines: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29. In the margin of this document, pointing to the last paragraph, is an ominous finger ☞, drawn either by the King or Cromwell.

of light who had not bowed the knee to Baal—the noble army of saints who were to flock to Charles's banners.

The same Tuesday there was a rising at Lincoln. Bishop Longlands' palace was attacked and plundered, and the town occupied by armed bodies of insurgents. By the middle of the week the whole country was in movement—beacons blazing, alarm-bells ringing; and, pending the reply of the King, Lincoln became the focus to which the separate bodies from Castre, Horncastle, Louth, and all other towns and villages, flocked in for head quarters.

The duty of repressing riots and disturbances in England lay with the nobility in their several districts. In default of organized military or police, the nobility *ex officio* were the responsible guardians of the peace. They held their estates subject to these obligations, and neglect, unless it could be shown to be involuntary, was treason. The nobleman who had to answer for the peace of Lincolnshire, was Lord Hussey of Sleford. Lord Hussey had spoken, as I have stated, in unambiguous language, of the probability and desirableness of a struggle. When the moment came, it seems as if he had desired the fruits of a Catholic victory without

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[1] Compare the report of Lancaster Herald to Cromwell, *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xix.: 'My especial good lord, so far as I have gone, I have found the most corrupted and malicious spiritualty, inward and partly outward, that any prince of the world hath in his realm; and if the truth be perfectly known, it will be found that they were the greatest corrupters of the temporalty, and have given the secret occasion of all this mischief.'

the danger of fighting for it, or else had been frightened and doubtful how to act. When the first news of the commotion reached him, he wrote to the mayor of Lincoln, commanding him, in the King's name, to take good care of the city; to buy up or secure the arms; to levy men; and, if he found himself unable to hold his ground, to let him know without delay.[1] His letter fell into the hands of the insurgents; but Lord Hussey, though he must have known the fate of it, or, at least, could not have been ignorant of the state of the country, sat still at Sleford, waiting to see how events would turn. Yeomen and gentlemen who had not joined in the rising hurried to him for directions, promising to act in whatever way he would command; but he would give no orders—he preferred to remain passive—he would not be false to his prince—he would not be against the defenders of the faith. The volunteers who had offered their services for the Crown he called 'busy knaves'—'he bade them go their own way as they would;' and still uncertain, he sent messengers to the rebels to inquire their intentions. But he would not join them; he would not resist them; at length, when they threatened to end the difficulty by bringing him forcibly into their camp, he escaped secretly out of the country; while Lady Hussey, 'who was supposed to know her husband's mind,' sent provisions to a detachment of the Lincoln army.[2] For such conduct the

[1] Lord Hussey to the Mayor of Lincoln: *Cotton. MS. Vespasian*, F 13.

[2] *Rolls House MS.* first series, 416. Cutler's Confession: MS. ibid. 407. Deposition of Robert Sotheby: ibid. A 2, 29.

commander of a division would be tried by a court-martial with no uncertain sentence; but the extent of Hussey's offence is best seen in contrast with the behaviour of Lord Shrewsbury, whose courage and fidelity on this occasion perhaps saved Henry's crown.

The messengers sent from Horncastle were Sir Marmaduke Constable and Sir Edward Madyson. Heneage the commissioner was permitted to accompany them, perhaps to save him from being murdered by the priests. They did not spare the spur, and, riding through the night, they found the King at Windsor the day following. Henry on the instant despatched a courier to Lord Hussey, and another to Lord Shrewsbury, directing them to raise all the men whom they could muster; sending at the same time private letters to the gentlemen who were said to be with the insurgents, to recall them, if possible, to their allegiance. Lord Shrewsbury had not waited for instructions. Although his own county had not so far been disturbed, he had called out his tenantry, and had gone forward to Sherwood with every man that he could impress, on the instant that he heard of the rising. Anticipating the form that it might assume, he had sent despatches on the very first day through Derbyshire, Stafford, Shropshire, Worcester, Leicester, and Northampton, to have the powers of the counties raised without a moment's delay.[1] Henry's letter found him at Sherwood on the 6th

Wednesday, Oct. 4.

[1] Lord Shrewsbury to the King: *MS. State Paper Office.* Letter to the King and council, vol. v. Holinshed tells a foolish story, that Lord Shrewsbury sued out his pardon to the King for moving without orders.

of October. The King he knew had written also to Lord Hussey; but, understanding the character of this nobleman better than his master understood it, and with a foreboding of his possible disloyalty, he sent on the messenger to Sleford with a further note from himself, entreating him at such a moment not to be found wanting to his duty. 'My lord,' he wrote, 'for the old acquaintance between your lordship and me, as unto him that I heartily love, I will write the plainness of my mind. Ye have always been an honourable and true gentleman, and, I doubt not, will now so prove yourself. I have no commandment from the King but only to suppress the rebellion; and I assure you, my lord, on my truth, that all the King's subjects of six shires will be with me to-morrow at night, to the number of forty thousand able persons; and I trust to have your lordship to keep us company.'[1] His exhortations were in vain; Lord Hussey made no effort; he had not the manliness to join the rising—he had not the loyalty to assist in repressing it. He stole away and left the country to its fate. His conduct, unfortunately, was imitated largely in the counties on which Lord Shrewsbury relied for reinforcements. Instead of the thirty or forty thousand men whom he expected, the royalist leader could scarcely collect three or four thousand. Ten times this number were by this time

Friday, October 6.

As he had done nothing for which to ask pardon, so it is certain, from his correspondence with the King, that he did not ask for any. Let me take this opportunity of saying that neither Holinshed, nor Stow, nor even Hall, nor any one of the chroniclers, can be trusted in their account of this rebellion.

[1] *MS. State Paper Office*, first series.

collected at Lincoln; and ominous news at the same time reaching him of the state of Yorkshire, he found it prudent to wait at Nottingham, overawing that immediate neighbourhood till he could hear again from the King.

Meanwhile Madyson and Constable had been detained in London. The immediate danger was lest the rebels should march on London before a sufficient force could be brought into the field to check them. Sir William Fitzwilliam, Sir John Russell, Cromwell's gallant nephew Richard, Sir William Parr, Sir Francis Brian, every loyal friend of the Government who could be spared, scattered south and west of the metropolis calling the people on their allegiance to the King's service. The command-in-chief was given to the Duke of Suffolk. The stores in the Tower, a battery of field artillery, bows, arrows, ammunition of all kinds, were sent on in hot haste to Ampthill; and so little time had been lost, that on Monday, the 9th of October, a week only from the first outbreak at Louth, Sir John Russell with the advanced guard was at Stamford, and a respectable force was following in his rear.

Monday, October 9.

Alarming reports came in of the temper of the north-midland and eastern counties. The disposition of the people between Lincoln and London was said to be as bad as possible.[1] If there had been delay or tri-

[1] 'My lord: Hugh Ascue, this bearer, hath shewed me that this day a servant of Sir William Hussey's reported how that in manner, in every place by the way as his master and he came, he hath heard as well old people as young pray God to speed the rebellious persons

fling, or if Shrewsbury had been less promptly loyal, in all likelihood the whole of England north of the Ouse would have been in a flame.

From the south and the west, on the other hand, accounts were more reassuring; Middlesex, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, all counties where the bishops had found heaviest work in persecuting Protestants, had answered loyally to the royal summons. Volunteers flocked in, man and horse, in larger numbers than were required; on Tuesday, the 10th, Suffolk was able to close his muster rolls, and needed only adequate equipment to be at the head of a body of men as large as he could conveniently move. But he had no leisure to wait for stores. Rumours were already flying that Russell had been attacked, that he had fought and lost a battle and twenty thousand men.[1] The security against a spread of the conflagration was to trample it out upon the spot. Imperfectly furnished as he was, the Duke reached Stamford only two days after the first division of his troops. He was obliged to pause for twenty-four hours to provide means for crossing the rivers, and halt and refresh his men. The rebels on the Monday had been reported to be from fifty to sixty thousand strong. A lost battle

Wednesday, Oct. 11.

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in Lincolnshire, and wish themselves with them; saying, that if they came that way, that they shall lack nothing that they can help them unto. And the said Hugh asked what persons they were which so reported, and he said *all;* which is a thing as meseemeth greatly to be noted.'—Sir William Fitzwilliam to Lord Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office,* second series, vol. vi.

[1] Richard Cromwell to Lord Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office,* second series, vol. vii.

would be the loss of the kingdom. It was necessary to take all precautions. But Suffolk within a few hours of his arrival at Stamford learnt that time was doing his work swiftly and surely. The insurrection, so wide and so rapid, had been an explosion of loose powder, not a judicious economy of it. The burst had been so spontaneous, there was an absence of preparation so complete, that it was embarrassed by its own magnitude. There was no forethought, no efficient leader—sixty thousand men had drifted to Lincoln and had halted there in noisy uncertainty till their way to London was interrupted. They had no commissariat—each man had brought a few days' provisions with him, and when these were gone the multitude dissolved with the same rapidity with which it had assembled. On the Wednesday at noon Richard Cromwell reported that the township of Boston, amounting to twelve thousand men, were gone home. In the evening of the same day five or six thousand others were said to have gone, and not more than twenty thousand at the outside were believed to be remaining in the camp. The young cavaliers in the royal army began to fear that there would be no battle after all.[1]

Suffolk could now act safely, and preparatory to his

[1] 'Nothing we lament so much as that they thus fly; for our trust was that we should have used them like as they have deserved; and I for my part am as sorry as if I had lost five hundred pounds. For my lord admiral (Sir John Russell), he is so earnest in the matter, that I dare say he would eat them with salt.'—Richard Cromwell to Lord Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office.*

advance he sent forward the King's answer to the articles of Horncastle.

'Concerning choosing of councillors,' the King wrote, 'I have never read, heard, nor known that princes' councillors and prelates should be appointed by rude and ignorant common people. How presumptuous, then, are ye, the rude commons of one shire, and that one of the most brute and beastly of the whole realm, and of least experience, to take upon you, contrary to God's law and man's law, to rule your prince whom ye are bound to obey and serve, and for no worldly cause to withstand?

'As to the suppression of religious houses and monasteries, we will that ye and all our subjects should well know that this is granted us by all the nobles, spiritual and temporal, of this our realm, and by all the commons of the same by Act of Parliament, and not set forth by any councillor or councillors upon their mere will and fantasy as ye falsely would persuade our realm to believe: and where ye allege that the service of God is much thereby diminished, the truth thereof is contrary, for there be none houses suppressed where God was well served, but where most vice, mischief, and abomination of living was used; and that doth well appear by their own confessions subscribed with their own hands, in the time of our visitation. And yet were suffered a great many of them, more than we by the Act needed, to stand; wherein if they amend not their living we fear we have more to answer for than for the suppression of all the rest.'

Dismissing the Act of Uses as beyond their understanding, and coming to the subsidy,—

'Think ye,' the King said, 'that we be so faint-hearted that perforce ye would compel us with your insurrection and such rebellious demeanour to remit the same? Make ye sure by occasion of this your ingratitude, unnaturalness, and unkindness to us now administered, ye give us cause which hath always been as much dedicate to your wealth as ever was king, not so much to set our study for the setting forward of the same seeing how unkindly and untruly ye deal now with us:

'Wherefore, sirs, remember your follies and traitorous demeanour, and shame not your native country of England. We charge you eftsoons that ye withdraw yourselves to your own houses every man, cause the provokers of you to this mischief to be delivered to our lieutenant's hands or ours, and you yourselves submit yourselves to such condign punishment as we and our nobles shall think you worthy to suffer. For doubt ye not else that we will not suffer this injury at your hands unrevenged; and we pray unto Almighty God to give you grace to do your duties; and rather obediently to consent amongst you to deliver into the hands of our lieutenant a hundred persons, to be ordered according to their demerits, than by your obstinacy and wilfulness to put yourselves, lives, wives, children, lands, goods, and chattels, besides the indignation of God, in the utter adventure of total destruction.' [1]

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[1] Henry VIII. to the rebels in Lincolnshire: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 463, &c.

Thursday, Oct. 12.

When the letter was brought in, the insurgent council were sitting in the chapter-house of the cathedral. The cooler-headed among the gentlemen, even those among them who on the whole sympathized in the rising, had seen by this time that success was doubtful, and that if obtained it would be attended with many inconveniences to themselves. The enclosures would go down, the cattle farms would be confiscated. The yeomen's tenures would be everywhere revised. The probability, however, was that, without concert, without discipline, without a leader, they would be destroyed in detail; and their best plan would be to secure their own safety. Their prudence nearly cost them their lives.

'We, the gentlemen,' says one of them, 'when the letters came, thought to read them secretly among ourselves; but as we were reading them the commons present cried that they would hear them read or else pull them from us. And therefore I read the letters openly; and because there was a little clause there which we feared would stir the commons, I did leave that clause unread, which was perceived by a canon there, and he said openly the letter was falsely read, by reason whereof I was like to be slain.'[1]

The assembly broke into confusion. The alarm spread that the gentlemen would betray the cause, as in fact they intended to do. The clergy and the leaders of the commons clamoured to go forward and attack

[1] Confession of Thos. Mayne: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 432.

Suffolk, and two hundred of the most violent went out into the cloister to consult by themselves. After a brief conference they resolved that the clergy had been right from the first, that the gentlemen were no true friends of the cause, and that they had better kill them. They went back into the chapter-house, and, guarding the doors, prepared to execute their intention, when some one cried that it was wiser to leave them till the next day; they should go with them into action, and if they flinched they would kill them then. After some hesitation the two hundred went out again—again changed their minds and returned; but by this time the intended victims had escaped by a private entrance into the house of the murdered chancellor, and barricaded the door. It was now evening. The cloisters were growing dark, and the mob finally retired to the camp, swearing that they would return at daybreak.

The gentlemen then debated what they had better do. Lincoln cathedral is a natural fortress. The main body of the insurgents lay round the bottom of the hill on which the cathedral stands; the gentlemen, with their retinues, seem to have been lodged in the houses round the close, and to have been left in undisputed possession of their quarters for the night. Suffolk was known to be advancing. They determined, if possible, to cut their way to him in the morning, or else to hold out in their present position till they were relieved. Meanwhile the division in the council had extended to the camp. Alarmed by the desertions, surprised by the rapidity with which the King's troops had been collect-

ed, and with the fatal distrust of one another which forms the best security of governments against the danger of insurrection, the farmers and villagers were disposed in large numbers to follow the example of their natural leaders. The party of the squires were for peace: the party of the clergy for a battle. The former moved off in the darkness in a body and joined the party in the cathedral. There was now no longer danger. The gentry were surrounded by dependents on whom they could rely; and though still inferior in number, were better armed and disciplined than the brawling crowd of fanatics in the camp. When day broke they descended the hill, and told the people that for the present their enterprise must be relinquished. The King had said that they were misinformed on the character of his measures. It was, perhaps, true, and for the present they must wait and see. If they were deceived they might make a fresh insurrection.[1]

Friday, October 13.

They were heard in sullen silence, but they were obeyed. There was no resistance; they made their way to the King's army, and soon after, the Duke of Suffolk, Sir John Russell, and young Cromwell rode into Lincoln. The streets, we are told, were crowded, but no cheer saluted them, no bonnet was moved. The royalist commanders came in as conquerors after a bloodless victory, but they read in the menacing faces which frowned upon them that their work was still, perhaps, to be done.

[1] Confession of Thos. Mayne: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 432.

For the present, however, the conflagration was extinguished. The cathedral was turned into an arsenal, fortified and garrisoned;[1] and the suspicion and jealousy which had been raised between the spiritualty and the gentlemen soon doing its work, the latter offered their services to Suffolk, and laboured to earn their pardon by their exertions for the restoration of order. The towns one by one sent in their submission. Louth made its peace by surrendering unconditionally fifteen of the original leaders of the commotion. A hundred or more were taken prisoners elsewhere, Abbot Mackarel and his canons being of the number;[2] and Suffolk was informed that these, who were the worst offenders, being reserved for future punishment, he might declare a free pardon to all the rest 'without doing unto them any hurt or damage in their goods or persons.'[3]

In less than a fortnight a rebellion of sixty thousand persons had subsided as suddenly as it had risen. Contrived by the monks and parish priests, it had been commenced without concert, it had been conducted without practical skill. The clergy had communicated to their instruments alike their fury and their incapacity.

But the insurrection in Lincolnshire was but the first shower which is the herald of the storm.

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[1] Henry VIII. to the Duke of Suffolk: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 480.

[2] Wriothesley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 471. Examination of the Prisoners: *Rolls House MS.*

[3] Henry VIII. to the Duke of Suffolk: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 480.

On the night of the 12th of October there was present at an inn in Lincoln, watching the issue of events, a gentleman of Yorkshire, whose name, a few weeks later, was ringing through every English household in accents of terror or admiration.

Our story must go back to the beginning of the month. The law vacation was drawing to its close, and younger brothers in county families who then, as now, were members of the inns of court, were returning from their holidays to London. The season had been of unusual beauty. The summer had lingered into the autumn, and during the latter half of September young Sir Ralph Ellerkar, of Ellerkar Hall in 'Yorkyswold,' had been entertaining a party of friends for cub-hunting. Among his guests were his three cousins, John, Robert, and Christopher Aske. John, the eldest, was the owner of the old family property of Aughton-on-the-Derwent, a quiet unobtrusive gentleman with two sons, students at the Temple: of Robert, till he now emerges into light, we discover only that he was a barrister in good practice at Westminster; and Christopher was the possessor of an estate in Marshland in the West Riding. The Askes were highly connected, being cousins of the Earl of Cumberland,[1] whose eldest son, Lord Clifford, had recently married a daughter of the Duke of Suffolk, and niece of the King.[2]

September.

[1] 'The captain and the Earl of Cumberland came of two sisters.'—Lord Darcy to Somerset Herald: *Rolls House MS.*

[2] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 523.

October 3.

The hunting party broke up on the 3rd of October, and Robert, if his own account of himself was true, left Ellerkar with no other intention than of going direct to London to his business. His route lay across the Humber at Welton, and when in the ferry he heard from the boatmen that the commons were up in Lincolnshire. He wished to return, but the state of the tide would not allow him; he then endeavoured to make his way by by-roads and bridle-paths to the house of a brother-in-law at Sawcliffe. But he was met somewhere near Appleby by a party of the rebels. They demanded who he was, and on his replying, they offered him the popular oath. It is hard to believe that he was altogether taken by surprise; a man of such remarkable powers as he afterwards exhibited could not have been wholly ignorant of the condition of the country; and if his loyalty had been previously sound he would not have thrown himself into the rising with such deliberate energy. The people by whom he was 'taken,' as he designated what had befallen him,[1] became his body-guard to Sawcliffe. He must have been well known in the district. His brother's property lay but a few miles distant, across the Trent, and as soon as the news spread that he was among the rebels his name was made a rallying cry. The command of the district was assigned to him from the Humber to Kirton, and for the next few days he remained endeavouring to organize the move-

October 4.

[1] Manner of the taking of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

ment into some kind of form. But he was doubtful of the prospects of the rebellion, and doubtful of his own conduct; the commons of the West Riding beginning to stir, he crossed into Marshland; and passing the Ouse into Howdenshire, he went from village to village, giving orders that no bells should be rung, no beacon should be lighted, except on the receipt of a special message from himself.

Leaving his own county, he again hastened back to his command in Lincolnshire; and by this time he heard of Suffolk's advance with the King's answer to the petition. He rode post to Lincoln, and reached the town to find the commons and the gentlemen on the verge of fighting among themselves. He endeavoured to make his way into the cathedral close, but finding himself suspected by the commons, and being told that he would be murdered if he persevered, he remained in concealment till Suffolk had made known the intentions of the Government; and then, perhaps satisfied that the opportunity was past, perhaps believing that if not made use of on the instant it might never recur, perhaps resigning himself to be guided by events, he went back at full speed to Yorkshire.

October 12

And events had decided: whatever his intentions may have been, the choice was no longer open to him. As he rode down at midnight to the bank of the Humber, the clash of the alarm-bells came pealing far over the water. From hill to hill, from church tower to church tower, the warning lights were shooting. The fishermen on the German Ocean

October 13.

watched them flickering in the darkness from Spurn-head to Scarborough, from Scarborough to Berwick-upon-Tweed. They streamed westward, over the long marshes across Spalding Moor; up the Ouse and the Wharf, to the watershed where the rivers flow into the Irish Sea. The mountains of Westmoreland sent on the message to Kendal, to Cockermouth, to Penrith, to Carlisle; and for days and nights there was one loud storm of bells and blaze of beacons from the Trent to the Cheviot Hills.

October 9.

All Yorkshire was in movement. Strangely, too, as Aske assures us, he found himself the object of an unsought distinction. His own name was the watchword which every tongue was crying. In his absence an address had gone out around the towns, had been hung on church doors, and posted on market crosses, which bore his signature, though, as he protested, it was neither written by himself nor with his consent.[1] Ill composed, but with a rugged eloquence, he called upon all good Englishmen to make a stand for the Church of Christ, which wicked men were destroying, for the commonwealth of the realm, and for their own livings, which were stolen from them by impositions. For those who would join it should be

[1] 'There was a letter forged in my name to certain towns, which I utterly deny to be my deed or consent.'—Narrative of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28. This is apparently the letter which is printed in the *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 467. It was issued on the 7th or 8th of October (see Stapleton's Confession: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28), the days on which, according to Aske's own confession, he seems to have been in the West-Riding.

well; those who refused to join, or dared to resist, should be under Christ's curse, and be held guilty of all the Christian blood which should be shed.

Whoever wrote the letter, it did its work. One scene out of many will illustrate the effect.

William Stapleton, a friend of Aske, and a brother barrister, also bound to London for the term, was spending a few days at the Grey Friars at Beverley, with his brother Christopher. The latter had been out of health, and had gone thither for change of air with his wife. The young lawyer was to have set out over the Humber on the 4th of October. At three in the morning his servant woke him, with the news that the Lincolnshire beacons were on fire, and the country was impassable. Beverley itself was in the greatest excitement; the sick brother was afraid to be left alone, and William Stapleton agreed for the present to remain and take care of him. On Sunday morning they were startled by the sound of the alarm-bell. A servant who was sent out to learn what had happened, brought in word that an address had arrived from Robert Aske, and that a proclamation was out, under the town seal, calling on every man to repair to Westwood Green, under the walls of the Grey Friars, and be sworn in to the commons.[1] Christopher Stapleton, a sensible man, made somewhat timid by illness, ordered all doors to be

October 8.

[1] The oath varied a little in form. In Yorkshire the usual form was, 'Ye shall swear to be true to God, the King, and the commonwealth.' — Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.* The tendency of the English to bind themselves with oaths, explains and partly justifies the various oaths required by the Government.

locked and bolted, and gave directions that no one of his household should stir. His wife, a hater of Protestants, an admirer of Queen Catherine, of the Pope, and the old religion, was burning with sympathy for the insurgents. The family confessor appeared on the scene, a certain Father Bonaventure, taking the lady's part, and they two together 'went forth out of the door among the crowd.' 'God's blessing on ye,' William Stapleton heard his sister-in-law cry.—'Speed ye well,' the priest cried; 'speed ye well in your godly purposes.' The people rushed about them. 'Where are your husband and his brother?' they shouted to her. 'In the Freers,' she answered. 'Bring them out!' the cry rose. 'Pull them out by the head; or we will burn the Freers and them within it.' Back flew the lady in haste, and perhaps in scorn, to urge forward her hesitating lord—he wailing, wringing his hands, wishing himself out of the world; she exclaiming it was God's quarrel—let him rise and show himself a man. The dispute lingered; the crowd grew impatient; the doors were dashed in; they rushed into the hall, and thrust the oath down the throat of the reluctant gentleman, and as they surged back they swept the brother out with them upon the green. Five hundred voices were crying, 'Captains! captains!' and presently a shout rose above the rest, 'Master William Stapleton shall be our captain!' And so it was to be: the priest Bonaventure had willed it so; and Stapleton, seeing worse would follow if he refused, consented.

It was like a contagion of madness—instantly he

was wild like the rest. 'Forward!' was the cry—whither, who knew or cared? only 'Forward!' and as the multitude rocked to and fro, a splashed rider spurred through the streets, 'like a man distraught,'[1] eyes staring, hair streaming, shouting, as he passed, that they should rise and follow, and flashing away like a meteor.

So went Sunday at Beverley, the 8th of October, 1536; and within a few days the substance of the same scene repeated itself in all the towns of all the northern counties, the accidents only varying. The same spirit was abroad as in Lincolnshire; but here were strong heads and strong wills, which could turn the wild humour to a purpose—men who had foreseen the catastrophe, and were prepared to use it.

Lord Darcy of Templehurst was among the most distinguished of the conservative nobility. He was an old man. He had won his spurs under Henry VII. He had fought against the Moors by the side of Ferdinand, and he had earned laurels in the wars in France against Louis XII. Strong in his military reputation, in his rank, and in his age, he had spoken in Parliament against the separation from the See of Rome; and though sworn like the rest of the peers to obey the law, he had openly avowed the reluctance of his assent—he had secretly maintained a correspondence with the Imperial Court.

The King, who respected a frank opposition, and

[1] Deposition of William Stapleton: *Rolls House MS.*

had no suspicion of anything beyond what was open, continued his confidence in a man whom he regarded as a tried friend, and Darcy, from his credit with the Crown, his rank, and his position, was at this moment the feudal sovereign of the East Riding. To him Henry wrote on the first news of the commotion in Lincolnshire, when he wrote to Lord Hussey and Lord Shrewsbury, but entering into fuller detail, warning him of the falsehoods which had been circulated to excite the people, and condescending to inform him 'that he had never thought to take one pennyworth of the parish churches' goods from them.' He desired Lord Darcy to let the truth be known, meantime assuring him that there was no cause for alarm ; 'one true man was worth twenty thieves and traitors,' and all true men, he doubted not, would do their duty in suppressing the insurrection.[1]

This letter was written on the same 8th of October on which the scenes which have been described took place at Beverley. Five days later the King had found reason to change his opinion of Lord Darcy.

To him, as to Lord Hussey, the outbreak at this especial crisis appeared inopportune. The Emperor had just suffered a heavy reverse in France, and there was no prospect at that moment of assistance either from Flanders or Spain. A fair occasion had been lost in the preceding winter—another had not yet arisen. The conservative English were, however, strong in

[1] Henry VIII. to Lord Darcy, October 8th: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 282.

themselves, and might be equal to the work if they were not crushed prematurely; he resolved to secure them time by his own inaction. On the first symptoms of uneasiness he sent his son, Sir Arthur Darcy, to Lord Shrewsbury, who was then at Nottingham, with further orders, after reporting on the state of the country, to go on to Windsor with a letter to the King. Sharing, however, in none of his father's opinions, the heir of the Darcies caught fire in the stir of Shrewsbury's camp—he preferred to remain where he was, and, sending the letter by another hand, he wrote to Templehurst for arms and men. Lord Darcy had no intention that his banner should be seen in the field against the insurgents. Unable to dispose of Sir Arthur as he had intended, he replied that he had changed his mind; his son must return to him at his best speed; for the present, he said, he had himself raised no men, nor did he intend to raise any—he had put out a proclamation with which he trusted the people might be quieted.[1] The manœuvre answered well. Lord Shrewsbury was held in check by insurrections on either side of him, and could move neither on Yorkshire nor Lincolnshire. The rebels were buying up every bow, pike, and arrow in the country, and Lord Darcy now shut himself up with no more than twelve of his followers in Pomfret Castle, without arms, without fuel, without provisions, and taking no effectual steps to secure either the one or the other. In defence of his conduct he stated afterwards that his convoys

[1] Letters to and from Lord Darcy: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 282.

had been intercepted. An experienced military commander who could have called a thousand men under arms by a word, could have introduced a few waggon-loads of corn and beer, had such been his wish. He was taking precautions (it is more likely) to enable him to yield gracefully to necessity should necessity arise. The conflagration now spread swiftly. Every one who was disposed to be loyal looked to Darcy for orders. The Earl of Cumberland wrote to him from Skipton Castle, Sir Brien Hastings the sheriff, Sir Richard Tempest, and many others. They would raise their men, they said, and either join him at Pomfret, or at whatever place he chose to direct. But Darcy would do nothing, and would allow nothing to be done. He replied that he had no commission and could give no instructions. The King had twice written to him, but had sent no special directions, and he would not act without them.[1]

Lord Darcy played skilfully into the rebels' hands. The rebels made admirable use of their opportunity. With method in their madness, the townships everywhere organized themselves. Instead of marching in unwieldy tumultuous bodies, they picked their 'tallest and strongest' men; they armed and equipped them; and, raising money by a rate from house to house, they sent them out with a month's wages in their pockets, and a promise of a continuance should their services be

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[1] Henry had written him a second letter on the 9th of October, in which, knowing nothing as yet of the rising in Yorkshire, he had expressed merely a continued confidence in Darcy's discretion.

prolonged. The day after his return from Lincoln, Aske found himself at the head of an army of horse and foot, furnished admirably at all points. They were grouped in companies by their parishes, and instead of colours, the crosses of the churches were borne by the priests.

Saturday, October 14.

The first great rendezvous in Yorkshire was on Weighton common. Here Stapleton came in with nine thousand men from Beverley and Holderness. The two divisions encamped upon the heath, and Aske became acknowledged as the commander of the entire force. Couriers brought in news from all parts of the country. Sir Ralph Evers and Sir George Conyers were reputed to have taken refuge in Scarborough. Sir Ralph Ellerkar the elder and Sir John Constable were holding Hull for the King. These places must at once be seized. Stapleton rode down from Weighton to Hull gate, and summoned the town. The mayor was for yielding at once; he had no men, he said, no meat, no money, no horse or harness—resistance was impossible. Ellerkar and Constable, however, would not hear of surrender. Constable replied that he would rather die with honesty than live with shame; and Stapleton carrying back this answer to Aske, it was agreed that the former should lay siege to Hull upon the spot, while the main body of the army moved forward upon York.[1]

Skirting parties meantime scoured the country far

[1] Stapleton's Confession: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

and near. They surrounded the castles and houses, and called on every lord, knight, and gentleman to mount his horse, with his servants, and join them, or they would leave neither corn-stack in their yards nor cattle in their sheds, and would burn their roofs over their heads.

Aske himself was present everywhere, or some counterfeit who bore his name. It seemed 'there were six Richmonds in the field.' The Earl of Northumberland lay sick at Wressill Castle. From the day of Anne Boleyn's trial he had sunk, and now was dying. His failing spirit was disturbed by the news that Aske was at his gates, and that an armed host were shouting 'thousands for a Percy!' If the Earl could not come, the rebels said, then his brothers must come—Sir Thomas and Sir Ingram. And next, with side glances, we catch sight of Sir Ingram Percy swearing in the commons, and stirring the country at Alnwick: 'using such malicious words as were abominable to hear; wishing that he might thrust his sword into the Lord Cromwell's belly; wishing the Lord Cromwell were hanged on high, and he standing by to see it.' And again we see the old Countess of Northumberland at her house at Semar, 'sore weeping and lamenting' over her children's disloyalty; Sir Thomas Percy listening, half moved, to her entreaties; for a moment pausing uncertain, then borne away by the contagion, and a few hours later flaunting, with gay plumes and gorgeous armour, in the rebel host.[1]

[1] Examination of Sir Thomas Percy: *Rolls House MS.* Demeanour of Sir Thomas and Sir Ingram Percy: *MS.* ibid. first series, 896.

On Sunday, October the 15th, the main army crossed the Derwent, moving direct for York. On Monday they were before the gates. The citizens were all in the interest of the rebellion; and the mayor was allowed only to take precautions for the security of property and life. The engagements which he exacted from Aske, and which were punctually observed, speak well for the discipline of the insurgents. No pillage was to be permitted, or injury, of any kind. The prices which were to be paid for victuals and horse-meat were published in the camp by proclamation. The infantry, as composed of the most dangerous materials, were to remain in the field. On these terms the gates were opened, and Aske, with the horse, rode in and took possession.[1] His first act, on entering the city, was to fix a proclamation on the doors of the cathedral, inviting all monks and nuns dispossessed from their houses to report their names and conditions, with a view to their immediate restoration. Work is done rapidly by willing hands, in the midst of a willing people. In the week which followed, by a common impulse, the King's tenants were universally expelled. The vacant dormitories were again peopled; the refectories were again filled with exulting faces. 'Though it were never so late when they returned, the friars sang matins the same night.'[2]

October 16.

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[1] 'The said Aske suffered no foot man to enter the city, for fear of spoils.'—Manner of the taking of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

[2] Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. iii.

Orders were next issued in Aske's name, commanding all lords, knights, and gentlemen in the northern counties to repair to his presence; and now, at last, Lord Darcy believed that the time was come when he might commit himself with safety; or rather, since the secrets of men's minds must not be lightly conjectured, he must be heard first in his own defence, and afterwards his actions must speak for him. On the night of the surrender of York he sent his steward from Pomfret, with a request for a copy of the oath and of the articles of the rising, promising, if they pleased him, to join the confederacy. The Archbishop of York, Dr Magnus an old diplomatic servant of the Crown, Sir Robert Constable, Lord Neville, and Sir Nicholas Babthorpe, were by this time with him in the castle. His own compliance would involve the compliance of these, and would partially involve their sanction.

On the morning of the 16th or 17th he received a third letter from the King, written now in grave displeasure; the truth had not been told; the King had heard, to his surprise, that Lord Darcy, instead of raising a force and taking the field, had shut himself up, with no more than twelve servants, in Pomfret; 'If this be so,' he said, 'it is negligently passed.'[1] Lord Darcy excused himself by replying that he was not to blame; that he had done his best; but there were sixty thousand men in arms, forty thousand in harness. They took what they pleased—horses, plate, and cattle; the

[1] Henry VIII. to Lord Darcy, October 13: *Rolls House MS.*

whole population was with them; he could not trust his own retainers; and, preparing the King for what he was next to hear, he informed him that Pomfret itself was defenceless. 'The town,' he said, 'nor any other town, will not victual us for our money; and of such provision as we ourselves have made, the commons do stop the passage so straitly, that no victual can come to us; the castle is in danger to be taken, or we to lose our lives.'[1] The defence may have been partially true. It may have been merely plausible. At all events, it was necessary for him to come to some swift resolution. The occupation of Lincoln by the Duke of Suffolk had set Lord Shrewsbury at liberty; arms had been sent down, and money; and the midland counties, in recovered confidence, had furnished recruits, though in limited numbers. The Earl was now at Newark, in a condition to advance; and on the same 17th of October, on which this despairing letter was written, he sent forward a post to Pomfret, telling Darcy to hold his ground, and to expect his arrival at the earliest moment possible.[2] Neither the rebels nor Shrewsbury could afford to lose so important a position; and both made haste. Again, on the same Tuesday, the 17th, couriers brought news to Aske, at York, that the commons of Durham were hasting to join him, bringing with them Lord Latimer, Lord Lumley, and the Earl of

Tuesday, October 17.

[1] Lord Darcy to the King, October 17: MS. ibid.

[2] Lord Shrewsbury to Lord Darcy; *Rolls House MS.* first series, 282. Darcy certainly received this letter, since a copy of it is in the collection made by himself.

Westmoreland. Being thus secure in his rear, the rebel leader carried his answer to Lord Darcy in person, at the head of his forces. He reached Pomfret on the afternoon of Thursday, the 19th; finding the town on his side, and knowing or suspecting Darcy's disposition, he sent in a message that the castle must be delivered, or it should be immediately stormed. A conference was demanded and agreed to. Hostages were sent in by Aske. Lord Darcy, the Archbishop, and the other noblemen and gentlemen, came out before the gate.

Thursday, October 19.

'And there and then the said Aske declared unto the said lords spiritual and temporal the griefs of the commons; and how first the lords spiritual had not done their duty, in that they had not been plain with the King's Highness for the speedy remedy and punishing of heresy, and the preachers thereof; and for the taking the ornaments of the churches and abbeys suppressed, and the violating of relics by the suppressors; the irreverent demeanour of the doers thereof; the abuse of the vestments taken extraordinary; and other their negligences in doing their duty, as well to their sovereign as to the commons.

'And to the lords temporal the said Aske declared that they had misused themselves, in that they had not prudently declared to his Highness the poverty of his realm, whereby all dangers might have been avoided; for insomuch as in the north parts much of the relief of the commons was by favour of abbeys; and that before this last statute made the King's Highness

had no money out of that shire in award yearly, for that his Grace's revenues of them went to the finding of Berwick; now the property of abbeys suppressed, tenths, and first-fruits, went out of those parts; by occasion whereof, within short space of years, there should no money nor treasure then be left, neither the tenant have to pay his yearly rent to his lord, nor the lord have money to do the King service. In those parts were neither the presence of his Grace, execution of his laws nor yet but little recourse of merchandise; and of necessity the said country should either perish with skaith or of very poverty make commotion or rebellion: and the lords knew the same to be true, and had not done their duty, for they had not declared the said poverty of the said country to the King's Highness.'[1]

'There were divers reasonings on both parts.' Darcy asked for time; if not relieved, he said he would surrender on Saturday; but Aske, to whom Shrewsbury's position and intentions were well known, and who was informed privately that the few men who were in the castle would perhaps offer no resistance to an attack, 'would not condescend thereto.' He allowed Lord Darcy till eight o'clock the following morning, and no longer. The night passed. At the hour appointed, fresh delay was demanded, but with a certainty that it would not be granted; and the alternative being an immediate storm, the drawbridge was lowered—Pomfret Castle was in possession of the rebels, and Lord Darcy,

[1] Manner of the taking of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

the Archbishop of York, and every other man within the walls, high and low, were sworn to the common oath.

Friday, October 20.

The extent of deliberate treachery on the part of Darcy may remain uncertain. The objects of the insurrection were cordially approved by him. It is not impossible that, when the moment came, he could not resign his loyalty without a struggle. But he had taken no precautions to avert the catastrophe. If he had not consciously encouraged its approach, he saw it coming, and he waited in the most unfavourable position to be overwhelmed; and when the step was once taken, beyond any question he welcomed the excuse to his conscience, and passed instantly to the front rank as among the chiefs of the enterprise.[1]

On the afternoon of the surrender the insurgent leaders were sitting at dinner at the great table in the hall. A letter was brought in and given to Lord Darcy. He read it, dropped it on the cloth, and 'suddenly gave a great sigh.' Aske, who was sitting opposite to him, stretched his hand for the paper across the board. It was brief, and carried no signature—Lord Shrewsbury,

[1] I believe that I am unnecessarily tender to Lord Darcy's reputation. Aske, though he afterwards contradicted himself, stated in his examination that Lord Darcy could have defended the castle had he wished.—*Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29. It was sworn that when he was advised 'to victual and store Pomfret,' he said, 'there was no need; it would do as it was.'—Ibid. And Sir Henry Saville declared that 'when Darcy heard of the first rising, he said, 'Ah! they are up in Lincolnshire. God speed them well. I would they had done this three years ago, for the world should have been the better for it.''—Ibid.

the writer merely said, would be at Pomfret the same night.[1]

The sigh may be easily construed; but if it was a symptom of repentance, Darcy showed no other. A council of war was held when the dinner was over; and bringing his military knowledge into use, he pointed out the dangerous spots, he marked the lines of defence, and told off the commanders to their posts. Before night all the passages of the Don by which Shrewsbury could advance were secured.[2]

Leaving Pomfret, we turn for a moment to Hull, where Stapleton also had accomplished his work expeditiously. On the same day on which he separated from Aske he had taken a position on the north of the town. There was a private feud between Beverley and Hull. His men were unruly, and eager for spoil; and the harbour being full of shipping, it was with difficulty that he prevented them from sending down blazing pitch barrels with the tide into the midst of it, and storming the walls in the smoke and confusion. Stapleton, however, was a resolute man; he was determined that the cause should not be disgraced by outrage, and he enforced discipline by an act of salutary severity. Two of the most unmanageable of his followers were tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be executed. 'A friar,' Stapleton says, 'was assigned to them, that they might make them clean to God,' and they expected nothing but death. But the object so far was only to

[1] Aske's Deposition: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 414.

[2] Examination of Sir Thomas Percy: *Rolls House MS.*

terrify. One of them, 'a sanctuary man,' was tied by the waist with a rope, and trailed behind a boat up and down the river, and 'the waterman did at several times put him down with the oar under the head.' The other seeing him, thought also to be so handled; 'howbeit, at the request of honest men, and being a housekeeper, he was suffered to go unpunished, and both were banished the host; after which there was never spoil more.'[1]

In the town there was mere despondency, and each day made defence more difficult. Reinforcements were thronging into the rebels' camp; the harbour was at their mercy. Constable was for holding out to the last, and then cutting his way through. Ellerkar would agree to surrender if he and his friends might be spared the oath and might leave the country. These terms were accepted, and on Friday, Stapleton occupied Hull.

So it went over the whole north; scarcely one blow was struck anywhere. The whole population were swept along in the general current, and Skipton Castle alone in Yorkshire now held out for the Crown.

With the defence of this place is connected an act of romantic heroism which deserves to be remembered.

Robert Aske, as we have seen, had two brothers, Christopher and John. In the hot struggle the ties of blood were of little moment, and when the West Riding rose, and they had to choose the part which they would take, 'they determined rather to be hewn in gobbets than stain their allegiance.' Being gallant gentlemen,

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[1] Stapleton's Confession: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

instead of flying the county, they made their way with forty of their retainers to their cousin the Earl of Cumberland, and with him threw themselves into Skipton. The aid came in good time; for the day after their arrival the Earl's whole retinue rode off in a body to the rebels, leaving him but a mixed household of some eighty people to garrison the castle. They were soon surrounded; but being well provisioned, and behind strong stone walls, they held the rebels at bay, and but for an unfortunate accident they could have faced the danger with cheerfulness. But unhappily the Earl's family were in the heart of the danger.

Lady Eleanor Clifford, Lord Clifford's young wife, with three little children and several other ladies, were staying, when the insurrection burst out, at Bolton Abbey. Perhaps they had taken sanctuary there; or possibly they were on a visit, and were cut off by the suddenness of the rising. There, however, ten miles off among the glens and hills, the ladies were, and on the third day of the siege notice was sent to the Earl that they should be held as hostages for his submission. The insurgents threatened that the day following Lady Eleanor and her infant son and daughters should be brought up in front of a storming party, and if the attack again failed, they would 'violate all the ladies, and enforce them with knaves' under the walls.[1] After the ferocious murder of the Bishop of Lincoln's chancellor, no villany was impossible; and it is likely that the

[1] Examination of Christopher Aske: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 840.

Catholic rebellion would have been soiled by as deep an infamy as can be found in the English annals but for the adventurous courage of Christopher Aske. In the dead of the night, with the vicar of Skipton, a groom, and a boy, he stole through the camp of the besiegers. He crossed the moors, with led horses, by unfrequented paths, and he 'drew such a draught,' he says, that he conveyed all the said ladies through the commons in safety, 'so close and clean, that the same was never mistrusted nor perceived till they were within the castle;'[1] a noble exploit, shining on the bypaths of history like a rare rich flower. Proudly the little garrison looked down, when day dawned, from the battlements, upon the fierce multitude who were howling below in baffled rage. A few days later, as if in scorn of their impotence, the same gallant gentleman flung open the gates, dropped the drawbridge, and rode down in full armour, with his train, to the market-cross at Skipton, and there, after three long 'Oyez's,' he read aloud the King's proclamation in the midst of the crowd . . . . . 'with leisure enough,' he adds, in his disdainful way . . . . 'and that done, he returned to the castle.'

While the North was thus in full commotion, the Government were straining every nerve to meet the emergency. The King had at first intended to repair in person to Lincolnshire. He had changed his mind when he heard of Suffolk's rapid success.[2] But York-

[1] Examination of Christopher Aske: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 840.

[2] Henry VIII. to the Duke of Suffolk: *Rolls House MS.*

shire seemed again to require his presence. The levies which had been sent for from the southern counties had been countermanded, but were recalled within a few hours of the first order. 'The matter hung like a fever, now hot, now cold.' Rumours took the place of intelligence. Each post contradicted the last, and for several days there was no certain news, either of the form or the extent of the danger. Lord Shrewsbury wrote that he had thrown his outposts forwards to the Don; but he doubted his ability to prevent the passage of the river, which he feared the rebels would attempt. He was still under-handed, and entreated assistance. The Earls of Rutland and Huntingdon were preparing to join him; but the reinforcements which they would bring were altogether inadequate, and the Duke of Norfolk and the Marquis of Exeter were sent down to add the weight of their names; their men were to follow as they could be raised. Cromwell was collecting money in London. The subsidy had not been paid in; large sums belonging to the Crown had fallen into the hands of Aske at York, and the treasury was empty. But 'benevolences' were extorted from the wealthy London clergy: 'they could not help in their persons,' the King said, and 'they must show their good will, if they had any,' in another way.[1] Loans could be borrowed, besides, in the City; the royal plate could go to the Mint; the crown jewels, if necessary, could be sold. Henry, more than any of the council, now comprehend-

[1] Wriothesley to Cromwell *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 472.

ed the danger. 'His Majesty,' wrote his secretary on the 18th of October, 'appeareth to fear much this matter, specially if he should want money, for in Lord Darcy, his Grace said, he had no great hope.' Ten thousand pounds were raised in two days. It was but a small instalment; but it served to 'stop the gap' for the moment. Three thousand men, with six pieces of field artillery, were sent at once after Norfolk, and overtook him on the 24th of October at Worksop.

Oct. 24.

Norfolk, it was clear, had gone upon the service most reluctantly. He, too, had deeper sympathies with the movement than he cared to avow; but, even from those very sympathies, he was the fittest person to be chosen to suppress it. The rebels professed to have risen in defence of the nobility and the Catholic faith. They would have to fight their way through an army led by the natural head of the party which they desired to serve.[1] The force under Shrewsbury was now at Doncaster, where, on the 25th, the Duke joined him. The town was in their hands, and the southern end of the bridge had been fortified. The autumn rains had by this time raised the river, securing their flank, and it would have been difficult for an attacking army to force a passage, even with great advantage of numbers. Their situation, at the same time, was most precarious; of the forty thousand men, of whom Shrewsbury had

[1] The Marquis of Exeter, who was joined in commission with the Duke of Norfolk, never passed Newark. He seems to have been recalled, and sent down into Devonshire, to raise the musters in his own county.

written to Lord Hussey, he had not been able to raise a tenth; and, if rumour was to be believed, the loyalty of the few who were with him would not bear too severe a strain. With Norfolk's reinforcements, the whole army did not, perhaps, exceed eight thousand men, while even these were divided; detachments were scattered up the river to watch and guard the few points at which it might be passed. Under such circumstances the conduct which might be necessary could only be determined on the spot; and the King, in his instructions, left a wide margin of discretion to the generals.[1] He had summoned the whole force of the south and west of England to come to him in London, and he intended to appear himself at their head. He directed Norfolk, therefore, to observe the greatest caution; by all means to avoid a battle, unless with a certainty of victory; and 'the chances of war being so uncertain,' he said, 'many times devices meant for the best purpose turning to evil happs and notable misfortunes,' he advised that rather than there should be any risk incurred, the Duke should fall back on the line of the Trent, fortify Newark and Nottingham, and wait his own arrival; 'until,' to use the King's own words, 'with our army royal, which we do put in readiness, we shall repair unto you, and so with God's help be able to bear down the traitors before us; yourselves having more regard to the defence of us and of your natural country than to any dishonour that might be spoken of such retirement, which in the end

[1] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 493.

shall prove more honourable than with a little hasty forwardness to jeopard both our honour and your lives.' 'For we assure you,' he said, 'we would neither adventure you our cousin of Norfolk, nor you our cousin of Shrewsbury, or other our good and true subjects, in such sort as there should be a likelihood of wilful casting of any of you away for all the lands and dominion we have on that side Trent.'

October 25.

The Duke of Norfolk, on his way down, had written from Welbeck, 'all desperately.' By any means, fair or foul, he had said that he would crush the rebels; 'he would esteem no promise that he would make to them, nor think his honour touched in the breach of the same.'[1]

To this Henry replied, 'Albeit we certainly know that ye will pretermit none occasion wherein by policy or otherwise ye may damage our enemies, we doubt not, again, but in all your proceedings you will have such a temperance as our honour specially shall remain untouched, and yours rather increased, than, by the certain grant of that you cannot certainly promise, appear in the mouths of the worst men anything defaced.' Finally, he concluded, 'Whereas you desire us, in case any mischance should happen unto you, to be good lord unto your children, surely, good cousin, albeit we trust certainly in God that no such thing shall fortune, yet we would you should perfectly know that if God should take you out of this transitory life before us, we should not fail so to remember your children, being your lively

[1] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 519.

images, and in such wise to look on them with our princely favour as others by their example should not be discouraged to follow your steps.'[1]

Lord Shrewsbury, as soon as he found himself too late to prevent the capture of Pomfret, sent forward Lancaster Herald with a royal proclamation, and with directions that it should be read at the market cross.[2] The herald started on his perilous adventure 'in his King's coat of arms.' As he approached Pomfret he overtook crowds of the country people upon the road, who in answer to his questions told him that they were in arms to defend Holy Church, which wicked men were destroying. They too and their cattle, their burials and their weddings, were to be taxed, and they would not endure it. The herald informed them that they were all imposed upon. Neither the King nor the council had ever thought of any such measures; and the people, he said, seemed ready to listen, 'being weary of their lives.' Lies, happily, are

Saturday, October 21.

[1] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 495.

[2] This particular proclamation—the same, apparently, which was read by Christopher Aske at Skipton—I have been unable to find. That which is printed in the State Papers from the Rolls House Records, belongs to the following month. The contents of the first, however, may be gathered from a description of it by Robert Aske, and a comparison of the companion proclamation issued in Lincolnshire. It stated briefly that the insurrection was caused by forged stories; that the King had no thought of suppressing parish churches, or taxing food or cattle. The abbeys had been dissolved by Act of Parliament in consequence of their notorious vice and profligacy. The people, therefore, were commanded to return to their homes, at their peril. The commotion in Lincolnshire was put down. The King was advancing in person to put them down also, if they continued disobedient

canker-worms, and spoil all causes, good or bad, which admit their company, as those who had spread these stories discovered to their cost when the truth became generally known.

Lancaster Herald, however, could do little; he found the town swarming with armed men, eager and furious. He was arrested before he was able to unroll his parchment, and presently a message from the castle summoned him to appear before 'the great captain.'

'As I entered into the first ward,' he said, 'there I found many in harness, very cruel fellows, and a porter with a white staff in his hand; and at the two other ward gates a porter with his staff, accompanied with harnessed men. I was brought into the hall, which I found full of people; and there I was commanded to tarry till the traitorous captain's pleasure was known. In that space I stood up at the high table in the hall, and there showed to the people the cause of my coming and the effect of the proclamation; and in doing the same the said Aske sent for me into his chamber, there keeping his port and countenance as though he had been a great prince.'

The Archbishop of York, Lord Darcy, Sir Robert Constable, Mr Magnus, Sir Christopher Danby, and several other gentlemen were in the room. As the herald entered, Aske rose, and, 'with a cruel and inestimable proud countenance, stretched himself and took the hearing of the tale.' When it was declared to him, he requested to see the proclamation, took it, and read it openly without reverence to any person; he then said

he need call no council, he would give an answer of his own wit himself.

Standing in the highest place in the chamber, taking the high estate upon him, 'Herald,' he replied, 'as a messenger you are welcome to me and all my company, intending as I do; and as for the proclamation sent from the lords from whom you come, it shall not be read at the market cross,[1] nor in no place amongst my people which be under my guiding.'

He spoke of his intentions; the herald inquired what they were. He said 'he would go to London, he and his company, of pilgrimage to the King's Highness, and there to have all the vile blood of his council put from him, and all the noble blood set up again; and also the faith of Christ and his laws to be kept, and full restitution to Christ's Church of all wrongs done unto it; and also the commonalty to be used as they should be.' 'And he bade me trust to this,' the herald said, 'for he would die for it.'

Lancaster begged for that answer in writing. 'With a good will,' Aske replied; and he put his hand to his bill, and with a proud voice said, 'This is mine act, whosoever say to the contrary. I mean no harm to the King's person, but to see reformation; I will die in the quarrel, and my people with me.'

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[1] In explanation of his refusal, Aske said afterwards that it was for two causes: first, that if the herald should have declared to the people by proclamation that the commons in Lincolnshire were gone to their homes, they would have killed him; secondly, that there was no mention in the same proclamation neither of pardon nor of the demands which were the causes of their assembly.—Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

Lancaster again entreated on his knees that he might read the proclamation. On his life he should not, Aske answered; he might come and go at his pleasure, and if Shrewsbury desired an interview with the Pomfret council, a safe-conduct was at his service; but he would allow nothing to be put in the people's heads which might divert them from their purpose. 'Commend me to the lords,' he said at parting, 'and tell them it were meet they were with me, for that I do is for all their wealths.'[1]

October 25.

By this time the powers of all the great families, except the Cliffords, the Dacres, and the Musgraves, had come in to the confederacy. Six peers, or eldest sons of peers, were willingly or unwillingly with Aske at Pomfret. Lord Westmoreland was represented by Lord Neville. Lord Latimer was present in person, and with him Lord Darcy, Lord Lumley, Lord Scrope, Lord Conyers. Besides these, were the Constables of Flamborough, the Tempests from Durham, the Boweses, the Everses, the Fairfaxes, the Strangwayses, young Ellerkar of Ellerkar, the Danbys, St Johns, Bulmers, Mallorys, Lascelleses, Nortons, Moncktons, Gowers, Ingoldsbys: we scarcely miss a single name famous in Border story. Such a gathering had not been seen in England since the grandfathers of these same men fought on Towton Moor, and the red rose of Lancaster faded before 'the summer sun of York.' Were their descendants, in another bloody battle, to seat

[1] Lancaster Herald's Report: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 485.

a fresh Plantagenet on Edward's throne? No such aim had as yet risen consciously into form; but civil wars have strange issues—a scion of the old house was perhaps dreaming, beyond the sea, of a new and better-omened union; a prince of the pure blood might marry the Princess Mary, restored to her legitimate inheritance. Of all the natural chiefs of the North who were in the power of the insurgents, Lord Northumberland only was absent. On the first summons he was spared for his illness; a second deputation ordered him to commit his powers, as the leader of his clan, to his brothers. But the brave Percy chose to die as he had lived. 'At that time and at all other times, the Earl was very earnest against the commons in the King's behalf and the lord privy seal's.' He lay in his bed resolute in refusal. The crowd yelled before the castle, 'Strike off his head, and make Sir Thomas Percy earl.' 'I can die but once,' he said; 'let them do it; it will rid me of my pain.' 'And therewith the Earl fell weeping, ever wishing himself out of the world.'[1]

They left him to nature and to death, which was waiting at his doors. The word went now through the army, 'Every man to Doncaster.' There lay Shrewsbury and the Duke of Norfolk, with a small handful of disaffected men between themselves and London, to which they were going.

They marched from Pomfret in three divisions. Sir

[1] Stapleton's Confession; *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

Thomas Percy, at the head of five thousand men, carried the banner of St Cuthbert. In the second division, over ten thousand strong, were the musters of Holderness and the West Riding, with Aske himself and Lord Darcy. The rear was a magnificent body of twelve thousand horse, all in armour: the knights, esquires, and yeomen of Richmondshire and Durham.[1]

In this order they came down to the Don, where their advanced posts were already stationed, and deployed along the banks from Ferrybridge[2] to Doncaster.

A deep river, heavily swollen, divided them from the royal army; but they were assured by spies that the water was the only obstacle which prevented the loyalists from deserting to them.[3]

There were traitors in London who kept the insurgents informed of Henry's movements, and even of the resolutions at the council board.[4] They knew that

[1] 'We were 30,000 men, as tall men, well horsed, and well appointed as any men could be.'—Statement of Sir Marmaduke Constable: *MS. State Paper Office.* All the best evidence gives this number.

[2] Not the place now known under this name—but a bridge over the Don three or four miles above Doncaster.

[3] So Aske states.—Examination: *Rolls House MS.*, first series, 838. Lord Darcy went further. 'If he had chosen,' he said, 'he could have fought Lord Shrewsbury with his own men, and brought never a man of the northmen with him.' Somerset Herald, on the other hand, said, that the rumour of disaffection was a feint. 'One thing I am sure of,' he told Lord Darcy, 'there never were men more desirous to fight with men than ours to fight with you.'—*Rolls House MS.*

[4] 'Sir Marmaduke Constable did say, if there had been a battle, the southern men would not have fought. He knew that every third man was theirs. Further, he said the King and his council determined nothing but they had knowledge before my lord of Norfolk gave them know-

if they could dispose of the one small body in their front, no other force was as yet in the field which could oppose or even delay their march. They had even persuaded themselves that, on the mere display of their strength, the Duke of Norfolk must either retire or would himself come over to their side.

Norfolk, however, who had but reached Doncaster the morning of the same day, lay still, and as yet showed no sign of moving. If they intended to pass, they must force the bridge. Apparently they must fight a battle; and at this extremity they hesitated. Their professed intention was no more than an armed demonstration. They were ready to fight;[1] but in fighting they could no longer maintain the pretence that they were loyal subjects. They desired to free the King from plebeian advisers, and restore the influence of the nobles. It was embarrassing to commence with defeating an army led by four peers of the purest blood in England.[2]

Wednesday, October 25; Thursday, October 26.

For two days the armies lay watching each other.[3] Parties of clergy were busy up and down the rebel host, urging an advance, protesting that if they hesitated the cause was lost; but

ledge.'—Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office.*

[1] 'I saw neither gentlemen nor commons willing to depart, but to proceed in the quarrel; yea, and that to the death. If I should say otherwise, I lie.'—Aske's Examination: *Rolls House MS.*

[2] Rutland and Huntingdon were in Shrewsbury's camp by this time.

[3] 'They wished,' said Sir Marmaduke Constable, 'the King had sent some younger lords to fight with them than my lord of Norfolk and my lord of Shrewsbury. No lord in England would have stayed them but my lord of Norfolk.'—Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office.*

their overwhelming strength seems to have persuaded the leaders that their cause, so far from being lost, was won already, and that there was no need of violence.

On the 25th Lancaster Herald came across to desire, in Norfolk's name, that four of them would hold an interview with him, under a safe-conduct, in Doncaster, and explain their objects. Aske replied by a counter-offer, that eight or twelve principal persons on both sides should hold a conference on Doncaster Bridge.

Both proposals were rejected; the Duke said that he should remain in his lines, and receive their attack whenever they dared to make it.[1] There was a pause. Aske called a council of war; and 'the lords'—or perhaps Lord Darcy—knowing that in rebellions half measures are suicide, voted for an immediate onset. Aske himself was of a different opinion. Norfolk did not wholly refuse negotiation; one other attempt might at least be made to avoid bloodshed. 'The Duke,' said Aske, in his account of his conduct, 'neither of those days had above six or eight thousand men, while we were nigh thirty thousand at the least; but we considered that if battle had been given, if the Duke had obtained the victory, all the knights, esquires, and all others of those

[1] The chroniclers tell a story of a miraculous fall of rain, which raised the river the day before the battle was to have been fought, and which was believed by both sides to have been an interference of Providence. Cardinal Pole also mentions the same fact of the rain, and is bitter at the superstitions of his friends; and yet, in the multitude of depositions which exist, made by persons present, and containing the most minute particulars of what took place, there is no hint of anything of the kind. The waters had been high for several days, and the cause of the unbloody termination of the crisis was more creditable to the rebel leaders.

parts had been attainted, slain, and undone, for the Scots and the enemies of the King; and, on the other part, if the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Earl of Rutland, the Earl of Huntingdon, the Lord Talbot, and others, had been slain, what great captains, councillors, noble blood, persons dread in foreign realms, and Catholic knights had wanted and been lost. What displeasure should this have been to the King's public wealth, and what comfort to the antient enemies of the realm. It was considered also what honour the north parts had attained by the said Duke; how he was beloved for his activity and fortune.'[1]

If a battle was to be avoided nevertheless, no time was to be lost, for skirmishing parties were crossing the river backwards and forwards, and accident might at any moment bring on a general engagement. Aske had gained his point at the council; he signified his desire for a further parley, and on Thursday afternoon, after an exchange of hostages, Sir Thomas Hilton, Sir Ralph Ellerkar, Sir Robert Chaloner, and Sir Robert Bowes[2] crossed to the royal camp to attempt, if possible, to induce the Duke to agree to the open conference on the bridge.[3] The con-

October 26.

[1] Second Examination of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 838. It is true that this is the story of Aske himself, and was told when, after fresh treason, he was on trial for his life. But his bearing at no time was that of a man who would stoop to a lie. Life comparatively was of small moment to him.

[2] Uncle of Marjory, afterwards wife of John Knox. Marjory's mother, Elizabeth, to whom so many of Knox's letters were addressed, was an Aske, but she was not apparently one of the Aughton family.

[3] Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

ditions on which they would consent to admit even this first slight concession were already those of conquerors. A preliminary promise was demanded from the Duke that all persons who, in heart, word, or deed, had taken part in the insurrection, should have free pardon for life, lands, and goods; that neither in the pardon nor in the public records of the realm should they be described as traitors. The Duke must explain further the extent of his powers to treat. If 'the captain' was to be present on the bridge, he must state what hostages he was prepared to offer for the security of so great a person; and as Richard Cromwell was supposed to be with the King's army, neither he nor any of his kin should be admitted among the delegates. If these terms were allowed, the conference should take place, and the objects of the insurrection might be explained in full for the Duke to judge of them.[1]

[1] Instructions to Sir Thomas Hilton and his Companions: *Rolls House MS.*

There are many groups of 'articles' among the Records. Each focus of the insurrection had its separate form; and coming to light one by one, they have created much confusion. I have thought it well, therefore, to print in full, from Sir Thomas Hilton's instructions, a list, the most explicit, as well as most authentic, which is extant.

'I. Touching our faith, to have the heresies of Luther, Wickliffe, Huss, Melancthon, Œcolampadius, Bucer's *Confessio Germanica*, *Apologia Melancthonis*, the works of Tyndal, of Barnes, of Marshal, Raskall, St Germain, and such other heresies of Anabaptists, clearly within this realm to be annulled and destroyed.

'II. To have the supreme head, touching *cura animarum*, to be reserved unto the See of Rome, as before it was accustomed to be, and to have the consecration of the bishops from him, without any first-fruits or pensions to him to be paid out of this realm; or else a pension reasonable for the outward defence of our faith.

'III. We humbly beseech our

Hilton and his companions remained for the night in Doncaster. In the morning they returned with a favourable answer. After dinner the

Friday, October 27.

most dread sovereign lord that the Lady Mary may be made legitimate, and the former statute therein annulled, for the danger if the title might incur to the Crown of Scotland. This to be in Parliament.

'IV. To have the abbeys suppressed to be restored — houses, lands, and goods.

'V. To have the tenths and first-fruits clearly discharged, unless the clergy will of themselves grant a rent-charge in penalty of the augmentation of the Crown.

'VI. To have the friars observants restored unto their houses again.

'VII. To have the heretics, bishops and temporals, and their sect, to have condign punishment by fire, or such other; or else to try the quarrel with us and our partakers in battle.

'VIII. To have the Lord Cromwell, the lord chancellor, and Sir Richard Rich to have condign punishment as subverters of the good laws of this realm, and maintainers of the false sect of these heretics, and first inventors and bringers in of them.

'IX. That the lands in Westmoreland, Cumberland, Kendal, Furness, the abbey lands in Massamshire, Kirkbyshire, and Netherdale, may be by tenant right, and the lord to have at every change two years' rent for gressam [the fine paid on renewal of a lease; the term is, I believe, still in use in Scotland], and no more, according to the grant now made by the lords to the commons there under their seal; and this to be done by Act of Parliament.

'X. The statute of hand-guns and cross-bows to be repealed, and the penalties thereof, unless it be on the King's forest or park for the killing of his Grace's deer, red or fallow.

'XI. That Doctor Legh and Doctor Layton may have condign punishment for their extortions in the time of visitation, as bribes of nuns, religious houses, forty pounds, twenty pounds, and so to —— leases under one common seal, bribes by them taken, and other their abominable acts by them committed and done.

'XII. Restoration for the election of knights of shires and burgesses, and for the uses among the lords in the Parliament house, after their antient custom.

'XIII. Statutes for enclosures and intakes to be put in execution, and that all intakes and enclosures since the fourth year of King Henry the Seventh be pulled down, except on mountains, forests, or parks.

'XIV. To be discharged of the fifteenth, and taxes now granted by Act of Parliament.

same four gentlemen, accompanied by Lords Latimer, Lumley, Darcy, Sir Robert Constable, and Sir John Bulmer, went down upon the bridge. They were met by an equal number of knights and noblemen from

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'XV. To have the Parliament in a convenient place at Nottingham or York, and the same shortly summoned.

'XVI. The statute of the declaration of the Crown by will, that the same be annulled and repealed.

'XVII. That it be enacted by Act of Parliament that all recognizances, statutes, penalties under forfeit, during the time of this commotion, may be pardoned and discharged, as well against the King as strangers.

'XVIII. That the privileges and rights of the Church be confirmed by Act of Parliament; and priests not to suffer by the sword unless they be degraded. A man to be saved by his book; sanctuary to save a man for all cases in extreme need; and the Church for forty days, and further, according to the laws as they were used in the beginning of this King's days.

'XIX. The liberties of the Church to have their old customs, in the county palatine of Durham, Beverley, Ripon, St Peter's at York, and such other, by Act of Parliament.

'XX. To have the Statute of Uses repealed.

'XXI. That the statutes of treasons for words and such like, made since anno 21 of our sovereign lord that now is, be in like wise repealed.

'XXII. That the common laws may have place, as was used in the beginning of your Grace's reign; and that all injunctions may be clearly decreed, and not to be granted unless the matter be heard and determined in Chancery.

'XXIII. That no man, upon subpœnas from Trent north, appear but at York, or by attorney, unless it be upon pain of allegiance, or for like matters concerning the King.

'XXIV. A remedy against escheators for finding of false offices, and extortionate fees-taking, which be not holden of the King, and against the promoters thereof.'

A careful perusal of these articles will show that they are the work of many hands, and of many spirits. Representatives of each of the heterogeneous elements of the insurrection contributed their grievances; wise and foolish, just and unjust, demands were strung together in the haste of the moment.

For the original of this remarkable document, see Instructions to Sir Thomas Hilton, Miscellaneous Depositions on the Rebellion: *Rolls House MS.*

Norfolk's army; Robert Aske remaining on the bank of the Don, 'the whole host standing with him in perfect array.'[1] The conference lasted till the October day had closed in darkness. What destinies did not hang upon its issue? The insurgents it is likely might have forced the passage of the river; and although the river of time was running with too full a current for them or any man to have stayed its course, yet they might have stained its waters with streams of English blood; the sunrise of the Reformation might have been veiled in storms; and victory, when it came at last, have shone over gory battle-fields and mangled ruins.

Such was not the destiny appointed for England. The insurgents were deceived by their strength. They believed themselves irresistible, and like many others who have played at revolutions, dreamt that they could afford to be moderate.

It was agreed that Sir Robert Bowes and Sir Ralph Ellerkar should carry the articles to the King; that the Duke of Norfolk should escort them in person, and intercede for their favourable hearing. Meanwhile, and till the King's reply was known, there should be an armistice. The musters on both sides should be disbanded—neither party should 'innovate' upon the *status in quo.*

The loyalists and the rebels alike expected to gain by delay. Letters from all parts of the kingdom were

[1] Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.*

daily pouring in to Aske, full of gratitude, admiration, and promises of help.[1] He had leisure to organize the vast force of which the command had been thrust upon him, to communicate with the Emperor or with the Regent's Court at Brussels,[2] and to establish a correspondence with the southern counties.

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[1] Lord Darcy to Somerset Herald: *Rolls House MS.*

[2] The following letter was written by some unknown person to the Regent of the Low Countries. The original is in the Archives at Brussels.

———— *to Her Majesty the Queen Regent.*

[MS. Archives at Brussels.]

London, October, 1536.

MOST NOBLE LADY,—I am instructed to inform your Majesty that on Monday, the 2nd of this present October, in the northern counties in the diocese of Lincoln, the King's officers and commissioners were proceeding with the demolition of four abbeys, when certain peasants, by God's will, commenced a riot under the conduct of a brave shoemaker named William King.* The chief commissioner, Doctor Lee, who was especially obnoxious to the people, as the summoner who cited the late Queen, your aunt, now in glory, before the Archbishop of Canterbury, contrived to escape; but his cook was taken, and, as a beginning, the people hanged him. A gentleman belonging to the Lord Privy Seal, otherwise called Master Cromwell, tried to stop them; and he too was immediately laid hands on, wrapped in the hide of a newly-killed calf, and worried and devoured by dogs; the mob swearing they would do as much for his master. The people went next to the house of the Bishop of Lincoln, whom they could not find; but they caught his chancellor, and to spite the Bishop, who is said to have been the first person to advise the King to divorce your aunt, they killed him.

The next day, being Tuesday, there were more than ten thousand of them in arms; and they proceeded to take the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and swear them to be true to their cause. The cobler assumed a cloak of crimson velvet, with the words embroidered in large letters upon it,

FOR GOD, THE KING, AND THE COMMONWEALTH.

Some of the gentlemen who had been sworn escaped and gave notice to the King, and on Wednesday, at nine in the morning, an order came out that all the gentlemen in London should place themselves under the

* Nicholas Melton was the name of the man who was called Captain Cobler.

The Duke of Norfolk escaped an immediate danger; agreeing in heart with the general objects of the

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command of Richard Cromwell. The Lord Mayor undertook to provide horses, and went in person from stable to stable, borrowing on all sides from natives and foreigners alike. To appease the complaints which began to be heard, it was given out that the horses were required for the Count of Nassau, who, they pretended, had come over with a train of men as ambassador, and had nothing to mount them on. On Saturday the number of insurgents had risen to fifty thousand, and there were said to be as many as ten thousand priests among them, who never ceased to stir them on to their work, and to tell them what great things they would achieve. The same day Lord Clinton's retinue joined them; Lord Clinton himself (it was he who married the Duke of Richmond's mother) had to fly with a single servant; and many other gentlemen were forced to fly also, who intended to have done service for the King.

When these news reached London, the King called a council; and immediately after the meeting, the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, and the other lords, dispersed in different directions, as it was said, to prevent the insurrection from spreading. The admiral and Sir Francis Brian went down to Ampthill, and collected about ten thousand men out of Northamptonshire and the counties adjoining. On Sunday the King was said to be going to Ampthill also, and the royal standard was expected to be displayed. Sunday afternoon I saw thirty-four of the falconets which the King has been making during the last year leave the Tower of London. There was no shot or powder, however, that I could see, and they were badly provided with artillerymen. The next day, when they were drawn out of the City, the horses were found so bad, that, for want of better, thirteen of the guns went but a mile, and then returned to the Tower; while the remainder were taken but a small distance.

Men are hired, as many as can be obtained, in Kent and elsewhere; but the chances are that when in face of the enemy they will turn their coats, and join the rebels in their good quarrel. Those who have risen say they will live like their forefathers; they will maintain the abbeys and the churches, and pay no more imposts and subsidies. They demand the repayment of the sums which they have been forced to contribute already, especially the great loan exacted from them in the Cardinal's time; and, finally, they will have surrendered into their hands the wool-comber (by whom they mean Cromwell), the tavern-keeper (which is their name for the Archbishop of Canterbury),

rising, he trusted that the petition, supported by the formidable report which he would carry up with him, might bring the King to consent to a partial reaction; if not to be reconciled to the Pope, at least to sacrifice Cromwell and the heretical bishops.

November. The weight of the crisis now rested on Henry himself. Cromwell was powerless

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and divers other bishops and lords of the council.

It was reported in London on Monday that the Earl of Northumberland's brother had joined the Commons with thirty thousand men. He wanted lately to be declared the Earl's heir; the King made difficulties, and he now means to be revenged. It was also said that a number of other lords and great men had been forced to join, by a threat that they should have their houses pillaged; this has been done already with the houses of those who, after taking the oath, have deserted to the King. A priest and a shoemaker were stated to have been hanged the same morning for merely saying it was a pity to collect an army to put down such poor people. The King declared that they cared more for a set of rascals than for him.

Thursday morning a knight went down to the coast to fetch off the workmen employed by the King. The town of Sandwich also has provided sixty poorly furnished men-at-arms. The frontiers are now unprotected, and a landing can be easily effected. Even the French tailors in London are pressed to serve. They give them harquebusses and two groats a-day, making four ducats the month, for their pay, with a groat to drink for every five leagues they march. The Flemish shoemakers are made to go on the same terms. To the English they give but sixpence a-day, with the same drink money as they allow the French.

Madame, it appears to the person who has been sent to me by your Majesty, that it is good fishing in troubled waters; and that now, in these disturbances, there is an opportunity such as there has not been these hundred years, to take vengeance upon the schismatic for the wrongs which he has done with his French alliances to his Majesty the Emperor, for the injuries of your late aunt, his lawful wife, and for the iniquitous treatment of his patient daughter the Princess. A portion of the army now in readiness in Zealand would suffice to restore the Princess to her place and rank. Two thousand harquebuss men (it is of those that the need is greatest) should be landed at the mouth of the river which runs from York.

where his own person was the subject of contention. He had no friends—or none whose connection with him did not increase his danger—while by his enemies he was hated as an incarnation of Satan. He left his cause in the King's hands, to be supported or allowed to fall.[1]

But the Tudor princes were invariably most calm when those around them were panic-stricken. From the moment that the real danger was known, the King's own hand was on the helm—his own voice was heard dictating his orders. Lincolnshire had again become menacing, and Suffolk had written despairing letters; the King told him 'not to be frightened at his shadow.' The reactionary members of the council had suggested a call of Parliament, and a proclamation that if any of the King's subjects could prove the late measures of the Government to be against the laws of God or the interests of the commonwealth, these measures should be undone. They had begged, further, that his Highness would invite all persons who had complaints against Cromwell and the bishops to come forward with their proofs, and would give a promise that if the charges could be substantiated, they should be proceeded against and punished.[2] At such a crisis the King refused either to call a Parliament to embarrass his hands, or to invite his subjects to argue against his policy. 'He dared to testify that there never were in any of his predecess-

[1] Richard Cromwell to Lord Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. vii.

[2] Devices for the Quieting of the North: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 606.

ors' days so many wholesome, commodious, and beneficial Acts made for the commonwealth: for those who were named subverters of God's laws he did take and repute them to be just and true executors of God's laws.' If any one could duly prove to the contrary, they should be duly punished. 'But in case,' he said, 'it be but a false and untrue report (as we verily think it is), then it were as meet, and standeth as well with justice, that they should have the self-same punishment which wrongfully hath objected this to them that they should have had if they deserved it.'[1]

On the 29th of October he was on the point of setting off from London; circulars had gone out to the mayors of the towns informing them of his purpose, and directing them to keep watch and ward night and day,[2] when Norfolk reached the Court with the two messengers.

Nov. 1.

Henry received them graciously. Instead of sending them back with an immediate answer, he detained them for a fortnight, and in that interval gained them wholly over to himself. With their advice and assistance he sent private letters among the insurgent leaders. To Lord Latimer and the other nobles he represented the dishonour which they had brought upon themselves by serving under Aske; he implored both them and the many other honourable men who had been led away to return to their allegiance, 'so as we may not,' he said, 'be enforced to extend our

[1] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 507–8.

[2] Bundle of unassorted MSS. in the State Paper Office

princely power against you, but with honour, and without further inconvenience, may perform that clemency on which we have determined.'[1]

By infinite exertion he secured the services, from various parts of England, of fifty thousand reliable men who would join him on immediate notice; while into the insurgent counties he despatched heralds, with instructions to go to the large towns, to observe the disposition of the people, and, if it could be done with safety, to request the assistance of the mayors and bailiffs, 'gently and with good words in his Grace's name.' If the herald 'used himself discreetly,' they would probably make little difficulty; in which case he should repair in his coat of arms, attended by the officers of the corporation, to the market cross, and explain to the people the untruth of the stories by which they had been stirred to rebellion. The poorest subject, the King said, had at all times access to his presence to declare his suits to him; if any among them had felt themselves aggrieved, why had they not first come to him as petitioners, and heard the truth from his own lips. 'What folly was it then to adventure their bodies and souls, their lands, lives and goods, wives and children, upon a base false lie, set forth by false seditious persons, intending and desiring only a general spoil and a certain destruction of honest people, honest wives, and innocent children. What ruth and pity was it that Christian men, which were not only by God's law bound to obey their prince,

[1] *Rolls House MS.* second series, 278

but also to provide nutriment and sustentation for their wives and children, should forget altogether, and put them in danger of fire and sword for the accomplishment of a certain mad and furious attempt.' They could not recall the past. Let them amend their faults by submission for the future. The King only desired their good. He had a force in reserve with which he could and would crush them if they drove him to it; he hoped that he might be able only to show them mercy and pardon.[1] As to the suppression of the abbeys, the people should learn to compare their actual condition with the objects for which they were founded. Let them consider the three vows of religion—poverty, chastity, and obedience—and ask themselves how far these vows had been observed.[2]

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[1] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 476, and compare p. 500. The instructions varied according to circumstances. There were many forms of them, of which very few are printed in the *State Papers*. I extract from several, in order to give the general effect.

[2] The King's words are too curious to be epitomized. The paper from which I here quote is written by his secretary, evidently from dictation, and in great haste. After speaking of the way in which the vow of chastity had been treated by the monks, he goes on—

'For the point of wilful poverty they have gathered together such possessions, and have so exempted themselves from all laws and good order with the same, that no prince could live in that quiet, in that surety, in that ease, yea, in that liberty, that they lived. The prince must carke and care for the defence of his subjects against foreign enemies, against force and oppression; he must expend his treasures for their safeguard; he must adventure his own blood, abiding all storms in the field, and the lives of his nobles, to deliver his poor subjects from the bondage and thrall of their mortal enemies. The monks and canons meantime lie warm in their demesnes and cloysters. Whosoever wants, they shall be sure of meat and drink, warm clothing, money, and all other things of pleasure. They may not fight for their prince

Thus instructed the heralds attempted to discharge their mission, and partially succeeded; but so hot a fever was not to be cooled on a sudden; and connected with the delay of the messengers, and with information of the measures which the King was procuring, their presence created, perhaps, more irritation and suspicion than their words accomplished good. The siege of Skipton continued; separate local insurrections were continually blazing; the monks everywhere were replaced in the abbeys; and Aske, who, though moderate, was a man of clear, keen decision, determined, since the King was slow in sending up his concessions, to anticipate them by calling a Parliament and Convocation of the northern notables, to sit at York.[1] 'The King's

and country; but they have declared at this rebellion that they might fight against their prince and country. Is not this a great and wilful poverty, to be richer than a prince?—to have the same in such certainty as no prince hath that tendereth the weal of his subjects? Is not this a great obedience, that may not obey their prince, and against God's commandment, against their duties of allegiance, whereto they be sworn upon the Holy Evangelists, will labour to destroy their prince and country, and devise all ways to shed Christian blood? The poor husbandman and artificer must labour all weathers for his living and the sustentation of his family. The monk and canon is sure of a good house to cover him, good meat and drink to feed him, and all other things meeter for a prince than for him that would be wilfully poor. If the good subject will ponder and weigh these things, he will neither be grieved that the King's Majesty have that for his defence and the maintenance of his estate, so that he shall not need to molest his subjects with taxes and impositions, which loiterers and idle fellows, under the cloke of holyness, have scraped together, nor that such dissimulers be punished after their demerits, if they will needs live like enemies to the commonwealth.'—*Rolls House MS.* first series, 297.

[1] Sir Brian Hastings to Lord Shrewsbury: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 268.

treasure,' which had fallen into his hands, gave him command of money; the religious houses contributed their plate; circulars were addressed to every parish and township, directing them to have their contingents ready at any moment to march; and, to insure a rapid transmission of orders, regular posts were established from Hull to Templehurst, from Templehurst to York, from York to Durham, from Durham to Newcastle. The roads were patrolled night and day; all unknown persons in town or village were examined and 'ripped.'[1] The harbour at Hull was guarded with cannon, and the town held by a strong garrison under Sir Robert Constable, lest armed ships from Portsmouth might attempt to seize it. Constable himself, with whose name we have already become familiar, was now, after Robert Aske and Lord Darcy, the third great leader of the movement.[2] The weather had changed, an early winter had set in, and the rivers either fell or froze; the low marsh country again became passable, and rumours were abroad that Darcy intended to surprise Doncaster, and advance towards Nottingham; and that Aske and Constable would cross the Humber, and, passing through Lincolnshire, would cut off Suffolk, and join him at the same place.[3]

[1] Sir Brian Hastings to Lord Shrewsbury: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 268.

[2] He was a bad, violent man. In earlier years he had carried off a ward in Chancery, one Anne Grysanis, while still a child, and attempted to marry her by force to one of his retainers.—*Rolls House MS.* second series, 434.

[3] Sir Brian Hastings to Lord Shrewsbury: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 626.

Nov. 9.

The King, feeling that the only safety was in boldness, replied by ordering Lord Shrewsbury to advance again to his old position. The danger must have been really great, as even Shrewsbury hesitated, and this time preferred to hold the line of the Trent.[1] But Henry would now hear nothing of retreat. His own musters were at last coming up in strength. The fortification of Hull, he said, was a breach of the engagement at Doncaster; and Vernon, one of the lords of the Welsh Marches, Sir Philip Draycote, and Sir Henry Sacheverell, going to Shrewsbury's assistance, the line of the Don was again occupied. The head quarters were at Rotherham, and a depôt of artillery and stores was established at Tickhill.[2]

In Suffolk's camp at Lincoln a suggestion was started that Aske's attack might perhaps be anticipated—that, by a swift, silent enterprise, it might be possible to seize and carry off both him and Sir R. Constable. Two volunteers were found who offered to make the experiment. One of them, Anthony Curtis, a cousin of Aske, 'for private malice, said that if he might have license he would find sureties, and would either kill his kinsman or be killed himself.'[3] Another attempt for Aske's destruction was made by the Duke of Norfolk, who had no objection to a coalition of noblemen against Cromwell, but disdained the dictation of an unknown

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[1] Shrewsbury to the King: *MS. State Paper Office;* Letters to the King and Council, vol. v.

[2] *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, vol. xxxvi.

[3] Suffolk to the King: *MS. State Paper Office;* Letters to the King and Council, vol. v.

upstart. He supposed that he might tempt Lord Darcy to an act of treachery, and sent a questionable proposal to him by the hands of a servant of Lord Hussey, a certain Percival Cresswell. The attempt failed; but Cresswell's account of his mission is not a little curious.

Nov. 10.

He arrived at Templehurst on Friday, November the 10th, shortly before dinner. Lord Darcy was walking with Aske himself, who was his guest at the time, and a party of the commons in the castle garden. Cresswell gave him a letter from Norfolk, which was cautiously worded, in case it should fall into wrong hands, and said he was charged also with a private message. The danger of exciting suspicion was so great that Darcy had a difficulty in arranging a separate conversation. He took Cresswell into the castle, where he left him in an anteroom full of armed men. They gathered about him, and inquired whether Cromwell, 'whom they called most vilipendiously,' was put out of the King's council. He replied that the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Oxford, Lord Sussex, and Sir William Fitzwilliam were with the King. 'God save the King!' they said; 'as long as noblemen of the true blood rule about the King all will be well. But how of Cromwell? Is he put from the council or no?' Cresswell said that he was still on the council. 'Then, whatsoever the Lord Darcy say to you,' they answered, 'show the King and the lords that until our petitions are granted we will take no pardon till we have our will.' Darcy had by this time secured a private

room and a few private moments. He called Cresswell in. 'Now tell your message,' he said. 'The Duke of Norfolk desires you,' replied the messenger, 'to deliver up Aske, quick or dead, but if possible, alive; and you shall so show yourself a true subject, and the King will so regard you.'[1] Darcy answered like a nobleman that he had given his faith, and he would not stain his coat.[2] He wrote a few lines to Norfolk—'Alas, my Lord!' his letter said, 'that you, being a man of so great honour, should advise or choose me to betray any living man, Frenchman, Scot, yea, or even Turk. To win for me or for mine heirs the best duke's lands that be in France, I would not do it to no living person.'[3] The next morning, after mass, he again called Cresswell to him, and bade him tell the King that he had never done better service either to him or to his father than he was doing at that moment, and if there was to be peace, he recommended that the answer to the petition should be returned instantly.

Nov. 11.

The King had written more than one answer; but in each draught which he had made there was a reservation attached to the promise of a general pardon, excluding in one instance ten persons, in another, six, from the benefit of it;[4] and they were withdrawn all of

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[1] It is to be remembered that Darcy still *professed* that he had been forced into the insurrection by Aske. This is an excuse for Norfolk's request, though it would have been no excuse for Darcy had he consented.

[2] Deposition of Percival Cresswell: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29.

[3] *MS. State Paper Office*, first series. Autograph letter of Lord Darcy to the Duke of Norfolk. It is unfortunately much injured.

[4] One of these is printed in the *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 506. The editor of these Papers does not

them in deference to the protests of the Duke of Norfolk. Ellerkar and Bowes were dismissed on the 14th of November, 'with general instructions of comfort.'[1] Norfolk himself, with other commissioners, would return to the North at the end of the month with a final reply.

The ill-humour of the insurgents was meanwhile increasing; division had began to show itself; the people suspected the gentlemen, the gentlemen feared the people, and noisy demonstrations showed Aske that a state of inaction was too dangerous to continue. On the return of Bowes and Ellerkar a hasty council was called at York. The question was put whether they should wait or not for the arrival of the commissioners. Especial exasperation had been caused by a letter of Cromwell to Sir Ralph Evers, in which it was said that, 'unless the commons would be soon pacified, there should be such vengeance taken that the whole world should speak thereof.'[2] Several of the leaders proposed to cut short further parley, and refer the cause to the sword. Darcy had already selected an agent to the Court of Brussels, to beg that arms and ammunition

seem to have known that neither this nor any *written* answer was actually sent. Amidst the confusion of the MSS. of this reign, scattered between the State Paper Office, the Rolls House, and the British Museum, some smothered in dirt and mildew, others in so frail a state that they can be scarcely handled or deciphered, far greater errors would be pardonable. The thanks of all students of English history are due to Sir John Romilly for the exertions which he has made and is still making to preserve the remnants of these most curious documents.

[1] Henry VIII. to the Earl of Rutland: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 454.

[2] Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.*

might be sent at once to Hull.[1] Sir Robert Constable declared openly, 'that if his advice might be taken, seeing he had broken one point in the tables with the King, he would yet break another, and have no meeting. He would have all the country made sure from Trent northward; he doubted not they would have joined with them all Lancashire and Cheshire, which would make them strong enough to defend themselves against all men; and then,' he said, 'he would be content to condescend to the meeting.'[2]

Had this advice been taken, the consequences might have been serious; but the fatal moderation of Aske prevailed over the more audacious but safer counsel. He resolved that the terms offered by the Government should be first discussed, but discussed in security. The musters should reassemble in full force.[3] The northern Parliament and Convocation had been summoned. The two assemblies should sit at Pomfret and not at York, and should meet at the time of the conference.

Nov. 26.

Thus, on the 26th of November, as the King's commissioners approached the borders of Yorkshire,[4] the news reached them that the beacons were again burning, and the force of the commons was again collecting. The conference, if conference there was to

[1] *Rolls House MS.* first series, 1805; and see *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 558.

[2] Deposition of John Selbury: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29.

[3] Sir Anthony Wingfield to the Duke of Norfolk: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 692.

[4] The Duke of Norfolk, Sir William Fitzwilliam, Sir John Russell, and Sir Anthony Brown.

be, must be held with their hands on their sword-hilts. The black squadrons, with St Cuthbert's banner, would be swarming on the banks of the Don as before.[1] They had brought down extensive powers, but the King had refused absolutely to grant a complete pardon. Five or six of the worst offenders, he insisted, should be surrendered; and if the rebels were obstinate, Norfolk had been directed to protract the discussion, to win time by policy, that he might himself come to them; and in the mean time to consent to nothing, to promise nothing, and yet do and say nothing 'which might give them warning and respite to fortify themselves.'[2]

But the waters had fallen low; the ground was hard; the sharpest winter had set in which had been known for years. The force which Shrewsbury had with him could not now hold its position in the face of the vast numbers which were collecting. When the number of the rebels who had reassembled was known, Sir John Russell was sent back from Nottingham to tell the King that his conditions could not be insisted upon, and to entreat him not only to grant the full pardon, but to promise also to hold a Parliament in person at York.

Ignorant what the answer would be, Norfolk, with the other commissioners, went on to Doncaster, having

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[1] The Duke of Suffolk feared an even larger gathering: where heretofore they took one man, he warned Norfolk, they now were taking six or seven. *State Paper Office MS.* first series, vol. iii. Lord Darcy assured Somerset Herald that they had a reserve of eighty thousand men in Northumberland and Durham — which, however, the herald did not believe. *Rolls House MS.*

[2] The King to the Duke of Norfolk: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 278.

prepared his way by a letter to Lord Darcy, to do away the effects of his late overtures.[1] He arrived at the town on the 28th of November. On Monday the 27th, the northern notables, laity and clergy, had assembled at Pomfret. Thirty-four peers and knights, besides gentlemen and extemporized leaders of the commons, sat in the castle hall;[2] the Archbishop of York and his Convocation in Pomfret church. The discussions of the latter body were opened by the Archbishop in a sermon, in which he dared to declare the meeting unlawful and the insurrection traitorous. He was swiftly silenced: a number of soldiers dragged him out of the pulpit, and threw him down upon the pavement. He was rescued and carried off by a party of his friends, or in a few more moments he would have been murdered.[3] The clergy, delivered from his control, drew up a list of articles, pronouncing successively against each step which had been taken in the Reformation;[4] and other articles simultaneously were drawn

Nov. 27.

[1] *MS. State Paper Office.*

[2] The names of the thirty-four were—Lords Darcy, Neville, Scrope, Conyers, Latimer, and Lumley; Sir Robert Constable, Sir John Danvers, Sir Robert Chaloner, Sir James Strangways, Sir Christopher Danby, Sir Thomas Hilton, Sir William Constable, Sir John Constable, Sir William Vaughan, Sir Ralph Ellerkar, Sir Christopher Heliyarde, Sir Robert Neville, Sir Oswald Wolstrop, Sir Edward Gower, Sir George Darcy, Sir William Fairfax, Sir Nicholas Fairfax, Sir William Mallore, Sir Ralph Bulmer, Sir Stephen Hamarton, Sir John Dauncy, Sir George Lawson, Sir Richard Tempest, Sir Thomas Evers, Sir Henry Garrowe, and Sir William Babthorpe.

[3] Examination of John Dakyn: *Rolls House MS.* first series, p. 402.

[4] They have been printed by Strype (*Memorials*, vol. ii. p. 266). Strype, however, knew nothing of the circumstances which gave them birth.

by the council in the hall. One by one, as the form of each was resolved upon, they were read aloud to the assembly, and were received with shouts of 'Fiat! Fiat!'

Ten knights were then told off, and ten followers for every knight, to ride down to Doncaster and arrange the preliminaries of the meeting. They saw the Duke on the day of his arrival; and on Wednesday the 29th, Lord Darcy, Robert Aske, and three hundred of the most eminent of their party, passed the bridge of the Don with a safe-conduct into the town. Wearing their pilgrim's badges, the five wounds of Christ crossed on their breasts, 'they made obeisance on their knees before the Duke and earls, and did humbly require to have the King's most merciful and free pardon for any their offences committed.' This done, they presented their resolutions, on which they had just determined at Pomfret, and the discussion opened. The Duke's hands were tied; he could undertake nothing. The debate continued till Saturday, 'exceeding perplexed,' messengers hurrying to and fro between Doncaster and Pomfret. At length, on Saturday, Sir John Russell came with the King's revised commission.

Nov. 29.

Dec. 2.

Against his judgment Henry had yielded to the entreaties of the privy council. He foresaw that to allow a commotion of such a kind to pass wholly unpunished, was to acknowledge a virtual defeat, and must encourage conduct which would soon lead to a repetition of the same scenes. He refused to admit that Norfolk was justified in

his despondency. Skipton still held out. Lord Clifford and Sir William Musgrave had gained possession of Carlisle, and were raising men there. Lord Derby was ready to move with the musters of Cheshire and Lancashire. Besides Shrewsbury's forces, and the artillery at Tickhill, Suffolk had eight thousand men in high order at Lincoln. He 'marvelled that Norfolk should write to him in such extreme and desperate sort, as though the world were turned upside down.' 'We might think,' he said, 'that either things be not so well looked on as they might be, when you can look but only to the one side; or else that ye be so perplexed with the bruits on the one part, that ye do omit to write the good of the other. We could be as well content to bestow some time in the reading of an honest remedy as of so many extreme and desperate mischiefs.' Nevertheless, he said, if the rebels would be contented with the two concessions which Norfolk had desired—a free pardon and a Parliament at York—these, but only these, might be made. No further engagements of any kind should or might be entered into. If more were insisted on, the commissioners should protract the time as skilfully as they could, and send secret expresses to Lord Derby and the Duke of Suffolk, who would advance by forced marches to their support.[1] With this letter he sent a

[1] Henry VIII. to the Duke of Norfolk: *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 511. The council, who had wrung these concessions from the King, wrote by the same courier, advising the Duke to yield as little as possible—'not to strain too far, but for his Grace's honour and for the better security of the commonwealth, to except from pardon, if by any means he might, a few evil persons, and especially Sir Robert Constable,'—

despatch to Suffolk, bidding him hold himself in readiness, instructing him at the same time to use his influence in the West Riding to induce the people to return to their allegiance, and permitting him to make liberal offers and promises in the name of his Government.[1]

The limitation of the new commission was as clear as language could make it. If the Duke of Norfolk committed himself more deeply, it was against the King's express commands, and in the face of repeated warnings.

On the day of Russell's arrival an agreement was made and signed. The pardon and the Parliament were directly promised. It appears, certainly, that further engagements were virtually entered upon, or that words were used, perhaps intentionally vague, which were interpreted by the insurgents through their hopes and wishes. They believed, perhaps they were led to believe, that their entire petition had been granted;[2] they had accomplished the object of their pilgrimage, and they were satisfied.

December. As the conference closed, Aske again fell upon his knees, 'and most humbly required

Hardwicke State Papers, vol. i. p. 27.

[1] 'You may of your honour promise them not only to obtain their pardons, but also that they shall find us as good and gracious lord unto them as ever we were before this matter was attempted; which promise we shall perform and accomplish without exception.'—Henry VIII. to the Duke of Suffolk: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 476.

[2] Aske, in his Narrative, which is in the form of a letter to the King, speaks of 'the articles now concluded at Doncaster, which were drawn, read, argued, and agreed among the lords and esquires' at Pomfret.—*Rolls House MS.*

the Duke of Norfolk and all the earls and lords of his part, to desire the lords of the north part to relinquish and refuse thenceforth to nominate him by the name of captain; and they promised: which done, the said Aske, in the presence of all the lords, pulled off his badge crossed with the five wounds, and in a semblable manner did all the lords there, and all others there present, saying all these words, 'We will wear no badge nor figure but the badge of our sovereign Lord.'' [1] A fine scene . . . . yet, as we sometimes witness with a sudden clearance after rain, leaving hanging vapours in the sky, indicating surely that the elements were still unrelieved.

The King had resolved on concession, but not on such concession as the Pomfret council demanded and Norfolk had seemed to promise. He would yield liberally to the substantial interests of the people, but he would yield little to their imaginative sympathies, and to the clergy and the reactionist lords he would not yield a step. The enclosures he intended should be examined into, the fines on renewals of leases should be fixed, and the relations of landlord and tenant so moderated that 'rich and poor men might live together, every one in his degree according to his calling.' [2] The abbey lands would not be restored to the monks, but he saw the inconvenience of attaching them to the domains of the Crown. They should be disposed of rapidly on terms favourable to the people and unfavourable to him-

[1] Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

[2] Instructions to the Earl of Sussex: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 299

self. In this direction he was ready to do all that he was desired to do; but undo the Reformation—never.

A remarkable state paper, in Cromwell's handwriting, indicates the policy which the King then intended. The northern Parliament was to meet the following summer. There is not the smallest doubt that Henry meant to observe his own promises. He would be present in person. The Queen would accompany him, and the opportunity would be taken for her coronation. Meanwhile, to clear up all misunderstandings, every nobleman and gentleman who had taken part in the insurrection was to be sent for, and should learn from the King himself the bearing of the measures against which they had clamoured, the motives which had led to the adoption of such measures, and the extent to which they would be further carried. A similar invitation should be sent to the principal persons in all other English counties, to come to London and give their advice on questions of social and local reform; and, further, to receive directions to try various experiments in such matters before the meeting of Parliament, 'that his Grace might see what fruit should succeed of them, and so alter and change as he should think meet.' To do away with the suspicion that the Government were favouring heresy, copies of the 'Articles of Faith' were to be scattered liberally through England; select preachers were to be sent in sufficient numbers into the North to explain their meaning; and next there follows a passage which, as written by Cromwell, was a foreshadowing of his own fate.

'Forasmuch as the rebels made the maintenance of the faith one of the chief grounds and causes of the rebellion, it shall be necessary that the King's Highness, in the mean season, see his laws, heretofore taken for the establishment of an unity in the points of religion, put in such experience and execution in those parts as it may appear that his Grace earnestly mindeth and desireth an agreement specially in those things; which will not be done without his Highness do some notable act in those quarters for that purpose.'

Finally, a lieutenant-general and a council were to be permanently established at York as a court of appeal, empowered to hear and decide all local causes and questions. That the Government might not again be taken by surprise, garrisons were to be established in the great towns, 'in such order as they might be continued without hatred of the people.' The ordnance stores should be kept in better preparation, and should be more regularly examined; and, above all, the treasury must be better furnished to meet unforeseen expenses, 'experience showing that princes be not so easily served save where there is prompt payment for service rendered, and the honest labourer is not kept waiting for his hire.[1]

[1] Scheme for the Government of the North: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 900. In connection with the scheme for the establishment of garrisons, a highly curious draft of an Act was prepared, to be submitted to the intended Parliament.

Presuming that, on the whole, the suppression of the monasteries would be sanctioned, the preamble stated (and the words which follow are underlined in the MS.) that—

'Nevertheless, the experience which we have had by those houses that are already suppressed sheweth plainly unto us that a great hurt and

These well-considered suggestions were carried at once into effect. By the end of December many of the gentlemen who had been out in the insurrection had been in London; in their interviews with the King they had been won back to an unreserved allegiance, and had returned to do him loyal service. Lord Darcy

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decay is thereby come, and hereafter shall come, to this realm, and great impoverishing of many the poor subjects thereof, for lack of hospitality and good householding that were wont in them to be kept, to the great relief of the poor people of all the counties adjoining the said monasteries, besides the maintaining of many smiths, husbandmen, and labourers that were kept in the said houses.

'It should therefore be enacted:

'1. That all persons taking the lands of suppressed houses must duly reside upon the said lands, and must keep hospitality; and that it be so ordered in the leases.

'2. That all houses, of whatsoever order, habit, or name, lying beyond the river of Trent northward, and not suppressed, should stand still and abide in their old strength and foundation.

'3. That discipline so sadly decayed should be restored among them; that all monks, being accounted dead persons by the law, should not mix themselves in worldly matters, but should be shut up within limited compass, having orchards and gardens to walk in and labour in—each monk having forty shillings for his stipend, each abbot and prior five marks—and in each house a governor, to be nominated by the King, to administer the revenue and keep hospitality.

'4. A thousand marks being the sum estimated as sufficient to maintain an abbey under such management, the surplus revenue was then to be made over to a court, to be called the *Curia Centenariorum*, for the defence of the realm, and the maintenance in peace as well as war of a standing army; the said men of war, being in wages in the time of peace, to remain in and about the towns, castles, and fortresses, within the realm at the appointment of the lord admiral, as he should think most for the surety of the realm.'

A number of provisions follow for the organization of the court, which was to sit at Coventry as a central position, for the auditing the accounts, the employment of the troops, &c. The paper is of great historic value, although with a people so jealous of their liberties, it was easy to foresee the fate of the project. It is among the *Cotton. MSS. Cleopatra*, E 4, fol. 215.

and Sir Robert Constable had been invited with the rest; they had declined to present themselves: the former pretended to be ill; Constable, when the King's messenger came to him, 'using no reverend behaviour nor making any convenable answer such as might have tended to his Grace's satisfaction,' shut himself up in a remote castle on the Yorkshire coast.[1] Of the three leaders who had thrown themselves into the insurrection with a fixed and peremptory purpose, Aske alone, the truest and the bravest, ventured to the King's presence. Henry being specially desirous to see a man who had shaken his throne, paid him the respect of sending his request by the hands of a gentleman of the bedchamber. He took him now, he said, for his faithful subject, he wished to talk with him, and to hear from his own lips the history of the rising.[2]

Aske consulted Lord Darcy. Darcy advised him to go, but to place relays of horses along the road, to carry six servants with him, leaving three at Lincoln, Huntingdon, and Ware, and taking three to London, that in case the King broke faith, and made him prisoner, a swift message might be brought down to Templehurst, and Darcy, though too sick to pay his court to Henry, would be well enough to rescue Aske from the Tower.[3] They would have acted more wisely if they had shown greater confidence. Aske went, however. He saw the King, and wrote out for him a straightforward and

[1] *Hardwicke State Papers*, vol. i. p. 38.

[2] *State Papers*, vol. i. p. 523.

[3] Confession of George Lascelles: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 774.

manly statement of his conduct—extenuating nothing—boasting of nothing—relating merely the simple and literal truth. Henry repeated his assurance to him that the Parliament should meet at York; and Aske returned, hoping perhaps against hope, at all events, exerting himself to make others hope, that the promises which they supposed to have been made to them at Doncaster would eventually be fulfilled. To one person only he ventured to use other language. Immediately that he reached Yorkshire, he wrote to the King describing the agitation which still continued, and his own efforts to appease it. He dwelt upon the expectations which had been formed, and in relating the expressions which were used by others, he indicated not obscurely his own dissatisfaction.

'I do perceive,' he said, 'a marvellous conjecture in the hearts of the people, which is, they do think they shall not have the Parliament in convenient time; secondly, that your Grace hath by your letters written for the most part of the honourable and worshipful of these shires to come to you, whereby they fear not only danger to them, but also to their own selves; thirdly, they be in doubt of your Grace's pardon by reason of a late book answering their first articles, now in print,[1] which is a great rumour amongst them; fourthly, they

[1] And for another reason. They were forced to sue out their pardons individually, and received them only as Aske and Lord Darcy had been obliged to do, by taking the oath of allegiance and binding themselves to obey the obnoxious statutes so long as they were unrepealed. — *Rolls House MS.* first series, 471.

fear the danger of fortifying holds, and especially because it is said that the Duke of Suffolk would be at Hull, and to remain there; fifthly, they think your Grace intendeth not to accomplish their reasonable petitions by reason now the tenths is in demand; sixthly, they say the report is my lord privy seal[1] is in as great favour with your Grace as ever as he was, against whom they most specially do complain;

'Finally, I could not perceive in all the shires, as I came from your Grace homewards, but your Grace's subjects be wildly minded in their hearts towards commotions or assistance thereof, by whose abetment yet I know not; wherefore, sir, I beseech your Grace to pardon me in this my rude letter and plainness of the same, for I do utter my poor heart to your Grace to the intent your Highness may perceive the danger that may ensue; for on my faith I do greatly fear the end to be only by battle.'[2]

These were the words of a plain, honest man, who was convinced that his conduct had been right, that his demands had been wise, and who was ready to return to rebellion when he found his expectations sliding away. Here, as so often in this world, we have to regret that honesty of purpose is no security for soundness of understanding; that high-hearted, sincere men, in these great questions, will bear themselves so perversely in their sincerity, that at last there is no resource but to dismiss

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[1] Cromwell.

[2] Robert Aske to the King: *MS. State Paper Office*, Royal Letters.

them out of a world in which they have lost their way, and will not, or cannot, recover themselves.

But Aske, too, might have found a better fate, if the bad genius of his party had not now, in an evil hour for him and for many more, come forward upon the scene

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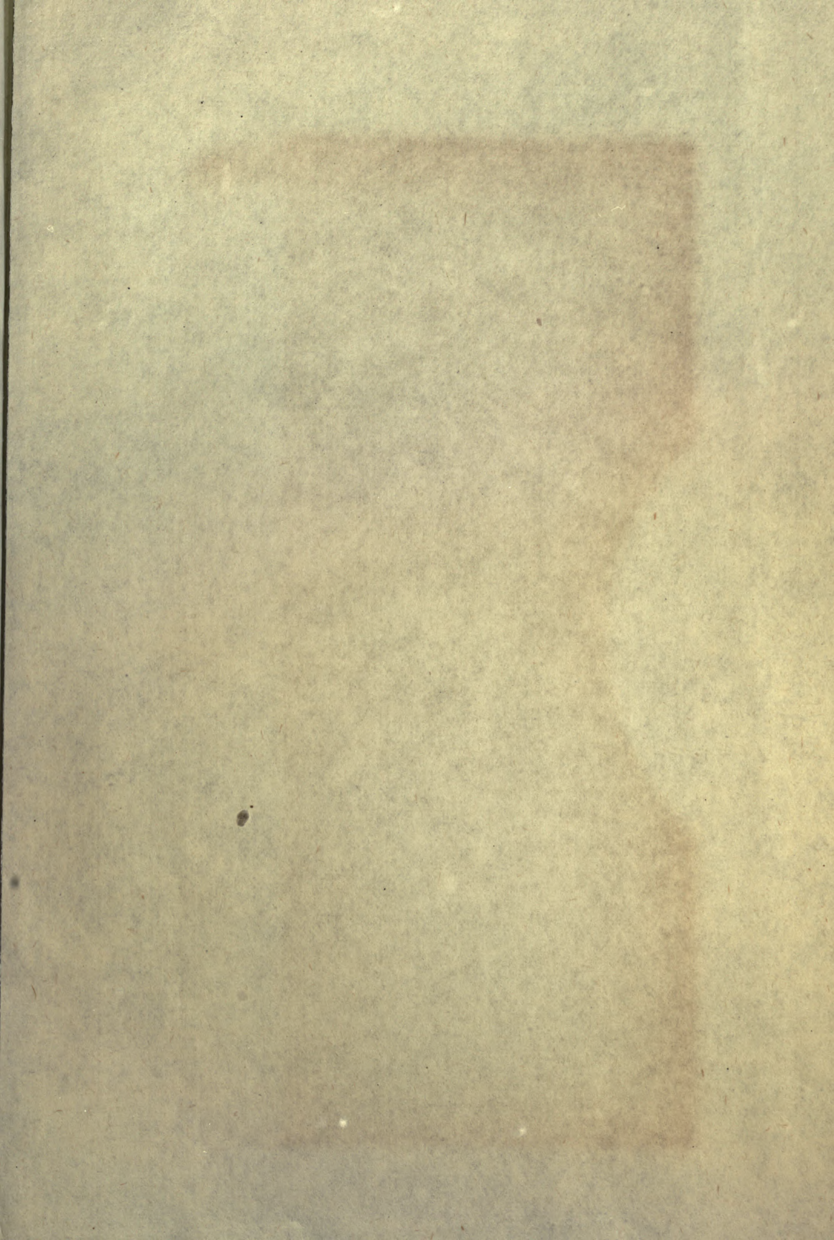

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