

THE HISTORY
OF
PROTESTANTISM .

BY THE

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ILLUSTRATED.

"PROTESTANTISM, THE SACRED CAUSE OF GOD'S LIGHT AND TRUTH AGAINST THE DEVIL'S FALSITY AND DARKNESS."—*Carlyle.*

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PROTESTANTISM IN ENGLAND FROM THE TIMES OF HENRY VIII.

CHAPTER I.

THE KING AND THE SCHOLARS.

The Darkness Fulfils its Period—Two Currents in Christendom—Two Phases of the One Movement in England—Henry VIII.—His Education—His Character—Popularity—Dean Colet—His Studies at Florence—Englishmen in Italy—Colet's Lectures at St. Paul's—William Grocyn—Colet Founds St. Paul's School—William Lily—Linacre—Dean Colet's Sermon at St. Paul's—Fitzjames, Bishop of London—Warham, the Primate—Erasmus—Sir Thomas More—The Plough of Reform Begins again to Move.

It is around the person and ministry of Wicliffe that the dawn of the new times is seen to break. Down to his day the powers of superstition had continued to grow, and the centuries as they passed over the world beheld the night deepening around the human soul, and the slavery in which the nations were sunk becoming ever viler. But with the appearance of Wicliffe the darkness fulfils its period, and the great tide of evil begins to be rolled back. From the times of the English Reformer we are able to trace two great currents in Christendom, which have never intermitted their flow from that day to this. The one is seen steadily bearing down into ruin the great empire of Roman superstition and bondage; the other is seen lifting higher and higher the kingdom of truth and liberty.

Let us for a moment consider, first, the line of calamities which fell on the anti-Christian interest, drying up the sources of its power, and paving the way for its final destruction; and next, that grand chain of beneficent dispensations, beginning with Wicliffe, which came to revive the cause of righteousness, now all but extinct.

In the days of Wicliffe came the Papal schism, the first rent in that compact tyranny which had for so long burdened the earth and defied the heavens. Next, and as a consequence, came the struggles of the Councils against the Papal autocracy: these were followed by a series of terrible wars, first in France and next in England, by which the nobles in both countries were nearly exterminated. These wars broke the power of feudalism, and raised the kings above the Papal chair. This was the first step in the emancipation of the nations; and by the opening of the sixteenth century, the process was so far advanced that we find only three great thrones in Europe, whose united power was more than a match for the Popedom, but whose conflicting interests kept open the door for the escape of the nations.

When we turn to the other line of events, we find it too taking its rise at the feet, so to speak, of Wicliffe. First comes the translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue, with the consequent spread of Lollardism—in other words, of Protestant doctrines in England; this was followed by the fall of Constantinople, and the scattering of the seeds of knowledge over the West; by the invention of the art of printing, and other discoveries which aided the awakening of the human mind; and finally by the diffusion of the light to Bohemia and other countries; and ultimately by the second great opening of the day in the era of Luther and the Reformers. From the Divine seed deposited by the hand of Wicliffe spring all the influences and events that constitute the modern times. The reforming movements which we have traced in both the Lutheran and the Calvinistic countries are about to culminate in the British Reformation—the topstone which crowns the edifice of the sixteenth century.

The action into which the English nation had been roused by the instrumentality of Wicliffe took a dual form. With one party it was a struggle for religious truth, with the other it was a contest for National independence. These were but two phases of one great movement, and both were needed to create a perfect and powerful Protestantism. For if the corruptions of the Papacy had rendered necessary a reformation of doctrine, not less had the encroachments and usurpations of the Vatican necessitated a vindication of the national liberties. The successive laws placed on the statute-book during the reigns of Henry V. and Henry VI., remain the monuments of the great struggle waged by England to disenthral herself from the fetters of the Papal supremacy. These we have narrated down to the times of Henry VIII., where we now resume our narrative.

Henry VIII. ascended the throne in 1509, and thus the commencement of his reign was contemporaneous with the birth of Calvin, of Knox, and of others who were destined, by their genius and their virtues, to lend to the age now opening a glory which their contemporaries, Henry and Francis and Charles, never could have given it by their arms or their statesmanship. It was a long while since any English king had mounted the throne with such a prospect of a peaceful and glorious reign, as the young prince who now grasped the sceptre which had been swayed by Alfred the Great. Uniting in his person the rival claims of York and Lancaster, he received the warm devotion of the adherents of both houses. Of majestic port, courteous manners, and frank and open disposition, he was the idol of the people. Destined to fill the See of Canterbury, his naturally vigorous understanding had been improved by a carefully conducted education, and his mental accomplishments far exceeded the customary measure of the princes of his age. He had a taste for letters, he delighted in the society of scholars, and he prodigally lavished in his patronage of literature, and the gaieties and entertainments for which

he had a fondness, those vast treasures which the avarice and parsimony of his father, Henry VII., had accumulated. The court paid to him by the two powerful monarchs of France and Spain, who each strove to have Henry as his ally, also tended to enhance his importance in the eyes of his subjects, and increase their devotion to him. To his youth, to the grace of his person, to the splendour of his court, and the wit and gaiety of his talk, there was added the prestige that comes from success in arms, though on a small scale. The conquest of Tournay in France, and the victory of Flodden in Scotland, were just enough to gild with a gleam of military glory the commencement of his reign, and enhance the favourable auspices under which it opened. But we turn from Henry to contemplate persons of lower degree, but of more inherent grandeur, and whose lives were destined to yield richer fruit to the realm of England. It is not at the foot of the throne of Henry that the Reformation is seen to take its rise. The movement took root in England a full century before he was born, or a Tudor had ascended the throne. Henry will reappear on the stage in his own time; meanwhile we leave the palace and enter the school.

The first of those illustrious men with whom we are now to be concerned is Dr. John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's. The young Colet was a student at Oxford, but disgusted with the semi-barbarous tuition which prevailed there, and possessed of a large fortune, he resolved to travel, if haply he might find in foreign universities a more rational system of knowledge, and purer models of study. He visited Italy, where he gave himself ardently to the acquisition of the tongue of ancient Rome, in company with Linacre, Grocyn, and William Lily, his countrymen, who had preceded him thither, drawn by their thirst for the new learning, especially the Greek. The change which the study of the classic writers had begun in Colet was completed by the reading of the Scriptures; and when he returned to England in 1497, the shackles of the schoolmen had been rent from his mind, and he was a discountenancer of the rites, the austerities, and the image-worship of the still dominant Church.¹ To the reading of the Scriptures he added the study of the Fathers, who furnished him with additional proofs and arguments against the prevailing doctrines and customs of the times. He began a course of lectures on the Epistles of St. Paul in his cathedral church; and deeming his own labours all too little to dispel the thick night that brooded over the land, he summoned to his aid labourers whose minds, like his own, had been enlarged by the new learning, and especially by that diviner knowledge, to the fountains of which that learning had given them access. Those who had passed their studious hours together on the banks of the Arno, and under the delicious sky of Florence, became in London fellow-workmen in the attempt to overthrow the monkish

¹ Knight, *Life of Colet*, p. 67 5 Oxford, 1823.

system of tuition which had been pursued for ages, and to introduce their countrymen to true learning and sound knowledge. Colet employed William Grocyn to read lectures in St. Paul's on portions of Holy Scripture; and after Grocyn, he procured other learned men to read divinity lectures in his cathedral.¹

But the special service of Colet was the founding of St. Paul's School, which he endowed out of his ample fortune, in order that sound learning might continue to be taught in it by duly qualified instructors. The first master of St. Paul's School was selected from the choice band of English scholars with whom Colet had formed so endearing a friendship in the capital of Tuscany. William Lily was appointed to preside over the newly-founded seminary, which had the honour of being the first public school in England, out of the universities, in which the Greek language was taught. This eminent scholar had been initiated into the beautiful language of ancient Greece at Rhodes, where he is said to have enjoyed for several years the instruction of one of the illustrious refugees whom the triumph of the Ottoman arms had chased from Constantinople. Cornelius Vitelli, an Italian, was the first who taught Greek in the University of Oxford. From him William Grocyn acquired the elements of that tongue, and, succeeding his master, he was the first Englishman who taught it at Oxford. His contemporary, Thomas Linacre, was not less distinguished as a "Grecian." Linacre had spent some delightful years in Italy—the friend of Lorenzo de Medici, and the pupil of Politianus and Chalcondyles, at that time the most renowned classical teachers in Europe—and when afterwards he returned to his native land, he became successively physician to Arthur, Prince of Wales, and to Henry VIII. These men were scholars rather than Reformers, but the religious movement owed them much. Having caught on the soil of Virgil and Cicero an enthusiastic love of classic learning, they imbibed therewith that simplicity and freedom, that vigour and independence of thought which characterised the ancients, and they transplanted these great qualities into the soil of England. The teaching of the monks now began to offend the quickened intellect of the English people, and the scandalous lives of the clergy to revolt their moral sense. Thus the way was being paved for greater changes.

Colet, however, was more than the scholar; he attained the stature of a Reformer, though, the time not being ripe for separation from Rome, he lived and died within the pale of the Church. In a celebrated sermon which he preached before Convocation on Conformation and Reformation, he bewailed the unhappy condition of the Church as a flock deserted by its shepherds. The clergy he described as greedy of honours and riches, as having abandoned themselves to sensual delights, as spending their days in hunting

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

and hawking, and their nights in feasting and revelry. Busied they truly were, but it was in the service of man; ambition they lacked not, but it rose no higher than the dignities of earth; their conversation was not in heaven, nor of heavenly things, but of the gossip of the court; and their dignity as God's ministers, which ought to transcend in brightness that of princes and emperors, was sorely bedimmed by the shadows of earth. And referring to the new doctrines which were beginning to be put forth in many quarters, "We see," said the dean, "strange and heretical opinions appearing in our days, and I wonder not; but has not St. Bernard told us that there is no heresy more dangerous to the Church than the vicious lives of its priests?" And coming in the close to the remedy, "The way," said he, "by which the Church may be reformed into a better fashion is not to make new laws—of these there are already enough—but to live new lives. With you, O Fathers and bishops, must begin the reformation so much needed; we, the priests, will follow when we see you going before, and then we need not fear that the whole body of the people will come after. Your holy lives will be as a book in which we shall read the Gospel, and be taught how to practise it; your example will be a sermon, and its sweet eloquence will be more effectual to draw the people into the right path than all the terror of cursings and excommunications."¹

The people listened with delight to the Dean of St. Paul's; but not so the clergy. The times were too early, and the sermon too outspoken. Among Colet's auditors was the Bishop of London, Fitzjames. He was a man of eighty, of irritable temper, innocent of all theology save what he had learned from Thomas Aquinas, and he clung only the more tenaciously to the traditions of the past the older he grew. His ire being kindled, he went with a complaint against Colet to Warham of Canterbury. "What has he said?" asked the archbishop. "Said!" exclaimed the aged and irate bishop, "what has he not said? He has said that it is forbidden to worship by images; that it is lawful to say the Lord's Prayer in one's mother tongue; that the text, 'Feed my sheep,' does not impose temporal dues on the laity to the priest; and," added he, with some hesitation, "he has said that sermons in the pulpit ought not be read." Warham smiled, for he himself was wont in preaching to read from his manuscript. To these weighty accusations, as Fitzjames doubtless accounted them, the dean had no defence to offer; and as little had the archbishop, an able and liberal-minded man, ecclesiastical censure to inflict. Another indication had been given how the tide was setting; and Dean Colet, feeling his position stronger, laboured from that day more zealously than ever to dispel the darkness around him. It was after the delivery of this famous sermon that he resolved to devote his ample fortune to the diffusion of sound learning, knowing that ignorance was the nurse of the numerous

¹ Colet's Sermon to the Convocation—Phoenix, vol. ii., pp. 1–11.

superstitions that deformed his day, and the rampart around those monstrous evils he had so unsparingly reprobated.

Erasmus, the famous scholar of Holland, and More, the nearly as famous scholar of England, belong to the galaxy of learned men that constituted the English Renaissance. Both contributed aid to that literary movement which helped to fill, at this early hour, the skies of England with light. The service rendered by Erasmus to the Reformation is worthy of eternal remembrance. He it was who first opened to the learned men of Europe the portals of Divine Revelation, by his edition of the Greek New Testament, accompanied by a translation in Latin. It was published in 1516, and forms a great epoch in the movement. Erasmus visited England, contracted a warm friendship with Colet, and learned from him to moderate his admiration of the great schoolman, Aquinas. He was introduced at court, was caressed by Henry, and permitted to share in the munificence with which that monarch then patronised learned men. Erasmus could not endure the indolence, the greed, the gluttony, the crass ignorance of the monks, and he lashed them mercilessly with his keen wit and his pungent satire. The two great scholars, Erasmus and More, met for the first time at the table of the Lord Mayor of London. A short but brilliant encounter of wits revealed the one to the other. More was the Erasmus of England; the *Utopia* of the former answers to the *Praise of Folly* (*Encomium Moriae*) of the latter. Possessing a playful fancy, a vigorous understanding, and a polished sarcasm, More delighted to assail with a delicate but effective raillery the same class of men against whom Erasmus had levelled his keenest shafts. He united with Erasmus in calling for a reformation of that Church of which, as says one, “he lived to be the champion, the inquisitor, and the martyr.”¹ In his *Utopia* he shows us what sort of world he would fain have given us—a commonwealth in which there should be no place for monks, in which the number of priests should not exceed the number of churches, and in which the right of private judgment should be accorded to every one, and if any should think wrong, he was to be put right by argument, and not by the rack or the faggot. Of great intellect, but not of equally great character, the two scholars had raised their voices, as we have said, for a reformation of abuses; but when they heard the voice of Luther resounding through Europe; and raising the same cry, and when they saw the reformation they had demanded at last approaching, they drew back in affright. They had failed to take account of the strength of error, and the forces necessary to uproot it; and when they saw altars overturned and thrones shaken—in short, a tempest arise that threatened to shake “not the earth only, but also heaven”—they resembled the magician who shudders at the spirit himself hath conjured up.

¹ Blunt, *Reformation in England*, p. 105; Lond., 1832.

Such were the men and the agencies now at work in England. They were not the Reformation, but they were necessary preparatives of that great and much-needed change. The spiritual principles that Wicliffe had taught were still in the soil; but, like flowers in the time of winter, they had hidden themselves, and waited in the darkness the coming of a more mollient time to blossom forth. Letters might exist where they would not be suffered to live. But meanwhile the action of these principles was by no means suspended. Wicliffe's Bible was being disseminated among the people; the line of his disciples was perpetuated in the poor and despised Lollards: Protestant tracts were frequently arriving in the Thames from Germany: and here and there young priests and scholars were reading public lectures on portions of the Scriptures. In the political sphere, also, preparations were going forward. England had been overturned—the old tree had been cut down to its roots, as it were, in order that fresh and more friendly shoots might spring forth. The barons had fallen in the wars: the Plantagenets had disappeared from the throne: a Tudor was now swaying the sceptre; inveterate customs and traditions were vanishing in the clear though chilly dawn of letters; and the plough of Reform, which had stood motionless in the furrow for wellnigh a century, was once more about to go forward.

CHAPTER II.

CARDINAL WOLSEY AND THE NEW TESTAMENT OF ERASMUS.

Arthur, Prince of Wales, Dies—Question of Henry's Marrying his Widow—Sentiments of the Primate—Dispensation of the Pope—Henry's Coronation and Marriage—Cardinal Wolsey—His Birth—Made King's Almoner—Made Archbishop of York—Cardinal—Chancellor—Legate-à-Latere—Rules the Kingdom Ecclesiastically and Civilly—His Grandeur—The Priests Renew the War against Parliament—Are Worsted—Resume their Persecution of Heretics—Story of Richard Hun—His Murder—Burning of his Bones—Martyrdom of John Brown—Erasmus Driven out of England—Prints his Greek and Latin New Testament—Its Enthusiastic Reception in England—England's Reformation eminently Biblical—England constituted the Custodian and Dispenser of the Bible.

HENRY VIII. again appears on the stage. We find him still the idol of the people; his court continues to be the resort of scholars; and the enormous wealth left him by his father enables him still to extend his munificent patronage to learning, and at the same time provide those shows, tournaments, and banquets, which made his court one of the gayest in all Europe. Nothing, at this hour, was less likely than that this prince should separate himself from the communion of the Roman Church, and withdraw his kingdom from obedience to the Pontifical jurisdiction. He had been educated for the priesthood during the life of Prince Arthur, his elder brother; the death of the prince placed a crown instead of a mitre on his head, but left him still so much the churchman that he plumed himself upon his theological lore, and was ever ready to do battle for a hierarchy in whose ranks he had looked forward to being enrolled, and at whose altars he had hoped to spend his life. A disciple of Thomas Aquinas, the subtlest intellect of the thirteenth century, and the man who had done more than any other doctor of the Middle Ages to fortify the basis of the Papal supremacy, Henry was not likely to be wanting in reverence for the See of Rome. Indeed, in one well-known instance he had shown abundance of zeal in the Pope's behalf: we refer to his book against Luther, for which the conclave at Rome voted him the title of "Defender of the Faith." But the train for the opposition he was to show, not to the doctrine of the Papacy, but to its jurisdiction, was laid nearly twenty years before; and it is instructive to mark that it was laid in an act of submission to that very jurisdiction, against which Henry was fated at a future day to rebel.

Arthur, Prince of Wales, was married during his father's lifetime to Catherine, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. The bride of the young prince, who was a year older than her husband, was the wealthiest heiress in Europe, and her dowry had been a prime consideration with Henry VII. in promoting the match. About five months after the marriage, Prince Arthur fell ill and died (2nd April, 1502), at the age of sixteen. When a few months

had passed, and it was seen that no issue was to be expected from Arthur's marriage, Prince Henry was proclaimed heir to the throne, and Catherine was about to return to Spain. But the parsimonious Henry VII., grieved to think that her dowry of 200,000 ducats¹ should have to be sent back with her, to become, it might be, the possession of a scion of some other royal house, started the proposal that Henry should marry his deceased brother's widow.

To this proposal Ferdinand of Spain gave his consent. Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, opposed it. "It is declared in the law of God," said the primate, "that if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: they shall be childless."² Fox, Bishop of Winchester, hinted that the difficulty might be got over by a dispensation from the Pope. The warlike Julius II. was then reigning; he thought more of battles than of the Mosaic code, and on being applied to, he readily granted the dispensation sought. In December, 1503, a bull was issued, authorising Catherine's marriage with the brother of her first husband. This was followed by the betrothal of the parties, but not as yet by their marriage, the Prince of Wales being then only twelve years of age.³

The interval gave the old king time for reflection. He began strongly to suspect that the proposed marriage, the Pope's bull notwithstanding, was contrary to the law of God; and calling Prince Henry, now fourteen years of age, to him, he caused him to sign a protest, duly authenticated, against the consummation of the marriage.⁴ And when four years afterwards he lay on his death-bed, he again summoned the prince to his presence, and conjured him not to marry her who had been the wife of his brother.⁵ On the 9th of May, 1509, Henry VII. was borne to the tomb; and no sooner had the coffin been lowered into the vault, and the staves of the officers of state, who stood around the grave, broken and cast in after it, than the heralds proclaimed, with flourish of trumpets, King Henry VIII. Henry could now do as he liked in the matter of the marriage. Meanwhile the amiable disposition and irreproachable virtue of Catherine had conciliated the nation, which at first had asked, "Can the Pope repeal the laws of God?" and when on the 24th of June Henry was crowned in Westminster, there sat by his side Catherine, as his bride and queen. Henry thus began his reign with an act of submission to the Papal authority; for in accepting his brother's widow as his wife, he accepted the Pope's dispensation as valid; and the Pontiff, on his part, rejoiced in what had taken place, as a new pledge of obedience to the Roman See on the part of England and her sovereign, seeing that with the validity of his bull was

¹ Burnet, *History of the Reformation in England*, vol. i., p. 35; Lond., 1681.

² Levit. xx. 21.

³ Burnet, i. 35, 36.

⁴ Collier, *Records*, ii. 1.

⁵ Burnet, i. 36.

now clearly bound up the legitimacy of the future princes of the realm. The two must stand or fall together; for if his bull was nought, so too was their title to the crown.

Years passed away without anything remarkable taking place in the domestic life of Henry and Catherine. These years were spent in jousts and costly entertainments; in the society of scholars and the patronage of learning; in a military raid into France, chiefly at the instigation of Julius II., who, himself much occupied on the battle-field, delighted to see his brother-sovereigns similarly engaged, well knowing that their rivalries kept them weak, and that their weakness was his strength. One thing only saddened the king and queen: it seemed as if the woe denounced against him who marries his brother's widow, "he shall be childless," were taking effect. Henry's male progeny all died. Catherine bore him three sons and two daughters; but "Henry beheld his sons just show themselves and then sink into the tomb."¹ Of all the children of Catherine, Lady Mary alone, born in 1515, survived the period of infancy. Doubts touching the lawfulness of his marriage began to spring up in the king's mind; but before seeing into what these scruples ripened, it is necessary to attend to another personage who now stepped upon the stage, and who was destined to act a great part in the events which were about to engage the attention, not of England only, but of Christendom.

From the lowest ranks there now sprang up a man of vast ambition and equal talent, who speedily rose to the highest posts in the State, and the most splendid dignities of the Church, and who, by his grandeur and munificence, illustrated once more before the eyes of the English people, the glory of the Church of Rome before it should finally sink and disappear. His name was Thomas Wolsey—by far the most famous of all those Englishmen who have borne the title of Cardinal. A few sentences will enable us to trace the rapid rise of this man to that blaze of power in which, for a season, he shone, only to fall as suddenly and portentously as he had risen. Wolsey (born 1471) was the son of a butcher at Ipswich, and after studying at Magdalen College, Oxford, he passed into the family of the Marquis of Dorset, as tutor.² Fox, Bishop of Winchester, Keeper of the Privy Seal, finding himself eclipsed by the Earl of Surrey in the graces of Henry VII., looked about him for one to counterbalance his rival; and deeming that he had found a suitable instrument in Wolsey, drew him from an obscure sphere in the country, and found a place for him at court as almoner to the king. Wolsey ingratiated himself into that monarch's favour, by executing successfully a secret negotiation at Brussels, with such dispatch that he returned before he had had time, as Henry thought, to set out. His advancement from that moment would have

¹ Soames, *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, vol. i., p. 176; Lond., 1826.

² Hume, vol. i., chap. 27, p. 488; Lond., 1826.

been rapid but for the death of the king, which happened not long afterwards. Under the young Henry, Wolsey played his part not less adroitly. His versatility developed more freely, in the warm air of Henry VIII.'s court, than it had done in the cold atmosphere of that of his predecessor. Business or pleasure came alike to Wolsey. He could be as gay as the gayest of the king's courtiers, and as wise and grave as the most staid of his councillors. He could retail, for the monarch's amusement, the gossip of the court and the town, or edify him by quoting the sayings of some medieval doctor, and especially his favourite, the angelic Aquinas. Wolsey was no ascetic; in his presence Vice never hung her head, and he never forbade in his sovereign those *liaisons* in which, unless public report hugely calumniated him, he himself freely indulged. Royal favours fell thick and fast on the clever and most accommodating churchman. The mitres of Tournay, Lincoln, and York were in one year placed on his head. But Wolsey was one of those who think that nothing has been gained unless all has been won. He refused to lower the cross of York to the cross of Canterbury, thus claiming for himself equality with the primate; and when this was denied him, he reached his end by another road. He solicited, through Francis I., the Roman purple, and in this too he succeeded.. In November, 1515, an envoy from Rome arrived in England,, bringing to the cardinal his "red hat"—that gift which has ever in the end wrought evil to the wearer, as well as to the realm; converting, as it does, its owner into the satrap of a foreign Power.

Wolsey was not yet satisfied: there was something higher still and he must continue, to climb. The pious Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, wearying of contending with the butcher's son, who had clothed his person in Roman purple, and his mind in more than Roman pride, now resigned the seals as Chancellor of the Kingdom, and the king put them into the hands of Wolsey.¹ He was now near the summit: one more effort and he would reach it: at last it was gained. There came a bull appointing him the Cardinal Legate-à-Latere of "Holy Church." This placed him a little, and only a little, below the Papal throne itself. To it Wolsey began to lift his eyes, as the only one of earth's grandeurs now above him; but meanwhile the pursuit of this dazzling prize was delayed, and he gave himself to the consolidation of those manifold powers which he wielded in England. His jurisdiction was immense. All church courts, all bishops and priests, the primate himself, all colleges and monasteries, were under him. All causes in which the Church was interested, however remotely, were adjudicated by him. He decided in all matters of conscience, in wills and testaments, in marriages and divorces, and in those actions which, though they might not be punishable by the law, were censurable by the Church as violations of good morals. From his

¹ Hume, vol. i., chap. 28, p. 495.

sentences there was no appeal to the king's tribunals. The throne and Parliament must submit to have their prerogatives, laws, and jurisdiction circumscribed and regulated by the cardinal, as the representative of God's Vicar in England. Those causes which were excluded from his jurisdiction as Legate-à-Latere, came under his cognisance as Chancellor of the Kingdom, so that Wolsey really governed both Church and State. He was virtually king, and his own famous phrase, *Ego et Rex meus*—"I and my king"—was not less in accordance with fact than it was with the idiom of the language in which it was expressed.

Of the grandeurs of his palace, the sumptuousness of his table, the number of his daily guests, and the multitude of his servants, it is needless to speak. The list of his domestics was upwards of 500, and some of the nobles of England did not account it beneath them to be enrolled in the number. When he moved out of doors he wore a dress of crimson velvet and silk; his shoes glittered with jewels; the goodliest priests of the realm marched before him, carrying silver crosses, while his pomp was swelled by a retinue of becoming length. When Wolsey said mass, it was after the manner of the Pope himself; bishops and abbots aided him in the function, and some of the first nobility gave him water and the towel.¹

But with his pomps, pleasures, and hospitalities he mingled manifold labours. His capacity was great, and seemed to enlarge with the elevation of his rank and the increase of his offices. His two redeeming qualities were the patronage of learning and the administration of justice. His decisions in Chancery were impartial and equitable, and his enormous wealth, gathered from innumerable sources, enabled him to surround himself with scholars, and to found institutions of learning, for which he had his reward in the praises of the former, and the posthumous glory of the latter. Nevertheless he did not succeed in making himself popular. His haughty deportment offended the people, who knew him to be hollow, selfish, and vicious, despite his grand masses and his ostentatious beneficence.

The rise at this hour of such a man, who had gathered into his single hand, all the powers of the State, seemed of evil augury for the Reformation. Rome, in all her dominancy, was in him rising up again in England. The priests were emboldened to declare war, first against the scholars by sounding the alarm against Greek, which they stigmatised as a main source of heresy, and next against Parliament by demanding back the immunities of which they had been stripped during preceding reigns. In addition to former losses of prerogative, the priests were threatened with a new encroachment on their privileges. In 1513 a law was passed, ordering ecclesiastics who should commit murder or theft to be tried in the secular courts—bishops, priests, and

¹ Hume, vol. i., chap. 28, p. 499.

deacons excepted. It was discovered that though the Pope could dispense with the laws of God, the Parliament could not. The Abbot of Winchelcomb, preaching at St. Paul's, gave the signal for battle, exclaiming, "'Touch not mine anointed,' said the Lord." Thereafter a clerical deputation, headed by Wolsey, proceeded to the palace to demand that the impious law should be annulled. "Sire," said the cardinal, "to try a clerk is a violation of God's laws." "By God's will we are King of England," replied Henry, who saw that to put the clergy above the Parliament was to put them above himself, "and the Kings in England, in times past, had never any superior but God only. Therefore know you well that we will maintain the right of our crown."

Baffled in their attack on Parliament, the priests vented their fury upon others. There were still many Lollards who, although living in the bosom of the Roman Church, gave the priests much disquiet. One of these was Richard Hun, a tradesman in London, who spent a portion of each day in the study of the Bible. He was summoned before the legate's court on the charge of refusing to pay a fee imposed by a priest, which he deemed exorbitant. Indignant at being made answerable before a foreign court, Hun lodged an accusation against the priest under the Act *Præmunire*.¹ "Such boldness must be severely checked," said the clergy, "otherwise not a citizen but will set the Church at defiance." Hun was accused of heresy, consigned to the Lollards' Tower in St. Paul's, and left there in irons, chained so heavily that his fetters hardly permitted him to drag his steps across the floor. On his trial no such proof of heresy was produced as would suffice for his condemnation, and his persecutors found themselves in a greater dilemma than before, for to set him at liberty would proclaim their defeat. Three of their fanatical agents undertook to extricate them from their difficulties. Climbing to his cell at midnight (3rd December, 1514), and dragging Hun out of bed, they first strangled him, and then putting his own belt round his neck, they suspended the body by an iron ring in the wall, to make it be believed that he had hanged himself.²

A great horror straightway fell upon two of the perpetrators of the deed, so that they fled, and thus revealed the crime. "The priests have murdered Hun," was the cry in London; and the fact being amply attested at the inquest, as well as by the confession of the murderers, the priests were harder put to than ever, and had recourse to the following notable device:—They examined the Bible which Hun had been wont to read, and found it was Wicliffe's translation. This was enough. Certain articles of indictment were drafted against Hun; a solemn session of Fitzjames, Bishop of London, with certain assessors, was held, and sentence was pronounced, finding Hun guilty and condemning his dead body to be burned as that of a heretic. His corpse was

¹ See *ante*, vol. i., p. 394.

² Fox, *Ads and Mon.*, vol. iv., pp. 183–185. Lond., 1846.

dug up and burned in Smithfield on the 20th of December. “The bones of Richard Hun have been burned,” argued the priests, “therefore he was a heretic; he was a heretic, therefore he committed suicide.” The Parliament, however, not seeing the force of this syllogism, found that Hun had died by the hands of others, and ordained restitution of his goods to be made to his family. The Bishop of London, through Wolsey, had influence enough to prevent the punishment of the murderers.¹

There was quite a little “cloud of witnesses” and martyrs in London, from the accession of Henry VIII. to 1517, the era of Luther’s appearance. Their knowledge was imperfect, some only had courage to witness unto the death, but we behold in them proofs that the Spirit of God was returning to the world, and that he was opening the eyes of not a few to see, in the midst of the great darkness, the errors of Rome. The doctrine about which they were generally incriminated was that of transubstantiation. Among other tales of persecution furnished by the times, that of John Brown, of Ashford, has been most touchingly told by the English martyrologist. Brown happened to seat himself beside a priest in the Gravesend barge. “After certain communication, the priest asked him,” says Fox, “‘Dost thou know who I am? Thou sittest too near me: thou sittest on my clothes.’ ‘No, sir,’ said Brown; ‘I know not what you are.’ ‘I tell thee I am a priest.’ ‘What, sir, are you a parson, or vicar, or a lady’s chaplain?’ ‘No,’ quoth he again; ‘I am a soul-priest, I sing for a soul,’ saith he. ‘Do you so, sir?’ quoth the other; ‘that is well done.’ ‘I pray you sir,’ quoth he, ‘where find you the soul when you go to mass?’ ‘I cannot tell thee,’ said the priest. ‘I pray you, where do you leave it, sir, when the mass is done?’ ‘I cannot tell thee,’ said the priest. ‘You can neither tell me where you find it when you go to mass, nor where you leave it when the mass is done: how can you then have the soul?’ said he. ‘Go thy ways,’ said the priest; ‘thou art a heretic, and I will be even with thee.’ So at the landing the priest, taking with him Walter More and William More, two gentlemen, brethren, rode straightway to the Archbishop Warham.”

Three days thereafter, as Brown sat at dinner with some guests, the officers entered, and dragging him from the house, they mounted him upon a horse, and tying his feet under the animal’s belly, rode away. His wife and family knew not for forty days where he was or what had been done to him. It was the Friday before Whit-Sunday. The servant of the family, having had occasion to go out, hastily returned, and rushed into the house exclaiming, “I have seen him! I have seen him!” Brown had that day been taken out of prison at Canterbury, brought back to Ashford, and placed in the stocks. His poor wife went forth, and sat down by the side of her husband. So tightly was he bound in the stocks, that he could hardly turn his head to speak to his wife,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

who sat by him bathed in tears. He told her that he had been examined by torture, that his feet had been placed on live coals, and burned to the bones, “to make me,” said he, “deny my Lord, which I will never do; for should I deny my Lord in this world, he would hereafter deny me. I pray thee, therefore,” said he, “good Elizabeth, continue as thou hast begun, and bring up thy children virtuously, and in the fear of God.” On the next day, being Whitsunday, he was taken out of the stocks and bound to the stake, where he was burned alive. His wife, his daughter Alice, and his other children, with some friends, gathered round the pile to receive his last words. He stood with invincible courage amid the flames. He sang a hymn of his own composing; and feeling that now the fire had nearly done its work, he breathed out the prayer offered by the great Martyr: “Into thy hands *I* commend my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord of truth,” and so he ended.¹ Shrieks of anguish rose from his wife and daughter. The spectators, moved with compassion, regarded them with looks of pity; but, turning to the executioners, they cast on them a scowl of anger. “Come,” said Chilton, a brutal ruffian who had presided at the dreadful tragedy, and who rightly interpreted the feeling of the bystanders—“Come, let us cast the children into the fire, lest they, too, one day become heretics.” So saying, he rushed towards Alice and attempted to lay hold upon her; but the maiden started back, and avoided the villain.²

Next to the heretics, the priests dreaded the scholars. Their instincts taught them that the new learning boded no good to their system. Of all the learned men now in England the one whom they hated most was Erasmus, and with just reason. He stood confessedly at the head of the scholars, whether in England or on the Continent. He had great influence at court; he wielded a pungent wit, as they had occasion daily to experience—in short, he must be expelled the kingdom. But Erasmus resolved to take ample compensation from those who had driven him out. He went straight to Basle, and establishing himself at the printing-press of Frobenius, issued his Greek and Latin New Testament. The world now possessed for the first time a printed copy in the original Greek of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It was the result of combined labour and scholarship; the Greek was beautifully pure; the Latin had been purged from the barbarisms of the Vulgate, and far excelled it in elegance and clearness. Copies were straightway dispatched to London, Oxford, and Cambridge. It was Erasmus’ gift to England—to Christendom, doubtless, but especially England; and in giving the country this gift he gave it more than if he had added the most magnificent empire to its dominion.

¹ Fox, *Acts and Mon.*, vol. iv., pp. 181, 182.

² *Ibid.*, p. 182.

The light of the English Renaissance was now succeeded by the light of the English Reformation. The monks had thought to restore the darkness by driving away the great scholar: his departure was the signal for the rising on the realm of a light which made what had been before it seem but as twilight. The New Testament of Erasmus was hailed with enthusiasm. Everywhere it was sought after and read, by the first scholars in Greek, by the great body of the learned in Latin. The excitement it caused in England was something like that which Luther's appearance produced in Germany. The monk of Saxony had not yet posted up his *Theses*, when the Oracles of Truth were published in England. "The Reformation of England," says a modern historian, who of all others evinces the deepest insight into history—"The Reformation of England, perhaps to a greater extent than that of the Continent, was effected by the Word of God."¹

To Germany, Luther was sent; Geneva and France had Calvin given to them; but England received a yet greater Reformer—the Bible. Its Reformation was more immediate and direct, no great individuality being interposed between it and the source of Divine knowledge. Luther had given to Germany his *Theses*; Calvin had given to France the *Institutes*; but to England was given the Word of God. Within the sea-girt isle, in prospect of the storms that were to devastate the outer world, was placed this Divine Light—the World's Lamp—surely a blessed augury of what England's function was to be in days to come. The country into whose hands was now placed the Word of God, was by this gift publicly constituted its custodian. Freely had she received the Scriptures, freely was she to give them to the nations around her. She was first to make them the Instructor of her people; she was next to enshrine them as a perpetual lamp in her Church. Having made them the foundation-stone of her State, she was finally to put them into the hands of all the nations of the earth, that they too might be guided to Truth, Order, and Happiness.

¹ D'Aubigné, *Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, vol. v., p. 199; Edin., 1853.

CHAPTER III.

WILLIAM TYNDALE AND THE ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT.

Bilney—Reads the New Testament—Is Converted by it—Tyndale—His Conversion—Fryth—All Three Emancipated by the Bible—Foundations of England's Reformation—Tyndale at Sodbury Hall—Disputations with the Priests—Preaches at Bristol—Resolves to Translate the Scriptures—Goes to London—Applies to Tonstall—Received into Humphrey Monmouth's House—Begins his Translation of the New Testament—Escapes to Germany—Leo's Bull against Luther Published in England—Henry's Book against Luther—Wolsey Intrigues for the Popedom—His Disappointment—Tyndale in Hamburg—William Roye—Begins Printing the English New Testament in Cologne—Finishes in Worms—Sends it across the Sea to England.

ERASMUS had laid his New Testament at the feet of England. In so doing he had sent to that country, as he believed, a message of peace; great was his astonishment to find that he had but blown a trumpet of war, and that the roar of battle was louder than ever. The services of the great scholar to the Reformation were finished, and now he retired. But the Bible remained in England, and wherever the Word of God came Protestantism was sure to follow.

There was at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, a young student of the canon law, Thomas Bilney by name, of small stature, delicate constitution, and much occupied with the thoughts of eternity. He had striven to attain to the assurance of the life eternal by a constant adherence to the path of virtue, nevertheless his conscience, which was very tender, reproached him with innumerable shortcomings. Vigils, penances, masses—all, in short, which the "Church" prescribes for the relief of burdened souls, he had tried, but with no effect save that he had wasted his body and spent nearly all his means. He heard his friends one day speak of the New Testament of Erasmus, and he made haste to procure a copy, moved rather by the pleasure which he anticipated from the purity of its Greek and the elegance of its Latin, than the hope of deriving any higher good from it. He opened the book. His eyes fell on these words: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." "The chief of sinners," said he to himself, musing over what he had read: "Paul the chief of sinners! and yet Christ came to save him! then why not me?" "He had found," says Fox, "a better teacher" than the doctors of the canon law—"the Holy Spirit of Christ."¹ That hour he quitted the road of self-righteous performances, by which he now saw he had been travelling, in pain of body and sorrow of soul, and he entered into life by Him who is the door. This was the beginning of the triumphs of the New Testament at Cambridge. How fruitful this one victory was, we shall afterwards see.

¹ Fox, *Acts and Mon.*, vol. iv., p. 620; Lond., 1846.

We turn to Oxford. There was at this university a student from the valley of the Severn, a descendant of an ancient family, William Tyndale by name. Nowhere had Erasmus so many friends as at Oxford, and nowhere did his New Testament receive a more cordial welcome. Our young student, “of most virtuous disposition, and life unspotted,”¹ was drawn to the study of the book, fascinated by the elegance of its style and the sublimity of its teaching. He soon came to be aware of some marvellous power in it, which he had found in no other book he had ever studied. Others had invigorated his intellect, this regenerated his heart. He had discovered an inestimable treasure, and he would not hide it. This pure youth began to give public lectures on this pure book; but this being more than Oxford could yet bear, the young Tyndale quitted the banks of the Isis, and joined Bilney at Cambridge.

These two were joined by a third, a young man of blameless life and elevated soul. John Fryth, the son of an inn-keeper at Sevenoaks, Kent, was possessed of marvellously quick parts; and with a diligence and a delight in learning equal to his genius, he would have opened for himself, says Fox, “an easy road to honours and dignities, had he not wholly .consecrated himself to the service of the Church of Christ.”² It was William Tyndale who first sowed “in his heart the seed of the Gospel.”³ These three young students were perfectly emancipated from the yoke of the Papacy, and their emancipation had been accomplished by the Word of God alone. No infallible Church had interpreted that book to them. They read their Bibles with prayer to the Spirit, and as they read the eyes of their understanding were opened, and the wonders of God’s law were revealed to them. They came to see that it was faith that unlocked all the blessings of salvation: that it was faith, and not the priest, that united them to Christ—Christ, whose cross, and not the Church, was the source of forgiveness; whose Spirit, and not the Sacrament, was the author of holiness; and whose righteousness alone, and not the merits of men either dead or living, was the foundation of the sinner’s justification. These views they had not received from Wittenberg; for Luther was only then beginning his career: their knowledge of Divine things they had received from the Bible, and from the Bible alone. Thus they laid the foundations of the Protestant Church of England, or rather dug down through the rubbish of ages, to the foundations which had been laid of old time by the first missionaries to Britain.

Henry VIII. was aspiring to become emperor; Wolsey was beginning to intrigue for the tiara; but it is the path of Tyndale that we are to follow, more glorious than that of the other two, though it led to neither tiara nor diadem. Completing his studies at Cambridge, Tyndale came back to his native

¹ Fox, *Acts and Mon.*, vol. v., p. 115.

² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Gloucestershire, and became tutor in the family of Sir John Walsh, of Sodbury Hall. At the table of his patron he met daily the clergy of the neighbourhood, “abbots, deans, archdeacons, with divers other doctors, and great beneficed men.”¹ In the conversations that ensued the name of Luther, who was then beginning to be heard of, was often mentioned, and from the man the transition was easy to his opinions. The young student from Cambridge did not conceal his sympathy with the German monk, and kept his Greek New Testament ever beside him to support his sentiments, which startled one half of those around the table, and scandalised the other half. The disputants often grew warm. “That is the book that makes heretics,” said the priests, glancing at the unwelcome volume. “The source of all heresies is pride,” would the humble tutor reply to the lordly clergy of the rich valley of the Severn. “The vulgar cannot understand the Word of God,” said the priests; “it is the Church that gave the Bible to men, and it is only her priests that can interpret it.” “Do you know who taught the eagles to find their prey?” asked Tyndale; “that same God teaches his children to find their Father in his Word. Far from having given us the Scriptures, it is you who have hidden them from us.”

The cry of heresy was raised against the tutor; and the lower clergy, resorting to the ale-house, harangued those whom they found assembled there, violently declaiming against the errors of Tyndale.² A secret accusation was laid against him before the bishop’s chancellor, but Tyndale defended himself so admirably that he escaped out of the hands of his enemies. He now began to explain the Scriptures on Sundays to Sir John and his household and tenantry. He next extended his labours to the neighbouring villages, scattering with his living voice that precious seed to which as yet the people had no access, in their mother tongue, in a printed form. He extended his preaching tours to Bristol, and its citizens assembled to hear him in St. Austin’s Green.³ But no sooner had he sowed the seed than the priests hastened to destroy it; and when Tyndale returned he found that his labour had been in vain: the field was ravaged. “Oh,” said he, “if the people of England had the Word of God in their own language this would not happen. Without this it will be impossible to establish the laity in the truth.”

It was now that the sublime idea entered his mind of translating and printing the Scriptures. The prophets spake in the language of the men whom they addressed; the songs of the temple were uttered in the vernacular of the Hebrew nation; and the epistles of the New Testament were written in the tongue of those to whom they were sent; and why, asked Tyndale, should not the people of England have the Oracles of God in their mother tongue? “If

¹ Fox, *Acts and Mon.*, vol. v., p. 115.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

God spare my life,” said he, “I will, before many years have passed, cause the boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than the priests do.”¹

But it was plain that Tyndale could not accomplish what he now proposed should be his life’s work at Sodbury Hall: the hostility of the priests, was too strongly excited to leave him in quiet. Bidding Sir John’s family adieu he repaired (1523) to the metropolis. He had hoped to find admission into the household of Tonstall, Bishop of London, whose learning Erasmus had lauded to the skies, and at whose door, coming as he did on a learned and pious errand, the young scholar persuaded himself he should find an instant and cordial welcome. A friend, to whom he had brought letters of recommendation from Sir John, mentioned his name to Bishop Tonstall; he even obtained an audience of the bishop, but only to have his hopes dashed. “My house is already full,” said the bishop coldly. He turned away: there was no room for him in the episcopal palace to translate the Scriptures. But if the doors of the bishop’s palace were closed against him, the door of a rich London merchant was now opened for his reception, in the following manner.

Soon after his arrival in the metropolis, Tyndale began to preach in public: among his hearers was one Humphrey Monmouth, who had learned to love the Gospel from listening to Dean Colet. When repulsed by Tonstall, Tyndale told Monmouth of his disappointment. “Come and live with me,” said the wealthy merchant, who was ever ready to show hospitality to poor disciples for the Gospel’s sake. He took up his abode in Monmouth’s house; he lived abstemiously² at a table loaded with delicacies; and he studied night and day, being intent on kindling a torch that should illuminate England. Eager to finish, he summoned Fryth to his aid; and the two friends working together, chapter after chapter of the New Testament passed from the Greek into the tongue of England.

The two scholars had been a full half-year engaged in their work, when the storm of persecution broke out afresh in London. Inquisition was made for all who had any of Luther’s works in their possession, the readers of which were threatened with the fire. “If,” said Tyndale, “to possess the works of Luther exposes one to a stake, how much greater must be the crime of translating the Scriptures!” His friends urged him to withdraw, as the only chance left him of ever accomplishing the work to which he had devoted himself. Tyndale had no alternative but to adopt with a heavy heart the course his friends recommended. “I understood at the last,” said he, “not only that there was no room in my lord of London’s palace to translate the New

¹ Fox, vol. v., p. 117.

² “By his good will he would eat but sodden meat, and drink but small single beer.” (Monmouth, on his examination—Fox, vol. iv., p. 618.)

Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England.”¹ Stepping on board a vessel in the Thames that was loading for Hamburg, and taking with him his Greek New Testament, he sailed for Germany.

While Tyndale is crossing the sea, we must give attention to other matters which meanwhile had been transpiring in England. The writings of Luther had by this time entered the kingdom and were being widely circulated. The eloquence of his words, fitly sustained by the heroism of his deeds, roused the attention of the English people, who watched the career of the monk with the deepest interest. His noble stand before the Diet at Worms crowned the interest his first appearance had awakened. As when fresh oil is poured into the dying lamp, the spirit of Lollardism revived. It leaped up in new breadth and splendour. The bishops took the alarm, and held a council to deliberate on the measures to be taken. The bull of Leo² against Luther had been sent to England, and it was resolved to publish it. The Cardinal-legate Wolsey, following at no humble distance Pope Leo, also issued a bull of his own against Luther, and both were published in all the cathedral and parish churches of England on the first Sunday of June, 1521. The bull of Wolsey was read during high mass, and that of Leo was nailed up on the church door. The principal result of this proceeding was to advertise the writings of Luther to the people of England. The car of Reformation was advancing; the priests had taken counsel to stop it, but the only effect of their interference was to make it move onwards at an accelerated speed.

At this stage of the controversy an altogether unexpected champion stepped into the arena to do battle with Luther. This was no less a personage than the King of England. The zeal which animated Henry for the Roman traditions, and the fury with which he was transported against the man who was uprooting them, may be judged of from the letter he addressed to Louis of Bavaria. “That this fire,” said he, “which has been kindled by Luther, and fanned by the arts of the devil, should have raged for so long a time, and be still gathering strength, has been the subject to me of greater grief than tongue or pen can express. . . . For what could have happened more calamitous to Germany than that she should have given birth to a man who has dared to interpret the Divine law, the statutes of the Fathers, and those decrees which have received the consent of so many ages, in a manner totally at variance with the opinion of the learned Fathers of the Church? . . . We earnestly implore and exhort you that you delay not a moment to seize and exterminate this Luther, who is a rebel against Christ; and, unless he repents, deliver himself and his audacious writings to the flames.”³

¹ *Writings of Tindal*, p. 4; Religious Tract Society, London.

² See *ante*, vol. i., p. 310.

³ Gerdesius, *Hist. Reform.*, tom. iv., appen. xxii., p. 117.

This shows us the fate that would probably have awaited Luther had he lived in England: happily his lot had been cast under a more benignant and gracious sovereign. But Henry, debarred in this case the use of the stake, which would speedily have consumed the heretic, if not the heresy, made haste to unsheathe the controversial sword. He attacked Luther's *Babylonian Captivity* in a work entitled *A Defence of the Seven Sacraments*. The king's book discovers an intimate acquaintance with mediaeval and scholastic inventions and decrees, but no knowledge whatever of apostolic doctrine. Luther ascribed it to Lee, afterwards Archbishop of York; others have thought that they could trace in it the hand of Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. But we see no reason to ascribe it to any one save Henry himself. He was an apt scholar of Thomas Aquinas, and here he discusses those questions only which had come within the range of his previous studies.¹ He dedicated the work to the Pontiff, and sent a splendidly bound copy of it to Leo. It was received at Rome in the manner that we should expect the work of a king, written in defence of the Papal chair, to be received by a Pope. Leo eulogised it as the crowning one among the glories of England, and he rewarded the messenger, who had carried it across the Alps, by giving him his toe to kiss; and recompensed Henry for the labour he had incurred in writing it, by bestowing upon him (1521) the title of "Defender of the Faith," which was confirmed by a bull of Clement VII. in 1523.² "We can do nothing against the truth, but for it," wrote an apostle, and his words were destined to be signally verified in the case of the King of England. Henry set up Tradition and the Supremacy as the main buttresses of the Papal system. The nation was wearying of both; the king's defence but showed the Protestants where to direct their assault; and as for the applauses from the Vatican, so agreeable to the royal ear, these were speedily drowned in the thunders of Luther; and most people came to see, though all did not acknowledge, it, that if Henry the king was above the monk, Henry the author was below him.

Wolsey now turned his face toward the Popedom. If he had succeeded in achieving this, which was the summit of his ambition, he would have attempted to revive the glories of the era of Innocent III.: its substantial power he never could have wielded, for the wars of the fifteenth century, by putting the kings above the Popes, had made that impossible. Still, as Pope, Wolsey would have been a more formidable opponent of the Reformation than either Leo or Clement. It was clear that he could reach the dignity to which he aspired only by the help of one or other of the two great Continental sovereigns of his time, Francis I. and Charles V. He was on the most friendly footing with Francis, whereas he had contracted a strong dislike to Charles, and the

¹ *Ibid.*, tom. iv., pp. 177, 178.

² See bull in Gerdesius, tom. iv., app. xxiv.

emperor was well aware that the cardinal loved him not. Still, on weighing the matter, Wolsey saw that of the two sovereigns Charles was the abler to assist him; so breaking with Francis, and smothering his disgust of the emperor, he solicited his interest to secure the tiara for him when it should become vacant. That monarch, who could dissemble as well as Wolsey, well knowing the influence of the cardinal with Henry VIII., and his power in England, met this request with promises and flatteries. Charles thought he was safe in promising the tiara to one who was some years older than its present possessor, for Leo was still in the prime of life. The immediate result of this friendship, hollow on both sides, was a war between Francis and the emperor. Meanwhile Leo suddenly died, and the sincerity of Charles, sooner than he had thought, was put to the test. With no small chagrin and mortification, which he judged it politic meanwhile to conceal, Wolsey saw Adrian of Utrecht, the emperor's tutor, placed in the Papal chair. But Adrian was an old man; it was not probable that he would long survive to sway the spiritual sceptre of Christendom, and Charles consoled the disappointed cardinal by renewing his promise of support when a new election, which could not be distant, should take place.¹ But we must leave the cardinal, his eyes still fixed on the dazzling prize, and follow the track of one who also was aspiring to a crown, but one more truly glorious than that of Pope or emperor.

We have seen Tyndale set sail for Germany. Arriving at Hamburg, he unpacked the MS. sheets which he had first begun in the valley of the Severn, and resumed on the banks of the Elbe the prosecution of his great design. William Roye, formerly a Franciscan friar at Greenwich, but who had abandoned the cloister, became his assistant. The Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark were translated and printed at Hamburg, and in 1524 were sent across to Monmouth in London, as the first-fruits of his great task. The merchant sent the translator a much-needed supply of money, which enabled Tyndale to pay a visit to Luther in Wittenberg, whence he returned, and established himself at the printing-house of Quentel and Byrckman in Cologne. Resuming his great labour, he began to print an edition of 3,000 copies of his English New Testament. Sheet after sheet was passing through the press. Great was Tyndale's joy. He had taken every precaution, meanwhile, against a seizure, knowing this archiepiscopal seat to be vigorously watched by a numerous and jealous priesthood. The tenth sheet was in the press when Byrckman, hurrying to him, informed him that the Senate had ordered the printing of the work to be stopped. All was discovered then! Tyndale was stunned. Must the labour of years be lost, and the enlightenment of England, which had seemed so near, be frustrated? His resolution was taken on the spot. Going straight to the printing-house, he packed up the printed sheets, and bidding Roye

¹ Burnet, *Hist. of Reform.*, vol. i., p. 4.; Lond., 1681

follow, he stepped into a boat on the Rhine and ascended the river. It was Cochlaeus who had come upon the track of the English New Testament, and hardly was Tyndale gone when the officers from the Senate, led by the dean, entered the printing-house to seize the work.¹

After some days Tyndale arrived at Worms, that little town which Luther's visit, four years before, had invested with a halo of historic glory. On his way thither he thought less, doubtless, of the picturesque hills that enclose the "milk-white" river, with the ruined castles that crown their summits, and the antique towns that nestle at their feet, than of the precious wares embarked with him. These to his delight he safely conveyed to the printing-house of Peter Schaefer, the grandson of Fust, one of the inventors of the art. He instantly resumed the printing, but to mislead the spies, who, he thought it probable, would follow him hither, he changed the form of the work from the *quarto* to the *octavo*, which was an advantage in the end, as it greatly facilitated the circulation.²

The printing of the two editions was completed in the end of 1525, and soon thereafter 1,500 copies were dispatched to England. "Give diligence"—so ran the solemn charge that accompanied them, to the nation to which the waves were wafting the precious pages—"unto the words of eternal life, by the which, if we repent and believe them, we are born anew, created afresh, and enjoy the fruits of the blood of Christ." Tyndale had done his great work. While Wolsey, seated in the splendid halls of his palace at Westminster, had been intriguing for the tiara, that he might conserve the darkness that covered England, Tyndale, in obscure lodgings in the German and Flemish towns, had been toiling night and day, in cold and hunger, to kindle a torch that might illuminate it.

¹ Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, vol. i., p. 49 *et seq.* Cochlaeus, p. 126. Fox, vol. v., p. 119.

² In the Museum of the Baptist College at Bristol is a copy of the *octavo* edition of Tyndale's New Testament. (*Ann. of Eng. Bible*, i. 70.)

CHAPTER IV.

TYNDALE'S NEW TESTAMENT ARRIVES IN ENGLAND.

Bilney's Labours at Cambridge—Hugh Latimer—His Education—Monkish Asceticism—Bilney's Device—Latimer's Conversion—Power of his Preaching—Wolsey's College—The Bishops try to Arrest the Evangelisation—Prior Buckingham—Bishop of Ely and Latimer—Dr. Barnes and the Augustine Convent—Workers at Cambridge—Excitement at Cambridge and Oxford—Desire for the Word of God—Tyndale's New Testament Arrives in London—Distributed by Garret in the City—in Oxford—over the Kingdom—Its Reception by the English People.

WHILE the English New Testament was approaching the shores of Britain, preparations, all unsuspected by men, were being made for its reception. The sower never goes forth till first the plough has opened the furrow. Bilney, as we have already said, was the first convert whom the Greek New Testament of Erasmus had drawn away from the Pope to sit at the feet of Christ. When Tyndale was compelled to seek a foreign shore, Bilney remained behind in England. His face was pale, for his constitution was sickly, and his fasts were frequent; but his eye sparkled, and his conversation was full of life, indicating, as Fox tells us, the vehement desire that burned within him to draw others to the Gospel. Soon we find him surrounded by a little company of converts from the students and Fellows of Cambridge. Among these was George Stafford, professor of divinity, whose pure life and deep learning made his conversion as great a loss to the supporters of the old religion as it was a strength to the disciples of the Protestant faith. But the man of all this little band destined to be hereafter the most conspicuous in the ranks of the Reformation was Hugh Latimer.

Latimer was the son of a yeoman, and was born at Thurstaston, in Leicestershire, about the year 1472. He entered Cambridge the same year (1505) that Luther entered the Augustine Convent; and he became a Fellow of Clare Hall in the year (1509) that Calvin was born. Of a serious turn of mind from his boyhood, he gave himself ardently to the study of the schoolmen, and he so drank in their spirit, that when he took orders he was noted for his gloomy asceticism. The outbreak of what he deemed heresy at Cambridge gave him intolerable pain; he railed spitefully against Stafford, who was giving lectures on the Scriptures, and he could hardly refrain from using violence to compel his companions to desist from reading the Greek New Testament. The clergy were delighted to see such zeal for the Church, and they rewarded it by appointing him cross-bearer to the university.¹ The young priest strode on before the doctors, bearing aloft the sacred symbol, with an air that

¹ Fox, vol. iv., p. 620.

showed how proud he was of his office. He signalled the taking of his degree as Bachelor of Divinity, by delivering a violent Latin discourse against Philip Melanchthon and his doctrines.

But there was one who had once been as great a zealot as himself, who was watching his career with deep anxiety, not unmingled with hope, and was even then searching in his quiver for the arrow that should bring down this strong man. This was Bilney. After repeated failures he found at last the shaft that, piercing Latimer's armour, made its way to his heart. "For the love of God," said Bilney to him one day, "be pleased to hear my confession."¹ It was a recantation of his Lutheranism, doubtless thought Latimer, that was to be poured into his ear. Bilney dropped on his knees before Latimer, and beginning his confession, he unfolded his former anguish, his long but fruitless efforts for relief, his peace at last, not in the works prescribed by the Church, but in the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; in short, he detailed the whole history of his conversion. As he spoke, Latimer felt the darkness within breaking up. He saw a new world rising around him—he felt the hardness of his heart passing away—there came a sense of sin, and with it a feeling of horror, and anon a burst of tears; for now the despair was gone, the free forgiveness of the Gospel had been suddenly revealed to him. Before rising up he had confessed, and was absolved by One who said to him, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." So has Latimer himself told us in his sermons. His conversion was instantaneous.

That ardour of temperament and energy of zeal, which Latimer had aforetime devoted to the mass, he now transferred to the Gospel. The black garment of asceticism he put off at once, and clothed himself with the bright robe of evangelical joy. He grasped the great idea of the Gospel's absolute freeness even better than Bilney, or indeed than any convert that the Protestantism of the sixteenth century had yet made in England; and he preached with a breadth and an eloquence which had never before been heard in an English pulpit. He was now a true cross-bearer, and the effects that followed gave no feeble presage of the glorious light with which the preaching of the Cross was one day to fill the realm.

While the day was opening on Cambridge, its sister Oxford was still sitting in the night, but now the Protestant doctrines began to be heard in those halls around which there still lingered, like a halo, the memories of Wicliffe. Wolsey unwittingly found entrance here for the light. Intending to rear a monument which should perpetuate his name to after-ages, the cardinal projected a new college at this university, and began to build in a style of most unexampled magnificence. The work was so costly that the funds soon fell short. Wolsey obtained a supply by the dissolution of the monastery of St.

¹ Latimer's Sermons.

Fridwide, which, having been surrendered to the Crown, was bestowed by Henry on the cardinal. A Papal bull was needed, and procured, to sanction the transfer. Wolsey, protected by this precedent, as he thought, proceeded to confiscate a few smaller monasteries; but a clamour arose against him as assailing the Church; he was compelled to stop, and it was said of him that he began to build a college and ended by building a kitchen. But the more vital part of the college went forward: six public lectureships were established—one of theology, one of civil law, one of medicine, one of philosophy, one of mathematics, and one of the Greek language. Soon after Wolsey added to these a chair of humanity and rhetoric.¹ He sought all through Europe for learned men to fill its chairs, and one of the first to be invited was John Clark, a Cambridge Master of Arts, learned, conscientious, and enlightened by the Word of God; and no sooner had he taken his place at that famous school than he began to expound the Scriptures and make converts. Are both universities to become fountains of heresy? asked the clergy in alarm. The bishops sent down a commission to Cambridge to make an investigation, and apprehend such as might appear to be the leaders of this movement. The court sat down, and the result might have been what indeed took place later, the planting of a few stakes, had not an order suddenly arrived from Wolsey to stop proceedings. The Papal chair had again become vacant, and Wolsey was of opinion, perhaps, that to light martyr-fires at that moment in England would not tend to further his election: as a consequence, the disciples had a breathing-space. This tranquil period was diligently improved. Bilney visited the poor at their own homes, Stafford redoubled his zeal in teaching, and Latimer waxed every day more bold and eloquent in the pulpit. Knowing on what task Tyndale was at this time engaged, Latimer took care to insist with special emphasis on the duty of reading the Word of God in one's mother tongue, if one would avoid the snares of the false teacher.

Larger congregations gathered round Latimer's pulpit every day. The audience was not an unmixed one; all in it did not listen with the same feelings. The majority hung upon the lips of the preacher, and drank in his words, as men athirst do the cup of cold water; but here and there dark faces, and eyes burning with anger, showed that all did not relish the doctrine. The dullest among the priesthood could see that the Gospel of a free forgiveness could establish itself not otherwise than upon the ruins of their system, and felt the necessity of taking some remedial steps before the evil should be consummated. For this they chose one of themselves, Prior Buckingham, a man of slender learning, but of adventurous courage. Latimer, passing over Popes and Councils, had made his appeal to the Word of God; the prior was charged, therefore, to show the people the danger of reading that book.

¹ Fiddes, *Life of Wolsey*, p. 209 *et seq.* Burnet, *Hist. of Reform.*, vol. i., p. 22.

Buckingham knew hardly anything of the Bible, but setting to work he found, after some search, a passage which he thought had a very decidedly dangerous tendency. Confident of success he mounted the pulpit, and opening the New Testament he read out, with much solemnity, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee." This, said he, is what the Bible bids us do. Alas! if we follow it, England in a few years will be a "nation full of blind beggars." Latimer was one of those who can answer a fool according to his folly, and he announced that next Sunday, he would reply to the Grey Friar. The church was crowded, and in the midst of the audience, planted right before the pulpit, in the frock of St. Francis, sat Prior Buckingham. His fancied triumph could yet be read on his brow, for his pride was as great as his ignorance.

Latimer began; he took up one by one the arguments of the prior, and not deeming them worthy of grave refutation, he exposed their absurdity, and castigated their author in a fine vein of irony and ridicule. Only children, he said, fail to distinguish between the popular forms of speech and their deeper meanings—between the image and the thing which the image represents. "For instance," he continued, fixing his eye on Buckingham, "if we see a fox painted preaching in a friar's hood, nobody imagines that a fox is meant, but that craft and hypocrisy are described, which are so often found disguised in that garb."¹ The blush of shame had replaced the pride on Buckingham's brow, and rising up, he hastily quitted the church, and sought his convent, there to hide his confusion.

When the prior retired in discomfiture, a greater functionary came forward to continue the battle. The Bishop of Ely, as Ordinary of Cambridge, forbade Latimer to preach either in the university or in the diocese. The work must be stopped, and this could be done only by silencing its preacher. But if the bishop closed one door, the providence of God opened another. Robert Barnes, an Englishman, had just returned from Louvain, with a great reputation for learning, and was assembling daily crowds around him by his lectures on the great writers of antiquity, in the Augustine Convent, of which he had been appointed prior. From the classics he passed to the New Testament, carrying with him his audience. In instructing his hearers he instructed himself also in the Divine mysteries of the Pauline Epistles. About the time that the eloquent voice of Latimer was silenced by the Bishop of Ely, Barnes had come to a fuller knowledge of the Gospel; and, tenderly loving its great preacher, he said to Latimer one day, "The bishop has forbidden you to preach, but my monastery is not under his jurisdiction; come and preach in my pulpit." The brief period of Latimer's enforced silence had but quickened the public interest in the Gospel. He entered the pulpit of the Augustine

¹ Gilpin, *Life of Latimer*, p. 10.

Convent; the crowds that gathered round him were greater than ever, and the preacher, refreshed in soul by the growing interest that was taken in Divine things by doctors, students, and townspeople, preached with even greater warmth and power. The kingdom of the Gospel was being established in the hearts of men, and a constellation of lights had risen in the sky of Cambridge—Bilney, the man of prayer; Barnes, the scholar; Stafford, whose speech dropped as the dew; and Latimer, who thundered in the pulpit, addressing the doctors in Latin, and the common people in their own mother tongue—true yokefellows all of them; their gifts and modes of acting, which were wonderfully varied, yet most happily harmonised, were put forth in one blessed work, on which God the Spirit was setting his seal, in the converts which, by their labours, were being daily added to the Gospel. This was not as yet the day, but it was the morning—a sweet and gracious morning, which was long remembered, and often afterwards spoken about in terms which have found their record in the works of one of the converts of those times—

“When Master Stafford read,
And Master Latimer preached,
Then was Cambridge blessed.”¹

Similar scenes, though not on a scale quite so marked, were at this hour taking place in Oxford. Almost all the scholars whom Wolsey had brought to fill his new chairs evinced a favour for the new opinions, or openly ranged themselves on their side. Wolsey, in selecting the most learned, had unwittingly selected those most friendly to Reform. Besides Clark, whom we have already mentioned, and the new men, there was John Fryth, the modest but stable-minded Christian, who had been Tyndale’s associate in preparing an instrumentality which was destined soon and powerfully to dispel the darkness that still rested above England, and which was only feebly relieved by the partial illumination that was breaking out at the two university seats of Cambridge and Oxford.

A desire had now been awakened in the nation at large for the Word of God, and that desire could be gratified not otherwise than by having the Scriptures in its own tongue. The learned men of England had been these nine years in possession of Erasmus’ Greek and Latin New Testament, and in it they had access to the fountain-heads of Divine knowledge, but the common people must receive the Gospel at second hand, through preachers like Latimer. This was a method of communication slow and unsatisfactory; something more direct, full, and rapid could alone satisfy the popular desire. That wish was about to be gratified. The fulness of the time for the Bible being given to England in her own tongue, and through England to the world

¹ Becon’s Works, vol. ii., p. 425.

in all the tongues of earth, had now come. He who brings forth the sun from the chambers of the sky at his appointed hour, now gave commandment that this greater light should come forth from the darkness in which it had been so long hidden. William Tyndale, the man chosen of God for this labour, had, as we have seen, finished his task. The precious treasure he had put on board ship, and the waves of the North Sea were at this hour bearing it to the shores of England.

Tyndale had entrusted the copies of his New Testament, not to one, but to several merchants. Carrying it on board, and hiding it among their merchandise, they set sail with the precious volume from Antwerp. As they ascended the Thames they began to be uneasy touching their venture. Cochlaeus had sent information that the Bible translated by Tyndale was about to be sent into England, and had advised that the ports should be watched, and all vessels coming from Germany examined; and the merchants were likely to find, on stepping ashore, the king's guards waiting to seize their books, and to commit themselves to prison. Their fears were disappointed. They were allowed to unload their vessels without molestation. The men whom the five pious merchants had imagined standing over the Word of God, ready to destroy it the moment it was landed on English soil, had been dispersed. The king was at Eltham keeping his Christmas; Tonstall had gone to Spain; Cardinal Wolsey had some pressing political matters on hand; and so the portentous arrival of which they had been advertised was overlooked. The merchants conveyed the precious treasure they had carried across the sea to their establishments in Thames Street. The Word of God in the mother tongue of the people was at last in England.

But the books must be put into circulation. The merchants knew a pious curate, timid in things of this world, bold in matters of the faith, who they thought might be willing to undertake the dangerous work. The person in question was Thomas Garret, of All Hallows, Honey Lane. Garret had the books conveyed to his own house, and hid them there till he should be able to arrange for their distribution. Having meanwhile read them, and felt how full of light were these holy books, he but the more ardently longed to disseminate them. He began to circulate them in London, by selling copies to his friends. He next started off for Oxford, carrying with him a large supply. Students, doctors, monks, townspeople began to purchase and read.¹ The English New Testament soon found its way to Cambridge; and from the two universities it was in no long time diffused over the whole kingdom. This was in the end of 1525, and the beginning of 1526. The day had broken in England with the Greek and Latin New Testament of Erasmus; now it was approaching noontide splendour with Tyndale's English New Testament.

¹ Fox, vol. v., p. 428. Strype, *Memorials of Thomas Cranmer*, p. 81; Lond., 1694.

We in this age find it impossible to realise the transition that was now accomplished by the people of England. To them the publication of the Word of God in their own tongue was the lifting up of a veil from a world of which before they had heard tell, but which now they saw. The wonder and ravishment with which they gazed for the first time on objects so pure, so beautiful, and so transcendently majestic, and the delight with which they were filled, we cannot at all conceive. There were narratives and doctrines; there were sermons and epistles; there were incidents and prayers; there were miracles and apocalyptic visions; and in the centre of all these glories, a majestic Personage, so human and yet so Divine; not the terrible Judge which Rome had painted him; but the Brother: very accessible to men, "receiving sinners and eating with them." And what a burden was taken from the conscience by the announcement that the forgiveness of the Cross was altogether free! How different was the Gospel of the New Testament from the Gospel of Rome! In the latter all was mystery, in the former all was light; the one addressed men only in the language of the schools, the other spoke to them in the terms of every day. In the one there was a work to be done, painful, laborious; and he that came short, though but in one iota, exposed himself to all the curses of the law; in the other there was simply a gift to be received, for the work had been done for the poor sinner by Another, and he found himself at the open gates of Paradise. It needed no one but his own heart, now unburdened of a mighty load, and filled with a joy never tasted before, to tell the man that this was not the Gospel of the priest, but the Gospel of God; and that it had come, not from Rome, but from Heaven.

Another advantage resulting from what Tyndale had done was that the Scriptures had been brought greatly more within reach of all classes than they ever were before. Wicliffe's Bible existed only in manuscript, and its cost was so great that only noblemen or wealthy persons could buy it. Tyndale's New Testament was not much more than a twentieth part the cost of Wicliffe's version. A hundred years before, the price of Wicliffe's New Testament was nearly three pounds sterling; but now the printed copies of Tyndale's were sold for three shillings and sixpence. If we compare these prices with the value of money and the wages of labour at the two eras, we shall find that the cost of the one was nearly forty times greater than that of the other; in other words, the wages of a whole year would have done little more than buy a New Testament of Wicliffe's, whereas the wages of a fortnight would suffice for the labourer to possess himself of a copy of Tyndale's.

CHAPTER V.

THE BIBLE AND THE CELLAR AT OXFORD—ANNE BOLEYN.

Entrance of the Scriptures—Garret carries them to Oxford—Pursuit of Garret—His Apprehension—Imprisonments at Oxford—The Cellar—Clark, Fryth, &c., do Penance—Their Sufferings—Death of Clark—Other Three Die—The Rest Released—Cambridge—Dr. Barnes Apprehended—A Penitential Procession in London—Purchase and Burning of Tyndale's Testaments by the Bishop of London—New Edition—The Divorce Stirred—Anne Boleyn—Her Beauty and Virtues—Knight Sent to Rome on the Divorce—A Captive Pope—Two Kings at his Feet.

WHEN God is to begin a work of reformation in the world, he first sends to men the Word of Life. The winds of passion—the intrigues of statesmen, the ambitions of monarchs, the wars of nations—next begin to blow to clear the path of the movement. So was it in England. The Bible had taken its place at the centre of the field; and now other parties—Cardinal Wolsey and King Henry within the country; the Pope, the Emperor, and the King of France outside of it—hastened to act their important though subordinate parts in that grand transformation which the Bible was to work on England. It is on this troubled stage that we are about to set foot; but first let us follow a little farther the immediate fortunes of the newly translated Scriptures, and the efforts made to introduce them into England.

The cardinal and the Bishop of London soon learned that the English New Testament had entered London, and that the Curate of All Hallows had received the copies, and had hidden them in his house. Search was made through all the city for Garret. He could not be found, and they were now told that he had gone to Oxford “to make sale of his heretical books.”¹ They immediately dispatched officers to search for him in Oxford, and “burn all and every his aforesaid books, and him too if they could find him.”² On the Tuesday before Shrove-tide, Garret was warned that the avengers of heresy were on his track, and that if he remained in Oxford he was sure to fall into the hands of the cardinal, and be sent to the Tower. Changing his name, he set out for Dorsetshire, but on the road his conscience smote him; he stopped, again he went forward, again he stopped, and finally he returned to Oxford, which he reached late at night. Weary with his wanderings, he threw himself upon his bed, where, soon after midnight, he was apprehended by Wolsey's agents, and given into the safe keeping of Dr. Cottisford, commissary of the university. A second attempt at flight was followed by arrest and imprisonment. Oxford was lost, the priests felt, unless the most summary measures were instantly adopted. All the friends of the Gospel at that university were

¹ Fox, vol. v., p. 421.

² *Ibid.*

apprehended, and thrown into prison. About a score of doctors and students were arrested, besides monks and canons, so widely had the truth spread. Of the number were Clark, one of the first to receive the truth; Dalabar, a disciple of Clark; John Fryth, and eight others of Wolsey's College. Corpus Christi, Magdalen, and St. Mary's Colleges also furnished their contribution to those now in bonds for the Gospel's sake. The fact that this outbreak of heresy, as the cardinal accounted it, had occurred mainly at his own college, made him only the more resolute on the adoption of measures to stop it. In patronising literature he had been promoting heresy, and the college which he had hoped would be the glory of Oxford, and a bulwark around the orthodoxy of England, had become the opprobrium of the realm and a menace to the Church.

The cardinal had now to provide a dungeon for the men whom he had sought for with so much pains, through England and the Continent, to place in his new chairs. Their prison was a damp, dark cellar below the buildings of the college, smelling rankly of the putrid articles which were sometimes stored up in it.¹ Here these young doctors and scholars were left, breathing the fetid air, and enduring great misery. On their examination, two only were dismissed without punishment: the rest were condemned to do public penance for their erroneous opinions. A great fire was kindled in the market-place: the prisoners, than whom, of all the youth at Oxford, none had a finer genius, or were more accomplished in letters, were marshalled in procession, and with fagot on shoulder they marched through the streets to where the bonfire blazed, and finished their penitential performance by throwing their heretical books into it.² After this, they were again sent back to their foul dungeon.

Prayers and animated conversations beguiled the first weeks of their doleful imprisonment. But by-and-by the chilly damp and the corrupted air did their terrible work upon them. Their strength ebbed away, their joints ached, their eyes grew dim, their features were haggard, their limbs shook and trembled, and scarcely were they able to crawl across the floor of their noisome prison. They hardly recognised one another as, groping their way in the partial darkness and solitariness, they encountered each other. One day, Clark lay stretched on the damp floor: his strength had utterly failed, and he was about to be released by the hand of Death. He craved to have the Communion given him before he should breathe his last. The request could not be granted. Heaving a sigh of resignation, he quoted the words of the ancient Father, "Believe, and thou hast eaten."³ He received by faith the "Bread of

¹ "A deep cave under the ground of the same college, where their salt fish was laid, so that through the filthy stench thereof they were all infected." (Fox, vol. v., p. 5.)

² Fox, vol. v., pp. 426–428.

³ "Crede et manducâsti." (Fox, vol. v., p. 428.)

Life,” and having eaten his last meal he died. Other three of these confessors were rapidly sinking. Death had already set his mark on their ghastly features. These were Sumner, Bayley, and Goodman. The cardinal was earnestly entreated to release them before death should put it out of his power to show them pity. Wolsey yielded to this appeal; but he had let them out only to die. The rest remained in the dungeon.

The death of these four was the means of opening the doors of the prison to the others. Even the cardinal, in the midst of his splendours, and occupied though he was at that moment with the affairs of England, and other kingdoms besides, was touched by the catastrophe that had taken place in the dungeons of his college, and sent an order for the release of the survivors. Six months had they sustained life in this dreadful place, the fever in the blood, and the poison in the air, consuming their strength day by day; and when their friends received them at the door of their living tomb, they seemed so many spectres. They lived to serve the cause into which they had received this early baptism. Some of them shone in the schools, others in the pulpit; and others, as Fryth and Ferrar, subsequently Bishop of St. David’s, consummated at the stake, long years after, the martyrdom which they had begun in the dungeon at Oxford.

The University of Cambridge was the first to receive the light, but its sister of Oxford seemed to outstrip it by being the first to be glorified by martyrdom. Cambridge, however, was now called to drink of the same cup. On the very same day (February 5th, 1526) on which the investigation had been set on foot at Oxford, Wolsey’s chaplain, accompanied by a sergeant-at-arms, arrived at Cambridge to open there a similar inquisition. The first act of Wolsey’s agent was to arrest Barnes, the distinguished scholar, who, as we have seen, had given the use of his pulpit in the Augustine Convent to Latimer. He next began a search in the rooms of Bilney, Latimer, and Stafford, for New Testaments, which he had learned from spies were hidden in their lodgings. All the Testaments had been previously removed, and the search resulted in the discovery of not a single copy. Without proof of heresy the chaplain could arrest no heretics, and he returned to London with his one prisoner. An indiscreet sermon which Barnes had preached against the cardinal’s “jewelled shoes, poleaxes, gilt pillars, golden cushions, silver crosses, and red gloves,” or, as the cardinal himself phrased it, “bloody gloves,” was the ground of his apprehension. When brought before Wolsey he justified himself. “You must be burned,” said the cardinal, and ordered him into confinement. Before the tribunal of the bishops he repeated next day his defence of his articles, and was sentenced to burnt alive. His worldly friends came round him. “If you die,” said they, “truth will die with you; if you save your life, you will cause truth to triumph when better days come round.” They thrust a pen into his hand: “Haste, save yourself!” they reiterated. “*Burned*

alive”—the terrible words ringing in his ears, freezing his blood, and bewildering his brain, he put forth his hand, and signed his recantation. He fell now that he might stand afterwards.

Meanwhile a great discovery had been made at London. The five merchants who had carried across from Germany the English New Testaments of Tyndale, had been tracked, apprehended, and were to do public penance at St. Paul’s Cathedral on the morrow. It was resolved to consummate Barnes’ disgrace by making him take his place in the penitential procession. On a lofty throne, at the northern gate of St. Paul’s, sat the cardinal, clothed all in red, a goodly array of bishops, abbots, and priests gathered around him. The six penitents slowly passed before him, each bearing a faggot, which, after encompassing the fire three times, they cast into the flames, together with some heretical books. This solemn act of public humiliation being ended, the penitents returned to their prison, and Wolsey, descending from his throne and mounting his mule, rode off under a canopy of state to his palace at Westminster.

It was but a small matter that the disciple was burning his fagot, or rotting in a cellar, when the Word was travelling through all the kingdom. Night and day, whether the persecutor waked or slept, the messenger of the Heavenly King pursued his journey, carrying the “good tidings” to the remotest nooks of England. Depôts of the Scriptures were established even in some convents. The chagrin and irritation of the bishops were extreme. An archiepiscopal mandate was issued in the end of 1526 against the Bible, or any book containing so much as one quotation¹ from it. But mandate, inquisitors, all were fruitless; as passes the cloud through the sky, depositing its blessed drops on the earth below, and clothing hill and valley with verdure, so passed the Bible over England, diffusing light, and kindling a secret joy in men’s hearts. At last Bishop Tostall bethought him of the following expedient for entirely suppressing the book. He knew a merchant, Packington by name, who traded with Antwerp, and who he thought might be useful to him in this matter. The bishop being in Antwerp sent for Packington, and asked him to bring to him all the copies of Tyndale’s New Testament that he could find. Packington undertook to do so, provided the bishop should pay the price of them. This the bishop cheerfully agreed to do. Soon thereafter Packington had an interview with Tyndale, and told him that he had found a merchant for his New Testaments. “Who is he?” asked Tyndale. “The Bishop of London,” replied the merchant. “If the bishop wants the New Testament,” said Tyndale, “it is to burn it.” “Doubtless,” replied Packington; “but the money will enable you to print others, and moreover, the bishop will have it.” The price was paid to

¹ Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, p. 81. Wilkins, *Concilia*, vol. iii., p. 706. Eox, vol. iv., pp. 666, 667.

Tyndale, the New Testaments were sent across to London, and soon after their arrival were publicly burned at St. Paul's Cross. Tyndale immediately set to work to prepare a new and more correct edition, and, says the chronicler,¹ "they came thick and threefold over into England." The bishop, amazed, sent for Packington to inquire how it came to pass that the book which he had bought up and suppressed should be more widely circulated than ever. Packington replied that though the copies had been destroyed the types remained, and advised Tonsall to buy them also. The bishop smiled, and beginning to see how the matter stood, dismissed the merchant, without giving him more money to be expended in the production of more New Testaments.

It was not Tyndale's edition only that was crossing the sea. A Dutch house, knowing the desire for the Bible which the public destruction of it in London had awakened, printed an edition of 5,000 of Tyndale's translation, and sent them for distribution in England. These were soon all sold, and were followed by two other editions, which found an equally ready market.² Then came the new and more correct edition of Tyndale, which the purchase of the first edition by Tonsall had enabled him to prepare. This edition was issued in a more portable form. The clergy were seized with a feeling of dismay. A deluge of what they termed heresy had broken in upon the land! "It was enough to enter London," said they, "for one to become a heretic." They speedily found that in endeavouring to prevent the circulation of the Bibles they were attempting a work beyond their strength.

The foundations of the Reformed Church of England had been laid in the diffusion of the Scriptures, but the ground had to be cleared of those mighty encumbrances which obstructed the rising of the edifice, and this part of the work was done by the passions of the men who now again present themselves on the stage. Twice had Charles V. promised the tiara to Wolsey, and twice had he broken his promise by giving it to another. A man so proud, and also so powerful as the cardinal, was not likely to pardon the affront: in fact his settled purpose was to avenge himself on the emperor, although it should be by convulsing all Europe. The cardinal knew that doubts had begun to trouble the king's conscience touching the lawfulness of his union with Catherine, that her person had become disagreeable to him, and that while he intensely longed for an heir to his throne, issue was hopeless in the case of his present queen. Wolsey saw in these facts the means of separating England from Spain, and of humiliating the emperor: his own fall and the fall of the Popedom in England he did not foresee. The cardinal broke his purpose, though

¹ Fox, vol. iv., p. 670.

² Soames, vol. i, p. 510.

guardedly, to Longland, the king's confessor.¹ It was agreed that in a matter of such consequence and delicacy the cardinal himself should take the initiative. He went first of all alone to the king, and pointed out to him that the salvation of his soul, and the succession to his crown, were in peril in this matter. Three days after he appeared again in the royal presence, accompanied by Longland. "Most mighty prince," said the confessor, "you cannot, like Herod, have your brother's wife."² Submit the matter to proper judges." The king was content. Henry set to studying Thomas Aquinas on the point, and found that his favourite doctor had decided against such marriages: he next asked the judgment of his bishops; and these, having deliberated on the question, were unanimously, with the exception of Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, of opinion that the king's marriage was of doubtful validity.³ At this point a French bishop appears upon the scene. Granmont, Bishop of Tarbes, had been dispatched to the English court (February, 1527), by Francis I., on the subject of the marriage of the Duke of Orleans with the Princess Mary, the sole surviving child of Henry VIII. The bishop, on the part of his master, raised before the English Council the question of the legitimacy of Mary, on the ground that she was the issue of a marriage forbidden *jure divino*. This, in connection with the fact that the Emperor Charles V. had previously objected to an alliance with the Princess Mary on the same ground, greatly increased the scruples of the king. The two most powerful monarchs in Europe had, on the matter, accused him of living in incest. It is probable that he felt real trouble of conscience. Another influence now conspired with his scruples, and powerfully inclined him to seek a divorce from Queen Catherine.

Anne Boleyn, so renowned for the beauty of her person, the grace of her manners, and the many endowments of her intellect, was about this time appointed one of the maids of honour to Queen Catherine. This young lady was the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, a gentleman of good family and estate, who, having occasion to visit France, took with him his daughter, and placed her at the French court, where she acquired all those accomplishments which add such lustre to female beauty. Her last years in France were passed in the elegant, intellectual, and virtuous court of Marguerite of Valois, the sister of Francis I. Attached to the person of his queen, Henry VIII. had many opportunities of seeing Anne Boleyn. He was not insensible to her charms of person, and not less was he pleased with the strength of her understanding, the sweetness of her temper, and the sprightliness of her conversation. That he then entertained the idea of making her his queen we are not prepared to

¹ Burnet, vol. i., pp. 37, 38.—"The best-informed writers of the sixteenth century, men of the most opposite parties—Pole, Polydore Virgil, Tyndale, Meteren, Pallavicini, Sanders, and Roper, More's son-in-law—all agree in pointing to Wolsey as the instigator of that divorce which has become so famous." (D'Aubigné, vol. v., p. 407.)

² More's Life, p. 129.

³ Burnet, vol. i., p. 38.

affirm. Meanwhile a strong attachment sprang up between Anne and the young Lord Percy, the heir of the House of Northumberland. Wolsey divined their secret, and set himself to frustrate their hopes. Anne Boleyn received an order to quit the court, and Percy was, soon thereafter, married to a daughter of the House of Talbot. Anne again retired to France, from whence, after a short residence, she returned definitively to England in 1527, and reappeared at court as one of the maids of honour.

Anne, now twenty years of age, was even more accomplished, and not less virtuous, than before.¹ The king became enamoured of her beauty, and one day, finding her alone, he declared himself her lover. The young lady fell on her knees, and in a voice that trembled with alarm and earnestness, made answer, "I deem, most noble King, that your Grace speaks these words in mirth, to prove me; if not, I beseech your Highness to believe me that I would rather die than comply with your wishes." Henry replied in the language of a gallant, that he would live in hope. "I understand not, mighty King, how you should entertain any such hope," spiritedly answered Anne; "your wife I cannot be, both in respect of my own unworthiness, and also because you have a queen already. Your mistress, be assured, I never will be."² From this day forward Henry was more intent than ever on the prosecution of his divorce from his queen.

In the end of the same year (1527), Knight, one of the royal secretaries, was dispatched to Rome, with a request to the Pope, in the king's behalf, that he would revoke the bull of Julius II., and declare Henry's marriage with Catherine void. Knight found Clement VII. in the stronghold of St. Angelo, whither he had fled from the soldiers of Charles V., who had just sacked the Eternal City. Clement could not think of drawing upon himself still farther the vengeance of the emperor, by annulling his aunt's marriage with the King of England; and, on the other hand, he trembled to refuse the divorce lest he should offend Henry VIII., whose zeal in his behalf he had recently rewarded with the title of "Defender of the Faith." The Emperor Charles, who had just learned from a special messenger of Catherine, with surprise and indignation, what Henry VIII. was meditating, found the question of the divorce not less embarrassing than the Pope did. If, on the one hand, he should thwart the King of England, he would lose Henry's alliance, which he much needed at

¹ No one now thinks it worth his while to rebut the calumnies of Sanders in his *History of English Schism*. Perhaps no falsifier ever more completely succeeded in making his slanders perfectly harmless simply by making them incredible than this writer. This lady of undoubted beauty, talent, and virtue, he paints as a monster absolutely hideous by the deformities of her body, and the yet greater deformities of her soul. We quote only the following short passage from the French translation: "On la vit après à la cour (de France), ou elle se gouverna avec si peu de pudeur, qu'on l'appelloit ordinairement *la haquenée d'Angleterre*. Francois I. eut part a ses bonnes graces; on la nomma depuis *la mule du Roy*." (*Histoire du Schisme d'Angleterre*; Paris, 1678.)

² Sloane MSS., 2,495—*apud* Turner, *Hist. of Eng.*, vol. ii., p. 196.

this hour when a league had been formed to drive him out of Italy; and if, on the other, he should consent to the divorce, he would sacrifice his aunt, and stoop to see his family disgraced. He decided to maintain his family's honour at every cost. He straightway dispatched to Rome the Cordelier De Angelis, an able diplomatist, with instructions to offer to the Pope his release from the Castle of St. Angelo, on condition that he would promise to refuse the English king's suit touching his divorce. The captive of St. Angelo to his surprise saw two kings as suppliants at his feet. He felt that he was still Pontiff. The kings, said he to himself, have besieged and pillaged my capital, my cardinals they have murdered, and myself they have incarcerated, nevertheless they still need me. Which shall the Pope oblige, Henry VIII. of England, or Charles V. of Spain? He saw that his true policy was to decide neither for nor against either, but to keep all parties at his feet by leaving them in embarrassment and suspense, and meanwhile to make the question of the divorce the means by which he should deliver himself from his dungeon, and once more mount his throne.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DIVORCE—THOMAS BILNEY, THE MARTYR.

The Papacy Disgraces itself—Clement gives his Promise to Both Kings—A Worthless Document sent to London—The Pope's Doublings—The Cardinal's Devices—Henry's Anger—Bilney sets out on a Preaching Tour—Discussions on Saint-Worship, &c.—Bilney Arrested—Recants—His Agony—His Second Arrest and Condemnation—His Burning—The "Lollards' Pit"—Other Martyrs—Richard Bayfield—John Tewkesbury—James Bainham—Crucifixes and Images Pulled down—Dissemination of the Scriptures—Fourth Edition of the New Testament.

We left Clement VII. in the dungeons of the Castle of St. Angelo, with two kings kneeling at his feet. The Pope, "who cannot err," contrives to gratify both monarchs. He gives to the one a promise that he will do as he desires, and grant the divorce; he assures the other that he will act conformably to his wishes and withhold it. It is thus that the captive Pope opens his prison doors, and goes back to his kingdom. It was not without great delay and much tortuosity, dissimulation, and suffering that Clement reached this issue, so advantageous at the moment, but so disastrous in the end. His many shifts and make-believes; his repeated interviews with the ambassadors of Charles and Henry; the many angry midnight discussions in his old palace at Orvieto; the mutual recriminations and accusations which passed between the parties; the briefs and bulls which were drafted, amended, and cancelled, to be drafted over again, and undergo the same process of emendation and extinction; or which were sent off to London, to be found, upon their arrival, worthless and fit only to be burned—to detail all this would be foreign to our purpose; we can only state briefly in what all these wearisome delays and shameful doublings ended. But these most disgraceful scenes were not without their uses. The Papacy was all the while revealing its innate meanness, hollowness, hypocrisy, and incurable viciousness, in the eyes of the emperor and the King of England, and was prompting in even their minds the question whether that system had not put itself into a false position by so inextricably mixing itself up with secular affairs, and assuming to itself temporal rule, seeing it was compelled to sustain itself in this office by cajoleries, deceptions, and lies, to its own infinite debasement, and loss of spiritual power and dignity. The prestige of which the Papacy then stripped itself, by its shameless tergiversations, it has never since recovered.

The envoy of the emperor, De Angelis, was the first to appear before the prisoner of St. Angelo. The result of the negotiation between them was that the Pope was to be released on the promise that he would do nothing in the divorce solicited by the King of England but what was agreeable to the emperor. Knight, the English envoy, unable to gain access to Clement in his

prison of St. Angelo, contrived to send in to him the paper containing Henry's request, and the Pope returned for answer that the dispensation asked for by the King of England would be forwarded to London.¹ "So gracious," observes Burnet, "was a Pope in captivity." The 10th of December, 1527, was the day fixed for the Pope's release, but feeling that he would owe less to the emperor by effecting his own escape than waiting till the imperial guards opened the door, Clement disguised himself the evening before, and made off for Orvieto, and took up his abode in one of its old and ruinous tenements. The English envoys, Knight and Cassali, followed him thither, and obtaining an interview with him in his new quarters, the entrance of which was blocked up with rubbish, and the walls of which had their nakedness concealed by rows of domestics, they insisted on two things—first, the appointment of a commission to try the divorce in England; and secondly, a dispensation empowering King Henry to marry again as soon as the divorce was pronounced. These two demands were strongly pressed on the perplexed and bewildered Pope. The king offered to the Pope "assistance, riches, armies, crown, and even life," as the reward of compliance, while the penalty of refusal was to be the separation of England from the tiara.² The poor Pope was placed between the terrible Charles, whose armies were still in Italy, and the powerful Henry. After repeated attempts to dupe the agents, both the commission and the dispensation were given,³ but with piteous tears and entreaties on the part of the Pope that they would not act upon the commission till he was rid of the Spaniards. The French army, under Leutrec, was then in Italy, engaged in the attempt to expel the Spaniards from the peninsula; and the Pope, seeing in this position of affairs a chance of escape out of his dilemma, finally refused to permit the King of England to act on the commission which he had just put into the hands of his envoy, till the French should be under the walls of Orvieto, which would furnish him with a pretext for saying to Charles that he had issued the commission to pronounce the divorce under the compulsion of the French. He promised, moreover, that as soon as the French arrived he would send another copy of the document, properly signed, to be acted upon at once.

Meanwhile, and before the bearer of the first documents had reached London, a new demand arrived from England. Henry expressed a wish to have another cardinal-legate joined with Wolsey in trying the cause. This request was also disagreeable, and Clement attempted to evade it by advising that Henry should himself pronounce the divorce, for which, the Pope said, he was as able as any doctor in all the world, and that he should marry another

¹ Burnet, vol. i., p. 47.

² See copy of original letter of Cardinal Wolsey to Sir Gregory Cassali, in Burnet, vol. i.—*Records*, iii.

³ Burnet, vol. i., p. 48.

wife, and he promised that the Papal confirmation should afterwards be forthcoming. This course was deemed too hazardous to be taken, and the councillors were confirmed in this opinion by discovering that the commission which the Pope had sent, and which had now arrived in England, was worthless—fit only to be burned.¹ The king was chafed and angry. “Wait until the imperialists have quitted Italy!” he exclaimed; “the Pope is putting us off to the Greek Kalends.”

The remedies which suggested themselves to the cardinal for a state of things that portended the downfall of the Popedom in England, and his own not less, were of a very extraordinary kind. On the 21st of January, 1528, France and England declared war against Spain. Wolsey in this gratified two passions at the same time: he avenged himself on the emperor for passing him over in the matter of the Popedom, and he sought to open Clement’s way to decree the divorce, by ridding him of the terror of Charles. To war the cardinal proposed to add the excommunication of the emperor, who was to pay with the loss of his throne for refusing the Papal chair to Wolsey. The bull for dethroning Charles is said to have been drafted, but the success of the emperor’s arms in Italy deterred the Pope from fulminating it. Finding the dethronement of Charles hopeless, Wolsey next turned his thoughts to the deposition of the Pope. The Church must sustain damage, he argued, from the thralldom in which Clement is at present kept. A vicar, or acting head, ought to be elected to govern Christendom so long as the Pope is virtually a prisoner: the vicar-to-be was, of course, no other than himself.² It was a crafty scheme for entering upon the permanent occupation of the chair of Peter. Such were the intrigues, the disappointments, the perplexities and alarms into which this matter, first put in motion by Wolsey, had plunged all parties. This was but the first overcasting of the sky; the tempest was yet to come.

While the kingdoms of the Papal world are beset by these difficulties, there rises, in majestic silence, another kingdom, that cannot be shaken, of which the builders are humble evangelists, acting through the instrumentality of the Scriptures. Thomas Bilney, of Cambridge, exchanging his constitutional timidity for apostolic fervour and courage, set out on a preaching tour through the eastern parts of England. “Behold,” said he, like another preacher of the desert, addressing the crowds that gathered round him, “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.” “If Christ takes away the sins of men,” he continued, “what good will it do you to be buried in the cowl of St. Francis? This ‘Lamb’ takes away your sins now: not after years of penance, but this moment. . . . Good people, put away your idols of gold and silver. Why are Jews and Mohammedans not yet converted? We have to

¹ Burnet, vol. i., pp. 49, 50.

² See “The Cardinal’s Letter to the Ambassadors about his Promotion to the Popedom,” in Burnet, i.—*Records*, xx.

thank the Pope and the priests for this, who have preached to them no other Gospel than that of offering wax candles to stocks and stones. Good people, refrain from lighting candles to the saints, for those in heaven have no need of them, and their images on earth have no eyes to see them.”¹

Bilney was accompanied by Arthur, another Cambridge scholar and disciple. They were often pulled from the pulpit by the friars. “What matters it to silence me?” said Arthur on one of these occasions. “Though I should be put to death, there are 7,000 better preachers than myself who will rise up to take my place.” One day (28th May, 1527) when Bilney was preaching in Christ Church, Ipswich, he said, “Our Saviour Christ is our Mediator between us and the Father: what should we need then to seek to any saint for remedy?” “That,” said a certain friar, named John Brusierd, “was true in St. Paul’s time, but not in ours: Christ was then the one Mediator, for no one had yet been canonised, and there were no saints in the calendar.”² At another time Bilney was asked by the same friar to solve the difficulty, how the Pope, who lived in his own house, could be “the Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God as God?”

“Do you know the Table of the Ten Commandments?” asked Bilney. The friar replied that he did.

“And do you know the constitutions devised by men, and bound on men under pain of death?” The friar gave a qualified confession of his knowledge of such constitutions.

“It is written,” said Bilney, “The temple of the Lord is holy, which is you? Therefore, the conscience of man is the temple of the Holy Ghost. For him who contemneth the Table of the Commandments of God there is but a small punishment, whereas for him who contemneth the constitutions of the Pope there is the punishment of death. What is this but for the High Priest of Rome to sit and reign in the temple of God (that is, in man’s conscience) as God?”³

Bilney and Arthur were arrested, and on the 27th of November, 1527, were brought before the Bishops’ Court, in the Chapter-house of Westminster. Wolsey took his seat on the bench for a moment only to state the alternative—abjuration or death—and withdrew to attend to affairs of State. The two prisoners boldly confessed the faith they had preached. The extraordinary scene that followed between Tonstall, the presiding judge, and Bilney—the one pressing forward to the stake, the other striving to hold him back—has been graphically described by the chronicler.⁴ But it was neither the exhortations of the judge nor the fear of burning that shook the steadfastness of

¹ Fox, vol. iv., pp. 621–625.

² Fox, vol. iv., pp. 628, 629.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 630.

⁴ Fox, vol. iv., pp. 631, 632.

Bilney; it was the worldly-wise and sophisticated reasonings of his friends, who crowded round him, and plied him day and night with their entreaties. The desire of saving his life for the service of truth was what caused him to fall. He would deny his Master now that he might serve him in the future.

On Sunday, the 8th of December, a penitential procession was seen moving towards St. Paul's Cross. Bilney, his head bare, walked in front of it, carrying his fagot on his shoulder, as much as to say, "I am a heretic, and worthy of the fire." Had he been actually going to the fire his head would not have been bowed so low; but, alas! his was not the only head which was that day bowed down in England. A standard-bearer had fainted, and many a young soldier ashamed to look up kept his eyes fixed on the ground. Such was the first use served by that life which Bilney had redeemed from the stake by his recantation.¹

After his public penitence he was sent back to prison. When we think of what Bilney once was, and of what he had now become, we shall see that one of two things must happen to the fallen disciple. Either such a malignant hatred of the Gospel will take possession of his mind as that he shall be insensible to his sin, and perhaps become a persecutor of his former brethren, or a night of horror and anguish will cover him. It was the latter that was realised. He lay, says Latimer, for two years "in a burning hell of despair."² When at length he was released from prison and returned to Cambridge, he was in "such anguish and agony that he could scarce eat or drink." His friends came round him "to comfort him, but no comfort could he find." Afraid to leave him a single hour alone, "they were fain to be with him night and day." When they quoted the promises of the Word of God to him, "it was as if one had run him through the heart with a sword." The Bible had become a Mount Sinai to him, it was black with wrath, and flaming with condemnation. But at last the eye that looked on Peter was turned on Bilney, and hope and strength returned into his soul. "He came again," says Latimer, like one rising from the dead. One evening in 1531, he took leave of his friends in Cambridge at ten o'clock of the night, saying that "he was going up to Jerusalem, and should see them no more." He set out overnight, and arriving at Norfolk, he began to preach privately in the houses of those disciples whom his fall had stumbled, and whom he felt it to be his duty first of all to confirm in the faith, Having restored them, he began to preach openly in the fields around the city. He next proceeded to Norwich, where he continued his public ministry, publishing the faith he had abjured, and exhorting the disciples to be warned by his fall not to take counsel with worldly-minded friends. He spoke as one who had "known the terrors of the Lord."³

¹ Fox, vol. iv., pp. 631, 632.

² Fox, vol. iv., p. 643.

³ Latimer's Sermons—Fox, vol. iv., pp. 641, 642.

In no long time, he was apprehended and thrown into prison. Friars of all colours came round him; but Bilney, leaning on Christ alone, was not to fall a second time. He was condemned to be burned as a heretic. The ceremony of degrading him was gone through with great formality. On the night before his execution, he supped in prison with his friends, conversing calmly on his approaching death, and repeating oft, and in joyous accents, the words in Isaiah xliii. 2, "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned," &c.¹ To test his powers of enduring the physical sufferings awaiting him, he put his forefinger into the flame of the candle, and, according to some accounts, kept it there till the first joint was burned.

Next morning, which was Saturday, the officers in their glaives, and holding their halberds, were seen at the prison door, waiting the coming forth of the martyr. Thomas Bilney appeared, accompanied by Dr. Warner, Vicar of Winterton, whom he had selected, as one of the oldest of his friends, to be with him in his last hours. Preceded by the officers, and followed by the crowd of spectators, they set out for the stake, which was planted outside the city gate, in a low and circular hollow, whose environing hills enabled the spectators to seat themselves as in an amphitheatre, and witness the execution. The spot has ever since borne the name of the "Lollards' Pit." He was attired in a layman's gown, with open sleeves. All along the route he distributed liberal alms by the hands of a friend. Being come to the place where he was to die, he descended into the hollow, the slopes of which were clothed with spectators. The executioners had not yet finished their preparations, and Bilney addressed a few words to the crowd. All being ready, he embraced the stake, and kissed it. Then kneeling down, he prayed with great composure, ending with the words of the psalm, "Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my supplications." He thrice repeated, in deep and solemn accents, the next verse, "And enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Then once more he said, "My soul thirsteth for thee." "Are you ready?" he inquired of the executioners. "We are ready," was the reply. He put off his coat and doublet; and, standing on the step in front of the stake, the chain was put round his body. Dr. Warner came up to him, and in the few words which his tears suffered him to utter, he bade the martyr farewell. Bilney, his face lighted with a gentle smile, bowed his head towards him, and expressed his thanks, adding, "O Master Doctor, *Pasce gregem tuum; pasce gregem tuum*" (Feed your flock; feed your flock). Warner departed, "sobbing and weeping." A crowd of friars, who had given evidence against Bilney on his trial, next pressed round the stake, entreating

¹ Bilney's Bible is now in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. It has numerous annotations in his own hand; and the verse quoted in the text, from Isaiah xliii., which consoled the martyr in his last hours, is specially marked with a pen on the margin. (Ed. of Fox, Lond. edition, 1846.)

the martyr to acquit them of his death before the people, lest they should withhold their alms from them. "Whereupon," says the chronicler, "the said Thomas Bilney spake with a loud voice to the people, and said, 'I pray you, good people, be never worse to these men for my sake, as though they should be the authors of my death: it was not they.' And so he ended."

The officers now made instant preparation for the execution. They piled up reeds and fagots about his body. The torch was applied to the reeds; the fire readily caught, and, mounting aloft with crackling noise, the flames enveloped the martyr, and blackened the skin of his face. Lifting up his hands, and striking upon his breast, he cried at times, "Jesu," and again, "Credo." A great tempest of wind, which had raged several days, inflicting great damage on the ripened corn-fields, was blowing at the time. Its violence parted the flames, and blowing them to either side of the sufferer, left full in sight of the vast concourse the blackened and ghastly figure of the martyr. This happened thrice. At last the fire caught such hold upon the wood that it burned steadily; and now "his body, being withered, bowed downward upon the chain." One of the officers, with his halberd, struck out the staple in the stake behind, and the body fell along upon the ashes. Fresh fagots were heaped over it; and being again lighted, the whole was speedily consumed.¹

So died the first disciple and evangelist in England in Reformation times. His knowledge was not perfect: some of the errors of Rome remained with him to the last; but this much had he learned from the Greek New Testament of Erasmus, that there is but one object of worship, namely, God; that there is but one Saviour, namely, Christ; and that forgiveness comes freely to men through his blood. Twenty years after the tragedy in the Lollards' Pit, Latimer, whom he had brought to the knowledge of the truth, preaching before Edward VI., called him "that blessed martyr of God, Thomas Bilney."

The Scriptures sowed the seed in England, and the blood of martyrs watered it. Next after Bilney came Richard Bayfield. Bayfield was a monk of Bury, and was converted chiefly through Tyndale's New Testament. He went beyond seas, and joining himself to Tyndale and Fryth, he returned to England, bringing with him many copies of the Bible, which he began to disseminate. He was apprehended in London, and carried first to the Lollards' Tower, and thence to the Coal-house. "Here he was tied," says the martyrologist, "by the neck, middle, and legs, standing upright by the walls, divers times, manacled."² The design of this cruelty, which the greatest criminals were spared, was to compel him to disclose the names of those who had bought copies of the Word of God from him; but this he refused to do. He was brought before Stokesley, Bishop of London, and accused of "being

¹ Fox, vol iv., pp. 654, 655.

² *Ibid.*, p. 681.

beyond the sea, and of bringing thence divers and many books, as well of Martin Luther's own works, as of others of his damnable sect, and of Ecolampadius the great heretic, and of divers other heretics, both in Latin and English." He was sentenced to the fire. Before execution he was degraded in the Cathedral-church of St. Paul's. At the close of the ceremonies, the Bishop of London struck him so violent a blow on the breast with his crosier, that he fell backwards, and swooning, rolled down the steps of the choir. On reviving, he thanked God that now he had been delivered from the malignant Church of Antichrist, alluding to the ceremony of "degradation" which he had just undergone. He was carried to the stake at Smithfield in the apparel in which Stokesley had arrayed him. He remained half an hour alive on the pile, the fire touching one of his sides only. When his left arm was burned, he touched it with the right, and it dropped off. He stood unmoved, praying all the while.¹

Many others followed. Among these was John Tewkesbury, merchant in London. Tyndale's New Testament had delivered him from the darkness. Becoming an object of suspicion to the priests, he was apprehended, and taken to the house of Sir Thomas More, now Lord Chancellor of England. He was shut up a whole week in the porter's lodge; his hands, feet, and head being placed in the stocks. He was then taken out and tied to a tree in Sir Thomas's garden, termed the Tree of Truth, and whipped, and small cords were drawn so tightly round his forehead that the blood started from his eyes. Such were the means which the elegant scholar and accomplished wit took to make this disciple of the Gospel reveal his associates. He was next carried to the Tower, and stretched on the rack till his limbs were broken. He yielded to the extremity of his sufferings, and recanted. This was in 1529. The brave death of his friend Bayfield revived his courage. The fact soon came to the knowledge of his persecutors, and being arrested, the Bishop of London held an assize upon him in the house of Sir Thomas More, and having passed sentence upon him as a relapsed heretic, he was carried to Smithfield and burned.²

James Bainham, a gentleman of Gloucestershire, and member of the Middle Temple, delighted in the study of the Scriptures, and began to exhibit in his life in eminent degree the evangelical virtues. He was arrested, and carried to the house of Sir Thomas More at Chelsea. He was passed through the same terrible ordeal to which the author of *Utopia* had subjected Tewkesbury. He was tied to the Tree of Truth, scourged, and then sent to the Tower to be racked. The chancellor was exceedingly anxious to discover who of the gentlemen of the Temple, his acquaintance, had embraced the Gospel, but no

¹ Fox, vol. iv., pp. 687, 688.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 689–694.

disclosure could these cruelties extort from Bainham. On his trial he was drawn by the arts of his enemies to abjure. He appeared a few days after at St. Paul's Cross with his fagot; but recantation was followed by bitter repentance. He too felt that the fires which remorse kindles in the soul are sharper than those which the persecutor kindles to consume the body. The fallen disciple, receiving strength from on high, again stood up. Arrested and brought to trial a second time, he was more than a conqueror over all the arts which were again put forth against his steadfastness. On May-day, at two o'clock (1532), he appeared in Smithfield. Going forward to the stake, which was guarded by horsemen, he threw himself flat on his face and prayed. Then rising up, he embraced the stake, and taking hold of the chain, he wound it round his body, while a serjeant made it fast behind.

Standing on the pitch-barrel, he addressed the people, telling them that "it was lawful for every man and woman to have God's Book in their mother tongue," and warning them against the errors in which they and their fathers had lived. "Thou liest, thou heretic," said Master Pane, town-clerk of London. "Thou deniest the blessed Sacrament of the altar." "I do not deny the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood, as it was instituted by Christ, but I deny your transubstantiation, and your idolatry of the bread, and that Christ, God and man, should dwell in a piece of bread; but that he is in heaven, sitting on the right hand of God the Father." "Thou heretic!" said Pane—"Set fire to him and burn him."

The train of gunpowder was now ignited. As the flame approached him, he lifted up his eyes and hands to heaven, and prayed for the forgiveness of Pane and of Sir Thomas More, and continued at intervals in supplication till the fire had reached his head. "It is to be observed," says the chronicler, "that as he was at the stake, in the midst of the flaming fire, which fire had half consumed his arms and legs, he spake these words: 'O ye Papists! behold, ye look for miracles, and here now ye may see a miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain than if I were in a bed of down; but it is to me as a bed of roses.' These words spake he in the midst of the flaming fire, when his legs and arms, as I said, were half consumed."¹

While these and many other martyrs were dying at the stake, indications were not wanting that the popular feeling was turning against the old faith in the destruction of its public symbols. Many of the crucifixes that stood by the highway were pulled down. The images of saints, whose very names are now forgotten, were destroyed. The images of "Our Lady" sometimes disappeared from chapels, and no one knew where they had gone, or by whom they had been carried off. The authors of these acts were in a few cases discovered and hanged, but in the majority of instances they remained unknown.

¹ Fox, vol. iv., pp. 697–705.

But this outbreak of the iconoclast spirit in England was as nothing compared to the fury with which it showed itself in the Low Countries, and the havoc it inflicted on the cathedrals and shrines of Belgium, Switzerland, and the south of France.

But the one pre-eminent Reforming Power in England was that which descended on the land softly as descends the dew, and advanced noiselessly as the light of morning spreads over the earth—the Holy Scriptures. A little before the events we have just narrated, a fourth edition of the New Testament, more beautiful than the previous ones, had been printed in Antwerp, and was brought into England. A scarcity of bread which then prevailed in the country caused the corn ships from the Low Countries to be all the more readily welcomed, and the “Word of Life” was sent across concealed in them. But it happened that a priest opening his sack of corn found in the sack’s mouth the Book so much dreaded by the clergy, and hastened to give information that, along with the bread that nourisheth the body, that which destroyeth the soul was being imported into England. Nevertheless, the most part of the copies escaped, and, diffused among the people, began slowly to lift the mass out of vassalage, to awaken thought, and to prepare for liberty. The bishops would at times burn a hundred or two of copies at St. Paul’s Cross but this policy, as might have been expected, only resulted in whetting the desire of the people to possess the sacred volume. Anxious to discover who furnished the money for printing this endless supply of Bibles, Sir Thomas More said one day to one George Constantine, who had been apprehended on suspicion of heresy, “Constantine, I would have you be plain with me in one thing that I will ask thee, and I promise thee that I will show thee favour in all other things of which thou art accused. There is beyond the sea Tyndale, Joye, and a great many of you. There be some that help and succour them with money. I pray thee, tell me who they be?” “My lord, I will tell you truly,” said Constantine, “it is the Bishop of London that hath holpen us, for he hath bestowed upon us a great deal of money upon New Testaments to burn them, and that hath been and yet is our only succour and comfort.” “Now, by my truth,” said the chancellor, “I think even the same, for so much I told the bishop before he went about it.”¹

¹ Fox—Soames, *Hist. of Reformation*, vol. i., p. 512.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DIVORCE, AND WOLSEY'S FALL.

Bull for Dissolving the King's Marriage—Campeggio's Arrival—His Secret Instructions—Shows the Bull to Henry—The Commission Opened—The King and Queen Cited—Catherine's Address to Henry—Pleadings—Campeggio Adjourns the Court—Henry's Wrath—It First Strikes Wolsey—His Many Enemies—His Disgrace—The Cause Avoked to Rome—Henry's Fulminations—Inhibits the Bull—His Resolution touching the Popedom—Wolsey's Last Interview with the King—Campeggio's Departure—Bills Filed in King's Bench against Wolsey—Deprived of the Great Seal—Goes to Esher—Indictment against him in Parliament—Thrown out—The Cardinal Banished to York—His Life there—Arrested for High Treason—His Journey to Leicester—His Death—His Burial.

WOLSEY at last made it clear to Clement VII. and his cardinals that if the divorce were not granted England was lost to the Popedom. The divorce would not have cost them a thought, nor would Henry have been put to the trouble of asking it twice, but for the terror in which they stood of the emperor, whose armies encompassed them. But at that moment the fortune of war was going against Charles V.; his soldiers were retreating before the French; and Clement, persuading himself that Charles was as good as driven out of Italy, said, "I shall oblige the King of England." On the 8th of June, 1528, the Pope issued a commission empowering Campeggio and Wolsey to declare the marriage between Henry and Catherine null and void. A few days later he signed a decretal by which he himself annulled the marriage.¹ This important document was put into the hands of Campeggio, who was dispatched to England with instructions to show the bull to no one save to Henry and Wolsey. Whether it should ever be made public would depend upon the course of events. If the emperor were finally beaten, the decretal was to be acted upon; if he recovered his good fortune, it was to be burned. Campeggio set out, and travelled by slow stages, for he had been instructed to avail himself of every pretext for interposing delay, in the hope that time would bring a solution of the matter. At last Campeggio appeared, and his arrival with the bull dissolving the marriage gave unbounded joy to the king. This troublesome business was at an end, Henry thought. His conscience was at rest, and his way opened to contract another marriage. The New Testament was separating England from the Papacy, but the decretal had come to bind the king and the realm more firmly to Rome than ever. Nevertheless, a Higher than man's wisdom made the two—Tyndale's New Testament and Clement's decretal—combine in the issue to effect the same result.

¹ Herbert, p. 248. Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, vol. i., p. 171. Burnet, vol. i., pp. 54, 55.

Eight months passed away before Campeggio opened his commission. He had been overtaken on the road by messengers from Clement, who brought him fresh instructions. The arms of the emperor having triumphed, the whole political situation had been suddenly changed, and hence the new orders sent after Campeggio, which were to the effect that he should do his utmost to persuade Catherine to enter a nunnery; and, failing this, that he should not decide the cause, but send it to Rome. Campeggio began with the queen, but she refused to take the veil; he next sought to induce the king to abandon the prosecution of the divorce. Henry stormed, and asked the legate if it was thus that the Pope kept his word, and repaid the services done to the Popedom. To pacify and reassure the monarch, Campeggio showed him the bull annulling the marriage; but no entreaty of the king could prevail on the legate to part with it, or to permit Henry any benefit from it save the sight of it.¹

After many delays, the Legatine Commission was opened on the 18th of June, 1529, in the great hall of the Black Friars, the same building, and possibly the same chamber, in which the Convocation had assembled that condemned the doctrines of Wicliffe. Both the king and queen had been cited to appear. Catherine, presenting herself before the court, said, "I protest against the legates as incompetent judges, and appeal to the Pope."² On this the court adjourned to the 21st of June. On that day the two legates took their places with great pomp; around them was a numerous assemblage of bishops, abbots, and secretaries; on the right hung a cloth of state, where sat the king, attended by his councillors and lords; and on the left was the queen, surrounded by her ladies. The king answered to the call of the usher; but the queen, on being summoned, rose, and making the circuit of the court, fell on her knees before her husband, and addressed him with much dignity and emotion. She besought him by the love which had been between them, by the affection and fidelity she had uniformly shown him during these twenty years of their married life, by the children which had been the fruit of their union, and by her own friendless estate in a foreign land, to do her justice and right, and not to call her before a court formed as this was; yet should he refuse this favour, she would be silent, and remit her just cause to God. Her simple but pathetic words, spoken with a foreign accent, touched all who heard them, not even excepting the king and the judges. Having ended, instead of returning to her seat, she left the court, and never again appeared in it.

¹ Burnet, vol. i., p. 58: "He could not be brought to part with the decretal bull out of his hands, or to leave it for a minute, either with the king or the cardinal." Campeggio would not even show it to the Council.

² Sanders, *Histoire du Schisme d'Angleterre*, p. 44; Paris, 1678.

The queen replied to a second citation by again disowning the tribunal and appealing to the Pope. She was pronounced contumacious, and the cause was proceeded with. The pleadings on both sides went on for about a month. It was believed by every one that sentence would be pronounced on the 23rd of July. The court, the clergy, the whole nation waited with breathless impatience for the result. On the appointed day the judgment-hall was crowded; the king himself had stolen into a gallery adjoining the hall, so that unobserved he might witness the issue. Campeggio slowly rose: the silence grew deeper: the moment was big with the fate of the Papacy in England. "As the vacation of the Rota at Rome," said the legate, "begins tomorrow, I adjourn the court to the 1st of October."¹

These words struck the audience with stupefaction. The noise of a violent blow on the table, re-echoing through the hall, roused them from their astonishment. The Duke of Suffolk accompanied the stroke, for he it was who had struck the blow, with the words, "By the Mass! the old saw is verified today: never was there legate or cardinal that brought good to England."² But the man on whose ears the words of Campeggio fell with the most stunning effect was the king. His first impulse was to give vent to the indignation with which they filled him. He saw that he was being deluded and befooled by the Pope; that in spite of all the services he had rendered the Popedom, Clement cared nothing for the peace of his conscience or the tranquillity of his kingdom, and was manifestly playing into the hands of the emperor. Henry's wrath grew hotter every moment; but, restraining himself, he went back to his palace, there to ruminate over the embroglio into which this unexpected turn of affairs had brought him, and if possible devise measures for finding his way out of it.

A King John would have sunk under the blow: but it roused the tyrant that slumbered in the breast of Henry VIII. From that hour he was changed; his pride, his truculence, his selfish, morose, bloodthirsty despotism henceforward overshadowed the gaiety, and love of letters, and fondness for pomps which had previously characterised him.

Of the two men who had incurred his deeply-rooted displeasure—Clement and Wolsey—the latter was the first to feel the effects of his anger. The cardinal was now fallen in the eyes of his master; and the courtiers, who were not slow to discover the fact, hastened to the king with additional proofs that Wolsey had sacrificed the king for the Pope, and England for the Papacy. Those who before had neither eyes to see his intrigues nor a tongue to reveal them, now found both, and accusers started up on all sides, and, as will happen, those sycophants who had bowed the lowest were now the loudest in

¹ Burnet, vol. i., p. 77.

² "Jura par la sainte Messe, que jamais legat ne cardinal n'avoit bien fait en Angleterre." (Sanders, p. 62.)

their condemnations. Hardly was there a nobleman at court whom Wolsey's haughtiness had not offended, and hardly was there a citizen whom his immoralities, his greed, and his exactions had not disgusted, and wherever he looked he saw only contemners and enemies. Abroad the prospect that met the eye of the cardinal was not a whit more agreeable. He had kindled the torch of war in Europe; he had used both Charles and Francis for his own interests; they knew him to be revengeful as well as selfish and false. Wherever his fame had travelled—and it had gone to all European lands—there too had come the report of the qualities that distinguished him, and by which he had climbed to his unrivalled eminence—a craft that was consummate, an avarice that was insatiable, and an ambition that was boundless. Whichever way the divorce should go, the cardinal was undone: if it were refused he would be met by the vengeance of Henry, and if it were granted he would inevitably fall under the hostility and hatred of Anne Boleyn and her friends. Seldom has human career had so brilliant a noon, and seldom has such a noon been followed by a night so black and terrible. But the end was not yet: a little space was interposed between the withdrawal of the royal favour and the final fall of Wolsey.

On the 6th of July, the Pope avoked to Rome the cause between Henry of England and Catherine of Aragon.¹ On the 3rd of August, the king was informed that he had been cited before the Pope's tribunal, and that, failing to appear, he was condemned in a fine of 10,000 ducats. "This *ordonnance* of the Pope," says Sanders, "was not only posted up at Rome, but at Bruges, at Tournay, and on all the churches of Flanders."² What a humiliation to the proud and powerful monarch of England! This citation crowned the insults given him by Clement, and filled up the cup of Henry's wrath. Gardiner, who had just returned from Rome with this most unwelcome news, witnessed the storm that now burst in the royal apartment.³ The chafed and affronted Tudor fulminated against the Pope and all his priests. Yes, he would go to Rome, but Rome should repent his coming. He would go at the head of his army, and see if priest or Pope dare cite him to his tribunal, or look him in the face.⁴ But second thoughts taught Henry that, bad as the matter was, any ebullition of temper would only make it worse by showing how deep the affront had sunk. Accordingly, he ordered Gardiner to conceal this citation from the knowledge of his subjects; and, meanwhile, in the exercise of the powers vested in him by the Act of Praemunire, he inhibited the bull and forbade it to be served upon him. The commission of the two legates was, however, at

¹ Burnet, *Records*, bk. i., p. 81.

² Sanders, p. 63.

³ Herbert, *Life of Henry VIII.*, p. 287.

⁴ *State Papers*, vii., p. 194.

an end, and the avocation of the cause to Rome was in reality an adjudication against the king.

Two years had been lost: this was not all; the king had not now a single ally on the Continent. Charles V. and Clement VII. were again fast friends, and were to spend the winter together in Bologna.¹ Isolation abroad, humiliation at home, and bitter disappointment in the scheme on which his heart was so much set, were all that he had reaped from the many fair promises of Clement and the crafty handling of Wolsey. Nor did the king see how ever he could realise his hopes of a divorce, of a second marriage, and of an heir to his throne, so long as he left the matter in the hands of the Pope. He must either abandon the idea of a divorce, with all that he had built upon it, or he must withdraw it from the Papal jurisdiction. He was resolved not to take the first course—the second only remained open to him. He would withdraw his cause, and, along with it, himself and his throne, from the Roman tribunals and the jurisdiction of the Papal supremacy. In no other way could he rescue the affair from the dead-lock into which it had fallen. But the matter was weighty, and had to be gone about with great deliberation. Meanwhile events were accelerating the ruin of the cardinal.

The king, seeking in change of residence escape from the vexations that filled his mind, had gone down to Grafton in Northamptonshire. Thither Campeggio followed him, to take leave of the court before setting out for Italy. Wolsey accompanied his brother-legate to Grafton, but was coldly received. The king drew him into the embrasure of a window, and began talking with him. Suddenly Henry pulled out a letter, and, handing it to Wolsey, said sharply, "Is not this your hand?"² The cardinal's reply was not heard by the lords that filled the apartment, and who intently watched the countenances of the two; but the letter was understood to be an intercepted one relating to the treaty which Wolsey had concluded with France, without the consent or knowledge of the king. The conversation lasted a few minutes longer, and Wolsey was dismissed to dinner, but not permitted to sleep under the same roof with the king. This was the last audience he ever had of his master, and Wolsey but too truly divined that the star of his greatness had set. On the morrow the two cardinals set forth on their journey, Wolsey returning to London, and Campeggio directing his steps towards his port of debarkation. At Dover,³ his baggage was strictly searched, by the king's orders, for important papers, especially the decretal⁴ annulling his marriage, which Henry had been permitted to see, but not to touch. The decretal was not found, for this very sufficient reason, that the cardinal, agreeably to

¹ See *ante*, vol. i., p. 573.

² Cavendish.

³ Cavendish says Calais; the Bishop of Bayonne, Da Bullay, says Dover.

⁴ Herbert, p. 288.

instructions, had burned it. All other important documents were already across the Channel, the crafty Italian having taken the precaution to send them on by a special messenger. Campeggio was glad to touch French soil, leaving his fellow-churchman to face as he best could the bursting of the tempest.

It now came. At the next Michaelmas term (October 9th) Wolsey proceeded to open, with his usual pomp, his Court of Chancery. The gloom on his face, as he sat on the bench, cast its shadow on the members of court, and seemed even to darken the hall. This display of authority was the last gleam in the setting splendours of the great cardinal; for the same hour the Attorney-General, Hales, was filing against him two bills in the King's Bench, charging him with having brought bulls into England, in virtue of which he had exercised an office that encroached upon the royal prerogative, and incurred the penalties of Praemunire. Soon after this the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk waited on him from the king, to demand delivery of the Great Seal, and to say that, vacating his palaces of Whitehall and Hampton Court, he must confine himself to his house at Esher. "My lords," said the stricken man, with something of his old spirit, "the Great Seal of England was delivered to me by the hands of my sovereign, and I may not deliver it at the simple word of any lord." The two noblemen returned next day with a written order from the king, and the seal was at once given up.¹ Stripped of his great office, his other possessions, though of immense value, seemed a small matter. His treasures of gold and silver, his rich robes, his costly and curious furniture—all he would present to the king, peradventure it would soften his heart and win back his favour, or at least save the giver from the last disgrace of the block. He understood Henry's disposition, and knew that like other spendthrifts he was fond of money. Summoning the officers of his household before him, he ordered them to place tables in the great hall, and lay out upon them the various articles entrusted to their care. His orders were immediately obeyed. Soon the tables groaned under heaps of glittering spoil. Cloths of gold, with which the walls of the great gallery were hung; Eastern silks, satins, velvets; tapestry adorned with scriptural subjects, and stories from the old romances; furred robes, gorgeous copes, and webs of a valuable stuff named baudekin, wrought in the looms of Damascus, were piled up in wonderful profusion. In another room, called the Gilt Chamber, the tables were covered with gold plate, some articles being of massive fabric, and set with precious stones; in a second apartment was arranged the silver-gilt; and so abundant were these articles of luxury, that whole basketfuls of gold and silver plate, which had

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

fallen out of fashion, were stowed away under the tables.¹ An inventory having been taken, Sir William Gascoigne was commanded by the cardinal to see all this wealth delivered to the king.

The cardinal now set out for Esher, accompanied by his attached and sorrowing domestics. On his journey, a horseman was seen galloping towards him across country. It was Sir Henry Norris, with a ring from the king, “as a token of his confidence.” The fallen man received it with ecstatic but abject joy. It was plain there lingered yet an affection for his former minister in the heart of the monarch. He reached Esher, and took up his abode within four bare walls.² What a contrast to the splendid palaces he had left! Meanwhile his enemies—and these were legion—pushed on proceedings against him. Parliament had been summoned the first time for seven years—during that period England had been governed by a Papal legate—and an impeachment, consisting of forty-four clauses, founded upon the Act of Praemunire, was preferred against Wolsey. The indictment comprehended all, from the pure Latin in which he had put himself above the king (*Ego et Rex meus*) to the foul breath with which he had infected the royal presence; and it placed in bold relief his legatine function, with the many violations of law, monopolising of church revenues, grievous exactions, and unauthorised dealings with foreign Powers of which he had been guilty under cover of it.³ The indictment was thrown out by the Commons, mainly by the zeal of Thomas Cromwell, an affectionate servant of Wolsey’s, who sat for the City of London, and whose chief object in seeking election to Parliament was to help his old master, and also to raise himself.

But the process commenced against him in the King’s Bench was not likely to end so favourably. The cardinal had violated the Act of Praemunire beyond all question. He had brought Papal bulls into the country, and he had exercised powers in virtue of them, which infringed the law and usurped the prerogatives of the sovereign. True, Wolsey might plead that the king, by permitting the unchallenged exercise of these powers for so many years, had virtually, if not formally, sanctioned them; nevertheless, from his knowledge of the king, he deemed it more politic to plead guilty. Nor did he miscalculate in this. Henry accorded him an ample pardon, and thus he escaped the serious consequences with which the Act of Præmunire menaced him.⁴

¹ Cavendish, vol. i., pp. 183, 184. Herbert, p. 290.— One of the best inventories of Wolsey’s furniture is preserved among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum. (See Ellis, *Letters*, vol. ii., p. 250)

² “Thus continued my lord at Esher three or four weeks, without either beds, sheets, table-cloths, or dishes to eat their meat in . . . but afterwards my lord borrowed some plates and dishes of the Biohop of Carlisle.” (Cavendish.)

³ Herbert, p. 295.

⁴ Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, vol. i., p. 182.

At Esher the cardinal fell dangerously ill, and the king, hearing of his sickness, sent three physicians to attend upon him. On his recovery, he was permitted to remove to Richmond; but the Privy Council, alarmed at his near approach to the court, prevailed on the king to banish him to his diocese of York. The hopes Wolsey had begun to cherish of the return of the royal favour were again dashed. He set out on his northward journey in the early spring of 1530. His train, according to Cavendish, consisted of 160 persons and seventy-two waggons loaded with the relics of his furniture. "How great must have been that grandeur which, by comparison, made such wealth appear poverty!"¹ Taking up his abode at Cawood Castle, the residence of the Archbishops of York, he gave himself with great assiduity to the discharge of his ecclesiastical duties. He distributed alms to the poor; he visited his numerous parish churches; he incited his clergy to preach regularly to their flocks; he reconciled differences, said mass in the village churches, was affable and courteous to all, and by these means he speedily won the esteem of every class. This he hoped was the beginning of a second upward career. Other arts he is said to have employed to regain the eminence from which he had fallen. He entered into a secret correspondence with the Pope; and it was believed at court that he was intriguing against his sovereign both at home and abroad. These suspicions were strengthened by the magnificent enthronisation which he was preparing for himself at York. The day fixed for the august ceremonial was near, when the tide in the cardinal's fortunes turned adversely, nevermore to change. Suddenly the Earl of Northumberland—the same Percy whose affection for Anne Boleyn Wolsey had thwarted—arrived at Cawood Castle with an order to arrest him for high treason. The shock well-nigh killed him; he remained for some time speechless. Instead of ascending his throne in York Cathedral, he had to mount his mule and begin his pilgrimage to the Tower; thence to pass, it might be, to the block. On beginning his journey, the peasantry of the neighbourhood assembled at Cawood, and with lighted torches and hearty cheers strove to raise his spirits; but nothing could again bring the light of joy into his face. His earthly glory was ended, and all was ended with it. He halted on his way at Sheffield Park, the residence of the Earl of Shrewsbury. One morning during his stay there, George Cavendish, the most faithful of all his domestics, came running into his chamber, crying out, "Good news, my lord! Sir William Kingston is come to conduct you to the king." The word "Kingston" went like an arrow to his heart. "Kingston!" he repeated, sighing deeply. A soothsayer had warned him that he should have his end at Kingston. He had thought that the town of that name was meant: now he saw that it was the Tower, of which Kingston was the Constable, that was to be fatal to him. The arrival of Sir William was to

¹ Galt, *Life of Cardinal Wolsey*, p. 193; Lond. 1846.

the poor man the messenger of death. Blow was coming after blow, and heart and strength were rapidly failing him. It was a fortnight before he was able to set out from Sheffield Park. On the way he was once and again near falling from his mule through weakness. On the third day—Saturday, the 26th of November—he reached Leicester. The falling leaf and the setting sun—the last he was ever to see—seemed but the emblems of his own condition. By the time he had got to the abbey, where he was to lodge, the night had closed in, and the abbot and friars waited at the portal with torches to light his entrance. “Father,” said he to the abbot, as he crossed the threshold, “I am come to lay my bones among you.” He took to his bed, from which he was to rise not again. Melancholy vaticinations and forebodings continued to haunt him. “Upon Monday, in the morning,” says Cavendish, his faithful attendant, and the chronicler of his last hours, “as I stood by his bedside about eight of the clock, the windows being close shut, having wax lights burning upon the cupboard, I beheld him, as he seemed, drawing fast to his end.

He, perceiving my shadow upon the wall by his bedside, asked . . . ‘What is it of the clock?’ ‘Forsooth, sir,’ said I, ‘it is past eight o’clock in the morning.’ ‘Eight of the clock?’ quoth he, ‘that cannot be,’ rehearsing divers times, ‘Eight of the clock, eight of the clock. Nay, nay,’ quoth he at last, ‘it cannot be eight of the clock, for by eight of the clock ye shall lose your master.’”¹ He survived all that day.

At six on Tuesday morning, Kingston, Lieutenant of the Tower, entered his chamber to inquire how he did? “Sir,” said he, “I tarry but the will and pleasure of God.” His intellect remained perfectly clear. “Be of good cheer,” rejoined Kingston. “Alas! Master Kingston,” replied the dying cardinal, “if I had served God as diligently as I have served the king, He would not have given me over thus in my grey hairs. Howbeit,” he added, “this is the just reward I must receive for all my worldly diligence and pains, only to satisfy his vain pleasure, not regarding my duty to God.”² Such was Wolsey’s judgment upon his own life.

He had but few minutes to live, and the use he made of them was to send a last message to his former master, on a matter that lay near his heart. “Master Kingston,” he said, “attend to my last request: tell the king that I conjure him in God’s name to destroy this new pernicious sect of Lutherans. . . . The king would know that if he tolerates heresy, God will take away his power.” Wolsey is the same man on his death-bed as when, sitting under the canopy of state, he had sent martyrs to the fire. His last breath is expended in fanning the torch of persecution in England. But now the faltering tongue and glazing eye told those around him that the last moment was come. “Incontinent,”

¹ Cavendish, vol. i., pp.313, 314

² *Ibid.*, pp. 319, 320.

says Cavendish, “the clock struck eight, and then gave he up the ghost,” leaving the attendants awe-struck at the strange fulfilment of the words, “By eight of the clock ye shall lose your master.” The corpse, decked out in Pontifical robes, with mitre and cross and ring, was put into a coffin of boards, and carried into “Our Lady Chapel,” where the magistrates of Leicester were permitted to view the uncovered ghastly face, and satisfy themselves that the cardinal was really dead. A grave was hastily dug within the precincts of the abbey, wax tapers were kept burning all night round the bier, orisons were duly sung, and next morning, before daybreak, the coffin containing the body of the deceased legate was carried out, amidst funeral chants and flaring torches, and deposited in the place prepared for it. Dust to dust. The man who had filled England with his glory, and Europe with his fame, was left without tomb or epitaph to say, “Here lies Wolsey.”

CHAPTER VIII.

CRANMER, CROMWELL, THE PAPAL SUPREMACY ABOLISHED.

The King at Waltham Abbey—A Supper—Fox and Gardiner Meet Cranmer—Conversation—New Light—Ask the Universities, What says the Bible?—The King and Cranmer—Cranmer Set to Work—Thomas Cromwell—advises the King to Throw off Dependence on the Pope—Henry Likes the Advice—resolves to Act Upon it—takes Cromwell into his Service—The Whole Clergy held Guilty of Præmunire—Their Possessions and Benefices to be Confiscated—Alternative, Asked to Abandon the Papal Headship—Reasonings between Convocation and the King—Convocation Declares King Henry Supreme Head of the Church of England.

The Great Ruler brings forth men as he does the stars, each in his appointed time. We have just seen the bitterest, and certainly the most powerful enemy of Protestantism in all England, quit the stage; two men, destined to be eminently instrumental in advancing the cause of the Reformation, are about to step upon it.

The king, on his way from Grafton to London, halted at Waltham, Essex, to enjoy the chase in the neighbouring forest. The court was too numerous to be all accommodated in the abbey, and two of the king's servants—Gardiner his secretary, and Fox his almoner—were entertained in the house of a citizen of Waltham, named Cressy. At the supper-table they unexpectedly met a former acquaintance, a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge.

His name was Thomas Cranmer, and the plague having broken out at Cambridge, he had now come hither with his two pupils, sons of the man at whose table the secretary and almoner found him. How perfectly accidental, and how entirely without significance seemed it, that these three men should that night sit at the same supper-table! and yet this meeting forms one of the grand turning-points in the destiny of England.

Thomas Cranmer was born (1489) at Alsacton, near Nottingham, of a family whose ancestors had come into England with the Conqueror.¹ He received his first lessons from an old and inflexibly severe priest, who taught him little besides submission to chastisement. On going to Cambridge his genius opened, and his powers of application became such that he declined no labour, however great, if necessary to the right solution of a question. At this time the fame of the Lutheran controversy reached Cambridge, and Cranmer set himself to know on which side was the truth. He studied the Hebrew and Greek languages, that he might have access to the fountains of knowledge, for he felt that this was a controversy which must be determined

¹ Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, p. 1; Lond., 1694.—The residence of the Alsactons and Cranmers may still be traced, the site being marked by enormous earth-works. (Thorston and Throsby, *His., of Nottinghamshire*.)

by the Bible, and by it alone. After three years spent in the study of the Scriptures,¹ without commentaries or human helps of any kind, the darkness of scholasticism which till now had hung around him cleared away, and the simple yet majestic plan of salvation stood forth in glory before his eyes on the sacred page. Forty years had he passed in comparative seclusion, preparing, unsuspected by himself, for the great work he was to perform on the conspicuous stage to which he was to pass from this supper-table.

His two friends, who knew his eminent attainments in theology, directed the conversation so as to draw from him an opinion upon the question then occupying all men's minds, the royal divorce. He spoke his sentiments frankly, not imagining that his words would be heard beyond the chamber in which they were uttered. "Why go to Rome?" he asked; "why take so long a road when by a shorter you may arrive at a more certain conclusion?" "What is that shorter road?" asked Gardiner and Fox. "The Scriptures," replied Cranmer. "If God has made this marriage sinful the Pope cannot make it lawful." "But how shall we know what the Scriptures say on the point?" inquired his two friends. "Ask the universities," replied the doctor, "they will return a sounder verdict than the Pope."

Two days afterwards the words of Cranmer were reported to the king. He eagerly caught them up, thinking he saw in them a way out of his difficulties. Henry had previously consulted the two English universities, but the question he had put to them was not the same which Cranmer proposed should be put to the universities of Christendom. What Henry had asked of Oxford and Cambridge was their own opinion of his marriage,—was it lawful? But the question which Cranmer proposed should be put to the universities of Europe was, What does the Bible say of such marriages? does it approve or condemn them? and, having got the sense of Scripture through the universities, he proposed that then the cause should be held as decided. This was to appeal the case from the Pope to God, from the Church to the Scriptures. With this idea Henry at once fell in, not knowing that it was the formal fundamental principle of Protestantism that he was about to act upon. Cranmer was immediately summoned to court; he was as reluctant as most men would have been forward to obey the order. He would have preferred the calm of a country parsonage to the splendours and perils of a court. The king was pleased with his modesty not less than with his learning and good sense, and commanded him to set immediately to work, and collect the opinions of the canonists and Papal jurists on the question whether his marriage was in accordance with, or contrary to, the laws of God. It was also resolved to consult the universities. Clement VII. had cited the King of England to his bar: Henry would summon the Pope to the tribunal of Scripture.

¹ Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, p. 2.

While Cranmer is beginning his work, which is to give him the primatial mitre of England in the first place, and the higher glory of a stake in the end, we must mark the advent on the stage of public affairs of one destined to contribute powerful aid towards the emancipation of England from the Popedom. This man was Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell had commenced life in the English factory at Antwerp; he afterwards accompanied the German army to Italy as a military adventurer, where he served under Bourbon, and was present at the sack of Rome. He then returned to his native country and began the study of law. It was in this capacity that he became connected with Wolsey, whom he faithfully served, and whose fall, as we have seen, he helped to break. He had seen that Wolsey's overthrow was largely owing to his subserviency to the Pope; he would make trial of the contrary road, and lift up England and England's king above the haughty head that wore the tiara. Full of this idea he sought and obtained an interview with Henry. With great courage and clearness he put before the king the humiliations and embarrassments into which both Henry himself and his kingdom had been brought by dependence on the Pope. Who was the Pope, he asked, that he should be monarch of England? and who were the priests, that they should be above the law? Why should not the king be master in his own house? why should he divide his power with a foreign bishop? To lower the throne of England before the Papal chair, and to permit English causes to be tried at Italian tribunals, was only to be half a king, while the people of England were only half his subjects. Why should England impoverish herself by paying taxes to Rome? England at this moment was little else than a monster with two heads. Why should not the king declare himself the head of the Church within his own realm, and put the clergy on the same level with the rest of the king's subjects? They swore, indeed, allegiance to the king, but they took a second oath to the Pope, which virtually annulled the first, and made them more the Pope's subjects than they were the king's. The king would add to his dignity, and advance the prosperity and glory of his realm, by putting an end to this state of things. Did he not live in an age when Frederick the Wise and other sovereigns were throwing off the Papal supremacy, and did it become England to crouch to a power which even the petty kingdoms of Germany were contemning?¹ The few minutes which it required to utter these courageous words had wrought a great revolution in the king's views. Treading in the steps of his royal ancestors, he had acquiesced blindly in a state of things which had been handed down from remote ages: but the moment these anomalies and monstrous absurdities were pointed out to him he saw at once his true position; yet the king might not have so clearly seen it but for the

¹ *Apologia Regis. Poli ad Carolum V.—Poli Epistolæ*, vol. i., pp. 120, 121.

preparation his mind had undergone from the perplexities and embarrassments into which his dependence on the Papacy had brought him.

Fixing a keen eye on the speaker, Henry asked him whether he could prove what he had now affirmed? Cromwell had anticipated the question, and was prepared with an answer. He pulled from his pocket a copy of the oath which every bishop swears at his consecration, and read it to the king. This was enough. Henry saw that he reigned but over his lay subjects, and only partially over them, while the clergy were wholly the liegemen of a foreign prince. If the affair of the divorce thwarted him in his affections, this other sorely touched his pride; and, with the tenacity and determination characteristic of him, Henry resolved to be rid of both annoyances.

Thus, by the constraining force of external causes, the policy of England was forming itself upon the two great fundamental principles of Protestantism. Cranmer had enunciated the religious principle that the Bible is above the Pope, and now Cromwell brings forward the political one that England is wholly an independent State, and owes no subjection to the Papacy. The opposites of these—that the Church is above the Scriptures, and the Pope above England—were the twin fountains of the vassalage, spiritual and political, in which England was sunk in pre-Reformation times. The adoption of their opposites was Protestantism, and the prosecution of them was the Reformation. This by no means implies that the Reformation came from Henry VIII. The Reformation came from the two principles we have just stated, and which, handed down from the times of Wicliffe, were revived by the confessors and martyrs of the sixteenth century. Henry laid hold on these forces because they were the only ones that could enable him to gain the personal and dynastic objects at which he aimed. At the very time that he was making war on the Pope's jurisdiction, he was burning those who had abandoned the Pope's religion.

Whilst listening to Cromwell, astonishment mingled with the delight of the king: a new future seemed to be rising before himself and his kingdom, and Cromwell proceeded to point out the steps by which he would realise the great objects with which he had inspired him. The clergy, he showed him, were in his power already. Cardinal Wolsey had pleaded guilty to the infraction of the law of *Præmunire*, but the guilt of the cardinal was the guilt of the whole body of the clergy, for all of them had submitted to the legatine authority. All therefore had incurred the penalties of *Præmunire*; their persons and property were in the power of the king, and Henry must extend pardon to them only on condition of their vesting in himself the supremacy of the Church of England, now lodged in the Pope. The king saw his path clearly, and with all the impetuosity and energy of his character he addressed himself to the prosecution of it. He aimed mainly at the Pope, but he would begin at home; the foreign thralldom would fall all the more readily that the home

servitude was first cast off. Taking his ring from his finger, and giving it to the bold and resolute man who stood before him, the king made Cromwell a Privy Councillor, and bade him consider himself his servant in the great and somewhat hazardous projects which had been concocted between them.

Vast changes rapidly followed in the State and Church of England. The battle was begun in Parliament. This assembly met on November 3rd, 1529, and instantly began their complaints of the exactions which the clergy imposed on the laity. The priests demanded heavy sums for the probate of wills and mortuaries; they acted as stewards to bishops; they occupied farms; abbots and friars traded in cloth and wool; many lived in noblemen's houses instead of residing on their livings, and the consequence was that "the poor had no refreshing," and the parishioners "lacked preaching and instruction in God's Word."¹ Such were the complaints of the Commons against the clerical estate, at that time the most powerful in England, since the nobility had been weakened by the wars, and the Commons were dispersed and without union. This most unwonted freedom with sacred men and things on the part of the laity exceedingly displeased Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. The prelate rebuked them in an angry speech in the Lords, saying "that the Commons would nothing now but down with the Church," and that all this "came of want of faith."²

His brethren, however, deemed it wiser policy to allay the storm that was rising in Parliament against the Church, at the cost of some concessions. On the 12th of November it was decreed by Convocation that priests should no longer keep shops or taverns, play at dice or other forbidden games, pass the night in suspected places, be present at disreputable shows, go about with sporting dogs, or with hawks, falcons, or other birds of prey on their fists. These and other acts of a yet grosser sort were subjected to heavy fines; and laws were also enacted against unnatural vices.³

The Commons urged forward their attack. Their next complaint was of the laws and constitutions of the clergy. The Commons affirmed that their provincial constitutions made in the present reign encroached upon the royal prerogative, and were also burdensome to the laity. In this matter the Parliament carried fully with it the sympathy of the king. He felt the great presumption of the clergy in making orders, of the nature of laws, to bind his subjects, and executing them without his assent or authority. The clergy stood stoutly to their defence in this matter, pleading long prescription, and the right lodged in them by God for the government of the Church. But, replied the Commons, this spiritual legislation is stretched over so many temporal matters, that under the pretext of ruling the Church you govern the

¹ Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, vol. i., p. 204.

² Herbert, p. 321.

³ Wilkins, *Concilia*, vol. iii., p. 717 *et seq.*

State. Feeling both the nation and the throne against them, and dreading impending mischief, the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury prepared a humble submission, and sent it to the king, in which they promised, for the future, to forbear to make ordinances or constitutions, or to put them in execution, unless with the king's consent and licence.¹

The way being so far prepared by these lesser attacks, the great battle was now commenced. To lop off a few of the branches of the Pontifical supremacy did not content Henry. He would cut down that evil tree to the root. He would lay the axe to the whole system of ecclesiastical legislation under a foreign prince, and he would himself become the Head of the Church of England. On the 7th of January, 1531, Cromwell, obeying Henry's orders, entered the Hall of Convocation, and quietly took his seat among the bishops. Rising, he struck them dumb by informing them that they had all been cast in the penalties of *Præmunire*. When and how, they amazedly asked, had they violated that statute? They were curtly informed that their grave offence had been done in Cardinal Wolsey, and that in him too had they acknowledged their guilt. But, they pleaded, the king had sanctioned the cardinal's exercise of his legatine powers. This, the bishops were told, did not in the least help them; the law was clear; their violation of it was equally clear. The king within his dominions has no earthly superior, such had from ancient times—that is, from the days of Wicliffe; for it was the spirit of Wicliffe that was about to take hold of the priests—been the law of England; that law the cardinal had transgressed, and only by obtaining the king's pardon had he escaped the consequences of his presumption. But *they* had not been pardoned by the king; they were under the penalties of *Præmunire*, and their possessions and benefices were confiscated to the crown. This view of the matter was maintained with an astuteness that convinced the affrighted clergy that nothing they could say would make the matter be viewed in a different light in the highest quarter. They stood, they felt, on a precipice. The king had thrown down the gauntlet to the Church. The battle on which they were entering was a hard one, and its issue doubtful. To yield was to disown the Pope, the fountain of their being as a Romish Church, and to resist might be to incur the wrath of the monarch.

The king, through Cromwell, next showed them the one and only way of escape open to them from the *Præmunire* in the toils of which they had been so unexpectedly caught. They must acknowledge him to be the Head of the Church of England. To smooth their way and make this hard alternative the easier, Cromwell reminded them that the Convocation of Canterbury had on a recent occasion styled the king *Caput Ecclesiæ*—Head of the Church—and that they had only to do always what they had done once, and make the title

¹ Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, vol. i., pp. 204–206.—Act 25 Henry VIII., cap. 19.

perpetual.¹ But, responded the bishops, by *Ecclesia* we did not intend the Church of England, but the Church universal, spread over all Christendom. To this the ready answer was that the present controversy was touching the Church of England, and it alone, and the clergy of the same.² But, replied the bishops, Christ is Head of the Church, and he has divided his power into temporal and spiritual, giving the first branch to princes and the second to priests. The command, “Obey and be subject,” said the king, does not restrict the obedience it enjoins to temporal things only; it is laid on all men, lay and clerical, who together compose the Church. Proofs from Scripture were next adduced by the clergy that Christ had committed the administration of spiritual things to priests only, as for instance preaching and the dispensation of the Sacrament.³ No man denies that, replied the king, but it does not prove that their persons and deeds are not under the jurisdiction of the prince. Princes, said the bishops, are called *fili Ecclesiae*—sons of the Church. The Pope is their father, and the Head of the Church; to recognise the king as such would be to overthrow the Catholic faith. The debate lasted three days.

The Bishops of Lincoln and Exeter were deputed to beg an interview with the king, in order to entreat him to relinquish his claim. They were denied access into the royal presence. The clergy showed no signs of yielding; still less did the king. The battle was between Henry and Clement; for to give this title to the king was to dethrone the Pope. It was a momentous time for England. In no previous age could such a contest have been waged by the throne; it would not even have been raised; but the times were ripe—although even now the issue was doubtful. The primate Warham, prudent, and now very aged, rose and proposed that they should style the king “Head of the Church” *quantum per legem Christi licet*—so far as the law of Christ permits. Henry, on first hearing of it, stormed at the proposed modification of his powers; but his courtiers satisfied him that the clause would offer no interference in practice, and that meanwhile it would prevent an open rupture with Rome. It was not so easy, however, to bring the other side to accept this apparent compromise. The little clause would be no effective bulwark against Henry’s aggression. His supremacy and the Pope’s supremacy could not stand together, and they clearly saw which would go to the wall. But they despaired of making better terms. The primate rose in Convocation, and put the question, “Do you acknowledge the king as your supreme head so far as the law of Christ allows?” Not a member spoke. “Speak your minds freely,” said Warham. The silence was unbroken. “Then I shall understand that, as you do not oppose, you give consent.”⁴ The silence continued; and that silence was

¹ Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, vol. i., p. 211.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Collier, vol. ii.

accepted as a vote in the affirmative. Thus it passed in the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury that the king was the Supreme Head of the Church of England. A few months later the same thing was enacted in the Convocation of the Province of York. On the 22nd March, 1532, Warham signed the submission which was sent in to the king, styling him "Protector and Supreme Head of the Church of England." A subsidy of £100,000 from the clergy of the Province of Canterbury, and £18,000 from those of York, accompanied the document, and the king was pleased to release them from the penalties of Præmunire. This great revolution brought deliverance to the State from a degrading foreign thralldom: that it conferred on the Church an equal measure of freedom we are not prepared to say.

CHAPTER IX.

THE KING DECLARED HEAD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Abolition of Appeals to Rome—Payment of Annats, &c.—Bishops to be Consecrated without a Licence from Rome—Election to Vacant Sees—The King declared Head of the Church—Henry VIII. Undoes the Work of Gregory VII.—The Divorce—The Appeal to the Universities—Their Judgment—Divorce Condemned by the Reformers—Death of Warham—Cranmer made Primate—Martyrdom of Fryth—The King Marries Anne Boleyn—Her Coronation—Excommunication of Henry VIII.—Birth of Elizabeth—Cambridge and Oxford on the Pope's Power in England—New Translation of the Bible—Visitation of the Monasteries—Their Suppression—Frightful Disorders.

THE supremacy of the Pope formed the rampart that protected the ecclesiastical usurpations which flourished so rankly in England, to the oppression of the people, and the weakening of the royal prerogative. Now that a breach had been made in that bulwark, the abuses that had grown up behind it were attacked and abolished one after the other. Causes were no longer carried to Rome.¹ The king, as Head of the Church, had become the fountain of both civil and spiritual justice to his subjects. No one could be cited before any ecclesiastical court out of his own diocese. Twenty years were fixed as the term during which estates might be left to priests for praying souls out of purgatory. The lower orders of priests were made answerable before the civil tribunals for murder, felony, and other crimes of which they might be accused.²

The payment of annats and first-fruits to the Pope, by which an enormous amount of money had been carried out of England, was abolished.³ The religious orders were forbidden to receive foreign visitors, on the ground that these functionaries came, not to reform the houses of the clergy, but to discover the secrets of the king, and to rob the country of its wealth. The purchase of faculties from Rome was declared unlawful, and no one was permitted to go abroad to any Synod or Council without the royal permission. The law of Henry IV. was repealed, by which heretics might be burned on the sentence and by the authority of the bishop, and without a writ from the king. The stake was not yet abolished as the punishment of heresy, but the power of adjudging to it was restricted to a less arbitrary and, it might be, more merciful tribunal. As we have stated in a former chapter, the power exercised by the clergy of making canons was taken from them. This privilege had been greatly abused. These canons, being enforced upon the people by the clergy, had really the force of law; and as they were often

¹ Act 24 Henry VIII., cap. 12.

² Act 23 Henry VIII., cap. 9, 10, 11.

³ *Ibid.*, cap. 20, Burnet, vol. i., bk. ii., p. 117.

infringements of the constitution and expressed mostly the will of the Pope, they were the substitution of a foreign and usurped authority for the legitimate rule of the king and the Parliament. A commission of thirty-two persons, sixteen of whom were ecclesiastics, and the other sixteen laymen, was appointed by the crown to examine the old canons and constitutions, and to abrogate those that were contrary to the statutes of the realm or prejudicial to the prerogative-royal.¹ A new body of ecclesiastical laws was framed, composed of such of the old canons as being unexceptionable were retained, and the new constitutions which the commission was empowered to enact. This was a favourite project of Cranmer's, which he afterwards renewed in the reign of Edward VI.

It was foreseen that this policy, which was daily widening the breach between England and Rome, might probably in the end bring upon the nation excommunication and interdict. These fulminations had lost the terrors that once invested them; nevertheless, their infliction might, even yet, occasion no little inconvenience. Arrangements were accordingly made to permit the whole religious services of the country to proceed without let or hindrance, even should the Pope pronounce sentence of interdict. It was enacted (March, 1534) that no longer should the consecration of bishop, or the administration of rite, or the performance of any religious act wait upon the pleasure of the Bishop of Rome. The English bishops were to have power to consecrate without a licence from the Pope. It was enacted that when a bishopric became vacant, the king should send to the chapter a *cong e d' lire*, that is, leave to elect a new bishop, accompanied by a letter indicating the person on whom the choice of the chapter was to fall. If no election was made within twelve days, the king was to nominate to the see by letters-patent. After the bishop-elect had taken an oath of fealty to the king, his Majesty, by letters to the archbishop, might order the consecration; and if the persons whose duty it was to elect and to consecrate delayed the performance of these functions above twenty days, they incurred the penalty of a *Pr emunire*.² It was forbidden henceforward for archbishop or bishop to be nominated or confirmed in his see by the Pope.

This legislation was completed by the Act passed in next session of Parliament (November—December, 1534).³ Convocation, as we have seen, declared Henry Head of the Church. "For corroboration and confirmation thereof," be it enacted, said the Parliament, "that the king, his heirs, &c., shall be taken, accepted, and reputed *the only Supreme Head on 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

¹ Act 25 Henry VIII., cap. 19.

² Act 25 Henry VIII., cap. 20. Burnet, vol. I., bk. ii., p. 148.

³ Act 26 Henry VIII., cap. 1.

style thereof, as all honours, dignities, immunities, &c., pertaining to the said dignity of Supreme Head of the said Church.” A later¹ Act set forth the large measure of ecclesiastical jurisdiction lodged in the king. “Whereas his Majesty,” said Parliament, “is justly Supreme Head, &c., and hath full authority to correct and punish all manner of heresies, schisms, errors, vices, and to exercise all other manner of jurisdictions, commonly called ecclesiastical jurisdiction”—it is added, “That the archbishops and bishops have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical but by, under, and from the Royal Majesty.”²

Thus did Henry VIII. undo the work of Gregory VII. Hildebrand had gone to war that he might have the power of appointing to all the sees of Christendom. Not a mitre would he permit to be worn unless he himself had placed it on the head of its possessor; nor would he give consecration to any one till first he had sworn him to “defend the regalities of St. Peter.” From his chair at Rome, Gregory was thus able to govern Europe, for not a bishop was there in all Christendom whom he had not by this oath chained to his throne, and through the bishops, the kings and their nations. It was this terrible serfdom which Henry VIII. rose up against and broke in pieces, so far as his own Kingdom of England was concerned. The appointment of English bishops he wrested from the Pope, and took into his own hands, and the oath which he administered to those whom he placed in these sees bound them to fealty, not to the chair of Peter, but to the throne of England. As against the usurped foreign authority which the King of England now scornfully trod into the dust, surely Henry did well in being master in his own house. The dignity of his crown and the interests of his subjects alike demanded it. It is in this light that we look at the act; and taking it *per se*, there can be no doubt that Henry, in thus securing perfect freedom for the exercise of the prerogatives and jurisdictions of his kingly office, did a wise, a just, and a proper thing.

While this battle was waging in Parliament, the matter of the divorce had been progressing towards a final settlement. In the end of 1529, as we have already mentioned, it was resolved to put to the universities of Christendom the question, “What says the Bible on the marriage of the king with Catherine, his brother’s widow?” Henry would let the voice of the universal Church, rather than the Pope, decide the question. The universities of Cambridge and Oxford, by majorities, declared the marriage unlawful, and approved the divorce. The Sorbonne at Paris declared, by a large majority, in favour of the divorce. The four other universities of France voted on the same side. England and France were with Henry VIII. The king’s agents, crossing the Alps, set foot on the doubtful soil of Italy. After the Sorbonne, the most

¹ Act 37 Henry VIII., cap. 17.

² Burnet, vol. i., bk. ii., p. 157.

renowned university of the Roman Catholic world was that of Bologna. To the delight of Henry, Bologna declared in his favour. So too did the universities of Padua and Ferrara. Italy was added to the list of countries favourable to the King of England. The envoys of Henry next entered the territories of the Reformation, Switzerland and Germany. If Romanism was with Henry, much more will Protestantism be so. To the king's amazement, it is here that he first encounters opposition.¹ All the reforming doctors, including Luther, Calvin, and Ecolampadius, were against the divorce. The king has sinned in the past by contracting this marriage, said they, but he will sin in the future if he shall dissolve it. The less cannot be expiated by the greater sin: it is repentance, not divorce, to which the king ought to have recourse. Meanwhile, Cranmer had been sent to Rome to win over the Pope. A large number of the Roman Catholic nobles also wrote to Clement, beseeching him to grant the wishes of Henry; but the utmost length to which the Pope would go was to permit the King of England to have two wives.²

In the midst of these negotiations, Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of all England, died. The king resolved to place Dr. Thomas Cranmer in the vacant see. The royal summons found Cranmer in Nuremberg, whither he had been sent after his return from Rome on the business of the divorce. Cranmer, learning through his friends that this urgent recall was in order to his elevation to the primacy, was in no haste to return. The prospect of filling such a post under so imperious a monarch as Henry, and in times big with the most portentous changes, filled him with alarm. But the king had resolved that Cranmer should be primate, and sent a second and more urgent message to hasten his return. On his appearance before the king, Cranmer stated the difficulties in his path, namely, the double oath which all bishops were accustomed to take at consecration—the one to the Pope, the other to the king. The doctor did not see how he could swear fidelity to both. It was ultimately arranged that he should take the oath to the Pope under a protest “that he did not bind himself to do anything contrary to the laws of God, the rights of the King of England, and the laws of the realm,” and that he should not be hindered in executing such reformation as might be needed in the Church of England. This protest he repeated three times³— first, in the Chapter-house of Westminster; next, on the steps of the high altar of the cathedral, in presence of the assembled clergy and people; thirdly, when about to put on the pall and receive consecration. After this he took the oath to the Pope.

¹ Burnet, vol. i., bk. ii.; *Records*, p. 88.

² “Pontifex secreto, veluti rem quam magni faceret, mihi proposuit conditionem hujusmodi. Concedi posse vestræ Majestati ut duas uxores habeat.” (*Original Despatch of De Cassali*—Herbert, p. 330.)

³ Wilkins, *Concilia*, vol. iii., p. 757.

It was love of the Gospel which impelled Cranmer to advance: it was the divorce that urged onward Henry VIII. The imperious monarch was carrying on two wars at the same time. He was striving to clear his kingdom of the noxious growth of Papal bulls and prerogatives that so covered and deformed it, and he was fighting to prevent the entrance of Lutheranism. Hardly had the mitre been placed on his brow when Cranmer had to thrust himself between a disciple and the stake. Leaving Tyndale in the Low Countries, John Fryth came across, and began to preach from house to house in England. He was tracked by Sir Thomas More, who had received the Great Seal when it was taken from Wolsey, and thrown into the Tower, heavily loaded with irons. His main crime, in the eyes of his enemies, was the denial of transubstantiation. The king nominated six of the temporal and spiritual peers, of whom Cranmer was one, to examine him. The power of the stake had just been taken from the bishops, and Fryth was destined to be the first martyr under the king. Cranmer, who still believed in consubstantiation, loved Fryth, and wished to save his life, that his great erudition and rare eloquence might profit the realm in days to come; but all his efforts were ineffectual. Fryth mounted the stake (4th July, 1533), and his heroic death did much to advance the progress of the Reformation in England.

About the time that the martyr was expiring at the stake, the Pope was excommunicating the King of England. Fortified with the opinion of the universities, and the all but unanimous approval of the more eminent of the Roman Catholic doctors, Henry married Anne Boleyn on the 25th of January, 1533.¹ On the 10th of May, the Archbishop of Canterbury, having received the royal licence to that effect, constituted his court to judge the cause. Queen Catherine was summoned to it, but her only response to the citation was, "I am the king's lawful wife, I will accept no judge but the Pope." On the 23rd of May, the primate, attended by all the archiepiscopal court, gave sentence, declaring "the marriage between our sovereign lord King Henry, and the most serene lady Catherine, widow of his brother, having been contracted contrary to the law of God, null and void."² On the 28th of May, the same court declared that Henry and Anne had been lawfully wedded. The union, ratified by the ecclesiastical court, was on Whitsunday sealed by the pomp of a splendid coronation. On the previous day, Anne passed from the Tower to Westminster, through streets gay with banners and hung with cloth of gold, seated in a beautifully white gold-bespangled litter, her head encircled with a wreath of precious stones, while the blare of trumpets and the thunder of cannon mingled their roar with the acclamations of the enthusiastic citizens. Next day, in the presence of the rank and beauty of England, and the

¹ Such is the date of the marriage given in Cranmer's letter of 17th June, 1533. Hall, Holinshed, and Burnet give the 15th of November, 1532.

² Wilkins, *Concilia*, vol. iii., p. 759.

ambassadors of foreign States, the crown was put upon her head by the hand of Archbishop Cranmer.

Hardly had the acclamations that hailed Anne's coronation died away, when the distant murmurs of a coming tempest were heard. The affronted emperor, Charles V., called on the Pope to unsheath the spiritual sword, and smite the monarch who had added the sin of an adulterous union to the crime of rebellion against the Papal chair. The weak Clement dared not refuse. The conclave met, and after a month's deliberation, on the 12th of July, the Pope pronounced excommunication upon the King of England, but suspended the effect of the sentence till the end of September. He hoped that the king's repentance would avert execution. Henry had crossed the Rubicon. He could not put away Anne Boleyn, he could not take back Catherine, he could not blot from the statute-book the laws against Papal usurpations recently placed upon it, and restore in former glory the Pontifical dominion in his realm, so he appealed to a General Council, and posted up the document on the doors of all the parish churches of England.

While the days of grace allotted to the king were running out, a princess was born in the royal palace of Greenwich. The infant was named Elizabeth. The king was disappointed that a son had not been born to him; but the nation rejoiced, and Henry would have more heartily shared his people's joy, could he have foreseen the glory that was to surround the throne and name of the child that had just seen the light.

On the 7th of April, news reached England that the Pope had pronounced the final sentence of interdict. Clement VII., "having invoked the name of Christ, and sitting on the throne of justice," declared the dispensation of Julius II. valid, the marriage with Anne Boleyn null, the king excommunicate, his subjects released from their allegiance, and the Emperor Charles V. was empowered, failing the submission of Henry, to invade England and depose the king.

Nothing could have been better; if Henry was disposed to halt, this compelled him to go on. "What authority," asked the king of his doctors and wise councillors, "has the Pope to do all this? Who made a foreign priest lord of my realm, and master of my crown, so that he may give or take them away as it pleases him? Inquire, and tell me." In obedience to the royal mandate, they studied the laws of Scripture, they searched the records of antiquity, and the statutes of the realm, and came again to the king. "The Pontiff of Rome, sire, has no authority at all in England."¹ It was on the 3rd of November of the same year that the crowning statute was passed, as we have already

¹ "Romanus Pontifex non habet a Deo in sacra scriptura concessam sibi majorem auctoritatem ac jurisdictionem in hoc regno Angliæ quam quivis alius episcopus externus." (*Decision of University of Cambridge*, 2nd May, 1534.) A precisely similar answer came from Oxford.

narrated, which declared the king to be on earth the Supreme Head of the Church of England.

As the Pontifical authority departs, that of the Word of God enters England. We have just seen the Church and realm emancipated from the dominion of Rome; the first act of the liberated Church was to enfranchise the people. Cranmer moved in Convocation that an address be presented to the king for an English translation of the Bible. The Popish party, headed by Dr. Gardiner, opposed the motion, on the ground that the use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue promoted the spread of heresy. But in spite of their opposition, the proposal was adopted by Convocation. The king—influenced, there is little doubt, by his new queen, who was friendly to the Reformed opinions, and had in her possession a copy of Tyndale's, interdicted translation—acceded to the request of Convocation. The great principle had been conceded of the right of the people to possess the Bible in their mother tongue, and the duty of the Church to give it to them. Nevertheless, the bishops refused to aid in translating it.¹ Miles Coverdale was called to the task, and going to the Low Countries, the whole Bible was rendered into English, with the aid of Tyndale, and published in London in 1536, dedicated to Henry VIII.

The next step in the path on which the king and nation had entered was the visitation of the monasteries. Cromwell was authorised by the king to appoint commissioners to visit the abbeys, monasteries, nunneries, and universities of the kingdom, and to report as to the measures necessary to reform these establishments.² Henry had powerful political motives urging him to this measure. He had been excommunicated: Charles V. might invade his kingdom; and should that happen, there was not a confraternity of monks in all England who would not take advantage of their release from allegiance by the Pope, to join the standard of the invader. It was only prudent to disarm them before the danger arose, and divert part of the treasures, spent profitlessly now, in fortifying his kingdom. Neither Henry nor any one else, when the commission of inquiry was issued, foresaw the astounding disclosures that were to follow, and which left the Parliament no alternative but to abolish what could not be cured.

The Report of the Commissioners was presented to the Commons at their meeting on the 4th of February, 1536. It is not our intention to dwell on the horrors that shocked the nation when the veil was lifted. The three foundations, or cardinal virtues, which these institutions had been established to exemplify, were obedience, poverty, and chastity. They illustrated their obedience by raising themselves above the laws of the realm; their poverty by filling their houses with gold and silver and precious raiment; and their

¹ See *Supplication of the Poor Commons to the King*—Strype, *Eccles. Mem.*, vol. I., bk. i., chap. 53.

² Strype, *Eccles. Mem.*, vol. I., p. 329.

chastity by practices which we leave other historians to describe. Nowhere was holiness so conspicuously absent as in these holy houses. "There were found in them," says one, "not seven, but more than 700,000 deadly sins. Alack! my heart maketh all my members to tremble, when I remember the abominations that were there tryed out. O Lord God! what canst thou answer to the five cities, confounded with celestial fire, when they shall allege before thee the iniquities of those religious, whom thou hast so long supported? . . . In the dark and sharp prisons there were found dead so many of their brethren that it is a wonder: some crucified with more torments than ever were heard of, and some famished to death only for breaking their superstitious silences, or some like trifles. . . . No, truly, the monstrous lives of monks, friars, and nuns have destroyed their monasteries and churches, and not we."¹

The king and Parliament had started with the idea of reformation: they now saw that abolition only could meet the case. It was resolved to suppress all the religious houses the income of which did not exceed £200 a year, and to confiscate their lands to the king, to be devoted to other and better uses.² The number of smaller houses thus dissolved was 376, and their annual revenue £32,000, besides £100,000 in plate and money. Four years later all the larger abbeys and priories were either surrendered to the king or suppressed. The preamble of the Act set forth that "the churches, farms, and lands had been made a spoil of," and that though now for 200 years it had been sought to cure "this unthrifty, carnal, abominable living," no amendment appeared, "but their vicious living shamefully increaseth." Indeed, many of these houses did not wait till sentence of dissolution had been pronounced upon them: they sought by a voluntary surrender to anticipate that sentence, and avert the revelation of the deeds that had been enacted in them. It is worthy of remark that twenty-six mitred abbots sat as barons in the Parliament in which this Act was passed; and the number of spiritual peers was in excess of the lay members in the Upper House.³ In Yorkshire, where the monks had many sympathisers, who regarded the dissolution of their houses as at once an impiety and a robbery, this much-needed reformation provoked an insurrection which at first threatened to be formidable, but was eventually suppressed without much difficulty.

Some few of the monasteries continued to the close to fulfil the ends of their institution. They cultivated a little learning, they practised a little medicine, and they exercised a little charity. The orphan and the outcast found

¹ Strype, *Eccles. Mem.*, vol. I., bk. i., chap. 34.

² Act 27 Henry VIII., cap. 28.

³ The Report of the Commission has gone a-missing. Its substance, however, may be gathered from the preamble of the Act, from which our quotations in the text are taken, and also from the copious extracts in Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol. I., p. 399 *et seq.*; from the Cotton MSS., Cleopatra E 4, &c. &c.

asylum within their walls, and the destitute and the decayed tradesman participated in the alms which were distributed at their threshold. The traveller, when he heard the vesper bell, turned aside to sleep in safety under their roof, and again set forth when the morning star appeared. But the majority of these places had scandalously perverted their ways, and were simply nurseries of superstition and indolence, and of all the evils that are born of these two. Nevertheless, the immediate consequence of their dissolution was a frightful confusion in England. Society was disjointed by the shock. The monks and nuns were turned adrift without any sufficient provision. Those who had been beggars before were now plunged into deeper poverty. Thefts, murders, treasons abounded, and executions were multiplied in the same proportion. "Seventy-two thousand persons are said to have perished by the hand of the executioner in the reign of King Henry."¹ The enormous amount of wealth in the form of lands, houses, and money, that now changed hands, added to the convulsion. Cranmer and Latimer pleaded that the confiscated property should be devoted to such purposes as were consonant with its original sacred character, such as lectureships in theology, hospitals for the sick and poor, and institutions for the cultivation of learning and the training of scholars; but they pleaded in vain. The courtiers of the king ran off with nearly the whole of this wealth; and the uses to which they put it promoted neither the welfare of their families, nor the good order of the kingdom. The consequences of tolerating an evil system fall heaviest on the generation that puts an end to it. So was it now; but by-and-by, when order had emerged out of the chaos, it was found that the cause of industry, of virtue, and of good government had greatly benefited by the dissolution of the monasteries.

¹ Blunt, p. 142.

CHAPTER X.

SCAFFOLDS—DEATH OF HENRY VIII.

Executions for Denying the King's Supremacy—Bishop Fisher—Sir Thomas More—Execution of Queen Anne Boleyn—Henry's Policy becomes more Popish—The Act of the Six Articles—Persecution under it—The Martyr Lambert—Act Permitting the Reading of the Bible—A Bible in Every Church—*The Institution of a Christian Man*—*The Necessary Erudition of a Christian Man*—The *Primer*—Trial and Martyrdom of Anne Askew—Henry VIII. Dies.

WE come now within the shadow of very tragic events. Numerous scaffolds begin to deform this part of the history of England, the guilt of which must be shared between Clement VII., who threatened the kingdom with invasion, and Henry VIII., who rigorously pressed the oath of supremacy upon every man of importance among his subjects. The heads of the religious houses were summoned with the rest to take the oath. These persons had hitherto been exempt from secular obedience, and they refused to acknowledge any authority that put itself, as the royal supremacy did, above the Pope. The Prior of Charterhouse and some of his monks were tried and convicted for refusing the oath, and on the 4th of May, 1535, they were executed as traitors at Tyburn. Certain friars who had taken part in the northern rebellion were hung in chains at York. The Pope having released all his Majesty's subjects from their allegiance, to refuse the oath of supremacy was regarded as a disowning of the king, and punished as treason.

But amid the crowd of scaffolds now rising in England—some for refusing the oath of supremacy, and others for denying transubstantiation—there are three that specially attract our notice, and move our sorrow, though not in equal degree. The first is that of Dr. John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. He was a man of seventy-seven, and refusing to take the oath of supremacy, he was committed to the Tower. He had been there a year when the Pope, by an unseasonable honour, hastened his fate. Paul III. sent him a red hat, which, when the king learned, he swore that if he should wear it, it would be on his shoulders, for he should leave him never a head. He was convicted of treason, and executed on the 22nd June, 1535. This prelate had illustrated his exalted station by a lowly deportment, and he attested the sincerity of his belief by his dignified behaviour on the scaffold. The next was a yet nobler victim, Sir Thomas More, the flower of English scholars. His early detestation of monks had given place to a yet greater detestation of heretics, and this man of beautiful genius and naturally tender sensibilities had sunk into the inquisitor. He had already been stripped of the seals as chancellor, and in the private station into which he had retired he tried to avoid offence on the matter of the supremacy. But all his circumspection could not shield him from the suspicions of his former master. More was asked to take the oath of supremacy, but

declined, and after languishing a year in prison, on the 6th of July, 1535, he was led to Tower Hill, and beheaded.

And now comes the noblest victim of all, she whom, but three short years before, the king took by the hand, and leading her up the steps of his throne, placed beside himself as queen. The same gates and the same chamber in the Tower which had sent forth the beautiful and virtuous Anne Boleyn to be crowned, now open to receive her as a prisoner. Among her maids of honour was one “who had all the charms both of youth and beauty in her person; and her humour was tempered between the severe gravity of Queen Catherine, and the gay pleasantness of Queen Anne.”¹ Jane Seymour, for such was her name, had excited a strong but guilty passion in the heart of Henry. He resolved to clear his way to a new marriage by the axe. The upright Cranmer was at this time banished the court, and there was not another man in the nation who had influence or courage to stop the king in his headlong course. All bent to a tyranny that had now learned to tread into the dust whatever opposed it, and which deemed the slightest resistance a crime so great that no virtue, no learning, no former service could atone for it. The king, feigning to believe that his bed had been dishonoured, threw his queen into the Tower. At her trial on the 15th of May, 1536, she was left entirely unbefriended, and was denied even the help of counsel. Her corrupt judges found her guilty on evidence which was discredited then, and which no one believes now.² On the 19th of May, a little before noon, she was brought on the scaffold and beheaded. “Her body was thrown into a common chest of elm-tree that was made to put arrows in, and was buried in the chapel within the Tower before twelve o’clock.”³ The alleged accomplices of Anne quickly followed her to the scaffold, and though some of them had received a promise of life on condition of tendering criminatory evidence, it was thought more prudent to put all of them to death. Dead men can make no recantations. Henry passed a day in mourning, and on the morrow married Jane Seymour.

We have reached a turning-point in the life and measures of Henry VIII. He had vindicated his prerogative by abolishing the Pope’s supremacy, and he had partially replenished his exchequer by suppressing the monasteries, and he resolved to pause at the line he had now reached. He had fallen into “a place where two seas met:” the Papacy buffeted him on the one side,

¹ Herbert, bk. iii., p. 196.

² Her uncle the Duke of Norfolk, her bitterest enemy, pronounced the sentence, on hearing which she raised her eyes to heaven, and exclaimed, “Oh, Father and Creator! oh, Thou who art the way, and the truth, and the life! Thou knowest that I have not deserved this death.” (Meteren, *Hist. des Pays Bas*, p. 21.)

³ Herbert, bk. iii., p. 205.—The judgment pronounced in court by Cranmer, two days after her execution, and which was to the effect that her marriage with the king was not valid, on the ground of pre-contract, is a melancholy proof of the tyranny of the king and the weakness of the archbishop. (See Herbert. pp. 203–213.)

Lutheranism on the other; and the more he strove to stem the current of the old, the more he favoured the advancing tide of the new. He would place himself in equilibrium, he would be at rest; but this he found impossible. The Popish party regained their ascendancy. Cromwell, who had been Henry's adviser in the assault on the supremacy and the despoiling of the monasteries, was sent (28th July, 1540) to die on a scaffold.¹ Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, an ambitious and intriguing man, devoted to the old religion, took the place of the fallen minister in the royal councils. The powerful family of the Howards, with whom the king was about to form an alliance—Jane Seymour and Anne of Cleves being already both out of the way—threw their influence on the same side, and the tyranny of the king became henceforth more truculent, and his victims more numerous. If Henry had quarrelled with the Pope, he would show Christendom that he had not apostatised from the Roman Catholic faith, that he cherished no inclination towards Lutheranism, and that he was not less deserving now of the proud title of "Defender of the Faith" than he had been on the day when the conclave voted it to him. What perhaps helped to make the king veer round, and appear to be desirous of buttressing the cause which he had seemed so lately desirous only to destroy, was the fact that Paul III. had confirmed and re-fulminated against him the bull of excommunication which Clement VII. had pronounced, and the state of isolation in which he found himself on the Continent made it prudent not further to provoke the Popish Powers till the storm should be over.

Accordingly there was now passed the Act of the Six Articles, "the lash with the six strings," as it was termed. The first enacted the doctrine of transubstantiation; the second withheld the Cup from the laity; the third prohibited priests from marrying; the fourth made obligatory the vow of celibacy; the fifth upheld private masses for souls in purgatory; and the sixth declared auricular confession expedient and necessary. This creed, framed by the "Head of the Church" for the people of England, was a very compendious one, and was thoroughly Roman. The penalties annexed were sufficiently severe. He who should deny the first article, transubstantiation namely, was to be burned at the stake, and they who should impugn the others were to be hanged as felons; and lands and goods were to be forfeited alike by the man who died by the rope as by him who died by the fire.² These articles were first proposed in Convocation, where Cranmer used all his influence and eloquence to prevent their passing. He was outvoted by the lower clergy. When they came before Parliament, again Cranmer argued three days together against them, but all in vain. The king requested the archbishop to retire from the House before the vote was taken, but Cranmer chose rather to disoblige

¹ Herbert, p. 284.

² Act 31 Henry VIII., cap. 14.

the monarch than desert the cause of truth. It was to the credit of the king that, instead of displeasure, he notified his approval of the fidelity and constancy of Cranmer—the one courageous man in a pusillanimous Parliament. It was soon seen that this Act was to draw after it very tragic consequences. Latimer, now Bishop of Worcester, and Shaxton, Bishop of Salisbury, were both thrown into prison, and they were soon followed by 500 others. Commissioners were appointed to carry out the Act, and they entered upon their work with such zeal that the prisons of London were crowded with men suspected of heresy. The Act was applied to offences that seemed to lie beyond its scope, and which certainly were not violations of its letter. Absence from church, the neglect of the use of the rosary, the refusal to creep on one's knees to the cross on Good Friday, the eating of meat on interdicted days, and similar acts were construed by the commissioners as violations of the articles, and were punished accordingly.

It was now that stakes began to be multiplied, and that the martyrs, Barnes, Garret, and Jerome, suffered in the fire. To show his impartiality, the king burned two Papists for denying the supremacy. It was now too that Henry, who, as the historian Tytler says, “had already written his title of Supreme Head of the Church in letters of blood,” found an opportunity of exhibiting in a public debate his zeal for orthodoxy. Lambert, a clergyman in priest's orders, who taught a school in London, had been accused before the archiepiscopal court of denying the doctrine of transubstantiation, and had appealed from the primate to the king. The court was held in Westminster Hall. The king took his place on the judgment-seat in robes of white satin, having on his right hand the prelates, the judges, and the most eminent lawyers, and on his left the temporal lords and the great officers of the court. Scaffolds had been erected for the accommodation of the public, before whom Henry took pride in showing his skill in ecclesiastical lore. The disputation between the king and the prisoner, in which Cranmer and nine other prelates took part, lasted five hours. The day wore away in the discussion; torches were brought in. “What sayest thou now,” exclaimed Henry, anxious to close the strange *rencontre*, “after these solid reasons brought forward by these learned men: art thou satisfied? wilt thou live or die?” The prisoner declared himself still unconvinced. He was then condemned, as “an obstinate opponent of the truth,” to the stake. He was executed two days afterwards. “As touching the terrible manner and fashion,” says Fox, “of the burning of this blessed martyr, here it is to be noted, of all others that have been burned and offered up at Smithfield, there was yet none so cruelly and piteously handled as he.” The fire was lighted, and then withdrawn, and lighted again, so as to consume him piecemeal. His scorched and half-burned body was raised on the pikes of the halberdiers, and tossed from one to the other to all the extent his chain would allow; the martyr, says the martyrologist, “lifting

up such hands as he had, and his finger-ends flaming with fire, cried unto the people in these words, 'None but Christ, none but Christ!' and so being let down again from their halberds, fell into the fire, and gave up his life."¹

Cranmer had better success with the king in another matter to which we now turn. The whole Bible, as we have already seen, had been translated into English by Tyndale and Miles Coverdale, with the view of being spread through England. The work was completed in October, 1535. Another edition was printed before the 4th of August, 1537, for on that day we find Archbishop Cranmer sending Grafton, the printer, with his Bible to Cromwell, with a request that he would show it to the king, and obtain, if possible, the royal "licence that the same may be sold, and read of every person, without danger of any Act, proclamation, or ordinance, heretofore granted to the contrary."² In 1538 a royal order was issued, appointing a copy of the Bible to be placed in every parish church, and raised upon a desk, so that all might come and read. The Act set forth "that the king was desirous to have his subjects attain to the knowledge of God's Word, which could not be effected by means so well as by granting them the free and liberal use of the Bible in the English tongue."³ "It was wonderful," says Strype, "to see with what joy this Book of God was received, not only among the learned sort, and those who were lovers of the Reformation, but generally all England over, among all the vulgar and common people; and with what greediness God's Word was read, and what resort to places where the reading of it was. Everybody that could bought the book, or busily read it, or got others to read it to them, if they could not themselves; and divers elderly people learned to read on purpose. And even little boys flocked among the rest to hear portions of the Holy Scriptures read."⁴ The first edition was sold in two years, and another immediately brought out. How different now from the state of things a few years ago! Then, if any one possessed a copy of the Scriptures he was obliged to conceal it; and if he wished to read it, he must go out into the woods or the fields, where no eye saw him, or choose the midnight hour; now, it lay openly in the peasant's home, to be read at the noon-day rest, or at the eventide, without dread of informer or peril of prison. "I rejoice," wrote Cranmer to Cromwell, "to see this day of Reformation now risen in England, since the light of God's Word doth shine over it without a cloud."

In the same year other injunctions were issued in the king's name, to the effect, among other directions, that once a quarter every curate should preach a sermon specially directed against the superstitious usages of the times. The preacher was enjoined to warn his hearers against the folly of going on

¹ Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, pp. 65, 66 (see also Appendix).

² Biogr. of Tyndale—*Doctrinal Treatises*, Parker Soc., pp. 74–76.

³ Burnet, vol. i., bk. iii., p. 270

⁴ Strype, *Memorials of Cranmer*, p. 64.

pilgrimage, of offering candles and tapers to relics, of kissing them, and the like. If the preacher had extolled these practices formerly, he was now publicly to recant his teaching, and to confess that he had been misled by common opinion and custom, and had had no authority from the Word of God.¹

The publication of the Bible was followed by other books, also set forth by authority, and of a kind fitted to promote reformation. The first of these was *The Institution of a Christian Man*, or “The Bishops’ Book,” as it was termed, from having been drawn up by the prelates. It was issued with the approval of the king, and was intended to be a standard of orthodoxy to the nation. Its gold was far indeed from being without alloy; the new and the old, a few evangelical doctrines and a great many Popish errors, being strangely blended and bound up together in it.

The Institution of a Christian Man was succeeded, after some time, by *The Necessary Erudition of a Christian Man*. This was called “The King’s Book.” Published after the Six Articles, it maintained the doctrine of transubstantiation. In other respects, *The Erudition* was an improvement upon *The Institution*. Revised by Cranmer, it omits all mention of what the other had recommended, namely, the veneration of images, the invocation of the saints, and masses for the dead, and places moral duties above ceremonial observances, as, for instance, the practice of charity above abstinence from flesh on Friday. It contained, moreover, an exposition of the Apostle’s Creed, the Seven Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Pater Noster, and the Ave Maria, to which were appended two articles on justification, in which an approximation was made to sounder doctrine on the subject of the fall of man, and the corruption of nature thereby inherited. The redemption accomplished by Christ was so exhibited as to discourage the idea of merit.²

The king published, besides, a *Primer*. It was intended for the initiation of the young into the elements of the Christian religion, and consisted of confessions, prayers, and hymns, with the seven penitential psalms, and selections from the Passion of our Lord as recorded in the Gospel of St. John. But the *Primer* was not intended exclusively for youth; it was meant also as a manual of devotion for adults, to be used both in the closet and in the church, to which the people were then in the habit of resorting for private as well as public prayer.

Henry VIII. was now drawing to his latter end. His life, deformed by many crimes, was to be darkened by one more tragedy before closing. Anne Askew was the second daughter of Sir William Askew, of Kelsey, in Lincolnshire. Having been converted to the Protestant faith by reading the Scriptures, she was taken before “the Quest,” or commissioners appointed to work

¹ Strype, *Eccles. Mem.*, vol. i., p. 514.

² Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, pp. 95–97.

the “drag-net” of the Six Articles, charged with denying transubstantiation. She was thrown into prison, and lay there nearly a year. The Council, with Gardiner and Bonner at its head, was then plotting the destruction of Queen Catherine; and Anne Askew, by command of the king, was brought before the Council and examined, in the hope that something might be elicited from her to incriminate the ladies of the queen’s court. Her firmness baffled her persecutors, and she was thrown into the Tower. In their rage they carried her to a dungeon, and though she was delicate and sickly, they placed her on the rack, and stretched her limbs till the bones were almost broken. Despite the torture, she uttered no groan, she disclosed no secret, and she steadfastly refused to renounce her faith. Chancellor Wriothesly, in his robes, was standing by, and, stung to fury by her silence, he stripped off his gown, grasped the handle of the rack, and swore that he would make the prisoner reveal her accomplices. He worked the torture with his own hands, till his victim was on the point of expiring. Anne swooned on being taken off the rack. On recovering, she found herself on the stony floor, with Wriothesly by her side, trying, by words of feigned kindness, to overcome the resolution which his horrible barbarities had not been able to subdue. She was condemned to the fire.

When the day of execution arrived, she was carried to Smithfield in a chair, for the torture had deprived her of the use of her limbs. Three others were to die with her. She was fastened to the stake with a chain. The Lord Mayor, the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Bedford, the Lord Chancellor Wriothesly, and other persons of rank occupied a bench in front of St. Bartholomew’s Church, in order to witness the execution. A strong railing served to keep off the dense crowd of hardened ruffians and fanatical scoffers that occupied the area; but here and there were persons whose looks testified their sympathy with the sufferers and their cause, their presence refreshing them, doubtless, in their hour of agony. Presently the Lord Mayor commanded the torch to be applied. At the lighting of the train the sky suddenly blackened; a few drops of rain fell, and a low peal of thunder was heard. “They are damned,” said some of the spectators. “God knows whether I may truly call it thunder,” said one who was present; “methought it seemed that the angels in heaven rejoiced to receive their souls into bliss.”¹ Their heroic death, which formed the last of the horrors of Henry VIII.’s reign, was long remembered.

¹ Strype, *Eccl. Mem.*, vol. i., pp. 599, 600. Fox says their martyrdom took place in June. Bishop Bale says it was on the 16th of July, 1546. Southey, in his *Book of the Church* (vol. ii., p. 92), says that the execution was delayed till darkness closed. We are disposed to think that this is a mistake, arising from misunderstanding an expression of Fox about “the hour of darkness?”

A few months after these tragic events, the king was laid down on the bed from which he was to rise no more. On the 27th of January, 1547, it became evident that his end was drawing near. Those around him inquired whether he wished to have the consolations of a clergyman. "Yes," he replied, "but first let me repose a little." The king slept an hour, and on awakening desired his attendants to send immediately for Cranmer. Before the archbishop could arrive Henry was speechless; but he retained his consciousness, and listened to the exhortations of the primate. Cranmer then asked of him a sign that he rested on Christ alone. Henry pressed his hand and expired. It was early on the morning of the 28th when the king breathed his last. He had lived fifty-five years and seven months, and had reigned thirty-seven years, nine months, and six days.¹

It has been the lot of Henry VIII. to be severely blamed by both Protestants and Papists. To this circumstance it is owing that his vices have been put prominently in the foreground, and that his good qualities and great services have been thrown into the shade. There are far worse characters in history, who have been made to figure in colours not nearly so black; and there are men who have received much more applause, who have done less to merit it. We should like to judge Henry VIII. by his work, and by his times. He contrasts favourably with his two great contemporaries, Francis I. and Charles V. He was selfish and sensual, but he was less so than the French king; he was cruel—inexorably and relentlessly cruel—but he did not spill nearly so much blood as the emperor. True, his scaffolds strike and startle our imagination more than do the thousands of victims whom Charles V. put to death, but that is because they stand out in greater relief. The one victim affects us more than does the crowd; and the relationship of the sufferer to the royal murderer touches deeply our pity. It is the wife or the minister whom we see Henry dragging to the scaffold: we are therefore more shudderingly alive to his guilt; whereas those whom the kings of France and Spain delivered up to the executioner, and whom they caused to expire with barbarities which Henry VIII. never practised, were more remotely connected with the authors of their death. As regards the two most revolting crimes of the English king, the execution of Anne Boleyn and Thomas Cromwell, the Popish faction must divide with Henry the guilt of their murder. The now morose and suspicious temper of the monarch made it easy for conspirators to lead him into crime. The darkest periods of his life, and in particular the executions that followed the enactment of the Six Articles, correspond with the ascendancy at court of Gardiner and his party, who never ceased during Henry's reign to plot for the restoration of the Papal supremacy.

¹ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, p. 139. Herbert, p. 630.

Henry VIII. was a great sovereign—in some respects the greatest of the three sovereigns who then governed Christendom. He had the wisdom to choose able ministers, and he brought a strong understanding and a resolute will to the execution of grand designs. These have left their mark on the world for good. Neither Charles nor Francis so deeply or so beneficially affected the current of human affairs. The policy of Charles V. ruined the great country at the head of which he stood. The same may be said of the policy of Francis I.; it began the decline of the most civilised of the European nations. The policy of Henry VIII.—inspired, we grant, by very mixed motives, and carried through at the cost of great crimes on his part, and great sufferings on the part of others—has resulted in placing Great Britain at the head of the world. His policy comprised three great measures. He restored the Bible to that moral supremacy which is the bulwark of conscience; he shook off from England the chains of a foreign tyranny, and made her mistress of herself; and he tore out the gangrene of the monastic system, which was eating out the industry and the allegiance of the nation. This was rough work, but it had to be done before England could advance a step in the path of Reform. It was only a man like Henry VIII. who could do it. With a less resolute monarch on the throne, the nation would have been broken by the shock of these great changes; with a less firm hand on the helm, the vessel of the State would have foundered amid the tempests which this policy awakened both within and without the country.

The friendship that existed so close between Henry VIII. and Cranmer is one of the marvels of history. The man who could appreciate the upright and pious archbishop, and esteem him above all his servants, and who was affectionately regarded and faithfully served by the archbishop in return, must have had some sterling qualities in him. These two men were very unlike, but it was their dissimilarity, we are disposed to think, that kept them together. It was the simplicity and transparency of the archbishop that enabled the heart of the king fully to confide in him; and it was the strength, or—shall we say it?—the tyranny of Henry that led the somewhat timid and weak Reformer to lean upon and work along with the monarch. Doubtless, Cranmer's insight taught him that the first necessity of England was a strong throne; and that, seeing both Church and State had been demoralised by the setting up of the Pope's authority in the country, neither order nor liberty was possible in England till that foreign usurpation was put down, and the king made supreme over all persons and causes. This consideration, doubtless, made him accept the "Headship" of Henry as an *interim* arrangement, although he might not approve of it as a final settlement. Certain it is that the co-operation maintained between the pure and single-minded primate, and the headstrong and blood-stained monarch, resulted in great blessings to England.

When Henry died, he left to Cranmer little but a ruin. The foundations of a new edifice had indeed been laid in the diffusion of the Word of God; but while the substructions lay hid underground, the surface was strewn over by the debris of that old edifice which the terrible blows of the king had shivered in pieces. Cranmer had to set to work, with such assistants as he could gather round him, and essay in patience and toil the rearing of a new edifice. It is in this labour that we are now to follow him.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AS REFORMED BY CRANMER.

Edward VI.—His Training and Character—Somerset Protector—Wriothesly Deposed—Edward's Coronation—The Bible—State of England—Cranmer Resumes the Work of Reformation—Royal Visitation—Erasmus' Paraphrase—Book of Homilies—Superstitious Usages Forbidden—Communion in Both Kinds—Cranmer's Catechism—Laity and Public Worship—Communion Service—Book of Common Prayer—Pentecost of 1549—Public Psalmody Authorised—Articles of Religion—The Bible the Only Infallible Authority.

EDWARD VI. was in his tenth year when the sceptre of England was committed to his hand. If his years were few, his attainments were far beyond what is usual at his early age. He already discovered a rare maturity of judgment, and a soul ennobled by the love of virtue. His father had taken care to provide him with able and pious preceptors, chief of whom were Sir Anthony Cooke, a friend of the Gospel, and Dr. Richard Cox, afterwards Bishop of Ely; and the precocity of the youthful prince, and his rapid progress in classical studies, rewarded the diligence and exceeded the expectations of his instructors. Numerous letters in Latin and French, written in his ninth year, are still extant, attesting the skill he had acquired in these languages at that tender age. Catherine Parr, the last and noblest of the wives of Henry VIII., assiduously aided the development of his moral character. Herself a lady of eminent virtue and great intelligence, she was at pains to instil into his mind those principles which should make his life pure, his reign prosperous, and his subjects happy. Nor would the watchful eye of Cranmer be unobservant of the heir to the crown, nor would his timely co-operation and wise counsel be wanting in the work of fitting him for swaying the sceptre of England at one of its greatest crises. The archbishop is said to have wept for joy when he marked the rapid and graceful intellectual development, and deep piety, of the young prince.

The king's maternal uncle, Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, afterwards Duke of Somerset, was made head of the council of regency, under the title of Protector of the Realm. He was an able statesman, and a friend of the Reformed opinions. Cranmer, in virtue of his primacy, as well as by appointment of the late king, was a member of the Council. Wriothesly, the chancellor, a man versed in intrigue, and so bigoted an adherent of the old faith that, as we have seen, he sometimes tortured with his own hands those under examination before him, had also a seat in that body. But one of the first acts of the Council was to depose him from office, and deprive him of the seals. This was no faint indication that the party which had so long clogged the wheels of the Reformation must now descend from power. Other

signs of a like nature soon followed. The coronation of the young monarch took place on the 28th of February, in the Abbey of Westminster.¹ There followed a general pardon: the Statute of the Six Articles was abolished, and the prosecutions commenced under it were terminated; the friends of the Gospel were released from prison; many learned and pious men returned from exile, and thus the ranks of the Reformers were recruited, and their spirits reanimated. Nor was it less pleasing to mark the token of respect which was paid to the Scriptures by the youthful king on receiving his crown. If his father had brought forth the Bible to carry his divorce, the son would exalt it to a yet higher place by making it the rule of his government, and the light of his realm. Bale relates that, when Cranmer had placed the crown on Edward's head, and the procession was about to set out from the abbey to the palace, three swords were brought to be carried before him, emblematical of his three kingdoms. On this the king observed, "There lacks yet one." On his nobles inquiring what it was, he answered, "The Bible," adding, "that book is the sword of the spirit, and is to be preferred before these. It ought in all right to govern us: without it we are nothing, and can do nothing. He that rules without it is not to be called God's minister, or a king." The Bible was brought, and carried reverently in the procession.

With Edward on the throne, the English Josiah, as he has been styled, with Protector Somerset in the Cabinet, with many tried disciples and former fellow-labourers returned from prison or from beyond seas, Cranmer at last breathed freely. How different the gracious air that filled the palace of Edward from the gloomy and tyrannical atmosphere around the throne of Henry! Till now Cranmer knew not what a day might bring forth; it might hurl him from power, and send him to a scaffold. But now he could recommend measures of reform without hesitancy, and go boldly forward in the prosecution of them. And yet the prospect was still such as might well dismay even a bold man. Many things had been uprooted, but very little had been planted: England at that hour was a chaos. There had come an outburst of lawless thought and libertine morals such as is incident to all periods of transition and revolution. The Popish faction, with the crafty Gardiner at its head, though ruling no longer in the councils of the sovereign, was yet powerful in the Church, and was restlessly intriguing to obstruct the path of the primate, and bring back the dominion of Rome. Many of the young nobles had travelled in Italy, and brought home with them a Machiavellian system of politics, and an easy code of morals, and they sought to introduce into the court of Edward the principles and fashions they had learned abroad. The clergy were without knowledge, the people were without instruction; few men in the nation had clear and well-established views, and every day that

¹ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, pp. 142, 143.

passed without a remedy only made matters worse. To repel the Popish faction on the one hand and encourage the Reforming party on the other; to combat with ignorance, to set bounds to avarice and old and envenomed prejudice; to plan wisely, to wait patiently, and to advance at only such speed as circumstances made possible; to be ever on the watch against secret foes, and ever armed against their violence; to toil day after day and hour after hour, to be oftentimes disappointed in the issue, and have to begin anew: here were the faith, the patience, and the courage of the Reformers. This was the task that now presented itself to Cranmer, and which he must pursue through all its difficulties till he had established a moral rule in England, and reared an edifice in which to place the lamp of a Scriptural faith. This was the one work of the reign of Edward VI. England had then rest from war; the sound of battle was forbidden to disturb the silence in which the temple rose.¹ Let us describe the work, as stage by stage the edifice is seen to advance under the hands of its builders.

The first step was a “Royal Visitation for Reformation of Religion.” This Commission was appointed within a month after the coronation of Edward VI., and was sent forth with instructions to visit all the dioceses and parishes of England, and report respecting the knowledge and morals of the clergy, and the spiritual condition of their flocks.² The Commission executed its task, and its report laid open to the eye of Cranmer the real state of the nation, and enabled him to judge of the remedies required for evils which were the growth of ages. The first thing adopted in the shape of a cure was the placing of a companion volume by the side of the Bible in all the churches. The book chosen was Erasmus’ Paraphrase on the New Testament, in English.³ It was placed there by way of interpreter, and was specially designed for the instruction of the priests in the sense of Scripture. It would have been easy to have found a better guide, but Erasmus would be read by many who would have turned away from the commentaries of Luther.

There quickly followed a volume of homilies, twelve in number. The Bishop of Winchester, Gardiner, the uncompromising enemy of Cranmer and the Reformation, objected to this as unnecessary, seeing the nation already possessed King Henry’s *Erudition of a Christian Man*.⁴ The homilies were prepared nevertheless, Cranmer himself writing three of them, those on Salvation, Faith, and Works. The doctrine taught in the homily on Salvation, otherwise termed Justification, was that of Luther, namely, that we are justified by faith without works. Gardiner and his party strongly objected to this,

¹ There is one exception to the peace, viz., the battle of Pinkie, near Edinburgh, fought in September, 1547, in which the English defeated the Scotch, slaughtering 10,000, and taking 2,000 prisoners. .

² Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, bk. ii., chap. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁴ Burnet, vol. III., part iii., bk. 4; Lond. ed., 1820.

arguing that such a justification excluded “charity,” and besides was superfluous, seeing we receive justification in baptism, and if after this we sin, we are restored by penance. Cranmer defended the homily on the ground that his object was “only to set out the freedom of God’s mercy.”¹ The hand of Latimer, now restored to liberty, and of Thomas Becon, one of Cranmer’s chaplains, may be traced in others of the homilies: the authors of the rest are entirely unknown, or can only be doubtfully guessed at. The homilies are plain expositions of the great doctrines of the Bible, which may be read with profit in any age, and were eminently needed in that one. They were appointed to be read from the pulpit in every church. The Ithuriel which Cranmer sent abroad, the touch of whose spear dissolved the shackles of his countrymen, was Light.

The royal visitation, mentioned above, now began to bear yet more important fruits. In November, 1547, Parliament sat, and a Convocation being held at the same time, the ecclesiastical reforms recommended by the royal visitors were discussed, embodied in orders, and promulgated by the Council. The clergy were enjoined to preach four times every year against the usurped authority of the Bishop of Rome; they were forbidden to extol images and relics; they were not to allow lights before images, although still permitted to have two lighted candles on the high altar, in veneration of the body of Christ, which even Cranmer still believed was present in the elements. The clergy were to admit none to the “Sacrament of the altar” who had not first undergone an examination on the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. A chapter of the New Testament, in English, was to be read at matins, or morning worship, and a chapter of the Old Testament at evensong. The portions of Scripture read at mass were enjoined to be also in English. Chantry priests, or those who sang masses at the private oratories in cathedral churches for the souls of the founders, were to spend more profitably their time in teaching the young to read and write. All clergymen with an income of £100 a year—equal at least to £1,000 now—were to maintain a poor scholar at one of the universities. Candles were forbidden to be carried on Candlemas Day, ashes on Ash Wednesday, palms on Palm Sunday. “So that this year” (1547), says Strype, “on Candlemas Day, the old custom of bearing candles in the church, and on Ash Wednesday following giving ashes in the church, was left off through the whole of the city of London.”² An order was also issued by the Council for the removal of all images from the churches—a change implying so great an alteration in the worship of the people as to be a reformation in itself.³ Another most important change was now adopted. After being discussed in Convocation, it was enacted by

¹ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, bk. ii., chap. 3.

² *Ibid.*, bk. ii., chap. 5.

³ Burnet, vol. ii., p. 60. Collier, vol. ii., p. 241.

Parliament that henceforth the communion should be dispensed, in both kinds. The same Parliament abolished the law of clerical celibacy, and permitted priests to marry.

In 1548 came *Cranmer's Catechism*. It was not written by the archbishop, although it bore his name. Originally compiled in German for the instruction of the youth of Nuremberg, it was translated into Latin by the son of Justus Jonas, the friend of Luther, and brought to England by him when driven from his native land by the *Interim* of Charles V. This catechism was rendered into English by the orders of Cranmer, who deemed it fitted to be useful in the instruction of youth. This catechism may be regarded as a reflection of Cranmer's own mind, and the mind of England at that hour. Both were but groping their way out of the old darkness. In it the first and second commandments are made to form but one, thus obliterating, or at least darkening, the prohibition of the worshipping of God by images. Of the seven Sacraments of the Roman Church, four are discarded and three retained: baptism is spoken of as "the bath of regeneration, or the instrument of the second birth." The doctrine taught under the head of the Eucharist is that of the bodily presence, as we should expect it to be from the German origin of the book, and the known sentiments of Cranmer at this stage of his career. He was still a believer in the dogma of consubstantiation; and only by painful efforts and laborious investigations did he reach the ground on which Zwingli and Calvin stood, and from which he could never afterwards be dislodged.¹

There followed the same year two important steps of reformation. Cranmer conceived the great idea of calling the people to take their part in the worship of the sanctuary. Under the Papacy the people had been excluded from the public worship of God: first, by restricting its performance to the priests; and, secondly, by the offering of it in a dead language. The position of the laity was that of spectators—not even of listeners, but spectators of grand but meaningless ceremonies. Cranmer resolved to bring back these exiles. "Ye are a priesthood," he said, "and must worship with your own hearts and voices." In prosecution of this idea, he procured that the mass should be changed into a communion, and that the service should be in English instead of Latin. To enable a people long unused to worship to take part in it with decency and with the understanding, he prepared a Liturgy in order that all might offer their adoration to the Supreme, and that that adoration should be expressed in the grandest and most august forms of speech. For the magnificent shows of Rome, Cranmer substituted the sublime emotions of the human soul. How great an advance intellectually as well as spiritually!

In furtherance of this great end, two committees were appointed by the king, one to prepare a Communion Service, and the other a Book of Common

¹ Strype, *Mem. Cranmer*, p. 160. *Cranmer's Catechism*, p. 182 *et seq.*; Oxford, 1829.

Prayer, or Liturgy. The committees met in the royal palace of Windsor, and spent the most of the summer of 1548 in deliberations on this important matter. The notes prepared by Cranmer, evidently with the view of being submitted to the committee as aids to inquiry and guides in discussion, show us the gradual advance of Cranmer and his fellow Reformers to the conclusions they ultimately reached.

“What or wherein,” so runs the first query, “John receiving the Sacrament of the altar in England, doth it profit and avail Thomas dwelling in Italy, and not knowing what John in England doth?”

“Whether it [the mass] profit them that be in heaven, and wherein?”

“What thing is the presentation of the Body and Blood of Christ in the mass, which you call the oblation and sacrifice of Christ? and wherein standeth it in act, gesture, or word? and in what act, gesture, or word?”

“Whether in the primitive Church there were any priests that lived by saying of mass, matins, or even-song, or by praying for souls only?”

“For what cause were it not convenient or expedient to have the whole mass in the English tongue?”

“Whether it be convenient that masses satisfactory [expiatory] should be continued, that is to say, priests hired to say masses for souls departed.”¹

The part of the labours of the commissioners charged with the reformation of the public worship which was the first to be finished was the Communion Service. It was published by itself. In its compilation the ancient missal had been drawn upon; but the words of consecration were omitted; and the import or sense which the service was now made to bear, appears from the words of Cranmer in the discussions on the query he had proposed, “What are the oblation and sacrifice of Christ in the mass?” “The oblation and sacrifice of Christ in the mass,” said Cranmer, “are not so called because Christ is indeed there offered and sacrificed by the priest and the people, for that was done but once by himself upon the cross; but are so called because they are a memory or representation of that very true sacrifice and immolation which were before made upon the cross.” The mass was now changed, not into a mere commemoration, but into a communion, in which the partaker received spiritually the body and blood of Christ, or, to express more plainly the Protestant sense, in which he participated in the benefits of Christ’s death. The notoriously ungodly were not to be admitted to the Sacrament. A confession of sin was to be made, followed by absolution, and the elements were then to be delivered with the words, “The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body unto everlasting life “The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy soul unto

¹ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, bk. ii., chap. 5. This writing of the archbishop, Strype says, is without date, but obviously composed with an eye to the change of the mass into a communion.

everlasting life.” When all had partaken, the congregation was dismissed with the Benediction. This form of the service was not meant to be final, for a promise was given by the king, “further to travail for the Reformation, and setting forth such godly orders as might be to God’s glory, and the edifying of his subjects, and the advancement of true religion,”¹ and meanwhile all preachers were forbidden to agitate the question of the Eucharist in the pulpit till such time as its service should be completed. The anticipated alteration did take place, and in the corrected Prayer Book of Edward VI. the words given above were changed into the following:—“Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith;” “Drink this in remembrance that Christ’s blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.” A rubric was also added, through the influence of Knox, to the effect that though the posture of kneeling was retained at the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, no adoration of the elements was thereby intended.²

The Communion Service was followed by the Book of Common Prayer. It was compiled by substantially the same men who had drawn up the Communion Service, and the principal of whom were Cranmer, Ridley, and Goodrich. The Breviary and the ancient Liturgies were laid under contribution in the formation of the Book of Common Prayer. The Bible is the revelation of God’s mind, to the Church, worship is the evolution of the Church’s mind God-wards; and on this principle was the Liturgy of the Church of England compiled. The voice of all preceding ages of the Church was heard in it: the voice of the first age; as also that of the age of Augustine and of all succeeding ages, including whatever was pure and lofty in the Church of the Middle Ages; all were there, inasmuch as the greatest thoughts and the sublimest expressions of all the noblest minds and grandest eras of the Church were repeated and re-echoed in it. The Book of Common Prayer was presented to Convocation in November, 1548, and having been approved of by that body, was brought into Parliament, and a law was passed on the 21st of January, 1549, since known as the Act of Uniformity,³ which declared that the bishops had now concluded upon one uniform order of Divine worship, and enacted that from the Feast of Whit Sunday next all Divine offices should be performed according to it. On the passing of the Act all clergymen were ordered to bring to their bishop “antiphoners, missals, and all other books of service, in order to their being defaced and abolished, that they might be no hindrance to that godly and uniform order set forth.”⁴ On the 10th of June,

¹ Strype, vol. ii., p. 135.

² Collier, vol. ii, p. 310. Records, No. 70.

³ “2nd and 3rd Edward VI., c. i. Previously to the passing of the Act a great variety of forms of prayer and communion had been in use. Some used the form of Sarum, some that of York, others that of Bangor, and others that of Lincoln, while others used forms entirely of their own devising.” (Strype, *Eccles. Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 138.)

⁴ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, p. 194.

being Whit Sunday, the Liturgy was first solemnly performed in St. Paul's Cathedral, and in most of the parish churches of England. "The Day of Pentecost was fitly chosen," says one, "as that on which a National Church should first return after so many centuries to the celebration of Divine service in the native tongue, and it is a day to be much observed in this Church of England among all our generations for ever."¹

The Act ratifying the Book of Common Prayer contained also an authorisation for the singing of psalms in public worship. The absence of singing was a marked characteristic of the Papal worship. The only approach to it were chants, dirges, and wails, in a dead language, in which the people as a rule took no part. Singing revived with Protestantism; as we should expect it would, seeing all deep and lofty emotions seek to vent themselves in song. The Lollards were famous for their singing, hence their name. They were followed in their love of sacred song by certain congregations of the Reformed Church of England, who began the practice of their own accord; but now the psalms were sung in virtue of the royal order in all churches and private dwellings. Certain of the psalms were turned into metre by Sternhold, a member of the Privy Chamber, and were set to music, and dedicated to Edward VI., who was greatly delighted with them. Others were versified by Dr. Cox, W. Whittingham, and Robert Wisdom. And when the whole Book of Psalms, with other hymns, were finished by Hopkins and certain other exiles in Queen Mary's reign, this clause in the Act gave authority for their being used in public worship. They were sung at the commencement and at the close of the morning service, and also before and after sermon.²

The last part of the work, which Cranmer was now doing with so much moderation, wisdom, and courage, was the compilation of Articles of Religion. All worship is founded on knowledge. That knowledge or truth is not the evolution of the human mind, it is a direct revelation from heaven; and the response awakened by it from earth is worship. The archbishop, in arranging the worship of the Church of England, had assumed the existence of previously communicated truth. Now he goes to its Divine fountains, that he might give dogmatic expression to that to which he had just given emotional utterance. He puts into doctrine what he had already put into a prayer, or into a song. This was, perhaps, the most difficult part of his task—it was certainly the most delicate—and a feeling of this would seem to have made him defer it till the last. The facts relating to the preparation of the Articles are obscure; but putting all things together, it would appear that the Articles were not debated and passed in Convocation; but that they were drawn up by Cranmer himself, and presented to the king in 1552.³ They were revised, at the king's

¹ Massingberd, *The Eng. Reform.*, p. 356; Lond., 1847.

² Strype, *Eccles. Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 139, 140.

³ Burnet, vol. III., part iii., bk. 4.

instance, by Grindal, Knox, and others, previous to being ratified by Parliament, and subscription to them made obligatory on all preachers and ministers in the realm.¹ Having received Cranmer's last revise, they were published in 1553 by the king's authority, both in Latin and English, "to be publicly owned as the sum of the doctrine of the Church of England."² As regards the doctrine of the Articles, all those divines who have been the more thoroughly versed in theology, both in its history and in its substance, from Bishop Burnet downwards, have acknowledged that, in the main, the Articles follow in the path of the great doctor of the West, Augustine. The archbishop in framing them had fondly hoped that they would be a means of "union and quietness in religion." To these forty-two Articles, reduced in 1562 to thirty-nine, he gave only a subordinate authority. After dethroning the Pope to put the Bible in his room, it would have ill become the Reformers to dethrone the Bible, in order to install a mere human authority in supremacy over the conscience. Creeds are the handmaids only, not the mistress; they are the interpreters only, not the judge; the authority they possess is in exact proportion to the accuracy with which they interpret the Divine voice. Their authority can never be plenary, because their interpretation can never be more than an approximation to all truth as contained in the Scriptures. The Bible alone must remain the one infallible authority on earth, seeing the prerogative of imposing laws on the consciences of men belongs only to God.

¹ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, pp. 272, 273.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 272, 301.

CHAPTER XII.

DEATHS OF PROTECTOR SOMERSET AND EDWARD VI.

Cranmer's Moderation—Its Advantages—His Great Difficulties—Proposed General Protestant Convention—The Scheme Fails—Disturbing Events in the Reign of Edward VI.—Plot against Protector Somerset—His Execution—Rise of the Disputes about Vestments—Bishop Hooper—Joan of Kent—Her Opinions—Her Burning—Question of Changing the Succession—Cranmer Opposes it—He Yields—Edward VI. Dies—Reflections on the Reformation under Edward VI.—England Comes Late into the Field—Her Appearance Decides the Issue of the Movement.

We have followed step by step the work of Cranmer. It would be easy to criticise, and to say where a deeper and broader foundation might have been laid, and would have been, doubtless, by an intellect of the order of Calvin. Cranmer, even in the opinion of Burnet, was cautious and moderate to a fault; but perhaps that moderation fitted him for his place. He had to work during many years along with one of the most imperious monarchs that ever occupied a throne. Had Henry, when he quarrelled with the Pope, quarrelled also with Popery, the primate's task would have been easy; but Henry felt it all the more incumbent upon him to show his loyalty to the faith of the Church, that he had rebelled against her head. There were times in Cranmer's life when he was the one Reformer at a Roman Catholic court and in a Popish council; and had he retired from his position, the work must have stopped, so far as man can judge. After Henry went to the grave, and the young and reforming Edward succeeded him on the throne, the Popish faction was still powerful, and Cranmer had to pilot the movement through a host of enemies, through numberless intrigues, and through all the hindrances arising from the ignorance and godlessness which the old system had left behind it, and the storms of new and strange opinions which its overthrow had evoked. That he effected so much is truly wonderful; nor can England ever be sufficiently thankful for the work he accomplished for her; but Cranmer himself did not regard his work as finished, and had Edward VI. lived, it is probable that many things in the worship of the Church, borrowed from the ancient superstition, would have been removed, and that some things in her government would have undergone a remodelling in accordance with what Cranmer and the men associated with him in the work of Reformation believed to be the primitive institution. "As far as can be judged from Cranmer's proceedings," says Burnet, "he intended to put the government of the Church in another method, different from the common way of Convocation."¹ Foreign divines, and Calvin in particular, to whose judgment Cranmer much deferred, were

¹ Burnet, vol. III., part iii., bk. 4.

exhorting him to prosecute the Reformation of the Church of England “by purging it of the relics of Popery,”¹ and not to delay in doing so, lest “after so many autumns spent in procrastinating, there should come at last the cold of a perpetual winter.” The same great duty did Calvin press upon the Duke of Somerset, the Protector, whose steadfast zeal and undoubted patriotism he thankfully acknowledges, and even upon the king, Edward VI., to whose sincere piety he pays a noble tribute.

Nay, a project was at that hour in agitation among the great Protestant theologians of all countries, to hold a general conference for a free exchange of their views on all subjects, and the adoption of one system of doctrine, and one form of government, or as near an approximation to this as might be desirable and possible, for all the Reformed Churches, in order to the more perfect consolidation of the Reformation, and the more entire union of Christendom. The project had the full approval of Edward VI., who offered his capital as the place in which to hold this congress. Cranmer hailed the assembling of so many men of influence and power on an errand like this. Not less warmly had Melancthon entered into the idea, and corresponded with Cranmer in prosecution of it. It had the high sanction of Calvin, than whom there was no one in all Christendom who more earnestly longed to see the breaches in the Reformed ranks closed, or who was less disposed to view with an approving eye, or lend a helping hand to schemes merely visionary. His letters to Cranmer on the subject still remain, in which he pleads that, though he might well be excused a personal attendance on the ground of his “insignificance,” he was nevertheless willing to undergo any amount of “toil and trouble,” if thereby he might further the object.²

This Protestant convention never assembled. The difficulties in the way of its meeting were then immense; nor was the prospect of arriving at the desired concord so certain as to encourage men to great efforts to overcome them. Moreover the Council of Trent, which had met a little before, hearing with alarm that the Reformers were about to combine under one discipline, took immediate steps to keep them disunited. They sent forth emissaries, who, feigning themselves zealous Protestants, began to preach the more violent doctrines of the Anabaptists. England was threatened with an outbreak of the same anti-social and fanatical spirit which had brought so many calamities on Germany and Switzerland; apples of discord were scattered among the friends of the Gospel, and the projected conference never assembled.³

¹ See Calvin’s letter to Cranmer of July, 1552—Jules Bonnet, vol. ii., p. 341; Edin., 1857.

² See his letter to Cranmer, April, 1552—Jules Bonnet, vol. ii., p. 331. See also Cranmer’s letters in his works, published by the *Parker Society*; and the *Zurich Letters*, First Series.

³ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, pp. 107, 108.

The reign of Edward VI., and with it the era of Reformation under Cranmer, was drawing to a close. The sky, which had been so clear at its beginning, began now to be darkened. The troubles that distracted the Church and the State at this time arose from various causes, of which the principal were the execution of the Duke of Somerset, the disputes respecting vestments, the burning of Joan of Kent, and the question of the succession to the crown. These occurrences, which influenced the course of future events, it is unnecessary to detail at much length.

The Duke of Somerset, pious, upright, and able, had faithfully served the crown and the Reformation; but his inflexible loyalty to the cause of the Reformed religion, and the hopelessness of a restoration of the old faith while he stood by the side of the throne, stirred up his enemies to plot his overthrow. The conspirators were able to persuade the king that his uncle, the Protector, had abused his office, and was an enemy to the crown. He was stripped of his office, and removed from court. He returned after awhile, but the intrigue was renewed, and this time with a deadlier intent. The articles of indictment drawn up against him, and which Strype affirms were in Gardiner's hand, who, although then in the Tower, guided the plot which the Papists were carrying on, charge the duke with such things as "the great spoil of the churches and chapels, defacing ancient tombs and monuments, and pulling down the bells in parish churches, and ordering only one bell in a steeple as sufficient to call the people together."¹ Warwick, Duke of Northumberland, an ambitious and hypocritical man, resolved on his death. He accused Somerset of a design to raise a rebellion and assassinate himself and the other privy councillors. He was tried and condemned; the king, now entirely in the power of Warwick, signed his uncle's death-warrant with tears in his eyes; and he was executed (January, 1552) amidst the lamentations of the people, by whom he was greatly beloved, and who rushed on the scaffold to dip their handkerchiefs in his blood. Cranmer remained his friend to the last, but could not save him.

The next cloud that rose over the Reformed Church of England was the dispute respecting vestments. This contention first arose amongst a Protestant congregation of English exiles at Frankfort, some of whom objected to the use of the surplice by the minister, the Litany, the audible responses, and kneeling at the communion, and on these grounds they separated from their brethren. The strife was imported into England, and broke out there with great fierceness in the reign of Elizabeth, but it had its beginning at the period of which we write, and dates from the reign of Edward VI. Hooper, who returned in July, 1550, from Germany and Switzerland, where he had contracted a love for the simple forms followed in these churches,

¹ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, p. 266.

was nominated Bishop of Gloucester. He refused to be consecrated in the vestments usually worn on these occasions. This led to a warm dispute between him and Cranmer, Ridley, Bucer, and Peter Martyr. The first issue was that Hooper was committed to the Fleet by the Council; and the second was that he complied, and was consecrated after the usual form.¹ In this way began that strife which divided the friends of Reformation in England in after-days, and which continued to rage even amid the fires of persecution.

The next occurrence was one in itself yet more sad. It is remarkable that England should have had its Servetus case as well as Geneva, although the former has not attained the notoriety of the latter. But if there be any difference between them, it is in this, that the earlier, which is the English one, is the less defensible of the two executions. Joan Bocher, or, as she is commonly styled, Joan of Kent, held, in the words of Latimer, "that our Saviour was not very man, nor had received flesh of his mother Mary." Persisting in her error, she was judicially excommunicated by Cranmer, the sentence being read by him in St. Mary's Chapel, within the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, in April, 1549; the king's commissioners, of the number of whom was Hugh Latimer, assisting. She was then delivered to the secular arm, and sentenced to be burned. After her condemnation she was kept a week in the house of the chancellor, and every day visited by the archbishop and Bishop Ridley, who reasoned with her in the hope of saving her from the fire. Refusing to change her opinion, she was burned.² The relations of Cranmer to Joan of Kent are precisely those of Calvin to Servetus, with this exception, that Cranmer had more influence with the king and the Privy Council than Calvin had with the magistrates and Town Council of Geneva, and that whereas Calvin earnestly interceded that the sword might be substituted for the stake in the case of Servetus, we know of no interference on the part of Cranmer to have the punishment of Joan of Kent mitigated. Nor did the error of this poor woman tend in the same degree to destroy the foundations of civil order, as did the opinions so zealously propagated by Servetus. The doctrine of toleration had not made greater progress at London than at Geneva. It was the error of that age that it held the judicial law of the Jews, according to which heresy was punishable with death, to be still binding upon States. We find the Pilgrim Fathers acting upon the same belief, and led by it into the same deplorable acts, a century after the time when Calvin had publicly taught that opinions ought not to be punished by the sword unless promulgated to the disturbance of civil society.

The last matter in which we find the archbishop concerned under Edward VI. was the change of the succession to the throne from the Princess Mary,

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 216, 217.

² Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, p. 181.

the eldest daughter of Henry VIII., to Lady Jane, daughter of Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk. This scheme took its rise with the domineering Northumberland, who, having married one of his sons to Lady Jane, hoped thus to bring the crown into his own family. The argument, however, that the duke urged on the king, was that Mary, being a bigoted adherent of the Romish faith, would overthrow the Reformation in England should she succeed to the throne. The king, therefore, in his will set aside his sister, and nominated Lady Jane Grey in her room. The archbishop strongly withstood the proposed alteration, but, persuaded by the king, who ceased not to entreat him, he put his name, the last of all the privy councillors, to the king's will.¹ This was not forgotten by Mary, as we shall see, when she came to reign. The zeal of Edward for the Reformation continued unabated: his piety was not only unfeigned, but deep; but many of the noblemen of his court led lives shamefully immoral and vicious, and there was, alas! no Calvin to smite the evil-doers with the lightnings of his wrath. With the death of Edward VI., in his sixteenth year (July 6, 1553), the night again closes around the Reformation in England.

It is a mighty work, truly, which we have seen accomplished in England. Great in itself, that work appears yet more marvellous when we consider in how short a time it was effected. It was begun and ended in six brief years. When Henry VIII. descended into the tomb in 1547, England was little better than a field of ruins: the colossal fragments of that ancient fabric, which the terrible blows of the king had shivered in pieces, lay all about, and before these obstructions could be removed—time-honoured maxims exploded, inveterate prejudices rooted up, the dense ignorance of all classes dispelled—and the building of the new edifice begun, a generation, it would have been said, must pass away. The fathers have been brought out of the house of bondage, it is the sons who will enter into the land of evangelical liberty. England emancipates her throne, reforms her Church, restores the Lord's Supper to its primitive simplicity and significance, and enters into the heritage of a Scriptural faith, and a Protestant liberty, in the course of a single generation. Such sudden and manifest interposition in the life of nations, is one of the ways by which the great Ruler attests his existence. He puts forth his hand—mighty intellects arise, there is a happy conjunction of favouring circumstances, courage and foresight are given, and nations with a leap reach the goal. So was it in the sixteenth century with the nations that embraced Protestantism; so was it especially with England. This country was among the last to enrol itself in the reforming army; but having started in the race, it rushes to the goal: it crowns itself with the new liberties.

¹ *Strype, Mem. of Cranmer*, pp. 295, 296. Burnet, vol. III., part iii., pp. 315, 316.

There was an advantage in England coming late into the battle. Not unfrequently does a general, when great issues are at stake, and the contest is prolonged and arduous, keep a body of troops in reserve, to appear on the field at the decisive moment, and strike the crowning blow. It was the appearance of England on the great battle-field of the sixteenth century that effectually turned the tide, and gave victory to the movement of the Reformation. The Huguenots had been beaten down; Flanders had sunk under Spain; strength had departed from the once powerful Germany; prisons and scaffolds had thinned the ranks and wasted the strength of the Reformed host in other countries. Spain, under Philip II., had summoned up all her energies to crush, in one mighty blow, Protestantism for ever, when lo! England, which had remained off the field and out of action, as it were, till then, came forward in the fresh youth, and full, unimpaired strength, which the Reform of Cranmer had given her, and under Elizabeth she arrested the advancing tide of an armed Papacy, and kept her soil inviolate to be the head-quarters of Protestantism, and of all those moral, political, and literary forces which are born of it alone. She further secured a new point of departure in ages to come, whence the Reformation might go forth to carry its triumphs round the globe.

CHAPTER XIII.

RESTORATION OF THE POPE'S AUTHORITY IN ENGLAND.

Execution of Lady Jane Grey, &c.—Accession of Mary—Her Character—Conceals her projected Policy—Her Message to the Pope—Unhappiness of the Times—Gardiner and Bonner—Cardinal Pole made Legate—The Pope's Letter to Mary—The Queen begins to Persecute—Cranmer Committed to the Tower—Protestant Ministers Imprisoned—Protestant Bishops and Clergy Deprived—Exodus—Coronation of the Queen—Cranmer Condemned for Treason—The Laws in favour of the Reformation Repealed—A Parliament—The Queen's Marriage with Philip of Spain—Disputation on the Mass at Oxford—Appearance of Latimer, &c.—Restoration of Popish Laws, Customs, &c.—Arrival of Cardinal Pole—Terms of England's Reconciliation to Rome—The Legate solemnly Absolves the Parliament and Convocation—England Reconciled to the Pope.

The project of Northumberland, devised professedly for the protection of the Protestant religion, but in reality for the aggrandisement of his own family, involved in calamity all who took part in it. Lady Jane Grey, after a reign of ten days, was committed to the Tower, thence to pass, after a brief interval, to the block. The duke expiated his ambition on the scaffold, returning in his last hours to the communion of the Church of Rome, after many years passed in the profession of a zealous Protestantism. The Princess Mary was proclaimed queen on the 17th of July, 1553, and her accession was hailed by the great body of the nation with satisfaction, if not with enthusiasm. There was a prevalent conviction that the crown was rightfully hers; for although one Parliament had annulled her right of succession, as well as that of her sister Elizabeth, on the ground of the unlawfulness of the marriage of Henry VIII. with Catherine of Aragon, another Parliament had restored it to her; and in the last will of her father she had been ranked next after Edward, Prince of Wales, heir of the crown. The vast unpopularity of the Duke of Northumberland, whose tyrannical character had caused him to be detested, acted as a foil to the new sovereign; and although the people were not without fears of a change of policy in the matter of religion, they were far indeed from anticipating the vast revolution that was near, and the terrible calamities that were to overspread the kingdom as soon as Mary had seated herself on the throne.

Mary was in her thirty-seventh year when she began to reign. Her person was homely, her temper morose, her understanding narrow, and her disposition gloomy and suspicious. She displayed the Spanish gravity of her mother, in union with the obstinacy of her father, but these evil qualities, were not relieved by the graces of Catherine and the talents of Henry. Her training, instead of refining her character and widening her views,, tended only to strengthen the unhappy conditions with which nature had endowed her. Her education had been conducted mainly by her mother, who had taught her little besides a strong attachment to the Roman Catholic faith. Thus, though

living in England, she had breathed from her youth the air of Spain; and not only was the creed of that country congenial to a disposition naturally melancholy, and rendered still more so by the adverse circumstances of her early years, but her pride engaged her to uphold a religion for which her mother had lived a martyr. No sooner had she mounted the throne than she dispatched a messenger to announce her accession to the Pope, This was on the matter to say, “I am your faithful daughter, and England has returned to the Roman obedience.” Knowing how welcome these tidings would be in the Eternal City, the messenger was bid not to loiter on the road, and he used such expedition that he accomplished in nine days a journey on which an ordinary traveller then usually spent thrice that length of time, and in which Campeggio, when he came to pronounce the divorce, had consumed three months.

But Mary, knowing that the tidings which caused joy in Rome would awaken just the opposite feelings in England, kept her subjects as yet in the dark touching the policy she had determined on pursuing. The Reformers of Suffolk, before espousing her cause, begged to know whether she was willing to permit the religious settlement under Edward VI. to continue. She bade them put their minds at ease; that no man would be molested on the ground of religion; and that she would be perfectly content if allowed to practise in peace her own form of worship. When she entered London, she sent for the Lord Mayor, and assured him that she “meant graciously not to compel or strain other. people’s consciences, otherwise than God shall, as she trusted, put in their hearts a persuasion of the truth.”¹ These soft words opened her way to the throne. No sooner was she seated upon it than she changed her speech; and throwing off all disguise, she left no one in doubt that her settled purpose was the suppression of the Protestant faith.

Without losing a day, she proceeded to undo all that had been effected during the reigns of her father and brother. What Cranmer had found to be hindrances in the work of constructing. Mary found to be helps in the business of overthrowing the Protestant edifice. Vast numbers of the population were still attached to the ancient beliefs; there had been no sufficient time for the light to penetrate the darkness; a full half of the clergy, although conforming outwardly to the Reformed worship, remained Popish at heart. They had been monks and friars: their work, as such, was to chant the Litany and to say mass; and, ignorant of all besides, they made but sorry instructors of the people; and they would have been pensioned off, but for the wretched avarice of the present possessors of the abbey lands, who grudged the stipends they should have to pay to better men. The times were frightfully disordered—the grossest immoralities were common, the wildest opinions were

¹ Burnet, vol III., bk v., p. 322.

afloat, and a spirit of scepticism has ever been found to favour rather than retard the return of superstition. Thus Mary found her work as easy as Cranmer had found his to be difficult, and she pursued it with an ardour that seemed to grudge every hour that passed and left it incomplete.

Her first care was to gather round her fitting instruments to aid her. Gardiner and Bonner were liberated from prison. They had been kept in the Tower during the former reign, not because they were inimical to Protestantism, but because their intrigues made it dangerous to the public peace to leave them at large. These two men were not less intent on the destruction of the Reformed Church, and the restoration of the ancient glories of the Popedom in England, than Mary, but their greater patience and deeper craft taught them to moderate the dangerous precipitancy of the queen. Gardiner was made Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor of England; and Bonner, Bishop of London, in the room of Ridley. A third assistant did Mary summon to her aid, a man of lofty intellect, pure character, and great learning, infinitely superior to the other two with whom he was to be mated. Reginald Pole, a scion of the House of York, had attained the Roman purple, and was at this hour living on the shores of Lake Garda, in Italy, the favourite retreat of the poet Catullus. The queen requested the Pope to send Cardinal Pole to England, with full powers to receive the kingdom into the Roman pale. Julius III. at once named Pole his legate, and dispatched him to England on the august errand of receiving back the repentant nation. The legate was the bearer of a letter from the Pope to the queen, in which he said, "That since she carried the name of the Blessed Virgin, he called on her to say the *Magnificat*, applying it to the late providences of God toward herself."

The impatience of Pole to complete the task which had been put into his hands was as great as that of Mary herself. But Gardiner and Bonner, more cautious though not less in earnest, and fearing that the great project was being pushed on too rapidly, wrote to Charles V. to delay Pole on his way through the Low Countries, till they had prepared the way for his arrival. Pole, much against his will, and not a little to his surprise and chagrin, was detained in Belgium. Meanwhile his coadjutors in England were taking such steps as they thought necessary to accomplish the great end which all three had in view.

All men throughout England, who held any post of influence and were known to be favourable to the Reformation, were now displaced. The last time that Archbishop Cranmer officiated publicly was on the 8th of August, when he read the Protestant burial service at the obsequies of his late master, Edward VI. After this he was ordered to confine himself to his house at Lambeth. A report was spread abroad that he had recanted and said mass in his cathedral. This drew from him what probably his enemies wished, a written declaration of his continued adherence to the Protestant faith, and on this he

was summoned before the Council and committed to the Tower.¹ The archbishop was charged with treason in having subscribed the deed of Edward VI. transferring the succession to Lady Jane Grey, and also with heresy, as contained in the paper given in to the Council. But his great offence, and that which his enemies could not pardon, was the divorce of Henry VIII., of which—forgetful of the proud cardinal lying without epitaph in the Abbey of Leicester—they held Cranmer to be the chief promoter. Ridley, Bishop of London, deprived of his see, had preceded the archbishop to prison, as had also Rogers, for preaching the Protestant sermon at St. Paul’s. Latimer, the most eloquent preacher in all England; Hooper of Gloucester, who preached three or four times every day to his parishioners; Coverdale, Bradford, Saunders, and others were deprived of their liberty during the months of August and September.

A commission was issued to the new Bishops of Winchester, London, Chichester, and Durham—who, in addition to their detestation of Protestantism, were soured in their tempers by what had befallen them in the past reign—empowering them to deprive the Protestant bishops and ministers of their offices, on pretence either of treason, or of heresy, or of marriage. They did their work with zeal and expedition. All the Protestant bishops were deprived, as also numbers of the clergy, and in particular those who were married. Some were deprived who were never cited before the commission; others were cited who were locked up in prison, and deprived because they did not appear; others were extruded on promise of a pension that was never paid; and others were refused their stipend because they were dismissed a day or two before the expiry of the term at which it was payable—“so speedy, so hasty, so without warning,” says one, “were the deprivations.” “Yea, some noblemen and gentlemen were deprived of those lands which the king had given them, without tarrying for any law. Many churches were changed, many altars set up, many masses said, many dirges sung, before the law was repealed. All was done in post-haste.”²

The members of the foreign Protestant congregations established in various parts of England had passports given them, with orders to leave the country. About 1,000 Englishmen, in various disguises, accompanied them in their flight. Cranmer, who had foreseen the bursting of the storm, counselled those whom he deemed in danger to provide for their safety by seeking a foreign asylum. Many acted on his advice, and some 800 exiles were distributed among the cities of Germany and Switzerland. Providence, as the historian Burnet remarks, made the storm abate on the Continent when it began to rage in England, and as England had offered sanctuary to the exiles

¹ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, pp. 305, 306.

² Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, p. 310. Burnet, vol. in., bk. v., pp. 329, 330.

of Germany in their day of trouble, so now the persecuted of England found refuge in Strasburg and Antwerp, in Zurich and Geneva. But the archbishop himself refused to flee, though urged to do so by his friends. He had been too deeply concerned, he said, in the changes of religion under the last reign not to remain and own them. As things stood, this was a voluntary surrender of himself on the altar.¹

On the 1st of October the queen was crowned at the Abbey of Westminster. The usual pardon was proclaimed, but while the ordinary criminals were set free, the prisoners in the Tower and Fleet—that is, the professors of the Gospel, including Grafton and Whitchurch, the printers of the Bible—were exempt from the deed of grace. A few days thereafter, the queen issued a proclamation, saying that she meant to live and die in the religion of her youth, and willed that all her loving subjects should embrace the same.² All who were in favour of the old religion deemed this a sufficient warrant publicly to restore the mass, even before the law had made it legal. Nor had they long to wait for a formal authorisation. This same month, a Parliament was assembled, the elections being so managed that only those should sit in it who would subserviently do the work for which they had been summoned. The first Act of this Parliament was to declare Henry VIII.'s marriage with Queen Catherine lawful, and to lay the blame of the divorce at the door of Cranmer, oblivious of the fact that Gardiner, the chief inspirer of these measures, had been active in promoting the divorce before Cranmer's name was even known to the king. This was followed in November by the indictment at Guildhall of the archbishop for high treason. He was found guilty, and condemned. The queen, whose life he had saved in her youth, pardoned him his treason—a kindness which snatched him from the axe, but reserved him for the fire. By another Act of the Parliament all the laws made respecting religion in the reign of Edward VI. were repealed. A Convocation was at the same time held; but so careful had been the selection of those who were to compose it, that only six had courage to own themselves the friends of the Reformation accomplished in the previous reign. The opening sermon was preached by Bonner's chaplain from the text, "Feed the flock." Among other travesties of Scripture that diversified the oration was the application to the queen of the words of Deborah, "Religion ceased in England until Mary arose—a virgin arose in England."

Meanwhile it was whispered that another serious step was contemplated by the queen. This was a marriage with the emperor's son, Philip of Spain. The news startled the nation, for they saw a foreign despotism coming along with a foreign faith. Even the Parliament begged the queen "not to marry a

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 313, 314. Burnet, vol. in., bk. iv., p. 321.

² *Ibid.*, p. 312.

stranger,” and the queen, not liking to be crossed in her matrimonial projects, deemed the request impertinent, and dismissed the members to their homes. Gardiner, however, hit on means for facilitating the match between Mary and Philip. Having learned that a galleon, freighted with gold from South America, had just arrived in Spain, he wrote to the emperor, saying that he knew not how he could so well bestow a few millions of this wealth as in securing the votes of influential men in England in favour of the match, and thus rescue a nation from heresy, and at the same time add another to the many kingdoms already under the sceptre of Spain. The counsel of the Bishop of Winchester was followed, and the match went prosperously forward.

To give an air of seriousness and deliberation to the changes which were being hurried on with so much determination and levity, it was thought good to have a disputation on the mass at Oxford. The three venerable confessors now in the Tower—Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer—were brought out, and carried down to Oxford, there to be “baited,” as one has said, by the members of both universities, for Cambridge also was summoned to bear its part in the defence of “the Sacrament of the altar.” The opening services—which were of more than usual splendour—being ended, the commissioners, to the number of thirty-three, took their seats before the altar, and then in a little while Cranmer was brought in, guarded by bill-men. “He gave them,” says Strype, “great reverence, and stood with his staff in his hand. They offered him a stool to sit, but he refused.” Weston, the prolocutor, said that the commission had no desire save that of reclaiming the archbishop from his heresy, and handing him a copy of the articles to be debated, requested his opinion upon them. The archbishop, having read them, briefly characterised them as opposed to the truth of Scripture, but promised to give his opinion in writing next day. “His behaviour all this while,” says Strype, “was so grave and modest that many Masters of Art who were not of his mind could not forbear weeping.” The archbishop having been removed, Ridley was brought in. The same articles having been presented to him, he condemned them as false, but desired a copy of them, that he might answer them in writing. Last of all, Latimer was brought in. Having looked at the articles, he said that in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper there was a certain presence, but not such a presence as they affirmed. He could not publicly dispute, he said, by reason of his age and the weakness of his memory; but he would give his opinion on the questions in writing, and begged a copy of them for that purpose. “I cannot here omit,” says Strype, “old Father Latimer’s habit at his first appearance before the commissioners, which was also his habit while he remained a prisoner in Oxford. He held his hat in his hand; he had a kerchief on his head, and upon it a night-cap or two, and a great cap such as townsmen used, with two broad flaps to button under his chin, an old thread-bare Bristow frieze gown, girded to his body with a penny leather girdle, at which

hanged, by a long string of leather, his Testament, and his spectacles without case hanging about his neck upon his breast.”¹ Latimer was then in his eighty-fourth year.

It were useless to narrate the disputation that followed. It was a mock debate, and was intended only as a blind to the nation; and we notice it here for this reason—that it shows us the Fathers of the English Reformation bearing their dying testimony against the doctrine of the bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist, a tenet around which all the other doctrines of Rome cluster, and on which so many of them are built.

The face of England was every day becoming more Popish. All the Protestant preachers had been silenced, and a crowd of ignorant priests rushed in to fill their places. These men abstained from marriage which God has ordained, but not from the uncleanness which God has forbidden. Mass was restored in every parish. Holidays were ordered to be kept. Auricular confession, in Bonner’s diocese, was made obligatory on all above twelve years of age. Worship was performed in an unknown tongue. The Popish symbols were restored in the churches, the streets, and the highways. The higher clergy dazzled the spectators by magnificent processions; the lower clergy quarrelled with their parishioners for candles, eggs on Good Friday, dirge-groats, and fees for saying mass for souls in purgatory. The youth were compelled to attend school, where they were carefully instructed in the Popish faith.

In April, 1554, a new Parliament assembled, and the Spanish gold having done its work, the measures necessary for completing the nation’s subjection to the Pope’s authority were rapidly proceeded with. On the 20th of July, the queen was married to Philip, who henceforward became her chief adviser; and thus the sword of Spain was added to the yoke of Rome. On the 21st of November, Cardinal Pole arrived in England, and immediately entered on his work of reconciling the nation to Rome. He came with powers to give absolution to all heretics who sought it penitently; to pardon all repentant clergymen their irregularities; to soften, by a wise use of the dispensing power, the yoke of ceremonies and fasts to those who had now been for some time unaccustomed to it; and as regarded the abbey lands, which it had been foreseen would be the great difficulty, the legate was instructed to arrange this matter on wonderfully liberal terms. Where he saw fit, he was empowered to permit these lands to be *detained* by their present holders, that “the recovery of the nation and the salvation of souls” might not be obstructed by worldly interests.

These terms being deemed satisfactory on the whole by the Parliament, it proceeded to restore in full dominancy the Papal power. An Act was

¹ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, pp. 335, 336.

passed, repealing all the laws made against the supremacy of the Pope in the reign of Henry VIII.; the power of punishing heretics with death was given back to the bishops; and the work of reconciling the realm to Rome was consummated by the legate's summoning before him the Parliament and the two Houses of Convocation, to receive on their bended knees his solemn absolution of their heresy and schism.¹ The civil and ecclesiastical estates bowed themselves down at the feet of the Pope's representative. Their own infamy and their country's disgrace being now complete, they ordered bonfires to be lighted, and a *Te Deum* to be sung, in token of their joy at beholding the Pontifical tiara rising in proud supremacy above the crown of England.

¹ Strype. *Mem. of Cranmer*. p. 345.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BURNINGS UNDER MARY.

English Protestantism Purified in the Fire—Glory from Suffering—Spies—The First Victims—Transubstantiation the Burning Article—Martyrdom of Rogers—Distribution of Stakes over England—Saunders Burned at Coventry—Hooper at Gloucester—His Protracted Sufferings—Burning of Taylor at Hadleigh—Burning of Ferrar at Carmarthen—England begins to be Roused—Alarm of Gardiner—“Bloody” Bonner—Extent of the Burnings—Martyrdom of Ridley and Latimer at Oxford—A Candle Lighted in England—Cranmer—His Recantation—Revokes his Recantation—His Martyrdom—Number of Victims under Mary—Death of the Queen.

Mournful and melancholy, not without shame, is England's recantation of her Protestantism. Escaped from her bondage, and fairly on her march to liberty, she suddenly faints on the way, and returns into her old fetters. The Pope's authority again flourishes in the realm, and the sword has been replaced in the hands of the bishops, to compel all to fall down and do obeisance to the Roman divinity. How sad a relapse, and how greatly to be deplored and yet it was the tyranny of this cruel time that helped above most things to purify English Protestantism, and to insure its triumph in the end. This fierce tempest drove away from it a cloud of adherents who had weakened it by their flatteries, and disgraced it by their immoral lives. Relieved of this crushing weight, the tree instantly shot up and flourished amid the tempest's rage. The steadfast faith of a single martyr brings more real strength to a cause like Protestantism than any number of lukewarm adherents. And what a galaxy of glorious names did this era gather round the English Reformation! If the skies were darkened, one bright star came forth after another, till the night seemed fairer than the day, and men blessed that darkness that revealed so many glories to them. Would the names of Cranmer, of Ridley, of Latimer, and of Hooper have been what they are but for their stakes? Would they have stirred the hearts of all the generations of their countrymen since, had they died in their palaces? Blot these names from the annals of English Protestantism, and how prosaic would its history be!

With the year 1555 came the reign of the stake. Instructions were sent from court to the justices in all the counties of England, to appoint in each district a certain number of secret informers to watch the population, and report such as did not go to mass, or who failed otherwise to conduct themselves as became good Catholics. The diligence of the spies soon bore fruit in the crowded prisons of the kingdom. Protestant preachers, absentees from church, contemners of the mass, were speedily tracked out and transferred to gaol. The triumvirate which governed England—Gardiner, Bonner, and Pole—might select from the crowd what victims they pleased. Among the

first to suffer were Rogers, Vicar of St. Sepulchre's; Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester; Rowland Taylor, Vicar of Hadleigh in Suffolk; Saunders, Vicar of All Hallows, Bread Street; and Bradford, one of the Prebendaries of St. Paul's. They were brought before Gardiner on the 28th of January, 1555. Their indictment bore reference mainly to transubstantiation and the Pope's supremacy. These two articles had suddenly become, in the eyes of the queen and her bishops, the sum of Christianity, and if one doubted either of them he was not fit to live on English soil. The pretext of treason was not needed now. The men who perished in the fire under Mary were burned simply because they did not, and could not, believe in the corporeal presence in the Lord's Supper. Their examination was short: their judges had neither humanity nor ability to reason with them. "What sayest thou?" was the question put to all of them. "Is it Christ's flesh and blood that is in the Sacrament, or what?" And according to the answer so was the sentence: if the accused said "flesh," he was acquitted; if he answered "bread," he was burned. The five theologians at the bar of Gardiner denied both the mass and the Pope's supremacy; and, as a matter of course, they were condemned to be burned.

Rogers, who had been the associate of Tyndale and Coverdale in the translation of the Scriptures, was suddenly awakened on Monday morning, the 4th of February, and bidden to prepare for the fire. As he was being led to Smithfield he saw his wife in the crowd, waiting for him, with one infant at the breast and ten at her feet. By a look only could he bid her farewell. His persecutors thought, perhaps, to vanquish the father if they had failed to subdue the disciple; but they found themselves mistaken. Leaving his wife and children to Him who is the husband of the widow and the father of the orphan, he went on heroically to the stake. The fagots were ready to be lighted, when a pardon was offered him if he would recant. "That which I have preached," said Rogers, "will I seal with my blood." "Thou art a heretic," said the sheriff. "That shall be known at the last day," responded the confessor. The pardon was removed, and in its room the torch was brought. Soon the flames rose around him. He bore their torment with invincible courage, bathing his hands as it were in the fire while he was burning, and then raising them towards heaven, and keeping them in that posture till they dropped into the fire. So died John Rogers, the proto-martyr of the Marian persecution.

After this beginning there was no delay in the terrible work. In order to strike a wider terror into the nation, it was deemed expedient to distribute these stakes over all England. If the flocks in the provincial towns and rural parts saw their pastors chained to posts and blazing in the fires, they would be filled with horror of their heresy—so the persecutor thought. It did not occur to him that the people might be moved to pity their sufferings, to admire their heroism, and to detest the tyranny which had doomed them to this awful death. To witness these dreadful spectacles was a different thing from

merely hearing of them, and a thrill of horror ran through the nation—not at the heresy of the martyrs, but at the ferocious and blood-thirsty cruelty of the bigots who were putting them to death. On the 8th of February, Laurence Saunders was sent down to Coventry—where his labours had been discharged—to be burned. The stake was set up outside the town, in a park already consecrated by the sufferings of the Lollards. He walked to it bare-footed, attired in an old gown, and on his way he threw himself twice or thrice on the ground and prayed. Being come to the stake, he folded it in his arms, and kissing it, said, “Welcome the cross of Christ; welcome the life everlasting!” “The fire being put to him,” says the martyrologist, “full sweetly he slept in the Lord.”¹

Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, had been the companion of Rogers at the tribunal, and he expected to have been his companion at the stake; but when Rogers went his way to the fire, Hooper was remanded to his cell. On the evening of that day he was told that he was to undergo his sentence at Gloucester. His enemies had done him unwittingly the greatest kindness. To die for Christ anywhere was sweet to him; but to give his blood in the presence of those to whom he had preached Him, and whose faith he would thereby confirm, made him leap for joy. Now would he crown his ministry by this the greatest of all the sermons he had ever preached. Next morning attended by six of the queen’s guards, he began his journey before it was light. On the third day he arrived at Gloucester, where he was met at the gates by a crowd of people bathed in tears. A day’s respite being allowed him, he passed it in fasting and prayer, and in bidding adieu to friends. He retired early to rest, slept soundly for some time, and then rose to prepare for death. At eight o’clock on the 9th of February he was led out. The stake had been planted close to the end of the cathedral, in which he had so often preached to the very persons who were now gathered to see him die. It was market-day, and a crowd of not less than 7,000 had assembled to witness the last moments of the martyr, many climbing up into the boughs of an elm that overshadowed the spot. Hooper did not address the assemblage, for his persecutors had extorted a promise of silence by the barbarous threat of cutting out his tongue, should he attempt to speak at the stake; but his meekness, the more than usual serenity of his countenance, and the courage with which he bore his prolonged and awful sufferings, bore nobler testimony to his cause than any words he could have uttered.

He knelt down, and a few words of his prayer were heard by those of the crowd who were nearest to the stake:—“Lord, thou art a gracious God, and a merciful Redeemer. Have mercy upon me, most miserable and wretched offender, after the multitude of thy mercies and the greatness of thy

¹ Fox, vol. vi., p. 628.

compassion. Thou art ascended into heaven: receive me to be partaker of thy joys, where thou sittest in equal glory with the Father.” The prayers of Bishop Hooper were ended. A box was then brought and laid at his feet. He had but to stoop and lift it up and walk away from the stake, for it held his pardon. He bade them take it away. The hoop having been put round his middle, the torch was now brought, amid the sobbings and lamentations of the crowd. But the fagots were green, and burned slowly, and the wind being boisterous, the flame was blown away from him, and only the lower parts of his body were burned. “For God’s sake, good people,” said the martyr, “let me have more fire! “A few dry fagots were brought; still the pile did not kindle. Wiping his eyes with his hands, he ejaculated, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me, and receive my soul!” A third supply of fuel was brought, and after some time a stronger flame arose. He continued praying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” till his tongue was swollen and his lips had shrunk from the gums. He smote upon his breast with both his hands, and when one of his arms dropped off, he kept beating on his breast with the other, “the fat, water, and blood oozing out at the finger-ends.” The fire had now gathered strength; the struggle, which had lasted nearly three-quarters of an hour, was drawing to a close; “his hand did cleave fast to the iron upon his breast;” and now, bowing forwards, he yielded up the ghost.¹

On the same day on which Laurence Saunders was burned at Coventry, a similar tragedy was being enacted at Hadleigh in Suffolk. Dr. Rowland Taylor, one of Cranmer’s chaplains, had discharged the duties of that cure with a zeal, an ability, and a kindliness of disposition which had endeared him to all his parishioners. One day, in the summer of 1554, he heard the bells of his church suddenly begin to ring. Hastily entering the edifice, he saw to his astonishment a man with shaven crown, dressed in canonicals, at the altar, preparing to say mass, while a number of armed men stood round him with drawn swords to defend him. Dr. Taylor, on remonstrating against this intrusion, was forcibly thrust out of the church. He was summoned before Gardiner, who railed on him, calling him a knave, a traitor, and a heretic, and ended by throwing him into prison. The old laws against heresy not having as yet been restored, Taylor, with many others, was kept in gaol until matters should be ripe for setting up the stake. Meanwhile the prisoners were allowed free intercourse among themselves. Emptied of their usual occupants, and filled with the god-fearing people of England, “the prisons,” as Fox states, “were become Christian schools and churches;” so that if one wished to hear good, he crept stealthily to the grated window of the confessor’s dungeon, and listened to his prayers and praises. At last, in the beginning of 1555, the stake was restored, and now Taylor and his companions, as

¹ Fox, vol. vi., pp. 656–659.

we have already said, were brought before Gardiner. Sentence of death was passed upon the faithful pastor. On the way down to Suffolk, where that sentence was to be executed, his face was the brightest, and his conversation the most cheerful, of all in the company. A most touching parting had he with his wife and children by the way; but now the bitterness of death was past. When he arrived in his parish, he found a vast crowd, composed of the poor whom he had fed, the orphans to whom he had been a father, and the villagers whom he had instructed in the Scriptures, waiting for him on the common where he was to die. "When they saw his reverend and ancient face, with a long white beard, they burst out with weeping tears, and cried, 'Jesus Christ strengthen thee and help thee, good Dr. Taylor; the Holy Ghost comfort thee!'" He essayed to speak to the people, but one of the guard thrust a tip-staff into his mouth. Having undressed for the fire, he mounted the pile, and kneeled down to pray. While so engaged, a poor woman stepped out from the crowd, and kneeling by his side, prayed with him. The horsemen threatened to ride her down, but nothing could drive her away. The martyr, standing unmoved, with hands folded and eyes raised to heaven, endured the fire.¹

Ferrar, Bishop of St. David's, had been examined before Gardiner at the same time with those whose deaths we have just recorded, but his condemnation was deferred. He was sent down to Wales, and on the 26th of March he was brought before the Romish bishop who had been appointed to his see, and condemned. On the 30th he was burned on the south side of the cross at the market-place of Carmarthen. Fox records a touching proof of the steadfastness with which he suffered. A young man came to Ferrar to express his sympathy with him at the painful death he was about to undergo. Relying on the extraordinary support vouchsafed to those who are called to seal their testimony with their blood, Ferrar gave him this sign, that he would stand unmoved amidst the flames. "And as he said, so he right well performed," says Fox; "he never moved."

Men contrasted the leniency with which the Romanists had been treated under Edward VI., with the ferocious cruelty of Mary towards the adherents of the Reformed faith. When Protestantism was in the ascendant, not one Papist had been put to death for his religion. A few priests had been deprived of their benefices; the rest had saved their livings by conforming. But now that Popery had risen to power, no one could be a Protestant but at the peril of his life. The highest and most venerated dignitaries of the Church, the men of greatest learning and most exemplary virtue in the nation, were dragged to prison and burned at stakes. The nation at first was stupefied, but now amazement was giving place to indignation; and Gardiner, who had expected to see all men cowering in terror, and ready to fall in with his measures,

¹ Fox, vol. vi., pp. 690–699.

began to be alarmed when he saw a tempest of wrath springing up, and about to sweep over the land. Did he therefore desist from his work of burning men or did he counsel his royal mistress to abandon a project which could be carried through only at the cost of the destruction of the best of her subjects? By no means. The device to which he had recourse was to put forward a colleague, a man yet more brutal than himself—Bonner, surnamed the Bloody—to do the chief part of the work, while he fell a little into the background. Edmund Bonner was the natural son of a richly beneficed priest in Cheshire, named Savage; and the son ought never to have borne another name than that which he inherited from his father. Educated at Oxford, he was appointed archdeacon at Leicester under Henry VIII., by whom he was employed in several embassies. In 1539 he was advanced to be Bishop of London by Cromwell and Cranmer, who believed him to be, as he pretended, a friend to the Reformation.

Upon the enactment of the law of the Six Articles, he immediately “erected his crest and displayed his fangs and talons.” He had the thirst of a leech for blood. Fox, who is blamed for “persecuting persecutors with ugly pictures”—though certainly Fox is not to blame if ferocity and sensuality print their uncomely lineaments on their votaries—describes him as the possessor of a great, overgrown, and bloated body. Both Gardiner and Bonner, the two most conspicuous agents in the awful tragedies of the time, had been supporters of the royal supremacy, which formed a chief count in the indictment of the men whom they were now ruthlessly destroying.

The devoted, painstaking, and scrupulously faithful Fox has recorded the names and deaths of the noble army of sufferers with a detail that renders any lengthy narrative superfluous; and next to the service rendered to England by the martyrs themselves, is that which has been rendered by their martyrologist. Over all England, from the eastern counties to Wales on the west, and from the midland shires to the shores of the English Channel, blazed these baleful fires. Both sexes, and all ages and conditions, the boy of eight and the man of eighty, the halt and the blind, were dragged to the stake and burned, sometimes singly, at other times in dozens. England till now had put but small price upon the Reformation—it knew not from what it had been delivered; but these fires gave it some juster idea of the value of what Edward VI. and Cranmer had done for it. Popery was now revealing itself—writing its true character in eternal traces on the hearts of the English people.

Before dropping the curtain on what is at once the most melancholy and the most glorious page of our history, there are three martyrs before whose stakes we must pause. We have briefly noticed the disputation which Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer were compelled to hold with the commission at Oxford, in September, 1554. The commission pronounced all three obstinate heretics, and sentenced them to be burned. Herein the commission was guilty

of the almost unexampled atrocity of sentencing men to suffer under a law which had yet to be enacted; and till the old penal statutes should be restored, the condemned were remanded to prison.¹ In October of the following year, an order was issued for the execution of Ridley and Latimer. The night before his death Ridley supped with the family of the mayor. At table no shade of the stake darkened his face or saddened his talk. He invited the hostess to his marriage; her reply was a burst of tears, for which he chid her as if she were unwilling to be present on so joyous an occasion, saying at the same time, "My breakfast may be sharp, but I am sure my supper will be most sweet." When he rose from table his brother offered to watch with him all night. "No, no," replied he, "I shall go to bed and, God willing, shall sleep as quietly tonight as ever I did in my life."

The place of execution was a ditch by the north wall of the town, over against Baliol College.² Ridley came first, dressed in his black furred gown and velvet cap, walking between the mayor and an alderman. As he passed Bocardo, where Cranmer was confined, he looked up, expecting to see the archbishop at the window, and exchange final adieus with him. Cranmer, as Fox informs us, was then engaged in debate with a Spanish friar, but learning soon after that his fellow-prisoners had passed to the stake, the archbishop hurried to the roof of his prison, whence he beheld their martyrdom, and on his knees begged God to strengthen them in their agony, and to prepare him for his own. On his way to the stake, Ridley saw Latimer following him—the old man making what haste he could. Ridley ran and, folding him in his arms, kissed him, saying, "Be of good heart, brother; for God will either assuage the fury of the flames, or else strengthen us to abide it." They kneeled down and prayed, each by himself, afterwards they talked together a little while, "but what they said," says Fox, "I can learn of no man." After the sermon usual on such occasions, they both undressed for the fire. Latimer, stripped by his keeper, stood in a shroud. With his garments he seemed to have put off the burden of his many years. His bent figure instantly straightened; withered age was transformed into what seemed vigorous manhood; and standing bolt upright, he looked "as comely a father as one might lightly behold."³

All was now ready. An iron chain had been put round the martyrs, and a staple driven in to make it firm. The two were fastened to one stake. A lighted fagot was brought and laid at Ridley's feet. Then Latimer addressed his companion in words still fresh—after three centuries—as on the day on which they were uttered: "BE OF GOOD COMFORT, MASTER RIDLEY, AND PLAY THE

¹ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, pp. 340, 341.

² Now converted into a street; the exact spot is believed to be near the corner of Broad Street, where ashes and burned sticks have been dug up.

³ Fox.

MAN: WE SHALL THIS DAY LIGHT SUCH A CANDLE, BY GOD'S GRACE, IN ENGLAND, AS I TRUST SHALL NEVER BE PUT OUT."

The flames blazed up rapidly and fiercely. Latimer bent towards them, as if eager to embrace those ministers, terrible only in appearance, which were to give him exit from a world of sorrow into the bliss eternal, Stroking his face with his hands, he speedily, and with little pain, departed. Not so Ridley. His sufferings were protracted and severe. The fagots, piled high and solidly around him, stifled the flames, and his lower extremities were burned, while the upper part of his body was untouched, and his garments on one side were hardly scorched. "I cannot burn," he said; "let the fire come to me." At last he was understood; the upper fagots were pulled away; the flames rose; Ridley leaned towards them; and crying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" his body turned over the iron chain, the legs being already consumed, and he fell at Latimer's feet.

Cranmer still lived, but he was a too conspicuous member of the Protestant host, and had acted a too prominent part under two monarchs, not to be marked out for the stake. But before receiving the crown of martyrdom, that lofty head was first to be bowed low in humiliation. His enemies had plotted to disgrace him before leading him to the stake, lest the glory of such a victim should exalt the cause for which he was about to be offered in sacrifice. The archbishop was removed from the prison to the house of the Dean of Christ Church. Crafty men came about him; they treated him with respect, professed great kindness, were desirous of prolonging his life for future service, hinted at a quiet retirement in the country. The Pope's supremacy was again the law of the land, they said, and it was no great matter to promise submission to the law in this respect, and "to take the Pope for chief head of this Church of England, so far as the laws of God, and the laws and customs of this realm, will permit." He might himself dictate the words of this submission. The man who had stood erect amid the storms of Henry VIII.'s time, and had oftener than once ignored the wishes and threatenings of that wayward monarch and followed the path of duty, fell by the arts of these seducers. He signed the submission demanded of him. The queen and Cardinal Pole were overjoyed at the fall of the archbishop. His recantation would do more than all their stakes to suppress the Reformation in England. None the less did they adhere steadfastly to their purpose of burning him, though they carefully concealed their intentions from himself. On the morning of the 21st of March, 1556, they led him out of prison, and preceded by the mayor and alderman, and a Spanish friar on either side of him, chanting penitential psalms, they conducted him to St. Mary's Church, there to make his recantation in public. The archbishop, having already felt the fires that consume the soul, dreaded the less those that consume the body, and suspecting what his enemies meditated, had made his resolve. He walked onward, the noblest

of all the victims, his conductors thought, whom they had yet immolated. The procession entered the church, the friars hymning the prayer of Simeon. They placed Cranmer on a stage before the pulpit. There, in the “garments and ornaments “of an archbishop, “only in mockery everything was of canvas and old clouts,”¹ sat the man who had lately been the first subject of the realm, “an image of sorrow, the dolour of his heart bursting out at his eyes in tears.” Dr. Cole preached the usual sermon, and when it was ended, he exhorted the archbishop to clear himself of all suspicion of heresy by making a public confession. “I will do it,” said Cranmer, “and that with a good will.” On this he rose up, and addressed the vast concourse, declaring his abhorrence of the Romish doctrines, and expressing his steadfast adherence to the Protestant faith. “And now,” said he, “I come to the great thing that so much troubleth my conscience, more than anything that ever I did or said in my whole life.” He then solemnly revoked his recantation, adding, “Forasmuch as my hand offended, writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished therefor; for may I come to the fire, it shall be first burned.”

Hardly had he uttered the words when the Romanists, filled with fury, plucked him violently from the scaffold, and hurried him off to the stake. It was already set up on the spot where Ridley and Latimer had suffered. He quickly put off his garments, and stood in his shroud, his feet bare, his head bald, his beard long and thick—for he had not shaved since the death of Edward VI.—a spectacle to move the heart of friend and foe, “at once the martyr and the penitent.” As soon as the fire approached him, he stretched out his right arm, and thrust his hand into the flames, saying, “That unworthy right hand!” He kept it in the fire, excepting that he once wiped with it the drops from his brow, till it was consumed, repeatedly exclaiming, “That unworthy right hand!” The fierce flame now surrounded him, but he stood as unmoved as the stake to which he was bound. Raising his eyes to heaven, and breathing out the prayer of Stephen, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” he expired.² No marble tomb contains his ashes, no cathedral tablet records his virtues, no epitaph preserves his memory; nor are such needed. As Strype has well said, “His martyrdom is his monument.”

Between the 4th of February, 1555, when Rogers, Vicar of St. Sepulchre’s, was burned at Smithfield, and the 15th of November, 1558, when five martyrs were burned in one fire at Canterbury, just two days before the death of the queen, not fewer than 288 persons, according to the estimate of Lord Burleigh, were burned alive at the stake. Besides these, numbers perished by imprisonment, by torture, and by famine. Mary did all this with the full approval and sanction of her conscience. Not a doubt had she that in burning

¹ Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, p. 375.

² Fox. Strype, *Mem. of Cranmer*, p. 371 *et seq.*

her Protestant subjects she was doing God service. Her conscience did indeed reproach her before her death, but for what? Not for the blood she had shed, but because she had not done her work more thoroughly, and in particular for not having made full restitution of the abbey lands and other property of the Church which had been appropriated by the crown. Her morose temper, and the estrangement of her husband, were now hastening her to the grave; but the nearer she drew to it, she but the more hastened to multiply her victims, and her last days were cheered by watching the baleful fires that lit up her realm, and made her reign notorious English history.

CHAPTER XV.

ELIZABETH—RESTORATION OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH.

Joy at Mary's Death—A Dark Year—The Accession of Elizabeth—Instant Arrest of Persecution—Protestant Policy—Difficulties—The Litany and Gospels in English—Preaching Forbidden—Cecil and Bacon—Parliament—Restoration of the Royal Supremacy—Act of Uniformity—Alterations in the Prayer Book—The Sacrament—Disputation between Romish and Protestant Theologians—Excommunication Delayed—The Papists Frequent the Parish Churches—The Pulpit—Stone Pulpit at Paul's Cross—The Sermons—Visitation Articles—Additional Homilies—Cranmer, &c., Dead, yet Speaking—Return of the Marian Exiles—Jewell—New Bishops—Preachers sent through the Kingdom—Progress of England—The Royal Supremacy.

Queen Mary breathed her last on the morning of the 17th November, 1558. On the same day, a few hours later, died Cardinal Pole, who with Carranza, her Spanish confessor, had been Mary's chief counsellor in those misdeeds which have given eternal infamy to her reign. The Parliament was then in session, and Heath, Archbishop of York, and Chancellor of England, notified to the House the death of the Queen. The members started to their feet, and shouted out, "God save Queen Elizabeth!" The news of Mary's decease speedily circulated through London: in the afternoon every steeple sent forth its peal of joy: in the evening bonfires were lighted, and the citizens, setting tables in the street, and bringing forth bread and wine, "did eat, drink, and rejoice." Everywhere, as the intelligence travelled down to the towns and counties of England, the bells were set a-ringing, and men, as they met on the highways, grasped each other by the hand, and exchanged mutual congratulations.

The nation awoke as from a horrible nightmare; it saw the troop of dismal spectres which had filled the darkness taking flight, and a future approaching in which there would no more be spies prowling from house to house, officers dragging men and women to loathsome gaols, executioners torturing them on racks, and tying them with iron chains to stakes and burning them; no more Latin Litanies, muttered masses, and shaven priests; it saw a future in which the Bible would be permitted to be read, in which the Gospel would again be preached in the mother tongue of old England, and quiet and prosperity would again bless the afflicted land.

There is no gloomier year in the history of England than the closing one in the reign of Mary. A concurrence of diverse calamities, which mostly had their root in the furious bigotry of the queen, afflicted the country. Intelligence was decaying, morals were being corrupted, through the introduction of Spanish maxims and manners, commerce languished, for the nation's energy was relaxed, and confidence was destroyed. Drought and tempests had

induced scarcity, and famine brought plague in its rear; strange maladies attacked the population, a full half of the inhabitants fell sick, many towns and villages were almost depopulated, and a sufficient number of labourers could not be found to reap the harvest. In many places the grain, instead of being carried to the barn-yard, stood and rotted in the field. To domestic calamities were added foreign humiliations. Calais was lost in this reign, after having been two centuries in the possession of the English crown. The kingdom was becoming a satrapy of Spain, and its prestige was year by year sinking in the eyes of foreign Powers. "It was visible," says Burnet, "that the providence of God made a very remarkable difference, in all respects, between this poor, short, and despised reign, and the glory, the length, and the prosperity of the succeeding reign."¹

When Elizabeth ascended the throne, the gloom instantly passed from the realm of Great Britain. The prisons were opened, the men whom Mary had left to be burned were released, the fires which were blazing all over England were extinguished; and the machinery of persecution which up to that moment had been vigorously worked, inspiring fear and terror in the heart of every friend of religious liberty, was arrested and stood still. The yoke of the tyrant and the bigot now rent from off the nation's neck, England rose from the dust, and rekindling the lamp of truth, started on a career of political freedom and commercial prosperity, in which, with a few exceptional periods, there has been no pause from that day to this.

When Elizabeth received the intelligence of her sister's death and her own accession she repaired to the Tower, as was the ancient custom of the sovereigns of England before being crowned. On crossing its threshold, remembering that but a few years before she had entered it as a prisoner, with little hope of ever leaving it save for the scaffold, she fell on her knees, and gave thanks to God for preserving her life in the midst of so many enemies and intrigues as had surrounded her during her sister's life-time. As she passed through the streets of London on her coronation-day, a copy of the Bible was presented to her, which she graciously received. The people, whom the atrocities of the past reign had taught to value the Reformation more highly than before, hailed this as a token that with the new sovereign was returning the religion of the Bible.

Elizabeth ascended the throne with the sincere purpose of restoring the Protestant religion; but the work was one of immense difficulty, and it was only in the exercise of most consummate caution and prudence that she could hope to conduct it to a successful issue. On all sides she was surrounded by great dangers. The clergy of her realm were mostly Papists. In the eyes of the Marian bishops her title was more than doubtful, as the daughter of one

¹ Burnet, vol. III, bk. v., p. 394; Lond., 1820.

whose claim to be the wife of Henry VIII. they disputed. The learned divines and eloquent preachers who had been the strength of Protestantism in the reign of her brother Edward, had perished at the stake or had been driven into exile. Abroad the dangers were not less great. A Protestant policy would expose her to the hostility of the Popish Powers, as she very soon felt. The Duke of Feria, the Spanish ambassador, let her understand that his master was the Catholic king, and was not disposed to permit, if his power could prevent, the establishment of heresy in England.¹ But her chief difficulty was with the court of Rome. When her accession was intimated to Paul IV., he declared “that she could not succeed, being illegitimate; and that the crown of England being a fief of the Popedom, she had been guilty of great presumption in assuming it without his consent.”

Elizabeth laboured under this further disadvantage, that if on the one hand her enemies were numerous, on the other her friends were few. There was scarcely to be found a Protestant of tried statesmanship and patriotism whom she could summon to her aid. The queen was alone, in a sort. Her exchequer was poorly replenished; she had no adequate force to defend her throne should it be assailed by rebellion within, or by war abroad. Nevertheless, in spite of all these hazards the young queen resolved to proceed in the restoration of the Protestant worship. That her advance was slow, that her acts were sometimes inconsistent, and even retrogressive, that she excited the hopes and alarmed the fears of both parties by turns, is not much to be wondered at when the innumerable perils through which she had to thread her path are taken into account.

The first alteration which she ventured upon was to enjoin the Litany and the Epistle and Gospel to be read in English, and to forbid the elevation of the Host. This was little, yet it was a turning of the face away from Rome. Presuming on the queen’s reforming disposition, some of the more zealous began to pull down the images: Elizabeth bade them hold their hand; there were to be no more changes in worship till the Parliament should assemble. It was summoned for the 27th of January, 1559. Meanwhile all preaching was forbidden, and all preachers were silenced, except such as might obtain a special licence from the bishop or the Council. This prohibition has been severely censured, and some have seen in it an assumption of power “to open and shut heaven, so that the heavenly rain of the evangelical doctrine should not fall but according to her word;”² but this is to forget the altogether exceptional condition of England at that time. The pulpits were in the possession of the Papists, and the use they would have made of them would have been to defend the doctrine of transubstantiation, and to excite popular odium

¹ Burnet, vol. III, bk. vi., p. 396.

² Professor Bruce, *The Ecclesiastical Supremacy Annexed to the English Crown*, p. 34; Edin., 1802.

against the queen and the measures of her Government. Instead of sermons, which would have been only apologies for Popery, or incitements to sedition, it was better surely to restrict the preachers to the reading of the homilies, by which a certain amount of much-needed Scriptural knowledge would be diffused amongst the people.

The same cautious policy governed Elizabeth in her choice of councillors. She did not dismiss the men who had served under her sister, but she neutralised their influence by joining others with them, favourable to the Reformation, and the superiority of whose talents would secure their ascendancy at the council-board. Especially she called to her side William Cecil and Nicholas Bacon, two men of special aptitude. The first she made Secretary of State, and the second Lord Keeper, in the room of Archbishop Heath, who resigned the post of Chancellor. The choice was a happy one, and gave early proof of that rare insight which enabled Elizabeth to select with unerring judgment, from the statesmen around her, those who were best able to serve the country, and most worthy of her confidence. Cecil and Bacon had lived in times that taught them to be wary, and, it may be, to dissemble. Both were sincerely attached to the Reformed faith; but both feared, equally with the queen, the danger of a too rapid advance. Of large comprehension and keen foresight, both efficiently and faithfully served the mistress who had done them the honour of this early choice.

The Parliament met on the day appointed—the 27th of January, 1559. The session was commenced with a unanimous declaration that Queen Elizabeth was “the lawful, undoubted, and true heir to the crown.” The laws in favour of the Protestant religion which had been passed under Henry VIII. and Edward VI., but which Mary had abolished, were re-enacted. Convocation, according to its usual practice, assembled at the same time with Parliament. Foreseeing the reforming policy which the Commons were likely to adopt, the members of Convocation lost no time in passing resolutions declaring their belief in transubstantiation, and maintaining the exclusive right of the clergy to determine points of faith. This was on the matter to tell Parliament that the Pope’s authority in England, as re-established by Mary, was not to be touched, and that the ancient religion must dominate in England. The Commons, however, took their own course. The Parliament abolished the authority of the Pope. The royal supremacy was restored; it being enacted that all in authority, civil and ecclesiastical, should swear that they acknowledged the queen to be “the supreme governor in all causes, as well ecclesiastical as temporal, within her dominions; that they renounced all foreign power and jurisdiction, and should bear the queen faith and true allegiance.”¹ The same Parliament passed (April 28th, 1559) the Act of Uniformity of the

¹ Act 1 Elizabeth, cap. 1.

Book of Common Prayer, enjoining all ministers “to say and use the matins, even-song, celebration of the Lord’s Supper, &c., as authorised by Parliament in the 5th and 6th year of Edward VI.” A few alterations and additions were made in the Prayer Book as finally enacted under Elizabeth, the most important of which was the introduction into it of the two modes of dispensing the Sacrament which had been used under Edward VI., the one at the beginning and the other at the close of his reign. The words to be used at the delivery of the elements—as prescribed in the first Prayer Book of Edward—were these:— “The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.” The words prescribed in the second Prayer Book were as follow:—“Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.” The communicant might interpret the first form, if he chose, in the sense of a corporeal presence; the second excluded that idea, and conveyed no meaning save that of a spiritual presence, to be apprehended by faith. Both formulas were henceforth conjoined in the Communion Service.

The tide of Reformation, though flowing slowly, was yet advancing too fast for the clergy, and they strove to stem it—or rather to turn it back—by insisting on a reply to their resolutions approving of transubstantiation, sent to the House of Lords, and also presented to the queen. They at last succeeded in obtaining an answer, but one they neither expected nor desired. A public debate on the points at issue was ordered to be held on the last day of March, in the Abbey of Westminster. Four bishops, and four other divines of the Roman school, were to dispute with an equal number of theologians on the Protestant side. Cole, Dean of St. Paul’s, figured prominently in the debate. “He delivered himself,” says Jewell, “with great emotion, stamping with his feet, and putting himself as in convulsions.” The dean justified the practice of performing worship in a dead language, by affirming that the apostles divided their field of labour into two great provinces—the Eastern and the Western. The Western, in which Latin only was spoken, had fallen to the lot of Peter and Paul; the Eastern, in which Greek only was to be used, had been assigned to the rest of the apostles. But, inasmuch as the West had descended to themselves through Peter and Paul, it became them to worship in the ancient and only legitimate language of that province. It was not the least necessary, Cole argued, that the people should understand the worship in which they joined, it was even to their advantage that they did not, for the mystery of an unknown tongue would make the worship venerable in their eyes and greatly heighten their devotion. Fecknam, Abbot of Westminster, defended the cause of the monastic orders by reference to the sons of the prophets and the Nazarites among the Jews, and the yet weightier example of Christ and his apostles, who, he maintained, were monks. The Lord Keeper, who presided, had frequent occasion to reprove the bishops for transgressing the

rules of the debate. The Bishops of Winchester and Lincoln angrily retorted by threatening to excommunicate the queen, and were committed to the Tower. The Popish cause lost by the disputation, and the Parliament gathered courage to return with bolder steps to that order of things which had existed under Edward VI.¹

Elizabeth, having determined upon a Protestant policy, saw every day the difficulties vanishing from her path, and new and unexpected aids coming to her assistance. The task was not so overwhelmingly difficult after all! Two sagacious statesmen had placed their genius and their experience at her service. This was her first encouragement. Her way had been smoothed, moreover, by another and a very different ally. Death had been busy in the nation of late; and, as if proceeding on system, the destroyer had levelled his shafts against the more influential and zealous upholders of Popery. While the enemies of the queen were thus being thinned at home, abroad the aspect of the horizon was less threatening than when she ascended the throne. The death of Francis II., and the distractions that broke out during the minority of Charles IX., weakened the Popish combination on the Continent. Paul IV., loth to think that England was finally lost, and cherishing the hope of reclaiming Elizabeth from her perverse course by mild measures, forbore to pronounce sentence of excommunication—to which he held her liable for the offence of intruding into a fief of the Papal See without his consent. His successor in the Pontifical chair, Pius IV., pursued the same moderate course. This greatly facilitated Elizabeth's government with her Popish subjects. Her right to her crown had not been formally annulled. The Romanists of her realm had not been discharged of their allegiance, and they continued to frequent the parish churches and join in the Protestant worship. Thus for eleven years after Elizabeth's accession the land had rest, and, in the words of Fuller, England "was of one language and one speech." The delay in the excommunication never yielded the fruits which the Popes expected to gather from it: England and its queen, instead of returning to the Roman obedience, went on their way, and when at last Pius V. fulminated the sentence which had so long hung above the head of the English monarch it was little heeded; the sway of Elizabeth had by this time been in some degree consolidated, and many who eleven years before had been Papists, were now converts to the Protestant faith.

Amid many injunctions and ordinances that halted between the two faiths, and which tended to conserve the old superstition, several most important practical steps were taken to diffuse a knowledge of Protestant truth amongst the people. There was a scarcity of both books and preachers, and the efforts of the queen and her wise ministers were directed to the object of

¹ Burnet, vol. III., bk. vi., pp. 402–405.

remedying that deficiency. The preacher was even more necessary than the book, for in those days few people could read, and the pulpit was the one great vehicle for the diffusion of intelligence. At St. Paul's Cross stood a stone pulpit, which was a centre of attraction in Popish times, being occupied every Sunday by a priest who descanted on the virtue of relics and the legends of the saints. After the Reformation this powerful engine was seized and worked in the interests of Protestantism. The weekly assemblies around it continued, and increased, but now the crowd gathered to listen to the exposition of the Scriptures, or the exposure of Popish error, by some of the most eminent of the Protestant ministers. The court was often present, and generally the sermon was attended by the Lord Mayor and aldermen. This venerable pulpit had served the cause of truth in the days of Edward VI.: it was not less useful in the times of Elizabeth. Many of the sermons preached from it were published, and may be read at this day with scarcely less delight than was experienced by those who heard them; for it is the prerogative of deep emotion—as it is of high genius—to express thought in a form so beautiful that it will live for ever.

The next step of Elizabeth, with her statesmen and clergy, was to issue injunctions and visitation articles. These injunctions sanctioned the demolition of images and the removal of altars, and the setting up of tables in their room. The clergy were required—at least four times in the year—to declare that the Pope's supremacy was abolished, to preach against the use of images and relics, against beads in prayer, and lighted candles at the altar or Communion table, and faithfully to declare the Word of God. Every minister was enjoined to catechise on every second Sunday—for half an hour at least, before evening prayer—in the Ten Commandments, the Articles of the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. Curates were "to read distinctly," and such as were but "mean readers" were to peruse "once or twice beforehand the chapters and homilies to be read in public, to the intent they may read to the better understanding of the people." Low indeed must both teachers and taught have sunk when such injunctions were necessary! Elizabeth and her Government found that the ignorance which Popery creates is one of its strongest defences, and the greatest of all the impediments which have to be surmounted by those who labour for the emancipation of nations fallen under the dominion of Rome.

It was against that ignorance that Elizabeth and her councillors continued to direct their assaults. The next step, accordingly, was the publication of the Book of Homilies. We have already said that in the reign of Edward VI. twelve homilies were published, and appointed to be read in those churches in which the ministers were disqualified to preach. The clergy, the majority of whom were secretly friendly to the Romish creed, contrived to evade the Act at the same time that they professed to obey it. They indeed read the

homily, but in such a way as to frustrate its object. The minister “would,” says Latimer, “so hawk and chop it, that it were as good for them to be without it, for any word that could be understood.” Edward’s Book of Homilies, which contained only twelve short sermons, was to be followed by a second book, which had also been prepared by the same men—Cranmer, Latimer, and others; but before it could be published Edward died. But now the project was revived. Soon after Elizabeth ascended the throne, the first Book of Homilies was re-published, and along with it came the second series, which had been prepared but never printed. This last book contained twenty sermons, and both sets of homilies were appointed to be read from the pulpit. No more effectual plan could have been adopted for the diffusion of Scriptural knowledge, and this measure was as necessary now as in the days of Edward. A great retrogression in popular intelligence had taken place under Mary; the priests of Elizabeth’s time were as grossly ignorant as those of Edward’s; the majority were Papists at heart, and if allowed to preach they would have fed their flocks with fable and Romish error. Those only who were known to possess a competent knowledge of the Word of God were permitted to address congregations in their own words; the rest were commanded to make use of the sermons which had been prepared for the instruction of the nation. These homilies were golden cups, filled with living water, and when the people of England pressed them to their parched lips, it well became them to remember whose were the hands that had replenished these vessels from the Divine fountain. The authors of the homilies—Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer—though dead, were yet speaking. They had perished at the stake, but now they were preaching by a thousand tongues to the people of England. Tyrants had done to them as they listed; but, risen from the dead, these martyrs were marching before the nation in its glorious exit from its house of bondage.

The mere reading of the Homilies Sunday after Sunday was much, but it was not all. The queen’s Injunctions required that a copy of the Homilies, provided at the expense of the parish, should be set up in all the churches, so that the people might come and read them. By their side, “one book of the whole Bible, of the largest volume in English,” was ordered to be placed in every church, that those who could not purchase the Scriptures might nevertheless have access to them, and be able to compare with them the doctrine taught in the Homilies. To the Bible and the Homilies were added Erasmus’s *Paraphrase, on the New Testament*, also in English. And when the famous *Apology* of Jewell, one of the noblest expositions of Protestantism which that or any age has produced, was written, a copy of it was ordered to be placed in all the churches, that all might see the sum of doctrine held by the Reformed Church of England. These measures show how sincerely the queen and her councillors were bent on the emancipation of the nation from the

yoke of Rome; and the instrumentalities they made use of for the diffusion of Protestantism form a sharp contrast to the means employed under Mary to convert men to the Roman worship. The Reformers set up the Bible, the Romanists planted the stake.

During the first year of Elizabeth's reign, though there lacked not thousands of clergy in England, the labourers qualified to reap the fields now white unto harvest were few indeed. But their numbers were speedily recruited from a quarter where the storms of persecution had for some time been assembling them. When the great army of Protestant preachers at Zurich, at Geneva, at Strasburg, and at other foreign towns heard that Elizabeth was on the throne, they instantly prepared to return and aid in the Reformation of their native land. These men were rich in many gifts—some in genius, others in learning, others were masters of popular eloquence, and all were men of chastened spirit, ripe Christians and scholars, while their views had been enlarged by contact with foreign Protestants. Their arrival in England greatly strengthened the hands of those who were labouring to rebuild the Protestant edifice. Among these exiles was Jewell, a man of matchless learning, which his powerful intellect enabled him to wield with ease and grace, and who by his incomparable work, the *Apology*, followed as it was by the *Defence*, did more than any other man of that age to demonstrate the falsehood of the Popish system, and the impregnable foundations in reason and truth on which the Protestant Church reposed. Its publication invested the Reformed cause in England with a prestige it had lacked till then. The arrival of these men was signally opportune. The Marian bishops, with one exception, had vacated their sees—not, as in the case of the Protestants under Mary, to go to prison or to martyrdom, but to retire on pensions, and live till the end of their days in security and affluence. But the embarrassment into which they expected the Government would be thrown by their resignation was obviated by the appointment to the vacant posts of men who, even they were compelled to acknowledge, were their superiors in learning, and whom all men felt to be immensely their superiors in character. Of these exiles some were made bishops, others of them declined the labours and responsibilities of such an office, but all of them brought to the service of the Reformation in England an undivided heart, an ardent piety, and great and varied learning. The queen selected Matthew Parker, who had been chaplain to her mother, Anne Boleyn, to fill the See of Canterbury, vacant since the death of Cardinal Pole. He was consecrated by three bishops who had been formerly in possession of sees, which they had been compelled to vacate during the reign of Mary. Coverdale, Scorey, and Barlowe. Soon after his consecration, the primate proceeded to fill up the other sees, appointing thereto some of the more distinguished of the Reformers who had returned from exile. Grindal was made Bishop of London, Cox of Ely, Sandys of Worcester, and Jewell of

Salisbury. An unusual number of mitres were at this moment vacant through death; only fourteen men who had held sees under Mary survived, and all of these, one excepted, had, as we have already said, resigned; although they could hardly plead that conscience had compelled them to this step, seeing all or nearly all of them had supported Henry VIII. in his assumption of the royal supremacy, which they now refused to acknowledge. Of the 9,400 parochial clergy then computed in England, only some eighty resigned their livings. The retirement of the whole body would have been attended with inconvenience, and yet their slender qualifications, and their languid zeal, rendered their presence in the Reformed Church a weakness to the body to which they continued to cling. It was sought to counteract their apathy, not to say opposition, by permitting them only the humble task of reading the homilies, and by sending better-qualified men, so far as they could be found, throughout England, on preaching tours. "In the beginning of August, 1559," says Burnet, "preachers were sent to many different parts; many northern counties were assigned to Sandys; Jewell had a large province—he was to make a circuit of many hundred miles, through Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Somersetshire, Devonshire, Cornwall, Dorsetshire, and Wiltshire."¹

The first eleven years of Elizabeth's reign were those in which the Protestantism of England took root, and the way was prepared for those splendid results that were to follow. These eleven years were likewise those of Elizabeth's greatest successes, though not those of the greatest brilliancy, because wanting the dramatic incidents that gave such glory to the latter half of her reign. In these years the great queen is seen at her best. With infinite tact and sagacity, aided by her sage adviser Cecil, she is beheld threading her way through innumerable labyrinths and pitfalls. When she ascended the throne England was a chaos; whichever way she turned, she beheld only tremendous difficulties; but now order has emerged from the confusion; her throne is powerful, her arsenals are stored with arms, her dockyards with ships, the Protestant faith is established in her realm, genius and learning flourish under her sceptre, and the name of England has again become a terror to her foes. So long as Elizabeth pursues her reforming path, obstacle after obstacle vanishes before her, and herself and her kingdom wax ever the stronger.

But the point at which Protestantism finally halted under Elizabeth was somewhat below that which it had reached under Edward VI. For this various reasons may be assigned. The queen, as Heylin hints, loved a gorgeous worship as well as a magnificent state ceremonial—hence the images and lighted tapers which the queen retained in her own chapel. But the prevailing motive with Elizabeth was doubtless the desire to disarm the Pope and the Popish Powers of the Continent by conciliating the Papists of England, and drawing

¹ Burnet, vol. III., bk. vi., p. 406.

them to worship in the parish churches. This was the end she had in view in the changes which she introduced into the Prayer Book; and especially was this her object in the restoration into the administration of the Lord's Supper of both forms of words prescribed in the two Prayer Books of Edward. The union of the two forms, the one appearing to favour the corporeal presence, the other conveying the spiritual sense, obscured the doctrine of the Eucharist, and enabled the Papist to say that in receiving the Eucharist he had partaken in the ancient Roman mass. But the great defect, we are disposed to think, in the English Reformation was the want of a body of canons for the government of the Church and the regulation of spiritual affairs. A code of laws, as is well known, was drawn up by Cranmer,¹ and was ready for the signature of Edward VI. when he died. It was revived under Elizabeth, with a view to its legal enactment; but the queen, thinking that it trenched upon her supremacy, would not hear of it. Thus left without a discipline, the Church of England has, to a large been dependent on the will of the sovereign as regards its government. Touching the nature and extent of the power embodied in the royal supremacy, the divines of the Church of England have all along held different opinions. The first Reformers regarded the headship of the sovereign mainly in the light of a protest against the usurped authority of the Pope, and a declaration that the king was supreme over all classes of his subjects, and head of the nation as a mixed civil and ecclesiastical corporation. The "headship" of the Kings of England did not vest in them one important branch of the Papal headship—that of exercising spiritual functions. It denied to them the right to preach, to ordain, and to dispense the Sacraments. But not less true is it that it lodged in them a spiritual jurisdiction, and it is the limits of that jurisdiction that have all along been matter of debate. Some have maintained it in the widest sense, as being an entire and perfect jurisdiction; others have argued that this jurisdiction, though lodged in a temporal functionary, is to be exercised through a spiritual instrumentality, and therefore is neither inconsistent with the nature nor hostile to the liberties of the Church. Others have seen in the supremacy of the crown only that fair share of influence and authority which the laity are entitled to exercise in spiritual things. The clergy frame ecclesiastical enactments and Parliament sanctions them, say they, and this dual government is in meet correspondence with the dual constitution of the Church, which is composed partly of clerics and partly of laics. It is ours here not to judge between opinions, but to narrate facts, and gather up the verdict of history; and in that capacity it remains for us to say that, while history exhibits opinion touching the royal supremacy as flowing in a varied and conflicting current, it shows us the actual exercise of the prerogative—whether as regards the rites of worship, admission to

¹ *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*,

benefices, or the determination of controversies on faith—as proceeding in but one direction, namely, the government of the Church by the sovereign, or a secular body representing him.¹

¹ Those who wish to see at full length the different opinions which have been maintained by divines on the royal supremacy, may consult, among other works, Strype, *Eccles. Mem. Bibliotheca Scriptorum Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, 1709; Becanus (a Jesuit), *Dissidium Anglicanum de Primatu Regis*, 1612; Madox, *Vindication of the Church of England*; Professor Archibald Bruce, *Dissertation on the Supremacy of Civil Powers, &c.*, 1802; Dr. Blakeney, *History of the Book of Common Prayer*, 1870; Dr. Pusey, *The Royal Supremacy not an Arbitrary Authority*, 1850; Warren, *The Queen or the Pope*, 1851; Cunningham. *Discussion on Church Principles*, chap. 6, 1863.

CHAPTER XVI.

EXCOMMUNICATION OF ELIZABETH, AND PLOTS OF THE JESUITS.

England the Head-quarters of Protestantism—Its Subjugation Resolved upon—Excommunication of Queen Elizabeth—Jesuits—Assassins—Dispensation to Jesuits to take Orders in the Church of England—The Nation Broken into Two Parties—Colleges Erected for Training Seminary Priests—Campion and Parsons—Their Plan of Acting—Campion and his Accomplices Executed—Attempts on the Life of Elizabeth—Somerville—Parry—The Babington Conspiracy—Ballard—Savage—Babington—The Plot Joined by France and Spain—Mary Stuart Accedes to it—Object of the Conspiracy—Discovery of the Plot—Execution of the Conspirators.

When Elizabeth was at the weakest, the sudden conversion of an ancient foe into a firm ally brought her unexpected help. So long as Scotland was Popish it was a thorn in the side of Elizabeth, but the establishment of its Reformation in 1560, under Knox, made it one in policy as in faith with England. Up till this period a close alliance had subsisted between Scotland and France, and the union of these two crowns threatened the gravest danger to Elizabeth. The heiress of the Scottish kingdom, Mary Stuart, was the wife of Francis II. of France, who on ascending the throne had openly assumed the title and arms of England, and made no secret of his purpose to invade that country and place his queen, Mary Stuart, upon its throne. In this project he was strongly encouraged by the Guises, so noted for their ambition and so practised in intrigue. The way to carry out his design, as it appeared to the French king, was to pour his soldiers into his wife's hereditary kingdom of Scotland, and then descend on England from the north and dethrone Elizabeth. The scheme was proceeding with every promise of success, when the progress of the Reformation in Scotland, and the consequent expulsion of the French from that country, completely deranged all the plans of the court of France, and converted that very country, in which the Papists trusted as the instrument of Elizabeth's overthrow, into her firmest support and security. So marvellously was the path of Elizabeth smoothed, and her throne preserved.

We have briefly traced the measures Elizabeth adopted for the Reformation of her kingdom on her accession, and the prosperity and power of England at the close of the first decade of her reign. Not a year passed, after she unloosed her neck from the yoke of Rome, that did not see a marked advance in England's greatness. While the Popish Powers around her were consuming their strength in internal conflicts or in foreign wars, which all had their root in their devotion to the Papal See, England was husbanding her force in unconscious anticipation of those great tempests that were to burst upon her, but which instead of issuing in her destruction, only afforded her opportunity of displaying before the whole world, the spirit and resource she

had derived from that Protestantism which brought her victoriously out of them.

It was now becoming clear to the Popish Powers, and most of all to the reigning Pope, Pius V., that the Reformation was centring itself and drawing to a head in England; that all the Protestant influences that had been engendered in the various countries were finding a focus—a seat—a throne within the four seas of Great Britain; that all the several countries of the Reformation—France, Switzerland, Geneva, Germany, the Netherlands—were sending each its special contribution to form in that sea-girt isle a wider, a more consolidated, and a more perfect Protestantism than existed anywhere else in Christendom: in short, they now saw that British Protestantism, binding up in one, as it was doing, the political strength of England with the religious power of Scotland, was the special outcome of the whole Reformation—that Britain was in fact the Sacred Capitol to which European Protestantism was bearing in triumph its many spoils, and where it was founding its empire, on a wider basis than either Geneva or Wittemberg afforded it. Here therefore must the great battle be fought which was to determine whether the Reformation of the sixteenth century was to establish itself, or whether it was to turn out a failure. Of what avail was it to suppress Protestantism in its first centres, to trample it out in Germany, in Switzerland, in France, while a new Wittemberg and a new Geneva were rising in Britain, with the sea for a rampart, and the throne of England for a tower of defence? They must crush heresy in its head: they must cast down that haughty throne which had dared to lift itself above the chair of Peter, and show its occupant, and the nation she reigned over, what terrible chastisements await those who rebel against the Vicar of Christ, and Vicegerent of the Eternal King. Successful here, they should need to fight no second battle; Great Britain subjugated, the revolt of the sixteenth century would be at an end.

To accomplish that supreme object, the whole spiritual and temporal arms of the Popedom were brought into vigorous action. The man to strike the first blow was Pius V., and that blow was aimed at Queen Elizabeth. The two predecessors of Pius V., though they kept the sentence of excommunication suspended over Elizabeth, had, as we have seen, delayed to pronounce it, in the hope of reclaiming her from her heresy; but the queen's persistency made it vain longer to entertain that hope, and the energetic and intolerant ecclesiastic who now occupied the Papal throne proceeded to fulminate the sentence. It was given at the Vatican on the 5th of May, 1570. After large assertion of the Pope's power over kings and nations, the bull excommunicates "Elizabeth, the pretended Queen of England, a slave of wickedness, lending thereunto a helping hand, with whom, as in a sanctuary, the most pernicious of all men have found a refuge. This very woman having seized on the kingdom, and monstrously usurping the supreme place of Head of the

Church in all England, and the chief authority and jurisdiction thereof, hath again brought back the said kingdom into miserable destruction, which was then newly reduced to the Catholic faith and good fruits.”

After lengthened enumeration of the “impieties and wicked actions” of the “pretended Queen of England,” the Pope continues: “We do out of the fulness of our Apostolic power declare the aforesaid Elizabeth, being a heretic, and a favourer of heretics, and her adherents in the matters aforesaid, to have incurred the sentence of anathema, and to be cut off from the unity of the body of Christ. And moreover we do declare her to be deprived of her pretended title to the kingdom aforesaid, and of all dominion, dignity, and privilege whatsoever. And we do command and interdict all and every the noblemen, subjects, people, and others aforesaid, that they presume not to obey her or her monitions, mandates, and laws; and those who shall do the contrary, we do strike with the like sentence of anathema.”¹

The signal having been given from the Vatican, the war was forthwith commenced. The Papal corps were to invade the land in separate and successive detachments. First came the sappers and miners, for so we may denominate the Jesuits, who followed in the immediate wake of the bull. Next appeared the skirmishers, the men with poniards, blessed and sanctified by Rome, to take off the leading Protestants, and before and above all, Elizabeth. The heavier troops, namely the armies of the Popish sovereigns, were to arrive on the field in the close of the day, and provided the work were not already done by the Jesuit and the assassin, they were to do what remained of it, and complete the victory by the irresistible blow of armed force. Over the great ruin of throne and altar, of rights and liberties, the Papacy would erect once more its pavilion of darkness.

In truth, before the bull of excommunication had been issued, the Jesuits had entered England. About the year 1567, Parsons and Saunders were found itinerating the kingdom, with authority from the Pope to absolve all who were willing to return to the Roman communion. Cummin, a Dominican friar, was detected in the garb of a clergyman of the Church of England, and when examined by Archbishop Parker, he pleaded that although he had not received licence from any English bishop, he had nevertheless in preaching and praying most strenuously declaimed against the Pope and the Church of Rome. The source of his zeal it was not difficult to divine. The dispute respecting vestments was by this time waxing hot, and this emissary had been sent from Rome to embitter the strife, and divide the Protestants of England. Another startling discovery was made at this time. Thomas Heath, brother of the deprived Archbishop of York, professed the highest style of Puritanism.

¹ *Damnatio et Excommunicatio Elizabethæ Reginae Anglian, &c. Datum Romæ, &c., 1570, 5 cal. Maii, Pontificatus Nostri Anno 5.*

Preaching one day in the Cathedral of Rochester, he loudly inveighed against the Liturgy as too little Biblical in its prayers. On descending from the pulpit after sermon, a letter was found in it which he had dropped while preaching. The letter, which was from an eminent Spanish Jesuit, revealed the fact that this zealous Puritan, whose tender conscience had been hurt by the Prayer Book, was simply a Jesuit in disguise. Heath's lodgings were searched, and a licence was found from the Pope, authorising him to preach whatever doctrines he might judge best fitted to inflame the animosities and widen the divisions of the Protestants. The men who stole into England under this disguise found others, as base as themselves, ready to join their enterprise, and who, in fact, had retained their ecclesiastical livings in the hope of overthrowing one day that Church which ranked them among her ministers. So far the campaign had proceeded in silence and secrecy; the first overt act was that which we have already narrated, the fulmination of the bull of 1570.

This effectually broke the union and peace which had so largely prevailed in England during Elizabeth's reign. The lay Romanists now withdrew from the churches of an excommunicated worship; they grew cold towards an excommunicated sovereign; they kept aloof from their fellow-subjects, now branded as heretics; and the breach was widened by the measures the Parliament was compelled to adopt, to guard the person of the queen from the murderous attacks to which she now began to be subjected. Two statutes were immediately enacted. The first declared it high treason "to declare that the queen is a heretic or usurper of the crown."¹ The second made it a like crime to publish any bull or absolution from Rome.² It was shown that these edicts were not to remain a dead letter, for a copy of the bull of excommunication having been posted up on the palace gates of the Bishop of London, and the person who had placed it there discovered, he was hanged as a traitor. The Massacre of St. Bartholomew, which occurred soon after (1572), sent a thrill of terror through the court and nation, as the possible precursor of similar scenes in England. The doom of the Huguenots taught Elizabeth and the English Protestants that pledges and promises of peace were no security whatever against sudden and wholesale destruction.

A school was next established to rear seminary priests and assassins. The catechism and the dagger were to go hand in hand in extirpating English Protestantism. Father Allen, afterwards created a cardinal, took the initiative in this matter. He founded a college at Douay, in the north-east of France, and selecting a small band of English youths he carried them thither, to be educated as seminary priests and afterwards employed in the perversion of their native land. The Pope approved so entirely of the plan of Father Allen,

¹ Act 13 Elizabeth, cap. 1.

² *Ibid.*, cap. 2.

that he created a similar institution at Rome—the English College,¹ which he endowed with the proceeds of a rich abbey. Into these colleges no student was admitted till first he had given a pledge that on the completion of his studies he would return to England, and there propagate the faith of Rome, and generally undertake whatever service his superiors might deem necessary in a country whose future was the rising or falling of the Papal power.

Before the foreign seminaries had had sufficient time to send forth qualified agents, two students of Oxford, Edmund Campion and Robert Parsons, repairing to Rome, there arranged with the Jesuits the plan for carrying out the execution of the Pope's bull against Queen Elizabeth. In 1580 they returned and commenced operations. They assumed a new name and wore a different dress each day. "One day," says Fuller, "they wore one garb, on another a different one, while their nature remained the same. He who on Sunday was a priest or Jesuit, was on Monday a merchant, on Tuesday a soldier, on Wednesday a courtier; and with the shears of equivocation he could cut himself into any shape he pleased. But under all their new shapes they retained their old nature."² Campion made the south of England his field of labour. Parsons travelled over the north, awakening the Roman Catholic zeal and the spirit of mutiny. They lodged in the houses of the Popish nobles. Their arrival was veiled in the deepest secrecy, they tarried but a night, employing the evening in preparing the family and domestics for mass, administering it in the morning, and then departing as stealthily as they had come. At length Campion addressed a letter to the Privy Council, boldly avowing his enterprise, which was to revive in England "the faith that was first planted, and must be restored and boasting that the Jesuits of all countries were leagued together for this object, and would never desist from the prosecution of it so long as there remained one man to hang at Tyburn. He concluded by demanding a disputation at which the queen and members of the Privy Council should be present."³ A warrant was issued for his apprehension. He was seized in the disguise of a soldier, conveyed to the Tower, and along with Sherwin, Kirby, and Briant, his accomplices, executed for high treason, which the Act already passed declared his offence to be.

Campion and Parsons were but the pioneers of a much more numerous body. The training-schools at Douay, at Rheims, and at Rome now began to send forth men who were adepts in all the arts which the enterprise required. They entered London, they crept from house to house, they haunted the precincts of the court, they found their way into the provinces.⁴ In Salop alone

¹ Strype, *Annals*, vol. iii., p. 40; Lond., 1728.

² Fuller, bk. ix., p. 130.

³ Strype, vol. fit, pp. 32, 33.

⁴ Strype, vol. iii., p. 39.

were found not fewer than 100 recusants.¹ They said mass in families, gave absolutions, and worked perseveringly to pervert the people at once from the Protestant faith and their allegiance to Elizabeth. Every year their numbers were recruited by fresh swarms. They held re-unions, which they styled synods, to concert a common action; they set up secret printing-presses, and began to scatter over the kingdom, pamphlets and books, written with plausibility and at times with eloquence, attacking Protestantism and instilling sedition; and these works had the greater influence, that they had come no man knew whither, save that they issued out of a mysterious darkness.

The impatience of these men to see England a Popish country would not permit them to wait the realisation of their hopes by the slow process of instruction and perversion. Some of them carried more powerful weapons for effecting their enterprise than rosaries and catechisms. They came armed with stilettos and curious poisons, and they plunged into plot after plot against the queen's life. These machinations kept her in continual apprehension and anxiety, and the nation in perpetual alarm. Their grand project, they felt, was hopeless while Elizabeth lived; and not being able to wait till age should enfeeble her, or death make vacant her throne, they watched their opportunity of taking her off with the poniard. The history of England subsequent to 1580 is a continuous record of these murderous attempts, all springing out of and justifying themselves by the bull of excommunication. In 1583 Somerville attempted the queen's life, and to escape the disgrace of a public execution, hanged himself in prison. In 1584 Parry's treason was discovered, and he was executed. Strype tells us that he had seen among the papers of Lord Burleigh the Italian letter of the Cardinal di Como to Parry, conveying the Pope's approval of his intention to kill the queen when riding out, accompanied by the full pardon of all his sins.² Next came the treason of Throgmorton, in which Mendoza the Spanish ambassador was found to be implicated, and was sent out of England. Not a year passed, after the arrival in England of Campion and Parsons, without an insurrection or plot in some part of the queen's dominions. The prisons of London contained numerous "massing priests, sowers of sedition," charged with disturbing the public peace, and preaching disaffection to the queen's government and person.³

In 1586 came the Babington conspiracy, the most formidable and most widely ramified of all the treasons hatched against the life and throne of Elizabeth. It originated with John Ballard, a priest who had been educated at the seminary of Rheims, and who, revering the bull of excommunication as the product of infallibility, held that Elizabeth, having been excommunicated by the Pope, ought not to be permitted to enjoy her sceptre or her life an hour

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

² *Ibid.*, p. 249.

³ Strype, vol. iii., p. 217.

longer, and that to deprive her of both was the most acceptable service one could do to God, and the surest way of earning a crown in Paradise. Ballard soon found numerous accomplices, both within and without the kingdom. One of the first to join him was John Savage, who had served in the Low Countries under the Duke of Parma. Many gentlemen of good family in the midland and northern counties of England, zealots for the ancient religion, were drawn into the plot, and among these was Babington, from whom it takes its name. The conspiracy embraced persons of still higher rank and power. The concord prevailing at this time among the crowned heads of the Continent permitted their acting together against England and its queen, and made the web of intrigue and treason now weaving around that throne, which was the political bulwark of Protestantism, formidable indeed. The Guises of France gave it every encouragement; Philip of Spain promised his powerful aid; it hardly needed that the Pope should say how fully he accorded it his benediction, and how earnest were his prayers for its success. This mighty confederacy, comprehending conspirators of every rank, from Philip of Spain, the master of half Europe, down to the vagrant and fanatical Ballard, received yet another accession. The new member of the plot was not exactly one of the crowned heads of Europe, for the crown had fallen from her head, but she hoped by enrolling herself among the conspirators to recover it, and a greater along with it. That person was Mary Stuart, who was then living in England as the guest or captive of Elizabeth. Babington laid the plans and objects of himself and associates before Mary, who approved highly of them, and agreed to act the part allotted to herself. The affair was to commence with the assassination of Elizabeth; then the Romanists in England were to be summoned to arms; and while the flames of insurrection should be raging within the kingdom, a foreign army was to land upon the coast, besiege and sack the cities that opposed them, raise Mary Stuart to the throne, and establish the Popish religion in England.

The penetration, wisdom, and patriotism of the statesmen who stood around Elizabeth's throne—men who were the special and splendid gifts of Providence to that critical time—saved England and the world from this bloody catastrophe. Walsingham early penetrated the secret. By means of intercepted letters, and the information of spies, he possessed himself of as minute and exact a knowledge of the whole plot as the conspirators themselves had; and he stood quietly by and watched its ripening, till all was ready, and then he stepped in and crushed it. The crowned conspirators abroad were beyond his reach, but the arm of justice overtook the miscreants at home. The Englishmen who had plotted to extinguish the religion and liberties of their native land in the blood of civil war, and the fury of a foreign invasion, were made to expiate their crimes on the scaffold; and as regards the poor unhappy Queen of the Scots, the ending of the plot to her was not,

as she had fondly hoped, on the throne of England, but in front of the headsmen's block in the sackcloth-hung hall in Fotheringay Castle.¹

“Upon the discovery of this dreadful plot,” says Strype, “and the taking up of these rebels and bloody-minded traitors, the City of London made extraordinary rejoicings, by public bonfires, ringing of bells, feasting in the streets, singing of psalms, and such like: showing their excess of gladness, and ample expressions of their love and loyalty to their queen and government.”²

An attempt was made at the time, and has since been renewed at intervals, to represent the men executed for their share in this and similar conspiracies as martyrs for religion. The fact is that it is impossible to show that a single individual was put to death under Elizabeth simply because he believed in or professed the Popish faith: every one of these State executions was for promoting or practising treason. If the Protestant Government of Elizabeth had ever thought of putting Papists to death for their creed, surely the first to suffer would have been Gardiner, Bonner, &c., who had had so deep a hand in the bloody tragedies under Mary. But even the men who had murdered Cranmer and hundreds besides were never called to account, but lived in ease and peace all their days amid the relations and contemporaries of the men they had dragged to the stake.

¹ Full particulars of the plot, with the documents, and confessions of the conspirators, are given by Strype, *Annals*, vol. III., bk. ii., chap. 5. See also Hume, Froude, the Popish historian Lingard, and others.

² Strype, vol. iii., p. 417.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ARMADA—ITS BUILDING.

The Armada—The Year 1588—Prophecies—State of Popish and Protestant Worlds previous to the Armada—Building of the Armada—Victualling, Arming, &c., of the Armada—Number of Ships—of Sailors—Galley-Slaves—Soldiers—Guns—Tonnage—Attempts to Delude England—A Second Armada prepared in Flanders under Parma—Number of his Army—Deception on English Commissioners—Preparations in England—The Militia—The Navy—Distribution of the English Forces—The Queen at Tilbury—Supreme Peril of England.

While Mary Stuart lived the hopes and projects of the Catholic Powers centred in her. But Mary Stuart lived no longer. The axe of the headsman in Fotheringay Castle had struck the centre out of the great Popish plot: it had not, however, brought it to an end. The decree enjoining the extirpation of Protestantism on all Christian princes still stood recorded among the infallible canons of Trent, and was still acknowledged by the kings of the Popish world. The plot now took a new shape, and this introduces us to the story of the “Invincible Armada.”

The year of the Armada (1588) had been looked forward to with dread long before it came, seeing it had been foretold that it would be a year of prodigies and disasters.¹ It was just possible, so had it been said, that the world would this year end; at the least, during its fatal currency thrones would be shaken, empires overturned, and dire calamities would afflict the unhappy race of men. And now as it drew near rumours of portents deepened the prevailing alarm. It was reported that it had rained blood in Sweden, that monstrous births had occurred in France, and that still more unnatural prodigies had terrified and warned the inhabitants of other countries.

But it needed no portent in the sky, and no prediction of astrologer or star-gazer, to notify the approach of more than usual calamity. No one who reflected on the state of Europe, and the passions and ambitions that were inspiring the policy of its rulers, could be blind to impending troubles. In the Vatican was Sixtus V., able, astute, crafty, and daring beyond the ordinary measure of Popes. On the throne of Spain was Philip II., cold, selfish, gluttonous of power, and not less gluttonous of blood—as dark-minded a bigot as ever counted beads, or crossed himself before a crucifix. No Jesuit could be more secret or more double. His highest ambition was that after-generations should be able to say that in his days, and by his arm, heresy had been exterminated. France was broken into two struggling factions; its throne was occupied by a youth weak, profligate, and contemptible, Henry III. His

¹ Camden, vol. iii., p. 402. Strada, vol. ii., p. 530.

mother, one of the monstrous births whom those times produced, governed the kingdom, while her son divided his time between shameful orgies and abject penances. Holland was mourning her great William, bereaved of life by the dagger of an assassin, hired by the gold of Spain, and armed by the pardon of the Pope. The Jesuits were operating all over Europe, inflaming the minds of kings and statesmen against the Reformation, and forming them into armed combinations to put it down. The small but select band of Protestants in Spain and in Italy, whose beautiful genius and deep piety, to which was added the prestige of high birth, had seemed the pledge of the speedy Reformation of their native lands, no longer existed. They were wandering in exile, or had perished at the stake. Worst of all, concord was wanting to the friends of the Reformation. The breach over which Calvin had so often mourned, and which he had attempted in vain to heal, was widened. In England a dispute which a deeper insight on the one side, and greater forbearance on the other, would have prevented from ever breaking out, was weakening the Protestant ranks. The wave of spiritual influence which had rolled over Christendom in the first half of the century, bearing on its swelling crest scholars, statesmen, and nations, had now these many years been on the ebb. Luther, Calvin, Knox, Cranmer, and Coligny were all off the stage; and their successors, though men of faith and of ability, were not of the same lofty stature with those who had been before them—the giants who had commenced the war. And what a disparity in point of material resources between the nations who favoured and the nations who opposed the Reformation! Should it come to a trial of strength between the two, how unlikely was it that England with her four millions of people, and Holland with even fewer, would be able to keep their ground in presence of the mighty armies and rich exchequers of the Popish world! It was coming to a trial of strength. The monarch whose sceptre was stretched over some hundred millions of subjects, was coming against her whom only four millions called their sovereign. These were the portents that too surely betokened coming calamity. It required no skill in astrology to read them. One had but to look, not at the stars, but on the earth, and to contrast the different circumstances and spirit of the contending parties—the friends of Romanism acting in concert, devising vast schemes, veiling them in darkness, yet prosecuting them with unremitting vigour; while the friends of the Reformation were divided, irresolute, cherishing illusions of peace, and making little or no preparations against the awful tempest that was rolling up on all sides of them.

The building of the Armada had been commenced two years before the execution of Mary Stuart. The elevation of Mary to the throne of the excommunicated Elizabeth was to have been the immediate outcome of it, but the preparations did not slacken from what had occurred in Fotheringay Castle. Neither time, nor toil, nor money was spared to fit out such a fleet as the

world had never before seen. The long line of coast extending from Cape Finisterre to the extreme point of Sicily was converted into one vast building-yard.¹ Where ever there was a harbour or river's mouth, advantage was taken of it to construct a war-galley or a transport-craft. At intervals along this line of some 1,500 or 2,000 miles, might be seen keels laid down of a size then deemed colossal, and carpenters busy fastening thereto the bulging ribs, and clothing them with planks. The entire sea-board rang without intermission with the clang of hammer, the stroke of axe, and the voices of myriads of men, employed in building the vessels that were to bear the legionaries of Spain, the soldiers of the Inquisition, over the seas to the shores of heretical England. Wherever ship-builders were to be found, whether in the West Indies or in America, Philip II. searched them out, and had them transported to Spain to help forward his great and holy work. The inland forests were felled, and many a goodly oak and cork-tree were dragged to the coast; thousands of looms were set to work to weave cloth for sails; hundreds of forges were in full blaze, smelting the ore, which gangs of workmen were hammering into guns, pikes, and all sorts of war material. Quantities of powder and shot, and whatever might be needed for invasion, as grappling-irons, bridges for crossing rivers, ladders for scaling the walls of towns, wagons, spades, mattocks, were stored up in abundance. Bread, biscuit, wine, and carcasses of sheep and oxen were brought to Lisbon, where the main portion of the Armada was stationed, and stowed away in the ships.² "The Catholic king," says Meteren, "had finished such a mighty navy as never the like had before that time sailed upon the ocean sea." The ships were victualled for six months. It was believed that by the expiry of that period the object of the Armada would be accomplished, and the sailors and soldiers of Spain would eat of the corn of England.

The Armada numbered 150 vessels, great and small, armed, provisioned, and equipped for the service that was expected of it. On board of it were 8,000 sailors; 2,088 galley-slaves, for rowing; 20,000 soldiers, besides many noblemen and gentlemen who served as volunteers; its armour consisted of 2,650 pieces of ordnance ; its burden was 60,000 tons.³ This was an immense tonnage at a time when the English navy consisted of twenty-eight sail, and its aggregate burden did not exceed the tonnage of a single Transatlantic steamer of our own day.

The ships were of great capacity and amazing strength. Their strong ribs were lined with planks four feet in thickness, through which it was thought impossible that bullet could pierce. Cables smeared with pitch were wound

¹ Hume, vol. ii., chap. 42.

² Meteren, bk. xv. Hakluyt, *History of the Navigations, Voyages, &c., of the English Nation*, vol. i., pp. 591, 592; Lond., 1599.

³ Meteren, bk. xv. Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 593.

round the masts, to enable them to withstand the fire of the enemy. The galleons were sixty-four in number. They towered up above the waves like castles: they were armed with heavy brass ordnance. The galliasses were also of great size, and “contained within them,” says Meteren, “chambers, chapels, turrets, pulpits, and other commodities of large houses.” They were mounted with great guns of brass and iron, with the due complement of culverins, halberds, and field-pieces for land service. Each galliass was rowed by 300 galley-slaves, and “furnished and beautified with trumpets, streamers, banners, and warlike engines.”¹

During the time that this unprecedentedly vast fleet was being built in the harbours of Spain, everything was done to conceal the fact from the knowledge of the English nation. It was meant that the bolt should fall without warning and crush it. In an age when there were hardly any postal communications, secrecy was more easily attainable than in our day; but the preparations were on far too vast a scale to remain unknown. The next attempt was to propagate a delusion touching the real destination of this vast armament. At one time it was given out that it was intended to sweep from the seas certain pirates that gave annoyance to Spain, and had captured some of her ships. It was next said that Philip meant to chastise certain unknown enemies on the other side of the Atlantic. All that craft and downright lying could do was done, to lay to sleep the suspicions of the people of England. Even the English agent at Madrid, with the Armada building as it were before his eyes, was induced to credit these fabulous explanations; for we find him writing home that there had recently been discovered richer mines in the New World than any heretofore known; but that these treasures were guarded by a gigantic race, which only this enormous fleet could overcome; and this, he felt confident, was the true destination of the Armada. Even Walsingham, one of the most sagacious of the queen’s ministers, expressed his belief—just fifteen days before the Armada sailed—that it never would invade England, and that Philip’s hands were too full at home to leave him leisure to conquer kingdoms abroad. Such being the belief of some of her ambassadors and statesmen, it is not surprising that Elizabeth should have continued to confide in the friendly intentions of the man who was toiling night and day to prepare the means of her destruction, and could with difficulty be roused to put herself and kingdom in a proper posture of defence against the coming blow.

Nor was the fleet now constructing in Spain the whole of that mighty force which was being collected for the overthrow of England and the destruction of Protestantism. There was not one but two Armadas. In the Netherlands, the possession of which gave Philip coasts and ports opposed to

¹ Meteren, bk. xv. Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 593.

England, there was a scene of activity and preparation as vast almost as that upon the sea-board of the Atlantic. Philip's governor in Belgium at that time was the Duke of Parma, the ablest general of his age, and his instructions were to prepare an army and fleet to co-operate with the Spanish force as soon as the Armada should arrive in the English Channel. The duke, within his well-guarded territory, did not slacken his exertions night or day to execute these orders. He brought ship-wrights and pilots from Italy, he levied mariners at Hamburg, Bremen, Embden, and other places. In the country of Waas, forests were felled to furnish flat-bottomed boats for transport. At Dunkirk he provided 28 war-ships. At Nieuport he got ready 200 smaller vessels, and 70 in the river of Waten. He stored up in the ships planks for constructing bridges and rafts for fording the English rivers, stockades for entrenchments, field-pieces, saddles for horses, baking-ovens—in short, every requisite of an invading force. He employed some thousands of workmen in digging the Yper-lee for the transport of ships from Antwerp and Ghent to Bruges, where he had assembled 100 small vessels, which he meant to convey to the sea by the Sluys, or through his new canal. The whole of the Spanish Netherlands, from which wholesome industry had long been banished, suddenly burst into a scene of prodigious but baleful activity.¹

The duke assembled in the neighbourhood of Nieuport a mighty host, of various nationalities. There were 30 regiments of Italians, 10 of Walloons, 8 of Scots, and 8 of Burgundians. Near Dixmuyde were mustered 80 regiments of Dutch, 60 of Spaniards, 6 of Germans, and 7 of English fugitives, under the command of Sir William Stanley.² There was hardly a noble house in Spain that had not its representative within the camp of Parma. Quite a flock of Italian and Neapolitan princes and counts repaired to his banners. Believing that the last hour of England had come, they had assembled to witness its fall.

Meanwhile every artifice, deception, and falsehood were resorted to, to delude Elizabeth and the statesmen who served her, and to hide from them their danger till the blow should descend. She sent her commissioners to the Low Countries, but Parma protested, with tears in his eyes, that there lived not on earth one who more vehemently desired peace than himself. Did not his prayers morning and night ascend for its continuance? And as regarded the wise and magnanimous sovereign of England, there was not one of her servants that cherished a higher admiration of her than he did. While indulging day after day in these deliberate lies, he was busy enlisting and arming soldiers, drilling regiments, and constructing flat-bottomed boats and transports to carry his forces across the German Ocean, and dethrone and lead

¹ Meteren, bk. xv. Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 594.

² *Ibid.*

captive that very queen for whom he professed this enthusiastic regard. This huge hypocrisy was not unsuccessful. The commissioners returned, after three months' absence, in the belief that Parma's intentions were pacific, and they confirmed Elizabeth and her ministers in those dreams of peace, from which they were not to be fully awakened till the guns of the Spanish Armada were heard in the English Channel.

In aid of Philip's earthly armies, the Pope, when all was ready, mustered his spiritual artillery. Sixtus V. fulminated his bull against Elizabeth, in which he confirmed the previous one of Pius V., absolved her subjects from their allegiance, and solemnly conferred her kingdom upon Philip II., to have and to hold as tributary and feudatory of the Papal Chair." While the Pope with the one hand took away the crown from Elizabeth, he conferred with the other the red hat upon Father Allen. Italian honours to English Papists are usually contemporaneous with insults to English sovereigns, and so was it now: Allen was at the same time made Archbishop of Canterbury by the Pope, and Papal Legate. "This Allen," says the Dutch historian, "being enraged against his own native country, caused the Pope's bull to be translated into English, meaning upon the arrival of the Spanish fleet to have it published in England."¹

There was no longer disbelief in England touching the destination of Philip's vast fleet. In a few weeks his ships would be off the coast; how was the invasion to be met? England had only a handful of soldiers and a few ships to oppose to the myriad host that was coming against her. The royal army then was composed of such regiments as the nobles, counties, and towns could assemble when the crown required their service. Appeals were issued to the Lords Lieutenant of the several counties: the response shows the spirit which animated England. The total foot and horse furnished by England were 87,000. Wales contributed 45,000: making together 132,000. This force was exclusive of what was contributed by London, which appears to have been 20,000.² This force was distributed into three armies: one of 22,000 foot and 2,000 horse, for the defence of the capital, and which was stationed at Tilbury under the Earl of Leicester. A second army, consisting of 28,900 men, was for defence of the queen's person. A third was formed, consisting of 27,400 heavy horse armed with lances, and 1,960 light horse armed with different weapons, to guard the coast. These were stationed at such points in the south and east as were likely to be selected by the enemy for landing. Beacons were prepared, and instructions were issued respecting

¹ Meteren, bk. xv. Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 595.

² These numbers, with the arrangement of the forces, are taken from Bruce's *Report*, which was compiled from documents in the State Paper Office, prepared at the command of Government, and printed but not published. The author is indebted for its use to the late David Laing, LL.D.

their kindling, so that the soldiers might know on what point to converge, when the signal blazed forth announcing that the enemy had touched English soil.¹

The fleet which the queen had sent to sea to oppose the Armada consisted of thirty-four ships of small tonnage, carrying 6,000 men. Besides these, the City of London provided thirty ships. In all the port towns merchant vessels were converted into war-ships; and the resisting navy might number 150 vessels, with a crew of 14,000. This force was divided into two squadrons—one under Lord Howard, High Admiral of England, consisting of seventeen ships, which were to cruise in the Channel and there wait the arrival of the Armada. The second squadron, under Lord Seymour, consisting of fifteen ships, was stationed at Dunkirk, to intercept Parma, should he attempt to cross with his fleet from Flanders. Sir Francis Drake, in his ship the *Revenge*, had a following of about thirty privateers.² After the war broke out the fleet was farther increased by ships belonging to the nobility and the merchants, hastily armed and sent to sea; though the brunt of the fight, it was foreseen, must fall on the queen's ships.

At this crisis Queen Elizabeth gave a noble example of patriotism and courage to her subjects. Attired in a military dress she appeared on horseback in the camp at Tilbury, and spiritedly addressed her soldiers, declaring her resolution rather to perish in battle than survive the ruin of the Protestant faith, and the slavery of her people.

The force now mustered in England looks much more formidable when set forth on paper than when drawn up in front of Philip's army. These 100,000 men were simply militia, insufficiently drilled, poorly armed, and to be compared in no point, save their spirit, with the soldiers of Spain, who had served in every clime, and met warriors of all nations on the battle-field. And although the English fleet counted hull for hull with the Spanish, it was in comparison but a collection of pinnaces and boats. The queen's spirit was admirable, but her thrift was carried to such an extreme that she grudged the shot for the guns, and the rations for the men who were to defend her throne. The invading navy was the largest which had ever been seen on ocean since it was first ploughed by keel. The Spanish half alone was deemed more than sufficient to conquer England, and how easy would conquest become when that Armada should be joined, as it was to be, by the mighty force under Parma, the flower of the Spanish army! England, with her long line of coast, her unfortified towns, her four millions of population, including many thousand Papists ready to rise in insurrection as soon as the invader had made good his landing, was at that hour in supreme peril; and its standing or falling

¹ Bruce, *Report*, pp. 47, 48.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 60. Meteren. Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 595.

was the standing or falling of Protestantism. Had Philip succeeded in his enterprise, and Spain taken the place of England, as the teacher and guide of the nations, it is appalling to think what at this hour would have been the condition of the world.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ARMADA ARRIVES OFF ENGLAND.

The Armada Sails—The Admiral Dies—Medina Sidonia appointed to Command—Storm off Cape Finisterre—Second Storm—Four Galleons Lost—Armada Sighted off the Lizard—Beacon-fires—Preparations in Plymouth Harbour—First Encounter between the Armada and English Fleet—The Armada Sails up the Channel, Followed and Harassed by the English Fleet—Its Losses—Second Battle—Third Battle off the Isle of Wight—Superiority of the English Ships—The Armada Anchors off Calais—Parma and his Army Looked for—The Decisive Blow about to be Struck.

THE last gun and the last sailor had been taken on board, and now the Armada was ready to sail. The ships had been collected in the harbour of Lisbon, where for some time they lay weatherbound, but the wind shifting, these proud galleons spread their canvas, and began their voyage towards England. Three days the fleet continued to glide down the Tagus to the sea, galleon following galleon, till it seemed as if room would scarce be found on the ocean for so vast an armament. These three memorable days were the 28th, the 29th, and the 30th of May, 1588. The Pope, as we have seen, had pronounced his curse on Elizabeth; he now gave his blessing to the fleet, and with this double pledge of success the Armada began its voyage. It was a brave sight, as with sails spread to the breeze, and banners and streamers gaily unfurled, it held its way along the coast of Spain, the *St. Peter* doubtless taking the lead, for the twelve principal ships of the Armada, bound on a holy enterprise, had been baptised with the names of the twelve apostles. On board was Don Martin Allacon, Administrator and Vicar-General of the "Holy Office of the Inquisition," and along with him were 200 Bare-footed Friars and Dominicans.¹ The guns of the Armada were to begin the conquest of heretical England, and the spiritual arms of the Fathers were to complete it.

Just as the Armada was about to sail, the Marquis Santa Cruz, who had been appointed to the chief command, died. He had been thirty years in Philip's service, and was beyond doubt the ablest sea-captain of whom Spain could boast. Another had to be sought for to fill the place of the "Iron Marquis," and the Duke of Medina Sidonia was selected for the onerous post. The main recommendation of Medina Sidonia was his vast wealth. He was the owner of large estates which lay near Cadiz, and which had been settled at the first by a colony from Sidon.² To counterbalance his inexperience in naval affairs, the ablest seamen whom Spain possessed were chosen as his

¹ Meteren, bk. xv. Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 594. Bruce, *Report*, p. 65; see also Appendix, No. 50, where the exact number of friars is set down at 180.

² Bruce, *Report*, p. 66, foot-note.

subordinate officers. The “Golden Duke” was there simply for ornament; the real head of the expedition was to be the Duke of Parma, Philip’s commander in the Netherlands, and the ablest of his generals. The duke was to cross from Flanders as soon as the Armada should have arrived off Calais, and, uniting his numerous army with the vast fleet, he was to descend like a cloud upon the shore of England.

The Armada had now been three weeks at sea. The huge hulks so disproportioned to the tiny sails made its progress windward wearisomely slow. Its twenty-one days of navigation had not enabled it to double Cape Finisterre. It had floated so far upon a comparatively calm sea, but as it was about to open the Bay of Biscay, the sky began to be overcast, black clouds came rolling up from the south-west, and the swell of the Atlantic, growing into mountainous billows, tumbled about those towering structures, whose bulk only exposed them all the more to the buffeting of the great waves and the furious winds. The Armada was scattered by the gale; but the weather moderating, the ships reassembled, and pursuing their course, soon crossed the bay, and were off Ushant. A second and severer storm here burst on them. The waves, dashing against the lofty turrets at stem and stern, sent a spout of white water up their sides and high into mid-air, while the racing waves, coursing across the low bulwarks amidships, threatened every moment to engulf the galleons. One of the greatest of them went down with all on board, and other two were driven on the shore of France. In the case of a fourth this tempest brought liberty on its wings to the galley-slaves aboard of it, among whom was David Gwin, who had been taken captive by the Spaniards, and had passed eleven doleful years on board their galleys.¹

The storm subsiding, the Armada once more gathered itself together, and setting sail entered the Channel, and on the 29th of July was off the Lizard.² Next day England had her first sight of her long-expected enemy, coming over the blue sea, her own element, to conquer her. Instantly the beacon-fires were kindled, and blazing along the coast and away into the inland, announced alike to dweller in city and in rural parts that the Spanish fleet was in the Channel. Long as the Armada had been waited for, its appearance took England by surprise. Its sailing from Lisbon two months before had been known in England; but next came tidings that storms had dispersed and driven it back; and orders had been sent from the Admiralty to Plymouth to lay up the ships in dock, and disband their crews.³ Happily, before these orders could be executed the Armada hove in sight, and all doubt about its coming was at an end. There it was in the Channel. In the afternoon of Saturday, the 30th of July, it could be descried from the high ground above

¹ Meteren, bk. xv. Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 596.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

Plymouth harbour, advancing slowly from the south-west, in the form of a crescent, the two horns of which were seven miles apart. As one massive hulk after another came out of the blue distance, and the armament stretched itself out in portentous length on the bosom of the deep, it was seen that rumour had not in the least exaggerated its size. On board his great galleon, the *St. Martin*, in his shot-proof fortress, stood Medina Sidonia, casting proud glances around him, now at the mighty fleet under his command, moving onwards as he believed to certain victory, and now on the shore under his lee, that land of which the Pope had said to Philip, "To thee will I give it."

That was a night long to be remembered in England. As another and yet another hill-top lighted its fires in the darkness, and the ever-extending line of light flashed the news of the Armada's arrival from the shores of the Channel to the moors of Northumberland; and across the Tweed, all through Scotland, where, too, beacon-fires had been prepared, the hearts of men were drawn together by the sense of a common danger and a common terror. All controversies were forgotten in one absorbing interest; and the cry of the nation went up to the Throne above, that He who covered his people in Egypt on that awful night when the Angel passed through the land, would spread his wing over England, and not suffer the Destroyer to touch it.

Meanwhile in the harbour of Plymouth all was bustle and excitement. Howard, Drake, and Hawkins were not the men to sleep over the enterprise. The moment the news arrived that the Armada had been sighted off the Lizard, they began their preparations, and the whole following night was spent in getting the ships ready for sea. By Saturday morning sixty ships had been towed out of harbour. Their numbers were not more than a third of those of the Armada, and their inferiority in size was still greater; but, manned by patriotic crews, they hoisted sail, and away they went to meet the enemy. On the afternoon of the same day the two fleets came in sight of each other. The wind was blowing from the south-west, bringing with it a drizzling rain and a chopping sea. The billows of the Atlantic came tumbling into the Channel, and the galleons of Spain, with their heavy ordnance, and their numerous squadrons, rolled uneasily and worked clumsily; whereas the English ships, of smaller size, and handled by expert seamen, bore finely up before the breeze, took a close survey of the Spanish fleet, and then standing off to windward, became invisible in the haze. The Spaniard was thus informed that the English fleet was in his immediate neighbourhood, but the darkness did not permit battle to be joined that night.

Sunday morning, the 31st of July, broke, and this day was to witness the first encounter between the great navy of Spain and the little fleet of England. Medina Sidonia gave the signal for an engagement; but to his surprise he found that the power of accepting or declining battle lay entirely with his opponent. Howard's ships were stationed to windward, the sluggish Spanish

galleons could not close with them; whereas the English vessels, light, swift, and skilfully handled, would run up to the Armada, pour a broadside into it, and then swiftly retreat beyond the reach of the Spanish guns. Sailing right in the eye of the wind, they defied pursuit. This was a method of fighting most tantalising to the Spaniard: but thus the battle, or rather skirmish, went on all day: the Armada moving slowly up-channel before the westerly breeze, and the English fleet hanging upon its rear, and firing into it, now a single shot, now a whole broadside, and then retreating to a safe distance, but quickly returning to torment and cripple the foe, who kept blazing away, but to no purpose, for his shot, discharged from lofty decks, passed over the ships of his antagonist, and fell into the sea. It was in vain that the Spanish admiral hoisted the flag of battle; the wind and sea would not permit him to lie-to; and his little nimble foe would not come within reach, unless it might be for a moment, to send a cannon-ball through the side of some of his galleons, or to demolish a turret or a mast, and then make off, laughing to scorn the un-gainly efforts of his bulky pursuer to overtake him. As yet there had been no loss of either ship or man on the part of the English.

Not quite so intact was the Armada. Their size made the ships a more than usually good mark for the English gunners, and scarcely had a shot been fired during the day that had not hit. Besides, the English fired four shots to one of the Spaniards. The Armada sustained other damage besides that which the English guns inflicted upon it. As night fell its ships huddled together to prevent dispersion, and the galleon of Pedro di Valdez, fouling with the *Santa Catalina*, was so much damaged that it fell behind and became the booty of the English. This galleon had on board a large amount of treasure, and what was of greater importance to the captors, whose scanty stock of ammunition was already becoming exhausted, many tons of gunpowder. Above the loss of the money and the ammunition was that of her commander to the Spaniards, for Pedro di Valdez was the only naval officer in the fleet who was acquainted with the Channel.¹

Later in the same evening a yet greater calamity befell the Armada. The captain of the rear-admiral's galleon, much out of humour with the day's adventures, and quarrelling with all who approached him, accused the master-gunner of careless firing. Affronted, the man, who was a Fleming, went straight to the powder magazine, thrust a burning match into it, and threw himself out at one of the port-holes into the sea. In a few seconds came the explosion, flashing a terrific but momentary splendour over the ocean. The deck was upheaved; the turrets at stem and stern rose into the air, carrying with them the paymaster of the fleet and 200 soldiers. The strong hulk, though torn by the explosion, continued to float, and was seized in the

¹ Meteren; Hakluyt., vol. i., p. 597.

morning by the English, who found in it a great amount of treasure, and a supply of ammunition which had not ignited.¹ On the very first day of conflict the Armada had lost two flagships, 450 officers and men, the paymaster of the fleet, and 100,000 ducats of Spanish gold. This was no auspicious commencement of an expedition which Spain had exhausted itself to fit out.

On the following day (Monday, 1st August) the Armada held its way slowly up-channel, followed by the fleet under Howard, who hovered upon its rear, but did not attack it. Next morning (Tuesday) the Armada was off St. Alban's Head; and here the first really serious encounter took place. As the morning rose, the wind changed into the east, which exactly reversed the position of the two fleets, giving the weather-gauge to the Armada. Howard attempted to sail round it and get to windward of it, but Medina Sidonia intercepted him by coming between him and the shore, and compelled him to accept battle at close quarters. The combat was long and confused. In the evening the Spanish ships gathered themselves up, and forming into a compact group, went on their way. It was believed that they were obeying Philip's instructions to steer for the point where the Duke of Parma was to join them with his army, and then strike the decisive blow. The shores of the English Channel were crowded with spectators; merchant vessels were hastening from every port of the realm to the spot where the very existence of the English crown hung on the wager of battle. These accessions added greatly to the appearance, but very little to the effective force, of the queen's navy. The nobles and gentry also were flocking to the fleet; the representatives of the old houses, pouring thither in the same stream with the new men whose genius and patriotism had placed them at the head of affairs, giving by their presence prestige to the cause, and communicating their own enthusiasm to the soldiers and sailors in the fleet.²

On Wednesday the Armada continued its course, followed by Howard and his fleet. A few shots were that day exchanged, but no general action took place. On Thursday, the 4th, the Armada was off the Isle of Wight. The wind had again changed into the east, giving to the Armada once more the weather-gauge. Accordingly it lay-to, and here the sharpest action of all was fought. The ships of the two fleets engaged, yard-arm to yard-arm, and broadside after broadside was exchanged at a distance of about 100 yards. The admiral, Lord Howard, in his ship the *Ark*, steered right into the heart of the Armada, in search of Medina Sidonia, in his ship the *St. Martin*, making acquaintance with each galleon as he passed, by pouring a broadside into it. Rear-Admiral Oquendo, perceiving Howard's design, ran his ship under the bows of the *Ark*, and by the shock unshipped her rudder, and rendered her

¹ Meteren; Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 598.

² Meteren; Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 599.

unmanageable. Six Spanish galleons closed round her, never doubting that she was their prize. In a trice the *Ark's* own boats had her in tow, and passing out of the hostile circle she was off, to the amazement of the Spaniards. The fight continued several hours longer. Ships of apostolic name found their saintly titles no protection from the round shot of the English guns. The *St. Matthew*, the *St. Mark*, the *St. Philip*, the *St. Luke*, the *St. John*, the *St. Martin*, fought with the *Lion*, the *Bull*, the *Bear*, the *Tiger*, the *Dreadnought*, the *Revenge*, the *Victory*, but they could gain no mastery over their unapostolical antagonists. In the carnal business of fighting the superiority seemed to lie with the heretical combatants. The sides of the orthodox galleons were pierced and riddled with the English shot, their masts cut or splintered, and their cordage torn; and when evening fell, the enemy, who had all through the conflict seen the Spanish shot pass harmlessly over him and bury itself in the sea, stood away, his hulls bearing no sign of battle, hardly a cord torn, and his crews as intact as his ships.

On the following day (Friday) the procession up-channel was resumed, at the same slow pace and in the same order as before, the mighty Armada leading the van and the humble English fleet following. On the afternoon of Saturday the Spaniards were off Calais. It was here, or near to this, that Medina Sidonia was to be joined by the Duke of Parma, with the fleet and army which he had been preparing all the previous winter, and all that summer, in the harbours of Flanders. The duke had not arrived, but any hour might bring him, and Medina Sidonia resolved here to cast anchor and wait his approach. The Armada accordingly took up its position in the roadstead of Calais, while the English fleet cast anchor a league off to the west.¹

The hour had now come when it was to be determined whether England should remain an independent kingdom, or become one of Philip's numerous satrapies; whether it was to retain the light of the Protestant faith, or to fall back into the darkness and serfdom of a mediaeval superstition. Battles, or rather skirmishes, there had been between the two fleets, but now the moment had come for a death-grapple between Spain and England. The Armada had arrived on the battle-ground comparatively intact. It had experienced rough handling from the tempests of the Atlantic; Howard and Drake had dealt it some heavy blows on its way up the Channel; several of those galleons which had glided so proudly out of the harbour of Lisbon, were now at the bottom of the ocean; but these losses were hardly felt by the great Armada. It waited but the junction with the Duke of Parma to be perhaps the mightiest combination of naval and military power which the world had seen. This union might happen the next day, or the day after, and then the Armada,

¹ Meteren; Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 600.

scattering the little fleet which lay between it and the shores to which it was looking across, would pass over, and Elizabeth's throne would fall.

CHAPTER XIX.

DESTRUCTION OF THE ARMADA.

The Roadstead of Calais—Vast Preparations in Flanders—The Dutch Fleet Shuts in the Army of Parma—The Duke does not Come—A Great Crisis—Danger of England—Fire-ships—Launched against the Armada—Terror—The Spaniards Cut their Cables and Flee—Great Battle off Gravelines—Defeat of the Spaniards—Shattered State of the Galleons—Narrowly Escape Burial in the Quicksands—Retreat into the North Sea—The Armada off Norway—Driven across to Shetland—Carried round to Ireland—Dreadful Scenes on the Irish Coast—Shipwreck and . Massacre—Anstruther—Interview between the Minister and a Shipwrecked Spanish Admiral—Return of a Few Ships to Spain—Grief of the Nation—The Pope Refuses to Pay his Million of Crowns—The Effects of the Armada—The Hand of God—Medals Struck in Commemoration—Thanksgiving in England and the Protestant States.

WE left the two fleets watching each other in the roadstead of Calais, the evening closing in darkly, the scud of tempest drifting across the sky, and the billows of the Atlantic forcing their way up the Channel, and rocking uneasily the huge galleons of Spain at their anchorage. The night wore away: the morning broke; and with the returning light the Duke of Medina Sidonia is again seen scrutinising the eastern ocean, and straining his eyes if haply he may descry the approach of the Duke of Parma. This is the appointed place of meeting. The hour is come, but it has not brought the man and the armament so eagerly desired. On his way up the Channel, Medina Sidonia had sent messenger after messenger to Parma, to urge him to be punctual. He had not concealed from him what it must have cost the proud Spaniard no little pain to confess, that he needed his help; but he urged and entreated in vain: there was no sail in the offing. Neither sight nor sound of Parma's coming could Medina Sidonia obtain.

All the while, Parma was as desirous to be on the scene of action as Medina Sidonia was to have him there. The duke had assembled a mighty force. One of his regiments was accounted the finest known in the history of war, and had excited great admiration on its march from Naples to the Netherlands, by its engraved arms and gilded corslets, as well as its martial bearing. A numerous fleet, as we have already said, of flat-bottomed vessels was ready to carry this powerful host across to England. But one thing was wanting, and its absence rendered all these vast preparations fruitless. Parma needed an open door from his harbours to the ocean, and the Dutch took care not to leave him one. They drew a line of warships along the Netherland coast, and Parma, with his sailors and soldiers, was imprisoned in his own ports. It was strange that this had not been foreseen and provided against. The oversight reveals the working of a Hand powerful enough by its slightest

touches to defeat the wisest schemes and crush the mightiest combinations of man.

Parma wrote repeatedly to both Philip and Medina Sidonia to say that all was ready, that sailors, soldiers, and transports were collected, but that the Dutch had shut him in, and months of labour and millions of ducats were lost for want of the means of exit; that the Armada must come across the German Ocean, and with its guns make for him a passage through the hostile fleet, which, so long as it kept watch and ward over him, rendered one arm of the great Armada useless. And yet Philip either would not or could not understand this plain matter; and so, while one half of Spain's colossal army is being rocked in the roadstead of Calais, its commander fretting at Parma's delay, the other half lies bound in the canals and harbours of Flanders, champing the curb that keeps them from sharing with their comrades the glory and the golden spoils of the conquest of England.

In the meantime, anxious consultations were being held on board the English fleet. The brave and patriotic men who led it did not conceal from themselves the gravity of the situation. The Armada had reached its appointed rendezvous in spite of all their efforts, and if joined by Parma, it would be so overwhelmingly powerful that they did not see what should hinder its crossing over and landing in England. They were willing to shed their blood to prevent this, and so too were the brave men by whom their ships were manned; but there seemed to be a struggle in the mind of the queen between parsimony and patriotism, and that wretched penuriousness which kept the fleet supplied with neither ammunition nor provisions, threatened to counterbalance all the unrivalled seamanship, together with the bravery and devotion that were now being put forth in defence of the British crown. The hours of the Sunday were wearing away; the crown of England was hanging in the balance; before another dawn had come, Parma's fleet, for aught they could tell, might be anchored alongside of Medina Sidonia's in the roadstead of Calais, and the time would be past for striking such a blow as would drive off the Spanish ships, and put the crown and realm of England beyond danger.

A bold and somewhat novel expedient, suggested by her Majesty, as both Camden and Meteren affirm,¹ was resolved upon for accomplishing this object. Eight ships were selected from the crowd of volunteer vessels that followed the fleet; their masts were smeared with pitch, their hulls were filled with powder and all kinds of explosive and combustible materials; and so prepared they were set adrift in the direction of the Armada, leaving to the Spaniards no alternative but to cut their cables or to be burned at their anchors. The night favoured the execution of this design. Heavy masses of

¹ Meteren; Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 601.

clouds hid the stars; the muttering of distant thunder reverberated in the sky; that deep, heavy swell of ocean that precedes the tempest was rocking the galleons, and rendering their position every moment more unpleasant—so close to the shallows of Calais on the one side, with the quicksands of Flanders on their lee. While in this feverish state of apprehension, new objects of terror presented themselves to the Spaniards. It was about an hour past midnight when the watch discerned certain dark objects emerging out of the blackness and advancing towards them. They had hardly given the alarm when suddenly these dark shapes burst into flame, lighting up sea and sky in gloomy grandeur. These pillars of fire came stalking onwards over the waters. The Spaniards gazed for a moment upon the dreadful apparition, and, divining its nature and mission, they instantly cut their cables, and, with the loss of some of their galleons and the damage of others in the confusion and panic, they bore away into the German Ocean, the winds their pilot.¹

With the first light the English admiral weighed anchor, and set sail in pursuit of the fleeing Spaniard. At eight o'clock on Monday morning, Drake came up with the Armada off Gravelines, and giving it no time to collect and form, he began the most important of all the battles which had yet been fought. All the great ships on both sides, and all the great admirals of England, were in that action; the English ships lay-to close to the galleons, and poured broadside after broadside into them. It was a rain of shot from morning to night. The galleons falling back before the fierce onset, and huddling together, the English fire was poured into the mass of hulls and masts, and did fearful execution, converting the ships into shambles, rivulets of blood pouring from their scuttles into the sea. Of the Spanish guns, many were dismounted, those that remained available fired but slowly, while the heavy rolling of the vessels threw the shot into the air. Several of the galleons were seen to go down in the action, others put *hors de combat* reeled away towards Ostend.² When the evening fell the fighting was still going on. But the breeze shifting into the northwest, and the sea continuing to rise, a new calamity threatened the disabled and helpless Armada; it was being forced upon the Flanders coast, and if the English had had strength and ammunition to pursue them, the galleons would have that night found common burial in the shoals and quicksands of the Netherlands. They narrowly escaped that fate at the time, but only after prolonged terrors and sufferings, to be overtaken by it amid wilder seas, and on more savage coasts. The power of the Armada had been broken; most of its vessels were in a sinking condition; from 4,000 to 5,000 of its soldiers, shot down, had received burial in the ocean; and at least

¹ *Ibid.*

² Meteren; Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 602.

as many more lay wounded and dying on board their shattered galleons. Of the English not more than 100 had fallen.

Thankful was the terrified Medina Sidonia when night fell, and gave him a few hours' respite. But with morning his dangers and anxieties, returned. He found himself between two great perils. To the windward of him was the English fleet. Behind him was that belt of muddy water which fringes the Dutch coast, and which indicates to the mariner's eye those fatal banks where, if he strikes, he is lost. The helpless Armada was nearing these terrible shoals every moment. Suddenly the wind shifted into the east, and the change rescued the Spanish galleons when on the very brink of destruction. The English fleet, having lost the weather-gauge, stood off; and the Spanish admiral, relieved of their presence, assembled his officers on board his ship to deliberate on the course to be taken. Whether should they return to their anchorage off Calais, or go back to Spain by way of the Orkneys? this was the alternative on which Medina Sidonia requested his officers to give their opinion. To return to Calais involved a second battle with the English, and if this should be, the officers were of opinion that, there would come no tomorrow to the Armada; to return to Spain in battered ships, without pilots, and through unknown and dangerous seas, was an attempt nearly as formidable; nevertheless, it was the lesser of the two evils to which their choice was limited, and it was the one adopted.¹ Tempest, conflagration, and battle had laid the pride of Spain in the dust.

No sooner had the change of wind rescued the Spanish ships from the destruction which, as we have seen, seemed to await them, than it shifted once more, and settling in the south-west, blew every moment with greater force. The mostly rudderless ships could do nothing but drift before the rising storm into the northern seas. Drake followed them for a day or two; he did not fire a gun, in fact his ammunition was spent, but the sight of his ships was enough, the Spaniards fled, and did not even stay to succour their leaking vessels, which went down unhelped amid the waves.

Spreading sail to the rising gale, the Armada bore away past the Frith of Forth. Drake had been uneasy about Scotland, fearing that the Spaniards might seek refuge in the Forth and give trouble to the northern kingdom; but when he saw this danger pass, and the Armada speed away towards the shores of Norway, he resolved to retrace his course before famine should set in among his crews. No sooner did Drake turn back from the fleeing foe than the tempest took up the pursuit, for that moment a furious gale burst out, and the last the English saw of the Armada were the vanishing forms of their retreating galleons, as they entered the clouds of storm and became hid in the blackness of the northern night. In these awful solitudes, which seemed

¹ Meteren; Hakluyt, vol. i, p. 603.

abandoned to tempests, the Spaniards, without pilots and without a chart, were environed by bristling rocks and by unknown shallows, by currents and whirlpools. They were “driven from light into darkness;” they were “chased out of the world.”

The tempest continuing, the Armada was every hour being carried farther into that unknown region which the imagination of its crews peopled with terrors, but not greater than the reality. The fleet was lessening every day, both in men and ships; the sailors died and were thrown overboard; the vessels leaked and sank in the waves. The survivors were tossed about entirely at the mercy of the winds and the waters; now they were whirled along the iron-bound coast of Norway, now they were dashed on the savage rocks of the Shetlands, and now they found themselves in the intricate friths and racing currents of the Orkneys. Carried on the tempest’s wings round Cape Wrath, they were next launched amid the perils of the Hebrides. The rollers of the Atlantic hoisted them up, dashed them against the black cliffs, or flung them on the shelving shore; their crews, too worn with toil and want to swim ashore, were drowned in the surf, and littered the beach with their corpses. The winds drove the survivors of that doomed fleet farther south, and now they were careering along the west coast of Ireland. The crowd of sail seen off the coast caused alarm at the first, but soon it was known how little cause there was to fear an Armada which was fleeing when no man was pursuing. There came a day’s calm; hunger and thirst were raging on board the ships; their store of water was entirely spent; the Spaniards sent some boats on shore to beg a supply. They prayed piteously, they offered any amount of money, but not a drop could they have. The natives knew that the Spaniards had lost the day, and that should they succour the enemies of Elizabeth, the Government would hold them answerable. Nor was this the worst; new horrors awaited them on this fated coast. The storm had returned in all its former violence; to windward were the mighty crested billows of the Atlantic, against which both themselves and their vessels were without power to contend; to the leeward were the bristling cliffs of the Irish coast, amid which they sought, but found not, haven or place of rest. The gale raged for eleven days, and during that time galleon after galleon came on shore, scattering their drowned crews by hundreds upon the beach. An eye-witness thus describes the dreadful scene:—“When I was at Sligo,” wrote Sir Geoffrey Fenton, “I numbered on one strand of less than five miles in length, eleven hundred dead bodies of men, which the sea had driven upon the shore. The country people told me the like was in other places, though not to the same number.”¹ On the same coast there lay, Sir William Fitzwilliam was told, “in the

¹ Fenton to Burghley, October 28: MSS. Ireland—quoted by Froude, vol. xii., p. 451; Lond., 1870.

space of a few miles, as great store of the timber of wrecked ships, more than would have built five of the greatest ships that ever I saw, besides mighty great boats, cables, and other cordage answerable thereto, and some such masts for bigness and length as I never saw any two could make the like.”¹

The sea was not the only enemy these wretched men had to dread. The natives, though of the same religion with the Spaniards, were more pitiless than the waves. As the Spaniards crawled through the surf up the beach, the Irish slaughtered them for the sake of their velvets, their gold brocades, and their rich chains. Their sufferings were aggravated from another cause. The Government had sent orders to the English garrisons in Ireland to execute all who fell into their hands. This order, which was prompted by the fear that the Spaniards might be joined by the Irish, and that a mutiny would ensue, was relentlessly carried out. It was calculated that in the month of September alone, 8,000 Spaniards perished between the Giants’ Causeway and Blosket Sound;² 1,100 were executed by the Government officers, and 3,000 were murdered by the Irish. The rest were drowned. The islets, creeks, and shores were strewn with wrecks and corpses, while in the offing there tossed an everdiminishing fleet, torn and battered, laden with toil-worn, famished, maddened, despairing, dying men. The tragedy witnessed of old on the shore of the Red Sea had repeated itself, with wider horrors, on the coast of Ireland.³

We turn to another part of this appalling picture. It is more pleasant than that which we have been contemplating. We are on the east coast of Scotland, in the town of Anstruther, where James Melville, brother of the illustrious Andrew Melville, was minister. One morning in the beginning of October, 1588, so he tells us in his Autobiography, he was awakened at daybreak by one of the bailies of Anstruther coming to his bedside, and saying, “I have news to tell you, sir: there is arrived in our harbour this morning a ship full of Spaniards, but not to give mercy, but to ask it.” The minister got up and accompanied the bailie to the town-hall, where the council was about to assemble to hear the petition of the Spaniards, who meanwhile had been ordered back to their ships. After the magistrates, burghers, and minister had deliberated, the commander of the ship was introduced, “a very reverend man, of big stature, and grave and stout countenance, grey-headed, and very humble-like, who, after many and very low courtesies, bowing down with his face near to the ground, and touching my shoe with his hand,” began the story of the Armada and its mishaps. This “very reverend man,” who was now doing obeisance before the minister of Anstruther, was the admiral of twenty galleons. He had been cast upon the “Fair Isle” between Shetland and

¹ Fitzwilliam to the English Council, December 31: MSS. Ireland—*apud* Froude.

² Sir William Fitzwilliam to Walsingham, September 30: MSS. Ireland—*apud* Froude.

³ Meteren; Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 604.

Orkney, and after seven weeks' endurance of cold and hunger among the natives, he had managed to procure a ship in which to come south, and now he was asking "relief and comfort" for himself and the captains and soldiers with him, "whose condition was for the present most pitiful and miserable;" and thereupon he again "bowed himself even to the ground." The issue was that the commander and officers were hospitably entertained at the houses of the neighbouring gentry, and that the soldiers, who numbered 260, "young beardless men, weak, toiled, and famished,"¹ were permitted to come ashore, and were fed by the citizens till they were able to pursue their voyage. The name of the commander was Jan Gomes di Medina.²

The few galleons that escaped the waves and rocks crept back one by one to Spain, telling by their maimed and battered condition, before their crews had opened their lips, the story of their overthrow. That awful tragedy was too vast to be disclosed all at once. When at last the terrible fact was fully known, the nation was smitten down by the blow. Philip, stunned and overwhelmed, shut himself up in his closet in the Escorial, and would see no one; a cry of lamentation and woe went up from the kingdom. Hardly was there a noble family in all Spain which had not lost one or more of its members. The young grandees, the heirs of their respective houses, who had gone forth but a few months before, confident of returning victorious, were sleeping at the bottom of the English seas, amid hulks and cannon and money-chests. Of the 30,000 who had sailed in the Armada, scarcely 10,000 saw again their native land; and these returned, in almost every instance, to pine and die. The Duke of Medina Sidonia, the commander-in-chief, was almost the only one of the nobles who outlived the catastrophe; but his head was bowed in shame, and envying the fate of those who had perished, he buried himself in his country-seat from the eyes of his countrymen. To add to the griefs of Philip II., he was deeply wounded from a quarter whence he had looked for sympathy and help. Pope Sixtus had promised a contribution of a million of crowns towards the expenses of the Armada, but when he saw to what end it had come, he refused to pay a single ducat. In vain Philip urged that the Pope had instigated him to the attempt, that the expedition had been undertaken in the sacred cause of the Church, and that the loss ought to be borne mutually. Sixtus was deaf; he was almost satirical. He could not be expected, he said, to give a million of money for an Armada which had accomplished nothing, and was now at the bottom of the sea.³

¹ "Sillie, trauchled, and houngered." We have taken the liberty of rendering the Scottish words into English, though the force is diminished thereby.

² *Autobiography and Diary of Mr. James Meivill*, pp. 260-263 Wodrow ed., Edin., 1842.

³ The Pope was satirised in his turn. When the news of the Armada's failure arrived in Rome, there was posted up a pasquil, in which Sixtus was made to offer, out of the plentitude of his power, a thousand years' indulgence to any one who would give him information respecting the whereabouts of the Spanish fleet: whether it had been taken up into

The Armada was the mightiest effort in the shape of armed force ever put forth by the Popish Powers against Protestantism, and it proved the turning-point in the great war between Pome and the Reformation. Spain was never after what it had been before the Armada. The failure of that expedition said in effect to her, "Remove the diadem; put off the crown." Almost all the military genius and the naval skill at her service were lost in that ill-fated expedition. The flower of Philip's army, and the ablest of his admirals, were now at the bottom of the ocean. The financial loss could not be reckoned at less than six millions of ducats; but that was nothing compared with the extinction of Spain's prestige. The catastrophe stripped her naked. Her position and that of the Protestant Powers were to a large extent reversed. England and the Netherlands rose, and Spain fell. There followed that same year, 1588, other heavy blows to the Popish interest. The two Guises were assassinated; Catherine de Medici passed from the scene of her intrigues and crimes; her son Henry III. followed, stricken by the dagger of Clement; the path was opened for Henry IV. to mount the throne, and the Protestant interests in France were greatly strengthened. The wavering Protestantism of James VI. of Scotland was steadied; the Netherlands breathed freely; and, as we shall immediately see, there came so marvellous a blossoming of arms and arts in the Protestant world as caused the glories of the Spanish Empire to be forgotten.

The tragedy of the Armada was a great sermon preached to the Popish and Protestant nations. The text of that sermon was that England had been saved by a Divine Hand. All acknowledged the skill and daring of the English admirals, and the patriotism and bravery of the English sailors and soldiers, but all at the same time confessed that these alone could not have saved the throne of Elizabeth. The Almighty Arm had been stretched out, and a work so stupendous had been wrought, as to be worthy of a place by the side of the wonders of old time. There were a consecutiveness and a progression in the acts, a unity in the drama, and a sublimity in the terrible but righteous catastrophe in which it issued, that told the least reflective that the Armada's overthrow was not fortuitous, but the result of arrangement and plan. Even the Spaniards themselves confessed that the Divine Hand was upon them; that One looked forth at times from the storm-cloud that pursued them, and troubled them. Christendom at large was solemnised: the ordinary course of events had been interrupted; the heavens had been bowed, and the Great Judge had descended upon the scene. While dismay reigned within the Popish kingdoms, the Protestant States joined in a chorus of thanksgiving. In England by the command of her Majesty, and in the United Provinces by

heaven, or had descended into hell; whether it was hanging in mid air, or was still tossing on the ocean. (*Cott. Libr.*, Titus, B. 2. Strype, *Annals*, vol. iii., p. 522.)

order of the States-General, a day of festival was appointed, whereon all were commanded to repair to church, and “render thanks unto God.” “The aforesaid solemnity,” says the Dutch historian, “was observed on the 29th of November, which day was wholly spent in fasting, prayer, and giving of thanks.”¹ On that day Queen Elizabeth, royally attired, and followed by the estates and dignitaries of the realm, visited London, and rode through the streets of the City to the Cathedral of St. Paul’s, in a triumphal chariot drawn by four white horses. The houses were hung with blue cloth; the citizens in their holiday dress lined the streets, ranged in companies, and displaying the ensigns and symbols of their various guilds and crafts. Eleven banners and flags which had been taken from the Spaniards hung displayed in front of St. Paul’s. The queen with her clergy and nobles, having offered public thanks in the church, thereafter retired to Paul’s Cross, where a sermon was preached from the same stone pulpit from which Ridley’s and Latimer’s voices had often been heard; and after the sermon the queen rose and addressed her assembled subjects, exhorting them to unite with her in extolling that merciful Power which had scattered her foes, and shielded from overthrow her throne and realm.

But the deliverance was a common one to the Protestant kingdoms. All shared in it with England, and each in turn took up this song of triumph. Zealand, in perpetual memory of the event, caused new coin of silver and brass to be struck, stamped on the one side with the arms of Zealand, and the words, “Glory to God alone,” and on the other with a representation of certain great ships, and the words, “The Spanish Fleet,” In the circumference round the ships was the motto, “It came, went, and was. Anno 1588.”² Holland, too, struck a commemorative medal of the Armada’s destruction; and Theodore Beza, at Geneva, celebrated the event in Latin verse. It seemed as if the days of Miriam, with their judgments and songs of triumph, had returned, and that the Hebrew prophetess had lent her timbrel to England, that she might sing upon it the destruction of a mightier host than that of Egypt, and the overthrow of a greater tyrant than he who lay drowned in the Red Sea. England began the song, as was meet, for around her isle had the Armada been led, a spectacle of doom; but soon, from beyond the German Ocean, from the foot of the Alps, from the shores of Scotland, other voices were heard swelling the anthem, and saying, “Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

¹ Strype says the 24th November.

² Meterenj Hakluyt, vol. i., p. 608.

Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.”

CHAPTER XX.

GREATNESS OF PROTESTANT ENGLAND.

The Reformation not Completed under Edward VI.—Fails to Advance under Elizabeth—
Religious Destitution of England—Supplication for Planting it with Ministers, &c.—
Dispute respecting Vestments, &c.—The Puritans—Their Numbers—Their Aims—
Elizabeth Persecutes them—Elizabeth's Character—Two Types of Protestantism Com-
bine to form One Perfect Protestantism—Outburst of Mind—Glory of England—Sci-
ence—Literature—Arts—Bacon—Shakspeare—Milton, &c.

As with the kings who gathered together against a famous city of old time, so with the Armada, "it came, it saw, it fled." The throne of Elizabeth was saved; the mass was not to be re-established in England, and the Reformation was not to be overthrown in Europe. The tempest had done its work, and now the Protestant kingdoms break out into singing, and celebrate in triumphal notes the deliverance which an Almighty Arm had wrought for them.

We now turn to the state of the Protestant faith within the kingdom. In vain has England been saved from the sword of Spain, if the plant of the Reformation be not taking root and flourishing in it. The accession of Elizabeth to the throne had once more opened the Bible to England after the persecutor had shut it, but the permeation of the nation with its light was somewhat slow. Instead of carrying forward the work of Reformation which Edward VI. had left so incomplete, Elizabeth was content to stop short of the point which her brother had reached. The work languished. For this, various causes may be assigned. Elizabeth was apathetic, and at times even hostile. The throne was too powerful and too despotic to permit the spiritual principle full scope to develop. Besides, the organisation for the instruction of the nation was defective, and matters were not improved by the languid way in which such organisation as did exist was worked. We find a "Supplication" given in to the Parliament of 1585, praying it to take steps for the planting of England with an educated and faithful ministry; and the statement of facts with which the Supplication was accompanied, and on which it was based, presents a sad picture of the religious destitution of the kingdom. Some of these facts are explained, and others defended, by the bishops in their answer to the Supplication, but they are not denied. The petitioners affirm that the majority of the clergy holding livings in the Church of England were incompetent for the performance of their sacred duties; that their want of knowledge unfitted them to preach so as to edify the people; that they contented themselves with reading from a "printed book;" and that their reading was so indistinct, that it was impossible any one should profit by what was read. Non-residence was common; pluralities were frequent; the bishops were little careful to license only qualified men; secular callings were in

numerous cases conjoined with the sacred office; in many towns and parishes there was no stated ministry of the Gospel, and thousands of the population were left untaught. "Yea," say they, "by trial it will be found that there are in England whole thousands of parishes destitute of this necessary help to salvation, that is, of diligent preaching and teaching." The destitute parishes of England must have amounted to the formidable number of from 9,000 to 12,000, for the bishops in their reply say that they were able to provide pastors, through the universities, for not more than a third of the 18,000 parishes of England. It follows that some 12,000 parishes were without pastors, or enjoyed only the services of men who had no university training. The remedies proposed by the petitioners were mainly these: that a code of laws, drawn from the Scriptures, should be compiled for the government of the Church; that a visitation of all the cities and large towns of the kingdom should take place, and the condition of the nation be accurately reported on; and that zealous and faithful men should not be extruded from the ministry simply because they objected to vestments and ceremonies.¹ The substance of the Supplication would seem to have been embodied in sixteen articles, and sent up from the Parliament to the House of Lords, requesting "reformation or alteration of the customs and practices of the Church established." It was answered by the two archbishops and Cowper, Bishop of Winchester, but nothing more came of it.²

The Supplication originated with the Puritans, being drawn up, it is believed, by Mr. Thomas Sampson, a man of some eminence among them. We have seen the first outbreak of that famous but unhappy strife at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. The battle begun on that diminutive stage was continued on the wider theatre of England after the accession of Elizabeth. The Marian exiles had contracted a love for the simple polity and worship that existed in the Reformed Churches of Switzerland, Geneva, and some parts of Germany, and on their return to England they sought to establish the same order in their native land. Aiming at this greater purity and simplicity, they were styled Puritans. In the famous Convocation of the Lower House, in 1562, the Puritan party were the majority of those present, but they were outvoted by proxies on the other side. In that assembly they contended for the abrogation of vestments, copes, surplices, and organs in Divine worship; against lay baptism, and the sign of the cross in baptism. As to kneeling at the Lord's Supper, they urged that it might be left indifferent to the determination of the ordinary. The opposing theologians took their stand on Edward VI.'s Liturgy, contending that it should not be altered, and fortifying their position from the venerated names of Cranmer, Ridley, and others, by whom it had

¹ Strype, *Annals*; vol. iii., pp. 222–227.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii.; Appendix, xxxix.

been framed, and who had sealed their profession at the stake. Some of the greatest names in the Church of England of that day were friendly to the reform pleaded for by the Puritans. Among others, Grindal, Horn, Sandys, Jewell, Parkhurst, and Bentham shared these sentiments. On the return of these scholars and theologians to England, they were offered bishoprics, but at first declined them, finding the queen inflexible on the question of ceremonies. But after consulting together and finding that these ceremonies were not in themselves sinful, and that the doctrine of the Church remained incorrupt, and that their brethren abroad counselled them to accept, lest the posts offered them should be filled by men hostile to the truth,¹ they came to the conclusion that it was their duty to accept consecration. But there were others, not less distinguished for piety and learning, who could not concur in this course, and who were shut out from the high offices for which their gifts so eminently qualified them. Among these were Miles Coverdale, John Fox the martyrologist, Laurence Humphrey, Christopher Goodman, William Whittingham, and Thomas Sampson. These things are not doctrines, it was argued by those who contended for ceremonies and vestments; they are but forms, they are matters of indifference. If they be indifferent and not vital, it was replied, why force them upon us to the wounding of our consciences, and at the risk of rending the Church of God? The charge of fanaticism was directed against the one side: that of intolerance was retorted upon the other. The aim of the Puritans, beyond doubt, was to perfect the Reformation which Cranmer had left incomplete.

The more eminent of Elizabeth's ministers of State were substantially with the Puritan party. Lord Burghley, Sir Francis Walsingham, the Earl of Bedford, Sir Francis Knollyes, were friendly to a yet greater reform in the Church of England, and disapproved of the rigour with which the Puritans were treated. The main difficulty lay with the queen. One of her leading aims was the reconciliation of English Papists, and hence her dread of a complete disseverance of the Church of England from that of Rome. She loved splendour in worship as well as in State affairs, and inheriting the imperiousness of her father, she deemed it intolerable that she should be thwarted in matters of rites and vestments. She hated the Puritans, she confiscated their goods, she threw them into prison, and in some instances she shed their blood. Penry had said that the queen, having mounted the throne by the help of the Gospel, would not permit the Gospel to extend beyond the point of her sceptre. He was condemned for felony, and hanged. Meanwhile the Reformation of the Church of England stood still.

¹ See Letter of P. Martyr to T. Sampson—*Zurich Letters*, 2nd Series, p. 84; Parker ed., 1846.

The destruction of the Armada solemnised the nation. It sounded like a great voice bidding them suspend their quarrels, and unite together in the work of Reformation, lest all parties should become the prey of a common foe. The years that followed were years of great prosperity and glory to England, but the queen's views did not enlarge, her policy did not meliorate, nor did her imperiousness abate. The principle of stability and development, that now began to give such proofs of its mightiness and to draw the eyes of the world upon England, was not planted in Elizabeth; it was rooted somewhere else. She valued the Reformation less for emancipating the conscience than for emancipating her crown. She laid most store upon it for rendering her kingdom independent abroad, not for purifying it at home. As a sovereign she had some good points, but not a few weak ones. She was vacillating, shuffling, at times deceitful; full of caprices and humours, and without strength of mind to pursue for any long time a high and courageous policy. When threatened or insulted she could assume an attitude and display a spirit that became a great sovereign, but she soon fell back again into her low, shifty policy. She possessed one great quality especially, namely, that of discerning who would prove able and upright servants. She always called strong men to her side, and though she delighted in ornamental men as courtiers, she would permit no hand but a skilful and powerful one to be laid on the helm of the State.

Elizabeth has been called great; but as her character and history come to be better understood, it is seen that her greatness was not her own, but that of the age in which she lived. She formed the centre of great events and of great men, and she could not escape being a partaker in the greatness of others, and being elevated into a stature that was not properly her own. The Reformation set England on high; and Elizabeth, as the first person in the State of England, was lifted up along with it.

We have now reached those twenty years (1588–1608) which may be regarded as constituting the era of the Protestant efflorescence in England. At this point two great Protestant streams unite, and henceforth flow together in the one mighty flood of British Protestantism. England and Scotland now combine to make one powerful Protestantism. It was not given to England alone, nor to Scotland alone, to achieve so great a work as that of consolidating and crowning the Reformation, and of presenting a Protestantism complete on both its political and religious sides to the nations of the earth for their adoption; this work was shared between the two countries. England brought a full political development, Scotland an equally full religious development; and these two form one entire and perfect Protestantism, which throw's its shield alike over the conscience and the person, over the spiritual and the temporal rights of man.

Of all the various forces that act on society, Protestantism, which is Religion, is by far the most powerful. "Christ brings us out of bondage into liberty," said Calvin, "by means of the Gospel." These words contain the sum of all sound political philosophy. Protestantism first of all emancipates the conscience; and from this fortress within the man it carries its conquests all over the world that lies without him. Protestantism had now been the full space of a generation in England, and the men who had been born and trained under it, gave proof of possessing faculties and cherishing aspirations unknown to their fathers. They were a new race, in short. Elizabeth pressed upon the Reformation with the whole weight of the royal supremacy, and the added force of her despotic maxims; but that could not break the spring of the mighty power against which she leaned, nor prevent it lifting up her people into freedom. Protestantism had brought the individual Englishman to the Bible; it taught him that it was at once his duty and his right to examine it, to judge for himself as to what it contained, and to act upon his independent judgment; and the moment he did so he felt that he was a new man. He had passed from bondage into freedom, as respects that master faculty that gives motion and vigour to all the rest, namely, conscience. As the immediate consequence, the human mind, which had slept through the Middle Ages, awoke in a strength and grandeur of faculty, a richness and beauty of development, which it had exhibited in no former age. England underwent a sudden and marvellous transformation.

In returning to the right road as respects religion, England found that she had returned to the right road as respects government, as respects science, and letters—in short, that she had discovered the one true path to national greatness. The same method—the Inductive—which had put her in possession of a Scriptural faith, would, she saw, as certainly conduct her to freedom in the State. Turning from the priest, England went to the Bible, the great storehouse of revealed truth, and she found there all that was to be believed, and all that was to be done. She adopted the same method in her inquiry after what was true and good in civil government. She looked at the principles of justice and order on which human society has been constituted by its Author, and framing these into law, she found that she had arrived at the right science of political government. Instead of the teaching of the priest, England, in adopting the Reformation, substituted the writing of God in the Bible as the basis of the Church. So in the State; instead of the arbitrary will of one man, England substituted as the basis of government the eternal writing of God, in the constitution which he has given to society. It was the same method with another application; and the consequence was that the political constitution of England, which had remained at the same point for two centuries, now began to make progress, and the despotic rods of the Tudors to be transformed into the constitutional sceptres of the princes of the House of Orange.

The same method was pursued in philosophy and science, and with the same result. "If," said Bacon, laying hold of the great principle of the Reformers, "if we would have a really true and useful science, we must go forth into the world of Nature, observe her facts, and study her laws." The key by which the Reformation opened the path to the one true religion, was that which Bacon employed to open the path to true science. And what a harvest of knowledge has since been reaped! The heavens stood unveiled; every star unfolded the law by which it is hung in the vault above; every flower, and crystal, and piece of matter, animate and inanimate, organic and inorganic, disclosed its secret properties, affinities, and uses. Then arose the sciences of astronomy, of chemistry, and others, which are the foundation of our arts, our mechanics, our navigation, our manufactures, and our agriculture. In a word, out of the principle first proclaimed in modern times by the Reformation, has come the whole colossal fabric of our industrial skill, our mechanical power, our agricultural riches, and our commercial wealth. In fine, from the great fundamental principle of Protestantism, which is the substitution of a Divine for a human authority, came our literature. Thought, so far as thinking to any good purpose was concerned, had slept for long centuries, and would have awaked no more, had it not been touched by the Ithuriel spear of Protestantism. It was long since one really great or useful work, or one really new idea, had been given to the world. A feeble dawn had preceded the Reformation, the fall of the Eastern Empire having compelled a few scholars, with their treasures of Greek lore, to seek asylum in the West. But that dawn might never have been, but for the desire which Wicliffe had originated to possess the Scriptures in the original tongues. It is also to be borne in mind that the great intellects that arose in Italy in the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, though living in the communion of the Roman Church, and devoting, in the instance of some of them, their genius to her service, had in heart left her theology, and found their way to the Cross. Dante, Petrarch, Michael Angelo, Torquato Tasso, Ariosto, and others owed the emancipation of their genius to their belief in the Evangelical faith. The great poet, painter, and sculptor, Michael Angelo, who reared the dome of St. Peter's and painted the Sistine, thus sings:—

"Ah! what does sculpture, what does painting prove,
When we have seen the Cross, and fixed our eye
On Him whose arms of love were there outspread?"¹

¹ Glassford, *Lyrical Compositions from the Italian Poets*, p. 55; Edin., 1846. The original is still more pointed— *Che aperse in croce a prender noi le braccia*" (The arms which were stretched out upon the cross to lay hold of us). M. Angelo and Ariosto were born in 1474.

It is the same Evangelical faith—the bondage of the will by sin, and salvation of God—which Ariosto embodies in the following lines:—

“How shall my cold and lifeless prayer ascend,
Father of mercies, to thy seat on high,
If, while my lips for thy deliverance cry,
My heart against that liberty contend?
* * * * *
To spare offenders, being penitent,
Is even ours; to drag them from the pit,
Themselves resisting, Lord, is thine alone.”¹

In all the countries of the Reformation a great intellectual awaking was the immediate consequence of the introduction of Protestantism. Geneva and Zurich became centres of literary light and industrial activity; the Huguenots were the first soldiers, writers, merchants, and artisans of France. Holland became as renowned for letters and arts in the years that succeeded its great struggle, as it had been for arms when contending against Spain. But it was in England that the great intellectual outburst attendant on the Reformation culminated. There mind opened out into an amplitude of faculty, a largeness of judgment, a strength and subtlety of reason, and a richness, boldness, and brilliancy of imagination, of which the world had seen no similar example, and which paled even the brightest era of classic times. By one quality were all the great thinkers and writers who illuminated the horizon of England in the Elizabethan age marked, namely, great creative power; and that eminently is the product of Protestantism. To it we owe our great thinkers and writers. Had not the Reformation gone before, Bacon would never have opened the path to true science; Shakspeare’s mighty voice would have been dumb for ever; Milton would never have written his epic; nor would John Bunyan have told us his dream; Newton would never have discovered the law of gravitation; Barrow would never have reasoned; nor would Taylor, Baxter, Howe, and many more ever have discoursed; not one of these deathless names would have been known to us, nor would England or the world ever have possessed one of their immortal works.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.