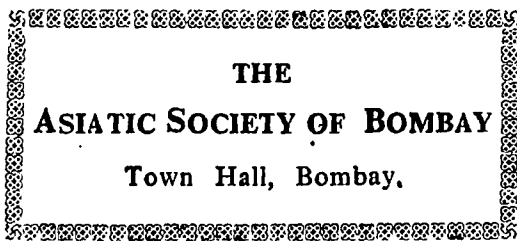




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**THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY**
Town Hall, Bombay.

CHARLES KNIGHT'S
POPULAR
HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

“The harvest gathered in the fields of the Past is to be brought home for the use of the Present.”—DR. ARNOLD, *Lectures on Modern History*.

VOL. II.

FROM THE REIGN OF RICHARD II. TO THE REIGN OF EDWARD VI.



HENRY III



EDWARD I

THE POPULAR
HISTORY OF ENGLAND:

An Illustrated History

OF SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT FROM THE EARLIEST
PERIOD TO OUR OWN TIMES.

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BY CHARLES KNIGHT.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.—A.D. 1377 to A.D. 1399.

Constitutional Principles developed in the Reign of Richard II.—Coronation of Richard II.—Council of Regency—Wars with France and Scotland—Capitation Tax—Poll Tax—Insurrection of 1381—The Insurgents in London—Suppression of the Insurrection—Wycliffe's Opinions coincident with the Insurrection—Preachers of Heresies—Translation of the Bible into English—Contest with the Pope—English Literature and Language—Statutes of Wages—Labourers in Husbandry—Games—Sanitary Laws—State Interference in Social Affairs 1—18

CHAPTER II.—A.D. 1382 to A.D. 1399.

Family Dissensions—The King's Guardians—Conduct of the War with France—Suspicions of Lancaster—Scots and Frenchmen cross the Border—War with Scotland—Projected Invasion of England by France—Disputes of the King and the Parliament—Commission of Regency—Secret Council of the King—Gloucester and other Nobles take Arms—The King's advisers declared Traitors—Battle of Otterbourne—Richard assumes the Government—Truce with France and Scotland—Richard in Ireland—His Marriage with Isabella of France—The King becomes despotic—*Coup d'état*—Murder of Gloucester—Quarrel of Hereford and Norfolk—Their Banishment—Wretched Condition of the Country—Death of John of Gaunt—Richard seizes his Possessions—The King goes to Ireland—Richard in Ireland—Henry of Lancaster lands at Ravenspur—Betrayal of Richard by the Percies—Captivity of Richard—A Parliament called—Richard's Deposition—Henry claims the Kingdom 19—38

CHAPTER III.—A.D. 1399 to A.D. 1413.

Hereditary pretensions of Henry of Lancaster to the Crown—Edmund Mortimer—Conspiracy against Henry defeated—Revolt of the Welsh—Owen Glendower—Alleged Murder of Richard II.—Doubts as to his Death at Pontefract—Statute against the Lollards—Burnings for Heresy—Hostility of France and Scotland—Battle of Homildon-hill—Revolt of the Percies—Battle of Shrewsbury—Revolt of Archbishop Scrope, Nottingham, and others—Rival Factions in France—The King's Jealousy of the Prince of Wales—Henry's Death 39—52

CHAPTER IV.—A.D. 1413 to A.D. 1415.

Henry V. proclaimed King—Sir John Oldcastle condemned as a Heretic—Henry's Demands upon France for large Territories—Resolves to claim the Crown of France—Conspiracy of Cambridge, Scrope, and Grey—Henry and his Army sail to Harfleur—Siege of Harfleur—Sickness of the English—March from Harfleur—Passage of the Somme—The French Army—Agincourt and its locality—The Battle of Agincourt 53—64

had bribed—Arrests in Ireland—Statute regarding Allegiance to a King de facto—Richard, so-called, in Scotland—Correspondence of Bothwell—Difficulties of an Imposture—Invasion by the Scots—The Cornish Insurrection—Captivity of the Adventurer—Alleged Treason of the Earl of Warwick—Warwick and his Fellow-Prisoner executed 220—233

CHAPTER XV.—A.D. 1501 to A.D. 1509.

Edmund de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk—Marriage of Prince Arthur to Catherine of Aragon—The Court of Henry VII.—Henry's Passion for Wealth—Treaty with Scotland—Death of Prince Arthur—Contract of Prince Henry with Arthur's Widow—Death of Henry VII.—Extortions through Empson and Dudley—Tendency towards absolute Monarchy—Few Parliaments during this Reign—State of the Clergy—Monastic Establishments—Population—Agriculture—Maritime Discovery—Commerce—Regulations of Internal Trade—Wages—Vagrancy—Criminal Laws—Public Health—Feasts—National Pride—Pageants—Sports 234—256

CHAPTER XVI.—A.D. 1509 to A.D. 1513.

Accession of Henry VIII.—Conviction of Empson and Dudley—Marriage of Henry with Catherine of Aragon—Their Coronation—The young King's Sports and Feats of Arms—Impending War with France—The Balance of Power—Alleged Reasons for the War—The Pope to be supported—Causes of Quarrel with Scotland—English Expedition to Spain—Wolsey the real Minister—Rise of Wolsey—Naval Warfare—Ravages on the Coasts—Henry's Expedition to France—Siege of Terouenne—Maximilian joins the English Army—Battle of the Spurs—Capitulation of Tournay—James IV. invades England—Battle of Flodden Field—Death of James IV. 257—272

CHAPTER XVII.—A.D. 1513 to A.D. 1521.

Ravages in Scotland, and on the Coasts of the Channel—Peace with France and Scotland—Francis I. and Charles of Spain—Conquest of Milan—Wolsey, Cardinal and Legate—Position of the Church—Affair of Richard Hunne—Ostentation of Wolsey—Continental Policy—Election for the Empire—Proposed Meeting between Henry and Francis—Arrival of Charles at Dover—The Embarkation—Characteristics of the two Kings—Field of the Cloth of Gold—Meeting with Charles V.—Conviction and Execution of the Duke of Buckingham 273—288

CHAPTER XVIII.—A.D. 1521 to A.D. 1525.

Luther—King Henry writes a Book against his Doctrines—His Title of Defender of the Faith—League and War against France—Wolsey levies Contributions on Property—Jealousy of Foreigners—Evil May-Day—A Parliament assembled—Great Debate upon the Demand for a Subsidy—Affairs of Scotland—Siege of Jedburgh—Duke of Suffolk makes War in France—Battle of Pavia—Francis a Prisoner—Taxes levied without Authority of Parliament—Insurrection in Suffolk—The illegal Demand abandoned 289—303

CHAPTER XIX.—A.D. 1525 to A.D. 1529.

Release of the King of France—Spirit of the Italians—The Sack of Rome—Character of the Armies at Rome—The Divorce of Queen Catherine agitated—Difficulties of Wolsey—His Embassy to France—He returns to new Difficulties—Anne Boleyn at the English Court—War declared against the Emperor—Commission from the Pope on the Question of the Divorce—Cardinal Campegius in England as Legate with Wolsey—Interview of the Legates with Catherine—Temper of the People in England—Opening of the Legatine Commission—Wolsey surrenders the Great Seal 301—320

CHAPTER XX.—A.D. 1529 to A.D. 1531.

	PAGE
Wolsey quits York Place — His progress to Esher — Thomas Cromwell — He defends Wolsey in Parliament — Sir Thomas More, Chancellor — Statutes against Ecclesiastical Abuses — Resistance of the Clergy — Burning of the Scriptures — Heresy — The King discharged of his Debts by Statute — Christmas at Greenwich — Embassy to the Pope — Cranmer — Opinions of the Universities on the Divorce — Wolsey in his See of York — His Popularity — Is arrested on a Charge of Treason — His Death, and the King's Lament	321—335

CHAPTER XXI.—A.D. 1531 to A.D. 1533.

A Great Field of English History now to be entered upon — The Clergy visited with heavy Penalties for submitting to Wolsey as Legate — The Pope's Sentence on the Divorce still protracted — The Pope threatened — Frith and Tyndale, the Reformers — Act regulating Payment of Annates to Rome — Retirement of More — His official character — Severe Laws — The Poisoner's Cauldron — Laws against Gipsies — Laws against Vagabonds — Infamous Severity of the Statute against Vagabonds of 1536 — Henry and Anne Boleyn in France — Marriage of Henry with Anne — Cranmer elevated to the Primacy — He pronounces the Marriage of Henry with Catherine unlawful — Coronation of Queen Anne — Catherine's Refusal to accept the Title of Princess Dowager	336—348
---	---------

CHAPTER XXII.—A.D. 1533 to A.D. 1535.

Birth of the Princess Elizabeth — Preparations for throwing off the Papal Power — Statute of Appeals to Rome — Cranmer's Judgment declared Illegal by Brief of the Pope — Statute for Punishment of Heresy — Burning of Frith — Act of Succession — Elizabeth Barton, the Holy Maid of Kent — Her Execution with others — Fisher included in the Attainder — Sir Thomas More implicated — Oath to be taken according to the Act of Succession — Fisher and More, declining to swear to the Preamble, sent to the Tower — Act of Supremacy — First Fruits and Tenths given to the King — New Definitions of Treason — The Monks of the Charterhouse refuse to acknowledge Henry the Head of the Church — Their Execution — Burning of Hollanders for Heresy — Fisher and More decline to make Answer to Questions as to the Supremacy — Their Condemnation — Their Deaths	349—364
--	---------

CHAPTER XXIII.—A.D. 1535 to A.D. 1536.

Cromwell Vicegerent — Visitation of the Monasteries — Delinquencies of Monastic Inmates, in some Cases — Official Corruption — Examples of Duty performed by male and female Heads of Houses — Dissolution of the smaller Monasteries — Parliamentary Attempts to regulate Prices and the Quality of Manufactures — Such endeavours Futile or Injurious — Death of Queen Catherine — Dangers of Anne Boleyn — May-day at Greenwich — Previous Summoning of a special Commission — Arrests — Queen Anne imprisoned in the Tower — Her Deportment — Her Letter to the King — Cranmer's Letter to him — True Bills found against Anne, her Brother, and four others — Trial of the four Commoners — Trial of Anne Boleyn and Lord Rochford — Execution of the five Men pronounced guilty — Account of the Execution of Anne by an Eye-witness — Marriage of Henry to Jane Seymour — General Remarks on the question of Anne Boleyn's Guilt or Innocence — Parliament and a new Law of Succession — The Princess Mary	365—384
---	---------

CHAPTER XXIV.—A.D. 1515 to A.D. 1538.

Ireland — Its Condition in the Early Part of the Reign of Henry VIII. — The English Pale — Regions beyond the Pale — Report on the State of Ireland — Surrey, Lieutenant-Governor — The Earl of Kildare arrested — Rebellion of 1534 — Thomas Fitzgerald — Murder of Archbishop Allen — Progress of the Rebellion — Fitzgerald surrenders — He and his Uncles attainted and executed — Violated Promises — Supremacy of Henry established — Selfish Policy of the Government — Disregard of the real Welfare of the Country — Attempts to make Ireland yield Revenue — Irish Fashions of Dress — Character of the Natives	385—396
---	---------

CHAPTER XXV.—A.D. 1536 to A.D. 1539.

PAGE

Three Years without an English Parliament—Proclamation for the Abolition of Holidays—The Lincolnshire Insurrection—Demands of the Insurgents—The King's Answer—The Yorkshire Insurrection—The Lancaster Herald at Pomfret—Negotiations with the Yorkshire Rebels—They disperse—Disturbed State of the Northern Counties—Second Rebellion—The Rebels defeated—Executions—Martial Law proclaimed—Birth of Prince Edward—Death of Queen Jane—Immediate Proceedings for a new Marriage of the King—Position of Cranmer and Cromwell—The Bible set up in Parish Churches—Anomalies of the Reformation—Papists and Heretics—Trial of Lambert before Henry—Burnings in Smithfield—Surrenders of the larger Religious Houses—Visitations of the Commissioners—Relics and Images—"Abomination of Living" in Monasteries—Concealment of Property—Abbot of Glastonbury—Deprivations—Pensions to Monks—Plunder and Favouritism—Destruction of Monastic Houses	397—414
---	---------

CHAPTER XXVI.—A.D. 1539 to A.D. 1540.

Parliament of 1539—Conformable Knights and Burgesses—A tractable Parliament the Instrument of Tyranny—Complaints against the Suppression of the Abbeys—Act for the King to make Bishops—Application of the Revenues of Religious Houses—Six new Bishoprics—Destruction of the Hospital of St. John—The Six Articles—Penalties under the Statute in which they are declared—Latimer and Shaxton resign their Bishoprics—Reformers executed or expatriated—Arrests of the Polo Family, and Convictions—Margaret, Countess of Salisbury—Anne of Cleves—Her Progress to England—The King and his Bride—The Marriage declared invalid—Fall of Cromwell—His Attainder—Queen Catherine Howard	415—430
--	---------

CHAPTER XXVII.—A.D. 1540 to A.D. 1547.

Three Priests burned as Heretics—Three Priests hanged as Traitors—Other Executions for denying the Supremacy—Queen Catherine Howard appears in Public—Her Shame discovered—Cranmer's Letter to Henry—Mercy promised to be extended towards her—Act of Attainder against her and Lady Rochford—New Law of Treason—Catherine Parr—War with Scotland and with France—State of Scotland under James V.—David Beaton—The first Scottish Reformer—Efforts to stop the Progress of Lutheran Opinions—James rejects the Overtures of Henry—Invasion of Scotland by Forces of the Duke of Norfolk—James deserted by his Nobles—Flight of Solway Moss—Death of James—Birth of the Princess Mary of Scotland—Treaty for a Marriage between Prince Edward and the Infant Princess—The Treaty broken off—Invasion of Scotland by Earl of Hertford—Edinburgh taken—Kelso destroyed—Jedburgh burnt—Ravages of the Southern districts—Proposition to assassinate Cardinal Beaton—He is murdered in the following Year—France invaded by Henry in Person—Boulogne besieged and taken—Francis and the Emperor conclude a Peace—Attempts of France to invade England—French make continued Efforts to retake Boulogne—Peace with France, in which Scotland is included—Persecutions for Heretical Opinions—Burning of Heretics at Windsor—Cranmer suspected of Heresy—Anne Askew and others burnt as Heretics—Queen Catherine Parr in Danger—Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Surrey arrested—Surrey convicted of High Treason and beheaded—Norfolk attainted—Death of King Henry VIII.	431—453
---	---------

CHAPTER XXVIII.—A.D. 1547.

General Notice of the Condition of England about the Middle of the Sixteenth Century—Sources of Information—Population—Parish Registers—Capital—Taxation—England a lightly-taxed Nation in these Times—Evasions of Subsidies—Sources of Revenue—The Royal Household—Military Expenditure—Military Organisation—Archery—The Navy—Defence of the Coasts—Civil Administration—Despotism of the Government—Bribery—Small Salaries of Officers—Parliaments—Their Subserviency—The Nobility and Gentry—Justices of the Peace—Merchants become Landed Men—Commercial Spirit entering into Rural Affairs—Aspect of the Country	
--	--

	PAGE
Districts—Inclosures—Monastic Lands let as Copyholds—New Distribution of Land—Effects upon the Labouring Population—Common and Several—Inclosures defended—The Statute of Vagabonds indicates an exceptional State of Society—Its Horrible Enactments—The Statute repealed—Offences against Property—Impostors—Agricultural Industry—Distribution of the Produce of Land—Dearth—Rise of Rents and Prices of Commodities—Attempts to keep down Prices and force Sales—Debasement of the Coinage—Effects upon Prices at Home and upon Exchange Abroad—Sufferings of the Labourers	454—475

CHAPTER XXIX.—A.D. 1547.

General Notice of England, <i>continued</i> —Decay of Towns—Growth of Villages—Ports—Coal Trade—Building—Paving in London—Sewers—Highways—Conduits—Washing-grounds—Lighting of London—Watermen of London—Burying in Towns—Wholesale Traders—Foreign Trade—Fairs and Markets—Inns—Insecurity of Travelling—Frauds—Increase of Luxury—Moral and Intellectual Progress—Various Forms of Church Service—Dissensions and Scoffings—Holidays—Popular Sports—Prohibited Books—Popular Reading—Mysteries and Miracle Plays—The Drama—Education of the Young—Schools—Universities—Physicians and Surgeons—Barber-Surgeons—Empirical Remedies—Painting—Holbein	476—499
--	---------

**

TABLE OF CONTEMPORARY SOVEREIGNS	500
--	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

PORTRAITS ON STEEL.

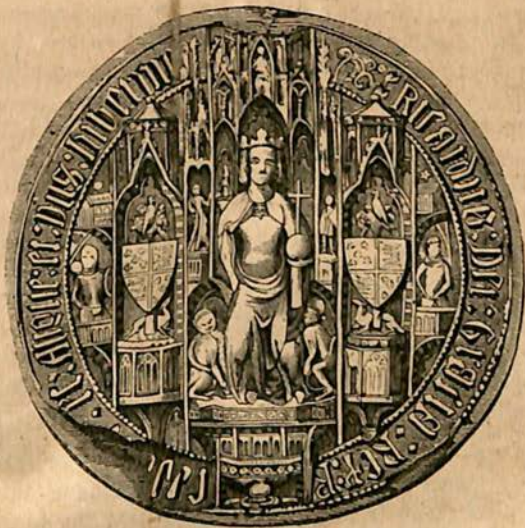
HENRY III.—EDWARD I.	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
EDWARD II.—EDWARD III.	<i>to face page</i> 1
RICHARD II.—HENRY IV.	65
HENRY V.—HENRY VI.	129
EDWARD IV.—EDWARD V.—RICHARD III.	193
HENRY VII.—HENRY VIII.	257
EDWARD VI.—QUEEN MARY	321
QUEEN ELIZABETH.—MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS	385

WOOD ENGRAVINGS.

PAGE	PAGE	PAGE
Great Seal of Richard II.	Banners used in the Battle of Agincourt	Privy Seal of Henry VI.
Groat of Richard II.	64	Autograph of Henry VI.
Specimen from a Copy of Wycliffe's Bible, in the British Museum	65	Framlingham Castle
Gower's Monument in the Church of St. Mary Overies Playing at Draughts. (Harl. MS. 4481.)	66	Caister Castle
Convocation of Clergy	66	Seal of Warwick
The Quarrel of Hereford and Norfolk	68	Criminals conducted to Death. (Harleian MS.)
Alnwick Castle	69	Gentlewomen spinning with the Distaff. (Harl. MSS.)
Black Gate, Newcastle	74	Herstoncoaux Castle, Sussex
Male Costume, Time of Richard II.	76	Doorway, King's College Chapel, Cambridge
Female Costume, Time of Richard II.	76	Ockwells Manor-house
Ancient Gate of Coventry	80	House built of stone at Grantham, Lincolnshire
Tournament	81	Mummers. (Bodleian MS.)
The Tower, from the Thames Monumental Brass of Eleanor Bohun	82	Mode of Sealing a Letter
Coronation of Henry IV. (Harleian MS.)	82	Great Seal of Henry VI.
Seal of Owen Glendower	82	London Stone
Lollards' Prison	82	Nave of St. Alban's Abbey
Warkworth Castle	82	Baynard's Castle
Tomb of Henry IV. and his Queen, at Canterbury Cathedral	82	Ancient Thoroughfare from Westminster to London, restored
A Parliament in the Time of Henry V.	82	142
Half-groat of Henry V.	82	Battle of St. Alban's
Signature of Henry V.	82	Signature of Edward IV. R.E.
Henry V. being armed by his Esquires	82	Great Seal of Edward IV. Reverse
Robert Chamberlain, Esquire to Henry V.	82	149
		Half-groat of Edward IV.
		Angel of Edward IV.
		Queen Elizabeth Woodville
		A Herald reading a Proclamation
		160
		Plan of the Tower of London
		Monk Bar, York
		Court of Edward IV.
		Court Fool and Buffoon. (Harl. MS. 4379.)
		170

PAGE		PAGE		PAGE		
	Earl Rivers presenting his book, written by Caxton, to Edward IV.	171	Picture in Greenwich Hospital).	266	Reading Abbey, as the Ruins appeared in 1721	307
	The Sanctuary at Westminster, from a Sketch in 1775	178	Battle of the Spurs. (From the ancient Picture at Hampton Court.)	269	The Hock-Cart	308
	Signature of Edward V.	179	Signature of Henry VIII. (Cotton MS. Vespasian F. 18)	270	Henry VIII delivering the Bible to Cranmer and Cromwell	406
	Chapel of Ely House, Holborn	181	Sword and Dagger of James IV., and two Knight's Banners, used at the Battle of Flodden Field	272	Trial of Lambert in Westminster Hall	407
	The Great Hall, Crosby Place	185	Henry VIII. and his Council. (From Hall's Chronicle, 1548.)	273	Elm formerly in St. Paul's Churchyard, on the spot where the Cross stood	410
	The Hall, Guildhall	186	Charles V. of Spain	280	Glastonbury	411
	Anne, Queen of Richard III.	189	Embarkation of Henry VIII. at Dover	283	Evesham	414
	The Bloody Tower	192	The Field of the Cloth of Gold	285	St. John's Gate. (From Hollar)	415
	Great Seal of Richard III.	193	Bas-relief. Meeting of Henry and Francis	288	An English Abbess	421
	Signature of Richard III.	195	Wolsey and his Suite	289	Calais from the Sea. (From an old Print.)	424
	Bas-relief on Gutenberg's Monument: Examining a Matrix	200	Luther, Medal of	291	Anne of Cleves. (From a Painting by Holbein.)	425
	Cold Harbour	201	Reverse of Medal of Luther	291	Queen Catherine Howard. (From a Painting by Vander Werf.)	429
	Female Costume in the Time of Richard III.	202	Shilling of Henry VIII.	292	Sandown Castle; one of the Fortresses erected by Henry VIII. in apprehension of an Invasion by Allies of the Pope	430
	Groat of Richard III.	203	Playing at Bucklers. Maids dancing for Garlands	293	Palace of Nonsuch, built by Henry VIII.	431
	Badge of Richard III.	207	General Costume in the Reign of Henry VIII.	294	Queen Catherine Parr. (From a Painting by Holbein.)	434
	Groat Seal of Henry VII.	208	English Foot-Soldier	298	Kolso	438
	Elizabeth, Queen of Henry VII. (From the Tomb in his Chapel at Westminster.)	210	Remains of the Gate House of Wolsey's College, Ipswich	304	Jedburgh	439
	A Knight armed. (Reign of Henry VII.)	213	Brass of Sir Thomas Bullon, in Hever Church	312	Henry VIII. in his later Armour	443
	Bermondsey. — Remains of the Conventual Buildings	215	Christchurch in the Sixteenth Century	315	Burning of Peerson, Testwood, and Filmer	447
	Foot-Soldier of the Time of Henry VII.	218	Wolsey's Tower at Esher	321	Burning of Anne Askew and others	449
	Sovereign of Henry VII.	220	Wolsey's Groat	323	Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey	452
	Autograph of Henry VII.	230	James Baynham doing Penance	327	Autograph of Henry VIII.	453
	Perkin Warbeck's Groat; a Silver Coin, in the British Museum	233	Ruins of Leicester Abbey	335	Edward VI. and his Council	454
	Statue of Lord Bacon, the Historian of Henry VII., at St. Alban's	234	Queen Anne Boleyn. (From a Painting by Holbein.)	336	St. Stephen's Chapel	463
	Ludi, or Court-Masqueradings. (Harleian MS. 4079.)	237	The Guard Room, Lambeth Palace	345	Shilling of Edward VI.	475
	Mummers	238	Old Palace at Greenwich	346	House formerly standing at the corner of Chancery Lane, in Fleet Street. Temp. Edward VI.	476
	Richmond Palace. (From an old Drawing, engraved in "Vetusta Monumenta.")	239	London Bridge, Southwark side	349	Old House, formerly at Warwick	479
	Henry VII.'s Chapel	240	Smithfield, in the Sixteenth Century	351	Lincoln's Inn Gateway	480
	Walsingham Abbey	245	Court-a-Street Chapel, in the Parish of Aldington, Kent	353	Bayswater Conduit	481
	Erasmus	247	A Carthusian	358	Public Washing Grounds	482
	Agricultural Implements	248	Cloisters, Charter House	360	Sir Thomas Gresham	483
	Henry VII.'s Trial of Weights and Measures. (From Harl. Coll.)	251	Dutch Printing Office	361	Wharf of the Almayn Merchants of the Still-yard	484
	General Costume in the Reign of Henry VII.	253	Lord Cromwell	365	General Costume of the Time of Edward VI.	487
	Maypole before St. Andrew Undershaft	255	Fountains Abbey	367	Ancient Parsonage at Lynton	488
	Great Seal of Henry VIII.	257	Queen Jane Seymour. (From a Drawing by Holbein.)	379	The Robin Hood Procession	490
	Queen Catherine. (From a Miniature by Holbein.)	258	St. Peter's Chapel in the Tower of London	381	The Bear at the Stake	491
	Henry VIII. in his Suit of Tilting Armour	259	Irish Chieftains. (Illumination in Harleian MS.)	385	Chained Bible	493
	Henry VIII. Maying at Shooter's Hill	261			Coventry Mystery	494
	Henri Grace Dieu. (From a					





Great Seal of Richard II.

POPULAR HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

Constitutional principles developed in the reign of Richard II.—Coronation of Richard—Council of Regency—Wars with France and Scotland—Capitation Tax—Poll Tax—Insurrection of 1381—The insurgents in London—Suppression of the insurrection—Wycliffe's opinions coincident with the insurrection—Preachers of heresies—Translation of the Bible into English—Contest with the Pope—English literature and language—Statutes of Wages—Labourers in husbandry—Games—Sanitary Laws—State interference in social affairs.

RYMER, our laborious historiographer, describes the reign of Richard II. as "a reign which affords but little matter that may shine in history, and cannot boast of any one great and distinguished captain, any one memorable battle, nor one important siege; no proceeding to St. Paul's, no Te Deum for victory."* To us, who regard battles, and sieges, and processions, and Te Deums, as less important matter for history than the progress of the people, the reign of Richard II. is one of the most interesting in our annals. In this reign, the great constitutional principles of our government were most strikingly exhibited in their practical efficiency. In this reign the power of the Commons was more signally displayed than at any previous period, in demanding administrative reform as the condition of voting supplies; in the

* Dedication to Queen Anne of vol. vii. of the *Fœdera*.

impeachment of those who were considered as the evil advisers of the crown ; and in strenuously insisting that the public liberties, secured by statutes and charters, should not be infringed upon by a king who had manifest tendencies towards despotism. At one period, this despotism was nearly successful. For two years Richard was an uncontrolled tyrant. By what was unquestionably a national act, however accompanied by treachery and violence, the despot was deposed. In this deposition, all the forms which might appear to belong to a more advanced state of society were most carefully observed. The king, who neglected the duties of his station, and aimed at arbitrary power, was treated as a public delinquent ; and the general good was set forth as the ultimate end of all government. But this reign is also remarkable for the great insurrection of the humblest classes of society against the remnant of feudal oppressions ; and although the revolt was suppressed, and happily so, from that time the condition of the serf underwent a real mitigation ; and as serfdom gradually became altogether extinct, the free labourer, although subject to much injustice, gradually acquired some of the rights of an independent citizen. In the revolution of 1399, which placed Henry IV. upon the throne, we no longer see the violent act of a factious nobility, united as a caste, but the result of a general agreement of various orders of society, having a common interest in the maintenance of freedom. In that revolution, and in many other occurrences of this reign, we may trace the influence of a public opinion, emanating from men of different degrees, accustomed to manage their own affairs, and now more awakened than ever to think upon the relations in which the governed stood to the governing. How far the agitation of great religious questions impelled the political and social movements of the end of the fourteenth century, is also an interesting matter of consideration. But we cannot look back from this period to that of the Norman conquest, and still farther back to the Anglo-Saxon times, without being impressed with the constant operation of the law of progress—that law by which great changes of society are steadily effected, as the minds of men become more and more capable of receiving them. Long before the feudal system had entirely passed away, the ancient constitution was again and again modified by those principles which, without historical research, look like new elements of society. It was this gradual introduction of the popular element which saved England from the despotism which, in other countries, grew out of the institutions of the Middle Ages. One of the ablest reasoners of our time has said of the period of which we are now treating, “a multitude of analogies may be traced between the political institutions of France and England, but then the destinies of the two nations separated, and constantly became more unlike as time advanced.”* To use the words of the same writer, it was given to the English “gradually to modify the spirit of their ancient institutions without destroying them.” The French lost the great principle of freedom when, at the same time as that in which the Commons of England would permit no tax to be levied without the consent of the people, the nobility of France suffered the crown to impose taxes at its will, provided they themselves were exempt. “At that very time,” says M. de Tocqueville,

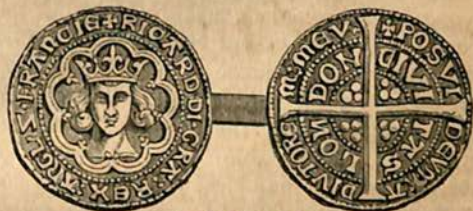
* Alexis de Tocqueville, “On the state of society in France before the Revolution of 1789,” translated by Henry Reeve, 1856, p. 181.

“ was sown the seed of almost all the vices, and almost all the abuses, which afflicted the ancient society of France during the remainder of its existence, and ended by causing its violent dissolution.”*

Edward III. was within a few hours of his last mortal agony, when a deputation of the citizens of London came to his grandson, Richard, and offering their support of his right to the crown, invited him to take up his residence in the Tower. The prince was then in his eleventh year. The same day, June 21, Edward died. On the 22nd, the boy king made his triumphal entry into London, amidst pageants and devices in every street, and conduits running with wine. The obsequies of his grandfather having been performed, Richard, on the 16th of July, was crowned at Westminster. The ceremonial was one of unusual magnificence; and the beautiful son of the idol of the people, receiving the homage of his uncles and the barons, and at the subsequent banquet creating earls and knights, may, in that solemnity, have been impregnated with those impressions of his own irresponsible greatness which appear to have clung to him through life. Some of the circumstances attending the accession of Richard may be attributed to the apprehensions that were entertained of the ambitious designs of

his uncle, John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster. The haste of the citizens of London to proffer their lives and fortunes, and the exaggeration with which the young king was gravely spoken of by great officers in church and state as a miracle of wisdom, were evidently calculated to reconcile the people to this shadow of a sovereign. The duke of Lancaster probably expected to be sole regent; but a temporary council was appointed, in which he took no

part. A parliament met in October, when, at the request of the Commons, the Lords, in the king's name, appointed nine persons to be a permanent council of the king; and it was resolved that, during the king's minority, the appointment of all the chief officers of the crown should be with the parliament. There was ill-concealed jealousy of Lancaster; and a speech which he made, demanding the punishment of those who spoke of him as a traitor, is upon the Rolls of Parliament. It was a serious time, when men's minds were excited by impending danger. The truce with France had recently expired: and not an hour was lost by Charles V. to renew hostilities in the way most offensive to the English. Commerce was interrupted; the sea-ports were burnt and ravaged; the Isle of Wight was plundered. To meet the expenses of a foreign armament, and of naval and land forces to protect the kingdom, a subsidy was granted. But two citizens of London, William Walworth and John Philpot, were sworn in parliament to be treasurers of the same, and strictly to apply the produce of the taxes to the support of the war. In this and immediately succeeding parliaments, the state of the nation was declared to be alarming. The wars of Edward III. had produced no perma-



Groat of Richard II.

* De Tocqueville, p. 182.

ment advantage; but had engendered a spirit of revenge which threatened the safety of England. There were enemies all around. France was active in her hostilities, in concert with Spain. The Scots, in 1378, burnt Roxburgh and captured Berwick. The great border-fortress was soon retaken, and a small gain was obtained by the cession of Cherbourg and Brest. But the duke of Lancaster was unsuccessful in an attack upon St. Malo, to whose relief the vigilant Du Guesclin came with a large army, and compelled the duke to retire to his ships. All the foreign enterprises of the English were futile and disastrous; and their cost produced general discontent. In addition to heavy duties on wool and leather, a capitation tax was granted in 1379. In principle this was an income tax, touching every person, from the duke, who was assessed at 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, to the labourer, who was called upon to pay 4*d.* for himself and his wife. The poll-tax of the next year was mainly granted for the support of a fruitless expedition to assist De Montfort, the duke of Brittany, against France. The earl of Buckingham, who had the command of this expedition, returned home with his army in great discontent; for De Montfort had concluded a pacific treaty with the French king. The expedition had no results. Its charges were very fatal. The poll-tax was essentially different from the direct tax of 1379. It was a tax of "three groats of every person of the kingdom, male or female, of the age of fifteen, of what state and condition soever, except beggars; the sufficient people in every town to contribute to the assistance of the less able, so as none paid above sixty groats, including himself and his wife."* How far the "sufficient people" contributed to the assistance of "the less able," may be inferred from the fact that very speedily "the less able" were in a state of insurrection. The pressure of the tax upon the humblest portion of the community, and the brutal manner in which it was enforced by the king's collector at Dartford, were the main causes, according to the chroniclers, of the revolt headed by Wat the Tyler. The tax was indeed as the match to the mine. The explosive materials had long been accumulating.

In the statutes of the first Parliament of Richard II., we have the earliest direct indications that the system of villanage was tottering to its fall. Complaint is made by lords and commons and men of Holy Church that in many seignories and parts of the realm, the villans and land-tenants in villanage, who owe services and customs to their lords, do day by day withdraw such services and customs; and by colour of certain exemplifications made out of the Book of Domesday of the manors and towns where they have been dwelling, and their evil interpretations of the same, affirm themselves to be utterly discharged of all manner of serfage, due as well of their body as of their said tenures. The Act goes on to point out the riotous assemblies and confederacies incited by counsellors and abettors, wherein it was agreed that every one should aid the other to resist their lords with strong hand. Such proceedings are to be put down by Special Commissions. We learn by this statute that it was not only the villans who resisted their lords in claiming "the franchise of their bodies," but the land-tenants, who sought "to change the position of their tenure and customs of old time due." There was an agitation of the social state which extended even further than

* Parliamentary History vol. i. p. 162.

the serfs and tenants in villanage. In the same parliament a statute was passed against "liveries;" by which we learn that "divers people of small revenue of land, rent, or other possessions, do make great retinue of people as well of esquires as of other, in many parts of the realm, giving to them hats and other liveries, of one suit by year, taking of them the value of the same livery, or perchance the double value, by such covenant and assurance that every one of them shall maintain the other in all quarrels." The "divers people of small revenue" were banding themselves together against the oppressions of the great proprietors. Serfs, petty tenants in villanage, freemen of small revenue, were all discovering that—as the country grew in wealth, as comforts were more diffused, as the citizens and burghers were for the most part free from feudal exactions, as even the serf who had lived a certain time in an incorporated town became free,—the cultivators, whether yeomen, or tenants, or labourers, had rights to maintain, and those who in rank and possessions were greatly above them had duties to discharge. We must especially notice the circumstance that those who claimed manumission relied upon their interpretation of the Domesday Record—which, to a great extent, had reference to the times of Edward the Confessor. They would go back to the Anglo-Saxon days to set aside the more extensive and more burdensome feudalities of the days since the Conquest. It was a demonstration of that national principle which has ever sought to build civil rights upon ancient foundations.

The insurrection of 1381, like most other attempts to obtain political justice by a tumultuous appeal to arms, was set on foot for the assertion of moderate demands, and became an occasion for havoc and bloodshed. The insurrection, however prepared by the confederacies for manumission, broke out in Kent through that manslaughter of the royal tax-collector by Wat the Tyler, which was the consequence of an outrageous insult, by the collector, on Tyler's daughter. The whole rural population of that district, in which the Saxon principle of personal independence had been cherished from generation to generation, flew to arms. The statistics, upon which the amount of taxes to be collected were founded, had always gone upon false estimates of the population. It could not be otherwise at a period when there was no system of registration. The collection of the poll-tax fell short of the required supply; and commissions were appointed to overlook the collectors, and rigidly enforce the levy. Men of Essex refused to answer the inquiries of the commissioners, and murdered officers of the commission. The same spirit of revolt existed in Suffolk and Norfolk. At Gravesend, a burgher had been claimed by his lord as a bondman, and was sent as a prisoner to Rochester Castle. The insurgents took the castle and liberated the burgher. But the great resistance to authority was under the leadership of Wat the Tyler, who associated with himself an itinerant preacher, John Ball, who, fourteen years before, had been excommunicated for preaching "errors, and schisms, and scandals against the pope, the archbishops, bishops, and clergy." To him is attributed the famous couplet—

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

Another priest, who assumed the name of Jack Straw, was connected with

the insurgents of Essex. Gathering large numbers of adherents from various parts, a vast body at length reached Blackheath. Some of the band had compelled the mayor and aldermen of Canterbury to swear fidelity to their cause, and many of the citizens had joined them in their march towards London. This was no sudden tumult of an isolated body of men, for the revolt extended from the coast of Kent to the Humber, and was organised in a remarkable manner by correspondence in letters which bore the signatures of Jack Milner, Jack Carter, Jack Trueman, and John Ball. The course of the insurgents was marked by the accustomed atrocities of ignorant men with weapons in their hands. It was not very likely, in an age when regular warfare was conducted without the slightest regard to the rights of humanity, that these rustics would exhibit the virtue of mercy which the lords of chivalry never cultivated. But in their destruction of property they would allow of no plunder for individual gain. As this rude army of a hundred thousand men approached London, there was, necessarily, universal consternation. The king, with members of his council, were in the Tower. The conduct of the royal youth was bold and energetic. He had left Windsor to meet the danger. On the 12th of June he descended the river in his barge. He was met with shouts and cries by the insurgents on the Rotherhithe bank, and his attendants would not permit him to land. That night, Southwark and Lambeth witnessed the demolition of the houses of the Marshalsea and of the King's Bench, and the sack of the palace of the archbishop of Canterbury. Out of Southwark they passed over London Bridge into the city on the following morning. They demolished Newgate, and burnt the duke of Lancaster's palace of the Savoy, and also the Temple. With the usual prejudice against foreigners, they butchered the Flemish artisans, wherever they were found. During this fearful day the king remained in the Tower. On the 14th of June, when Tower-hill was filled with this multitude, a herald made proclamation that the king would meet them at Mile-end. They moved off; and young Richard rode out of the Tower gates with a few followers, who were unarmed. He received the petition which the insurgents had drawn up. They demanded the abolition of slavery; the reduction of the rent of land to fourpence an acre; free liberty to buy and sell in all markets and fairs; and a general pardon for offences. Looking at the moderation of these demands it is difficult to believe that the objects of the insurrection were the destruction of all distinctions of rank, and the division of all property. Slavery was an unnatural condition, the more onerous where it existed at a time when it was gradually passing away, and which could not be long upheld by force. To limit the rent of land to fourpence an acre—a rate not much, if anything, below the average rental—was not more absurd than laws to limit the rate of wages and fix the price of provisions. To claim a liberty to buy and sell in all markets and fairs, was to assert a freedom of commercial intercourse which was greatly impeded by the charters of towns, and by the tolls which the lay and ecclesiastical lords exacted in every city and borough. These demands were agreed to by the king. The remaining hours of the day and the succeeding night were employed by many clerks in drawing up charters to the effect of the petition, for every parish and township. They were sealed the next morning; and the great body, chiefly the men of Essex and Hertfordshire, retired, bearing the king's banner. But the Kentish Tyler remained

in arms, with a body of the insurgents. He led his men into the Tower. They murdered the archbishop and other dignified persons, and drove the king's mother out of her lodgings. On the 17th, the king rode into Smithfield. The leader of the Kentish men, who had become insolent and ferocious in the hour of success, refused the charters which were offered to him. When he saw the king coming he halted his followers, and rode up to meet the youth, whose noble bearing would unquestionably have commanded the respect of Englishmen, and turned the tide of favour against the rebel. During their parley, Tyler put his hand upon his dagger, and touched the king's bridle. Walworth, the Lord Mayor of London, immediately stabbed him. The insurgents, when they saw their leader fall, bent their bows; but Richard, with the heroism of his race, galloped up to the astonished band, and exclaimed, "Tyler was a traitor—I will be your leader." They followed him to the fields of Islington, where a considerable force of citizens and others hastened to protect their king. There, the insurgents fell on their knees and implored his mercy. Richard commanded them to return to their homes; but would allow no attack to be made upon them by the forces which were gathering around him. In the eastern counties the insurrection was put down by Henry Spenser, known as the fighting bishop of Norwich. In a fortnight the charters were revoked by the king, and then followed, in every county, trials and executions to an enormous extent.

That the insurrection of 1381 was, in many districts, put down by means as violent and illegal as the outbreak, may be judged by the fact of a statute of indemnity being passed in parliament, for those who "made divers punishments upon the said villans and other traitors without due process of the law, and otherwise than the laws and usages of the realm required, although they did it of no malice prepensed, but only to appease and cease the apparent mischief." In the same statute all compulsory manumissions and releases were declared void. The parliament had been informed by the king that he had revoked all the charters of emancipation which he had been compelled to grant; but he submitted whether it would not be expedient to abolish the state of slavery altogether. That Richard was in this honestly advised, by counsellors who were far-seeing statesmen, we may well believe. With one accord the interested lords of the soil replied that they never would consent to be deprived of the services of their bondmen. But they complained of grievances less inherent in the structure of society—of purveyance; of the rapacity of law officers; of maintainers of suits, who violated right and law as if they were kings in the country; of excessive and useless taxation. These were evils which touched themselves. Slavery was an evil which to them was profitable, as they believed. We need not think too harshly of men to whom injustice had been familiarised by long ancestral usage.

In all the insurrectionary proceedings which so clearly indicated a condition of society in which those lowest in the social scale met with little consideration and no immediate redress, we cannot perceive, what has been maintained with a confidence very disproportioned to the evidence—that the "theory of property" expounded by Wycliffe, was a main cause of this anarchy—that "the new teaching received a practical comment in 1381, in the invasion of London by Wat, the Tyler of Dartford, and a hundred thousand men, who were to level all ranks, put down the church, and establish universal

liberty." * This unqualified statement is founded upon the very doubtful narrative of the chronicler Walsingham, as interpreted by Dr. Lingard. That historian says, "They (the villans) were encouraged by the diffusion of the doctrines of Wycliffe, that the right of property was founded in grace, and that no man, who was by sin a traitor to his God, could be entitled to the services of others." † Mr. Froude holds that "the theory, as an abstraction, applied equally to the laity as the clergy." Men like the rustics of Kent and Essex are not prone to act upon abstractions. Wycliffe taught, as others have taught after him, that "the clergy had no right to their tithes and temporal endowments except so far as they discharged faithfully their spiritual duties." ‡ The reformer considered the clergy as holding property as a direct recompense for service, the property being forfeit if the service were unperformed. A richly endowed church would necessarily take another view of the question, and denounce such doctrine as heretical. The experience of modern times has shown that it was not politic. Wycliffe's paramount grievance was the arrogance and the unchristian character of many who called themselves Vicars of Christ. To denationalise the clergy, by making them stipendiaries, was at that period to throw them completely under the influence of the papacy. Their landed possessions offered the best security for their patriotism and their civil obedience. But that Wycliffe's theory, so distinctly limited to ecclesiastical affairs, should have suggested the notion,—if the insurgents of 1381 ever did entertain such a notion,—that all property should be in common, appears to us irreconcilable with the ordinary course of human action. It is irreconcilable with their demand of a maximum for rent. The assumed connexion of "the new doctrine" with the insurrection may be attributed to the hostility with which the Lollard opinions were assailed by the misrepresentations of the apprehensive ecclesiastics and their historians. The agitation of Wycliffe and his followers was coincident with the insurrection of the villans, but it was not of necessity a cause. Agitation of any kind begets other agitation. But this was not the direct effect which some impute to the dissemination of Wycliffe's tenets.

Within a few months after the accession of Richard II., the rector of Lutterworth, in consequence of letters from the pope, was summoned before the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London, to answer for his opinions. He defended his doctrines, and was dismissed, with a direction to be cautious for the future. After the insurrection of 1381 had been quelled, a synod of divines was called, in which many of Wycliffe's opinions were censured as heretical, erroneous, and of dangerous tendency. To follow up their triumph, the prelates procured an Act to be passed by the Lords to the following effect:—That divers evil persons, under the dissimulation of great holiness, go about from county to county, and from town to town, "without the license of our holy father, the pope, or of the ordinaries of the places, or other sufficient authority, preaching daily, not only in churches and churchyards, but also in markets, fairs, and other open places." The sermons so preached, it is alleged, have been proved before the archbishop of Canterbury

* "History of England, by James Anthony Froude, M.A.," vol. ii. p. 19.

† Lingard, vol. iv. p. 236.

‡ See "An Apology for Lollard Doctrines, attributed to Wycliffe," Edited by J. H. Todd, D.D. Introduction, p. xxiv.

and the bishops and prelates, and a great part of the clergy, to contain heresies and notorious errors. Further it is said, "which persons do also preach divers matters of slander, to engender discord and dissension betwixt divers estates of the said realm, as well spiritual as temporal, in exciting of the people, to the great peril of all the realm." The Act then directs the sheriffs to hold such preachers and their abettors "in arrest and strong prison, till they will justify themselves according to the law and reason of holy church." This victory over the "poor preachers" was very short-lived. Wycliffe petitioned against the Act. The Commons represented that it had been passed without their consent. It was immediately repealed; and we hear nothing more in the legislative records about preachers of heresies, till, eighteen years afterwards, a law was passed to burn them. To us it appears manifest that, in repealing this Act, the parliament asserted its conviction that the heresies, the notorious errors, the matters of slander, which were preached in open places, had solely reference to the alleged corruptions of the Church, and that to subject the kingdom to the jurisdiction of the prelates, as the Act proposed,



I þe biginning was þe word ⁊ þe word was
 at god. ⁊ god was þe word þis was in þe big-
 nyng at god, alle þingz weren maad bi þim.
 and iuowten þur was maad no þing þat mi-
 þat was maad in þim was luf, and þe luf was
 þe luf of men, and luf schyneþ in derknessis and
 derknessis comprehenden not it.

Specimen from a Copy of Wycliffe's Bible, in the British Museum. Royal MS. I. C. viii.)

was to surrender the civil freedom which their ancestors had maintained. The men who refused to assent to the proposal of the king that slavery should be abolished, would have been ready enough to sanction the imprisonment of the preachers of universal equality, if such had been their doctrine. Undoubtedly Wycliffe himself did not hesitate to maintain that the revenues of the Church, applied, not to the service of the altar by its diligent ministers, but to the

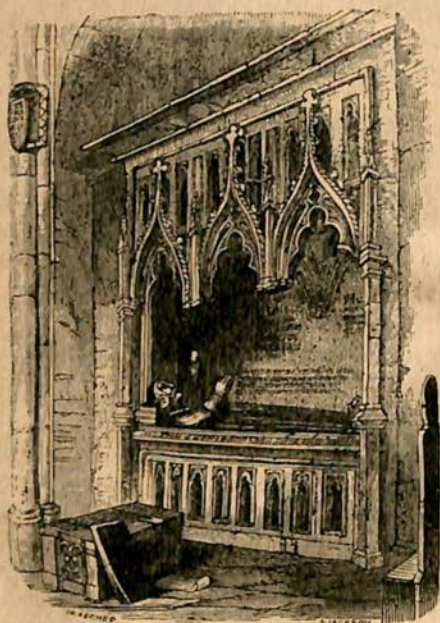
upholding the excessive pride and luxury of prelates and abbots and other "possessioners," were superfluous, and were truly the patrimony of the poor. Wycliffe is also reported to have said, although he attempted to explain his meaning away, that "charters of perpetual inheritance were impossible." In contending that the preachers of the Gospel were bound to lead a life of self-denial, like that of their Great Master, he naturally provoked a fiercer indignation than was excited by his more abstract doctrines regarding the Eucharist and the sacrament of matrimony. He was at last compelled to submit himself to the judgment of his ordinary, and he withdrew to his rectory. But he had accomplished a work which no ecclesiastical censure could set aside. He had translated the Scriptures into the English language. Whenever he and his disciples were assailed by the higher ecclesiastics, he had appealed to the Bible. His translation of the Bible was now multiplied by the incessant labour of transcribers. The texts of the Bible were in every mouth, as they were re-echoed in the sermons of his preachers, in churches and open places. The poor treasured up the words of comfort for all earthly afflictions. The rich and great meditated upon the inspired sentences which so clearly pointed out a more certain road to salvation than could be found through indulgences and pilgrimages. During the remaining years of the fourteenth century, the principles of the Lollards took the deepest root in the land. Wycliffe died in 1384, but his preaching never died. His Bible was proscribed; his votaries were imprisoned and burned. But the sacred flame was never extinguished. The first English reformer appeared in an age when civil freedom asserted itself with a strength which was never afterwards subdued or materially weakened. He fought a brave fight for religious freedom, with very unequal forces, against a most powerful hierarchy. But such contests are not terminated in a few years. The reforms which in the eternal laws are willed to be permanent are essentially of slow growth. When the "poor preachers" had slept for a century and a half their day of triumph was at hand.

The period during which Wycliffe promulgated his doctrines, and his followers continued to teach them without encountering any extreme penalties of the law, was eminently favourable to a successful attack upon the ecclesiastical system, through the general spirit of disaffection to its head. In the reign of Edward III., there had been a legislative resistance to the claim of the pope to appoint to benefices in England. In the third year of Richard II., 1379-80, it was declared by parliament that the statutes in this regard were not effectual; and that "benefices have been given, against the will of the founders, to divers people of another language, and of strange lands and nations, and sometimes to the utter enemies of the king and of his realm." Such persons, it was alleged, never made residence, nor were able to hear confession, to preach, and to teach the people. It was therefore provided that none should farm benefices for such aliens, nor remit them money, or merchandise, or letters of exchange, without license of the king. But in a few years the court of Rome came to an open rupture with England upon this question. In 1389-90, a statute was passed, declaring that if any one brought into the realm any summons, sentence, or excommunication arising out of the statute of 1379-80, he should be punished with pain of life, and forfeiture of goods. Pope Boniface was obstinate. He appointed an Italian cardinal to a prebendal stall at Wells, to which the king had previously presented. A

suit was instituted in England, in which judgment was given for the king. The bishops had supported the decision of the king's court, and had executed judgment accordingly. The pope, in consequence, excommunicated the bishops. Then the Commons of England said, in that voice which has made foreign tyranny, ecclesiastical or civil, tremble from that hour to this, "The said things so attempted be clearly against the king's crown and his regality, used and approved of the time of all his progenitors; wherefore they and all the liege commons of the same realm will stand with our said lord the king, and his said crown, and his regality, in the cases aforesaid, and in all other cases attempted against him, his crown and his regality, in all points, to live and to die." The Commons desired the king to seek the opinion of the Lords. The Lords temporal declared that they would support the crown. The Lords spiritual said, being separately examined, that they could not deny or affirm that the pope might not excommunicate bishops nor translate prelates; but that in the cases before them they would be with the king, "loialment en sustenance de sa corone,"—loyally upholding his crown,—and in all other cases touching his crown and his regality, as they were bound by their allegiance. An Act was passed that all persons suing at Rome, and obtaining instruments against the king, and all who brought them within the realm, should be put out of the king's protection, and all their lands and goods forfeited. The defiant attitude of England triumphed over this attempt at papal usurpation. But if we consider how the whole ecclesiastical system was intertwined with the authority of Rome, we may judge how favourable was the season for earnest men to assail every abuse in the Church. It has been said that, of this generation, one-third of the English people became Lollards, as the followers of Wycliffe were now termed. The ecclesiastical hierarchy held them as the tares (*lolium*) amongst the wheat. In the next generation the futile process commenced of attempting to weed out the tares. The gradual reforms by which the ancient State of England was preserved and invigorated were resisted by those who had directed the fortunes of her ancient Church. In the fulness of time it fell—a warning to those who dwell in the edifice re-constructed out of its materials, precious even in their occasional incongruity.

The age in which "the poor preachers" disseminated their opinions was an age in which knowledge began to spread, and literature was to some extent cultivated. The abstract doctrines of the Lollards had been enforced by the satires of "Piers Ploughman,"—full not only of sarcasm and invective, but of real poetry. Chaucer had arisen with his various knowledge, his familiarity with courtly and with common life, his acquaintance with the writings of Dante and Petrarch and the Italian fablers. He gave to his native English a copiousness and elegance which it had not previously possessed. He cast aside the use of Latin, which limited literature to the few. He brought his translations and adaptations within the reach of the many. From Boccaccio he borrowed his Knight's Tale, "as olde stories tellin us." To this romance he added vigorous descriptions and graceful fictions, which are wanting in his model. He invented the English heroic couplet—the fruitful parent of a noble poetical progeny. His "Romaunt of the Rose" is of French origin. His "Troilus and Cresseide," as he tells us, is from "myne auctor Lollius," an Italian of Urbino. His poems contain frequent allusions to the great

Latin writers. "The House of Fame" has not been traced to a distinct origin. "The Canterbury Tales," with their Arabian fiction and philosophy—their reflections of mediæval splendour, and of mediæval injustice as exhibited in the Clerk of Oxenford's Tale, which, written by Boccaccio, he learned of Petrarch at Padua—their wonderful pictures of English life, so thoroughly founded upon his own genius and powers of observation—would appear miraculous performances if we were to fall into the common notion that the end of the fourteenth century was an age of ignorance. Ignorance, very gross, no doubt, there was; but the national mind was awake, or such works could never have been produced. They were meant to be popular—and they were popular.



Gower's Monument in the church of St. Mary Overie.

Limited in their circulation by the necessary expense of their multiplication in manuscript, they found their way to the noble's privy-chamber, the franklin's fireside, and the student's cell. Most men, with any pretensions to knowledge, had some acquaintance with the novelties of literature and the current European fables. In the inventory under the will of a clerk of Bury, in 1370, we find his service-book, a law book, a book of statutes, and a book of romances.* The passion for fiction existed before printing multiplied the possession of works of amusement. The French romances were the courtly reading, before Chaucer

and Gower came with their more attractive English. Gower, "the moral Gower," was far inferior in genius to Chaucer. In him that great attribute of genius, humour, was wholly wanting. His "Confessio Amantis," full indeed of affectations, the pedantry of love, contains many interesting narratives and wise disquisitions. The early writers of fiction, without the creative power which has made Chaucer universal and enduring, used their stories as the vehicle for imparting the most recondite knowledge—and Gower was of this class. But in him we may trace the large range of inquiry that belonged to his time, destitute of scientific exactness, but leading into wide regions of speculation. The demand for poetry and fiction is strikingly exemplified by an incident connected with Gower's "Confessio Amantis." Richard, the luxurious king, is in his barge on the Thames. He sees the

* Wills from the Registers of Bury: Camden Society.

poet in a boat, and inviting him to come on board, desires him to "book some new thing." When Froissart came to England, in 1394, he brought a French romance to Richard, which he laid ready on the king's bed. "When the king opened it, it pleased him well, for it was fair enlumined and written. * * * Then the king demanded me whereof it treated, and I shewed him how it treated matters of love; whereof the king was glad, and looked in it, and read it in many places, for he could speak and read French very well." Froissart's commendation of the king's French shows that English was now commonly read and spoken; and that Chaucer and Gower had adapted themselves to that change which has carried our tongue to the ends of the earth. Upon Wycliffe's Bible our present translation is mainly founded. Sir John Mandeville, in 1356, wrote in English his Travels, so full of apocryphal marvels. Trevisa translated the "Polychronicon" of Higden in 1385. From him we learn that at the time he wrote, gentlemen had "much left off to have their children taught French." The change had been gradually coming, for John Cornwall, a schoolmaster, in 1356 made his boys translate Latin into English. By the end of the fourteenth century we were a nation, in language as well as in heart.

But there was yet much to do before that expressive word "nation" could be said to comprehend the whole people. It could not embrace all ranks while any portion remained in bondage. That the serfs were making efforts to procure that enfranchisement which their king desired for them, and which their lords denied, may be collected from an act of parliament of the ninth year of Richard, 1385. The statute says that "divers villans and neifs, as well of great lords as of other people, spiritual and temporal, do flee unto cities, towns, and places enfranchised, as the city of London, and feign divers suits against their lords, to the intent to make them free by answer of their lords." The villans, we thus see, were becoming free before the law. There was a time when their condition of bondage would have closed the ears of justice against any complaint from them against their lords. The law now listens to their complaints, and their lords must answer. But a special statute is necessary to limit this exercise of the right of freemen. "It is accorded and assented that the lords, nor other, shall not be forebarred of their villans, because of their answer in the law." The influence of religion, and the progress of equal justice, are steadily working together for the manumission of the serfs. Their great stronghold of freedom is to be found in the enfranchised cities and towns. The cultivators, whether tenants or labourers, provide for their children an escape from oppression by apprenticing them to handicrafts. The continuance of bondage, loose as the bonds are becoming, deprives the soil of its necessary labour. The land capitalists are forcing labour into other channels. Then step in the statute-makers, and enact, in 1388, "that he or she, which use to labour at the plough and cart, or other labour or service of husbandry, till they be of the age of twelve years, from thenceforth shall abide at the same labour, without being put to any mystery or handicraft, and if any covenant or bond of apprentice be from henceforth made to the contrary, the same shall be holden for none." Another enactment of the same parliament is to the effect that artificers and men of craft, servants and apprentices, shall be compelled to serve in harvest, to cut, gather, and bring

in the corn. The labourers in husbandry are not sufficient for the demand. The expedient of the former reign of confining the rural population to one place is again resorted to. Male and female servants and labourers are not to depart at the end of their term, to go to another place, without letters testimonial under the king's seal, entrusted for that purpose to some good man of the hundred, rape, wapentake, city, or borough: wandering without such letters, they are to be put in the stocks. In this same year, 1388, we have a glimpse of a poor-law, in the description of "beggars impotent to serve." These are to abide in the cities or towns where they dwell; but if the people of these cities or towns "may not suffice to find them,"—are not able to support them,—they may go to other towns within the hundred, rape, or wapentake, or to the place where they were born, and there constantly abide. Such enactments are symptoms of a transition state of society. The word "villan" is now generally giving place to the word "servant." The law now provides for the martial array and sports of every servant of husbandry, labourer, or servant of artificer. They are to bear no buckler, sword, nor dagger, except in the time of war for defence of the realm; but they shall have bows and arrows, and use the same on Sundays and holidays, leaving all idle games of tennis, football, quoits, skittles, dice, and casting of the stone. It was unwise, and no doubt it was useless, to attempt thus to cultivate the use of the great national weapon by a limitation of the games that made every village-green resonant with mirth and manly contention. The dice would be secretly used in the winter evenings, and the draught-board attract customers to the victualler's



Playing at Draughts. (Harleian MS. 4431.)

settle. The principle of interference in social affairs has, from the days of the Plantagenets to the days of the Stuarts—and indeed much later—been the crying evil of our legislation. The regulation of the rate of wages went on from the time of the pestilence in the reign of Edward III.; but it was now

found out that "a man cannot put the price of corn and other victuals in certain;" and it was therefore enacted that the justices of peace in every county shall make proclamation, by their discretion, according to the dearth of victuals, how much every craftman and labourer should take as wages, according to his degree. We now understand the impossible things which were attempted by these ancient legislators, and how they carried on an unequal strife against the laws of nature. The principle of their legislation,—that of prescribing by authority what the social instincts would accomplish far more effectually,—is not yet worn out. In some of their enactments, however, they exhibited a wisdom which their successors might have done well to imitate. Whoever knew the sanitary condition of London generally and of other great towns at the beginning of this century, and partially within the last twenty years,—whoever penetrates the obscure places of many towns at the present hour,—will marvel that a law of 1388 should have fallen into disuse at the end of four centuries and a half: "For that so much dung and filth of the garbage and entrails as well of beasts killed, as of other corruptions, be cast and put in ditches, rivers, and other waters, and also within many other places, within, about, and nigh unto divers cities, boroughs, and towns of the realm, and the suburbs of them, that the air there is greatly corrupt and infect, and many maladies and other intolerable diseases do daily happen"—it is enacted that proclamation be made through the realm that all they which cast and lay such annoyances shall immediately remove them, upon pain to forfeit to the king twenty pounds. To the mayors and bailiffs was entrusted the execution of this Act; and in their default the Court of Chancery was open to any complainant.

In looking at the old arrangements of society, most persons, naturally enough, consider those only valuable which have some general agreement with the principles of our modern life. Those which are in direct opposition to the system of independent action in the common transactions between man and man, are, in the same way, regarded as useless or injurious. That wages should be regulated by statute or proclamation of justices,—that the prices of articles of necessity should be also so regulated,—that sumptuary laws should determine the diet and apparel of all classes,—that not a piece of cloth or a hide of leather should be sold without the mark of the searchers,—that no money should be carried out of the country, whatever quantity of goods came in,—all these official interventions appear to us in the highest degree absurd and tyrannical, when we regard them from the economical point of view. But we are really not in a position absolutely to judge of the imagined necessity which called them forth. We cannot sufficiently place ourselves in the midst of the decaying feudal institutions, and say that such laws, the scaffoldings of a new social edifice, were wholly unnecessary. But we can say that all such expedients are entirely unsuited to modern times; and that, whatever be the insufficient working of the natural law of labour and capital,—whatever the power of traders to elevate prices, or deteriorate quality,—whatever the evils of extravagance in diet or apparel,—no state laws can give the people higher wages, or cheaper food, or more frugal manners, as these old regulations of society attempted to do. Political philosophy, after the experience of five centuries, has discovered that the great duty of the state is to permit the laws of demand and supply to pursue their natural course; and to leave individual

follies, which are not positive wrongs, public or private, to their own certain penalties. But there is an exceptional school, which, seeing a large amount of suffering and crime in existing society, appears somewhat too much enamoured of the ancient principle of perpetual interference, acting under the system by which "the discipline of an army was transferred to the details of social life."* It is held that, under this discipline, "in the distribution of the produce of land men dealt fairly and justly with each other; and in the material condition of the bulk of the people there is a fair evidence that the system worked efficiently and well."† To determine the state of the producing classes, a comparison is entered into of the rate of wages with the price of food; and it is held that in the old time, a labourer with a penny could buy more bread, beef, beer, and wine, than the labourer of the nineteenth century can do for a shilling. Be it so. But what shall we say of the system, when we regard the excessive fluctuations of price?—the result of the complacency with which "statesmen did not care for the accumulation of capital." "They desired," says the encomiast of the past, "to see the physical well-being of all classes of the commonwealth maintained at the highest degree which the producing power of the country admitted; and population and production remaining stationary, they were enabled to do it."‡ The producing power of the country was so variable that, in 1387, wheat at Leicester was sold at two shillings a quarter—in 1390, at sixteen shillings and eightpence.§ Where, with this imperfect and irregular production, was the stationary population? Dying of famine, to maintain the due proportion between population and production. The whole theory of "population and production remaining stationary" is a paradox, utterly opposed to any condition of society which could by possibility exist after the abolition of slavery. The instant at which the lords of the soil could no longer control the amount of the population upon their own demesnes—the instant that the system of free labour superseded serfage—the instant that the towns were ready to absorb the superabundant population of the country, and to increase their own population with no restraint but the ordinary laws by which the number of mouths to eat is proportioned to the amount of profitable labour to be performed—that instant there was an end of any possible power to keep population and production stationary. If, as the historian we have quoted believes, the population in the middle of the sixteenth century was five millions, the evidence is equally clear that it did not exceed two millions and a half at the end of the fourteenth century. The data for calculating the population at either period are exceedingly uncertain. Less than a million and a half were assessed to the poll-tax of Richard II., but which number did not include the people of Durham, Chester, and Wales. Undoubtedly there was a considerable increase in a century and a half. But what increase would there have been could the system of interference, founded upon the principle of keeping population and production stationary, have been successful? In our view, there was an end of the system when its broad foundation of slavery was at an end; and all subsequent laws for regulating wages, for fixing a maximum price on articles of necessity, and for surrounding trade with every species of arbitrary regulation, the vain

* Froude, "History of England," vol. i. p. 13.

† *Ibid.* p. 19.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 26.

§ "Chronicon Pretiosum."

endeavour to prevent fraud, were very useless attempts to prolong a controlling power when its vital principle had perished. It is of little consequence that for several centuries after the foundations of the mediæval feudality were utterly gone, endeavours of every kind were made to preserve the same regulating powers of authority which grew out of the original relations of lord, vassal, and serf. One by one they crumbled away in England; and as they more and more lost all vitality, and became mere incumbrances of legislation, the great body of the people more and more felt the possibility of increased production keeping pace with increased population; and their various comforts—positive luxuries when compared with the average household conveniences and gratifications of the fourteenth century—went on increasing, in the exact proportion of the national advance in wealth and knowledge under the self-regulating action of modern society.

But we venture to believe that we should fall into a grievous error if we were to accept the enactments which imply an organisation assigning to every man his certain place, and regulating all his dealings with his fellow men upon an absolute scale, as a complete evidence of the real condition of the people. The enactments themselves prove that they were, in a great degree, inoperative. We have mentioned the Statute of Diet and Apparel of 1368, and that it was repealed in the following year.* Is not this proof that "grooms and servants" could not be limited to meat once a day, and cloth of two marks the whole piece for their dress? The ordinance which regulates apparel regulates also the price at which the cloth is to be sold. Could the varying cost of the material of cloth allow this enactment to attain the slightest permanency? After the next session of parliament, the people, as to diet, apparel, and the price of cloth, became, in the words of the repealing Act, "as free as they were before." After the pestilence, the Act of the 25th of Edward III. regulates wages. By the 12th of Richard II. wages are again regulated, because "servants and labourers will not serve and labour without outrageous and excessive hire." In the 7th year of Henry IV. labourers and artificers are to be sworn to serve after the form of these two statutes of Edward III. and Richard II., and if they refuse to do so, to be put in the stocks. Need we go farther to show that all such enactments were but blind devices to struggle against the only laws that could be operative in such matters? In less than a century after the first Act regulating wages of Edward III., a very different scale is given by the 23rd of Henry VI., but with this important condition—"that such as deserve less shall take less." The Statute does not say, "that such as deserve more shall take more." But the exception to the scale, in favour of the payers of wages, proves that the whole scheme was a fallacy. Of the same flimsy construction was all the boasted protection of the humbler classes, by state supervision, against what is termed "the money-making spirit" of the traders. They had far higher need of protection against those who went on seeking, however vainly, to beat down wages by scales and penalties. Out of the exercise of the spirit of exchange, throwing off its state shackles one by one, have grown all the material blessings of modern civilisation. When

England became commercial, which it did rapidly in and after the reign of Edward III., the feudal organisation of society was thenceforth an impossibility. In every attempt to maintain that organisation, by what has been called "a higher code" for the production and distribution of wealth than the laws of supply and demand, we see only the dissolving shadow of a power once supreme, retreating and diminishing before a great expanding reality.



Convocation of Clergy.



The Quarrel of Hereford and Norfolk. Illumination in Froissart.

CHAPTER II.

Family dissensions—Conduct of the war with France—Suspensions of Lancaster—Scots and Frenchmen cross the Border—Projected invasion of England by France—Disputes of the king and the parliament—Commission of Regency—Secret Council of the king—Gloucester and other nobles take arms—The King's advisers declared traitors—Battle of Otterbourne—Richard assumes the government—Truce with France and Scotland—Richard in Ireland—His marriage with Isabella of France—The king becomes despotic—*Coup d'état*—Murder of Gloucester—Quarrel of Hereford and Norfolk—Their banishment—Wretched condition of the country—Death of John of Gaunt—Richard seizes his possessions—The king goes to Ireland—Henry of Lancaster lands at Ravenspur—Betrayal of Richard by the Percies—A Parliament called—Richard's deposition—Henry claims the kingdom.

The political intrigues of the reign of Richard II. are so complicated, and have been so obscurely related, that, from the first days of his accession, when John of Gaunt, in parliament, indignantly repelled some vague accusations against himself of designs upon the throne, till, twenty-two years afterwards, the king was deposed by the son of the same John of Gaunt, we are walking in a labyrinth of family quarrels, accompanied with a more than usual amount of hatred and dissimulation. At the age of twelve Richard was placed on the throne: For ten years he had little share in the government, though he was put forward, as in the instance of the insurrection of 1381, to act in his personal character of king. In 1382 he married Anne of Bohemia, a prudent and amiable princess, who restrained many of the impulses of his levity and

fitful passions. But he surrounded himself with favourite ministers, who evidently fomented the jealousy which he constantly felt of his uncles. John, the duke of Lancaster, appears to have possessed many of the high qualities of a statesman—prudent, but not an enemy to improvement—generous without prodigality—having great wealth and influence, but not employing his power in any proved disloyalty to his royal nephew. Thomas, the duke of Gloucester, was less scrupulous in the modes by which he controlled the immature king; and the early impatience of Richard under his stern tutelage, and the cherished hatreds of his adult age, were at last terminated by open hostility and secret murder. During the twenty-two years in which Richard bore the name of king, for one-half of the period he was an unwilling puppet in the hands of austere guardians; and when he broke loose from their authority in the second half of his reign, he had been so long controlled by others that he had never acquired the power of self-control; and thus, with many qualities which might have made him respected in any other position, he became a tyrant without the force of character that makes tyranny successful, and perished through the consequences of his own violence and rashness.

The war with France was feebly conducted, previous to a short truce in 1384. Henry Spenser, the bishop of Norwich, led an expedition into Flanders in 1383, ostensibly for a crusade against the pretensions to the papacy of Clement, a Frenchman. The expedition was, in reality, to support the Flemings in that resistance to the government of their duke which, in the previous year, had received such a check by the intervention of France. The Italian pope, Urban VI., was supported by England, and by the Flemings and German States. Part of the cost of this adventure was voted by parliament; part was raised by voluntary contributions. Had this expedition given assistance to the burghers of Bruges and Ghent and Ypres, before the fall of their great leader Philip Artevelde at the battle of Rosebecque, the democratic cause might have had a different issue. The martial bishop took Gravelines and Dunkirk, and defeated the forces of the count of Flanders; but the French again crossed the frontier, and the bishop fled to England, to be censured in parliament and fined, for having failed in this partisan warfare. In that year, Richard proposed a measure for the conclusion of the war with France, which gives to this great quarrel an air of the ludicrous, ill-assorting with the miseries which it brought upon both countries. The king of England was seventeen years of age. There is a letter in the public records from Richard to the duke of Lancaster, in which he gravely proposes that the quarrel between England and France should be determined by a single combat between himself and the French king, Charles VI., who was then in his fifteenth year. It does not appear that John of Gaunt gave any encouragement to this precocious heroism. He concluded the truce with France in 1384, in which Scotland was comprehended. But the Scots refused to desist from warfare, and the duke led an army across the border, burning towns and cutting down forests. On his return to England he was again assailed by suspicions of disloyalty. A Carmelite friar put into the hands of Richard a paper, professing to disclose a conspiracy to deprive him of his crown, and give the kingdom to his uncle. Lancaster maintained his innocence, and demanded that the slanderer should be committed to safe

custody. Sir John Holland, the king's half-brother, undertook the charge; and the next day the friar was found dead—strangled, it was said, by his knightly keeper. Whether he was put out of the way to prevent disclosures against Lancaster, or to conceal the treachery by which he had been suborned to make a false accusation, is one of the mysteries of this obscure period. The young king now began to exhibit that dissimulation which subsequently he was too ready to exercise. He professed his complete satisfaction; and Lancaster went abroad to obtain a prolongation of the truce with France. Preparations were made to arrest him on his return; but he secured himself in his castle of Pontefract. The storm blew over for a time. France had sent men-at-arms into Scotland, and had advanced a large sum of money to induce the Scots to invade England. In Froissart's relation of these circumstances there are many curious details of the state of Scotland. The French expedition was commanded by Sir John de Vienne. At Edinburgh the Frenchmen waited for the king of the Scots, who was in "the wyld Scottysche" (the Highlands). They were lodged about in the villages, for in the town there were not four thousand houses. Their aid was not popular, for the people cried "We can do without their help. What devil has brought them here? They will rifle and eat us up." Nor were the Frenchmen more satisfied with Scotland. The barons and knights, who looked for goodly castles and tapestried halls, said to their admiral "What pleasure hath brought us hither? We never knew what poverty meant till now." Horses were scarce and extravagantly dear; bridles and saddles there were none. The pride of chivalry was at fault. At last king Robert came to Edinburgh; but he produced in the Frenchmen no great reverence, for he came "with a pair of red bleared eyen,—it seemed they were lined with sendal."* The united armies then marched into England, and had advanced towards Newcastle, when they learned that king Richard was coming with a great army. They then retreated; and Douglas took the French admiral to a mountain, and showed him the mighty force of the English, and how unequal the Scots were to fight with them. But while Richard advanced into Scotland, took Edinburgh, and marched towards Aberdeen, the French and Scots entered Cumberland and Westmoreland, burning and plundering on every side. The duke of Lancaster knew the advantage which this inroad had given to the English army, and how surely the retreat of the Scots and French might be cut off. But the young king's favourite, De la Pole, filled his mind with the suspicion that his uncle, in advising a return to the borders, intended to expose him to the dangers of a winter campaign in a mountainous region, from which he would never escape alive. Richard refused to march into Cumberland with the duke; and returned with his army to England through Northumberland. The campaign of 1385 terminated without any trial of strength in battle. The Scots and French wasted England, and the English wasted Scotland. When the ill-assorted allies returned to Edinburgh, the Scots required to be paid the expenses of the campaign; for they said that the war was made for the profit of France and not for themselves; and they kept the admiral in pledge till their demands were satisfied. On his return from this expedition, the parliament ratified the honours which Richard had conferred on his favourites. Michael de la Pole was created earl of

* Sendal was a thin silk, of a reddish colour.

Suffolk, and Robert de Vere earl of Oxford. To neutralise the jealousy of his own relations, his uncles were created dukes of York and Gloucester; Henry, the son of the duke of Lancaster, was made earl of Derby; and Edward, the son of the duke of York, earl of Rutland. At the same time Roger, earl of March, was declared presumptive heir to the throne. He was the grandson of Lionel, the second son of Edward III., who died in 1368; and whose daughter, Philippa, married Mortimer, earl of March.

In 1386 the dreaded duke of Lancaster left England to assert his claim to the crown of Castile, in right of his second wife, Constantia, daughter of Peter the Cruel. The duke was more successful in his negotiations than permanently fortunate in his wars. He married his eldest daughter, by his first wife, to John, king of Portugal: and his daughter Catherine, who had succeeded to her mother's claims, was espoused, in 1387, by Henry III. of Castile. The quarrel of the rival families was terminated by this union; and thus the issue of John of Gaunt bore sovereignty in Spain for many generations. In the absence of Lancaster, enormous preparations were made by France for the invasion of England. The insurrections of Flanders had been put down; and the time seemed most opportune for revenging the injuries which France had received in the invasions of Edward III. and the Black Prince. In September, 1386, a larger fleet was collected than had ever before been seen in Christendom. In the port of Sluys were twelve hundred and eighty-seven vessels. Another fleet was assembled at Tréguier, in Brittany. The great lords of France and Burgundy rivalled each other in the magnificent decorations of the ships which were to bear them to the devoted English shores. If painted and gilded masts, emblazoned sails, and silken banners, could have insured success, no fleet was ever more grandly appointed. From all parts knights were arriving, for several months, in the towns of Flanders and Artois. They collected immense stores, as if they were about to found some distant colony. The young king of France set out from Paris with great pomp, and joined the duke of Burgundy at Arras. The lords and knights were full of gladness. They were going against the hated English, to avenge the blood of their fathers and their brethren. As they had traversed France the whole country had been stripped by them. Little had been left to the cultivators to give, for an enormous tax had been levied for this war. The lords and the knights seized upon everything that remained. "We have no money," they said, "but we will pay you when we return." The unhappy people muttered "Go, and may you never come back." But they did not go. The king came to Sluys. He thought he should make a good sailor. He was ready to sail. But his uncle, the duke de Berri, still lingered at Paris. The vast army was eating up everything. The season was becoming cold and stormy. The soldiers and the people of the towns were quarrelling; and a general revolt of the bold Flemings was again apprehended. At length the duke de Berri arrived. He found the season too far advanced for the attempt, and the great enterprise was postponed till the next year. The furious lords and knights dispersed homewards. The next year came, and the invasion was again postponed. The leaders quarrelled; and, instead of England being subject to invasion, the French coast was assailed, and the French and Flemish fleets destroyed, from Brest to Sluys.

Richard in 1386 was twenty years of age. A contest is coming on

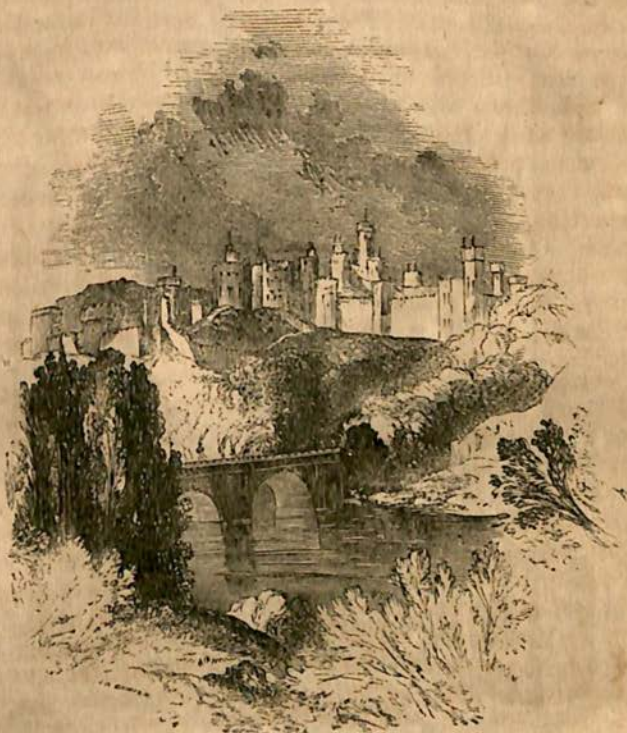
between the king and the parliament, which, partly the result of the family jealousies, and partly the desire of a self-willed youth to free himself from constitutional control, appears to threaten a political revolution. It is really of small consequence to us, at the present time, to think, according to one set of partisan historians, that Richard was an innocent and oppressed sovereign, and Thomas of Woodstock a most unprincipled usurper of the royal functions; or with another set, that the young king was engaged in a constant struggle for despotic power, and that all the parliamentary enactments by which he was opposed were just and sagacious assertions of the liberties of the country. We may seek our way through this maze of suspicion and accusation—of stern control and passionate resistance—without adopting the prejudices with which all such historical questions were regarded in the last century, from one point of view or from its opposite. The Statutes and Rolls of parliament are but imperfect expounders of the real causes of the shifting events of this reign; and the contemporary historians were necessarily possessed of very limited information. In one thing the State records and the Chroniclers are agreed—that Richard was unbounded in his personal expense. In 1386 the Commons petitioned the king “that the state of his household might be looked into and examined every year, by the chancellor, treasurer, and clerk of the privy-seal, and what was amiss, to be amended at their discretion.” The answer was, “The king will order it when he pleaseth.” Harding, the chronicler, says that Richard’s household consisted of ten thousand persons; that he had three hundred in his kitchen; and that all his offices were furnished in like proportion. If we trust these accounts, we may well believe that there was a perpetual conflict between the royal demands for taxes, and the indignation of the Commons, who felt that their supplies were spent in folly and favouritism, and that little was done in foreign warfare, upon which the honour of the country was held to depend. The king’s private counsellors were the encouragers of his extravagance, and his inciters against those whom he supposed to be his enemies. Knyghton, a contemporary, affirms that when the Commons resolved upon the impeachment of the earl of Suffolk, and communicated their resolution to the king, he replied that he would not, at their instance, remove the meanest scullion in his kitchen. The earl of Suffolk was impeached, and the king was compelled to part with one for whom he would probably have sacrificed the whole ten thousand of his household. But the Commons went farther. They petitioned the king to appoint a Commission of Regency for one year, with very large powers; the most formidable of which was that those who advised a revocation of their authority should incur the penalties of treason. Richard unwillingly complied. “The king,” says Hume, “was in reality dethroned; the aristocracy was rendered supreme.” He adds, “the intentions of the party were to render it perpetual.” Mr. Hallam replies to the historian “with a Tory bias,”—“that nothing less than an extraordinary remedy could preserve the still unstable liberties of England.”* In the summer of 1387 Richard made progresses in Cheshire and Yorkshire, and received marks of popular favour. In August he held a council at Nottingham, consisting of the archbishop of York; De Vere, now created duke of Ireland; the earl of Suffolk; the chief justice, Tresilian; and Sir Nicholas

* “Middle Ages,” part iii. chap. viii.

Brember, lord mayor of London. They tried to tamper with the sheriffs of the adjacent counties, to induce them to return no knights and burgesses to the next parliament but such as the king should nominate. This plan was unsuccessful. The judges were then summoned; and the king procured from them a declaration in answer to questions drawn up by the chief justice, that the Commission to which he had reluctantly assented was illegal; and that those who interfered with his rights in procuring it to be passed, or enforcing his consent to it, were traitors; with other assertions tending to the upholding of his unlimited prerogative. Of these opinions, given under an obligation of secrecy, the duke of Gloucester was soon apprised. Richard, meanwhile, was concerting measures for the arrest and indictment of those who had been designated as Traitors by judicial opinions, extorted, as was asserted by the majority of the judges, under menace. On the 10th of November, nine days before the Commission was to expire, Richard entered London, and was received with acclamations. Sir Nicholas Brember had influenced the voice of the citizens. On the next day it was known that an army of forty thousand men was advancing to the capital, under the command of the duke of Gloucester, and the earls of Arundel and Nottingham, the constable, admiral, and mareschal of England. The earls of Derby and Warwick joined them the next day. These noblemen, lords appellants as they were called, on the 17th of November, accused of treason before the king at Westminster those five of his obnoxious counsellors who had assembled at Nottingham. The earl of Suffolk fled to France; the archbishop of York eventually found refuge in Flanders; De Vere raised an army by authority of royal letters; but was defeated at Radcot Bridge, and escaped to Ireland. The other two who were denounced by the appellants,—Tresilian, the chief justice, and Sir Nicholas Brember,—were executed as traitors. There were other executions, with banishments and confiscations, and these penalties were all enforced under the authority of parliament. For about a year the government appears to have been in the hands of the parliamentary council, without any intervention on the part of the humiliated king.

In 1388, on the 10th of August, was fought the famous battle of Otterbourne, upon which is founded the ballad of "Chevy Chase." That ballad, and the earlier one called "The Battle of Otterbourne," treat this remarkable conflict as a border-feud. Froissart has a most minute description of this great fight between the Percy and the Douglas, which also shows that it was essentially an affair of the feudal lords, and not of the Scotch and English governments. Lord Henry Percy was appointed by the Council to keep the frontier of Northumberland against the Scots; and the Scotch lords and knights, seeing "the Englishmen were not all of one accord," gathered together at Aberdeen, and concerted a plan for meeting near the border. With a large army they crossed the Tyne, and went on to Durham, but soon retreated. At Newcastle they were encountered by the younger Percies, with their host; their father, the earl of Northumberland, keeping the pass of Alnwick. The leaders appear to have met as if at a tournament. Earl Douglas and Lord Henry Percy fought hand to hand, and Douglas won Percy's pennon, and told him that "he would set it on high on his castle of Dalkeith;" and Percy said Douglas should not carry it out of England.

After the skirmish, the Scots, the next day, marched to Otterbourne, about thirty miles from Newcastle. The castle has perished which Douglas assailed; but there we may trace the marshy valley and the little mountain where the Scots fixed their camp, and where Harry Percy came on, with the moon shining as bright as day, to win back his pennon. It was no skirmish now. Douglas was killed on one side, and Percy and his brother taken prisoners on the other, the victory being to the Scots. Douglas was buried at Melrose. Percy was soon ransomed. Froissart says of this battle,—“Englishmen on the one part, and Scots on the other part, are good men of war; for when they meet there is hard fighting without sparring. There is no love between them, as long as spears, swords, axes, or daggers will endure; but they lay on each upon the other, and when they be well beaten, and that the one part

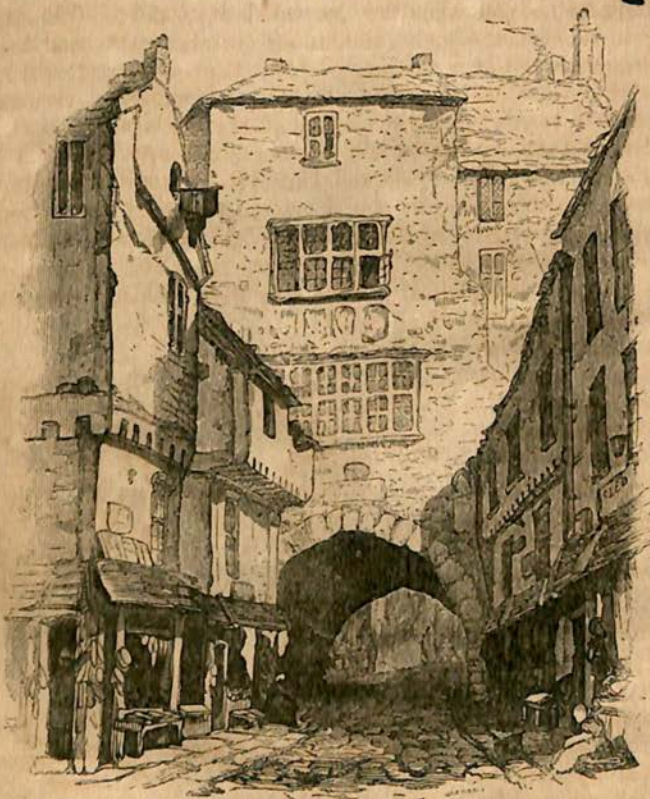


Alnwick Castle.

hath obtained the victory, then they glorify so in their deeds of arms, and are so joyful, that such as be taken they shall be ransomed ere they go out of the field, so that shortly each of them is so content with the other that, at their departing courteously, they will say—God thank you.” The long but graphic narrative by Froissart of this border-feud is suggestive of striking contrasts of mediæval and modern times. While the Scots had marched on beyond the Tyne, “all the English knights and squires of the county of York and bishopric of Durham were assembled at Newcastle.” Froissart adds, “the town was so

full of people, that they wist not where to lodge." Little is left in that town to remind us how often it was crowded with the chivalry of England, going to or returning from the Scottish wars. Nearly all its ancient buildings have been destroyed. The railway-train sweeps over the Tyne, and over the steep streets, at a prodigious elevation. Trim edifices, fresh and monotonous, have obliterated the traces of the past. One relic, the Black Gate, and its dungeon-looking houses, show how the Percies, and Mowbrays, and Greys lodged, when they filled Newcastle with their men-at-arms.

In 1389 the government of England appears to be acquiring some consistency, under the more immediate rule of the king. At a great council in



Black Gate, Newcastle.

May, he suddenly asked the duke of Gloucester—"How old am I?" His uncle replied, "Your highness is in your twenty-second year." Upon this Richard declared his opinion that he was old enough to manage his own affairs. There was no resistance, and he dismissed the chancellor and the treasurer. Gloucester retired into the country. Lancaster returned to England. The struggle of parties seemed to be at an end. A truce was concluded with France, which, several times renewed, lasted through this

reign, and Scotland was included in the pacification. William of Wykeham was appointed chancellor, although he had been one of the council of 1388; and the duke of York and the earl of Derby, although active in the proceedings of that year, regained their influence under the king. In the parliament of 1390, the chancellor declared the king to be of full age, and that he intended to govern his people in peace and quiet; to do justice to all men; and that clergy and laity should enjoy all their liberties. In 1394 the queen died. She was called "the good queen Anne" by the people. In that year Richard went to Ireland, with a large army. He took with him four thousand knights, and thirty thousand archers, and he remained there nine months. There had been revolt of the native chiefs and discontent of the colonists; but the mere demonstration of the English force prevented any battle. The king was thoroughly in his element—giving sumptuous entertainments, and displaying his regal magnificence to a wondering people. Four of the principal kings of Ireland, as they were called, came to Dublin, and submitted themselves to him without constraint. Of the quality of these kings Froissart had a curious account from Sir Henry Cristall, an Englishman, who had been a captive amongst the native Irish, and having been kindly treated, married and long resided with them. He was appointed to attend on the four kings who submitted themselves to Richard. It was Richard's wish that in manners and apparel they should conform to the usages of England. It was his purpose to create them knights. But they were wedded to their ancient

customs. They would sit at the same table as their minstrels and servants, eating out of the same dish and drinking out of the same cup. They were ill at ease with gowns of silk furred with minever, and disdained the linen breeches that the good Cristall provided for them. They perhaps showed their sense in despising the absurd costume of the court of Richard. At last they were properly attired, and were made knights by the king, with all solemnities of the church; and sate with him at the banquets, and "were regarded of many folks, because their behaving was strange to the manner of England."



Male costume, time of Richard II.

In 1396 Richard took a step which was unpopular. He resolved upon an intimate alliance with France, by seeking in marriage Isabella, the daughter of Charles VI., a child of eight years old. A magnificent embassy was sent to Paris, and the French court was willing to secure a pacification through this alliance. The earl marshal of England knelt to the little girl, and said,

"Fair lady, by the grace of God ye shall be our lady and queen of England," and Isabella answered, without counsel of any person, "Sir, an it please God and my lord my father that I shall be queen of England, I shall be glad thereof, for it is showed me that I shall then be a great lady." The negotiations were at length concluded. Froissart relates a remarkable conversation between Richard and the count of St. Pol, who came to England to make arrangements on the part of the French king, which in some degree throws a little light upon the mysterious events of the next three years. The king said that his two uncles, Lancaster and York, were inclined to the alliance, but that his uncle Gloucester was opposed to it; that he did all he could to draw the Londoners to his opinion; that if he stirred the people to rebellion the crown were lost. St. Pol answered Richard that he must dissimulate; win Gloucester with sweet words and great gifts, till the peace was made, and his bride was come to England. "That done," said the wily politician, "ye may take other counsel. Ye shall then be of puissance to oppress all your rebels; for the French king, if need be, shall aid you: of this ye may be sure." The king answered, "Thus shall I do." It was a fatal resolve. The two kings, accompanied by hundreds of nobles and knights, with all the pomp of the gorgeous, ceremonials of that age, met between Calais and Ardres, and there embraced, and drank spiced wine out of jewelled cups. Again they met



Female costume, time of Richard II.

on another day, at the boundary of the two camps; and then the child-queen arrived with a cavalcade of golden chariots and silken litters, with ladies wearing garlands of pearls and diamonds; and she was conducted by her uncles to Richard, who promised to cherish her as his wife. The duchesses of Lancaster and Gloucester received her; and she set forward to Calais, where the marriage was celebrated on the fourth of November.

The dangerous advice of the count St. Pol seems to have sunk deeply into Richard's heart. He had conducted himself with moderation since 1389; there were no plots to diminish his lawful power, and no attempt on his part to go beyond the authority of a constitutional king. In January, 1397, a parliament was called. On the 1st of February the Commons desired a conference with the king's officers; when, amongst other matters, they asked for a bill for avoiding the extravagant expenses of the king's household, complaining that many bishops, who had lordships, and many ladies, with their servants, were supported at the king's expense. Richard was indignant, and demanded the name of the member who had introduced the bill, and thus dared to interfere with his prerogative. It was Sir Thomas Haxey, a clergyman. On the 3rd of February, the Commons came most humbly before the king, and

declared that they only intended to request him to consider the matter himself, and make what regulations he should think proper. Two days afterwards a law was made, that whoever moved, or should move, the Commons of parliament, or any others, to make remedy or reformation of any kind appertaining to the king's person, rule, or royalty, should be held for a traitor. Under this ex-post-facto law, Haxey was condemned to die; but his life was spared, and he was subsequently pardoned. The vessel of the state was now drifting fast upon the quicksands of arbitrary government.

The Statute of the 21st year of Richard II., 1397-8, is a solemn record of the establishment of a despotic power, under the sanction of parliamentary forms. This remarkable document takes an historical view of the events of 1387-8, when the Council of Regency was triumphant, and exhibits to us the first remarkable example of the aid which tyranny derives from a corrupt and cowardly exercise of the sanctions of popular representation. Richard and his advisers appear to have discovered how effectually a subservient parliament may render despotism more easy and secure than through its own unconcealed workings. The Statute recites, with great minuteness, the commission granted to the duke of Gloucester and others, ten years before; and then, at the desire of the Commons, repeals the same, as a thing done traitorously, and against the king's crown and dignity. The Statute then describes, with equal minuteness, the questions put to the judges regarding that Commission, with their answers. These answers not only affirmed the procurers of the Commission to be traitors, but declared that all who attempted in parliament to proceed in other business than that limited by the king were traitors; and that parliamentary impeachments of the king's officers were treasonable. These answers were now declared "good and lawful," by the subservient Lords and Commons. The king then gives a general pardon for all offences, in consideration of a subsidy having been granted him for life; and sweeps away the small remaining power of the Lords and Commons, by nominating certain nobles and commoners to legislate upon "all petitions, and matters contained in the same, as they shall think best by their good advice and discretion." Thereupon the king, by the assent of eight lords and three commoners, makes certain ordinances and statutes upon matters of general import to the safety of the realm and the good of the people.* Nothing further could be desired to render Richard the king absolute. The junta thus created superseded parliamentary government altogether.

The mode in which this revolution was accomplished was by such a proceeding as we know in modern times as a *coup-d'état*. With consummate duplicity, Richard, on the 10th of July, 1397, had the earl of Warwick to dine with him, and the same evening Warwick was arrested and sent to Tintagel Castle, in Cornwall. The archbishop of Canterbury was solicited to bring his brother, the earl of Arundel, to a conference with the king. The earl was seized at this conference, and was hurried away to Carisbrook Castle, Richard having promised, upon oath, that he should not be injured in person or property. The great blow was still to be struck. The Rolls of parliament say that the duke of Gloucester was arrested at his castle of Plashy, when he came forth in procession, humbly to meet the king. The account which

* "Statutes of the Realm, from Original Records," &c., vol. ii. p. 94.

Froissart gives of the duke's arrest is somewhat different; but is very consonant with the sudden boldness and habitual cunning which belonged to the character of Richard. The king set out from London, as if he were going to hunt. He rode to Havering Bower in Essex; and after dinner again went forward, with a small company, till he came to Plashy, about five o'clock in the afternoon. The duke of Gloucester had supped; and when he heard of the king's coming he went forth, with his duchess and his children, to meet him in the court and welcome him. The king entered into the hall, and then into a chamber, where a supper was laid for him. But he sate not long, but said, "Fair uncle, cause five or six horses of yours to be saddled, for I will pray you to ride with me to London, for to-morrow the Londoners will be before us, and upon their requests I will be ordered by your counsel." On the way, the king rode on a great pace, when he came to a place where he had placed his earl marshal in ambush. The duke was arrested in the king's name on that July night. "He cried after the king, yet the king made a deaf ear, and rode on before." Richard lodged that night in the Tower of London. Gloucester was hurried to a barge in the Thames, and then into a ship, and the next night was in safe keeping at Calais.

The proceedings of the king appear to have struck terror into the hearts of those who were bound to Gloucester by the ties of the nearest relationship, and of those who had to dread the king's revenge upon themselves for the proceedings of 1387. By constraint or artifice they put their seals to an instrument appealing Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick of treason. On the 17th of September Richard met his subservient parliament. The assembly, according to an anonymous authority, was surrounded by the king's troops.* The Commons impeached the archbishop of Canterbury of high treason, and he was banished for life. The earl of Arundel was condemned, and beheaded. The earl of Warwick was condemned, but his life was spared. A writ was issued on the 21st of September to the earl marshal, governor of Calais, commanding him to bring his prisoner, the duke of Gloucester, before the king in parliament. On the 24th—a wonderfully short interval for an answer to be returned in those days—a letter was read from the earl marshal, who wrote that he could not produce the duke, for that he had died in the king's prison. No inquiry was made; no surprise expressed. Lancaster and York, his brothers—Derby, his nephew,—appear to have yielded without resistance to the o'er-passing tyranny. The lords, who were so ready to condemn—the traitors of ten years previous, themselves having participated in the publicly pardoned treason—were rewarded by new honours. Derby was created duke of Hereford; and Nottingham duke of Norfolk. A confession of Gloucester was read, which had reference to the proceedings which procured the commission of regency, and to those solely. And yet his own brothers joined in pronouncing his attainder of treason. There is no solution of these inconsistencies but the fact that Richard "kept in his wages ten thousand archers." Shakspeare truly makes the widowed duchess of Gloucester attribute the "patience" of Lancaster and York to "despair."

Richard is now supreme. He wants no parliament to grant him subsidies.

* "Life of Richard II.," published by Hearne. See Hallam, "Middle Ages," chap. viii. part iii.

He is provided with taxes for the term of his life. He has no dread of remonstrances against his profligate expenditure. It is treason of any person to suggest the necessity of control. Some of those whom he most dreads have been executed, or murdered, or banished. One more act of bold tyranny was necessary for the quiet of his suspicions,—“imaginative prince as he was.”* “The king kept still in his wages ten thousand archers, night and day that waited on him;” and “there was none so great in England that durst speak against anything that the king did or would do.” But although “the people durst not speak,” there were “many great lords who would speak and murmur when they were together.”† Of such were Hereford and Norfolk. They were the only two who remained of the lords appellants, who had given such dire offence in the eleventh year of Richard. They were riding between Brentford and London, when they began to speak in whispered inuendoes. What they said was divulged to Richard. Of this treachery Hereford has been suspected. Norfolk was sent for by the king, and commanded to declare before the council what had passed. The obsequious parliament had been adjourned to Shrewsbury, where they met in January, 1398. Hereford was now called upon to declare what was the talk between Norfolk and himself. Norfolk did not attend. According to Hereford’s written account, as given in the Rolls of parliament, the following was the discourse in that ride between Brentford and London :

Norfolk. “We are on the point of being undone.”

Hereford. “Why so?”

Norf. “On account of the affair of Radcotbridge.”

Heref. “How can that be, since he has granted us pardon, and has declared in parliament that we behaved as good and loyal subjects.”

Norf. “Nevertheless, our fate will be like that of others before us. He will annul that record.”

Heref. “It will be marvellous indeed, if the king, after having said so before the people, should cause it to be annulled.”

Norf. “It is a marvellous and false world that we live in.”

Norfolk then related a plot of certain of the king’s council to undo six other lords, amongst whom were Lancaster, Hereford, and himself.

Heref. “God forbid! It will be a wonder, if the king should assent to such designs. He appears to make me good cheer, and has promised to be my good lord. Indeed, he has sworn by St. Edward to be a good lord to me and the others.”

Norf. “So has he often sworn to me by God’s body: but I do not trust him the more for that.”

After this, Norfolk surrendered. The two dukes knelt before the king, and Norfolk said, “My dear lord, with your leave, if I may answer your cousin, I say Henry of Lancaster is a liar; and in what he has said, and would say, of me, lies like a false traitor as he is.” Both were ordered into custody; and it was resolved that the dispute should be referred to a Court of Chivalry. The Court sat at Windsor. Hereford would not withdraw his statement. Norfolk persisted in his peremptory denial. Wager of battle could alone determine the quarrel; and the judgment of God was to be appealed to, in the lists of Coventry, on the 16th of September.

* Froissart.

† *Ibid.*

To that ancient city, the favourite seat of the Black Prince, comes his son, with all the magnificent retinue which exhibited the feudal pomp without its ancient prowess. The silken pavilions are bright with the gaudiest colours. The king, surrounded by nobles, and guarded by thousands of men in harness, sits on an elevated stage.



Ancient gate of Coventry.

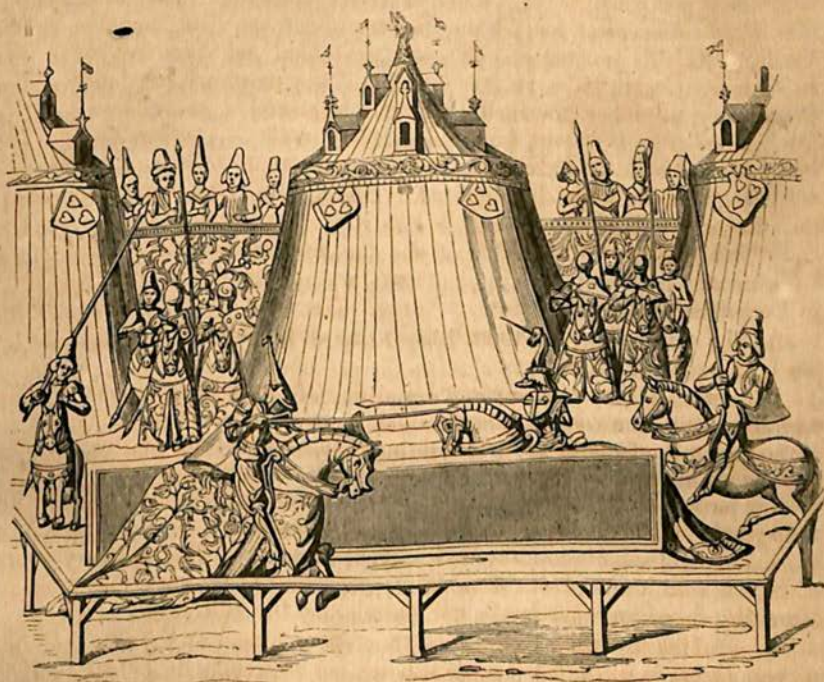
Henry of Lancaster makes the sign of the cross on his forehead; and entering the lists, alights from his horse, and takes his velvet chair. Thomas Mowbray hovers about the lists, and then enters crying—God aid him that hath the right. They have each previously sworn that this quarrel is just and true. The heralds make proclamation. The champions are mounted. The beavers are closed, and the spears are in rest. But the king casts down his warder, and the heralds shout, Ho! Ho! Hereford and Norfolk will not fight that day. The king affects to consult his

council; and the dangerous combatants are each banished, Hereford for ten years, Norfolk for life.*

Upon the departure of Hereford and Norfolk from the kingdom, Richard appears to have pursued the most reckless course. In the face of his declared amnesty for all offences, he extorted fines from seventeen counties, to whose population he imputed crimes connected with the levying arms in 1387. Under forced confessions of treason done at that period, he compelled rich individuals to give blank obligations, which his officers filled up with large sums, having no limitation but their despotic caprice. The ordinary course of justice was interrupted. Robbers in great companies kept the fields and highways, despoiling merchants, and plundering the cultivators of their produce. The people said—"In the days of good king Edward III. there was no man so hardy in England to take a hen, or a chicken, or a sheep, without he had paid truly for it; and now-a-days all that we have is taken from us, and yet we dare not speak." They complained that they had a king who attended to nothing but his own pleasure; and cared not how things went as long as he had his will. Thus writes Froissart, who is generally more tender towards Richard than other contemporary chroniclers. But it was not only the common people who complained;—the nobles showed their displeasure by ominous avoidance of the regal pageantries. At this juncture, John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster, died. He did not survive the banishment of his son more than three months. The king was perfectly aware of the deep love which the Londoners and the nation generally bore towards Hereford, whose popular demeanour had won their hearts. Thousands waited on him weeping when he rode out of London. And yet Richard chose this time to seize upon the property of that powerful house; and to decree that the banishment of Hereford had rendered him incapable of succeeding by attorney

* See the pompous description of the Lists of Coventry, in Hall's Chronicle

to the estates of his father, revoking the letters-patent which had been granted to enable the son to claim livery of his inheritance, should his father die during the period of his banishment. No crime had been imputed to Hereford. He was banished by the arbitrary will of the king, who, first decreeing his exile for a term of ten years, had subsequently revoked the sentence to an exile of six years. In the spring of 1399 Richard suddenly determined to go to Ireland, to avenge the loss of the earl of March, who had been surprised and slain by a party of the natives. He previously proclaimed a great tournament at Windsor, of forty knights and forty esquires



Tournament.

against all comers. The king and his child-queen sat there in more than wonted splendour; but few came to the feast, whether "lords, or knights, or other men, for they had the king in such hatred." Then Richard appointed his uncle, the Duke of York, regent; and he parted with Isabella at the door of St. George's chapel, where they had heard mass; lifting her up in his arms, and kissing her, and saying, "Adieu, madam, adieu, till we meet again." The Londoners were prophetic. They said, "Now goeth Richard of Bordeaux the way to Bristow, and so into Ireland, which will be to his destruction. He shall never return again with joy, no more than did king Edward the Second his great grandfather, who was foolishly governed by too much believing of the Spensers. In like wise, Richard of Bordeaux hath believed so much evil counsel, that it cannot be holden nor suffered any longer." *

* Froissart.

At the beginning of the year 1399, Henry of Lancaster is at the court of France. Although he has been banished by Richard, the son-in-law of the French king, he is in favour with Charles VI., and the princes and nobles. With the duke of Orleans he has entered into a compact for mutual support in all their undertakings. He seeks in marriage the widowed daughter of the duke de Berri; Mary de Bohun, the mother of Henry of Monmouth, and of five other children, being dead; and his pretensions are favourably received. The king of England grows jealous of his cousin's influence, and sends the earl of Salisbury to hinder the marriage, denouncing Henry as a traitor. The marriage is postponed. It is found that the son of John of Gaunt, although now duke of Lancaster, has nothing but his bare title to offer to a princess of France. At this juncture a pilgrim monk arrives in Paris, and obtains an interview with Henry. It is the banished Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, who has travelled thus disguised from Cologne. He brings intelligence of great import from England. Richard is gone to Ireland. Hé has quarrelled with the Percies, and has decreed their banishment. Nobles and Commons are alike discontented. The duke and the ex-prelate unite their fortunes. They pass together into Brittany; hire three small vessels; and with no further aid than that of the son of the late earl of Arundel, and a few men-at-arms and servants, sail from Vannes, and land at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, on the 4th of July.

At the midsummer of 1399, king Richard is leading a large army into the Irish bogs and thickets, to chastise the presumption of some of the chiefs. As he advances, they retreat; and draw him on till provisions fail, and the murmurs of his men compel him to march back. The usual accompaniments of the earlier feudal wars are not wanting. By command of the king every thing is set on fire. The pageantries of chivalry are also displayed in the Irish deserts. Henry of Monmouth, a boy of eleven years old, is with the army; and he, with others, is knighted by Richard. But the Irish chief, Mac-More, will submit to no terms; and the king, "pale with anger," swears by St. Edward that he would never depart from Ireland till he had Mac-More in his power, alive or dead. He marches to Dublin, having accomplished nothing by his expedition. Here the king and his retinue now live in great plenty and magnificence for six weeks. No news has arrived from England, for the winds have been contrary. At last, as an eye-witness tells us, "a barge arrived, which was the occasion of much sorrow." * Henry of Lancaster is in England. The people are in insurrection. Towns and castles have been yielded to the invader. Richard again grows "pale with anger;" and exclaims, "Good Lord, this man designs to deprive me of my country." A council is held, and the earl of Salisbury is dispatched to raise the Welsh. He landed at Conway; and soon collected a considerable force. Richard, irresolute, remained eighteen days longer at Dublin. When he put his foot upon Wales the revolution was nearly accomplished.

When the duke of York had knowledge of the landing of Henry at Ravenspur, he assembled the retainers of the crown, and raised a numerous force. But he found a general disaffection, instead of a willingness to

* "Histoire du Roy d'Angleterre Richard. Composée par un gentleman François de marque, qui fut à la suite du dict Roy." This manuscript of the French knight, which bears the date of 1399, is published in the "Archæologia," vol. xx., with a translation.

oppose the duke of Lancaster. The signs of approaching change were so alarming, that three members of the committee of parliament, who had been most obnoxious to the people—the earl of Wiltshire, Bussy, and Green—fled to Bristol. York led his doubtful army westward. The road to London was open from the north. Lancaster, when he arrived at the capital, had sixty thousand followers. “The people of London,” says Froissart, “were so joyful of the earl’s coming, that there was no more working in London that day than an it had been Easter-day.” Lancaster tarried not for feasts and gratulations. He marched rapidly into the west; and at Berkeley met the duke of York. Either the force of Henry was so overpowering, or his professions so plausible, that resistance or argument were unavailing; for the interview ended in the regent espousing his cause. Together they marched to Bristol, the castle of which was surrendered to the duke of York. The next morning the earl of Wiltshire, Bussy, and Green, were executed without a trial. York remained at Bristol. Henry marched on to Chester. Richard, meanwhile, had landed somewhere in Wales. But the troops which he brought with him quickly abandoned him. The army which the earl of Salisbury had raised had dispersed, there being “no tidings of the king.” With a few followers Richard wandered from castle to castle; and at length found a resting-place at Conway. His brothers, Exeter and Surrey, were dispatched to Chester, to ascertain Lancaster’s resolves. He prevented their return, having obtained a knowledge of the place where the king was to be found. The earl of Northumberland undertook to secure him. He marched from Chester with men-at-arms and archers; took possession of the castles of Flint and Rhuddlan as he advanced; and, approaching Conway, concealed his forces behind a rock, and rode forward with a few attendants. Admitted into the castle, he proposed certain conditions to the king, which were willingly agreed to, as they impaired not his royal authority; and to the observance of these Northumberland swore. It was promised that Lancaster should come to Flint, and having asked pardon on his knees, should be restored to the estates and honours of his family. The earl left Conway to prepare for this interview at Flint, and the king followed him. Descending a steep hill, Richard suddenly exclaimed, “I am betrayed. Do you not see banners and pennons in that valley?” Northumberland then came up, and seized the king’s bridle. In the evening the prisoner and his escort reached Flint Castle. The next morning Richard went upon a tower to watch for the arrival of Lancaster; and when he saw him coming along the sea-shore, with his mighty host, he shuddered and wept. Lancaster entered the castle. The French knight, who was present, has recorded what then took place. “Then they made the king, who had dined in the donjon, come down to meet duke Henry, who, as soon as he perceived him at a distance, bowed very low to the ground; and, as they approached each other, he bowed a second time, with his cap in his hand; and then the king took off his bonnet, and spake first, in this manner: ‘Fair cousin of Lancaster, you are right welcome.’ Then duke Henry replied, bowing very low to the ground—‘My lord, I am come sooner than you sent for me; the reason wherefore I will tell you. The common report of your people is such, that you have, for the space of twenty or two-and-twenty years, governed them very badly and very rigorously, and in so much that they are

not well contented therewith. But, if it please our Lord, I will help you to govern them better than they have been governed in time past.' King Richard then answered him, 'Fair cousin, since it pleaseth you, it pleaseth us well.' And be assured that these are the very words that they two spake together, without taking away or adding anything: for I heard and understood them very well."

The French knight then relates the progress of the captive and his enemy from Flint to Chester, and from Chester to London. At Chester Henry dismissed many of his followers. At Lichfield Richard attempted to escape by night, letting himself down through a window of the tower where he lodged. The knight then records, what Froissart also mentions as having previously occurred, that Henry told a deputation of Londoners, who demanded



The Tower, from the Thames.

the head of the king, that the king should be judged by the parliament. Slowly the cavalcade advanced by the north road, till, on the 1st of September, they came within six miles of London. Here they were met by the mayor and principal citizens; and as they went on the people shouted, "Long live the duke of Lancaster." They entered the city at the hour of vespers; and Henry alighted at St. Paul's, and went all armed before the high altar to make his orisons. He wept much at the tomb of his father. The king was lodged in the Tower.

During a sojourn of three days at Chester, writs had been issued in the

king's name to summon a parliament on the 30th of September. A month of captivity had to be passed by the unhappy Richard. There is a manuscript in the Royal Library of France which details an interview between the king and Lancaster in the Tower, at which York and Aumerle were present, when Richard in a violent rage exclaimed, "I am king, and will still continue king in spite of my enemies." But this passionate and irresolute nature was quickly subdued. On the 29th of September, according to an entry on the Rolls of parliament, Richard, in the presence of nobles and prelates, knights and justices, subscribed a deed of resignation of the crown; absolving his subjects from their allegiance; and adding that if he had the will he would choose his cousin of Lancaster as his successor. Froissart thus describes the surrender. "On a day the duke of Lancaster, accompanied with lords, dukes, prelates, earls, barons, and knights, and of the notablest men of London, and of other good towns, rode to the Tower, and there alighted. Then king Richard was brought into the hall, appareled like a king in his robes of estate, his sceptre in his hand, and his crown on his head. Then he stood up alone, not holden nor stayed by no man, and said aloud, 'I have been king of England, duke of Aquitaine, and lord of Ireland, about twenty-two years, which signiory, royalty, sceptre, crown, and heritage, I clearly resign here to my cousin, Henry of Lancaster; and I desire him here, in this open presence, in entering of the same possession, to take this sceptre:' and so delivered it to the duke, who took it." The parliamentary record most suspiciously adverts to the cheerfulness with which Richard made this surrender. Henry, a few years afterwards, was denounced by Northumberland as having compelled the king thus to abdicate under threats of death. The parliament met on the 30th of September, in Westminster Hall, which was crowded by people of all ranks. The throne was empty. The duke of Lancaster sat in his place as a peer. The resignation of the king was read; and each member expressed aloud his acceptance of it, amidst the shouts of the multitude. The Act of deposition was next read. The articles of impeachment were thirty-three in number. All the circumstances connected with the events of 1387-8 were now objected to the king. The murder of the duke of Gloucester was imputed to him, as well as the convictions of Arundel, Warwick, and others,—the banishment of Henry, and the seizure of his estates. His despotic tendencies were affirmed, for that when he was asked to do justice according to the laws, he would say, that "his laws were in his mouth,"—that "the laws were in his breast,"—that "he himself alone could make and change the laws of his kingdom;" and that he maintained that the life of every one of his subjects, and his lands and goods, were at his will and pleasure, without any forfeiture. It was added that he was "so variable and dissembling in his words and writings, that no man living, who knew his conditions, could or would confide in him;" and that his unfaithfulness and inconstancy were scandalous to himself and to the kingdom, especially amongst foreigners. After the reading of this voluminous document, the Act of deposition was solemnly pronounced by eight commissioners. Henry then approached the throne; and, having crossed himself, in the language of England thus said: "In the name of Fader, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Henry of Lancaster, challenge this rewme of Ynglonde, and the crown with all the

members, and the appurtenances, als I that am descendit, be right line of the blode, comyng fro the gude lord king Henry therde, and thorghe that right that God of his grace hath sent mee, with helpe of my kyn, and of my frendes to recover it; the which rewme was in poynt to be ondone for defaut of governance, and undoyng of the gude laws."* Henry of Lancaster was then led by the archbishops of Canterbury and York to the royal chair of state, "all the people wonderfully shouting for joy."

In his prison of the Tower the deposed Richard had to go through one more humiliation. On the day after his deposition, Sir William Thirnyng, one of the justices, with other procurators, came before him, and said, that in an assembly of all the States at Westminster, they declared and decreed and judged him to be deprived of the estate of king, and of all the dignity and worship, and of all the administration that belonged thereto. The broken-down man mildly answered that, after all this, he hoped that his cousin would be good lord to him. The murder of Thomas of Woodstock is now avenged. But in that hour of retribution the grave closes over the evil fortunes of that house. Humphrey, the only son of the duke of Gloucester, was with Richard in Ireland, in companionship with Henry of Monmouth. Upon the news of Henry's landing they were both shut up in the castle of Trym. Henry was released, to become Prince of Wales. Humphrey died before he reached England. Eleanor Bohun, his desolate mother, sank under her accumulated sorrows, four days after her husband's avenger ascended the throne.

* Parliamentary History, vol. i., p. 267.



Monumental Brass of Eleanor Bohun. Died 1399.



Coronation of Henry IV. Harleian MS.

CHAPTER III.

Hereditary pretensions of Henry of Lancaster to the crown—Edmund Mortimer—Conspiracy against Henry defeated—Revolt of the Welsh—Owen Glendower—Alleged murder of Richard II.—Doubts as to his death at Pontefract—Statute against the Lollards—Burnings for heresy—Hostility of France and Scotland—Battle of Homildon-hill—Revolt of the Percies—Battle of Shrewsbury—Revolt of Archbishop Scrope, Nottingham, and others—Rival factions in France—The King's jealousy of the Prince of Wales—Henry's death.

THE claim to the crown which Henry of Lancaster made "in his mother tongue," was a well considered form of words. The averment that "the realm was on the point to be undone for default of government and undoing of the good laws," was the true foundation of the deposition which the parliament had pronounced upon Richard. But the legal advisers of Henry took care to introduce a statement of hereditary right:—"I, Henry of Lancaster, challenge this realm of England, because I am descended, by right line of the blood, coming from the good lord King Henry Third." He took the same great seal as Richard, with the single alteration of the name on the legend. The badges of the House of Lancaster,—the crowned and chained antelope, the swan, the red rose, and the columbine,—decorate the illuminated MSS. of the Lancastrian period. The claim of Henry was equivocally put. Richard being deposed, Henry was not the next in the line of inheritance, as the grandson of Edward III. The posterity of Lionel, duke

of Clarence, the second son of Edward III., had a prior claim to that of the heir of John of Gaunt, the third son. At the time of Richard's deposition, the hereditary claim of the Clarence branch was vested in Edmund Mortimer, earl of March, who was the grandson of Philippa, the daughter of Lionel. But he was only ten years of age. In the sermon which the archbishop of Canterbury preached when the parliament deposed Richard and chose Henry, he took for his text, "A man shall reign over my people;" and he descanted on the theme, that when the King of Kings threatened his people, he said, "I will make children to rule over them." Nothing could more distinctly point to the young earl of March. John of Gaunt, when Roger Mortimer, in 1385, was declared presumptive heir to the throne, asserted that his own son was the true heir, as descended from Edmund Crouchback, the eldest son of Henry III., who was set aside on account of his deformity. This claim by blood from "the good king Henry Third," would have stood Henry of Lancaster in little avail, had he not been known as a man of vigour and ability; at the head of a powerful army; supported by the chief nobles; the favourite of the people. Edmund Mortimer, set aside by the revolution of 1399, died without issue in 1424. He had a sister, Anne, who married the second son of Edmund Langley, duke of York; and in her son arose the pretension to the crown of the house of York. The chronicler, Hall, quaintly, but most justly, said, "What misery, what murder, and what execrable plagues this famous region hath suffered by the division and dissension of the renowned houses of Lancaster and York, my wit cannot comprehend, nor my tongue declare, neither yet my pen fully set forth." This is the tragical story that arises out of the deposition of Richard II. It is a story well known to the English people, for it has been told in the dramatic form by a great historical teacher. History, strictly so called,—the history derived from Rolls and Statutes—must "pale its ineffectual fire" in the sunlight of the poet.

When the deposed Richard hoped that his cousin would be "good lord to him," he hoped for an impossibility. To retain some portion of his state, to be served by an expensive household, to appear in public, would have been fatal to the quiet rule of the house of Lancaster. To permit him to reside abroad would have been dangerous to the safety of the kingdom. The Lords in parliament attempted to meet the difficulty, by a resolution, which was to be kept secret, that it seemed advisable to them that the late king should be put under a safe and secret guard, in a place where no concourse of people might resort to him; and with no attendant who had been familiar to him about his person. When the question was put to the Lords, the earl of Northumberland said, "the king would have his life saved." It is related that, on this occasion, Thomas Merks, bishop of Carlisle, delivered a speech protesting against the deposition of Richard and the accession of Henry.* Four days afterwards, the king came to parliament; and it was determined that Richard, late king of England, should be adjudged to perpetual imprisonment, in safe and secret ward. Froissart truly says, "every man might well consider that he should never come out of prison alive." In the parliament of October, 1399, all the old hatreds and jealousies were revived, in the discussion of the conduct of the lords who had appealed Gloucester, Arundel,

* The speech is given by Sir John Hayward, who wrote during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. Its authenticity is very doubtful.

and Warwick of treason. The most violent disputes took place. The terms, so odious to honourable ears, of "liar" and "traitor," were freely exchanged; and gauntlets were thrown on the floor of the house. The lords appellants lost the honours and the lands which Richard had bestowed on them for their subserviency. But they escaped all other punishment. The duke of Albemarle (Aumerle) sank down to Earl of Rutland; and the dukes of Exeter and Surrey, Richard's half-brothers, to earls of Huntingdon and Kent. Violent as this parliament was, it wisely sought to restrain future violence. It limited treason to the offences enumerated in the Act of Edward III., in which that chief crime against civil government was taken out of the hands of the king's justices, and "what are treasons" was declared in parliament. It referred the accuser in a case of treason to the courts of law, abolishing those appeals of treason which had been productive of such evil effects. It forbade any delegation of the powers of parliament to a committee. It tried to restrain the quarrels of great nobles, by forbidding any person, except the king, to give liveries to his retainers. All this was indicative that the reign of justice was come back. In less than three months, in a confederacy of nobles, it was determined to attempt the restoration of Richard, and to drive Henry from power. The plot became known to the vigilant king, disclosed to him unwillingly by Rutland, who was one of the confederates. Windsor castle was surprised; but the forewarned Henry was in London levying an army. The conspirators marched to the west, proclaiming king Richard. At Cirencester, they were attacked in their quarters by the burghers; and the earls of Kent and Salisbury were seized and beheaded. The citizens of Bristol, in the same way, secured and executed lord Lumley and lord Despenser. Huntingdon was put to death by the tenants of the duke of Gloucester at Plashy. The popular attachment to Henry was thus signally manifested. There were a few executions under the legal judgment of the courts of law. The insurrection was at the beginning of January. Before the expiration of a month it was stated that the late king had died at Pontefract. The body was conveyed to London, and there shown, with the face exposed, so that those who knew Richard might identify him. The obsequies of the deposed king were performed in St. Paul's, Henry being present; and the corpse was subsequently interred at Langley. Henry V., upon coming to the throne, caused it to be removed to Westminster Abbey.

During the latter years of the reign of Richard, however distasteful his rule might have been in England, there was a strong attachment to him in Wales. When he sailed from Ireland to meet his enemy, he landed in Wales, confident that he should there find a powerful army. His procrastination alone caused the dispersion of that army. The Statute-book shows how obnoxious was the revolution of 1399 to the Welsh borderers. A parliament was held at Westminster in the second year of Henry's reign, 1400-1, when the Commons complained of the ravages of the Welsh in the countries joining upon the marches of Wales, by carrying off cattle and arresting merchants. Various strong measures were then enacted, quite sufficient in their severe injustice to produce a general revolt. It was not enough to sanction reprisals upon Welsh property and persons; but it was ordained, that no Welshman should be permitted to purchase land in

England, and that no "whole Englishman" should be convicted at the suit of any Welshman within Wales, except by the judgment of English justices. To make the separation of the two nations complete, it was also ordained that no Welshman should be thenceforth chosen to be citizen or burgess in any English city or town. The next year, another parliament passed more stringent measures; amongst which it was enacted that no Welshman should bear arms nor defensible armour. The country was in insurrection; the Welsh had found a leader. "It is ordained and stablished that no Englishman married to any Welshwoman of the amity and alliance of Owen of Gleindour, traitor to our sovereign lord, or to any other Welshwoman after the rebellion of the said Owen, shall be put in any office in Wales, or in the marches of the same."

Owen of Gleindour,—or as we now write, Owen Glendower,—was one of the most remarkable men of this period. Claiming descent from the ancient British princes, being the great-grandson of the famous Llewellyn, he might still have remained a peaceful landowner in Wales, but for the deposition of the master whom he had served as an esquire of his household. Educated at one of the Inns of Court in London, he possessed an amount of knowledge which made him regarded as a necromancer by his simple countrymen. His property was contiguous to that of Lord Grey de Ruthyn; and the Anglo-Norman baron claimed and seized some portion of it. Glendower petitioned the parliament of 1400 for redress. His petition was dismissed by the peers, with the scornful answer, that "they cared not for barefooted rascals."* He took arms; made Lord Grey his prisoner; and wasted his barony. But the



Seal of Owen Glendower.

private feud became a national revolt. The mountains again heard the bardic songs, which were applied to the new hero who had arisen to restore the glory of the ancient Britons. Henry thought to stop the popular voice by decreeing that "no waster, rhymers, minstrel, nor vagabond, be any wise sustained in the land of Wales." The Welsh scholars of Oxford and Cambridge departed to their own country, in 1401, to aid the rebellion; and the Welsh labourers employed in England escaped to join their countrymen. Owen Glendower, by the general voice of the people, was declared Prince of Wales. Before the rebellion had attained any very extensive organisation, Harry Percy (Hotspur) and Prince Henry, were engaged in different parts of the country against the insurgents. Henry of Monmouth, in

1401, was in his fourteenth year. His command in Wales could have been only nominal; and we are glad therefore to believe that a letter of this period, addressed in his name to the council, was a mere official communication. The boy is made to say, describing his triumphal progress,—“We caused the whole place to be set on fire.”—“We laid waste a fine and populous country.” This is learning the lessons of chivalry at a very early age. He continued, however, in authority, but was much straitened in his slaughter and burnings for want of money to pay his archers and men-at-arms. In 1402, Sir Edmund Mortimer, uncle to the young earl of March, went against Glendower; and

* “Se de scarris nudipedibus non curare.”—Leland.

his army being utterly routed in Radnorshire he was taken prisoner. The king now determined to go in person, "to check the insolencies and malice of Owen Glendower and other rebels." His expedition was fruitless. The royal army, in the month of August, was exposed to storms of rain, snow, and hail; and Glendower was alleged to have raised them by his wicked sorcery. That autumn the sagacious Welshman defied all the power of England in his mountain fastnesses. In the succeeding winter, his prisoner, Edmund Mortimer, became his friend and ally. Henry, with that jealousy which formed a part of his character, refused to ransom his "beloved cousin;" and Mortimer consoled himself by marrying the great Welsh chieftain's daughter.—On the 13th of December, 1402, he writes thus to his tenants: "Very dear and well-beloved; I greet you much, and make known to you that Owen Glyndor has raised a quarrel, of which the object is, if King Richard be alive, to restore him to his crown; and if not, that my honoured nephew, who is the right heir to the said crown, shall be king of England, and that the said Owen will assert his right in Wales. And I, seeing and considering that the said quarrel is good and reasonable, have consented to join in it, and to aid and maintain it, and, by the grace of God, to a good end. Amen!"

"If king Richard be alive!" It is nearly three years since king Richard's body was exposed in St. Paul's Church—a public act known to all the kingdom—and especially known to all such as Sir Edmund Mortimer. How can a doubt now be raised, "if king Richard be alive?" In six months from the date of this letter, a great host, headed by the Percies, will be looking for Glendower to fight with them against king Henry; and before they meet him in Hateley-field near Shrewsbury, they will denounce the usurping king as a murderer in the following words: "Thou hast caused our sovereign lord and thine, traitorously within the castle of Pomfret, without the consent or judgment of the lords of the realm, by the space of fifteen days and so many nights, with hunger, thirst, and cold, to perish." How are these contradictions to be solved? For years, Henry had to struggle against two popular beliefs. The first, and the most natural, was, that he had put Richard to death. That he died by violence is highly probable. His removal would add much to the safety of his successor; and every opportunity was afforded by his secret imprisonment to effect this removal by the foulest means. Thus Henry was publicly accused by the Percies of having procured Richard's death by starvation. The duke of Orleans, in 1403, in a letter to Henry, insinuated that he was guilty of the murder, and the king replied: "With regard to that passage in your letter where you speak of the death of our very dear cousin and lord, whom God absolve, saying 'God knows how it happened, and by whom that death was done,' we know not with what intent such words are used; but if you mean and dare to say that his death was caused by our order, or with our consent, we say that is false, and you will say what is false as often as you shall say so; as the true God knows, whom we call to witness: offering our body against yours in single combat, if you will or dare to prove it." In an age when the appeals of kings to heaven were occasionally of no more value than "dicers' oaths," this will not go for much. An account from a contemporary states that Sir Pierce Exton, with a band of assassins, entered his prison at Pontefract, and that Richard, seizing a battle-axe, fell bravely fighting with unequal numbers. Some years ago Richard's tomb was opened in Westminster

Abbey, and no marks of violence appeared on his skull, on which the contemporary relates that he received his death-wound. Walsingham, the chronicler, affirms as common rumour that Richard died by voluntary starvation. Froissart says, "how Richard died, and by what means, I could not tell when I wrote this chronicle." The question is no nearer its solution after four centuries and a half. The other popular belief, the most embarrassing to Henry, was, that Richard had escaped from Pontefract, and was living in Scotland. For several years there were proclamations against those who spread this rumour, and some were punished by death for this offence. The belief gradually passed away from the popular mind; and the chroniclers explain that a man named Serle, a servant to king Richard, having heard that his old master was alive in Scotland, came over from France, persuaded the court-fool to personate the ex-king, and was eventually executed as a traitor for the deception which had entrapped many persons into the confidence that Richard was coming to claim his crown. The fondness for "historic doubts" has revived the belief in our own times. It is stated that Richard's escape from Pontefract is proved by documents in our Record Office; that this escape was effected in connection with the rising of 1400, in which he was proclaimed by the earls who afterwards suffered as traitors; that there are entries in the public accounts of Scotland of expenses for the custody of king Richard of England; and that Richard lived till 1419 in Stirling castle, in a state of mental imbecility.* The vague and contradictory accounts of the manner of Richard's death by violence give some little sanction to the belief that he was not murdered at all. But if we even accept the explanation, that another body was substituted for Richard's at St. Paul's on the 14th of March, 1400, and that Henry and his court went through the mummery of his false obsequies, we have still so many difficulties to reconcile that we have little hesitation in believing that the Richard of Stirling castle was an impostor. The French believed in Richard's death when the son of the duke of Orleans married Isabella in 1406. In the same year the Lords addressed Henry, praying that those might be put to prison who preach and publish that Richard, late king, who is dead, should be in full life; or that "the fool in Scotland" is that king Richard who is dead.

However defective may be the evidence upon which impartial history must condemn or acquit Henry IV. of the murder of Richard II., he must bear the infamy of a political crime of broader and deeper significance. He was the first English king who put men to death by statute for their religious belief. He came to the throne with almost the unanimous support of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Archbishop Arundel was his great upholder; and this primate made Henry his instrument for the destruction of those who had assailed the corruptions of the Church. Henry's father had been a supporter of Wycliffe. The son of John of Gaunt was to be the persecutor of Wycliffe's followers. Henry was carried to the throne with the avowal of popular principles. The lay barons and the Commons were opposed to the pretensions of the Church to be above all inquiry—a dominant and irresponsible power. But Henry knew the strength of a body that, according to an estimate of his time, possessed one-third of the revenues of the king-

* This belief, which was first suggested by Mr. Tytler in his "History of Scotland," is fully acquiesced in by the compiler of the very useful "Annals of England," vol. i. p. 400. 1855

dom. In the first year of his reign was passed the Statute "De heretico comburendo"—"the first statute and butcherly knife," says Prynne, "that the impeaching prelates procured or had against the poor preachers of Christ's gospel." The fiery persecution of archbishop Arundel was grounded upon these charges:—"Whereas it is showed to our sovereign lord the king on the behalf of the prelates and the clergy,* that divers false and perverse people of a certain new sect, of the faith, of the sacraments of the church, and the authority of the same damnably thinking, and against the law of God and of the church usurping the office of preaching, do perversely and maliciously in divers places within the said realm, under the colour of dissembled holiness, preach and teach these days openly and privily divers new doctrines, and wicked heretical and erroneous opinions, contrary to the same faith and blessed determinations of Holy Church; and of such sect and wicked doctrine and opinions they make unlawful conventicles and confederacies, they hold and exercise schools, they make and write books, they do wickedly instruct and inform people, and as much as they may excite and stir them to sedition and insurrection, and make great strife and division among the people, and other enormities horrible to be heard daily do perpetrate and commit." The "convenient remedy" for such "novelties and excesses" was that none should preach, write, or teach against the faith of Holy Church; that all having in their possession books or writings of such wicked doctrines and opinions should deliver them up, or be arrested and proceeded against by the diocesan; and, finally, that if any persons be before the diocesan charged with such wicked preachings and teachings, and should refuse to abjure, or after abjuration fall into relapse, they should be left to the secular court; and the sheriff of a county, or mayor or bailiffs of a city or borough, after sentence, shall receive the same persons, and every of them, "and them, before the people, do [cause] to be burnt, that such punishment may strike in fear to the minds of other." Vain and detestable law—the parent of abominations that make the slaughters of the feudal ages, perpetrated in the heat and self-defence of battle, appear guiltless by the side of this deliberate wickedness in the name of the religion of mercy! In this hateful career Henry IV. was no impassive tool of the persecuting churchmen. The first victim was William Salter, a London clergyman, who was burnt on the 12th of February, 1401. The stake and the fagot were in full activity, till the Commons shuddered at the atrocities which Englishmen had now first to endure. In the reign of Richard II. the Commons would not permit that the Church should imprison heretics without the king's consent. Now heretics were to be burnt, upon the sole sentence of the ecclesiastical courts. A petition of the Lords in 1406, which we have just referred to, mixes up the charges of heresy against certain preachers and teachers with the charge of publishing rumours that king Richard was alive. This alleged offence was a possible cause of the king's bitterness against them. But it was also set forth in that petition that they stirred and moved the people to take away their temporal possessions from the prelates; and, it was added,

* "The petition and the statute are both in Latin, which is unusual in the laws of this time. In a subsequent petition of the Commons this act is styled 'the statute made in the second year of your majesty's reign, at the request of the prelates and clergy of your kingdom;' which affords a presumption that it had no regular assent of parliament."—Hallam, "Middle Ages," chap. viii. part. iii.

“in case that this evil purpose be not resisted by your royal majesty, it is very likely that in process of time they will also excite the people of your kingdom to take away from the lords temporal their possessions and heritages.” The Commons, who had also temporal possessions to lose, did not share this apprehension. They prayed Henry in 1410, that the Statute against the Lollards might be repealed, or even mitigated. He replied, that he wished one more severe had been passed; and to show how practical was his intolerance, he immediately signed a warrant for the burning of John Badby, a Lollard. The Commons deeply resented the temper of the king, and refused to grant a subsidy to be levied yearly without their renewed assent. But, in the reign of Henry V., a noble knight was burnt for heresy; and the “wicked doctrines” were thrown back for another century and a half. In His own good time, He who “remaineth a king for ever” asserts His own laws against the trumpety edicts of earthly kings. The Lollards’ dungeon at Lambeth is now a monument of the triumph of the Reformation.



Lollards' Prison.

It was with no vague meaning that Shakspeare put into the mouth of Henry IV. the aphorism, “Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.” His reign was a period of continued assault and danger on every side. France and Scotland refused to recognise Henry as the sovereign of England. Their truces, they maintained, were with Richard, and not with an usurper. With France the king was anxiously desirous of peace. But the princes and nobles of France, considering the deposition of Richard as the act of the people, were craving to punish a nation which they held as the most dangerous on earth through its pride and insolence.* The king of France, subject to partial attacks of insanity, had received a terrible shock by the announcement of the events that had deprived his daughter of her queenly rank. Isabella was conducted back to Calais with ceremonies almost as magnificent

* Froissart.

as those which had attended her marriage five years before. But Henry, straitened in his finances, did not send back with her the dower which Richard had received. The duke of Orleans was for commencing hostilities against Henry. The duke of Burgundy was more cautious. These rival uncles of the insane king, by their furious discords kept France in a state of disorder and terror, which rendered the government incapable of any great enterprise. Bordeaux, and other parts of Gascony, were still retained by the English government, and these were attacked by the duke of Burgundy. But the people clung to the English rule. In 1400, Henry invaded Scotland. He marched to Edinburgh; and left the usual mark of feudal royalty by burning the city. In 1402, the Scots invaded England. Henry was chasing Glendower in the land of the ancient Britons, and attributing to necromancy the ill success which courage and constancy had prepared for him. The Scottish earl of March, who had abjured his allegiance to his own sovereign, had defeated the invading Scots at Hepburn-moor. The earl Douglas came with a great army to revenge the loss. They advanced beyond the Tyne, devastating and plundering with more than usual fierceness and rapacity. But the earl of Northumberland, his son Henry Percy, and the earl of March, had collected a large force in their rear, and awaited their return near Wooller. On Holyrood-day, the 14th of September, the Scots took up a strong position on Homildon-hill. The English army was placed on an opposite eminence. Percy commanded a descent into the valley; and as the Scots lined the sides of Homildon-hill, the English archers picked down their men with unerring aim, while Douglas gave no order for advance. At last the Scots charged down the steep, and the English retired a little. Again they halted, and again the deadly shafts flew so sharp and strong that few could stand up against the "iron sleet." The English men-at-arms in this battle drew not a sword. The victory was won by the terrible archers alone. Douglas and many nobles and knights were made prisoners; amongst whom was Murdoc Stewart, the son and heir of the duke of Albany, the regent of Scotland. The earl of Northumberland presented his illustrious prisoners to Henry, at Westminster; when the king exhorted Murdoc to be resigned to his captivity, for he had been taken on the battle-field like a true knight. The notion that Henry demanded the prisoners of Homildon-hill from the captors, that he might deprive them of ransom, is an error which Shakspeare derived from Hall and Holinshed. It is distinctly proved that Henry reserved to the captors all their rights. The revolt of the Percies was possibly accelerated by the refusal of Henry to ransom Sir Edmund Mortimer, whose sister had become the wife of Hotspur. But the probability is, that no sudden impulses of passion excited their resistance to the authority of the man whom they had seated on the throne. The king was so unconscious of having provoked their resentment by any act of his own self-will, that the very army which encountered them at Shrewsbury was led by him, "to give aid and support to his very dear and loyal cousins, the earl of Northumberland and his son Henry, in the expedition which they had honourably commenced for him and his realm against his enemies the Scotch."* But the Percies had just cause of complaint against the government of Henry, in a matter which involved no jealousy of their power which had advanced him to the throne, as Hume

* Henry to the Privy Council. See preface by Sir H. Nicolas to "Privy Council of England."

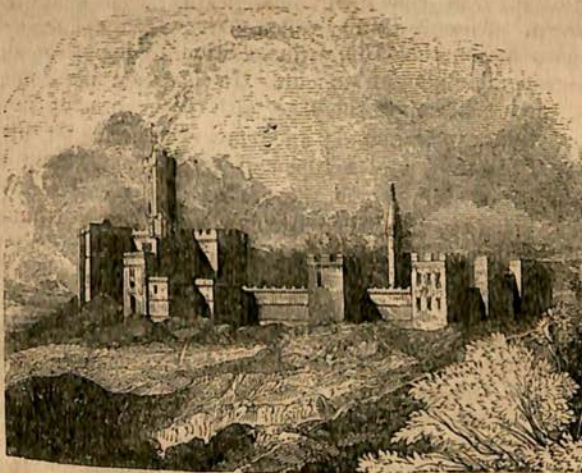
describes the temper of the king. The Percies had incurred great expenses in their resistance to the Scots; and the government of Henry had been unable to reimburse them. There are letters to the king and to the council from the earl of Northumberland, in the summer of 1403, bitterly complaining of the non-payment of large sums due to him. There is a letter of the same period from Henry's son, the prince of Wales, complaining that his soldiers would not remain with him unless they were promptly paid their wages; and an order is made by the king in council, on the 10th of July, 1403, that a thousand pounds should be sent to the prince, to enable him to keep his people together. It is clear that the king was surrounded by financial embarrassments, which affected his own son as much as the Percies. He satisfied the Percies as far as he could by small payments and large promises. They probably saw in these embarrassments a symptom of the weakness of Henry's government, and believed that the revolt of Glendower would enable them, in conjunction with him, to establish a government in which they should have a more supreme power than under the rule of the politic Lancaster. They managed their plans with such caution, that whilst the king was marching towards the north, expecting to join them in Northumberland, Hotspur was marching through Lancashire and Cheshire, proclaiming that Richard was alive. At Burton-upon Trent, Henry heard the news of the revolt. Within a week, he had fought the battle of Shrewsbury.

The prince of Wales was on the Welsh borders, and joined his forces to those of his father before the army of Henry entered Shrewsbury, on the 20th of July. Hotspur had been joined by Douglas and his Scots; and by his uncle, the earl of Worcester, with a body of Cheshire archers. Glendower was on his march from Carmarthenshire; but the rapid movement of Henry to the west brought the royal troops in the presence of the northern army before the Welsh chieftain could unite his forces with those of his confederates. Under the walls of Shrewsbury lay the insurgents. They retired a short distance to Hateley Field. The solemn defiance of the confederates was sent to Henry during the night, denouncing him and his adherents as "traitors, and subverters of the commonwealth and kingdom, and invaders, oppressors, and usurpers, of the rights of the true and direct heir of England and France."

Hateley Field is about three miles from Shrewsbury. It is a plain of no large extent, with a gentle range of hills rising towards the Welsh border. On that plain, where he had fought for his life and his crown, Henry afterwards caused a chapel to be built and endowed, wherein mass might be chanted for the souls of those who died in that battle, and were there interred. The mass is no longer there sung; but there is the little chapel. As we stand upon that quiet plain,—looking upon the eastern Haughmond hill, "the busky hill" of Shakspeare, and listen when "the southern wind doth play the trumpet,"—the words of the chronicler and the poet linger in our memories; and we think of that terrible hour, when "suddenly the trumpets blew, and the king's part cried Sainct George! and the adversaries cried Esperancé! Percie! and so, furiously, the armies joined."* The Northumbrian archers, who had done such terrible execution at Homildon-hill, now

* Hall.

drew their bow-strings against their English brothers; and the king's men "fell as the leaves fall on the ground after a frosty night at the approach of winter."* The troops of Henry recoiled before their slaughtering arrows, and before the charge which Percy and Douglas led. The prince of Wales was wounded by an arrow in the face; but the valiant youth continued to fight where the battle was strongest. For three hours the field was contested with an obstinacy that marked the breed of the men who were fighting against each other. "At the last, the king, crying Saint George! Victory! broke the array, and entered into the battle of his enemies, and fought fiercely, and adventured so far into the battle, that the earl Douglas struck him down, and slew sir Walter Blunt and three others appared in the king's suit and "clothing." † The king was raised, and again "did that day many a valiant feat of arms." Hotspur at length fell; an arrow pierced his brain. His death struck a panic terror into the hearts of his brave followers. The straggling Welsh, who had joined the battle, fled to the woods and hills. The gallant Douglas was taken prisoner, and few or none of his Scots escaped alive. On that Hateley Field, where about fourteen thousand men were engaged on each side, one half were killed or wounded. The earl of Worcester, the baron of Kenderton, and sir Richard Vernon, were amongst the prisoners delivered to the king. At the market-cross of Shrewsbury, where, a hundred and twenty years before, prince David of Wales had been executed as a traitor, Worcester, Kenderton, and Vernon paid the penalty of their revolt, with the same horrible barbarities that were inflicted, for the first time, upon the brother of Llewellyn. The earl of Northumberland was marching his retainers through Durham, when he received the news of the death of his son and his brother; and of the fatal issue of the sudden revolt of his house. He hurried back to his castle of Warkworth, and disbanded



his men. The earl was commanded to appear before the king at York. Henry was too politic to be unnecessarily severe; and the elder Percy escaped, even without a forfeiture.

* Walsingham.

† Hall.

But, in the midst of this great success, the government of Henry had a constant fight to maintain against numerous enemies. The people of England were subjected to various miseries by the opposition that was raised to the Lancastrian rule. The French landed in Wales, and burnt Tenby. Plymouth was burnt by ships from Brittany. Devonshire was harassed by descents on the coast. Reprisals, of course, took place; and the dwellers on the French shores of the Channel had to endure the same sort of visitations. In 1404, Glendower had so successfully asserted his power, that the French government concluded a treaty with him as "Owen, prince of Wales." Henry of Monmouth was doing his duty as the representative of his father in the Welsh borders. On the 11th of March, 1405, he obtained a considerable victory at Grosmont. But this success had no decisive result. The king was again about to enter the Principality with a large force, when a new revolt broke out in the north of England. The earl of Northumberland, the earl of Nottingham, Lord Bardolf, and Scrope, archbishop of York, confederated to place the earl of March on the throne. He and his brother had been delivered from their honourable imprisonment at Windsor by the skilful device of the widow of Despenser, one of Richard's favourites. They were immediately retaken; and the duke of York—known by his plots and betrayal of others when Aumerle and Rutland—was accused by the lady, his own sister, of being privy to the plot. The earl of Westmoreland entrapped two of the chief of the northern confederates into his hands—Scrope and Nottingham. The archbishop and the earl were beheaded. Northumberland and Bardolf escaped to Scotland. The execution of the archbishop, which Gascoigne, the chief justice, refused to sanction,—as the lay courts had no jurisdiction over a prelate,—was an offence against the Church, and the pope issued a temporary sentence of excommunication against all who had been concerned in his death. That sentence was afterwards withdrawn. There is a story which, if it rested upon good evidence, would give us a notion that Henry, in addition to his other great talents, possessed a considerable fund of humour. He charged a messenger to deliver the armour of the archbishop to the pope, with these words of the brothers of Joseph: "Lo! this have we found; know now whether it be thy son's coat, or no." After the execution of Scrope and Nottingham, Henry successfully besieged Prudhoe and Warkworth, the castles of the earl of Northumberland; and took Berwick, which had been delivered by Northumberland to the Scots. The unhappy Percy and Lord Bardolf wandered about for two years, endeavouring to organise resistance to Henry's consolidating power. In 1407 there was some discontent in England, through the king's demand for subsidies; and the Percy and Bardolf then ventured into Northumberland, raised their tenantry, and risked a battle with the sheriff of Yorkshire, Sir Thomas Rokeby, at Bramham Moor, near Tadcaster. Northumberland closed his unhappy career by falling in battle; and Bardolf, after being taken prisoner, died of his wounds.

Thus came to an end the English insurrections against the sovereignty of Henry of Lancaster. He has held the throne for nine years against assaults that would quickly have destroyed one of mere ordinary talent and energy. His most obstinate enemy has been Owen Glendower, a man of proportionate ability and force of character. The great Welshman never yielded. In 1411

he was exempted from Henry the Fourth's general pardon of the Welsh rebels. In 1416, Henry the Fifth, even after his great triumph of Agincourt, sought to make peace with the unconquered Owen, and to receive him into his allegiance. The circumstances of his death are not recorded. He probably sank into obscurity; and his memory was only preserved in the legends of his countrymen, which told of his wanderings on his native mountains, and his hidings in sea-girt caverns. Owyn's Cave is still to be seen on the coast of Merioneth. The contest in which he was engaged was held to be a revival of the ancient feud of Briton and Saxon; for in 1431 the Commons prayed that the forfeiture of the Glendower lands might be enforced, for that Owyn Glendower was a traitor, whose success would have been "to the destruction of all English tongue for evermore."

The connexion of the government of Henry with the quarrels and intrigues in France of the rival dukes of Orleans and Burgundy involves matters of state-policy which have now but little interest. During the reign of the insane king, Charles VI., the kingdom was a prey to their rival factions. Orleans, the brother of the king, was murdered by his cousin of Burgundy in 1407, who justified the deed, and became master of the state. The revolt of his Flemish subjects required his presence, and then the Orleanists declared him a public enemy. But Jean Sans-Peur was for a time too powerful to be put down. The young duke of Orleans, who had been married to Isabella, the widow of Richard II., who died in 1409, took as a second wife the daughter of the count of Armagnac. This count became the chief of the Orleanists, who thenceforward were called the Armagnacs. The young duke of Orleans demanded justice for the death of his father. The duke of Burgundy solicited aid from the king of England, who sent him eight hundred men-at-arms and a thousand bowmen. This assistance turned the scale in favour of Burgundy. But in 1412 the Armagnacs offered better terms to Henry, by agreeing to acknowledge him as duke of Aquitaine. The two factions at last began to consider that their quarrel had become complicated, by the intervention of one who would sacrifice both to regain the ancient power of the English in France. They agreed upon a peace. But Henry sent an army into Normandy under his second son, the duke of Clarence, who ravaged Maine and Anjou, and finally retired to Gascony, having received a large payment as the cost of his expedition.

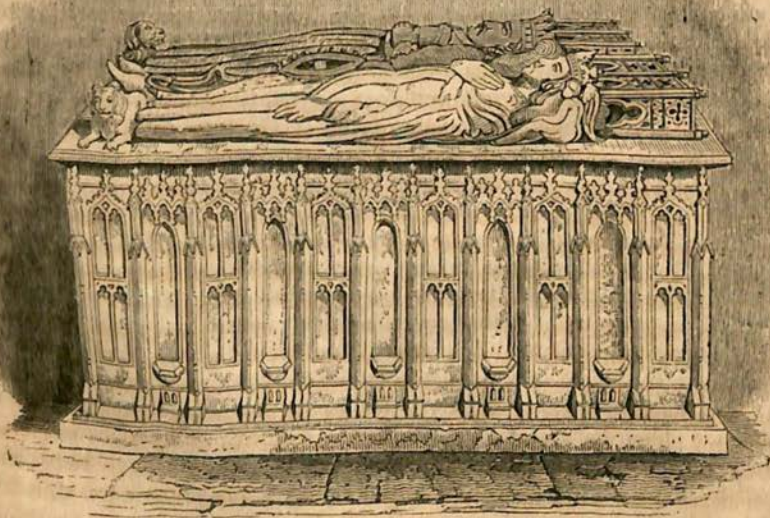
The kingly and parental relations of Henry IV. with the prince of Wales, during the latter years of this reign, have been variously described upon very imperfect information. It is extremely difficult to speak of the character of Henry of Monmouth without taking some colour from the most effective painter of character that all literature has produced. Mr. Hallam says, "The virtues of the prince of Wales are almost invidiously eulogised by those parliaments who treat harshly his father; and these records afford a strong presumption that some early petulance or riot has been much exaggerated by the vulgar minds of our chroniclers." Shakspeare rescued the prince from the imputation of low debauchery, by surrounding him with an atmosphere of wit, and by exhibiting his compunction for mis-spent hours in the midst of his revelries. Here we may leave the consideration of the prince's private character, without believing that it is much sullied even by the somewhat doubtful story of his having struck the chief justice of England. But his public

conduct, after he attained his majority in 1409, requires a brief notice. In 1410 he was made Captain of Calais, and President of the Council. In the capacity of president he is often found acting; and perhaps in his official position he witnessed the burning of John Badby for heresy, and offered him a yearly stipend if he would recant. But it would appear from some official records, that the prince had an authority which was scarcely compatible with the jealous character of his father. Henry IV. was in failing health, and the son was naturally at hand to assist in the public service. But records which state that certain business was transacted "in the presence of the king and of his son the prince," indicate a species of divided authority which might end in disunion. Hardyng, the rhyming chronicler, says—

"The king discharged the prince from his counsaill,
And set my lord Sir Thomas in his stead
Chief of council, for the king's more avail."

Stow says that the prince's great popularity induced the king to believe that he intended to usurp the crown; but that the prince, coming to his father with a large body of lords and gentlemen, whom he would not suffer to advance beyond the fire in the hall, declared that his life was not so desirable to him that he should wish to live one day under his father's displeasure. Then the king embraced him with tears, and said, "My right dear and heartily beloved son, it is of truth that I had you partly suspect, and as I now perceive, undeserved on your part: I will have you no longer in distrust for any reports that shall be made unto me. And thereof I assure you, upon my honour."

Henry IV. died on the 20th of March, 1413, in his forty-seventh year.



Tomb of Henry IV. and his Queen, at Canterbury Cathedral.



A Parliament in the time of Henry V.

CHAPTER IV.

Henry V. proclaimed king—Sir John Oldcastle condemned as a heretic—Henry's demands upon France for large territories—Resolves to claim the crown of France—Conspiracy of Cambridge, Scrope, and Grey—Henry and his army sail to Harfleur—Siege of Harfleur—Sickness of the English—March from Harfleur—Passage of the Somme—The French army—Agincourt and its locality—The Battle of Agincourt.

HENRY V. was proclaimed king on the 21st of March, 1413. He was crowned at Westminster on the 9th of April, being then in the twenty-fifth year of his age. A parliament, having been summoned by writ, met at Westminster on the 15th of May. There was nothing very noteworthy in its proceedings. The king met his Lords and Commons with an aspect of love and conciliation. He had taken not only the most generous, but the most prudent resolution towards those who had been considered dangerous to his house. He restored the son of Henry Percy to his family inheritance, and he liberated the earl of March from prison.

There were dangers, however, at home which the magnanimity of the king was not calculated to avert. The execrable laws against the preachers of the "new doctrines" had not prevented the tenets of Wycliffe from spreading through the nation, and beyond the narrow bounds of our island. It was a period of alarm for popes and prelates; and for all those who considered that the Church was properly built upon a foundation of worldly riches and dominion. John Huss, a Bohemian priest, had become acquainted with the

writings of Wycliffe; and he boldly preached the same doctrines as early as 1405. The archbishop of Prague, in 1409, commanded all the writings of Wycliffe to be delivered up to him by members of the university of Prague, of which Huss was rector; and many of these treasured volumes were publicly burnt. Huss continued to preach, in spite of the pope's excommunication, till he was silenced in 1413. In 1414, the Council of Constance held its first sitting, and Huss was summoned before it to declare his opinions. The brave man knew that he went at the risk of his life. He died at the stake in 1415. The same council decreed that the body of Wycliffe should be "taken from the ground, and thrown far away from the burial of any church." It was thirteen years before this miserable vengeance was carried into effect, by disinterring and burning our first English reformer's body, throwing his ashes into a brook. "The brook did convey his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas; they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."* But in the first year of Henry V. the prelates sought to strike a more effectual terror into the followers of Wycliffe than could be accomplished by any insult to his memory. They resolved to take measures against one of the most powerful supporters of the Lollards, Sir John Oldcastle, called lord Cobham. He had been the private friend of the king when prince of Wales; and Henry, in the honest desire, as we may believe, to avert the consequences of ecclesiastical vengeance, tried to induce Oldcastle to recant. He was inflexible; and the king then caused him to be arrested. On the 25th of September the undaunted knight was brought before the synod, and there pleaded his cause with a vigour and ability which have made him memorable amongst the martyrs of the Reformation. He was condemned as a heretic, and was handed over to the secular power. The king granted his ancient friend a respite of fifty days from the fiery penalty which awaited him; and during that period Oldcastle escaped from his prison in the Tower. The danger to which their leader had been exposed, and the severities which appeared preparing for those who held to their conscientious opinions, precipitated the Lollards into a movement which made the State as anxious for their suppression as was the Church. Rumours went forth of a fearful plot to destroy all religion and law in England; and, in the overthrow of king, lords, and clergy, to make all property in common. There can be little doubt that this rumoured plot was a gross exaggeration of some indiscreet assemblies for the purpose of petition. It was stated that in the fields of St. Giles, stretching to the Hampstead and Highgate hills—fields now covered with more human dwellings than all the London of the fifteenth century—twenty-five thousand insurgents were to meet under the command of Sir John Oldcastle. At midnight of the 7th of January, 1414, the king went forth from the city gates with a mighty array, to encounter this army of desperate rebels. He found about eighty persons. Others were surprised near Hornsey. Many of these unfortunate people were immediately executed; and Sir Roger Acton, a friend of Oldcastle, also suffered on the 10th of February. Henry proclaimed that the insurgents meant to destroy

* Faller.

him and his brothers, to divide the realm into districts, and to elect Sir John Oldcastle president. These allegations appear too extravagant not to lead us to the belief that the conspiracy, if conspiracy there were, had for its sole object the mitigation of the penal laws against the preachers and receivers of Wycliffe's doctrines. Within a few months a pardon was proclaimed to all the Lollards for the conspiracy, excepting Oldcastle and eleven others. Still prosecutions went on; and it is remarkable that the king pardoned many so prosecuted, after they had been convicted. The general body of Lollards were grievously punished for the indiscretion of some of their number. A new Statute was passed, giving all judges and magistrates power to arrest all persons suspected of Lollardism; binding them by oath to do their utmost to root up the heresy; and enacting that in addition to capital punishment the lands and goods of such convicted heretics should be forfeited to the king. It was three years before the vengeance of the Church fell on Oldcastle. He was taken in 1418, while Henry was in France; and was burnt, under the declaration of the archbishop and his provincial synod that he was an incorrigible heretic.

The factions of the Burgundians and Armagnacs were carrying on their desolating contests in France, when Henry V. came to the throne. Henry IV. had endeavoured to avail himself of their distractions by siding with one or the other party as best suited his policy. His son adopted a bolder course. When the treaty of Bretigny was violated by the French, Edward III. re-assumed the title of king of France, and went to war again to assert his pretended right. There had been several renewed truces between the two kingdoms, but no pacification, and no decided settlement of the contested claims. The unhappy condition of the French nation was an encouragement to the ambition of the young king of England, who had been trained from his earliest years in war and policy. An embassy was sent to Paris to negotiate for a prolongation of the truce. Then was suggested a pacification, by the marriage of Henry of England with Catherine, the youngest daughter of the insane Charles VI.. It was also proposed to the duke of Burgundy that his daughter should be queen of England. But the Orleanists were now supreme. Within a year from his accession Henry suddenly put in a claim to the crown of France, in renewal of the old claim of Edward III. Upon the rejection of this claim the king of England made demands far more unreasonable than were agreed to by his great-grandfather, when the peace of Bretigny was concluded. The French government consented to give up all the ancient territories of the duchy of Aquitaine, and to marry the daughter of Charles VI. to Henry, with a dowry of six hundred thousand crowns. An embassy was sent to France, when the amount of the proposed dowry was increased to eight hundred thousand crowns; and the demand of Henry for the cession of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou was rejected. The French then sent an embassy to England, when Henry demanded Normandy and all the territories ceded by the peace of Bretigny, under the threat that he would otherwise take arms to enforce his claim to the crown of France. On the 16th of April, 1415, he announced at a great council his determination to recover "his inheritance." He had previously obtained a supply from parliament "for the defence of the kingdom of England and the safety of the seas;" and the supply was thus limited, although the king had avowed his

intention to that parliament of making a claim to the kingdom of France. Historians are of opinion that the lords spiritual, with the new archbishop, Chicheley, as their organ, had urged the king to this decision, to divert the attention of the people from those questions of the doctrine and discipline of the Church which had become so formidable. The probability is, that Henry having become an instrument in their hands for putting down by terror those new doctrines which had spread from England to the continent, they were ready in return to gratify his personal ambition by advocating his designs upon France. Whatever admiration we may feel for the bravery, fortitude, and self-reliance of Henry, we must rank him amongst the guilty possessors of kingly power; and make a large abatement from the vaunted generosity of one "who lay in wait for the best opportunity of aggrandising himself at the expense of his distracted neighbours; as if nations were only more numerous gangs of banditti, instead of being communities formed only for the observance and enforcement of justice." *

At a council on the 17th of April the king appointed his brother, the duke of Bedford, to be lieutenant of the kingdom during his absence. The

next day he declared what should be the payment for the lords and knights who should be retained for his voyage to France, with the daily payment of each man-at-arms and each archer. The rate of pay was, for a duke, 13s. 4d. per day; for an earl, 6s. 8d.; for a baron, 4s.; for a knight, 2s.; for every other man-at-arms, 1s.; and for an



Half-groat of Henry V.

archer, 6d. Great nobles and others contracted to furnish large bodies of troops at this rate, well and sufficiently mounted, armed, and arrayed. But the first quarter's wages were required to be paid in advance, and pledges were given for the payment of the second quarter. Contracts were made for carpenters and other artisans, for wagons, and bows and arrows. The king pledged jewels for the performance of some of these contracts, and he raised large sums as loans upon jewels and plate. Ships and sailors were impressed. Surgeons were provided. Many officers of the royal household were to attend upon the king, with no fewer than fifteen minstrels. On the 18th of June Henry set out from Westminster, going in procession to St. Paul's, accompanied by the mayor, and citizens in their guilds. At Winchester he waited the arrival of an embassy from France. According to one French historian, Laboureur, Henry haggled about terms in the spirit of an usurer. The archbishop of Bourges, who was of the embassy, is accused by our chroniclers of having

replied to the king with improper boldness. Neither concession nor plain-speaking would avail. The ambassadors returned to Paris on the 26th of July, and reported that all Henry's peaceable professions covered malice and dissimulation. On the 24th of July the king made his will, concluding with these words in his own autograph: "This

is my last will, subscribed with my own hand, R. H. Jesu mercy and gremercy Ladie Marie help." Within a day or two a conspiracy against

Signature of Henry V.

* Mackintosh, "History of England," vol. i. p. 362.

him was discovered, which, according to some accounts, was instigated by the French court. The conspirators were, the king's cousin, Richard, earl of Cambridge, brother to the duke of York (Rutland); lord Scrope, who was Henry's familiar friend; and Sir Thomas Grey of Heton. A jury was summoned for their trial by the sheriff of Southampton, who found Cambridge and Grey guilty of treason, and Scrope of having concealed the knowledge of their purposes. Cambridge and Scrope claimed to be tried by their peers. By the lords then at Southampton, who formed a court for their trial, they were convicted; and they suffered death on the 5th of August. Grey had been previously executed.

The truce with France expired on the 2nd of August. On the beach of Southampton are collected men at arms, mounted archers, foot-archers, miners, gunners, armourers, and all the various attendants of a feudal army. There, under the walls of the old castle, shallow vessels float up to the river's banks, and with little preparation horses and men step on to the crowded decks. Fifteen hundred of such vessels are gathered together, and drift with the tide to the broader Solent. Fifteen hundred sails to bear an army, slowly and insecurely to Normandy, that would have been carried with far greater speed and safety by thirty of such vessels as now steam from that Southampton river. The king is at Porchester Castle. On the 10th of August, being Saturday, he goes on board his own ship, *The Trinity*, lying between Southampton and Portsmouth. His sail is set; the little craft, varying from three hundred tons to twenty tons, collect around *The Trinity*; and on Sunday they put to sea. On Tuesday, about noon, the royal ship enters the mouth of the Seine; and the fleet casts anchor about three miles from Harfleur.

The "Roll of the Men-at-arms that were at the Battle of Agincourt," and "The Retinue of Henry V. in his first Voyage," exhibit very clearly the nature of the force that was landed near Harfleur on the 14th of August.* The duke of Clarence, the duke of Gloucester, and the duke of York, had, together, 540 men-at-arms, bannerets, knights, and esquires; and 1720 horse-archers. The earl of Dorset, and the earl of Arundel had each 100 men-at-arms, and 300 horse-archers. The earl of March was there, with 60 men-at-arms, and 160 horse-archers. There is little doubt that the conspiracy, which was discovered at Southampton, was for the purpose of placing him, the legitimate heir of the crown, upon the throne; but the king, merciless as he was to the chief movers of the plot, granted a pardon to the earl of March, and gave him the honour of fighting by his side in this perilous warfare. The unhappy earl of Cambridge was to have been in that expedition, with 60 men-at-arms and 160 horse-archers. Of his men, 3 lances and 6 archers fought at Agincourt. Other great earls were there,—Suffolk, Oxford, Huntingdon, and the Earl-Marshal, with men-at-arms and archers, horse and foot, in due proportion. Bannerets were there,—names memorable amongst England's chivalry, each leading 20 or 30 men-at-arms,

* These lists are published in "The History of the Battle of Agincourt," by Sir N. H. Nicolas, 1827. In this volume are collected all the documents which have relation to this event, as well as the contemporary narratives; the most valuable of which is that of a priest who accompanied the expedition, being a Latin MS. in the Cottonian MSS. of the British Museum, first translated and published by Sir N. H. Nicolas.

and a larger number of archers. Then came an honoured roll of the knights and esquires of the land,—the worthy companions of Cornwall, and Erpingham, and Hungerford, and Umfreville,—some three hundred in number, each with his little band of lancers and archers; the yeomen of their manors; picked men, who went forth with stout limbs and resolved spirit, caring little for the abstract justice of the cause for which they were to fight, but knowing that they would have a due proportion of the “*gaignes de guerres*.”* This army, then, landed in small boats, and took up a position on the hill nearest Harfleur. No resistance was offered to the landing. The constable of France, d’Albret, was at Rouen, with a large number of troops. But he stirred not. The hardy people of the coast suffered the English to leap on their shores, as if they came in peace and friendship. The landing-place was rough with large stones; and there was a dyke and wall between the shore and the marsh towards the town. The entrance into the marsh was very difficult; and “the resistance of the smallest number of people would have sufficed to drive back many thousands.”† The army rested in its position till Saturday, the 17th, and then moved to the siege of Harfleur, in three battalions. The town was surrounded with embattled walls, and with ditches, filled to a great depth and breadth by the waters of the Seine. There were three gates, strongly defended by bulwarks. After the landing of Henry, the garrison was reinforced on the side which the English had not then invested. But the town was very quickly encompassed on all sides; the duke of Clarence having made a circuitous march, and taken a position on the hill opposite to that which the king occupied. The port was strictly blockaded towards the sea. After a demand for the surrender of the place, which was stoutly refused, the siege commenced. We now hear of guns as well as engines in an English siege. There is a belief that cannon had been employed at Cressy; and some sort of ordnance had certainly been occasionally in use in the middle of the fourteenth century. At Harfleur the king battered the bulwarks, and the walls and towers on every side, by the stones which his guns and engines cast. Two attempts were made to undermine the town; but there were counter-mines; and the miners met and fought underground. The siege went on with various fortune; but the besieged showed no symptom of surrender. Disease now began to make frightful ravages in the English camp. On the 15th of September died Richard Courtenay, bishop of Norwich; and on the 18th the earl of Suffolk. Henry’s men were perishing around him by dysentery; and he resolved to storm the town. The garrison, however, agreed to surrender on the 22nd of September, if they were not previously relieved. No relief came. The civil distractions of France had at first deprived the government of all energy. There was no preparation for resistance. There was no money in the royal treasury. Suddenly a tax was imposed; and the impost was collected from the clergy and the people by armed men. “What can the English do more to us?” exclaimed the unhappy victims of misrule. Harfleur was yielded up on that 22nd of September, with great ceremony. Henry sat upon a throne under a pavilion of silk, erected on the hill opposite the town. From the pavilion to Harfleur a line of English soldiers was formed; and through their ranks came the governor with a deputation, and he laid the keys of the town at the

* The produce of pillage or ransom.

† From “the Priest’s” narrative.

feet of the king. The siege had lasted thirty-six days. On the 23rd, Henry entered the town, and went barefoot to the church of St. Martin, to offer a solemn thanksgiving for his success. The bulk of the inhabitants,—women, children, and poor—were compelled to depart, but without any indignity; and the principal burghers, with many knights and gentlemen, were allowed to leave the place, making oath to surrender themselves at Calais in the following November. Henry now sent a challenge to the Dauphin of France to meet him in single combat—the old, unmeaning defiance of chivalry. On the 5th of October, the king held a council. The success at Harfleur had been bought at a terrible cost. Besides a large number killed in the siege, a much greater number of the army had died of dysentery in that district of overflowing marshes. Five thousand more were so sick that they were unable to proceed. Many had deserted. Comparing the various accounts of contemporary chroniclers, it is “morally impossible to form any other conclusion than that the English army which quitted Harfleur did not exceed nine thousand fighting men.”* At the Council of the 5th of October, Henry was strongly urged to return, with the remnant of his force, to England by sea. He was told that “the multitude of the French were continually increasing, and very likely might hem them in on every side, as sheep in pens.” So writes the priest; and he adds that the king determined to march to Calais, “relying upon the divine grace and the righteousness of his cause, piously considering that victory consists not in multitudes.” It is easy to blame Henry for this determination; to call it “rashness, and total recklessness of consequences;” † but it must not be forgotten that if the king had returned to England with the loss of two-thirds of his army, and with no success but the capture of a town that could not long be held, he risked the loss of that popular support which the general belief of his intrepidity had won for him from his early years. He had set his life upon a cast; and he must play out the game. On the 8th of October he commenced his extraordinary march. With eight days’ provisions the little army went forth from Harfleur, in three battalions, on the road to Calais. Henry’s policy was an honourable exception to the devastation which accompanied the marches of the great Edward and the Black Prince. He published a proclamation, “that no one, under pain of death, should burn, lay waste, or take anything, excepting victuals and necessaries.” The line of march was, at no great distance from the coast, towards the Somme. Passing by Fécamp, the army reached Arques, near Dieppe, on the 11th. A few shots were fired from the castle, but the passage through the town was not contested. The English began to believe that they should reach Calais without molestation. “For some firmly asserted,” says the observant priest, “that considering the civil discord and deadly hatred subsisting between the French princes and the duke of Burgundy, the French would not draw themselves out from the interior parts of the country and their strongholds, lest, while thus drawing themselves out, the forces of the duke of Burgundy should either follow them, or against their will usurp the possession of their estates.” At Eu, the English army was attacked, but the assailants were repulsed without difficulty. On Sunday, the 13th, they reached Abbeville. Now the imminent danger that was before this daring band was too manifest

* Narrative of Sir N. H. Nicolas, p. cxcix., ed. 1827.

† Nicolas.

to be concealed. The chroniclers of his great-grandfather's exploits had made Henry familiar with the circumstances of his passage of the Somme. To the ford of Blanchetaque an English army was again led. The causeway leading to the ford was broken down; and a great body of French was said to be collected on the opposite bank of the river. Without any certain information, Henry directed his march by the Somme above Abbeville, seeking for another passage. The bridges and causeways were all destroyed; and broad marshes added to the difficulty of finding a ford. The slender stock of provisions was now becoming exhausted. After a march of seven days they passed Amiens, and slept that night at the village of Boves. It was the time of vintage, and there was abundance of wine in open casks, and a little bread. The supply of wine was as dangerous to the safety of the army as its privations, and Henry forbade his men to fill their bottles. It was the 17th of October before they reached a plain near Corby. Here the king executed a soldier who had stolen the pix out of a church—an incident which Shakspeare has not overlooked. Here, too, he gave the famous order that each archer should provide himself with a stake, sharpened at each end, to plant in the ground when about to be attacked by cavalry. On the 18th, they were quartered near Nesle, a walled town about twenty-four miles above Amiens, and four miles from the nearest part of the Somme. Here the welcome news was brought that a ford had been discovered. Before the river could be reached, a marsh had to be crossed. The position was one of danger, and there was no choice but to make for the river, at all hazards. There were two fords, approached by narrow causeways, partly destroyed. The damaged portions were filled up with broken doors and windows from the neighbouring houses. The king was indefatigable in his personal exertions, superintending the repair of the causeways, and the orderly passage of men and horses. It was dark before the whole army had crossed. "We passed a joyful night," says the priest, "in the next farm-houses, which had been left by the French on our first arrival over the water."

The English army had been for a month investing Harfleur before the French government was roused from its inactivity. On the 10th of September, the king of France took the Oriflamme at St. Denis, and departed for Normandy. He had arrived at Rouen with his son, when the news of the fall of Harfleur reached the court. He was soon surrounded by princes and great lords with their men-at-arms. It was known that the constable of France was watching the passages of the Somme; and that the English, in ascending the left bank, were sustaining great privations. The weather was wet and tempestuous. The princes and nobles believed they had now nothing to dread from the presumption of king Henry. The citizens of Paris offered to send six thousand men well armed. The old duke de Berri, who had fought at Poitiers sixty years before, urged the acceptance of the offer. The duke of Alençon and the young chivalry would have nothing to do with these common people—"What do we want of these shopkeepers? We have already three times the number of the English." The princes sent to Henry three officers of arms, to tell him that, being resolved to fight him, they desired him to name a day and a place for the battle. The king of England replied that, having set out from his town of Harfleur, he was on his way to England; and that, resting in no town or fortress, they might find

him any day and hour in the open field.* Onward marched Henry by Peronne, the roads being found trodden "as if the French had gone before him in many thousands." On the 24th,—the fourth day after they had crossed the Somme,—the English army arrived at Blangy, in perfect discipline. A branch of the Canche, the Ternoise, was here crossed without difficulty. The French army was on the rising ground about a league distant. From Blangy there is a gentle ascent towards the village of Maisoncelles. "When we reached the top of the hill," says the priest, "we saw three columns of the French emerge from the upper part of the valley, about a mile from us; who at length being formed into battalions, companies, and troops, in multitudes compared with us, halted a little more than half a mile opposite to us, filling a very wide field, as if with an innumerable host of locusts,—a moderate sized valley being betwixt us and them." Nothing can be more accurate than this description of the locality. We have stood upon this ascent, having left the little river and the bridge of Blangy about a mile distant. Looking back, there is a range of gentle hills to the east, in the direction of St. Pol, from which the French army marched. Emerging "from the upper part of the valley," the French army would fill "a very wide field"—the plain of Agincourt. When Henry had crossed the river and ascended the hill, he expected instant battle. He formed his troops, and went about exhorting them to do their duty. Walter Hungerford, according to our good

priest's account, regretted that they had not with them ten thousand English archers. The solemn answer of the king, relying upon God for victory, has been given by the priest. Other burning words,—the version of the poet—have superseded the dialogue of the chroniclers. The sun was setting; and there was no attack. At Maisoncelles, now a long straggling village amidst trees, about a mile and a half from Blangy, the king took up his quarters for the night. In the gloomy twilight "a white way" had been found to this village. The noise of the French was heard as they took up their quarters, each vociferating for his servant or his comrade. Henry commanded the strictest silence. It was a night of dread to those who knew how many thousand enemies were close at hand. There was little sleep. The armourers were at work; the priests were confessing their penitents. In the French camp the confident knights played at dice, the stakes being the ransoms of their expected prisoners.



Henry V. being armed by his Esquires.

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* See Barante, tom. iii.

The route to Calais lay through the plain of Agincourt. The village of Agincourt now consists of a number of straggling mud-built cottages, and a farm or two, with a church of the beginning of the last century. It is covered by a wood towards the plain. Opposite Agincourt is another village, Tramecourt, also covered by a wood. The plain of Agincourt is a considerable table-land, now fully cultivated, and expanding into an open country after we have passed between the two woods. The village of Maisoncelles is about a mile from this field. Henry rose with the dawn on that 25th of October, the feast of St. Crispin; and he heard three masses. He was fully armed; and he wore a crown on his head of extraordinary magnificence. He mounted a small gray horse, and drew up his men upon the open ground near Maisoncelles, then covered with young corn. His little band was formed in one line, the men-at-arms in the centre, with wings on the left and right, the archers being posted between the wings, with their stakes fixed before them. A party that went into the village of Agincourt found no armed men there. Another party of archers were concealed in the village of Tramecourt. The French army was in three lines, completely covering the route to Calais. The advanced guard of about eight thousand knights and esquires, and five thousand five hundred archers and cross-bow men, was composed of the greater part of the French nobility. The main body was crowded in prodigious numbers, the lines, according to the

lowest estimate, being twenty men in depth. The men-at-arms wore coats of steel reaching to their knees, and heavy leg-armour, with other encumbering panoply. The contemporary chroniclers, both French and English, differ greatly as to the number of the French army. The lowest estimate is fifty thousand fighting men; the highest, one hundred and fifty thousand. The probability is that they were ten times as many as the English. Their position was between the two woods of Agincourt and Tramecourt, in a space much too confined for the movements of such a vast body. The woods as they at present exist show that the position was a disadvantageous one; and it was probably more disadvantageous if the woods were then more extensive. The two armies passed several hours without a movement on either



Robert Chamberlain, Esquire to Henry V.

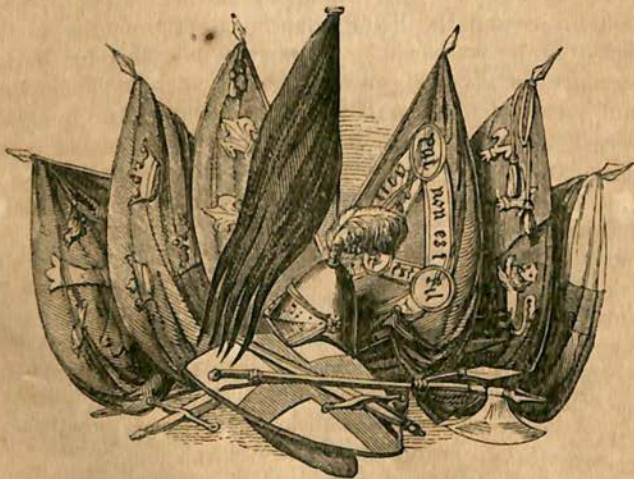
side. According to Monstrelet, Sir Thomas Erpingham, a knight grown gray with age and honour, at last flung his truncheon in the air, and called "Nestrocque!" ("now strike!") and then dismounted, as the King and others had done. The English then knelt down, invoking the

protection of God; and each man put a small piece of earth into his mouth, in remembrance that they were formed of dust, and to dust should return. Shouting the national "hurrah!" they kept advancing. The archers, without armour, in jackets and loose hose, some even barefoot, went boldly on to meet the mailed chivalry. Their bow-strings were drawn. The French stooped as the deadly shafts flew amongst them. Many were slain. Onward rushed the thousands of horsemen to break the line of the hardy yeomen. The sharpened stakes were planted in the earth; and the archers shrank not from the charge. The arrows again flew; and the horses becoming unmanageable from their wounds, the knights were driven back upon the van, which they threw into confusion. The king now advanced with his main body. A deadly conflict ensued. The archers threw away their bows, and fought with sword and bill. The second French line was soon reached; and here again the contest became more a slaughter than a battle. The enormous numbers of the French were the chief cause of their destruction. Their heavy armour was an incumbrance instead of a defence. The rear division, after the overthrow of the first and second division, took to flight. In three hours this terrible fight was over. The priest, who was "sitting on horseback among the baggage, in the rear of the battle," thus describes the slaughter of the French on this day of Agincourt: "When some of them in the engagement had been killed, and fell in the front, so great was the undisciplined violence and pressure of the multitude behind, that the living fell over the dead, and others also, falling on the living, were slain; so that, in three places, where the force and host of our standards were, so great grew the heap of the slain, and of those who were overthrown among them, that our people ascended the very heaps, which had increased higher than a man, and butchered the adversaries below with swords, axes, and other weapons. And when at length, in two or three hours, that front battle was perforated and broken up, and the rest were driven to flight, our men began to pull down the heaps, and to separate the living from the dead, proposing to keep the living as slaves, to be ransomed." Few were left alive for ransom. A clamour arose that the French, collecting in various parts of the field, were coming upon the wearied victors. The baggage, according to Monstrelet, was being plundered. In the momentary alarm, Henry commanded a massacre of all the prisoners. The French chroniclers mention this horrible circumstance in terms of sorrow rather than of blame. The hasty instinct of self-preservation dictated the order. The day before the battle the king had discharged, upon their parole, all the prisoners he had brought with him. His nature was not cruel. He stopped the carnage when he found that the danger was imaginary.

On the part of the English, the duke of York and the earl of Oxford were slain, with some hundreds of inferior degree. The estimates of this loss are very conflicting. Our own chroniclers make it absurdly small. Monstrelet says the loss of the English was sixteen hundred; and so St. Remy, another French historian. Of the chivalry of France, the flower perished. Seven of the princes of the blood had fallen. With the duke of Alençon Henry had fought in person, and was beaten down, having a portion of his crown struck off. The king could not save his gallant enemy, who fell before Henry's guards. Eight thousand gentlemen of France perished in

that field of carnage, of whom a hundred and twenty were nobles bearing banners. Between Agincourt and Tramecourt is a small enclosed piece of ground, which we saw planted with potatoes in the summer of 1856, where great numbers of the illustrious dead were buried. It is kept sacred to their memories; and here it is now proposed, four hundred and fifty years after the eventful day, to erect a monumental chapel. The whole plain is covered with the teeming crops of fruitful France. There is nothing to tell of that time of bloodshed and terror. Now and then, indeed, the upturned soil gives forth evidence of the presence of the dead. In 1816, an English officer of the Army of Occupation found relics of the slain, with many coins of Charles V. and Charles VI. A peasant, now living in one of the farm-cottages of Agincourt, shows a large thin gold coin of Charles VI., which he found in his field-labours. The herald of France was taken in the battle. "Montjoie," said Henry, "to whom is the victory—to me or to the king of France?" "To you, and not to him," said Montjoie. "And how is this castle called?" "The castle of Agincourt." "Well," said the king, "they will long speak of the battle of Agincourt." They will speak of it, as long as England's history endures, as one of the most wonderful examples of bravery, and fortitude, and heroic daring, of which a people may be justly proud. But they will also speak of it as a fearful sacrifice of human life to a false ambition, which had no object beyond the assertion of an indomitable will, and no permanent results beyond the perpetuation of hatred and jealousy between nation and nation.

Henry slept that night of the 25th of October at Maisoncelles. On the next day, he, with the duke of Orleans and many other noble prisoners, went his unmolested way to Calais.



Banners used in the Battle of Agincourt.





Front of Henry V.'s Chantry, Westminster.

CHAPTER V.

News of Agincourt arrives—Entry of Henry into London—State of France—Henry's Second Expedition—Overthrow of the Armagnacs—Siege and surrender of Rouen—Conferences at Meulan between Henry, the Duke of Burgundy, and the Queen—Henry first sees Katherine—Negotiations ineffectual—Burgundy murdered at Montereau—Peace of Troyes—Marriage of Henry—Henry and his Queen come to England—Parliament held—Clarence killed—Henry returns to France—Siege of Meaux—Katherine and her infant son come to Paris—Illness of Henry—His death—Difficulty of forming a just estimate of his character—Duke of Gloucester Protector—Death of Charles VI.—Regency of the Duke of Bedford—Feuds of Gloucester and Beaufort—Tutelage of Henry VI.

THE great victory of Agincourt was publicly known in London on the 29th of October, the same day on which king Henry reached Calais. "Early in the morning," says a contemporary chronicle, "came tidings to London while that men were in their beds, that the king had fought and had the battle and the field aforesaid. And anon as they had tidings thereof, they went to all the churches of the city of London, and rang all the bells of every church." Henry remained at Calais till the 17th of November. There was time for this news to go forth through the country before the arrival of the king; and the people warmed up into a fervour of joy which drowned the lament for the thousands that had perished during those past three months of sickness, want, and slaughter. When the king's ship, after

a boisterous passage, sailed into the port of Dover, the people rushed into the sea, and bore their hero to the shore. At the royal manor of Eltham he rested on his way to London; which he entered in solemn procession on the 23rd of November. From Blackbeath to Westminster he was escorted by twenty thousand of the citizens, "with devices according to their crafts."



Male Costume in the time of Henry V.

lattices and windows on both sides were filled with the most noble ladies and women of the realm, and with honourable and honoured men, who flocked together to the pleasing sight, and were so very gracefully and elegantly



Female Costume in the time of Henry V.

dressed, in garments of gold, fine linen, and crimson, and various other apparel, that a greater assembly, or a nobler spectacle, was not recollected to have been ever before in London." He goes on to say, "The king himself, amidst these public expressions of praise, and the bravery of the citizens, passed along, clad in a purple robe, not with lofty looks, pompous horses, or great multitude, but with a solid aspect, a reverend demeanour, and a few of his faithful domestics attendant on him; the dukes, earls, and marshals, his captives, following him with a guard of soldiers." *

* The Priest's Chronicle, Nicolas, p. cccxi.

The great highway of Cheap, after the cavalcade had passed London-bridge, was so crowded by the people, that the horsemen could scarcely pass through them. The city was gorgeous with arches, and towers, and pavilions, out of which innumerable virgins and youths showered laurel boughs and leaves of gold upon the conqueror's head, and sang English anthems with melodious voices, and with organs. The busy priest, as observant of the splendid pageant as of the terrible battle, says, "The

terrible battle, says, "The

In 1416 Henry was continuing to cherish his ambitious projects, and was preparing for their accomplishment. The attempted mediation of the emperor Sigismund, who visited England, had been unsuccessful. The war was carried on in Normandy; and the French made descents on the English shores of the channel. Harfleur was besieged in June; and the English garrison was reduced to the greatest distress, when it was relieved from blockade by the capture of the large carracks and other vessels that kept the mouth of the Seine. Meanwhile, Henry had secured the alliance of the duke of Burgundy, who had laid aside his resentment for the death of his brother, the duke of Brabant, at Agincourt. For the death of the other brother, the count of Nevers, on the same field, he cared little. It is unnecessary for us to attempt any minute description of the distractions of France, which presented the chief encouragement to the king of England to persevere in his design to claim the crown. The feuds of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs were as violent as ever; and were accompanied by the most intolerable oppression of the people by the reigning faction under the constable, Armagnac. Foreign troops, without pay, were let loose to plunder. Brigands committed the most outrageous atrocities; and the orders of the government to pursue and destroy them, without trial or inquiry, were made a pretence for the murder of large numbers of the Burgundian party. The insane king passed his life in fatuous indifference to all around him; and the court of the queen exhibited a licentious profusion, the more disgusting from its contrast with the universal wretchedness. It is recorded that Henry, after the day of Agincourt, addressing his prisoner, the duke of Orleans, disclaimed any merit in his great victory, and expressed his belief that he was the instrument of God in punishing the crimes of the French nation—the public disorders and the private wickedness. This was one of the ordinary delusions of ambition. There was no improvement in the condition of France when, on the 23rd of July, 1417, the king of England again embarked with a mighty army at Southampton. It was more numerous and more powerfully equipped than the force which, two years before, had landed in Normandy; consisting of forty thousand men, with miners and ordnance. At this crisis, the duke of Burgundy was marching upon Paris, resolved upon the extermination of the faction which held the government. Henry landed at Tonque, near Harfleur; and shortly after went on to besiege Caen, which city was taken by assault on the 4th of September. "The duke of Clarence beat down the walls with guns on his side, and first entered into the town, and cried, A Clarence! A Clarence!—A Saint George! and so was the town got." * Many other fortresses in Normandy speedily submitted; and Henry went into winter quarters. The French government, distracted with the movements of the duke of Burgundy, made no effectual resistance to the English. Henry continued to secure one fortress after another; and, holding his court at Caen, confiscated the estates of Norman lords, and bestowed them upon his English followers.

The summer of 1418 was a terrible season for France. The duke of Burgundy had retreated from before Paris in the previous year; for his partisans in the city had been expelled, and the count of Armagnac had the young dauphin, Charles, in his hands, as well as the unhappy king. The

* "An English Chronicle," written before 1471. Camden Society, 1856.

queen had been deprived of her power, as regent, and had been sent as a prisoner to Tours. Suddenly the duke of Burgundy appeared before Tours; delivered the queen from captivity; and received from her the appointment of governor-general of the kingdom. The rule of the count of Armagnac had been one of severity and terror; and the Parisians had fallen off from his faction, and now anxiously desired his overthrow. At the end of May there was a fearful massacre of the Armagnacs by an infuriated Paris mob; and many of them were held as prisoners. On the 12th of June, there was a cry that the terrible duke was at the gates; but the people shouted for

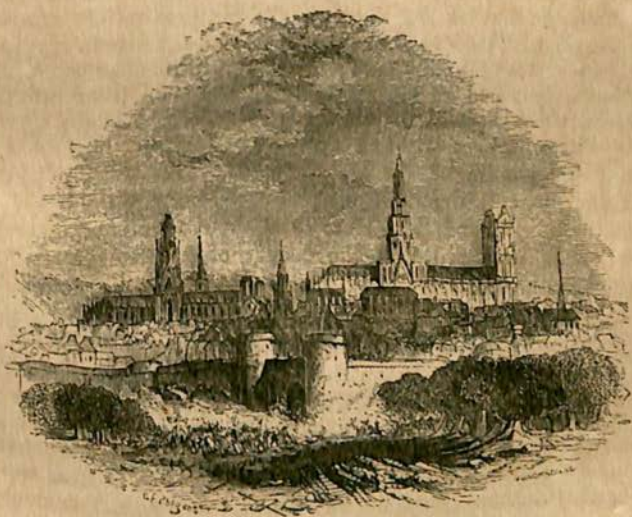


Storming a Fort. (Harleian MS.)

Burgundy; and, breaking open the prisons and private houses where the Armagnacs were confined, massacred fifteen hundred victims in one morning. Amongst them was the count of Armagnac. On the 14th of July the queen and the duke of Burgundy entered Paris in triumph. The appetite for blood was not yet sated; and for some days the new government made a profession of stopping the murders, but contrived to remove those persons who were most obnoxious to them. The duke of Orleans, whilst these horrible butcheries were perpetrated by a fickle multitude upon the party of which he was the real head, was shut up in the castle of Pontefract. He solaced his long captivity in England by the composition of verses which entitle him to rank amongst the best French poets of his age; and he also wrote "Chansons" in English, with elegance and facility. Henry was not

disposed to trust to the pacific occupations of his prisoner, as a guarantee that he would not be a troublesome enemy. There is a letter of this period in which the king enjoins his strict keeping, without going to any disport, "for it is better he lack his disport, than we be deceived."*

While these fearful scenes had been acted in Paris, king Henry sat down with the main body of his army before Rouen. In the previous winter, terms of peace had been proposed to him by the French government at Paris, and also on the part of the dauphin, afterwards Charles VII. But these negotiations were unavailing. The siege of Rouen was as prolific in horrors as any other event of that sanguinary period. The rule of Henry in Lower Normandy, which he had nearly conquered, was mild and conciliating. He abolished the odious tax on salt, and set a limit to illegal exactions. But the people of Rouen, into which city large numbers of armed men had been thrown under the command of chiefs who had retired before Henry, resolved to resist the progress of the invader. The king had crossed the Seine at Pont de l'Arche; but when he invested the city on the 30th of July, he found a garrison ready to make sorties upon his troops, and compel them to fight for every position which they took up. He set about the reduction of the place upon a system far more efficacious than any sudden assault. On the land side he dug deep ditches; and he fortified his lines with towers and artillery. The land approach was completely blockaded. The islands of the Seine above Rouen were filled by him with troops. The stream was



Ancient View of Rouen.

barricaded with iron chains; and immediately above the town he formed a bridge of boats manned with archers. He soon compelled the surrender of the castle on the hill of St. Catherine, now crowned with a church, with the beautiful river and the commercial city at its foot. Below Rouen he

* "Original Letters on English History." Ellis, Series i. vol. i.

commanded the navigation of the Seine by his armed vessels ; and the mouth of the river was guarded by a powerful fleet. For twenty weeks the devoted people beheld the gradual approach of famine. The population consisted of a hundred and fifty thousand souls ; some chroniclers say three hundred thousand. In that city of ancient narrow streets, where still remain many gloomy houses of the period, whose quaint gables and rude carvings are dear to the artist and the antiquary, was this wretched population, with all the resources of their accustomed industry cut off, shut up to starve. " And ever they of the town hoped to have been rescued, but it would not be : and many hundreds died for hunger, for they had eaten all their cats, horses, hounds, rats, mice, and all that might be eaten ; and oft times the men-at-arms driving out the poor people at the gates of the city, for spending of victual, anon our men drove them in again ; and young children lay dead in the streets, hanging on the dead mothers' paps, that pity was to see." * At last the garrison surrendered on the 19th of January, 1419, and the soldiers marched forth without arms, engaging not to serve against the king for one year. One of the noblest cities of France thus came under the English rule ; and here Henry built a palace, and held his court as duke of Normandy. The people of Rouen had been promised effectual relief both by the duke of Burgundy and by the dauphin ; but no succour came. The French princes were more intent upon circumventing each other than of organising a national resistance ; and Henry haughtily proclaimed that he was called to reign over France as a true king, and that it was the blessing of God which had inspired him to come into a distracted kingdom, that its sovereignty might be transferred to capable hands. There were two authorities in France, who refused to unite in repulsing their common enemy. The dauphin held a court and parliament at Poitiers ; the duke of Burgundy ruled at Paris. In the mean time Henry continued to advance towards the capital. A truce was at length concluded by him with the duke of Burgundy ; and it was agreed that the king of France and the king of England should have a meeting. In July, 1419, the queen, the princess Katherine, and the duke of Burgundy, came, without the king, to Meulan, on the Seine ; and here Henry met them, with great state on either side. The queen expected that the beauty of her daughter would have disarmed the sternness of the English king ; but although he professed himself anxious for an alliance with a lady so fair and gracious, he demanded the complete execution of the treaty of Bretigny, the cession of Normandy, and the absolute sovereignty of all the countries surrendered. The negotiations were again broken off. The dauphin and the duke of Burgundy now made some show of reconciliation ; and within a week after the conference at Meulan, they agreed to terms of union. With the same boldness as he displayed when met by divided councils, the king marched on towards Paris, now that he was assured that the two rival powers of France were united to resist the " damnable interference of the ancient enemies of the kingdom." † The dauphin and the duke had parted with demonstrations of mutual respect ; the dauphin to Touraine, the duke to join king Charles at Pontoise. On the 23d, the king, the queen, and the duke, went to Paris, which was completely undefended. On the 29th, news came that the English had taken Pontoise. The court

* "English Chronicle," p. 47.

† These words are given in the preamble to the treaty between the dauphin and Burgundy.

removed from Paris, to which the troops of Henry were rapidly approaching. The dauphin solicited another interview with the duke of Burgundy, on matters of importance to the welfare of the kingdom. The courtiers of the duke urged him not to go, for the dauphin was surrounded by the servants of the duke of Orleans, who had been assassinated in 1407; and by men whose friends and relations had perished in the massacre of the Armagnacs. But the duke resolved to meet his cousin at the place appointed, the bridge of Montereau. At each end of the bridge there were barriers; but there was no barrier in the centre, as was usual in these interviews of princes, who most hated and suspected each other when professions of friendship were most abundant. The dauphin was in a sort of lodge in the centre of the bridge when the duke advanced. They had each taken oaths pledging the safety of the other. The duke of Burgundy had left his attendants a little behind him; and as he bent his knee to the dauphin, he was struck down and quickly murdered; the servants of the duke being immediately surrounded by a large body of armed men. The dauphin gave out that the duke offered insult and violence to him; but there can be no doubt that the treacherous murder was premeditated, and the mode of accomplishment resolved upon. The heir of the crown of France was at this time seventeen years of age.

Philip, the son of the murdered duke of Burgundy, was at Ghent when he received the news of the tragedy at Montereau on the 12th of August. He was married to a daughter of the king of France. "Michelle," he said to his wife, "your brother has murdered my father." No time was wasted in idle complainings. Philip, known in history as "The Good," immediately, with the advice of his Flemish subjects, sought an alliance with Henry of England. The people of Paris, adverse as they were to the impending rule of the English, were still more hostile to the Armagnacs, who were desolating the country, with the dauphin at their head. The young duke of Burgundy arranged the terms of a treaty with Henry; which was finally concluded at Troyes, on the 21st of May, 1420. The king of England was to receive the hand of the princess Katherine; to be immediate regent of the kingdom; and to be recognised as successor to the crown on the death of Charles VI. When the terms of the treaty were announced to the parliament and other authorities of Paris, the highest eulogium was pronounced upon the king of England as a lover of peace and justice, a protector of the poor, a defender of the Church. The people were encouraged by these statements to hope for some happy termination of their miseries. The marriage of Henry with the princess of France was celebrated at Troyes, on the 2nd of June. The next day was one of banqueting. A tournament was proposed as a prolongation of the festivities; but Henry said, "the enemies of the king are in the city of Sens. Let us be ready to-morrow morning to march to its siege, where every knight may show his prowess in doing justice upon the wicked, that the poor people may live." He gave the nobles the most solemn assurances that he would love and honour the king of France; and that the ocean should cease to flow and the sun no more give light, before he should forget the duty which a prince owed to his subjects. The bridal month of Henry and his fair queen was passed in besieging Sens, and Montereau, and Villeneuve. When these were taken, Melun was besieged for four months. After its surrender on the 18th of November, the kings of France and England made a triumphant

entry into Paris; and the three estates of the kingdom gave a solemn approval of the treaty of Troyes.

At the beginning of 1421 king Henry held a parliament at Rouen. The coinage which was then issued bore the inscription, "Heres Franciæ." To Rouen came many English nobles and knights, and did homage to their king for lands granted to them in France. Immediately after, Henry and his queen went to England; and on the 23rd of February, Katherine was crowned at Westminster. The feasts and pageants that welcomed Henry and his queen were of unusual magnificence; and the chronicler Hall, in his pompous language, expresses the general sentiment of that period: "No doubt England had great cause to rejoice at the coming of such a noble prince and so mighty a conqueror, which in so small space and so brief time had brought under his obeisance the great and puissant realm and dominion of France." But there are other records which show that England herself was beginning to suffer from the operations of "so mighty a conqueror." The first statute of the parliament which the king convened in 1421 (chap. v.), referring to the statute of Edward III. that sheriffs and escheators should remain only one year in office, says, "Whereas, at the time of the making of the said statute, divers worthy and sufficient persons were in every county of England, to occupy and govern the same offices well towards the king and all his liege people; forasmuch that as well by divers pestilences within the realm of England, as by the wars without the realm, there is not now such sufficiency, it is ordained that the king, by authority of parliament, may make the sheriffs and escheators through the realm, at his will, until the end of four years." Barrington recites this statute to show that the laurels which Henry acquired were obtained at the dearest price, the depopulation of the country.* There were other causes than the waste of war to account for the deficiency of "worthy and sufficient persons in every county of England." In 1418 Henry was confiscating estates in Normandy, and bestowing them on his English followers. In 1421 he was receiving homage from English lords for the lands of France. The same temptations which led the Norman barons under the first William to desert the pleasant valleys of the Seine for the ruder abodes of the Severn and the Trent, now sent back their descendants to Normandy to make new acquisitions of the country from which the English had been dispossessed for two centuries. The evil from which England had been saved by the weakness of John was about to be renewed in the strength of Henry. Fortunate was it that the conqueror did not long remain to perpetuate his conquests; and that in the feebleness of his successor, and the distractions of a civil war, France was again lost.

The peace of Troyes was approved by the English parliament, and the Commons granted a subsidy of a fifteenth, "to continue the war, that the dauphin and his party, who maintained some cities and provinces against the king, being subdued, France might be entirely annexed to the English crown."† But even in this season of popular excitement there was a petition complaining of the intolerable burden of the war. In the previous year a petition had been presented to the duke of Gloucester, in a parliament which he had summoned as guardian of England, that he would move the

* "Observations on the Statutes," &c., p. 312.

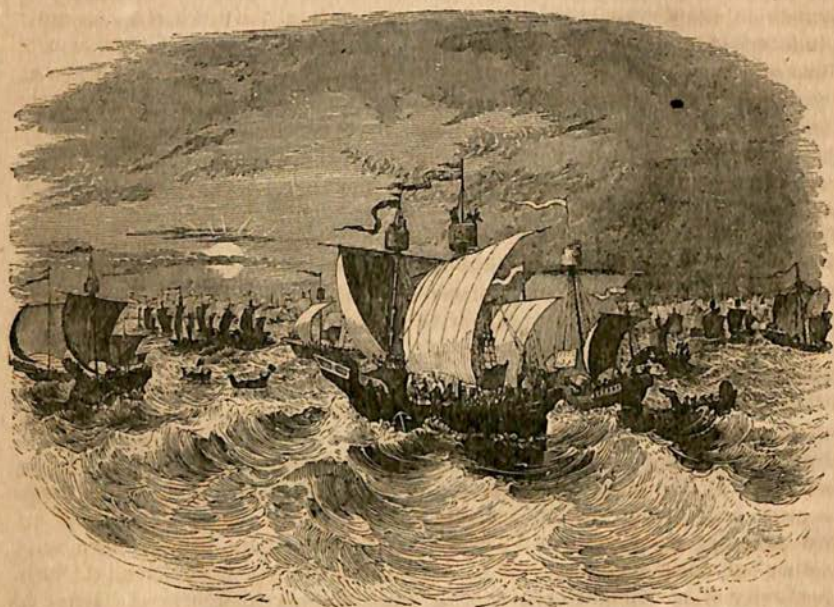
† "Parliamentary History," vol. i., p. 339.

king and queen to return, as speedily as might please them, in relief and comfort of the commons; and they also requested that their petitions might not be sent to the king beyond sea, but determined in England. They dreaded "that England might become a province of the French crown, which led them to obtain a renewal of the statute of Edward III., declaring the independence of this kingdom." * The king and his queen did not remain long, "in relief and comfort of the commons." They were making a progress through the kingdom, and had arrived at York, when news came which speedily called back Henry to France. He had left his brother, the duke of Clarence, as his lieutenant in Normandy. Anjou, which recognised the authority of the dauphin, was invaded by the duke; and at Beaujé, on the 22nd of March, he was surprised in his work of wasting the country by a great force of Anjevins, aided by several thousand Scottish auxiliaries under the earl of Buchan, the second son of the regent of Scotland. The duke was slain; and the greater number of his vanguard were killed or taken prisoners. The English archers, however, came up, and drove the French and Scots from the field. Soon, however, Scot was to be opposed to Scot in the great contest for dominion. Murdoch, the regent of Scotland, had lent assistance to the dauphin at a time of peace with England; and many of the Scottish nobles disapproved of the measure. The king of Scotland had been sixteen years a captive in Windsor Castle; and here, like that other illustrious prisoner the duke of Orleans, he found in the cultivation of literature a solace for the absence of liberty. In the garden of the keep of Windsor he first saw Jane Beaufort, walking amongst the hawthorn hedges and the juniper branches—and henceforth the cousin of king Henry was, in his mind, "the fairest and the freshest younge flower." So the captive has recorded of his love in his charming poem of "The King's Quair." Jane Beaufort's widowed mother had married the duke of Clarence; and this circumstance might have been some inducement to the captive king to accept the offer of Henry to accompany him to France, to redeem the great disaster of Beaujé. Archibald, earl of Douglas, and other Scottish knights, joined Henry and their young king; and set sail from Dover, with four thousand men-at-arms and twenty-four thousand archers. Queen Katherine was left at Windsor. Henry and his army landed at Calais on the 12th of June.

After several minor successes, king Henry, at the earnest entreaty of the people of Paris, undertook the siege of the city of Meaux, about thirty miles from the capital. The commander of the place, known as the Bastard of Vaurus, was a devoted adherent of the count of Armagnac, who had been butchered by the Parisians; and in revenge of his death, he massacred every Burgundian that he could encounter in the predatory excursions which he made to the very walls of Paris. He was a public enemy, carrying on a partisan warfare with a ferocity of which even those times of bloodshed furnished few examples. Henry undertook to subdue this brigand. But Meaux was a place of remarkable strength; and it was seven months before it was wholly taken. In this siege Henry lost several of his best captains, amongst whom were the earl of Worcester and lord Clifford and his men were swept away by an epidemic sickness. At last the garrison was starved

* Hallam, "Middle Ages," chap. viii. part iii.

out; and the commander was decapitated. By the surrender of Meaux the English became masters of the greater part of France to the north of the Loire. The queen of Henry had borne him a son, and she came back to France, with her infant, to join her husband in Paris. There was a short season of festivity at the Whitsunside of 1422; and then the king set out to raise the siege of Caen. He had for some time been labouring under a



English Fleet of the time of Henry V.

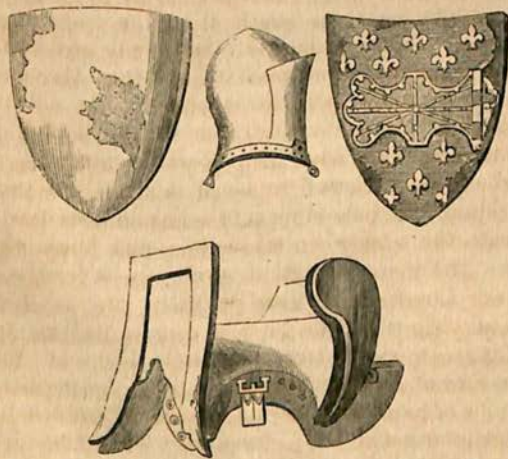
disease, which he bore up against with the same iron will that made him front every danger and difficulty of warfare. At Corbeil he became too ill to proceed; and his brother, the duke of Bedford, took the command of the army, in concert with the duke of Burgundy. Henry was carried back on a litter to the Bois de Vincennes. It soon became evident that his malady, whatever it might be, was beyond the medical skill of those days to arrest or cure. The English who surrounded the bed of the dying man saw the same composure which he had always shown in the battle-field. He commended his child to the care of his brother, the duke of Bedford, desiring the earl of Warwick to be his tutor. His brother of Gloucester he wished to be guardian of England. He advised that the regency of France should be offered to the duke of Burgundy; but in the event of his refusal to the duke of Bedford. Above all, he urged that no peace should be concluded with the dauphin, unless Normandy were ceded in absolute sovereignty to the English crown. Having delivered his last wishes, he asked the physicians how long he might expect to live. They said the Almighty had power to restore him to health. He repeated the question, requiring a direct answer. The answer was, "Not more than two hours." The ministers of religion then came to

his bed, and recited the penitential Psalms. At the words, "Thou shalt build up the walls of Jerusalem," he said, "If I had finished the war in France, and established peace, I would have gone to Palestine, to redeem the holy city from the Saracens." The last dream of glory was sanctified by the aspirations of religion.

Henry V. died on the 31st of August, 1422, in the tenth year of his reign, the thirty-fourth of his age. The devoted attachment to him of the English in France was expressed in funeral solemnities more than usually significant of real sorrow. Upon a car was shown a waxen figure of the king; and in a slow journey of many days a procession of heralds and priests, and knights and esquires in black armour, with all the dead king's household, traversed the country which had witnessed his painful marches—from Paris to Rouen, from Rouen to Abbeville, from Abbeville to Calais. Out of every town came the clergy and joined the cavalcade, and at night the body was placed in the principal church. The French people looked on with wonder, and even with pity, for the untimely fate of the great king; for they had seen the perfect discipline which he had preserved in his army, and how sternly he had repressed and punished the violence and exactions of their own lords. A fleet waited to convey the body and the English mourners to Dover. Slowly London was reached; and the funeral obsequies having been performed at St. Paul's in the presence of the Lords and Commons of the parliament, all that remained of the warrior and statesman was finally deposited in Westminster Abbey.

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to form a just estimate of the character of Henry V., in regarding it from the modern point of view. To place before our eyes the social good that might have been accomplished by a prince of such eminent talents, of such strong will, of such firm self-reliance, of such fortitude under the most appalling difficulties, of such equanimity at the height of success, of such zealous though erring sense of religious obligation—to view him in a possible career of honest energy without the lust of conquest, and to blame him for not preferring a real usefulness to a blind ambition—this is to set aside the circumstances which gave a direction to the actions by which we must judge of his character. We can imagine a prince so endowed, despising the superstition of his times, determine to make a corrupted church tolerant, and to bestow liberty of conscience upon all his subjects. Such a conquest of bigotry would have been a wilder and a more dangerous undertaking than the conquest of France. We can imagine him looking beyond all the prejudices of his age, and discovering that a free commercial intercourse between nations is the true foundation of prosperous industry. Such a theory has not been possible to be realised in England till the very times in which we live; and is even now rejected as impossible by nations far more advanced in understanding what belongs to real civilisation than the England of the fifteenth century. We can imagine him destroying the jealous factions which disturbed his father's doubtful authority, by calling forth the love of the great body of the people, and urging forward the rights of the burgh and the labourer to control the oppressions that still clung to the decaying system of feudality. It was long before the monarchical could extinguish the aristocratic tyranny; and then the rule of the one was, in many respects, a despotism more injurious than

the grasping and turbulent power of the many. England had to pass through various stages of misrule before the universal good could be received as the great end of all government. Before Henry V. there was opened the magnificent prospect of recovering the hereditary dominions of the Norman kings, which had slipped away from the feeble successors of the greatest of that valiant race; which had been partially won back by the third Edward; and which had again been surrendered to the growing power of France. His negotiations show that his real policy was to recover what had been lost after the treaty of Bretigny; and that his demand of the French crown would have been soon abandoned had not the distractions of France offered an irresistible temptation to his enthusiastic ambition. For he was an enthusiast. He had an undoubting confidence in the justice of his claim; he had no apprehensions of its impolicy. His bravery, fortitude, and perseverance won the admiration of the English people, as such qualities will always command the applause of a military nation. In England every man was trained to arms, and the brilliant achievements of the great soldier were far more valued than the substantial merits of the just lawgiver. But the career of Henry V. was not without its national benefit. From his time there was no false estimate in Europe of the prowess of the English; from his time there was no dream that the proud island might be subjugated. Even in the civil wars of the half century which succeeded Henry, England was unmolested from without. No king of France ever thought to avenge Agincourt by wearing the crown of England in right of conquest.



Helmet, Shield, and Saddle of Henry V. suspended over his Tomb.

When the death of Henry V. was known in London, some of the leading peers assembled, and issued writs for a new parliament. The duke of Gloucester had been named by the dying Henry as regent of England; but upon the roll of parliament it was entered that the king, considering his tender age, appoints the duke of Bedford, or, in his absence beyond sea, the duke of Gloucester, to be protector and defender of the kingdom. From subsequent proceedings recorded in the rolls of parliament it appears that

Gloucester had claimed to be regent according to the desire of his brother; but that the lords had resisted that claim, saying that the king could not grant governance of the land to any person except while he lived; and that although it was agreed that Gloucester should be chief of the Council, in absence of the duke of Bedford, he was to hold his position, not under the name of tutor, lieutenant, governor, or regent, or of any name that should import governance of the land, but only bear the name of protector and defender. We thus see that the jealousies which, in a few years, broke out into open violence and hatred were existing at the very onset of the reign of him "in infant bands crowned king." But we also see how strictly a great constitutional principle was adhered to, that a king could not appoint a regent during the minority of his successor; and that no person could exercise the royal prerogative during a king's infancy, except by the choice of parliament, and under the limitations prescribed by parliament for the conduct of the executive government.*

In less than two months after the death of Henry V., Charles VI., king of France, also died. At the funeral solemnities at St. Denis, the herald cried aloud, "Long life to Henry, king of France and England, our sovereign lord." France had been for forty-two years under the nominal rule of an incapable king, subject to accesses of insanity which delivered him, powerless, to one or other of the factions that distracted his kingdom. There were now two kings in France—an infant in Paris, with a regent who governed north of the Loire; and the dauphin, alike the object of party hatred and party adulation, who was crowned at Poitiers as Charles VII.; and who ruled or influenced most of the provinces south of the Loire. Brittany at first remained neutral in this great quarrel. Burgundy was with the English. When, therefore, some are accustomed to say that Henry V. conquered France, they speak with a very loose estimate of the noble territory that remained unconquered. In thirty years from the death of Henry V. all that had been surrendered to his arms or his policy was utterly lost.

To follow through the various fortunes of this war in France would, with some striking exceptions, be only to repeat the monotonous details of sieges and battle-fields—wearisome even when told with a due comprehension of their peculiar aspects. The more important of the early contests between the regent Bedford, and Charles VII., were the battle of Crevant, in 1423, where the earl of Salisbury signally defeated the earl of Buchan, commanding an allied army of French and Scots; and the battle of Verneuil, where Bedford utterly routed the French army in an engagement which was recorded in the rolls of parliament as "the greatest deed done by Englishmen in our days, save the battle of Agincourt." The duke of Bedford had military talents; and his policy sought to strengthen his faction by powerful alliances. He married the sister of the duke of Burgundy; and he negotiated a marriage between another sister of that duke, and the duke of Brittany. But these friendships were soon endangered by the rash passions of the duke of Gloucester, the protector and defender of England. The alliance with Burgundy had given stability to the power of Henry V. The personal ambition of his brother Gloucester weakened this support of the English

* See Hallam, "Middle Ages," chap. viii. part iii.

rule. Jacqueline of Hainault was the sovereign lady of Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Hainault. She was first married to the eldest son of Charles VI. of France, who died whilst dauphin; and she was then wedded to the duke of Brabant, kinsman to the duke of Burgundy. Eloping from her husband she went to England; and obtaining a divorce from the anti-pope married the duke of Gloucester, who claimed her large territorial possessions, and landed five thousand men at Calais to support his claim. Hainault became the seat of a new war. The dukes of Burgundy and Bedford endeavoured to reconcile the disputants; but Gloucester was obstinate, and bitterly quarrelled with Burgundy. It was agreed that a single combat should decide this new hostility; but Bedford at Paris, and the parliament in England, saw to what national evils this rupture might lead. Gloucester, in spite of their joint remonstrances, led an army into Holland; and the English in France began to take the side of their rash countryman. The question was finally settled by the pope declaring the marriage of Gloucester void; and he eventually consoled himself by marrying Eleanor Cobham, a lady of humble rank and spotted reputation. From that time, the duke of Burgundy cooled towards the English alliance. Gloucester, when he returned to England, engaged in a fierce quarrel with his uncle, Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, and chancellor, who was one of the illegitimate brothers of Henry IV. The people of London, in 1422, had seen their king, then two years old, "borne towards his mother's chare,* and he shrieked, and cried, and sprang, and would not be carried." † In 1424, they had seen him placed before the high altar of St. Paul's, and then seated upon a horse, and paraded through the city. In 1425, with a view probably to diminish the influence of the protector, by exhibiting the child Henry as a shadow of royalty, he was brought into the house of Lords, and seated on the throne on his mother's knee. "It was a strange sight," says Speed, the chronicler, "and the first time it was ever seen in England, an infant sitting in his mother's lap, and before it could tell what English meant, to exercise the place of sovereign direction in open parliament." The people knew that the power was necessarily in other hands than those of this poor child and his mother; and they saw the natural guardians of the baby-king quarreling for supremacy. On an October night of 1426, Gloucester sent for the mayor of London, and directed him to have the city strictly watched. The next morning Beaufort came from his palace in Southwark, with archers and men-at-arms, and assaulted by shot and missiles the gate of London-bridge, which was closed against him. The citizens were supporters of Gloucester; and "all the city of London was moved against the bishop, and would have destroyed him in his inn at Southwark, but the gates of London-bridge were so surely kept that no man might pass out, and the Thames was also kept that no man might pass over." ‡ In the dread of civil war, the duke of Bedford came over to England; and a parliament was held at Leicester, where the members were ordered to appear without arms. Gloucester exhibited articles of accusation against the bishop, the principal of which were, that he wanted to seize the young king's person, and that he sought to kill the protector and to excite a rebellion. A reconciliation was enforced by appointed arbitrators, who decided that Gloucester should be "good lord

* A horse litter on wheels.

† Chronicle of London.

‡ "An English Chronicle." Camden Society. p. 53.

to the bishop, and have him in affection and love ;” and that the bishop should bear to the protector “true and sad love and affection, and be ready to do him such service as pertaineth of honesty to my lord of Winchester, and to his estate, to do.” The bishop was humiliated. He resigned the chancellorship, and went abroad. But the pope bestowed upon him the red hat ; and Cardinal Beaufort henceforth figures in English history,—believed by some to have been a conscientious upholder of the Church, and an encourager of learning, and by others held as an unscrupulous and grasping politician, who “dies and makes no sign ” of repentance for his avarice and cruelty.

In accordance with the will of his dying father, the boy Henry, when six years old, was placed under the tutelage of the earl of Warwick. This companion in arms of Henry V. was fitted to train his son in all knightly qualities, and thus to form a character the very opposite to that of Henry VI. Warwick had fought under Henry IV. at Shrewsbury. He had been on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He had travelled in Prussia, Poland, and Russia. He had challenged any three knights of France to joust with him at Guines, and on three successive days he was the victor in each encounter.* His appointment as tutor to the king was made under the authority of the Council ; and he was to instruct his pupil in all things worthy to be known, nurturing him in the love and fear of his Creator, and in hatred of all vice. Warwick held this office till the king was sixteen. The system of education pursued by this chivalrous warrior might not have been the best fitted for a sensitive boy ; for the tutor applied to the Council for powers, which were granted, to hold the pupil under the strictest discipline, even after he had been crowned king in 1429. He was not to be spoken to, unless in the presence of Warwick and of the four knights appointed to be about his person, “as the king, by the speech of others private, has been stirred by some from his learning, and spoken to of divers matters not behoveful.” The Council promised that they would firmly assist the earl in chastising the king for his defaults ; and, “that for awe thereof he forbear the more to do amiss, and intend the more busily to virtue and to learning,” they should come to the king and declare their assent to his chastisement. According to this curious entry in the Rolls of Parliament,† Warwick applied for these articles as his protection against the young Henry’s displeasure and indignation, “as the king is grown in years, in stature of his person, and in conceit and knowledge of his high authority.” Severe corporal punishment was the accustomed instrument of good education in the fifteenth century. The scourge was recommended even by gentle mothers to be administered to their sons. One writes to beg that her son’s tutor may be implored “that he will truly belash him till he will amend ;” adding, “I had rather he were fairly buried than lost for default.” ‡ No doubt it was in this spirit of love that Warwick chastised the young king. At this age Henry appears not to have wanted the just sense of his own position which failed him in after life. It is difficult now distinctly to understand what were the deficiencies of his intellect. He

* In the Cottonian Library there is a MS. written by Rous, a priest who lived at Guy’s Cliff, being a life of this Earl of Warwick, illustrated with curious drawings, of which the one at p. 80 is a copy.

† Quoted in Mr. Sharon Turner’s “History of England during the Middle Ages,” 2nd edit. vol. ii. p. 492.

‡ “Paston Letters,” letter cvii. Ramsay’s edit.

probably inherited some portion of the malady of his maternal grandfather ; but infirmity of purpose and fear of responsibility seem to have marked his character rather than that unsoundness of mind which exhibits itself in habitual delusions and fitful aberrations. His life was one long state of pupilage. All the wonderful energy of his race appears in him to have been extinguished in a calm indifference to good or evil fortune, and in patient submission to stronger wills than his own—to his uncles, to his preceptor, to his wife, to his wife's favourites. How much of the fire of the Plantagenets might have been trodden out of Henry VI. by the severities of his early discipline cannot now be estimated. He was born to a most unhappy position ; and it is satisfactory to believe that his hard lot was solaced by that religious trust which lightens the burthens of the wretched, whether on a throne or in a dungeon. The earl of Warwick, who, like many other leaders of chivalry, was an enthusiastic believer in the efficacy of vows and pilgrimages, may have inspired his pupil with that strong feeling of ceremonial devotion which caused him long to be regarded as a saint. To a right direction of that piety we owe the noble foundations of Eton and King's College, Cambridge—worthy monuments which still call upon us to respect the memory of the most meek and most unfortunate of kings.



Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, as a Pilgrim, worshipping at the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem.



Medal of Joan of Arc; from a French work of 1634.

CHAPTER VI.

Defeat of the English before Montargis—Position of Charles VII.—Commencement of the siege of Orleans—Salisbury killed—Battle of Herrings—Despair of the besieged—Proclamation—The peasant girl of Domremy—Joan of Arc travels to the court of Charles VII.—Receives authority to relieve Orleans—Enters the besieged city—English belief in witchcraft—Terrors and defeats of the English—The siege raised—Defeats of Jargeau and Patay—Charles crowned at Rheims—Joan captured at Compiègne—Tried as a sorceress and burnt at Rouen—French war continued—Henry VI. crowned in Paris—The English disgraces and losses—Henry married to Margaret of Anjou—Affairs in England—The duchess of Gloucester accused of witchcraft—Arrest of the duke of Gloucester—Deaths of Gloucester and Beaufort.

THE war in France had been conducted without any decided success on either side, after the victory at Verneuil in 1424, till 1427, when the forces of the duke of Bedford sustained a severe defeat, and were compelled to raise the siege of Montargis. But the cause of Charles VII. was little advanced by this partial good fortune. His adherents were quarreling amongst themselves. Many of the nobles who had supported him now deserted a prince whose treasurer declared he had only four crowns in his coffer. Nearly all the fortresses on the right bank of the Loire had been surrendered without defence. The people were enduring famine and disease. Charles, whose character was a little improved by adversity, did not lose hope amidst the evils which surrounded him. He was of an easy nature, and in proportion as his great lords were faithless he addressed himself to the affection of the common people. Gradually a personal as well as a national feeling revived the patriotism which had been almost extinguished. Charles placed his chief reliance upon the possession of Orleans. If that city fell, the provinces beyond the Loire would be open to the English, and he would have to find a shelter in the mountains of Auvergne or the more remote Dauphiné. The English, it was known, were approaching to besiege Orleans. The inhabitants prepared for its defence with unwonted zeal. They received aids of money from other cities; and a tax was voted for the same aid by the three estates assembled at Chinon. The citizens adopted the most effectual means to resist the besiegers. They destroyed their suburbs, with their vines and gardens and houses, that their enemy might have no lodgment; and they

erected strong forts, particularly that of the Tournelles, which, defending the bridge, secured the communication of the city with the left bank of the Loire. On the 12th of September, 1428, the earl of Salisbury pitched his camp to the south of Orleans, and within a week commenced an attack upon the bulwark of the Tournelles. The assault was resisted with more than usual popular enthusiasm. The experienced warriors discharged their arrows and missiles; and the citizens, male and female, showered down stones upon the assailants. But the fort of the Tournelles was finally taken. The inhabitants



Tower. Archers. Cannon.

then raised another bulwark on an isle of the river, and cannonaded the English camp. Dunois and La Hire, the bravest of the French chivalry, arrived with reinforcements. The English lost their best commander, Salisbury. He had mounted the ruined tower of the Tournelles to survey the city, when a stone ball struck him, and carried away his eye and a part of his face. He survived eight days. The duke of Suffolk now succeeded to the command; and the siege was pursued with a perseverance as remarkable as the defence. The great extent of Orleans prevented its complete blockade; and supplies were, from time to time, thrown in for the relief of the besieged. Reinforcements, too, continued to arrive. To meet the necessities of the besieging army, the duke of Bedford had despatched an immense convoy with provisions from Paris. It was determined to cut off this supply. The

convoy, under the command of Sir John Fastolf, was attacked by a detachment from the garrison of Orleans, and by a body of French and Scots commanded by the count of Clermont. The attack was ill-devised; and was commenced without a proper concert amongst the French leaders. Their force of eight thousand men was defeated by fifteen hundred English. This was called the Battle of Herrings; vast quantities of this lenten food forming part of the supplies. It was fought on the 12th of February, 1429. The line of English forts round the city was gradually extending. Towers and bulwarks were erected on each bank of the Loire by the besiegers. The lines, vigilantly kept, now more effectually prevented the arrival of food or men. Famine was beginning to threaten more misery than the sword. The resolution which still remained to the unhappy people was that of despair. The fame of their gallant resistance had gone through France; and it was felt, even in districts far removed from the scene of warfare, that the time was approaching when it should be decided whether France should be governed by the English Plantagenets or by its own race of Valois.

The feudal lord of Orleans was in captivity in England; and it was proposed by the people, seeing resistance was unavailing, that their city should be placed in the keeping of the duke of Burgundy, till the great contest for the crown of France was decided. Philip of Burgundy was pleased at the proposal, which was communicated to him by ambassadors from Orleans. The duke of Bedford gave no encouragement to the plan, when it was debated between these allied chiefs at Paris. An adviser of Bedford says,—“We are not here to champ the morsels for Burgundy to swallow.” Bedford rejoins, “No, no, we will not beat the bushes for another to take the birds.” Bedford and Burgundy quarreled about the expected prey; and Burgundy withdrew his troops, and left the English to continue the siege alone. The fall of the city was rapidly approaching; when some wonder, not unmixed with contempt, was felt by the leaders of the besieging army, upon receiving a letter dictated in far different terms than those which usually proclaimed the challenges of chivalry: “King of England, and you, duke of Bedford, who call yourself regent of the kingdom of France; you, William de la Pole, count of Suffolk; you, John lord Talbot, and you, Thomas lord Scales, who call yourselves lieutenants of the said duke of Bedford, do ye right to the King of Heaven; render to the Pucelle, who is sent hither by God, the King of Heaven, the keys of the good cities you have taken and plundered in France. And you archers, companions in war, gentlemen and others, who are before the city of Orleans, go your ways into your own country, in the name of God. I am sent by the King of Heaven to drive you out of all France.” The English captains would have heard the common rumour that from the borders of Champagne a young woman had travelled to the court of Charles, at Chinon, asserting a divine mission; and that her pretensions had been examined before a solemn council of jurists and theologians at Poitiers. The dauphin must indeed be fallen low to depend upon such aid.

In the hamlet of Domremy, near Vaucouleurs, a pastoral country watered by the Meuse, dwelt a little cultivator named Jacques d'Arc, with his wife Isabel. They had a daughter, Joan, who was remarkable for her early piety. Her talents were considerable; but she had received no education, and made the mark of a cross at the beginning of the letters which were written at her

dictation. She said of herself, "I feared no woman of Rouen in sewing and spinning." When thirteen years of age, she refused to join in the sports of the young people of her hamlet; and secluded herself in the woods and fields, or was found kneeling before the cross in her parish church. This was after the period when the death of Charles VI. had divided France into two great factions; and the vicinity of Domremy to Burgundy had made the feuds of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs familiar to the peasantry. Joan saw the men of her own village violently disputing as to the merits of these parties; but mostly agreed in hatred of the English. She had herself looked upon the extreme misery of the people; and she attributed it, not without justice, to the invasion which had given the crown to an English king at Paris, whilst the true heir was in danger and difficulty. Her enthusiastic nature was stimulated by these united impulses of religion and patriotism; and in her solitary meditations she began to see visions and to hear voices. The first voice which she heard only exhorted her to be pious and discreet; but then came a figure with wings, and commanded her to go to the succour of the king, for that she should recover his kingdom. From time to time she told what she had seen and heard. "My voices have instructed me"—"My voices have commanded me," were her expressions. She seems to have distinctly separated her own supposed revelations from the local superstitions; for there was near her village a wonderful tree, called the Ladies' tree, growing beside a spring with healing properties; and old people said that fairies frequented the place; but she declared that she never saw fairies, and she never went to the tree to make garlands, as others did, from the time she knew she ought to go to the king. Amongst the ridiculous accusations which were afterwards heaped up against her, she was charged with having attended the witches' sabbath on every Thursday night, at the Fairies' oak of Bourlemont. There was an ancient prophecy, known to the country people, that France should be lost by a woman and saved by a woman. The queen Isabella, who had brought in the English, was the one. The people now added to the prophecy that a virgin from the marches of Lorraine should be the other. Before 1429 Joan was entirely persuaded that she had a power given her to restore the kingdom to Charles VII.

The voices which Joan heard disclosed to her the practical mode of carrying out her strong idea. They told her, what would have been her natural conviction, that she must put herself in communication with some great person. She sought the feudal lord of Baudricourt at Vaucouleurs. He sent her away, as one distraught. She told her story to two gentlemen who dwelt near her. "There is no help for France but in me," she said. "I would rather spin by the side of my poor mother, but I must go. My Lord calls me." Her pretensions were spread abroad. The duke of Lorraine sent for her, to cure him of a malady. She said that she had no heavenly light to remove his disease, and she counselled him to lead a better life than he had been wont to lead. The duke gave her four francs, and bade her depart. At last, the lord of Baudricourt listened to her when she again came before him in her shabby red gown. The people of Vaucouleurs provided her the equipment of a horse and a man's dress; and she went forth on a perilous journey, having received the oaths of John de Novelompont and Bertrand de Poulengi, who had first seriously listened to her pretensions, that they would

conduct her safely to the king. They travelled through a wild country in the winter season, taking the most unfrequented routes, and using every care to avoid the Burgundians and the English. She forwarded a letter, which she dictated, to Charles, and at length received permission to proceed to Chinon. Here she arrived after eleven days' travel. Her fame had gone before her. At last she overcame the difficulties of approaching the king. From that moment when she publicly announced her mission at the court of Charles, many things which she most probably did through her own shrewd sense were accounted miraculous. Thus she is recorded to have selected the prince out of a crowd of attendants; and to have indicated to him an acquaintance with facts only known to himself. It is difficult not to believe that at this stage she had become an instrument in the hands of some persons about the king. Every ostensible precaution, however, appears to have been taken to prevent his cause being committed to an impostor. Her honest life was fully proved; and in the conviction of her sanctity, learned doctors, prudent counsellors, and bold warriors, agreed that the Maid should be confided in. A suit of armour was prepared for her; and she indicated where a sword could be found, behind the altar of a church, at Fierbois. At the head of a large force, she set out for Orleans, having authority for its command over the best knights of France. At Blois she put on her armour. Marching on the right bank of the Loire, she desired to enter Orleans through the English lines on that side. She was overruled by Dunois, of which she bitterly complained. It was at length decided that boats loaded with supplies should proceed up the river. The day was stormy, and the vessels could make no way. "The wind will change," said the confident girl. It did change, and the supplies and the troops were landed safely about six miles below the city. Meanwhile, the garrison of Orleans made a sortie on the north, which diverted the attention of the besiegers. An hour after sunset, Jeanne d'Arc rode into Orleans at the eastern gate, mounted on a white horse, her standard, on which was a figure of the Redeemer, being borne before her. The people by torchlight crowded around her; and she exhorted them to honour God, and to hope in her for their deliverance.

It was the 29th of April when this extraordinary aid, which was firmly believed to be supernatural, arrived to the beleaguered city. In the camp of the English the men would whisper their fears of impending misfortune; for it could not be concealed that a woman, said to be gifted with the spirit of prophecy, was coming to Orleans at the head of a great reinforcement. The shouts that came forth from the populous city on that April night would tell that she was come. The next day a herald from the Pucelle presented himself at the English camp. The respect paid to the messenger of princes was denied to the messenger of a reputed sorceress, and he was threatened to be burnt as a heretic. Another herald came to defy Talbot; and to declare, from the commander of the French, that if the messenger of the Pucelle received any harm, it should be visited upon the English prisoners. These proceedings began to spread alarm amongst the brave yeomen of England, who had fronted so many dangers in the field, but who had a terror of witches and magicians, which was a characteristic of this period. The Church had associated witchcraft and heresy in their proceedings against the early reformers; and, amongst the charges against the Waldenses, they were

accused of holding converse with the enemy of mankind in the form of a cat, and of riding through the air on magical sticks. When Henry IV. thought it politic to repress the Lollards, he became also very solicitous for the discovery and punishment of witches and sorcerers. The superstition had become familiar to the English, through the denunciations of the ecclesiastical authorities against "heresy, conjurations, necromancy, enchantments, witchcrafts, and other false belief against the faith of holy Church."* The soldiers of Suffolk and Talbot looked on in terror and amazement, when, on a tower facing the Tournelles, a form appeared in shining armour, and bade them depart if they would avoid misery and shame. William Glasdale, the commander of the Tournelles, reviled the maiden, and told her to go back to her cows. "Your men will be driven to retreat," she exclaimed, "but you will not live to fly with them." The French waited for succours from other garrisons, before they attempted any great operations against the besiegers. Joan was invariably for instant attack, without heeding disparity of numbers or disadvantages of position. Some of the knights were indignant at her assumed authority; but by her resistless force of will she conquered all opposition. The succours at length were at hand. There was no attempt to bring them into the city under cover of darkness, or while the English were engaged in another quarter. At the head of the French knights and soldiers, followed by the people of the town, Joan rode forth with her banner, between the towers of the besiegers. They looked on with wonder; but there was no resistance. When she returned at night, she threw herself exhausted on a bed. Awakened by a noise, she cried out, "My arms! my horse!" She rushed into the street, mounted with her banner, and rode alone to the spot where she heard the clamour. A rash sortie had been made; and the assailants were driven back. When they saw the white horse and the banner of the Maid, they shouted for joy, and followed her out of the gate into the besiegers' lines. After an engagement of three hours, the English fort was taken and set on fire. It was Joan's first battle. She had fought with the courage and address of the most accomplished knight.

The terror of the English after this sortie from the Burgundy gate became more universal. The next day the Pucelle and the chiefs crossed the Loire in a boat, and led an attack upon a fortification on the left bank. She was slightly wounded, and passed the night in the field. The great force of the besiegers was on the right bank of the river; and the lord of Gaucourt, the governor of Orleans, was opposed to this leading forth of the garrison, to leave the city defenceless, while the English were attacked on the left bank. But the daring and confident girl had completely won the real leadership of the soldiers and the citizens. She had returned to Orleans, and had told the chiefs that she had much to do on the morrow. Without any concert with the French leaders she rose early in the morning, and went forth with a tumultuous crowd to the Burgundy gate. It was shut against her egress. The governor was compelled to open it, and she rode out, followed by soldiers and a great multitude. Their counsel being thus rejected, the French knights, with their men-at-arms, reluctantly followed. But their prudence was soon laid aside in the din of battle. The river had been crossed by Joan, and she had commenced an assault on the Tournelles, the great fort held to be

* See Introduction to "Proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler." Camden Society.

impregnable. The artillery from its walls thinned the ranks of the assailants ; but the wonderful Maid was always ready with her rallying cry. She was the first to mount the rampart by a ladder. An arrow struck her, and she fell into the ditch. She was carried off ; and after a few natural tears drew the shaft out of her shoulder, and knelt in prayer. The attack had lasted four hours, and nothing had been gained. The retreat was sounded. Joan implored Dunois not to move. "Let our people rest, and eat and drink." Her standard-bearer had remained near the spot whence the Maid was borne away. The lord of Daubon, who was against a retreat, took the standard, and with another descended into the ditch ; and waving the well-known sign of victory the French rallied round him. Seeing what was taking place, Joan went forward to claim her standard. The English, who had seen her borne off wounded, felt a new alarm. The French advanced again to the attack of the fort, under their marvellous leader. From the other bank the people of Orleans were storming the Tournelles, having crossed the broken arches of the bridge by beams placed on the buttresses. The English were now between two assaults. The soldiers were filled with a superstitious awe. The maiden was on the battlement of the second tower of the works, the first having been taken. The soldiers, with Glasdale their commander, thus surrounded, were retreating into the main defence upon a wooden bridge, when a cannon-ball struck it, and the commander and his men fell into the stream, and were drowned. The prophetic words of the Maid, when Glasdale reviled her, were accomplished. There was now no chance of resistance to the impassioned assaults of the French. The English threw down their arms, and were slaughtered, drowned, or taken prisoners, to the number of seven thousand. No aid came from the panic-stricken camp ; and the Maiden passed over the repaired bridge into the city, amidst the shouts of the multitude, whilst every steeple sent forth its peals of gratulating bells, and at every church *Te Deum* was sung on that night of victory. The next morning, at break of day, the English marched out from their forts, and formed in order of battle to the north and west of the city. They stood in an attitude of defiance before the walls. Joan had hastily risen, and was soon at the northern gate. "Attack them not," she said. "If they attack you, defend yourselves." It was Sunday the 8th of May. An altar was brought to the gate ; and the priests chanted a solemn service. The English standards were displayed ; the trumpets sounded ; but they turned their faces from Orleans. The siege was at an end.

It is not necessary to assign any miraculous powers to Jeanne d'Arc in accounting for her wonderful success. She honestly believed herself inspired by Heaven, and she infused into others that belief. An enthusiast herself, she filled a dispirited soldiery and a despairing people with enthusiasm. The great secret of her success was the boldness of her attacks, when military science reposed upon its cautious strategy. In the eyes of the experienced tacticians she risked the safety of the city when she led her excited multitudes to the assault of the Tournelles. In her own self-reliance she would hear of no other counsels but the most daring ; and to that contempt of danger she owed her triumphs. In every desperate struggle between individuals and nations boldness is generally the most certain winner. Boldness was the principle which the peasant girl of Domremy maintained to

the end of her wonderful career. In eleven days she had stricken terror into an army which had been the terror of France for eleven years. The government of Charles VII. would have rested inactive under the triumph of Orleans. She unceasingly urged the dauphin's progress to Rheims, for she held him not as a king till he was crowned in that city, where all the kings of France for three centuries had been consecrated. The way thither was filled with their enemies. They held the keys of the cities between the Loire and the Seine. But the bold counsels at last prevailed, and Joan's standard was again floating at the head of a French army. On the 11th of June, the duke of Alençon, and the chiefs who had defended Orleans, arrived before Jargeau, which Suffolk occupied. The English earl had come out with his garrison to offer battle. The French had arrived in haste, and they were driven back. But at the command of the Pucelle they returned to the attack, and Suffolk retired within his walls. The bombardment of the town continued for three days; when a breach having been made, Joan led the assault. Jargeau fell, and Suffolk was a prisoner. On the 18th June was fought the battle of Patay. The English fled from the terrible banner that had been first seen at Orleans; and the lords Talbot and Scales were made prisoners. The hasty retreat of Fastolf brought upon him the undeserved imputation of cowardice; and when he came to the duke of Bedford, at Corbeil, he was deprived of the riband of the garter. The triumph of the victory of the Herrings did not save the good knight from the disgrace of the flight of Patay. But Bedford himself, though a man of great ability, believed, or affected to believe, in a miraculous cause for these reverses of the English. A letter was sent by him, at this period, to the Council at London, in which, according to rule, he addresses the young king: "All things here prospered for you till the time of the siege of Orleans, undertaken of whose advice God only knows. Since the death of my cousin of Salisbury, whom God absolve, who fell by the hand of God, as it seemeth, your people, who were assembled in great number at this siege, have received a terrible check. This has been caused in part, as we trow, by the confidence our enemies have in a disciple and limb of the Devil, called Pucelle, that used false enchantments and sorcery. The which stroke and discomfiture has not only lessened the number of your people here, but also sunk the courage of the remainder in a wonderful manner, and encouraged your enemies to assemble themselves forthwith in great numbers."

It was a false policy of the English chiefs to decry Jeanne d'Arc as a sorceress. It was the ready mode to spread the greatest terror of her exploits amongst their own adherents. The French, with equal confidence, proclaimed her as the favoured of Heaven, who exhibited as much courage as piety. At this juncture, the duke of Bedford secured the doubtful co-operation of the duke of Burgundy; and the cardinal Beaufort, who had raised an army in England for a crusade against the heretics of Bohemia, turned over his troops to the regent of France, to war against the Armagnacs, and to make new efforts against the enchantments which had given them power to resist the long triumphant bravery of the English. They took the field with new hopes. Onward went the Maid, upon her resolved design that Charles VII. should be crowned at Rheims. On the 28th of June, twelve thousand Frenchmen marched out of Gien, to traverse a country whose towns and fortresses were held by English and Burgundians. They reached Troyes, and

encamped before the town. Six days of inactivity were passed, and the French army wanted food; they were without artillery; and it was proposed to retreat to the Loire. Joan was sent for by the king and his council "Shall I be believed?" she asked. "Whatever you say," replied the king, "we will attend to." "Then, noble dauphin, assault the town, and you shall enter there to-morrow." On the morrow, the famous standard was displayed; and the terrified garrison of Troyes surrendered the place. They went on, and took Chalons without resistance. As they approached Rheims, the peasants of her native district came out to look upon the wonderful girl, whom they knew as the shepherdess by wise men accounted mad. After some debate within the town, and great apprehensions of failure in the French camp, Joan urged the king on, and the gates of Rheims were opened. On the 17th July, Charles was crowned in its ancient church. There were few nobles present. The Maiden stood with her standard before the altar. The expense of the coronation amounted only to twenty-four Parisian livres. Never was king so inaugurated. All the accustomed pomp was absent; but when the enthusiastic girl kissed the feet of her monarch, her tears were a holier consecration than the mystic oil with which, as the legends told, Clovis had been there baptised. Charles then went on towards Paris, receiving the submission of many towns on his march. Joan thought her mission accomplished; and earnestly desired to return to her father and mother, to keep their herds and flocks. Her counsels now became vacillating. Sometimes Charles retreated and sometimes marched forward. Bedford had sent him a challenge to meet in the open field, couched in the most opprobrious terms; and he was moving rapidly to bring the French to an engagement. The two armies suddenly met at Senlis; and for three days a battle was vainly expected. Each army then took its own way,—Bedford for Normandy, which had been entered by a hostile force under the constable Richemont. Charles marched on to Paris. On the 12th of September an assault was made at the Faubourg St. Honoré. The intrepid Joan, though she had lost confidence in her miraculous voices, displayed her wonted courage. She scaled the walls; but was wounded, and fell into the fosse. Crawling out from the heaps of dead and dying, she again waved her standard. The old confidence in her powers had deserted the French; and when the attack was repulsed, they reproached her that she had said they should sleep that night in Paris. "You would have slept there," she replied, "if you had fought as I fought." Charles retreated to the Loire. The succeeding winter was passed by the king at Bourges. In the spring the army moved to the relief of Compiègne, which was besieged by the duke of Burgundy. Joan got into the town, and the same day headed a sortie. She was taken prisoner, and was carried to the Burgundian quarters. Her wars were over.

For four months Joan was confined in the castle of Beaufort, near Cambrai. She was a prisoner of war to the Burgundians. She was afterwards conveyed to Arras and to Crotoy; and was finally delivered to the English in their city of Rouen. The university of Paris urged her trial before an ecclesiastical tribunal; and there are letters from that body, full of reproach to the English for not delivering up their prisoner to the justice of the Church. At length letters patent were issued in the name of Henry VI., in which it was stated that, in accordance with the public opinion, and at the

especial request of the bishop of Beauvais and the university of Paris, she was to be given up to the bishop, to be examined and proceeded against under his authority. She was subjected for several months to the most searching interrogatories. At fifteen examinations she was never disconcerted, but answered every question with perfect frankness. All the circumstances of her early life were related by her; and her belief in her voices and visions emphatically declared. Her determination to wear the male dress of her triumphs was persisted in. Upon her alleged revelations were founded articles



Monument to Jeanne d'Arc at Rouen.

accusing her of sorcery; and upon her declining to submit to the ordinances of the Church, when her voices commanded the contrary, the charge of being a schismatic was also introduced. Heresy and schism, meriting the punishment of fire, were declared to be found against her. The university of Paris ratified the articles of accusation. On a public scaffold at Rouen the sentence of condemnation was read to her by the bishop of Beauvais. Her courage deserted her; and she expressed her contrition and submission. Her sentence of burning at the stake was then to be commuted to perpetual

imprisonment. She was taken back to prison, but after two days her confidence returned; and she re-affirmed her belief that her voices came from God; and that, not understanding what the adjuration was that she had been called upon to sign, she had signed in the fear of being burnt. She was now a relapsed heretic, in the terms of the cruel zeal of the persecuting ecclesiastics, and her fate was no longer a matter of doubt. In the old market-place of Rouen a pile of wood was built up; and round it a scaffold was erected, where prelates and nobles might sit to behold the death of the heroic girl. There sat cardinal Beaufort and the bishop of Beauvais; and as Joan stood before them, a sermon was preached, setting forth her atrocities; and the preacher concluded with, "Joan, go in peace; the Church can no longer protect thee, and delivers thee into secular hands." She was immediately dragged to the pile; the fatal cap of the Inquisition, with the words "hérétique, relapse, apostate, idolâtre," was placed on her head; the fire was kindled. Her last word was "Jesus." On the spot where this deed of infamy was perpetrated, stands one of the monuments by which the French of later times have sought to redeem their share of the disgrace of this murder of the 30th of May, 1431. French historians attempt to fix the greater blame upon the English. It is clear that, although the vengeance of those who had been driven from Orleans and vanquished at Patay was the main cause of this tragedy, it would not have been accomplished except through that terrible power which, under the name of religion, had no quality of mercy when a heretic was to be hunted to the death. The bishop of Beauvais and the cardinal of Winchester knew no distinction of nation when they sat on the scaffold at Rouen to do the work of the Holy Inquisition.

The coronation of Charles VII. at Rheims was to be rivalled by the more gorgeous ceremony of crowning Henry VI. at Paris. On St. George's day of 1430, the boy who had been crowned at Westminster came, with Beaufort, to Calais. They remained there a month. No army could be raised in England, through the "terrifyings" of the Pucelle. At length she was captured; but, even six months after, the soldiers of England deserted, rather than go to a land where their bows and bills were powerless against enchantments. But on the 17th of December, Henry made his public entry into Paris, and was crowned at Notre-Dame. He returned to England in February, 1431; and rode into London, amidst as profuse and laboured pageantry as had welcomed his father from Agincourt. He came under very different auspices. Dressed up with the mantle of royalty and the crown on his head, the boy of ten years old was to perform the character of king, that the exhibition might strengthen one of the parties in the state that was aiming at supremacy. Whilst these follies were enacted in England, Harfleur was re-captured by the French. The first trophy of Henry V. was for a while lost. The alliance of the duke of Burgundy was fast slipping away. Every year added to the strength of the national party in France. At every conference for peace the demands of Charles VII. became enlarged. At the congress of Arras in 1435, the French would only agree to cede Normandy and Guienne, to be held as fiefs, all other possessions and all claim to the crown being surrendered. The conditions were refused, and the duke of Burgundy abandoned the English alliance. He made a separate treaty with Charles VII.; swearing that he would forget his father's death, and be at perpetual peace with France. Monstrelet says that

the young king Henry wept at the news of this peace of 1435. The people of England manifested their indignation by seeking out the subjects of the duke of Burgundy, Flemings and others, to maltreat and murder them. The duke of Bedford, who had steadily upheld the will of his heroic brother, died at this critical period. There was no union in the English

councils. The duke of Gloucester would have called up the old heart of England to redeem the losses and disgraces of the six years that were past. The cardinal of Winchester, perhaps more wisely, advocated peace. In the quarrels between these rival leaders in the Council all opportunity for a successful struggle passed away. Paris was retaken by Charles in 1436; and the English were expelled. "When they should pass upon their journey," says Fabyan, "they were derided and scorned of the French nation out of all measure." Successes in Normandy, under the duke of York and Talbot, only prolonged the final issue; and when the duke of Burgundy's possessions were devastated by Talbot in 1437; when Picardy was ravaged in 1440, and Harfleur was once again captured by the English; when York was superseded as regent by Warwick, and Warwick again replaced by York, each making new attempts to recover the lost ascendancy;—

it was still manifest to the French that the time was approaching when the spirit of nationality would successfully maintain itself against the pretensions of alien rulers. After twenty-five years' captivity, the duke of Orleans was released from his prison in the Tower of London. There is a private contemporary record, which shows the interest that the English took in the passing events connected with France: "Tidings; the duke of Orleans hath made his oath upon the sacrament, and used it, never for to bear arms against England, in the presence of the king and all the lords except my lord of Gloucester; and in proof that my said lord of Gloucester agreed never to his deliverance, when the mass began he took his barge. God give grace the said lord of Orleans be true, for this same week shall he towards France." *



Street in Harfleur.

* "Paston Letters." Robert Repps to John Paston, Nov. 1st, 1440.

The war is continued a few years longer; and then a truce. England is anxious about the terms of pacification. Agnes Paston writes to her son on the 14th of February, 1445: "I pray you to send me tidings from beyond sea; for here they are afraid to tell such as be reported." The people were reluctant to believe, and thought it dangerous to say, that their weak young king was to marry a daughter of the duke of Anjou, with the approbation of the French king, whose consent would be bought by the surrender of all that remained of the lands which English treasure and blood had won in that war of twenty years. Their fears were accomplished. Henry was married to Margaret of Anjou in 1445; and one of the conditions of the marriage and the consequent truce was the surrender of Anjou and Maine. Normandy was soon conquered, when Maine, the key to its possession, was gone. Gascony yielded to the French in 1451; and after the last of the great English captains, the dreaded Talbot, fell at Castillon in 1458, Bordeaux was taken. The dream of conquest, which had lasted for more than a century, was, by God's blessing, at an end.

In the statute of the twentieth year of Henry VI. c. 9, is recited that clause of Magna Charta, which provides that no freeman shall be condemned "but by lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land;" and the preamble then goes on to say that in that statute no mention is made how women, ladies of great estate, married or sole, that is to say, duchesses, countesses, or baronesses, shall be put to answer upon indictments of treasons or felonies. It is therefore provided that such ladies, so indicted, shall be tried as peers of the realm are tried. The triumph of the party of cardinal Beaufort over that of the duke of Gloucester had been manifested in the release of the duke of Orleans; and now a stronger measure of humiliation was preparing for the last of the king's uncles—the favourite of the people, learned, and an encourager of learning. His wife, Eleanor, was accused of sorcery. The statute which we have mentioned was, in all probability, devised to bring her to the block, and thus to destroy Gloucester through his affections. In the common purpose of the encomiasts of the Church in its most corrupted state, it is sought to free Beaufort from the imputation of being the moving cause of these hateful proceedings. "Some writers," says Dr. Lingard, "have attributed the prosecution of dame Eleanor to Beaufort's enmity to her husband. But their assertion stands on the slightest foundation; a mere conjecture of Fox that it might be so, because the witch [of Eye] lived, according to Fabyan, in the neighbourhood of Winchester, of which Beaufort was bishop." The most circumstantial account of this passage of history is given in a very interesting chronicle written before 1471;* and there we shall find much firmer foundation for this belief than the "mere conjecture of Fox." This narrative is so curious as a picture of manners, that, in abridging it, we shall retain as much as possible of the original phraseology.

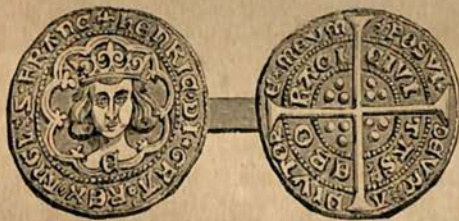
In 1440, on the Tuesday before Midsummer, a priest called sir Richard Wyche, a vicar of Essex, was burnt on Tower-hill for heresy. The numbers of those who perished at the stake in England, whilst Beaufort was supreme, must have gone far to mitigate the papal indignation for his stopping short in

* Camden Society, 1856.

his crusade against the reformers of Bohemia, putting the money raised in his capacious coffer. In his cognizance of the proceedings against Joan of Arc, he had learned how charges of sorcery and heresy could be blended; and how the popular sympathy for the poor believer might be turned into indignation against the wicked enchanter. When the Essex vicar was burnt there was murmur and trouble amongst the people, for some said he was a good man and a holy, and put to death by malice; and they went in great numbers to the place where he was burnt, and kissed the ground. In the same year, 1440, in July, two clergymen, Roger Bolingbroke, and Thomas Southwell, a canon of St. Stephen's chapel, "were taken as conspirators of the king's death; for it was said that the said Master Roger should labour to consume the king's person by way of necromancy; and that the said Master Thomas should say masses upon certain instruments with the which the said Master Roger should use his said craft of necromancy." Bolingbroke was a man of science, distinguished in his pursuit of astronomical studies,—described by William Worcester as one of the most famous clerks of all the world. On Sunday, the 25th of July, this accomplished scholar was brought to hear the sermon at Paul's Cross; and "stood in a high stage above all men's heads in Paul's churchyard, before the Cross, while the sermon endured, holding a sword in his right hand and a sceptre in his left hand, arrayed in a marvellous array, wherein he was wont to sit when he wrought his necromancy." The duchess of Gloucester had fled to sanctuary. Bolingbroke was examined before the king's council, according to this chronicle, and confessed that he wrought his necromancy "at the stirring of the aforesaid dame Eleanor to know what should fall of her, and to what estate she should come." This "necromancy" was evidently, from this description, the usual process of that age, and of much later times, of casting the nativity of the duchess. The observations of the astronomer were then held to be most usefully applied in the calculations of astrology; and Roger Bolingbroke is not to be held undeserving of his reputation as a most famous clerk, for believing in what the most accomplished philosophers of his time believed. But Bolingbroke was to be sacrificed that one greater than he might be crushed. When he had confessed to what was called his necromancy, dame Eleanor "was cited to appear before certain bishops of the king's; that is to say, before Master Harry Chicheley, archbishop of Canterbury; Master Harry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester and cardinal; Master John Kemp, archbishop of York and cardinal; Master William Ayscough, bishop of Salisbury; and other, on the Monday, the 22nd day of July next following, in St. Stephen's chapel of Westminster, for to answer to certain articles of necromancy, of witchcraft or sorcery, of heresy, and of treason." Bolingbroke, the chronicle adds, was brought forth to witness against her; and he said "she was cause and first stirred him to labour in his necromancy." Then Bolingbroke and Southwell were indicted as principals of treason, and the duchess as accessory. To make the tragic farce complete, a woman called the Witch of Eye was burnt in Smithfield, for having in former days given medicines to Eleanor Cobham to make the duke of Gloucester love her and wed her. The duchess was brought before an ecclesiastical commission in October, when she submitted herself to the correction of the bishops; and on the 9th of November she was condemned to perform all the humiliations of penance in the streets of

London, on three several days; "the which penance she fulfilled, and did right meekly, so that the more part of the people had in her great compassion." She was confined at Calais and the Isle of Man for the remainder of her life. The enemies of the duke of Gloucester went probably as far as they dared; and the affrighted woman made that submission to the Church which saved her from the penalties of heresy. Bolingbroke was tried at Guildhall for high treason, and executed with the accustomed cruelties. Southwell died in the Tower before the time appointed for his trial. The accusation of treason was founded upon the charge that at the request of the duchess, the clergymen had made an image of wax like the king, which they placed before the fire, and as it gradually consumed the king would pine and die. That the whole affair was an infamous conspiracy for political purposes there can be little doubt. It could have only been carried through in an ignorant age; and not then, unless juries had been afraid to come themselves under the terrible charge of heresy, in acquitting those destined for sacrifice by a persecuting church, made more terrible in its political ascendancy.

The great ecclesiastics were at this period the moving power of the government. Beaufort had in vain been accused by Gloucester of having estranged the king from him, his sole uncle; for having amassed inordinate riches, not through his church preferment or as having inheritance: "neither office, livelihood, nor captain may be had without too great a good given him * * * for who that would give most his was the price." These attacks left deep scars. In 1445, Margaret of Anjou was crowned queen of England. The duke of Suffolk, who had negotiated the marriage, now came to strengthen the party of Beaufort in the government. The duke of Gloucester was the only man who stood in the way of the absolute power of the queen and of the favourite, who had taken her from the petty court of



Half-Groat of Henry VI.

Henry

Signature of Henry VI.

Anjou to raise her to the highest place of European royalty. The king was a mere puppet of sovereignty; having his head upon the coin, and making a legible signature. Whatever could contribute to the ruin of Gloucester would be acceptable to the churchmen of the council, who had been denounced by him "as preventing men to say what they think of truth." A parliament was called to be held at Cambridge, at the beginning of 1447; but the place of meeting was afterwards changed to Bury St. Edmund's. There was a secret order issued for armed men to be attendant there on the king. The duke of Gloucester was in his place as peer on the 10th of February; when the usual formalities were gone through. On the 11th he was arrested by the high constable of England, and his attendants were seized and sent to different prisons. They were only thirty-two in number,

for he came without the large retinues which the great had generally in their train when danger was apprehended. At the end of seventeen days, Humphrey of Gloucester was found dead in his bed. His great adversary, Henry Beaufort, died six weeks after him, at the age of eighty years. His death-bed scene has been depicted by Shakspeare with a terrible power which the soberer statement of the chronicler will not obliterate: "Why should I die, having so much riches? If the whole realm would save my life, I am able by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it.—Fye, will not death be hired, nor will money do nothing?"* These were not unlikely words in the mouth of a dying man who was undoubtedly of "covetise insatiable."

The death of the duke of Gloucester was accomplished, there can be little doubt, by secret murder. Hall has a reflection upon the event which exhibits more of the character of philosophical history than belongs to the old annalists: "There is an old said saw, that a man intending to avoid the smoke, falleth into the fire: so here the queen, minding to preserve her husband in honour, and herself in authority, procured and consented to the death of this noble man, whose only death brought to pass that thing which she would most fain have eschewed, and took from her that jewel which she most desired; for if this duke had lived, the duke of York durst not have made title to the crown: if this duke had lived, the nobles had not conspired against the king, nor yet the commons had not rebelled: if this duke had lived, the house of Lancaster had not been defaced and destroyed; which things happened all contrary by the destruction of this good man."

* Hall, upon the authority of Beaufort's chaplain.



Henry VI. From an illumination, Harl. MS



Court of Henry VI.

CHAPTER VII.

Social condition during the wars of the Roses—Degrees of Rank—Incomes—Forty-shilling freeholders—Statutes of Apparel—Distinction of Birth—The Gentleman and the Roturier—Administrative system—Royal revenue—Public functionaries—Military system—Defence of the Coast and Towns—Forcible entries upon estates—Liveries—Rent—Relations of Landlord and Tenant—Want of money by landowners—Prevalence of litigation—Occasional bribery—Petty law-suits—Number of attorneys limited—Offences against person and property—Hours of labour—Domestic manufactures—Interference of the State with industry.

In the progress of our narrative we have arrived at one of the most remarkable epochs of our eventful history. We have arrived at that period when we may turn aside from that great contest between England and France—"two so invincible nations, which never would yield or bow the one to the other, neither yet once hear of abstinence of fighting or refusing from war, so much were their hearts hardened, and so princely were their stomachs"* In this war, and in previous French wars, Cominès tells us that the English "carried over a considerable booty into England, not only in plunder which they had taken in the several towns, but in the richness and quality of their

* Hall's Chronicle, 13th year of Henry VI.

prisoners, who paid them great ransoms for their liberty."* A different war was at hand—a war in which the English lords would fight at intervals for thirty-five years upon their native soil, and only end this work of mutual destruction when one half of the old nobility of England was swept away. During these wars of York and Lancaster, of which the seeds were sown in the distracted councils of the minority of Henry VI., we have many scattered but authentic materials for viewing the social condition of the country. The first division of this extraordinary period opens with the insurrections of 1450; and then proceeds in showing the duke of York taking up arms in 1452, and his son Edward seated on the throne in 1461. The second embraces the perilous fortunes of Henry and his intrepid wife, and the overthrow of the Lancastrian party after that gleam of triumph, which was destroyed by the fatal battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury in 1471. Edward sits on the throne for thirteen years longer, in comparative tranquillity; then two more years of mysterious murder and fierce war; and then a dynasty with which the feudal system has practically come to an end. This is one great epic, which requires to be told without any material interruption to the relation of events, of which the links are welded in one continuous chain. But it may be desirable, before we enter upon this narrative, to endeavour to form a just estimate of the habits and condition of the people, while these battles and revolutions were carried forward at their own doors. During this troubled time, when we might naturally expect that the whole framework of society would be thrown into disorder, we find the internal administration of England proceeding with the same regularity as if the struggle for supremacy were raging on the banks of the Seine instead of the banks of the Thames. The uniform course of justice is uninterrupted. Men are litigating for disputed rights, as if there were no general peril of property. They are electing knights of the shire and burgesses, under aristocratical or popular influences, as if the real arbitrement of these contentions was to be in the parliament-house and not in the battle-field. They are buying and selling, growing and exporting, as if the producers looked on with indifference whilst the Warwicks and Somersets were slaying or being slain. They wear richer apparel, and strive more for outward distinctions, and build better houses, than when their fathers were fighting in France; and they are really prospering in an increase of material wealth, though they greatly lack the instrument of exchange, for the want of money is grievously felt from the peer to the huckster. They pursue their accustomed diversions; they hunt and they hawk; they gamble in public gardens; they gape at the players of interludes; they go on pilgrimage to Canterbury and Walsingham, and St. Jago—they take life easily, as if no danger were around them, when truly they might be in trouble for shouting for the White Rose on one day, and for the Red on the next. Their marriages go forward, with the keenest avidity amongst the gentry and the burgesses to make the best bargains for their sons and daughters; and whilst we know how many great houses were rendered desolate by these troubles, we have no satisfactory evidence that during their existence population had decreased. These appearances on the surface of things involve many important points of national character and

* *Memoirs of Philip de Comines*, book vi. chap. ii.

social progress ; and we therefore proceed to collect some leading traits of the people, as they show themselves in and near the stormy era which commenced with the commencement of the second half of the fifteenth century, and lasted till the quarrels of York and Lancaster came to an end upon Bosworth-field. During this period the condition of society appears to have undergone very slight change ; for in whatever regarded the civil administration of the country, there was no revolutionary action connected with the sudden changes in the supreme power. It was of this period that Comines, one of the most accomplished statesmen of his age, thus wrote : " In my opinion, of all the countries in Europe where I was ever acquainted, the government is nowhere so well managed, the people nowhere less obnoxious to violence and oppression, nor their houses less liable to the desolations of war, than in England, for there the calamities fall only upon their authors." * In another part of the same chapter, he says, " England has this peculiar grace, that neither the country, nor the people, nor the houses, are wasted, destroyed, or demolished ; but the calamities and misfortunes of the war fall only upon the soldiers, and especially the nobility." But we might still hesitate to believe that the government was well administered, and the people little disturbed by violence, if we were to regard the wars of the Roses as one continued series of exterminating slaughters. Comines, still speaking of these wars, says, " In England, when any disputes arise and proceed to a war, the controversy is generally decided in eight or ten days, and one party or other gains the victory." † After the first battle, that of St. Albans, in 1455, there was outward peace for four years. York was in arms in 1459 ; gained the battle of Northampton in 1460 ; and was killed on the last day of that year. Within three months his son Edward was on the throne, and had gained the decisive victory of Towton. With the exception of the Lancastrian rising of 1464, the kingdom was at peace till 1470. The attempt then to restore Henry VI. was defeated in the fighting of two months. Warwick landed on the 13th September ; Edward fled on the 3rd of October ; on the 14th March, 1471, he was again in England ; and after the great battle of Barnet, that of Tewkesbury decided the contest on the 4th of May. The remaining thirteen years of Edward saw no civil warfare. The landing of Richmond, and the fall of Richard III., was the affair of a fortnight. The actual warfare in England, from 1455 to 1485, included an aggregate space of time of something less than two years.

The statutes and other state documents which have regard to distinctions of rank, furnish some evidence of the increase of population, and of the divisions of society into more complex arrangements than those of the gentle, the free, and the servile. The Statute of Additions of 1413 declares that in every original writ of actions, appeals, and indictments, to the names of the defendants in such writs " Additions shall be made of their estate or degree or mystery, and of the towns or hamlets, or places or counties, of the which they were or be." It is affirmed by Fuller in his " Worthies," that such distinctions were not used, except in law process, until the latter end of the reign of Henry VI. In 1429 was passed the Statute of Elections for Knights of the Shire ; which recited that the elections for many counties " have now of late been made by very great and excessive number of

* Book v. chap. xviii.

† Book vi. chap. ii.

people dwelling within the same counties, of which the most part was people of small substance and of no value, whereof every of them pretended a voice equivalent, as to such elections to be made, with the most worthy knights and esquires dwelling within the said counties." It was therefore enacted that the knights of the shires should be chosen in every county by "people dwelling and resident in the same, whereof every one of them shall have free land or tenement to the value of forty shillings by the year, at the least, above all charges." There can be no more distinct evidence than this statute—which was unchanged for four centuries, however the value of money had changed—that the great bulk of the people, those of small substance, having passed out of the servile condition into the free, had become so numerous that they were the real constituencies of the country. Extensive suffrage was therefore held as dangerous as in recent times. A forty-shilling freeholder was then a person of some importance. In 1433, when commissioners were empowered to tender an oath to "persons of quality" to keep the peace, two inhabitants of Lyme were placed on the list, "as considerable



Law Habits of the fifteenth century. From MSS, engraved in Strutt's "Angel-Cynnan."

men who were able to dispense 12*l.* per annum."* Any one who lived in a forty-shilling tenement, or derived profit from land of the clear rent of forty shillings, when a shilling an acre was a high rent,† was a person of substance. The qualification of a justice of the peace was twenty pounds in lands and tenements, and it was less in towns.‡ In 1450 there was a subsidy granted, in the nature of an income-tax upon a graduated scale, persons holding in frank tenement from 20*s.* to 20*l.* paying 6*d.* in the pound; from 20*l.* to 200*l.*, 12*d.*; and all upwards 2*s.* These graduations of tax exhibit a very unequal distribution of property. The immense landed possessions in the hands of the nobles and prelates, and the enormous payments to

* Roberts "Social History of the Southern Counties," p. 194. 1856.

† The rent of land had not increased in the middle of the 15th century above the 6*d.* or 9*d.* per acre of 80 years before. Cullum's "Hawsted."

‡ Stat. 1445.

some of the great officers of the crown by salaries, and through extortions and briberies, sufficiently account for this inequality. The wealth, too, acquired in commerce, was in some instances very large. William de la Pôle, a merchant of Hull, lent Edward III. the sum of 18,500*l.* at one payment. His son became earl of Suffolk in the reign of Richard II., and the duke of Suffolk, whose fate we shall have to record in 1450, descended from the great Hull trader. William Cannyng, of Bristol, and Richard Whittington, of London, were opulent merchants of this period, whose memories still live in popular estimation. The salaries of the judges, in 1440, were—The chief justice of the Common Pleas, 120*l.* per ann. ; of the King's Bench, 93*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* ; of the Justices, 73*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* In addition, the judges had allowances for their official costume. For their winter robes they were each allowed 5*l.* 6*s.* 11½*d.* ; for their summer robes, 3*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* The king's serjeants and the attorney were each allowed for robes, 1*l.* 6*s.* 11*d.** About the middle of the reign of Henry VI. the revenue of the crown was 65,000*l.*, and the expenditure exceeding the receipts by 35,000*l.*, the royal debts amounted to 372,000*l.* The king's household expenses were then limited to 12,000*l.*

There were two Statutes of Apparel passed in the reign of Edward IV., from which we may collect what were the existing degrees of society, as we inferred from the statute of the preceding century.† The statute of 1463,

exactly a hundred years after that of Edward III., is granted at the prayer of the commons ; and has reference only to the averment that "the commons of the realm, as well men as women, have worn and do daily wear excessive and inordinate array." Amongst the commons, there are included, with their wives and children, the knight under the estate of a lord, other than lord's children ; the knight bachelor ; the esquire and gentleman. But the amount of possession is taken into account ; and the esquire and gentleman



Group of Artisans.

having 40*l.* a year may indulge in damask or satin forbidden to their less wealthy neighbours. Mayors, sheriffs, and aldermen, have special exemptions. Below the class of esquire and gentleman are those who have obtained a position by their wealth ; and those who have 40*l.* of yearly value may rejoice in furs, and their wives in gilt girdles. The men possessed of less than 40*s.* yearly are debarred from furs, and fustian, and scarlet cloth. The yeoman, and the persons under his degree, are to have no stuffing in their

* "Chronicon Pretiosum."

† See Vol. I. p. 479.

doublets. Lastly, the servants in husbandry and artificers are to wear no clothing of which the cloth shall cost more than two shillings the broad yard. The second statute of 1483 prescribes what peculiar apparel of cloth of gold or silk shall be forbidden to all below the royal rank; what to those below a duke; what to those below a lord, of whom the knight only shall wear velvet in his doublet. By a comprehensive clause no man under the estate of a lord should wear cloth of foreign manufacture; and the old price of cloth is again fixed for labourers and artificers. All other ordinances are repealed; but this statute contains one repealing clause which shows how vainly Lords and Commons attempted to legislate against the omnipotence of female taste: "Provided always, that this Act extend not, nor be prejudicial to or for any woman, excepted the wives of servants and labourers." The most gallant man of his time, by this clause, left his reign disburthened of the tyranny of having legislated against velvet and satin, girdle or coverchief, so as to interfere with the will of the ladies of England to wear the costliest array, without regard to the rank or the means of their less privileged husbands.

These Statutes of Apparel, if we read them rightly, were not intended to restrain the impoverishment of England "and the final destruction of the



Female Costume in the time of Edward IV.

husbandry of the realm," as they profess, but to maintain by outward appearance those distinctions of rank which were fast passing away. It was not that the fine clothes themselves conferred distinction; for servants of great households, heralds, minstrels, and players of interludes, were allowed to wear them. But it was to put some distinguishing mark upon the noble and the gentleman, as compared with the *roturier*—a word which had formerly a significant place in our language. The once great distinction of blood was

passing away, when the descendant of the merchant of Hull had become the most powerful peer of England. Yet this very Suffolk was so bound to the usages of chivalry, that when taken prisoner at Jargeau he asked his captor if he were a knight, and being answered "No,"—said, "Then I will make thee a knight;" and in the field was the lucky officer knighted, and received twenty thousand pounds for the peer's ransom. When lord Rivers was brought before Warwick at Calais, in 1460, the king-maker rated him, and said "that his father was but a squire;" and lord Salisbury called him 'knave's son.'* It was upon the complaint of the Commons that the

* Paston Letters, letter cxxxv. Ramsay's edit.

statute of 1463 was passed. The esquire was beginning to tread upon the heels of the knight. The qualification for knighthood was forty pounds a-year; and so many had reached that point of opulence, that some would rather fine to the king than receive a dignity grown common. The old grand Norman distinction of *gentilhomme* was that upon which the well-born then chose to stand. They worthily clung to it for a century or two later; till the distinction of blood, as constituting a caste, was destroyed by the intermarriage of the higher with the middle classes, and by each class following the same modes of advancement, legal, mercantile, or political. M. de Tocqueville says that the history of the word *gentleman* is that of democracy itself. "We shall find its application extending in England in the same proportion in which classes draw near one another and amalgamate." * In the fifteenth century this contact and amalgamation were slowly beginning.

We shall be enabled to obtain a clearer view of the social organisation of England in the latter half of the fifteenth century, if we glance at the administrative system of the kingdom. At the head of that system was the King. All acts were done in his name, even if he was an infant of nine months old, as in the case of Henry VI., or a boy of thirteen, as in the case of Edward V. The constitution made no provision for a minority, or for incapacity; and in the earlier times, when legitimate succession was set aside by the legislative powers with little ceremony, such a provision was less necessary. Some great functionary, as Chief of the Council, or Protector, discharged the kingly office, vicarially, in cases where the king was incapable. The hereditary revenues of the crown were very large, so that taxes or subsidies were usually voted only on extraordinary occasions. But if the hereditary revenues were large, and the accessions by taxation were growing more systematic, the crown had abundant need of all these regular and occasional resources. Let us rapidly look at the royal expenditure. During the eleven weeks that the duke of Gloucester carried on the government in the name of Edward V., the ordinary routine of administration was in active exercise; and in the original "Docket-Book" we may see, in a brief space, how various were the functions of the Crown, and how necessarily great the regal disbursements. † The treasurer and chamberlains of the Exchequer are commanded to pay for certain services and expenses, under various heads, whose bare enumeration exhibits an outline of the regal life, and of the range of the executive power. They are first to pay "The costs and expenses the which it shall behove us to have and sustain about our household, our chamber and great wardrobe, and our works." The functionaries that were under the holders of the patent offices of treasurer of the household, keeper of the jewels, clerk of the great wardrobe, and clerk of the works, far exceeded in number the retainers of the most expensive modern court. In apparel, as we may judge from the sumptuary laws, this period was most luxurious. It has been truly said, that extravagance in dress "was a peculiar characteristic of the middle ages throughout Europe." ‡ The handsome Edward IV., and the misshapen Richard III., were equally careful of the

* "State of Society in France before 1789," p. 152.

† "Grants, etc., from the Crown during the reign of Edward V." Camden Society, 1854.

‡ Sir N. H. Nicolas, "Wardrobe Accounts of Edward IV."

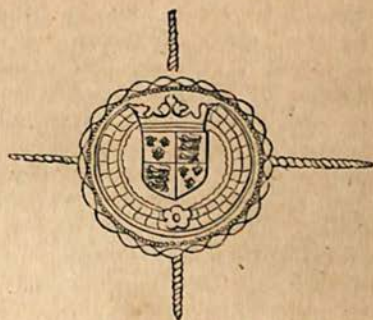
splendour of their array. Lewis XI. of France is familiar to us in his shabby doublet, and his old hat with its leaden image. But Comines says that in his last days "his gowns were all of crimson satin, lined with rich martins' furs." The disbursements of the clerk of the works were necessarily large, in the repairs of the palaces, and the additions of furniture that were constantly required. But out of the royal revenues were also to be paid the fees of all the high officers—the chancellor, the treasurer and privy seal, the judges, the barons and chancellor of the exchequer, and all other ministers of the courts. All fiscal officers were also to be paid from the same fund,—custom-house officers, comptrollers, receivers, surveyors, searchers. "Pay ye also of our treasure to our lieutenant of Ireland, wardens of our marches east and west, captain of our town of Berwick, wages assigned by us and our council, after the indentures of their withholding." There was no standing army to pay in England, as in France under Charles VII. Ireland, and the borders of Wales and Scotland, were defended by contract. These "grants" exhibit the nature of the bargains made with the wardens of the marches. Henry, earl of Northumberland, is retained for five lunar months to be lord captain of the castle and town of Berwick, and therein to keep six hundred soldiers, defensibly arrayed, of whom three hundred shall be archers, with two knights or squires to be



Archers.

lieutenants; for whose wages the king grants the sum of 43*l.* 10*s.* 1*d.* monthly, the soldiers being paid at the rate of 6*d.* a day. These wages are to be paid beforehand for the first two months; and the king is also to provide artillery and other habiliments of war. The navy was paid by separate disbursement for each ship: "Pay ye also, from time to time, unto the clerks of our ships all things necessary for the safeguard and surety keeping of our said ships, and for wages and victuals of mariners attending upon the same." For the general defence of the kingdom against rebellion

or invasion there was a sweeping grant to pay "the cost and expenses of all those that be or shall be assigned by our commission or commissions for to resist or subdue our rebels or enemies within this our kingdom." Upon emergencies, forces were raised by the king's letters under the privy seal, commanding the attendance of persons named, with armed men, in number according to their degree. The Roll of Agincourt shows how the lords and knights and esquires of England came to the summons of their king upon receiving these missives. The English army was always thus a new army at the beginning of a war; and Comines gave it a just character, which,—the circumstances of hasty levies remaining the same,—it has maintained from the siege of Harfleur to the siege of Sebastopol: "Though no nation is more raw and undisciplined



Privy Seal of Henry VI.

than the English at their first coming over, yet a little time makes them brave soldiers, excellent officers, and wise counsellors."* But the fighting Englishman of the fifteenth century was not fresh from the plough and the loom, without any sort of military training. The iron helmet was hung upon the wall of the cottage as well as of the castle; and the long bows of yew stood in the halls of the esquire and the burgess, for their servants to shoot at the butts on every Sunday and other festival.† The municipal officers of towns had looked upon their youths gradually sending the "light-flight arrow" to the legal distance of two hundred and twenty yards; and then, grown into stalwart men, performing the same feat with the heavy war-arrow. There was many a Locksley in every village, to whom this long range would present no difficulty. When the king's letter came,—either direct or through some great lord to his tenants and partisans—men were always at hand to send to the field. It was not always so easy to pay them. There is a letter of 1470 from the duke of Suffolk to the bailiffs of Eye, commanding that two men should be paid the money due to them according to the covenants made with them by the authorities of that borough, which men "were waged for your town to await upon us in the king's service at Lincoln Field."‡ Suffolk was a Lancastrian; and these "proper men of their hands" who went to Lincoln Field, were there to fight against the reigning king in the insurrection of Sir Robert Wells. They were glad, no doubt, to get back to Eye when this enterprise failed. But Warwick came with a greater preparation, and then Edward was driven from his seat. During the short triumph of the Lancastrians the men who had fought for them were to be paid their wages. For an expedition against France, or a struggle against the reigning house at home, an army could be got together when the

Autograph of Henry VI.

* Book iv. chap. v.

† Statute 11 Hen. IV.

‡ Paston Letters, cccv.

means of paying the adventurous spirits of the land were forthcoming. Whether the wages were to be paid in hand, or the payment deferred to a more convenient season, the king sent forth his summons in these words when there was danger: "Trusty and well beloved, we strictly charge and command you, upon the faith and liegeance that ye bear unto us, that ye arredie [make ready] you with all the fellowship ye can make." * But there was no efficient provision for the defence of the coasts against a foreign enemy. A few of the commercial towns, such as Yarmouth, Poole, and Bristol, were fortified at this period. But in small places, where no great lord was at hand to issue forth from his stronghold with his retainers, the enemies, Frenchmen or Fleming, not unfrequently landed, and carried off property and persons. While the government was wholly occupied in 1458 by the great assembly of rival lords in London, to mediate between York and the Lancastrians, we have the following description of the state of the Norfolk coast: "On Saturday last past, Dravell, half-brother to Warren Harman, was taken with enemies, walking by the sea-side; and they have him forth with them, and they took two pilgrims, a man and a woman. * * * * God give grace that the sea may be better kept than it is now, or else it shall be a perilous dwelling by the sea-coast." †

The people of England, long after the turbulence of the lords of the early feudal times had been restrained by law, were sometimes accustomed to behold displays of physical force, in which the array was neither for foreign warfare nor domestic insurrection. There are two statutes of this period which are singularly indicative of an altered state of society. The first is, for the controul of "them that make entries with strong hand into lands or tenements, or other possessions whatsoever, and them hold with force." ‡ The second is "for the punishment of such persons as give or receive liveries." § Both these statutes were confirmations and amendments of previous enactments; but the practice of the period, as distinct from its theory of justice and order, shows how ineffectual are laws "to nourish love, peace, and quietness,"—such being the objects which one of these statutes sets forth—when the possessors of great power and riches have no dread of the only real champion of right against might, the force of public opinion. Let us glance at two such exhibitions of lawless power and dangerous pomp, of which the violated laws took no cognisance.

In September, 1469, there is a great fellowship assembled at Framlingham. The little town is crowded with yeomen, who have gathered together from the many manors of the great duke of Norfolk; and there are hired soldiers with guns and cross-bows; and two or three pieces of cannon are mounted upon rude carriages; and armed horsemen wait at the castle gate for orders to march. Within the massive walls of that fortress there is an unusual bustle in the large court-yard. The duke is sitting with his council, composed of officers of his household, and of gentlemen who wear his livery; for he has summoned his dependants and friends around him, writing, in regal phrase, "that we may commune with you, and have your sad [serious] advice in such matters as concerneth greatly to our weal." || The decision is at last taken. The council breaks up. The yeomen and hired soldiery

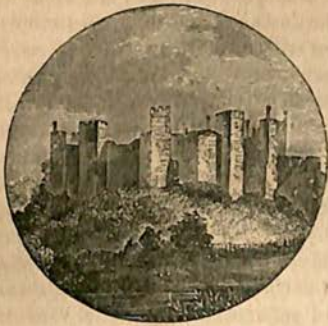
* Paston Letters, cccl.
§ Stat. 8 Ed. IV. c. 2.

† *Ibid.* cx.

‡ Stat. 8 Hen. VI. c. 9.

|| Paston Letters, cclxiii.

receive rations from the spacious butteries of the castle. They are formed in order of march ; and take their way towards the eastern coast, gathering in their progress a fresh multitude with pikes and staves, and halting, after several days, near the good town of Yarmouth.



Framlingham Castle.



Caister Castle.

In the castle of Caister there are some thirty "proved men, and cunning in the war and in feats of arms ; and that will shoot both guns and cross-bows, and amend and string them, and devise bulwarks, and will keep watch and ward."* These thirty men are ready to hold Caister against the thousand that have marched out of Framlingham to take that "rich jewel in time of war." Are they rebels and traitors who occupy that strong place,—a few years before the splendid palace of the Fastolf who fought in France,—but a dismantled and gloomy fortress when the duke of Norfolk demanded its surrender ? They were simply the servants of the legatee under the will of the old warrior ; and the duke, who claimed to have purchased the property of two of the executors, whilst the third had possession, took this mode of asserting his title. Caister was regularly besieged, and men were killed on either side, before it was surrendered. The great duke then makes proclamation that the vanquished might depart, having their lives and goods and harness ; and his grace grants this favour at the instance of divers lords, and "of our most dear and singular-beloved wife." Norfolk was winning Caister with the strong hand, in open defiance of the law. He was carrying through the process of disseisin, or forcible dispossession, although he was bound by statute to make his entry peaceably upon the disputed freehold. This breach of the law was an ordinary occurrence. "Disseisin, or forcible dispossession of freeholds, makes one of the most considerable articles in our law-books." †

Let us follow the duke of Norfolk in a more peaceful display of his power. There was a time when the Bigods and Mowbrays would have ridden into Norwich with five hundred men-at-arms, and have done swift justice upon the burgess that disputed their right to dictate how the city should be governed, or in what sums its people should be mulcted. Those days are past. The Mowbrays are still mighty, but after another fashion.

* Paston Letters, cclxi.

† Hallam, "Middle Ages," Chap. viii. Part iii.

They come not to Norwich with the proud feudal array of fierce retainers in masced armour, but with two hundred of their household in blue and tawny gowns, moving after the duke, with the blue on the left side of the gown and the tawny on the right. The man who was fighting at Caister against the duke has taken his livery on this occasion, when Edward IV. is coming to Norwich; and he hopes to muster twenty men in the duke's blue and tawny, "to be sure of his good lordship in time to come." The power of the great peer, in showing the gentlemen of his county arranged as his menials, is to be thought of by the king, whose statutes declare that liveries are illegal. But the display was meant for plebeian as well as royal meditations. The peer who exhibited the greatest number of liveries would be thought to have the greatest influence in the elections of knights of the shire and burgesses. The arts by which the "free and independent" elector was managed in the fifteenth century were little different from those of the nineteenth.

There are two simple words, familiarly used in the fifteenth century, which distinctly tell what the great relations of class to class had then become. Those words are, Rent, Wages. The land-lord had now tenants who held leases, instead of being bound to the soil by feudal service as villans. The man who farmed the land had now salaried servants,—partly paid in money and partly in food and lodging, or wholly paid in money,—instead of thralls with the collar on their necks. The substitution of rent for service had destroyed, in a considerable degree, the more intimate relations of the land-owner and the cultivator, both for good and for evil. The power which once implied protection as well as severity was superseded by the power which, regarding land simply as a property to be made the most of, had resigned the rude fidelity of vassalage for the hard bargaining of tenancy. No doubt much of

"The constant service of the antique world"

remained, even when, as was common in leases, the landlord might re-enter and possess if the rent was a month in arrear.* But, in general, there was as much of the commercial spirit in the dealings between landlord and tenant as in the exchange of any other commodity between vendor and purchaser. Distraints for rent were the commonest of occurrences; and the tenant's cart seems to have been the most convenient chattel to seize and carry off. The difficulty of collecting rents must have been extreme, at a time when agriculture was so imperfect that a bad season produced general misery. In 1463 we have the first corn-law, based upon the averment which kept all classes comparatively unprosperous in England for four hundred years: "Whereas the labourers and occupiers of husbandry within this realm be daily grievously endamaged by bringing of corn out of other lands and parts into this realm, when corn of the growing of this realm is at low price."† When wheat was six shillings and eightpence the quarter, importation was forbidden. The inevitable fluctuations of price in corn, when corn was the only rent-paying produce except wool, prevented that more careful agriculture which, in all times, is founded upon average profits and not upon fortuitous abundance. When the cultivator wanted to obtain the best price for his wool, that legislation which was always

* Cullam's "Hawsted," p. 228.

† Stat. 3rd Edward IV. c. 2.

protecting one class against another class, to the injury of both classes, ordained that the exportation of wool should be hampered with restrictions; "because that sufficient plenty of the said wools may continually abide and remain within the said realm, as may competently and reasonably serve for the occupation of cloth-makers."* Of necessity much of the "sufficient plenty" became superabundant stock; and the price of wool was beaten down by the limitation of the market. Thus it was that the landowners were constantly complaining of the want of money. Their revenues were derived from rents, and the rents were ill paid, because, amongst other causes, such as the want of knowledge and the want of capital, the delusion of protection was set up, to keep all industry at the same low level from age to age. Under this state of things we are not surprised to find that the bailiff of Sir William Plumpton, a great lord of Yorkshire in the time of Henry VI. and Edward IV., writes to his master—who, as many others did, kept land in his own hands, as well as letting his estates—"I am not in store at this time of money for to get your harvest with, without I might get it of your tenants; or else for to take of [for] your sheep silver, and that I were right loth for to do.† * * * Letting you wit, also, that I have been in the Peak, and there I cannot get no money * * * Letting you wit that I was on St. Lawrence day at Melton, with four-score of your sheep to sell, and could sell none of them, but if I would have sold twenty of the best of them for thirteen-pence a-piece."‡ The duke of Suffolk has a dispute about property with Sir John Paston, and Sir John's brother advises a settlement for a hundred marks, "some of the duke of Suffolk's folks having let me in secret wise have knowledge that he must make a shift for money, and that in all haste." The earl of Warwick, the king-maker, writes in 1455 to his friend, sir Thomas Todenham, that he has to make a payment on the completion of a purchase, "wherefore we pray you with all our heart that ye will lend us ten or twenty pounds."§ The seal of the bear and ragged staff is affixed to this letter—a device that we more commonly associate with the idea of power far exalted above the want of a sum equivalent to two or three hundred pounds of our present money. There is another letter of the same earl to his bailiff of Sutton, desiring him to pay Philip Lowez forty-six shillings and eight pence, "that he lent us in our right great necessity."|| We can scarcely wonder that the riches of Cardinal Beaufort made him hateful to the necessitous nobles who had less of the world's wisdom. The cardinal writes a characteristic epistle to some confidential friend, "that ye will go, and W. Toly, my clerk, bearer of this, with you, to the coffer that my money is in, and take out two thousand three hundred marks, and take it the foresaid Toly, and let seal the coffer again with a signet of mine, graven with the salutation of our lady, the which my said clerk hath."¶



Seal of Warwick.

* Stat. 3rd Edward IV. c. 1.

† The silver coin was depreciated as compared with gold. Cardinal Beaufort required that his loans to the crown should be paid "in gold of the coin of England of just weight."

‡ Plumpton Correspondence, p. 21.

§ Paston Letters, letter lxxvi.

|| Ellis's Letters, Series i., vol. i. p. 14.

¶ *Ibid.* p. 8.

One of the most remarkable features of society in this period is the incessant litigation. Every gentleman had some knowledge of law, and his knowledge never rusted for want of practice. Agnes Paston writes to one of her sons, "I greet you well, and advise you to think once of the day of your father's counsel to learn the law, for he said many times that whosoever should dwell at Paston should have need to con to defend himself." * Mr. Hallam has truly observed that "a people wherein an artificial jurisprudence is cultivated, requiring both a regard to written authority, and the constant exercise of a discriminating judgment upon words, must be deemed to be emerging from ignorance." † But he also implies that what the mind thus gains in precision and acuteness is at the expense of some important qualities. The clients, no less than the counsel and attorneys, were familiar with every legal quibble. In one case, judgment could not be obtained because the "John Damme" of a testament was "Joh Damme" in the bill before the court. In another, a defendant alleged that he lived at "Raytheby" and not at "Ratheby," as set forth—a curious plea in an age of such unsettled orthography. ‡ The history of this dispute with the quibble about a letter, of which we have all the stages of the process, and the final award, extends over a period of thirty-six years—from the 21st of Richard II. to the 12th of Henry VI. Sir William Clopton held the manor of Hawsted, which had been bought by his ancestor in the 33rd of Edward III. (1360). In 1397, Philip Fitz-Eustace breaks into a close of the manor, cuts down trees, and carries off goods and chattels. After a suit, lasting ten years, judgment is given in 1407 against Fitz-Eustace, who had pleaded that the close belonged to him. But the dispute was not settled; for another tribunal, whose powers were dying out in the changes of men and manners, took cognisance of the quarrel in 1427, twenty years after the original suit was ended. William Clopton, esquire, then in possession of the property, by a writ of John, duke of Bedford, constable of England, addressed to John, duke of Norfolk, marshal of England, is summoned "to answer in the Court of Chivalry to Robert Eland, of the county of Lincoln, esquire, who charged the said William Clopton with putting his seal of arms to a false and forged deed." The arbitrement of the Court of Chivalry had probably gone into disuse when the lawyers had become more important than the knights; and we hear of no battle for the defence of William Clopton's injured honour. But he brings his action against Robert Eland and others, for having published and read two deeds, claiming the manor of Hawsted, upon the allegation that the deeds so read were false. The matter was referred to arbitration, and the arbitrators decided, that having examined the principal instrument at their leisure, and "seen it in the sun," it was an old deed "new rased and new written again." § In the Paston Letters we have evidence that forgeries of acquittance and of grants were not uncommon. The offence was punishable, at common law, with fine and imprisonment. Another frequent cause of litigation was the stopping of footpaths. The people of that day understood their rights as well as the patriot of Hampton Wick a century ago, who compelled the crown to open the ancient road

* Paston Letters, letter x.

† "Literature of Europe," vol. i. p. 80.

‡ Cullum's "Hawsted," p. 120.

§ *Ibid.* pp. 115—122.

through Bushy Park. Agnes Paston writes indignantly to her husband that Clement Spicer came to her closet and asked her why she had stopped the king's way; and that Waryn Herman, "proudly going forth with me in the church, he said the stopping of the way should cost me twenty nobles, and yet it should down again."* In these litigations, the constant appeal to the law is some proof that it was righteously administered. Juries were sometimes, indeed, specially exhorted "to do as conscience will, and to eschew perjury;" and there is evidence of payments to the jury "for their expenses and labour, and for a breakfast after they had delivered their verdict." † The most distinct proof of corruption is furnished by statutes of 1426 and 1439; the first of which accuses sheriffs of taking great sums of money for allowing bail to persons apprehended; and the second attributes great perjuries which daily abound to sheriffs making favourable panels of juries for great gifts and rewards. There was a laxity upon such points which endured far beyond the fifteenth century; and we need scarcely be surprised that in an age when only a bird in the air might carry the matter, official bribery was not held as a personal degradation. The higher nobles were to be purchased even by a foreign enemy. Comines shows how Lewis XI. cajoled Edward IV. into peace, by payments to himself and by large presents to his officers. The same caution which lord Hastings, the high chamberlain of England, exhibited when he refused to give a receipt for two thousand crowns of gold that the king of France sent him, was probably the shield of less mighty functionaries: "What you desire," said Hastings to the agent of Lewis, "is not unreasonable; but this present proceeds from your master's generosity, not any request of mine: if you have a mind I should receive it you may put it into my sleeve." ‡ To repress bribery by threats of fine was as little likely to secure justice, as the limitation of attorneys by statute was likely to prevent litigation. This enactment of 1455 is very curious. In Norfolk and Suffolk, says the preamble, in time not long past, there were only six or eight attorneys coming to the king's courts, in which time great tranquillity reigned, and little trouble or vexation was made by untrue and foreign suits; and now there be fourscore attorneys, the more part having no other thing to live upon but gain by attorneyship; and they go to every fair and market and other places where is any assembly of people, exhorting, procuring, moving, and inciting the people to attempt untrue suits for small trespasses, little offences, and small sums of debt, which actions be triable in Courts Baron. The remedy was to limit the number of common attorneys to six in Norfolk, six in Suffolk, and two in the city of Norwich. The real object of the statute was to prevent these small actions being carried to the higher courts instead of the Courts Baron. The people, we may readily believe, had found injustice in the petty local courts; and they sought for justice where the law would be understood and equally administered. The evidence of such abundant litigation is no proof of a disordered state of society. When men cannot obtain justice speedily and cheaply there are few lawsuits. When their disputes go before an honest and energetic tribunal, the more

* Paston Letters, letter xvii.

† Roberts' "Southern Counties," p. 2.

‡ Memoirs, book vi., chap. 2.

suits the greater evidence that law is not the instrument of oppression which it becomes in bad times.

The public and private records of this period afford us little information as to the amount and character of offences against person and property. By a statute of 2nd Henry V., made upon complaint that the perpetrators of divers murders, manslaughterers, robberies, batteries, &c., fled to woods and secret places to avoid the execution of the common law, it was enacted that if, after proclamation, such persons should come to the Court of King's Bench for trial, and did not appear, they should be held as convict. This was a temporary statute; but it was made perpetual by the 8th of Henry VI. Fine, imprisonment, death, were the penalties for such offences. But we



Criminals conducted to Death. (Harleian MS.)

can make no attempt to exhibit any statistics of crime. From the absence of such denunciations of "sturdy vagabonds and valiant beggars, in great routs and companies," as we find in the savage laws of Henry VIII., we may infer that in these times, which have been too hastily considered as a period of anarchy, there was no remarkable insecurity of life and goods. The private letters of the period detail no outrages which might not have occurred in the most settled condition of society. In 1421, a statute was passed to restrain the excesses of clerks and scholars of Oxford, who hunted with dogs in parks and forests, and threatened keepers with their lives; and who took clerks convict of felony out of the ward of the ordinaries, and set them free. This temporary Act was not renewed. The Scotch and Irish students of Cambridge were also declared, in the Rolls of Parliament, to be the authors of threatening letters demanding money. But we have no trace of these excesses at a later period. In the middle of the fifteenth century we have the relation of a sudden street-scuffle in Coventry, between Sir Humphrey Stafford and Sir Robert Harcourt, in which two of their retainers were killed; "and all this mischief fell because of an old debate that was between them for taking of a distress."* Another account shows that the earl of Devonshire and Lord Bonville were at great variance; and how Thomas Courtney, the son and heir of the earl, came to a house in Devonshire occupied by Nicholas Radford, an eminent lawyer who was counsel to Lord Bonville, and there murdered him in the most cowardly and cruel manner.†

* Paston Letters, letter ix.

† *Ibid.* p. 68.

But these are exceptional cases, which only prove that the age of private feud was not wholly passed away. In Scotland, such assaults were as frequent as a bout of quarter-staff in England. One species of violence, for which a special statute was provided, is characteristic of a period in which the chivalrous spirit of reverence for women was yielding to grosser influences, with many other graces of chivalry that were the plating of its atrocities. The statute of the 31st Henry VI. shows how "unsatiable covetousness" had moved "divers people of great power against all right, gentleness, truth, and good conscience." Their offence was the "great abusing of ladies, gentlewomen, and other women sole, having any substance of lands, tenements, or moveable goods." To such they came, "promising faithful friendship;" and "perceiving their great innocency and simplicity," carried them off by force, or inveigled them to places where they were of power, and compelled them to sign obligations for money for their liberty. "Also," says this statutory reproach of those who bore the name of gentlemen, "they will many times compel them to be married by them, contrary to their own likings." The remedy was to sue out a writ in chancery, when the fraudulent bonds would be set aside. For the enforced marriage there appears to have been no redress. Such are some glimpses of the acts of violence of the higher and richer classes. The outrages of the labouring people sometimes broke out in riots at fairs, in resistance to the payment of toll.* Vagabonds no doubt there were in every hamlet, "untrue people of their hands,"—such as are described in the petition of a body of tenants to their lord: "Not having any cow or calves, or any other goods whereby they might live, nor any other occupise; and well they fare, and at all sports and games they are in our country for the most part, and silver to spend and to gaming, which they have more ready than any other." No dues would these men pay to lord or king; "and as for geese, hens, and capons, your tenants may none keep."† The complaint against these men, who "as vagabonds live," came from people of their own degree. The idleness and the pilfering were not vices of the class.

The industrious habits of artificers and labourers may be inferred from a statute of 1495, regulating wages. The waste of time which it condemns was the result of customs derived from an earlier period. It is the story which will never end, of coming late to work and long sitting at meals. Modern customs have rendered "long time of sleeping at afternoon" obsolete. But those who hold that the labour of modern times is overtaken, as compared with mediæval labour, should learn what is required by this statute. From the middle of March to the middle of September, every labourer and artificer was to be at his work before five o'clock in the morning, and he was to depart not till between seven and eight o'clock in the evening. In this season, he was to have half an hour for breakfast, an hour for dinner, and half an hour for his "nonemete;" and from the middle of May to the middle of August he was to have half an hour for sleep in the day. From September to March, he was to be at his work "in the springing of the day, and depart not till night of the same day." But this difference of the hours of labour in summer and winter was taken into account in wages. The summer wages of the free

* "Plumpton Correspondence," p. lxi.

† *Ibid.*, p. 38.

mason and master carpenter, of $5\frac{1}{2}d.$ without food, were reduced to $4d.$ in the winter. The lower artificers and labourers, who received $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ in the summer without meat and drink, were to serve for $3d.$ in the winter.* We shall not attempt here to enter into any comparison of the ancient and modern rate of wages; or now endeavour to disprove the bold assertion that "the working man of modern times has bought the extension of his liberty at the price of his material comfort."† That disproof, as we believe, will be supplied by a just view of the condition of the labourers at every stage of our history, not measured by estimates of wages and prices, which are very doubtful approximations to the truth, but by regarding them in their relations to the whole progress of society.

The Statutes of Wages which refer to artificers include under that denomination the occupations only of the mason, carpenter, tiler, and "other artificers concerning building." All the various handicrafts took their regulations from their guilds. The clothiers stood apart as pursuing the most important branch of England's industry; and the dealings of the



Gentlewomen Spinning with the Distaff. Harl. MSS.

cloth-maker and his workmen were regulated by statute.‡ In that fifteenth century there were no factories. Every manufacture was carried on at the homes of the workmen in the several branches; and thus the operations of the clothiers, whether carders, spinsters, weavers, fullers, shearmen, or dyers, were combined, though separate, by the tradesman whose capital was engaged in cloth-making. The statute before us is justly framed for the protection of the workers. Truck was for-

bidden. The work-people were to be paid lawful money, and not to be "driven to take part of their wages in pins, girdles, and other unprofitable wares." The wool given out to be wrought was not to be of excessive weight. On the other hand, every cloth-worker was to perform his duty in his occupation. The system of domestic manufacture is also indicated in other enactments, protecting native labour from foreign competition. The silk-women and spinners were especially protected; and it is remarkable that—connected with the statute of 34th Henry VI., against the importation of wrought silk in ribands, laces, and chains of silk—the Rolls of Parliament state that such importation has caused "great idleness amongst young gentlewomen and other apprentices of the same crafts, and the laying down of many good and notable households of them that have occupied the same crafts, which be convenient, worshipful, and according for gentlewomen

* Stat. 4 Edward IV., cap. 1.

† Froude, "History of England," vol. i. p. 80.

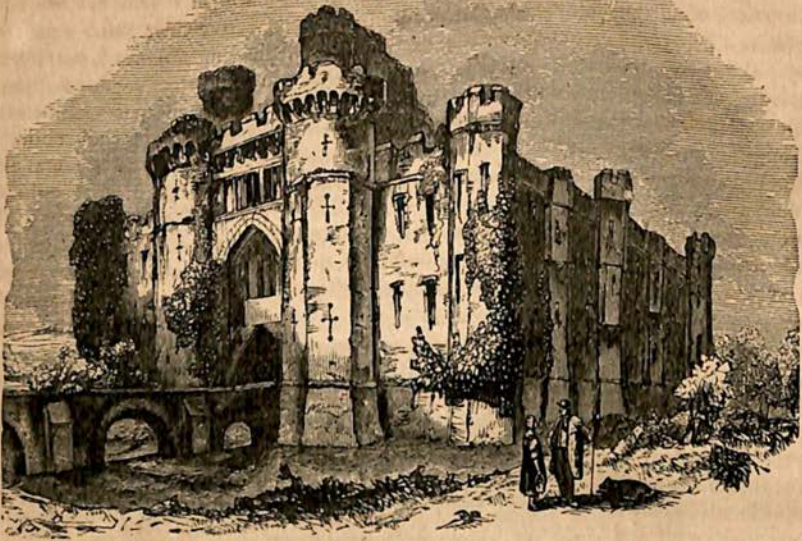
‡ Stat. 23 Henry VI., cap. 12.

and other women of worship." But the constant pressure of labour for employment is no where more clearly indicated than in those proceedings of the legislature, to which the people were always looking for some vain relief in prohibiting the competition of foreign industry. Margaret Paston writes to her husband, "ye have many good prayers of the poor people that God should speed you at this parliament; for they live in hope that ye should help to set a way that they might live in better peace in this country than they have done before; and that wools should be purveyed for that they should not go out of this land, as it has been suffered to do before; and then shall the poor people live better than they have done by their occupation therein." The preambles to most protecting acts invariably complain how men and women of manual occupations are greatly impoverished, and cannot live by their mysteries, and that their servants in great number are unoccupied, and do hardly live in great misery and ruin.* And yet one who justly claims to have more diligently studied these statutes than other historians, maintains that at this period, not only was there given "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work," but that "all industrious men could maintain themselves in comfort and prosperity."† The perpetual interferences of the state with trade must have prevented many a workman from continuing his occupation, and have made him a beggar. When the parliament of Henry V. enacted that no patten-maker should make pattens or clogs of the best and lightest timber of which they could be made, then known as asp, that the fletchers might sell their arrows cheap, were the makers of pattens indebted to the government which proposed to itself, as we are informed, "that all able-bodied men should be found in work?"‡ The parliament of Edward IV. found out that the law of Henry V. was "great damage to the patten-makers and none advantage to the fletchers." In the anti-commercial spirit of the age, the duke of Burgundy ordained that all woollen cloths wrought in England should be banished out of the lands of the said duke; and Edward IV., finding that this measure of the duke of Burgundy against English exports caused the weavers, fullers, dyers, carders, spinners, and winders of yarn to be destitute of occupation, prohibited the importation of all merchandises of all the lands of the duke, upon pain of forfeiture. Were all the various labourers engaged in the import trade with Burgundy assured that the government, which thus compelled them to starve under this stagnation of their ordinary employment, was intently occupied upon a benevolent provision for their prosperity? In these commercial enactments—in all that relates to prices, wages, quality of commodities, protection of native labour—we perceive little more than the grossest ignorance, fettering trade by unwise laws alike injurious to producer and consumer, and then whining over its own blunders, when the hasty remedies for surface evils had destroyed the industry which they were intended to foster.

* See especially 3 Edward IV. cap. iv.

† Froude, "History of England," vol. i. p. 67.

‡ Ibid., vol. i. p. 43.



Herstmonceux Castle, Sussex.

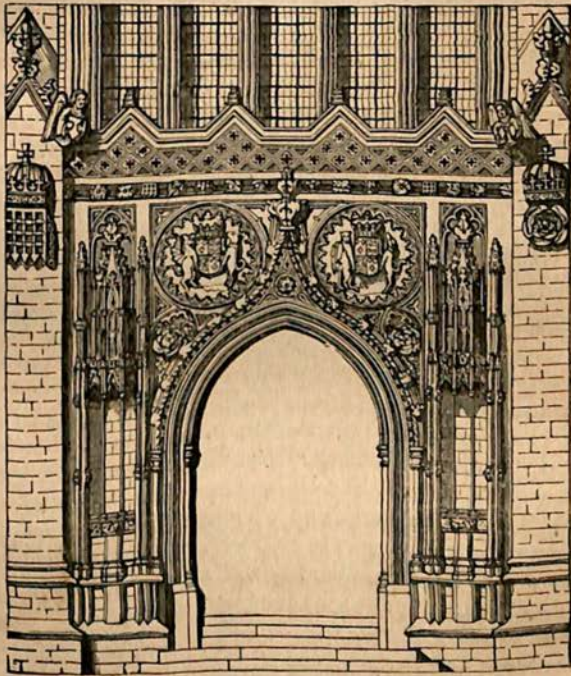
CHAPTER VIII.

Combinations of Masons—Association an English principle—Domestic Architecture—Timber houses—Consumption of Timber—Furniture and Utensils—Dearness and scarcity of Clothing—Domestic Servants—Females—Married life of Females—Housewifery—The Clergy—Their intercourse with the laity—Curates and Chaplains—Pilgrimages—Wills—Difficulties of Communication—Letters—State of Popular Knowledge—Beginnings of Printing.

If we wanted any proof that the laws for the regulation of labour were for the oppression and not the protection of workmen, we should find it in one brief enactment of 1423 : * “Whereas by the yearly Congregations and Confederacies made by the Masons in their general chapters assembled, the good course and effect of the Statutes of Labourers be openly violated and broken, in subversion of the law, and to the great damage of all the commons : our said lord the king, willing in this case to provide remedy, hath ordained and established, that such Chapters and Congregations shall not be hereafter holden ; and if any such be made, they that cause such Chapters and Congregations to be assembled and holden, if they thereof be convict, shall be judged for felons ; and that all the other Masons that come to such Chapters and Congregations, be punished by imprisonment of their bodies, and make fine and ransom at the king’s will.” This is hard measure for the

* Stat. 3 Henry VI. cap. 1.

class of men who, during three centuries, had covered England with its noblest monuments; and now, in the assemblies where they discoursed of their art, also complained of the oppression that levelled that art to the ordinary condition of unskilled labour. They resisted, as they had a right to resist. They held together, as Englishmen from that day to this have held, when tyranny has tried to break their ranks. Destructive as these class-contests may have been—in most cases unwise and useless for their immediate ends,—they were better than servile endurance of real or fancied wrong. The union of masons, which this law called confederacy, was the principle which has made our nation unassailable from without and strong against oppression from within—the union of family, of occupation, of locality, of country—the steadfast individual will strengthening itself by association; and learning, in the discordant opinions of deliberative bodies, to moderate the rash and uncertain counsels of the solitary judgment. No real social



Doorway, King's College Chapel, Cambridge.

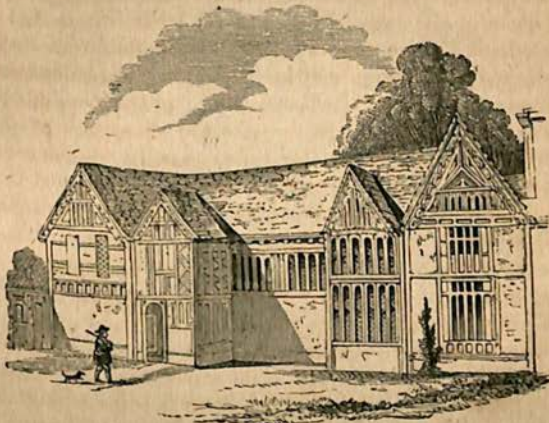
tyranny could ever endure long in England against this principle. If the combination were inexpedient, the true wisdom of moderation would soon manifest itself. If it were just, no arbitrary legislative interference could eventually put it down. That the masons held their "chapters" in despite of the law of Henry VI. we have no doubt; and that they controlled the bad "course and effect of the Statutes of Labourers" by some compromise, we may be equally assured. It was a building age in England; and

the land would not have been covered with improved domestic structures, if the rewards of the artificer had not been proportioned to the demand for his skill, in despite of the attempt to regiment all labour.

The period for grand ecclesiastical architecture was coming to an end. The cathedrals of England were finished. The age of monastic endowment was passed. Henry VI. began the noble chapel of King's College; but it remained incomplete till Henry VII. placed his armorial bearings over the door-way, as if that gorgeous structure had been his sole work. Castles, such as had arisen under the Norman kings,—strong fortresses, but wretched abodes,—were no longer needed, except on the Welsh and Scotch borders. The great proprietors now wanted dwellings that should unite convenience with some power of defence. The baronial lords, whose fathers had gone forth from the dreary keeps in which their armed followers lived in dirt and darkness, now added spacious courts, rich with "fair-compassed windows," within the space protected by the broad moat and the loop-holed tower. The new castles were constructed so as to unite the characters of castellated and domestic architecture. Such was Herstmonceaux, in Sussex, erected in 1448; a spacious parallelogram, with seventeen octagon towers, and a machicolated gateway. The building with brick had been disused for centuries; and this ruined pile is a noble specimen of its revival. In some of these buildings there was the appearance rather than the reality of strength. They would have stood no attacks of cannon; and their battlements were rather for the purpose of defying sudden assaults from marauders and undisciplined bands, than for resisting a practised soldiery, provided with the improved munitions of war. Nottingham Castle, in the time of Edward IV., had become "a gallant building for lodging," as Leland describes it; and though licences to crenelate manor-houses—that is, to embattle and fortify them—were common enough at this period, the decorated gable and the handsome oriel window had superseded, in most instances, the protecting parapet and the frowning embrasure. The great hall was still the distinguishing feature of the domestic arrangement; and if the number of lodging-rooms was greatly increased, as compared with the rude provisions of an earlier period, there was small regard to those niceties of domestic comfort which grow with the growing refinements of each successive generation. One of the smaller manor-houses, Ockwells, in Berkshire, is a remarkable specimen of a building of elaborate decoration, in which the hall, with its spacious painted windows, strangely contrasts in its size and beauty with the meanness of the apartments which we reach after having mounted the broad staircase.

The ordinary country dwellings of the proprietary classes were constructed upon the same fashion of an open court, with a hall. They were generally so constructed as to be capable of some defence against attack. There was more apprehension of the forcible entries of disputants for possession, than of public enemies or robbers. A house defended against such assaults is thus described: "Partrick and his fellowship are sore afraid that ye would enter again upon them; and they have made great ordinance within the house; and it is told me they have made bars to bar the doors crosswise; and they have made wickets in every quarter of the house to shoot out at, both with bows and with hand-guns: and the holes that be made for hand-guns they be scarce knee high from the placher (floor); and of such holes

be made five; there can no man shoot out at them with no hand-bows." * Most of these houses were of timber; and it appears that in some cases they were framed upon the spot where the wood was felled.† In populous districts the demand for building timber was great; and this circumstance, which indicates how certainly the value of landed property is enhanced by the increase of an urban population, added largely to the revenues of the tenants-in-fee. The necessities, however, of the landed proprietors often compelled them to sell at a great reduction of price. "If I should sell my woods now," says Margaret Paston, "there will no man give so much for them by near an hundred marks as they be worth, because there be so many wood sales in



Ockwells Manor-house.

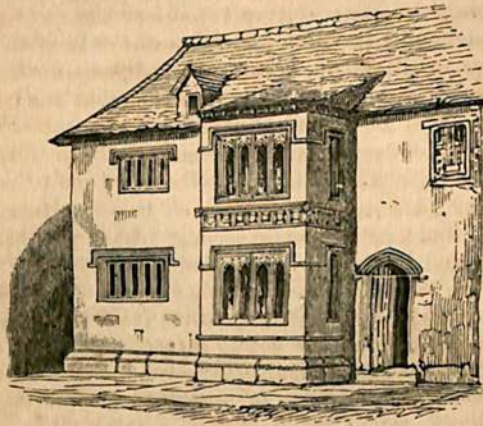
Norfolk at this time." ‡ The demand for fire-wood and charcoal for the towns was also gradually thinning the remotest coverts, and making way for the population that was to convert the dense forests into pastures and corn-fields. One of the richest prospects of southern England is from Leith hill, its highest eminence, where the eye ranges from the Downs of the coast to the chalk hills of Reigate, and luxuriates in the variety beneath—corn-lands, meadows, parks, mansions, villages, plantations—but all indicating a tract which man has subdued into fertility. That was once the Weald of Surrey and Sussex—the Coit Andred of the Britons, the Andredes-weald of the Saxons; the immense forest formerly inhabited only by the wild hog and the stag, till the charcoal-burner there lighted his fires, and the iron-smelter built his forge. Before pit-coal came into use—and its value was little known in the fifteenth century—the great central fire of the baronial hall smoked and blazed with billet and brushwood. In the living apartments the broad chimney-piece, beneath which the fuel rested upon andirons, was now made ornamental. Warmth was needed to exclude the blast that came through the ill-fitted doors and shrunken shutters. Hangings concealed the rough plastering of the walls and the "chinks which time had made." The sleeping rooms were small. The good matron, Agnes Paston, is puzzled how she can

* Paston Letters, letter lxxvii.

† Ibid., letter xlv.

‡ Ibid., letter cccxvii.

put her husband's writing-board and his coffer beside the bed, so that he could have space to sit.* This was in their town-house of Norwich, which was probably built of stone; and, if wanting in comfort within, exhibited an architectural taste without, which shames the hideous uniformity of modern towns—the long lines of high brick walls, with holes called windows at regular intervals. The furniture of the houses of the esquire and the yeoman



House built of stone at Grantham, Lincolnshire.

was exceedingly scanty. Beds were rarely used except by the most wealthy; and "a little featherbed" forms a considerable item in a will. A rich householder, John Baret, of Bury, in 1463, bequeaths to his niece "the round table for the term of her life, and after remain to the owner of my place." † Common utensils were transmitted from generation to generation; this worthy burgess thus leaving "a great earthen pot that was my mother's." Wives had a life interest in "stuff of household," which was bequeathed to descend, after the decease of the wife, article by article to relatives and friends. The riches so handed down are such as a pottle pot and a quart pot, a pair of tongs, and a pair of bellows. Roger Rokewoode, of Euston, "squier," bequeaths to his son Robert, twenty-four pounds of lawful money, six kine, four horses, a brass pot, two brass pans, six pewter dishes, four saucers and three platters of pewter, a feather bed, a pair of sheets, and a pair of blankets. ‡ The kine, the horses, and the saucers and platters, appear of equal importance. The deficiency of household comfort is sufficiently shown by such minute dispositions of old and mean chattels, of little value now, but then estimated in proportion to their scarcity.

Running over wills of this period we find an equal scantiness of apparel. The "Wardrobe Accounts" of princes present a dazzling catalogue of new long gowns, doublets, demy gowns, jackets, tippetts, slops—made of velvet, damask, cloth of gold, ermine. But when we come to peer into the wardrobes of the gentry and the burgesses, we see how carefully they treasured

* Paston Letters, letter exxiii.

† "Wills from the Registers of Bury," p. 23.

‡ Ibid., p. 53.

their articles of clothing. One testator leaves to a friend, "one of my short gowns, a good one which is convenient for him, and my russet hood." * Another desires that a neighbour's wife shall have "my best lined gown and my cloak." † Another bestows "a doublet and a pair of hosen." ‡ A worthy lady bequeaths to her son, "a tawny jacket lined with yellow." § How the bravery of their apparel was a great point with the higher classes, and how they were pinched to obtain their costly finery, we have abundant evidence. One of the Pastons honestly tells his brother that a real friend thus reproved his extravagance in dress and servants: "It is the guise of your countrymen to spend all the goods they have on men and livery gowns, and horse and harness, and so bear it out for a while, and at the last they are but beggars." || They were as solicitous about their own dress as about the splendour of their attendants; and their solicitude for display sometimes made them ridiculous. "The gallant with the great chain," who is going to be married, is clearly a butt for the Norwich ladies. Hats were a French invention of 1449; and a belted knight writes, "Send me a hat and a bonnet by the same man; and let him bring the hat upon his head, for fear of mis-fashioning of it." ¶ The importance attached to articles of clothing was, no doubt, the result of their comparative dearness. Coarse cloth for labourers, as we learn from the statute, was not to exceed 2s. per yard; fine cloth, fit for the gown of a doctor at an university, cost 3s. 7d. Multiplying these values by 15—the supposed relation of present to ancient money-value—we see that a fine gown, which would demand several yards of broad cloth, would be a costly article; and that the working man's dress would require a considerable outlay. A hat cost a shilling—the felt hat which, looking at the different value of money, is now bought at a fourth of that amount. Although the government was always regulating the price of materials of apparel, it prevented the only practical regulation, by utterly prohibiting the importation of woollen cloth, caps, hats, gloves, girdles, wrought leather, shoes.** If in the home manufacture any cheapening process was discovered, it was put down, upon the principle which the common sense of mankind has not wholly discarded, that what abridges labour, and therefore lessens the cost of production, is a public evil: "It is showed in the said parliament, how that hats, bonnets, and caps, as well single as double, were wont to be faithfully made, wrought, fulled, and thicked by men's strength, that is to say, with hands and feet, and thereby the makers of the same have honestly before this time gained their living, and kept many apprentices, servants, and good houses, till now of late that by subtle imagination, to the destruction of the labours and sustenance of many men, such hats, bonnets, and caps have been fulled and thicked in fulling-mills, and in the said mills the said hats and caps be broken and deceitfully wrought, and in no wise by the mean of any mill may be faithfully made." †† The "subtle imagination" which is here denounced has filled England with wealth, of which the humblest in the land is a partaker, in the universal diffusion of those conveniences and comforts of life which "men's strength, that is to say, with hands and feet," could never have produced except for the rich few.

* "Bury Wills," p. 41.

† Ibid., p. 75.

‡ Ibid., p. 84.

§ Ibid., p. 115.

|| Paston Letters, letter lv.

¶ Ibid., letter cclxiv.

** Stat. 3 Edward IV. cap. 4.

†† Stat. 22 Edward IV. cap. 5.

Of the inner household life we have some glimpses. The domestic servants of the wealthy were numerous; and those of the middle classes, as well as of the upper, appear to have been treated with a kindness and consideration that belonged to a period when no dignity was supposed to be compromised by considering dependants as humble friends. We have repeated examples of bequests to servants. In the correspondence of those servants in trust, such as bailiffs of manors, we have a frank statement of their opinions, not only as to the arrangement of property, but of higher matters concerning their master's interest. That there was eye-service and faithlessness in this state of society, as in more refined times, we may readily believe. We have seen, in the course of the public history, how mighty princes were deserted upon their death-beds, and their valuables carried off. A law of this period declares that "divers household servants, as well of lords as of other persons of great degree, shortly after the death of their said lords and masters, violently and riotously have taken and spoiled the goods which were of their said lords and masters at the time of their death, and the same distributed amongst them, to the impediment of the executors of the will of their said lords and masters."* The constant disputes about succession, and the delays in the administration of estates, may have prompted to these evil courses.

The position of females in the arrangements of family is a tolerably certain indication of the general state of society. We have no materials for speaking of the female life of the times of Henry VI. and Edward IV., besides those we derive from that invaluable source of information, the "Paston Letters." We do not refer so constantly to this remarkable correspondence, which extends over forty-five years, through any peculiar belief of its importance. Mr. Hallam has called attention to these letters as "a precious link in the chain of the moral history of England, which they alone in this period supply." † We here see the daughters of the house subjected to that strict discipline which then, and long after, marked the relations of child and parent. Other females, besides the daughters, were educated in the houses of the gentry; the claims of blood demanding protection for those without fortune. That the young women were, for the most part, well instructed, we may judge from the number of excellent letters, from married and single, which are found in this Paston collection. In the matters of love and matrimony, the daughters were greatly dependent upon the will of their parents, but in some cases they appear to have had a pretty determined will of their own. Every effort was made in this Paston family to break off a contract which one daughter had made with a person of inferior degree; but the young lady eventually triumphed. ‡ The interposition even of royalty to recommend a marriage was not always successful. "The queen [Margaret of Anjou] came into this town on Tuesday last past, after noon, and abode here till it was Thursday afternoon; and she sent after my cousin Elizabeth Clere, to come to her; and she durst not disobey her commandment, and came to her. And when she came in the queen's presence, the queen made right much of her, and

* Stat. 33 Henry VI. cap. 1.

† "Literature of Europe," vol. i. p. 228.

‡ "Once upon a Time," by Charles Knight.

desired her to have an husband, the which ye shall know of hereafter. But as for that, he is never nearer than he was before." * The old days were passed, when the knight knelt at the feet of his lady-love, and went forth to the tournament to challenge all men to produce her equal in beauty and virtue. The knight now ascertained what portion the lady's father would give, and he bargained for the uttermost crown. The mother made no hesitation in speaking boldly to a powerful person for a daughter, "to get for her one good marriage if he knew any." They were a plain-speaking race, and went straight to the real object of their hearts, without any unnecessary diplomacy. The "goodly young woman," not overburdened with accomplishments, but not ignorant; who could "use herself to work readily, as other gentlewomen do, and somewhat to help herself," was pretty sure to find an eligible partner. In the married life she had need of much practical knowledge besides sewing, and spinning, and housewifery. The lord of the household was no constant dweller in his own castle or manor-house. He was away, fighting, or hawking, or looking after his law-suits in London; and the lady had the rule of his retainers and the welcome of his friends—the management of his farms, the sharp bargainings with his tenants. When she gave her hand she obeyed as well as loved with a fidelity and serious devotion to her duties that could dispense with romance; and the father of her children was always to her "worshipful."

The statute of the 3rd year of Edward IV. is more minute in its enumeration of wrought goods forbidden to be imported than any which had preceded it; and it enables us to form some notion of the extent of those home manufactures which supplied the increasing domestic requirements of the people. We have mentioned the more important articles of apparel thus protected from foreign competition. The articles for which the lady was to rely upon native skill were laces, corses, ribbands, fringes, twined silk, embroidered silk, laces of gold, points, bodkins, scissors, pins, purses, pattens. But the prohibition was pretty equal with both sexes; for the gentleman, to whom the equipments of his horse was a matter of the first concern, had no choice but of English saddles, spurs, and bridles. His knife, his dagger, and his razor, were to be English; and the renown of the Sheffield "whittle" would imply that he need not seek excellence in foreign blades. In all iron ware, England relied upon her native forges for andirons, gridirons, locks, hammers, pincers, fire-tongs, dripping-pans, chafing-dishes, ladles, scummers. Hanging-candle-sticks and curtain-rings were forbidden to be imported, in common with metal basons and ewers. Playing cards and dice were amongst the prohibited articles. We thus see that our house-keepers of the fifteenth century had artificers labouring for them in various fashions. Time has spared few of the articles then produced almost solely "by man's strength," or we should discover how rudely many of the expensive wares were then fabricated, which science has now made beautiful and cheap. Many an old thrifty housewife has been in the condition of Lydgate, the chief poet of this period, who walks through London, invited by the tradesmen of Cheap and Canwick-street to buy "velvet, silk, and lawn," and she

* Paston Letters, letter li.

has said with him, when she saw the variety of fabrics unknown to the home of her childhood—

“I never was used to such things indeed,
And, wanting money, I might not speed.”*

We must turn from this bewildering enumeration of what the artisans of England had been gradually learning to produce, since the primitive time when king Alfred made his horn lantern, to look rapidly at some of the broader aspects of domestic life which remain to be indicated.

We have few materials at this period to estimate the general manners of the Clergy, and especially those of the higher churchmen, as in the preceding century, when satire and solemn invective dared to raise their voices against the pride, covetousness, and luxury of bishops and mitred abbots; denouncing jovial monks and idle seculars as abandoned ministers to public immorality. The severities against those who spoke out against the corruptions of the Church had shut the mouths even of the boldest. To be pointed at as a heretic was even more fatal than to be suspected as a traitor. Lollardie was crushed. The abbeyes might more and more appropriate the revenues that ought to have been the reward of the parish-priest. The bishop might neglect his sacred functions, to add to his revenues the fees of the great offices of state; and, like cardinal Beaufort, procure laws to be made against commercial freedom, and then receive large sums for licences to violate them. Great spiritual lords might band themselves with great temporal lords, to withdraw the funds of hospitals from their proper uses, and leave the old, the lazar, the lunatic, and the pregnant woman, for whose benefit those hospitals were endowed, to perish at their utmost need.† They need not now fear that the Commons would again complain, as in 1410 and in 1414, that the clergy were masters of one-third of the revenue of the kingdom; and that if the superfluities of their revenues were properly applied, the realm would be in a better position of defence, the poor better maintained, and the clergy would attend more to their own functions. Such a compromise as that which the Church had made with Henry V., by allowing him, upon these allegations, to appropriate the revenues of a hundred and ten priories of aliens, would not again be necessary in this day of ecclesiastical power. With all this security, the gorgeous edifice was mouldering at its base. We must wait half a century before the great crash comes. Let us here trace a few illustrations of the domestic intercourse of the clergy with the laity.

In almost every house of the nobility and higher gentry there was a chaplain. In a very large number of parishes there was a curate. The incumbent, in too many instances, was a pluralist; and thus many of the attacks of Wycliffe and his followers were levelled against those who took the wages of the shepherd and neglected the sheep. This class of chaplains and working curates was very indifferently paid. By the statute of the 36th of Edward III., no parish priest nor yearly priest should take more than five marks, or at most six, “for their wages by year.” The statute of the 2nd of Henry V. avers that “they will not serve but for ten pounds, or twelve, or

* “London Lyekpenny.”

† Statute for reformation of abuses of the funds of hospitals. 2 Henry V. cap. 1.

ten marks by year, at least." The unquestionable rise in the price of commodities made the poor priests as discontented with their legal wages as we have seen that the masons were. They were to be met by new laws, made by the influence of the wealthier clergy, and of the lay great men who were to pay for their services; and thus the statute ordains that "no yearly chaplain shall take for his whole wages by year, for his board, apparel, and other necessaries, but seven marks; and the parish priests which serve cures shall take but eight marks, unless by licence of the ordinary." The highest payment for a parish priest was nine marks—six pounds.* The artificer at fourpence a day earned about as much as the parish priest, to suffice for "his board, apparel, and other necessaries." That this class of men would cherish a rooted dislike of the full-fed monk, and of the mendicant friar who contrived to have a sufficient share of the goods of the world, was inevitable; and the discontent gathered strength, till the image with the head of gold and the feet of iron and clay was broken to pieces. But meanwhile they laboured diligently, as many of the brethren of the monastic orders also laboured; or they could not have kept alive, amidst many observances which we properly regard as superstitious, a real spirit of piety and charity amongst the people. Some of the Wills which we have mentioned, in connection with less important matters, afford sufficient proof that this spirit was not dead in the century which preceded the Reformation.

The presiding influence of religion is to be traced wherever the individual mind displays itself. It is not the influence of the particular chaplain or confessor—the reliance upon his holiness or the admiration of his learning—but the irresistible conviction that the Church is all-powerful to condemn or to save. The interference of the ecclesiastic with men's temporal affairs was never-ceasing; and the officiousness was often hastily resented by members of the family where the priest was supreme. John Paston complains that his mother's chaplain has turned her affection from her sons: "Sir James * and I be twain: we fell out before my mother, with 'thou proud priest,' and 'thou proud squire,' my mother taking his part, so I have almost beshut the bolt as for my mother's house." But the Church held its empire over the will of the population, high and low, through the universal belief in the efficacy of its ceremonial observances for procuring health and weal and the safety of souls. A husband is sick in London; and his anxious wife writes, "My mother behested [vowed] another image of wax of the weight of you, to our Lady of Walsingham; and she sent four nobles to the four orders of friars at Norwich to pray for you; and I have behested to go on pilgrimage to Walsingham and St. Leonards." † These were not the mere fancies of the women of that time. William Yelverton, a judge of the King's Bench, writes to thank his cousin for his zeal "for Our Lady's House of Walsingham;" adding, "for truly if I be drawn to any worship or welfare, and discharge of mine enemies' danger, I ascribe it unto Our Lady." In the most doubtful time of the wars of the Roses, in 1471, the duke of Norfolk and his duchess are on pilgrimage, on foot, to Our Lady of Walsingham. By a bull of the pope, the shrine of St. Jago, in Galicia, was averred to be of equal virtue for pilgrimage as the Holy Sepulchre. There was a little danger to give excitement to the short

* The title "Sir" shows that the priest held a living.

† Paston Letters, letter v.

land journey in Spain, for the Moslems were still in the peninsula, and the military knights of St. Jago were organised to protect the pilgrims. From 1413 to 1456, many thousands of English sailed from Plymouth, Falmouth, Yarmouth, Bristol, Southampton, Hull, London, and many other ports, in small vessels licensed for this special service.* Pilgrimages to Canterbury and Walsingham were ridiculed by the early reformers as mere pleasure-trips, with more merriment than sanctity; and, if we may judge from Chaucer, they were especially adapted for a people to whom the "douce far niente"—the do-nothing of the South—was intolerable weariness. The national characteristic then, as now, was its avidity for action. The knight, wanting home occupation, most earnestly desires that a hawk may be procured; for he says, "By my troth, I die for default of labour." † The energy of the race carried the knight into the battle-field as much for excitement as for principle; made him in peace the most daring falconer and huntsman; and sent the yeoman and peasant to their archery contests, their



Mummers. Bodleian MS.

leaping, their vaulting, their morris-dances, and their mummings. The Church laid hold of this universal hatred of sitting down at rest, and sent them on pilgrimage.

But as the most active came naturally to look at the approaching night "when no man worketh," the Church then was at hand, with its real truths and its vain delusions, to give confidence in the last human trial. The Wills of the period afford unquestionable evidence of the constant presence of the spiritual adviser in the once busy man's "chair-days." Moneys bequeathed to the high altar of the abbey or parish-church; requiems to be said, in rich vestments appropriated for the special purpose, with a yearly reward to the priest; a newly-painted image of Our Lady to be set up, with a taper ever burning; the chimes in the steeple to be repaired; a priest to have a house to dwell in, and at every meal to repeat the name of the testator; that they that hear it may say, "God have mercy on his soul," which greatly may relieve him. It was this undoubting confidence in the prayers of the priesthood which

* See Turner's "History of England," vol. iii.; and Roberts's "Southern Counties," for lists of these expeditions.

† Paston Letters, letter cccxxv.

made the Church so rich and powerful. Rome, and its spiritual power, were still ever present to the popular mind. One testator wishes that a Latin sentence should be written "on the fore part of the iron about my grave," with "the day and the year of our Lord of my departing from this world, and the Pardon which I purchased to be written therewith." * Another, a lady, bequeaths "to a priest for to go to Rome, ten pounds; and I will that the said priest go to the stations and say masses as is according to a pilgrim." † But, amidst all this, the Christian sympathy for the poor and miserable displays itself in little traits of pious tenderness; in association, also, with the English hospitality. Executors are to visit the poor and bedridden, and give them each a farthing or a penny. A good dinner is to be made to neighbours and lovers; and on the day of the dinner the prisoners in the gaol are to be refreshed with meat and drink. A large endowment is made for a priest to say mass on Sundays, in the chapel of the gaol before the prisoners; and that they have seven fagots of wood every week in the winter. It would appear from this care for prisoners, that their condition was most wretched, as indeed it remained till the days of John Howard. Whatever may have been the errors of the Church of the fifteenth century, we may justly conclude that at the bottom of their teaching was a solid foundation of zeal and charity; and that in many of the concerns of life they were the kind instructors and faithful friends of the great body of the people, out of whose ranks the real working ministers for the most part proceeded.

The dominant control of the local clergy over the popular mind was a necessary result of the isolation of the village and the town. The friar and the parson were the only superior persons that mixed intimately with the burgess and the yeoman; and they only, through the same intercourse with the higher ranks, could tell of public affairs beyond the range of their own districts. The merchant, as he was called, who travelled from fair to fair, and the pilgrim, were the only bearers of news. The common carriers were more occupied with the price of oats than the affairs of state; and had more dread of thieves on the road than of changes of dynasties. Thus, there was small communication between one part of the kingdom and another; and men abode, from childhood to age, in the narrow circle of their own local influences. The slowness with which news travelled is shown by the circumstance that the result, so important to the Londoners, of the great battle of Towton was not known to them till six days after Edward's victory. "Tidings" were only to be found in letters, such as those of the Pastons. But it was dangerous to write freely; and when an opinion was given upon passing events or the characters of men, some such sentence as this was added: "After this is read and understood, I pray you burn or break it, for I am loth to write anything of any lord." ‡ Letters were then most carefully folded and fastened at the end by a paper band, upon which the seal was affixed. Letters were, however, not always sacred. They were entrusted sometimes to the common carriers, who might be tampered with; and neighbours were not always faithful to their trust in an age of political suspicion. "Look that ye take heed that the letter were not broken ere that it came to your hands," says Sir John Paston, when he was hesitating about his safest policy

* "Bury Wills," p. 19.

† *Ibid.*, p. 74.

‡ Paston Letters, letter lxxxiv.

When it was necessary to be particularly careful, a floss of silk was put under the seal; and at the parts where the paper on which the seal was impressed was folded over the letter, marks were drawn by a pen connecting the enveloping paper with the letter itself. Political secrets were, however, rarely committed to writing. Spoken words were less dangerous.



Mode of sealing a Letter.

We may conclude this imperfect view of the domestic life of the fifteenth century by a brief reference to the state of knowledge amongst the laity. There were in the ranks of the nobility many encouragers of learning and literature. Humphrey of Gloucester had collected a magnificent library of six hundred volumes—a rare acquisition when we regard the value of manuscript books. The transcriber was employed in copying legal papers as well as in multiplying volumes. We have the account of one who writes twenty-eight leaves of evidence at 2*d.* a leaf; and sixty leaves of a Treatise on War at the same price. We find five marks offered for a Bible. The costly bindings of manuscripts greatly enhanced their marketable value. With this scarcity of books, we may readily conceive that reading was not a common acquirement amongst the laity. In the recommendations to a nobleman of a person “meet to be clerk of your kitchen,” a “goodly young man on horse and foot, well spoken in English, meetly well in French, and very perfect in Flemish,” is one who also “can write and read.”* The time was at hand, when, out of the Weald of Kent, a lad should have gone to London as a draper’s apprentice, who having in due course risen in estimation by his skill and industry, became the consul for the English merchants at Bruges. The sister of Edward IV. was married to the duke of Burgundy; and the merchant, who had a turn for letters, translated for her a French work in general esteem. Leaving his mercantile functions for a season, he was absent for two years in Germany. An invention, so simple that it appears wonderful that what affected mankind so nearly should have remained so long undiscovered—the art of printing from moveable types—was the wonder of Germany. Books were then to be produced at a tenth of the price of manuscripts. The English merchant saw the importance of the new art; he penetrated the mystery; and bestowed Printing upon England. William Caxton came, to render the ignorance of any large portion of society thenceforward impossible. He came, to be the forerunner of that great Reformation which was impracticable for Wycliffe, even with his Manuscript Bible in his hand. He came, to render Bibles and other books the common property of the great and the mean. He came, to make tyranny an impossible thing in England, when his art should have grown, like every other great institution which we have nourished, century after century, to be the chief safeguard against every form of oppression and corruption—the best upholder of just law and government. Slowly did the dissemination of knowledge by printed books change the condition of society; but henceforth we can never speak of that condition without regarding the influences of the printing press.

* Paston Letters, letter cccxvi.





Great Seal of Henry VI.

CHAPTER IX.

Death-struggle of the feudal power—The House of York—Banishment and murder of Suffolk—Insurrection of Cade—He enters London—His death—Spirit of revolt in England—York in arms against Somerset—Incapacity of the king—York Protector—The king recovers—York superseded—First battle of St. Alban's—Triumph of the Yorkists—York's second Protectorate ended—Reconciliation of the two factions—Commencement of the Civil War—Battle of Blore Heath—Parliament of Coventry—Battle of Northampton—The Duke of York claims the crown—Battle of Wakefield—Death of York—His son, Edward, wins the battle of Mortimer's Cross—Second battle of St. Alban's—Edward proclaimed king—Edward and Warwick march from London—Battle of Towton.

"THE convulsive and bleeding agony of the feudal power"* is the great story which we have to trace during the second half of the fifteenth century. We have seen the building up of the Constitution during seven centuries, when the men of England, from whatever stock derived, were working, like the builders of the second Temple, with their swords ever in their hands. We have seen the representative principle gradually asserting itself against despotic power, whether of the crown, the aristocracy, or the church, till it finally raised up the stronghold which assault or sap could never destroy. But "the troubled birth of constitutional monarchy," † succeeding to that feudal death-struggle, might have given us a dwarfed and puny Charter of Rights, but for the peculiarities of race and nurture of the great body of the people. We have seen this people, prepared by hundreds of years of discipline for the development of freedom under its changed aspects, when the reign of feudality was coming to its close. Whatever were the defects of the various states of

* Barante; article in "Revue Française," March 1829.
VOL. II.

† *Ibid.*

society which we have endeavoured to exhibit, we have seen, in the aggregate national character, the elements of future greatness and prosperity. Whatever the disturbances of foreign or internal war, as we approach nearer the line which separates ancient and modern manners we have seen a people active, enterprising, trained to individual exertion, patriotic, class mingling with class, and no class ever losing sight of the grand national foundation of individual freedom. We have seen a self-taxing people, always resisting every attempt of the monarch to make himself independent of their representatives, and whose nobles would, for the most part, rather pull down their castles than they "should be in the governance of any sovereign that would oppress the country." * We have seen a people in their habits not servile; or, on the other hand, anarchical, though designated in other countries "the fiercest nation in Europe;" a people never wholly relying upon administrative direction, but long trained to independent exertion in small communities; adapting themselves to changing circumstances, but always cleaving to their great principle of continuity; incessantly repairing, never destroying and building up anew: a people holding a great place in the world's estimation, because essentially brave and persevering; proud, but not tyrannous or habitually cruel; full of self-love and obstinacy, but never pursuing the impracticable for any long period, and swayed more than any other nation by the power of collective opinion, when fairly educed and fearlessly expressed. The whole character of this people had a solid foundation in the family ties. In the Home was the nursing-place of Liberty. In the Home was fostered and strengthened, in companionship with a more equal freedom, a purer Religion than that of mere ceremonial observance—the religion of the Book of Life, opened at last to every man who would "read, mark, 'earn, and inwardly digest" the words of Truth.

Richard, duke of York, was the son of Richard, earl of Cambridge; and when his father was beheaded, in 1415, he was about five years old. Upon the death of Edmund Mortimer, in 1424, he was the representative of the posterity of two sons of Edward III.—of Lionel, the third son, and of Edmund, the fifth son. The revolution of 1399, which placed the issue of John of Gaunt, the fourth son, upon the throne, had remained undisturbed for half-a-century. † Richard had advanced no pretensions to a higher dignity than he obtained when, in 1425, he succeeded to the titles and possessions of his uncles, Edward, duke of York, and Edmund, earl of March, having been relieved from the corruption of blood consequent upon the alleged treason of his father. He was employed in high offices in France, until 1444, when he was recalled, and the peace was concluded which destroyed the power of the English. York became necessarily opposed to the government whose policy had been so disastrous and unpopular; and an opportunity was taken to remove him to a distant scene of action. He was sent, as lieutenant of Ireland, to quell a rebellion in 1449. His excellent qualities—his firmness, justice, and moderation—"so assuaged the fury of the wild and savage people there, that he won such favour among them as could never be separated

* The words of William Worcester, of his master, Sir John Fastolf.

† See p. 40. In that place we called Lionel the *second* son, because William, whose birth followed that of the Black Prince, died in childhood.

from him and his lineage." * During his absence from England, in 1449, till the autumn of 1450, great évents had occurred, which were the natural sequel of the intrigues which had destroyed Humphrey of Gloucester in 1447. The loss of France was a main cause of the distractions of England. Comines, with his wonted sagacity, has observed that, upon their return to their own country from the foreign land which had afforded them such means of enrichment, "not one of the English lords thought of lessening his state, or retrenching his expenses; and the whole revenue of the kingdom being insufficient to satisfy the insatiable ambition of them all, dissensions and wars immediately arose amongst them for command and authority." †

The duke of Suffolk, who had effected the marriage of Henry VI. with Margaret of Anjou, had become the real ruler of England as the head of the queen's party. He is described by contemporary historians as crafty, avaricious, and despotic; surrounding the king with his own creatures, and irritating the people by inordinate exactions. The duke, in a parliament held in January, 1450, proclaimed his own unpopularity, by requesting the Lords "to admit his supplication and desire that he might make his declaration of the great infamy and defamatiön which was said upon him, by many of the people of this land." Within a few days, the Commons requested his committal to the Tower, and subsequently exhibited a bill of impeachment against him. It was a time of serious alarm from the temper of the people. Moleyne, the bishop of Chichester, who had been associated in the government with Suffolk—and whom that minister had accused of advising the surrender of the French provinces—was murdered by some shipmen at Portsmouth at the beginning of this January. Insurrections at the same time took place in various parts of the country, of which the alleged object was the punishment of the obnoxious favourite of the queen. The Commons appear to have proceeded against this powerful minister in the same spirit of determined animosity. They accused him of traitorous intercourse with France, through which Normandy had been lost; of making corrupt grants to enrich his own family; of misemploying subsidies for his private advantage; of appointing high officers for lucre. On the 17th of March he was brought before the king at Westminster, many lords being present; and there, denying the truth of the charges against him, he knelt down and submitted himself to the king's rule and governance, to do with him according to his pleasure. The result of this concerted scheme was the banishment of Suffolk for five years; in this way avoiding the impeachment of the Commons. The duke hastened from London; and thus escaped the popular fury in the capital. He remained in Suffolk till the end of April; and then sailed from Ipswich, with two ships, and "a little spinner" which he sent forward to Calais. On the 2nd of May, a large vessel, called Nicholas of the Tower, came in sight; and upon the summons of its commander the duke went on board her. We have a circumstantial relation of the fate of this unfortunate nobleman, in a letter written from London on the 5th of May. ‡ When he came on board the Nicholas, the master saluted him with "Welcome traitor." He was then "arraigned in the ship on their manner, upon the impeachments, and found guilty. And in the sight of all his men he was drawn out of the great ship into the boat, and there was an axe and a stock, and one of the

* Stow.

† Book i. chap. vii.

‡ Paston Letters, letter xxvii.

lowdest (meanest) of the ship bade him lay down his head, and he should be fairly ferd (dealt) with, and die on a sword; and took a rusty sword and smote off his head within half-a-dozen strokes, and took away his gown of russet, and his doublet of velvet mailed, and laid his body on the sands of Dover; and some say his head was set on a pole by it." There is a letter from the duke of Suffolk to his son, dated April 1450, "the day of my departing from this land,"—which exhibits him in the character of a wise, pious, and affectionate father. One sentence, coming from a man whose alleged crimes were the promptings of pride, avarice, and craftiness, is very curious:—"Furthermore, as far as father may and can, I charge you in any wise to flee the company and counsel of proud men, of covetous men, and of flattering men, the more especially and mightily to withstand them, and not to draw nor to meddle with them, with all your might and power; and to draw to you and to your company good and virtuous men, and such as be of good conversation, and of truth, and by them shall ye never be deceived nor repent you of."* The temper in which the news of the fall and death of Suffolk was popularly received is curiously exhibited in a song composed within a few weeks of the date of this tragedy. The duke is "Jack Napes" with his "clog and his chain" (the badge of his house), who is going over the sea "to seek more treasure;" and portions of the church-service for the dead are here put into the mouths of ecclesiastics and others who were most obnoxious, to sing "*Placebo and Dirige*" for "Jack Napes' soul," and to pray "let never such another come after this." This bitter song of triumph furnishes a curious piece of evidence that there was some powerful organisation of the discontented people in the spring and summer of 1450. One of the verses of this ballad says,

" Rise up Say : read *Parce mihi, Domine,*
Nihil enim sunt dies mei, thou shalt sing."

Say, who was thus to sing, "Spare me, O Lord, for my days are as nothing," was murdered in Cade's insurrection on the subsequent 4th of July. "As these verses appear to have been written before his death, they are singularly prophetic of his fate."† The prophecy was no doubt delivered by those who were resolved upon instigating its fulfilment.

In the holiday week of Whitsuntide, 1450, there was a more serious game played on Blackheath than the accustomed morris-dances and bear-baitings. There was an encampment there of many thousand Kentish men, who had gathered together to demand redress of grievances. Their leader is officially described as "the false traitor John Cade, naming himself John Mortimer, late called captain of Kent."‡ He is also chronicled as "an Irishman, called John Cade, the which at beginning took on him the name of a gentleman, and called himself Mortimer, for to have the more favour of the people; and he called himself also John Amend-all."§ Upon Blackheath this assemblage kept the field for several weeks; and the city of London, at that time, was friendly towards them. Cade declared to the messengers who

* Paston Letters, letter xxvi.

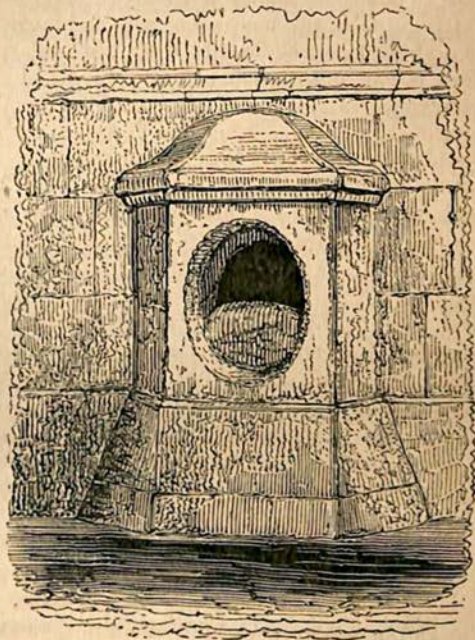
† Sir F. Madden, in "Archæologia," vol. xxix. p. 318, where this poem, and others of the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV., are correctly printed, and ably illustrated.

‡ Stat. 29 Henry VI. cap. i.

§ English Chronicle, published by the Camden Society, p. 64.

came from the king, that they were assembled to redress and reform the wrongs that were in the realm, and the defaults of those that were the king's chief counsellors.* These pretensions were set forth in fifteen articles, addressed to the king and parliament. A considerable force was raised to disperse the insurgents, but they retreated to Sevenoaks; and there, on the 27th June, defeated a detachment that had been sent against them, killing the commander, Sir Humphrey Stafford. Their success appears to have alarmed the king's council; and Lord Say, the most obnoxious of the ministers, was sent to the Tower. Henry himself removed to Kenilworth. Two days after, Cade resumed his camp at Blackheath, the king's forces having dispersed. One chronicle says that the men of certain lords "would not fight against them that laboured for to amend and reform the common profit."†

On the 1st of July the insurgents entered Southwark, and on the 2nd the gates of the city were opened to them. A statute of the 31st of Henry VI. describes "the most abominable tyrant, horrible, odious, and errant false traitor John Cade," as "taking upon him royal power." The contemporary English Chronicle says, "The said captain rode about the city bearing a naked sword in his hand, armed in a pair of brigandines,‡ wearing a pair of gilt spurs, and a gilt sallet,§ and a gown of blue velvet, as he had been a lord or a knight—and yet was he but a knave—and had his sword borne before him." Fabyan, then a resident in London, says, "He rode through divers streets of the city, and as he came to London-stone, he struck it with his sword, and said, 'Now is Mortimer lord of this city.'" On the 3rd, he again entered the city from Southwark. The mayor and justices were sitting at the Guildhall. Cade commanded that lord Say should be brought from the Tower, and arraigned before this court; but the nobleman demanded to be judged by his peers. Then the insurgents took the readier way to vengeance, by seizing lord Say, and at the Standard, in Cheap, striking off his head. This, and other horrible deeds, as well as the plunder of some houses, disabused the citizens of their belief that grievances were to be



London Stone.

* English Chronicle, p. 65.

‡ A species of armour worn by foot-soldiers.

† *Ibid.*, p. 65.

§ Helmet.

redressed by lawless tumults. Cade was in his old quarters at Southwark, when it was resolved to defend London-bridge against his further entrance into the city. During the whole night of Sunday, the 5th of July, the citizens, assisted by soldiers from the Tower, fought against the insurgents upon the bridge. A truce was at last agreed upon; and the men of Kent and their captain withdrew, upon a promise from the archbishop of Canterbury of a general pardon. A proclamation was, however, issued, offering the reward of a thousand marks for the apprehension of Cade, alive or dead; and "anon he fled into the wood country beside Lewes; and the sheriff of Kent him pursued; and there he was wounded unto the death, and taken and carried in a cart toward London, and by the way he died." * There is a petition of the sheriffs of London to the king, praying remuneration of their expenses in drawing "the body of a great traitor, naming himself Mortimer, upon an hurdle by the streets of your city of London, and his head to be set upon London-bridge." Also for delivering, under the king's writ, the one quarter of the said traitor to the constables of the hundred of Blackheath; another quarter to the mayor of Norwich; another to the mayor of Salisbury; and another to the bailiffs of Gloucester. The sheriffs allege that their expenses were very great, especially by their carriages of the quarters aforesaid, with the head of one Thomas Cheyney, "for and by cause that unneth (scarcely) any persons durst nor would take upon them the carriage of the said head and quarters for doubt of their lives." † Thomas Cheyney, called Bluebeard, had headed an insurrection near Canterbury in the preceding February.

The spirit of revolt was widely spread in England in this year, when the weakness and corruption of the government had roused the indignation of a people who were rarely incited to any acts of rebellion. The insurrections extended to Essex, Sussex, and Wiltshire, as well as Kent. Whatever grievances the commons had to complain of at home, the disasters of the English in France appear to have caused much of their hatred of the party in power. A servant of sir John Fastolf fell into the hands of the insurgents at Blackheath; and when it was known to whom he belonged, as the servant records, "the captain let cry Treason upon me throughout all the field;" causing a herald to proclaim, "that I was sent thither to spy their puissance and their habiliments of war, from the greatest traitor that was in England or in France," from one sir John Fastolf, knight, who had diminished all the garrisons, "which was the cause of the losing of all the king's title and right of an heritance that he had beyond sea." ‡ As the nobles felt their means of enrichment diminished by the loss of the French provinces, so needy adventurers, who had gone to France for pay and plunder, were now thrown upon their own country, and contributed to the discontents of the kingdom. All these circumstances enhanced the popularity of the duke of York, with whose house the rebels associated the name of their leader, Mortimer. Whether these revolts were prompted by the Nevilles and others who were hostile to the government, and seriously looked to a change of dynasty as the remedy for public evils, is a matter only of conjecture. The governor of Normandy, the duke of Somerset, to whom the more recent losses

* English Chronicle, p. 68.

† Ellis; "Original Letters," 2nd Series, vol. i. p. 112.

‡ Paston Letters, letter xxx.

in France were attributed, now arrived in England, and took the management of affairs. For four years there was a contest for life and death between two great parties in the State,—a contest characterised by that bitter hostility which was the natural prelude to civil war. Upon the return of Somerset the Commons petitioned the king to send him to the Tower; but he was soon released. There has been preserved a speech in the House of Lords of the duke of Norfolk against this powerful nobleman, in which he accuses Somerset as one of those who have been guilty of bringing about “the over great dishonours and losses that be come to this full noble realm of England.” But Somerset, nearly connected in blood with the house of Lancaster, and supported by the queen, defied his assailants; and in February 1452, the duke of York took up arms, declaring in a proclamation to the citizens of Shrewsbury, that the duke of Somerset having laboured his destruction by envy, malice, and untruth, “I, Richard of York, seeing that the said duke ever prevaileth and ruleth about the king’s person, that by this means the land is likely to be destroyed, am fully concluded to proceed in all haste against him, with the help of my kinsmen and friends, in such wise that it shall prove to promote ease, peace, tranquillity, and safeguard of all this land.”* The “all haste” with which York proceeded was not successful. He professed, in his attempt to overthrow Somerset, to keep within the bounds of his liegeance, and with no intent to displease his sovereign lord. But he advanced towards London with his forces; and, after much negotiation, Somerset was ordered into custody. York then disbanded his army, and went to Henry’s tent unarmed. As he left the king he was arrested; and would probably have been executed had the wishes of Somerset and the queen wholly prevailed. York finally swore féalty to the reigning sovereign, and retired to Wigmore, one of his castles.

In October 1453, king Henry became totally incapacitated for taking any share in that government of which he had long been only the nominal head. In the same month, his only son was born at Westminster, “whose noble mother sustained not a little slander and obloquy of the common people saying that he was not the natural son of king Henry, but changed in the cradle.”† The unhappy king remained at Windsor for many months, in a condition of total unconsciousness. In a most interesting letter of the 19th January, 1454, written to John Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, by some persons of his household, we have the following passage: “As touching tidings, please it you to wit, that at the prince’s coming to Windsor, the duke of Buckingham took him in his arms, and presented him to the king in goodly wise, beseeching the king to bless him; and the king gave no manner answer. Nathless the duke abode still with the prince by the king; and when he could no manner answer have, the queen came in, and took the prince in her arms, and presented him in like form as the duke had done, desiring that he should bless it; but all their labour was in vain, for they departed thence without any answer or countenance, saving only that once he looked on the prince, and cast down his eyen again, without any more.”‡

* Ellis; “Original Letters,” 1st Series, vol. i. p. 13.

† Fabyan, p. 628, ed. 1811.

‡ “Archæologia,” vol. xxix. p. 305: “Letter of Intelligence, January 1454:” from the Egerton MSS. in the British Museum.

In the letter from which this touching account of the helpless state of king Henry is quoted, we have a vivid picture of the disquiet, suspicion, and preparation for warfare which marked this crisis, when the government of the kingdom was to be contended for by two ambitious factions. The duke of Somerset was under arrest; but his influence was still powerful, and the efforts of his party unremitting. The writers of the "tidings" say that, he hath spies in every lord's house of this land,—some as friars, some as shipmen taken on the sea. They are of opinion that he is making himself ready to be as strong as he can make him; and therefore it is necessary that the duke of Norfolk should look well to himself, "lest bushments should be laid for him." The cardinal, Kempe, chancellor and archbishop of Canterbury, the great supporter with Somerset of the queen's party, hath armed all his servants with bow and arrows, sword and buckler. The duke of Exeter and the earl of Egremont have been in the north country, confederating with other Lancastrian lords, to make all the puissance they can, to come to London. The duke of Buckingham, Humphrey Stafford,—whose rent-roll amounted to six thousand three hundred pounds, derived from estates in twenty-seven counties,*—is at this period waiting upon events to decide his course; but he has ordered two thousand scarfs with the Stafford knot as badges for his retainers. According to this letter the queen had made a bill of articles, desiring to have the whole rule of the land; to appoint all the officers of the government; and fill up all the benefices of the church. It was a contest for power between Margaret of Anjou and Richard of York. How York and his partisans were preparing for the struggle is indicated in this remarkable letter. The duke, and the earl of March, are coming to London with a fellowship of good men, and their helmets and other harness are coming in carts. Salisbury, Warwick, Richmond, and Pembroke are coming with the duke of York, each of them with a goodly fellowship. The earl of Warwick will have a thousand men awaiting on him. The duke of Norfolk is advised, therefore, to come with such a fellowship as he ought to have about him; and to summon his tenants and servants to meet him in London. It is in such indirect revelations as these that we learn how earnest was the struggle for supremacy between these feudal lords; and upon what slippery ground those stood who held the reins of government. Death in the battle-field, and "the axe upon the block, very ready," were the natural results of such note of preparation.

In the parliament which met on the 14th of February, to which the great nobles had come with such overwhelming array, the proceedings were conducted in a peaceful and constitutional spirit. A deputation of peers was appointed to wait upon the king at Windsor, and inform him of the death of Cardinal Kempe, his chancellor, and of other important matters. They reported that they "could get no answer or sign" in reply to their prayer, at three several interviews. The peers, being thus satisfied of the king's incapacity, elected the duke of York to be "protector and defender of the realm of England during the king's pleasure." The duke held this office till the beginning of 1455, during which period Somerset remained in confinement. But in February of that year it was announced that the king was recovered. The only circumstances we learn of the character of his

* See "Archæological Journal," No. 31.

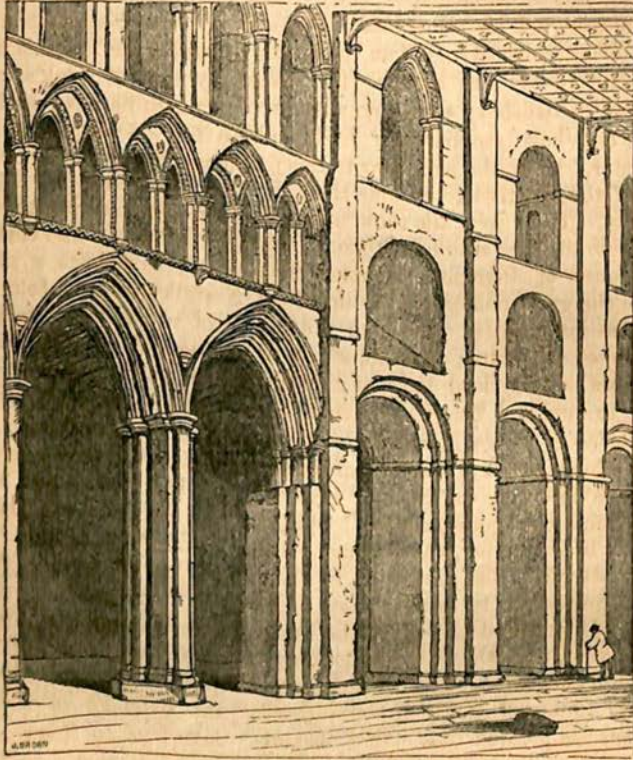
recovery are detailed in a private letter from an officer of the court, dated the 10th of January. He began to amend on the Christmas-day; and the queen took the infant prince to him, and he asked what his name was, and the queen told him Edward; and then he held up his hands and thanked God thereof. Further he said he never knew him till that time, nor wist what was said to him, nor where he had been whilst he was sick. "And he saith he is in charity with all the world, and so he would all the lords were." *

Very few of the lords, if we may judge by their actions, were, like poor king Henry, at charity with all the world. They were all thinking of themselves; all hating and fearing rivals; all coveting some place of profit and honour; all looking to the supremacy of their own faction for the gratification of their personal avarice or ambition. This is a hard thing to say of the great ones of a great nation; but in the private and public records of these evil times we can discover only a very feeble regard for the public good, with a very passionate striving after private advantage. It is in the intensity of the selfishness, and the wilfulness of the pride of these lords—who brought the hundreds and thousands of their retainers into the field to destroy their fellow-men for a cause in which the principles at issue were to them of far less importance than the heraldic badges of the two houses—that we must look for an explanation of the alternations of timidity and rashness, of faith and treachery, of lenity and cruelty, with which this contest was carried on at intervals for so many years; whilst those who were children in its beginning grew up into violent and cruel men, amidst the corrupting influences of family feuds, through which the second generation seemed only born to carry forward the evil deeds of the first.

The recovery, as it was called, of king Henry produced another signal change in affairs. Somerset was released. The protectorate of York was necessarily superseded; and he was also removed from his important office of captain of Calais. The hostility between the two great dukes was attempted to be compromised by arbitration; but their animosities were too deadly to be settled by the formal award of bishops and earls. York had retired to his estates in the north; but in the spring he marched towards London. The king was now again capable of taking an ostensible direction in the conduct of the government; and he left Westminster, on the 20th of May, with Somerset and other nobles, to meet York in arms before he reached the capital. The professions of loyalty to the king which York had always employed were still observed. In letters which he was subsequently stated to have written from Royston to the chancellor, and from Ware to Henry, he protested that he marched in military array only to defend himself from the violence of his enemies. These letters were concealed from the king; who had reached St. Alban's, with a force of about two thousand men, on the 22nd of May. On the same day York encamped in the fields near the town, with three thousand men. The Yorkists sent to demand that Edmund, duke of Somerset, "enemy to all the realm," should be given up to them. The king replied that by advice of his council he would not deliver him. The king's forces were within the town, which was defended by strong barriers. The defences were again and again assaulted by the Yorkists; but

* Paston Letters, letter lxxii.

they were driven back. At length Warwick brought up a strong force on the east side; and broke down the barriers and the slight houses, and entered St. Peter's Street. The royal banner was erected in that street, and there stood the passive king, whilst the deadly fight was raging in the narrow ways, and his counsellors and friends were fighting around him hand-to-hand with their rivals. The Lancastrian leaders, Somerset, Northumberland, and Clifford, at length were slain. Henry, as he stood beside his banner, was wounded in the neck with an arrow. Buckingham and Sudeley were also



Nave of St. Alban's Abbey.

wounded by the shafts of the archers of the north. Sir Philip Wentworth cast down the royal standard, and sought safety in flight; for which unchivalrous deed, Norfolk, who was of the opposite party, threatened that he should be hanged. All those who fell were buried beneath the roof of the noble abbey, which was in a few years more to be again associated with the memory of this fatal time. Whethamstede, the abbot of St. Alban's, describes the fury of the street battle of the 22nd of May. He heard sword clashing with sword, and shield striking shield. He saw the wounded with the arrows in their throats, and the dead with their cloven skulls. But the number slain was very small. A letter within three days afterwards says, "As for any great multitude of people that there was, as far as we can tell,

there was at most slain six score."* Hall exaggerates the number killed, of the king's party alone, to eight thousand. This affair of St. Alban's was, however, important in the quality of the leaders who fell on the side of the Lancastrians. The king sought shelter in the house of a tanner; and there York waited upon him, exhibiting profound respect, and conducted him next day to London, with the same outward marks of reverence. The fall of Somerset did not, however, restore confidence. The parliament met in July; and a general pardon was declared by statute for all those who had taken arms; and all the blame of the "journey" of St. Alban's was thrown upon Somerset and his adherents. But, as we learn from that invaluable correspondence which Mr. Hallam calls "my faithful guide," in that middle of July, 1455, "all my lord of Warwick's men, my lord of York's men, and also my lord of Salisbury's men, go with harness and in harness, with strange weapons; and have stuffed their lords' barges full of weapons daily unto Westminster." † In the summons to this parliament there was no attempt on the part of the Yorkists to exclude their rival peers. None were omitted, of either party. There were the same names as in the previous parliament, with the exception of those who had fallen on the 22nd of May. The composition of the House of Commons appears, however, to have been a matter of anxiety to the great nobles. The duchess of Norfolk writes to John Paston, to exert his influence in procuring the return of two of their household to be knights of the shire; "forasmuch as it is thought right necessary for divers causes that my lord have at this time in the parliament such persons as belong to him, and be of his menial servants." ‡ The influence of the Yorkist Peers, of whom Norfolk was one, was probably the moving cause of that determined action of the Commons at this time, which is a remarkable circumstance in our constitutional history. The duke of York had been appointed the king's commissioner to proceed in the parliament; but after a prorogation to November, the Commons proposed that "if the king hereafter could not attend to the protection of the country, an able person should be appointed protector, to whom they might have recourse for redress of injuries." They urged this upon the Peers a second and a third time; and then "the king, our said sovereign lord, by the advice and assent of his lords spiritual and temporal being in this present parliament, had named and desired the duke of York to be protector and defender of this land." Mr. Hallam has pointed out, "that whatever passed as to this second protectorate of the duke of York was altogether of a revolutionary complexion." § The majority of the Lords were Lancastrian. The house of York had its chief supporters amongst the Commons; who may be held to have represented the popular feeling. If we may form a judgment of the opinions of the people as derived from very slight indications, we should say that they were not anxious for a revolutionary crisis in the government out of any affection for the superior pretensions to legitimacy of the house of York. There had been sixty years of possession by the reigning family. Henry IV. had taken the crown after a solemn deposition of an unwise ruler, and by that ancient form of national consent which had so often disregarded the direct claims to succession. The "mere defect in their genealogy" || of the house of

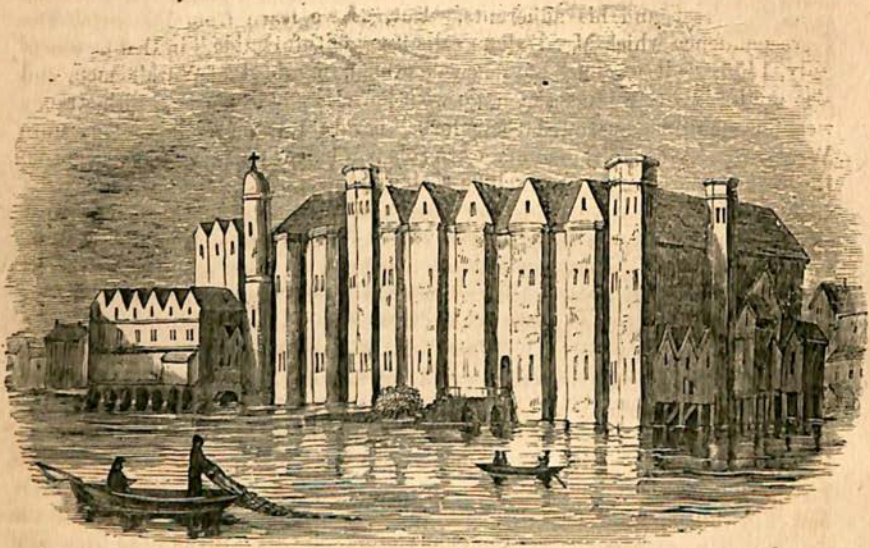
* Paston Letters, letter lxxxi.

† *Ibid.*, letter lxxxiv.‡ *Ibid.*, letter lxxix.

§ "Middle Ages," chap. viii. n. 111.

|| *Ibid.*

Lancaster would not have led to their overthrow, had not the prudence of Henry IV., and the glory of Henry V., been succeeded by the distractions of the long minority of Henry VI., and by the inevitable misgovernment which ensued from his imbecility, when he became a puppet in the hands of the grasping favourites of an unscrupulous queen. The people complained that the possessions of the crown were squandered upon the queen's creatures, "who ruled the realm as they liked, gathering riches innumerable,"—that



Baynard's Castle.

they were grievously taxed, but that all that came from them was spent in vain, for the king "held no household and maintained no wars."* There is a striking illustration of the mischief of injudicious commercial taxation, in a statute of 1453, which remits a part of "a subsidy called poundage" upon exports and imports, because such poundage shall be to the merchants denizens "a very great importable (unbearable) charge, and impoverishment of a great art of the poor people of this realm." The burgesses of towns, who were thus taxed with little discretion, would naturally look with hope upon a possible change of rulers. By such considerations was the realm moved, rather than by an abstract estimate of the value of hereditary right as opposed to undisturbed possession. It was long after the beginning of these contentions that the people became familiar with the notion that the actual occupancy of the throne was to be disturbed by the claims of the house of York. When Richard was appointed vicegerent of the kingdom, in 1455, the rights of the son of Henry were especially protected. Richard was

* English Chronicle, p. 79.

probably driven eventually to demand the throne by the violence of those to whose misgovernment he had been so long opposed. His second protectorate was very short. There was a partial recovery of the king's health at the beginning of 1456; and on the 25th of February the duke's commission was superseded, and he retired with his adherents to the privacy of his own estates. During two years the great quarrel was suspended. The intrigues of each faction were, no doubt, pursued with slight regard to the tranquillity of the country. The queen was charged with a conspiracy to destroy York and Warwick; and these nobles absented themselves from the king's councils, and maintained an armed neutrality. At this period the defence of the kingdom appears to have been utterly neglected. The coasts of the Channel were ravaged by French and Breton cruisers in 1457; and the eastern coast was equally insecure.*

In 1458 king Henry summoned the great nobles to a meeting in London. Fabyan, the alderman, has given a minute account of this assembly, which was "called to appease the rancour and malice between the queen and the lords." Thither came the duke of York, and was lodged in his own fortified mansion of Baynard's Castle, on the bank of the Thames, below St. Paul's. Warwick came from Calais, "with a great band of men, all arrayed in red jackets with white ragged staves upon them, and was lodged at the Grey Friars." The king and queen, with a numerous retinue, were lodged in the bishop of London's palace. Many of the nobles were quartered within Temple Bar, and many without, with formidable bands of followers, each having several hundreds in his train. The mayor of London "had daily in harness five thousand citizens, and rode daily about the city and suburbs of the same, to see that the king's peace were kept. And nightly he provided for three thousand men in harness, to give attendance upon three aldermen, and they to keep the watch till seven of the clock upon the morrow, till the day watch were assembled." † The London of this period was rich and populous, full of splendid ecclesiastical buildings, and of stately mansions. From the Tower to the Palace of Westminster, the Thames formed the great "silent highway." A little before this time, "upon the accustomed day when the new mayor used yearly to ride with great pomp unto Westminster to take his charge," John Norman deviated from the ancient custom, and was "rowed thither by water, for the which the watermen made of him a roundel or song to his great praise." ‡ In this feudal gathering of 1458 there must have been incessant communication between Westminster and London; and the ancient thoroughfare from Charing would have presented some of the most picturesque aspects of a city eminently beautiful from its position on the noblest of rivers—the cathedral of St. Paul's, with its lofty spire, towering up as impressively as the dome which took its place after two centuries. What the city chronicler calls "a dissimuled unity and concord," was accomplished in 1458. The king, and the rival nobles walking before him, hand-in-hand—the queen, led by the duke of York—went in procession to St. Paul's. And yet, in the following November, "fell a great debate between Richard, earl of Warwick, and them of the king's house.

* See p. 106.

† Fabyan, p. 632, ed. 1811.

‡ Fabyan, anno 1454.

insomuch that they would have slain the earl."* He escaped to his barge, and departed for Calais. His appointment as captain of Calais was superseded by a writ of privy seal, in favour of "the young duke of Somerset." Warwick refused to resign, saying that he was appointed by authority of parliament.† The false unity and concord had come to an end. All Henry's efforts to preserve peace by acting as umpire between those who sought for revenge for the day of St. Alban's, and those who had compelled the royal pardon for the events of that day, were neutralised by the passions of those around him.



Ancient Thoroughfare from Westminster to London, restored.

The affair of St. Alban's must be regarded rather as a contest between two ambitious factions for supremacy under the established dynasty, than as an overt act of rebellion against the crown. In 1459 the Civil War may be held to have commenced; and it assumed a character which left no doubt that the great issue to be tried was whether Henry or Richard should be king of England. The Yorkist forces were now marshalled against the royal forces. The battle of Blore Heath, in Staffordshire, in which the earl of Salisbury, the father of Warwick, defeated lord Audley, was fought on the 23rd of September. Salisbury was on his march to join the duke of York, which junction after this victory he effected near Ludlow. There Warwick also joined them; and they issued a proclamation, in which they still main-

* English Chronicle, p. 78

† *Ibid.*

tained that they were in arms to reform the government, but not to overthrow it. The king's army advanced by rapid marches; and on the 13th of October met the Yorkists, with a greatly superior force. Sir Andrew Trollope, upon the king's proclamation offering pardon, carried a large body of the Calais soldiers, whom he commanded, over to the Lancastrian camp. The army of the Yorkists immediately disbanded; and York fled to Ireland, where he received a welcome from those towards whom he had been a just governor. At a parliament held at Coventry on the 20th of November, the Yorkist lords who had not surrendered were declared traitors, and their possessions were confiscated. Salisbury and the young Edward escaped with Warwick to his stronghold of Calais, which he kept against all attacks during the spring of 1460. The proceedings of the Coventry parliament stripped off all the thin coverings of the ambition of the house of York. For Richard there was no choice between remaining an attainted outcast, or venturing for a crown. At Midsummer a large force under Warwick passed over from Calais, and landed in Kent. As this army advanced towards London its numbers were so largely increased, that Warwick entered the capital with forty thousand men. "The king's true liegemen of Kent," as they called themselves, who thus joined the banner of the White Rose, still demanded only redress of grievances, and the removal of those who told the king "that good is evil and evil is good." With these partisans, who appear thoroughly to have identified themselves with the quarrel of the great nobles, Warwick marched into the midland counties. On the 10th of July the two armies met near Northampton. The royal forces occupied an intrenched position; but the Yorkists under Warwick, Faulconbridge, and Edward earl of March, broke into the Lancastrian camp, and the king's army was utterly routed. Alone in his tent sat the unhappy Henry, while his queen and his son had fled, and the most strenuous of his adherents, Buckingham, Egremont, Beaumont, had perished. Warwick and Edward bowed before him, and professed to hold him in all reverence. The victorious Yorkists marched to London; when the Tower was surrendered to them, and its governor, lord Scales, was inhumanly slaughtered in his escape. There was a change of ministry; and the duke of York was sent for from Ireland. At this crisis, before the triumph of her husband's party was assured, we find the duchess of York taking refuge in the lodgings of a friend of her family, John Paston. A servant of the Pastons writes, on the 12th of October, to his master at Norwich, informing him that on the Monday after the nativity of the Virgin (15th of September), "there come hither to my master's place my Master Bowser, Sir Harry Ratford, John Clay, and the harbinger of my lord of March, desiring that my lady of York might be here until the coming of my lord of York, and her two sons, my lord George and my lord Richard, and my lady Margaret, her daughter, which I granted them, in your name, to lie here till Michaelmas. And she had not lain here two nights, but she had tidings of the landing of my lord at Chester. The Tuesday after my lord sent for her, that she should come to him to Hereford; and thither she is gone, and she hath left here both the sons and the daughter, and the lord of March cometh every day to see them." Here, in these humble chambers of the Temple, we may look upon this family, whose fate is still in suspense, while their head is an attainted fugitive. The lady

Cecily, duchess of York, the daughter of Ralph Neville, earl of Westmoreland, has been despoiled of her possessions in the attainder of her husband. Her second son, Edmund earl of Rutland, now seventeen years of age, has fled with his father to Ireland, having been included in the attainder of Coventry. The duchess remains in this bereaved and uncertain condition till she is sent for to join her lord at Hereford. Her two younger boys, and her daughter Margaret, are left alone in those Temple chambers. The boys will fill a large space in the annals of England; but now they are helpless children, who have been nurtured amidst the bitterness of their faction, with a precocious sense of hatreds and revenges. George, who in a short time will be duke of Clarence, is now scarcely eleven years of age; Richard, who will be duke of Gloucester, has just completed his eighth year. Margaret is the elder, being fifteen; and she, as duchess of Burgundy, will not be without her influence in her nation's fortunes. Edward, "the lord of March," who "cometh every day to see them," has not yet reached his twentieth year. With the precocity of the Plantagenets he is already a warrior, and is called, in one of the popular songs, "Thou virgin knight."* It is necessary to bear in mind the ages of this family to form a just comprehension of some of the circumstances of their eventful history.

The parliament assembled on the 7th of October. On the 9th the duke of York was in London. On the 16th he entered Westminster in royal array. Hall says, "The duke of York with a bold countenance entered into the Chamber of Peers, and sat down in the throne royal, under the cloth of estate, which is the king's peculiar seat." † Other relations state that he stood for a while with his hand on the throne. There can be no doubt, from the Rolls of Parliament, that he made a solemn claim to be king. There was a deliberate investigation of his genealogical title, which, upon the principle of direct succession, could not be disputed. But the Lords, with whom the decision appears to have rested, could not conceal from themselves that the claimant of the throne had again and again sworn fealty to the reigning sovereign, and that the violent disturbance of a dynasty which had endured for sixty years was a perilous expedient for the restoration of peace. They resolved upon a compromise—that Henry should retain the crown for his life, and that the duke of York and his heirs should succeed to it after Henry's death. The queen was in the north, surrounded by some of the most powerful of the lords who were devoted to the interests of the Lancastrian branch. It was not likely that she would readily submit to an arrangement which set aside the claims of her son. Her proud spirit would yield to no compromise. In the confidence of success York left London; and spent his Christmas in his castle of Sandal, in Yorkshire. He had a small army in the neighbourhood, when Somerset advanced with eighteen thousand men to invest the castle. Edward was at Shrewsbury. Had York waited the arrival of succours he might have been secure. But in the spirit of chivalry he resolved to go forth from his castle to oppose a force treble the amount of his own. A solemn day of combat had been appointed by both parties. But the feudal honour was fast passing away, leaving only the feudal ferocity. York was suddenly attacked and totally defeated. The

* "Archæologia," vol. xxix. p. 130.

† Chronicle, XXX. year of Henry VI.

romantic circumstances of the duke being placed upon an ant-hill, while a paper crown was put upon his head, and the mocking warriors cried, "Hail, king without a kingdom," are probably the inventions of the later chroniclers. The same spirit of exaggeration may have represented Rutland as basely murdered, when found with his tutor away from the scene of conflict. Instead of being a boy of twelve, as grave historians have accepted the statement, he was born in 1443, and was seventeen years and a half old at this battle of Wakefield. The father and the son both fell on the 31st of December, 1460. Whether they were butchered in cold blood, or died on the battle-field, is of little historical import. The victory of Wakefield was followed up by the successful party with merciless executions. Salisbury and other Yorkists were beheaded at Pomfret on the first day of 1461. In another month the tide of success was turned; and Edward, now duke of York, defeated the earl of Pembroke at Mortimer's Cross, and followed up his victory by the same course of executions as those of Wakefield. After that triumph, queen Margaret had advanced towards London from the north with a great and lawless force. The terror of their march had roused the spirit of the southern counties. The people were dragged more and more into this terrible conflict. A letter from London, dated the 23rd of January, says, "In this country every man is well willing to go with my lords here; and I hope God shall help them, for the people in the north rob and steal, and be appointed to pill (pillage) all this country



and give away men's goods and livelihoods in all the south country." * The ravaging bands under Northumberland, Westmorland, Exeter, Somerset,

* Paston Letters, letter cl.

Devonshire, Clifford, Roos, Dacre,—were drawing nigher and nigher to the capital. On Shrove Tuesday, the 17th of February, they had reached the neighbourhood of St. Alban's. Out of the city Warwick had marched, carrying with him the poor king Henry, in whose name all the acts most inimical to his family were now done. At Barnard's Heath, near St. Alban's, the second battle bearing that name was fought, and Warwick was utterly routed. Henry was left on the field, and now fell into the hands of the queen. The town of St. Alban's was plundered, with the same fury that had marked all the course of the northern army. The great contest would probably have been now decided but for one of those impulses of boldness which so often change the fortunes of individuals and nations. Edward, duke of York, then not twenty years old, entered London, as if the battle of St. Alban's had been a victory for his party, instead of a signal defeat. The army of the north was more intent upon plundering the country than upon seizing upon the moment of success to complete their triumph. Edward's forces had formed a junction with those of Warwick; and on the 28th of February, they marched into London. "In field and town every one called Edward king of England and France," says a contemporary MS.* A more daring spirit than that of Richard of York now represented the White Rose. Edward went straightforward to the great object of his ambition; and in an assembly of the peers, prelates, and citizens, on the 3rd of March, he demanded the crown. It was resolved at this council, that Henry, by joining the forces of the queen, had set aside the award of the preceding October, and forfeited the throne of which he had been granted the life-occupancy. The accession of Edward IV. to the crown of England dates from the 4th of March, on which day, say the Rolls of Parliament, "he took upon him to use his right and title to the realm of England and lordship; and entered into the exercise of the royal estate, dignity, pre-eminence, and power of the same crown, and to the reign and governance of the said realm of England and lordship; and the same fourth day of March amoved Henry, late called king Henry the sixth, son to Henry, son to Henry, late earl of Derby, son to John of Gaunt, from the occupation, usurpation, intrusion, reign, and governance of the said realm." In every statute which had reference to the laws of the three regal predecessors of Edward, the same principle of legitimacy was ostentatiously asserted; and Henry IV., Henry V., and Henry VI. were denominated "late kings of England successively, in deed and not of right." † Mr. Hallam has justly said, "With us, who are to weigh these ancient factions in the balance of wisdom and justice, there should be no hesitation in deciding that the house of Lancaster were lawful sovereigns of England." The wisest statesman of that age, in the same rational spirit, declared that in his judgment, and the judgment of the world, Henry VI. was the lawful king. ‡

A procession to St. Paul's, a speech from the throne, a solemn recognition before the great altar of the Abbey at Westminster, were the brief ceremonies with which Edward put on the crown. It was no time for feasting and

* "Archæologia," vol. xxix. p. 130.

† Stat. 1 Edward IV. cap. i., and subsequent statutes.

‡ Comines' Memoirs, book vi. chap. 13.

rejoicing. Norfolk is gone to his country to raise his men. Warwick has marched out of London northward on the 6th of March. A great force of foot, of which the most part were Welshmen and Kentishmen, followed him on the 10th. On the 12th Edward himself issued out of the city in goodly order at Bishopsgate, following the same northward course.* On the 13th, Henry, the Lancastrian king, is despatching letters under his signet from York, in which he announces that "our great traitor, the late earl of March, hath made great assemblies of riotous and mischievously-disposed people, and to stir and provoke them to draw unto him, he hath cried in his proclamation havoc upon all our true lieg^e, people and subjects, their wives, children, and goods." † The terrible havoc which the men of the north had inflicted upon the south was now to be retaliated. At Ferrybridge, the advanced columns of the Yorkists were defeated in a skirmish. On the 29th of March the main bodies of the two armies are in view of each other, at Towton, about eight miles from York. Never before or since in England was such a mighty host of the children of the soil gathered together for mutual destruction. The army of the Lancastrians has been computed at sixty thousand. They were the hardy north-men, with borderers, half English, who had dispersed to their moors and mountains after ravaging the country, for thirty miles in breadth, from York to St. Alban's. Again they were gathered under the banner of the Red Rose. They were led by the earls of Northumberland, Westmorland, Devonshire, Wiltshire, the duke of Somerset, Sir Andrew Trollope, and others, who were ready to fight to the death. .Of the composition of Edward's army of nearly fifty thousand, we have a remarkable description, in "Verses on the Battle of Towton," ‡ which, in relating how

"There was many a fair pennon waiting on the Rose,"

recites the badges and banners that fluttered in the Yorkist ranks on that terrible eve of Palm Sunday. The house of York was represented by its badges of the Falcon and Fetterlock, the Ostrich Feather, the Black Bull, and the Boar's-head. Warwick was there, with his dreaded banner of the Ragged-Staff; Norfolk came with the timely aid of his White Lion; Fauconberg fought under his Fish-hook; Scrope displayed his Cornish Chough, Grey of Ruthyn his Black ragged-staff, Bouchier his Bridled-horse, Stanley his Greyhound and Harts'-head. But the support of the people, under their own leaders, was manifest in the banners of the towns that had gathered round Edward in his march of sixteen days. He had led from London his Welshmen, with their banner of the Dolphin, and his Kentishmen, with the Harrow of Canterbury. But in the field of Towton were the White Ship of Bristow, and the proud Libert (Leopard) of Salisbury, whose men had marched to unite with the midland people. Coventry was there with its Black Ram; Worcester with its Wolf; Gloucester with its Dragon; Leicester with its Griffin; Nottingham with its George; Northampton with its Wild Rat. It was the eve of one of the most solemn festivals of the church, in which the entry of the Prince of Peace into Jerusalem was commemorated with the strewing of the first green branches and the earliest spring flowers, and solemn hymns were sung

* Fragment of a Chronicle, published by Hearne. † "Plumpton Correspondence," p. 1.

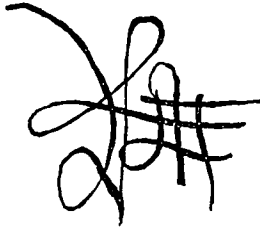
‡ "Archæologia," vol. xxix. p. 343.

for the victory of good over evil. On the eve of Palm Sunday began the cruel battle of Towton at four o'clock, when the armies joined. Through all that night, amidst a fall of snow, these fierce men madly fought till the afternoon of the next day. Then, thirty-three thousand men lay dead on the field of battle.

"The snow shall be their winding-sheet."

The triumph of the Yorkists was complete ; but it was not signalised by the greater triumph of mercy. It is affirmed that there was no quarter given in the battle ; although Comines says, " King Edward told me, that in all the battles which he had gained, his way was, when the victory was on his side, to mount on horseback, and cry out to save the common soldiers, and put the gentry to the sword, by which means none, or very few, of them escaped." * Those whom the sword spared too often fell beneath the axe. On the day after the battle of Towton, the earls of Devonshire and Wiltshire, with many others, were beheaded. The queen and the hunted king fled into Scotland.

* Memoirs, book iii. chap. 5.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a series of vertical strokes on the right side, characteristic of the signature of Edward IV.

Signature of Edward IV., R.E.



Great Seal of Edward IV. Reverse.*

CHAPTER X.

Popular support of the house of York—Coronation of Edward IV.—Executions—Attainders—Renewed attempts of queen Margaret—Insurrections—Battle of Hexham—Edward in peace—Debasement of the coin—The king's marriage—Warwick's estrangement—Marriage of Edward's sister to the duke of Burgundy—Marriage of Clarence to Warwick's daughter—Power of Warwick—Yorkshire insurrection—Insurrection under sir Robert Welles—Warwick and Clarence defeated—They fly to France—Invasion of Warwick and Clarence—Restoration of Henry VI.—Edward in exile—His return—Landing at Ravenspur—Reconciliation of Edward and Clarence—The march to London—Battle of Barnet—Henry again a prisoner—Landing of queen Margaret—Battle of Tewkesbury—Richard of Gloucester—Falconbridge—Death of Henry VI.

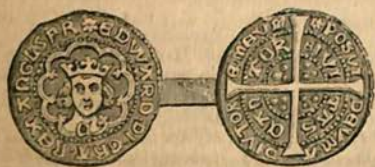
EDWARD of York has been borne to the throne upon the shoulders of the people. Public opinion was not then formed through journals, reported speeches, pamphlets—even events of great importance were slowly and imperfectly known—but still there was public opinion. An historian, who speaks of public opinion as an important element of the social life of modern Europe at this period, says, "It derives its origin and its nutriment from hidden sources; and, requiring little support from reason or from evidence, takes possession of the minds of men by involuntary conviction." † It was this public opinion, especially of London and the great towns, which swept away a well-disposed, but incapable king,—afflicted by mental and bodily

* On the ground of this side of the seal the sun and the rose are represented separately. The sun was adopted as a badge after the battle of Mortimer's Cross, on the morning previous to which three suns were seen, which, as the day advanced, became one

† Ranke, "History of the Popes," vol. i. p. 133.

infirmities; the instrument of a violent woman and her crafty favourites,—to substitute a youth of extraordinary vigour, of eminent beauty, of popular manners, but whose cruel and licentious nature was with difficulty controlled by the commanding will of the great noble who had identified himself with the cause of the house of York. That Warwick would have risked every thing merely for the assertion of the superior right to inheritance of the descendants of one son of Edward III. in preference to those of another son, is utterly inconsistent with the principle upon which the crown of England had been held for centuries, when there was no constitutional doubt that it was in the power of the great Council, afterwards called Parliament, to depose a king, and appoint a successor, who should have personal as well as hereditary claims. Sixty-one years had passed since the deposition of Richard II. and the election of Henry IV. During that time, there had been thirteen years of sagacious government; ten years of national glory; and thirty-eight years of a legal minority and weakness, during which a military people were constantly incensed by the disasters and disgraces of their arms, and an industrious people by the miserable intrigues and scandalous contests for power of grasping nobles. The English nation would endure a certain amount of vigorous despotism; taxation they would bear, for warlike attack or defence; but incapacity in the king, whom they regarded as the leader in all heroic enterprise, the wisest in council, the bravest in danger, they would not endure. They deposed the gentle Henry, and set up the fierce Edward.

Edward IV. was crowned at Westminster, on the 29th of June, 1461, by Thomas Bouchier, archbishop of Canterbury. His brother George was then created duke of Clarence, and his brother Richard duke of Gloucester. The king afterwards went a progress through the south and west, amidst some of the towns which had been so faithful to his interests. "He progressed," says Stow, "about the land to understand the estate thereof." His course was marked by executions as frequent as banquets. At



Half-Groat of Edward IV.

Bristol, he was present when sir Baldwin Fulford was beheaded, who was taken, "sailing into Brittany to rouse people against king Edward." One whose mind was deeply penetrated with the romance of antiquity—"the marvellous boy" of Bristol—has painted this tragedy with all the force of local colouring: the brave knight upon a sledge; the mayor, and aldermen, and councilmen in scarlet robes; the friars of St. Augustine and the friars of Saint James in the procession; the king looking out of the great minster window; Baldwin drawn past the cross in the high street up the steep hill.* The poet may have truly represented Edward gazing on this scene of death, for it was said of him, that he witnessed an execution with as much pleasure as others did a pageant. We have contemporary evidence that he was then in a merry mood, as was his occasional temper through life, whilst this work of revenge was going on. In a letter written on the day of Baldwin's death—"This

* Chatterton, "Bristow Tragedy."

same day sir Bauldwyn Fulford and another, called Haysaunt, were put in execution"—the writer, B. Essex, has communicated a secret message to Edward, and "the king laughed and made a great game thereof." * Yet, with his levity and his cruelty, this king had glimpses of his duty, in the season of his wondrous prosperity. He is solicited to grant a favour to one who has served him, and he answers, that "he would be your good lord therein, as he would to the poorest man in England; he would hold with you in your right, and as for favour he will not be understood that he shall show favour more to one man than to another, not to one in England." †

The parliament met on the 4th of November. It was a parliament wholly in the interests of the new dynasty. The Lancastrian peers and knights fell before its Bill of Attainder "thick as autumnal leaves." Henry VI., his queen, and their son, were attainted for the death of Richard, duke of York, and for delivering up Berwick to the Scots on the 25th of April, after the flight from Towton. Dukes, earls, knights, esquires, were attainted for being at the death of the duke of York; for being against king Edward at Towton-field; for procuring foreign princes to invade the realm; and for more recent movements in arms in Durham and Wales. The statute 1st Edward IV., which declares all the Lancastrian princes as "kings in deed and not of right," confirms their various grants, "except to such persons, and every of them, whom our sovereign lord the king reputeth and holdeth for his rebels or enemies." This despotic exception enabled the king not only to bestow the property of the attainted Lancastrians upon his friends, but to seize on the possessions of those whom he only suspected to be hostile to his claims. Some abandoned Henry, and made submission to Edward; to be treated with the contempt that belonged to their inconstancy. Such was Somerset, who submitted in 1463, and again went over to the Lancastrians, in 1464, then to perish on the scaffold. Those who were faithful, as Exeter was, had to endure exile and misery. "Some of them," says Comines, "were reduced to such extremity of want before the duke of Burgundy received them, that no common beggar could have been in greater. I saw one of them, who was duke of Exeter, but who concealed his name, following the duke of Burgundy's train bare-foot and bare-legged, begging his bread from door to door. This man was next of the house of Lancaster; had married king Edward's sister; and being afterwards known had a small pension allowed him for his subsistence." ‡ How slight regard has chronicle or tradition bestowed upon the hundreds of other poor outcasts of this fearful time! The fate of one family is an exception, for it has been consecrated by the poet. The Clifford who slew Rutland at Wakefield was himself slain at Towton in his twenty-fifth year. His widow and her infant boy fled "to the caves and to the brooks," and the child lived a solitary life in "Blencathara's rugged coves," till grown a youth he was again forced to fly, "to lead a flock from hill to hill." "The good lord Clifford," who was restored to his title and estates in the first year of Henry VII., and entered the House of Peers without being able to read or write, learnt in his shepherd life purer and wiser lessons than

* Ellis, "Original Letters," First Series vol. i. p. 15.

† Paston Letters, letter clxxxiii.

‡ Memoirs, book iii. chap. 4.

his four immediate progenitors had learnt—the lessons of hatred and revenge, through which they all had perished in the field of battle ;—

“Love had he found in huts where poor men lie.” *

It was three years before the accession of Edward to the throne had settled down into a state of tranquillity. The adherents of the house of Lancaster placed their dependence upon queen Margaret. Her unconquerable activity kept alive the spirit of the party. For her they planned ; for her they staked their lives, almost against hope. But they relied upon foreign aid, and upon the power of the nobles, who would still have been formidable if the people had been with them, but who were powerless whilst Edward was regarded as a deliverer from evil government. In 1462 Margaret raised an army of adventurers in France, and landed on the northern coast in October. The energetic king was soon at the head of a great force. The queen fled to her ships, which were scattered by a tempest, and part of her foreign troops being cast upon Holy Island were pursued and destroyed. She escaped to Berwick, which had been surrendered to the Scots in the previous year. A portion of her partisans had however taken the strong fortresses of Bamborough, Alnwick, and Dunstanburgh. Warwick arrived to besiege these castles ; and Bamborough and Dunstanburgh were surrendered by the duke of Somerset and sir Richard Percy, on condition that they should recover their rank and their estates upon swearing fealty to Edward. Alnwick capitulated. The attainders of Somerset and Percy were repealed by the parliament, and their lands restored. Deserted thus by two of her chief supporters, Margaret sought safety in her father's territory of Lorraine. Monstrelet, the French historian, without giving a date, tells that romantic story of her escape from her pursuers, which relieves the monotony of these dreary annals of bloodshed and treachery by a narrative which touches our common sympathies. In a wild forest near the coast she fell into the hands of banditti, who plundered her of her gold and jewels. They quarrelled about the division of the booty ; and, seizing her opportunity the queen fled with her boy, then about eleven years old. In the depths of the wood they were again encountered by a single robber. Margaret, with the decision of her character, threw herself upon the protection of the outlaw. “This is the son of your king—to your care I commit him—I am your queen.” The robber became her friend, and guarded her to a place of security.† Sir John Fortescue, the great Lancastrian lawyer, has a strange passage showing that the thieves of England are of such high courage that three or four will set upon seven or eight free men. Of the Scots, he says, “their hearts serve them not to take a man's goods while he is present, and will defend it ; but the Englishman be of another courage ; for if he be poor, and see another man having riches, which may be taken from him by might, he wot not spare to do so.” This desperate hardihood in evil doing, in which life was pitted against life, was not incompatible with generosity. The story of Margaret and the robber is consistent with the national character—that mixture of ferocity and gentleness of which the ballad-heroes of Sherwood were the type.

* Wordsworth's “Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle.”

† Hume places this event after the battle of Hexham. Turner and Lingard think it belongs to this earlier period.

In the fourth year of king Edward the constant exertions of the Lancastrians kept the government in serious alarm. In February, 1464, the parliament was prorogued in consequence of the commotions in various counties. On the 1st of March, John Paston writes to his father, "The commons in Lancashire and Cheshire were up to the number of ten thousand or more; but now they be down again; and one or two of them was headed in Chester as on Saturday last past."* In 1464 Margaret was again in Scotland; and now an attempt of extraordinary boldness to regain the lost throne was made by the Lancastrians. Percy and Somerset had gone over to their old friends, and were at the head of a large force of Scots and exiled English; and they again obtained the command of the three castles which had been yielded to Edward in 1462. Lord Montacute, the brother of Warwick, the warder of the east marches, went promptly against the force which Percy and Somerset had collected. On the 25th of April a battle was fought at Hedgeley Moor, near Wooller, where Percy, in the words of the Year Book, "*comme homme fuit occise*"—was killed like a man. On the 15th of May Montacute encountered the army of the queen near Hexham. In that decisive victory of Edward's commander the fortunes of the house of Lancaster sank to the lowest point of hopelessness, as if "never to rise again." The inconstant or treacherous Somerset was taken prisoner, and instantly beheaded. There was some justice in the recital of his crimes in the act for his attainder, which says, "of very gentleness and the noble honour that ought to be grounded, in every gentleman, he should have been established in firm faith and truth," for "he had been bounteously and largely treated." But in these unhappy contentions "the noble honour" was too often sacrificed to the base expediency. Executions, attainders, imprisonments, followed this victory. Some of the fugitives from the battle-field threw themselves into Bamborough Castle, with sir Ralph Gray, which fortress speedily surrendered to Warwick. Gray was beheaded at Doncaster, having been spared the degradation of having his spurs stricken off by the master cook, through the especial mercy of Edward. The estates of Percy were granted to Montacute, who became earl of Northumberland. The English government concluded at this time of success a truce for fifteen years with Scotland, in which it was stipulated that the Lancastrians should receive neither shelter nor aid from the Scots.†

The repose which Edward had now attained was not favourable to the improvement of his character. In the rush of war he was eminently brave and daring. In peace, the same energy became wild licentiousness. His expenses were unbounded. He gave away the forfeited possessions of his enemies with a rash liberality, and he resorted to very dangerous devices for the supply of his own extravagance. In 1464 "king Edward changed the coin of England, by which he had great getting;" and the contemporary writer, giving the value of this new coin, adds, "to the great harm of the common people."‡ Another contemporary says that the gold and silver

* Paston Letters, letter cccxxx.

† The affairs of Scotland, in connection with those of England, have not been of material importance since the release of James I., in 1424. The two kingdoms were in a state of occasional border warfare, with long truces. Towards the close of the reign of Edward IV., the relations of the two countries assume a greater degree of interest.

‡ Warkworth's Chronicle, p. 4.

money was changed and coined anew, that the name of Henry might be obliterated.* It appears from Warkworth's brief and obscure account that the old noble, which passed for six shillings and eightpence, was now called a rial and commanded to pass for ten shillings. This was not literally true, but was true in principle. Edward issued two new gold coins called angels and angelets, which were to be substituted for the noble and half noble. The noble of Henry IV. contained 108 grains of gold; the angel of Edward IV.



Angel of Edward IV.

contained only 80 grains. But Henry IV. had himself depreciated his noble from 120 grains to 108; so that the angel of Edward IV. was current for two-thirds more than its intrinsic value at the beginning of the century. Unquestionably these robberies of the public for the benefit of the royal treasury were "to the great harm of the com-

mon people." They were "to the extreme damage of the great ones of the kingdom," says another chronicler. But few in that age understood how fatal are such devices to the welfare of the whole community; and how short-lived was the advantage of the fraud to the crown itself. Edward followed the evil example of his predecessors; for to them and to him it was enough that the depreciation of the coin would supply some of the necessities of the passing hour. This "shallow and impudent artifice of lowering the standard"† perhaps produced more serious injuries to the industry of the country than the revolutions and counter-revolutions of this age, with all their waste of national resources, and all their disturbances of private property. But Edward had personal qualities which obviated the unpopularity of some of his public acts. "To gain universally the favour of all sorts, he used towards every man of high and low degree more than meet familiarity, which trade of life he never changed."‡ The "more than meet familiarity" might be offensive to the pride of decaying feudal power, but it stood Edward in the place of many nobler qualities. The mode in which his frank and genial humour was regarded may be traced in our ballad-poetry, which has been always ready to celebrate the adventures of kings with their humble subjects, whether tanners, millers, or tinkers. "A merrie, pleasant, and delectable historie between K. Edward the Fourth and a Tanner of Tamworth," was the delight of many an angle-nook of the sixteenth century.§ It was this impulsive temperament which led Edward to the rashest, but in many respects the most creditable action of his life,—his marriage. Elizabeth, the daughter of sir Richard Woodville and of Jaquetta, the duchess of Bedford, had been married to sir John Grey, a Lancastrian, who was killed at the second battle of St. Alban's. Edward saw the lady at her mother's house; when she solicited him to restore her late husband's confiscated possessions. Her beauty was irresistible to the young man of twenty-three; and they were secretly married.

* Continuation of History of Croyland.

† John Stuart Mill.

‡ Polydore Vergil, early translation, p. 116.

§ Ballad in Percy's "Reliques," vol. ii.

The ceremony is thus described: "Which spousals were solemnised early in the morning at a town named Grafton, near unto Stony-Stratford; at which marriage was no person present but the spouse, the spousesse, the duchess of Bedford her mother, the priest, two gentlewomen, and a young man to help the priest sing."* There is a letter, undated, written by Richard, duke of York, to dame Elizabeth Woodville, whom his son made queen of England, recommending her marriage to his well-beloved knight, sir Hugh John; and there is another from the earl of Warwick, in which he urges the same suit for the same gallant knight, "which now late was with you unto his full great



Queen Elizabeth Woodville.

joy;" and whose love was founded upon "the great sadness and wisdom that he found and proved in you at that time, as for your great and proved virtue and womanly demeaning."† Had sir Hugh John carried off the prize, the course of England's policy might have been somewhat changed in an alliance with France, or Spain, or Scotland, such as the wise ones of that day speculated upon. The probability is that no foreign prince chose to connect the fortunes of his family with such an insecure throne as that of Edward, and that no state management opposed the freedom of his own inclinations.

The marriage of Edward was avowed at the Michaelmas of 1464. On the 26th of May of the following year, Elizabeth was solemnly crowned at West-

* Fabyan, p. 654.

† "Archæologia," vol. xxix., p. 132.

minster. She had two sons by her marriage with sir John Grey. She had numerous relations—a father, brothers, sisters. The honours and riches which were indiscreetly showered upon this family provoked a bitter animosity, at a period when no public man looked upon the rise of another without jealousy. The marriage with the widow of a Lancastrian who had died fighting against Edward was not an impolitic step towards the extinction of the quarrel between the adherents of the two houses. It was in accordance with that just principle which had previously dictated the proclamation of a general amnesty to all who would submit to the new government. We must not implicitly receive the statement that “the nobility truly chafed, and cast out open speeches that the king had not done according to his dignity,” * and that “they found much fault with him in that marriage.” But we may well believe that they looked with the same fear and dislike upon the influence of a queen, for the advancement of her friends, as they had done in a former reign when Margaret was surrounded with obnoxious favourites, and they pulled down Suffolk and Somerset. Polydore says “the woman was of mean calling.” Her birth could not be called mean, whose mother was a duchess, and whose maternal uncle was a prince of Luxemburgh, who attended her coronation with a retinue of a hundred knights and gentlemen. The historical relations of this reign, and of that of Richard III., are to be received with the greatest caution; for they abound with exaggerations,—with assertions without evidence,—and with positive mis-statements that have been repeated by one historian after another till they have become familiar to us as unquestioned truths. The story that Warwick was deceived and insulted by Edward in being employed to negotiate a marriage with the sister-in-law of Louis XI. whilst the king’s rash passion led him to marry Elizabeth Woodville during the great earl’s absence, is considered a fiction of the later chroniclers unsupported by the relations of the more ancient historians.† But unquestionably Warwick became estranged from Edward soon after this period. The marriage of the three brothers of Elizabeth, and of her five sisters, into noble houses, with immense possessions, rendered the Woodvilles objects of envy and hatred. The Nevilles had placed Edward on the throne, and had since ruled the kingdom. They saw their power departing from them, in the sudden rise of the queen’s relations. Edward desired to marry his sister to Charles, the heir of Burgundy. Warwick was the avowed enemy of Charles, and he intrigued with Lewis of France to prevent the match. There was then a greater coldness between the king and the proud noble, which threatened a new field of St. Alban’s. They were, however, reconciled; and in 1468 the negotiations for the marriage with Charles, now the reigning duke, were completed; and the princess Margaret was conducted through the streets of London by Warwick, on her way to embark for Flanders. She was married on the 3rd of July near Bruges, and entered that city, rich with all the wealth of an industrious people, on the same day. The pageants and jousts of peace were unequalled in splendour. John Paston, who was present, was wild with the glories of that festival time: “As for the duke’s court, as of lords, ladies, and gentlewomen, knights, esquires, and gentlemen, I heard of never like unto it, save king Arthur’s court.” Especially he rejoices in the feasting: “There were never

* Polydore Vergil, p. 117.

† See note in Lingard, vol. v. p. 257, ed. 1825.

Englishmen had so good cheer out of England that ever I heard of." * The queen's brother, lord Scales, afterwards earl Rivers, was the admired of all observers. At a great tournament in Smithfield in 1467, he had jousted with Arthur the Bastard of Burgundy, and was victor in the field. At Bruges, lord Scales worsted another champion; for he and the Bastard had made promise at London that they would never meet again in arms.†

Whilst the house of York is thus at the height of splendour and fame, the house of Lancaster has almost passed out of the world's regard. Henry is a prisoner in the Tower of London. After the battle of Hexham, he remained concealed for more than a year in Lancashire; but his place of retreat was at last betrayed. According to Warkworth, he was "carried to London on horseback, and his legs bound to the stirrups, and so brought through London to the Tower, where he was kept long time by two squires and two yeomen of the crown and their men; and every man was suffered to come and speak with him by license of the keepers." ‡ Queen Margaret was in the asylum of her father's court. But at this lowest point of their fortunes, another revolution was preparing in England, more strange and complicated, more sudden and decisive, than the wildest dream of the most sanguine Lancastrian could have shaped out. Clarence, the brother of king Edward, was to become his enemy; and Warwick was to join with Clarence in restoring those whom he had cast down from their high estate. On the 11th of July, 1469, George, duke of Clarence, then in his 21st year, was married at Calais to Isabel, the daughter of the earl of Warwick. Edward had been decidedly opposed to this marriage. From the time when it was completed, England was the scene of insurrections, deadly enmities, hollow reconciliations, which ended in a second fatal period of civil war.

The attempt to unravel the tangled thread of the relations of the year which followed the marriage of Clarence is almost a hopeless task for modern historians. To understand the general character of the events, and their influence upon the people, we must form an accurate notion of the position of the earl of Warwick. We must not regard him merely as a rich nobleman, who could carry into the field a large band of personal retainers. In some respects he was more powerful than the king upon the throne. Richard Neville was the son of the earl of Salisbury; and he became earl of Warwick in 1449, through his marriage into the great Warwick family. Richard, duke of York, the father of Edward IV., had married the daughter of the earl of Westmorland, who was Warwick's grandfather; and thus Warwick stood in near relation to the house of York. His support of that house was therefore a natural result of his position; and his personal character, his immense wealth, and the high connections of the other branches of the Nevilles, would have placed him amongst the most powerful of the English nobles. But after the accession of Edward, he and his family held offices which rendered him still more powerful. He was captain of Calais, and of Dover, warden of the Scottish Marches, Lord Chamberlain, and Lord Steward. Comines says that, besides his inheritance, the annual profits of his offices amounted to

* Paston Letters, letter cclviii.

† Paston Letters. The most elaborate relation of these festivities is given by Barante.

‡ Chronicles, p. 5.

eighty thousand crowns. His state was more than regal. "When he came to London," writes Stow, "he held such a house that six oxen were eaten at a breakfast." This man, in whose mansions, scattered through the country, thirty thousand people are affirmed to have been daily fed, could raise an army at his lightest summons. With such a subject, Edward, however impatient under his domination, could scarcely dare to quarrel. Warwick held the king, whom he had raised up, in little personal esteem. "He looked upon him as a very weak prince."* Regarding him as a careless sensualist, he perhaps did some injustice to the character of Edward, who, when roused to action, displayed an energy which is scarcely compatible with weak intellect or deficient will. The earl, therefore, in the pursuit of his deep-laid schemes ran great risks. In the final issue of his plans, "the weak prince" signally defeated the wary politician. Within a fortnight after the marriage of Clarence there was a rising in Yorkshire, under a leader called Robin of Riddesdale. Sixty thousand men were in arms, whose rising was originally a mere resistance of the peasantry to a local impost, but which became thus formidable when it was connected with a demand that the Woodvilles should be removed from power. The name of Warwick was freely used in this insurrection; and two of his relations became its leaders, in the place of Robin of Riddesdale, who had been taken and beheaded. As their movements advanced southwards they defeated the king's army under the earl of Pembroke at Edgecote near Banbury; and the earl of Rivers, the queen's father, and sir John Woodville, her brother, who were taken prisoners, were beheaded at Coventry in the following September. William Herbert, earl of Pembroke, also perished on the scaffold. This renewal of the proscriptions and executions that followed the triumphs of the Lancastrians is attributed to the secret orders of Warwick. The dreaded earl now arrived in England, with Clarence and with Neville, archbishop of York. There appears little doubt, however the fact is disputed by some writers, that they obtained possession of the person of Edward at Honiley,† near Warwick, and that he was imprisoned in Middleham Castle. One of the articles of the attainder of Clarence, at a later period, charges him with "jeoparding the king's royal estate, person, and life in strait ward, putting him thereby from all his liberty, after procuring great commotions."‡ But there was a premature rising on the Scottish borders for the restoration of king Henry. Warwick now hastened to put down that insurrection. He had destined the throne for his son-in-law Clarence, and this demonstration was inconsistent with his plans. Edward regained his liberty; and again there was reconciliation. It is evident that there was no real amity; but that these hollow compromises were only the forerunners of more violent hostility. In the spring of 1470, the people of Lincolnshire were in arms against the government. They were headed by sir Robert Willes. There is a remarkable account of these events, which is manifestly official.§ The dissimulation of Warwick and Clarence in accepting the king's commission to put down the rebels; their writing of "pleasant letters" to Edward, whilst they were on the way to his enemies; are herein set forth with strong indignation. The king, by

* Comines † Not Olney. See Camden Miscellany, vol. i. p. 3.

‡ Quoted in Lingard, vol. i. p. 264.

§ "Chronicle of the Rebellion in Lincolnshire," published in the Camden Miscellany, vol. i.

his rapidity of movement, threw himself upon the insurgents before his false brother and cousin had joined. He defeated them at Stamford, their cry being a Clarence! a Clarence! a Warwick! Willes and others were beheaded; and the "Chronicle of the Rebellion" states that they confessed that the duke and the earl were the partners and the chief promoters of their treason; and that "their purpose was to destroy the king, and to have made the said duke king." The victory was followed up by Edward, who pursued the forces of Warwick into Yorkshire. They turned to the west and south; and the king moving rapidly after them, the earl and the duke got on shipboard at Dartmouth with many followers, and sailed for Calais. On the 31st of March they were proclaimed by Edward as traitors. The officer to whom Warwick had entrusted Calais refused to admit his captain; and the fugitives were compelled to sail for Normandy, and finally landed at Harfleur.

Warwick was now within the reach of the dangerous friendship of Lewis XI. of France, who of all crowned heads possessed the wisdom of the serpent without the harmlessness of the dove. Clarence and the earl proceeded to the court of Lewis at Amboise. Through the influence of the wily king, Margaret of Anjou and her great enemy Richard Neville were reconciled. Prince Edward, the son of Henry VI., was to marry the daughter of Warwick. Henry VI. was to be restored. But the immediate chance of the crown was lost to the "false, fleeting" Clarence. In this negotiation Margaret acted with the same high spirit which she had displayed in the day of her greatest power. For some time she steadily refused "to pardon the earl of Warwick, or to take party with him." Then Warwick humbly promised "to be true and faithful subject in time to come." Lewis strenuously urged the union, "and so the queen, thus required by the king, as it is said, counselled also by the servants of the king of Sicile, her father, after many treaties and meetings, pardoned the earl of Warwick, and so did her son also."* In these intrigues, no one shows a face of honesty and nobleness but queen Margaret. Edward was not wholly blind to the machinations of his enemies. Through a lady who had been in the household of the duchess of Clarence, he contrived to make his brother comprehend that the part which he had taken was fatal to the interests of the house of York. Then came another course of dissimulation of Clarence towards Warwick, during which he contrived to let his brother Edward know that he would be faithful to his interest, and would desert his present friends upon the first occasion. But Edward, with an excess of confidence which was madness rather than courage, despised the warnings which he received from his brother-in-law, the duke of Burgundy. "He never was concerned at any thing, but still followed his hunting," says Comines. He put entire faith in the earl of Warwick's brothers. At last, on the 13th of September, 1470, Warwick and Clarence landed at Dartmouth. Henry VI. was proclaimed; and as the small army of the earl advanced into the country, it was swelled by prodigious numbers of people who gathered under the standard of the all-powerful king-maker. Edward had led his army northward to suppress a pretended rebellion in Northumberland, which was got up as a snare. His quarters were at Doncaster; where six thousand men, at the prompting of Montacute, the brother of Warwick, threw away the badge of

* Ellis, "Original Letters," Second Series, vol. i. p. 132.

the White Rose, and shouted, "God bless king Henry." Edward was in a fortified house; but he saw resistance to the approaching army of Warwick would now be fruitless. He threw himself upon a horse, and on the third of October was on ship-board at Lynn. His queen was at that time residing in the Tower of London, where Henry VI. was detained as a state prisoner.* Elizabeth, when she heard of the landing of Warwick, left the city-fortress for the greater safety of the Sanctuary at Westminster. Here, on the 4th of November, in this season of peril, was born the first son of Edward IV. The deliverance of Henry from his captivity was accomplished on the 6th of October, immediately after the entry of the Lancastrian army into London. A nearly contemporary record of this event is very curious. "The bishop of Winchester, by the assent of the duke of Clarence and the earl of Warwick, went to the Tower of London, where king Henry was in prison by king Edward's commandments, and there took him from his keepers; which was nought worshipfully arrayed as a prince, and nought so cleanly kept as should seem such a prince. They had him out, and new arrayed him, and did to him great reverence, and brought him to the palace of Westminster, and so he was restored to his crown again."† The people of London again heard the once-familiar name of Henry shouted forth by the heralds, and they said "God bless him" in a trembling whisper.

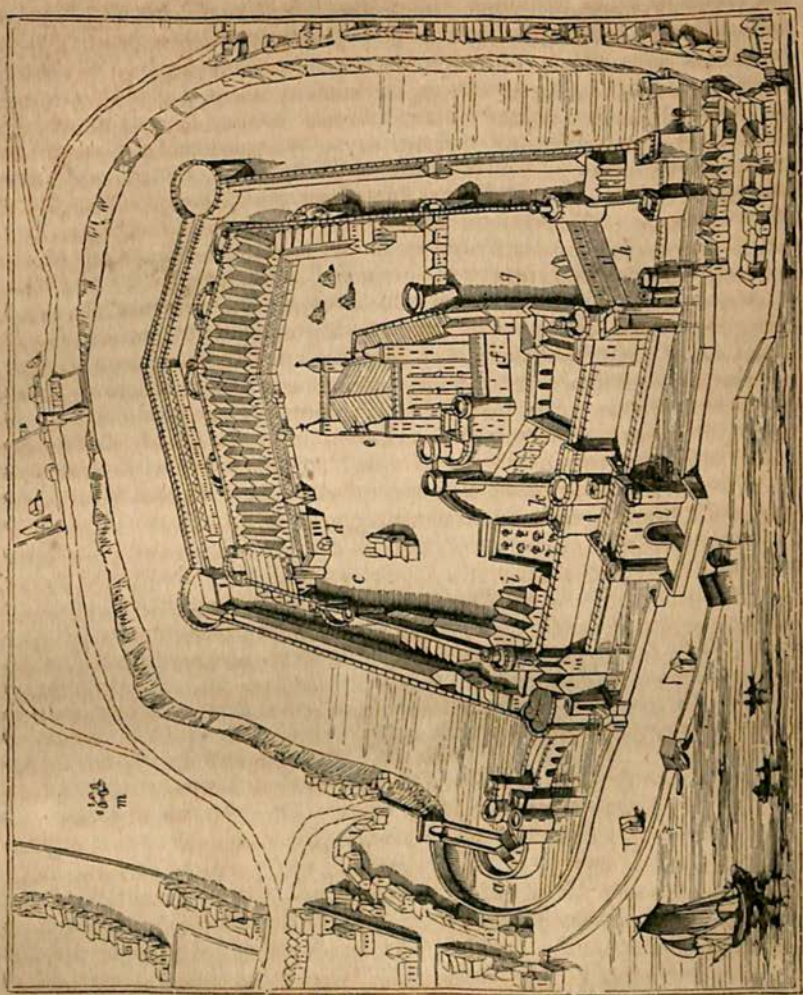


A Herald reading a Proclamation.

The most important guide to a comprehension of public affairs, the Rolls of Parliament, are wanting for the six months of the restoration of Henry VI. They were probably destroyed at the time of the counter-revolution; for, as we learn from other sources, in the parliament held at the beginning of 1471 the attainders of the Lancastrians were all removed; the Yorkists were attainted; and the crown was settled on Henry and his son

* See plan on the opposite page.

† Warkworth, p. 2.



PLAN OF THE TOWER OF LONDON.

We have seen that the captive Henry VI. and the queen of Edward IV. were in the Tower at the same period. It is necessary to bear in mind the great extent of this place, and its various uses, to understand this and other historical passages. A tolerably clear notion of what this palace, prison, and fortress was may be gathered from the above plan, which was engraved from a survey made in 1597.

- a. Lion's Tower.
- b. Bell Tower.
- c. Beauchamp Tower.
- d. The Chapel.
- e. The Keep, called also *Cæsar's Tower*, or *White Tower*.

- f. Jewel House.
- g. Queen's Lodgings.
- h. Queen's Gallery and Garden.
- i. Lieutenant's Lodgings.

- k. Bloody Tower.
- l. St. Thomas' Tower, and Traitor's gate.
- m. Place of Execution on Tower-hill.

Edward, and in failure of issue upon the duke of Clarence. Warwick and Clarence were appointed Protectors of the realm during the minority of prince Edward. This restoration appears to have been carried through with less ferocity than disgraced the earlier proceedings of the civil war. The earl of Worcester, Constable of England, was beheaded immediately upon the establishment of the Lancastrian authority—a nobleman who has been stigmatised as “the butcher of England,” but whom the father of English printing eulogises as “the right virtuous earl which late piteously lost his life.”* But no other death on the scaffold is recorded. The country appears to have quickly settled down into tranquillity; and the knights and esquires to have changed their party with wonderful celerity. Edward had fled to Holland so ill-provided that he “was forced to give the master of the ship for his passage a gown lined with martins, and promised to do more for him whenever he had an opportunity.”† He had, however, in the train of himself and his brother Richard, followers to the number of seven or eight hundred; but, says Comines, “sure so poor a company were never seen before.” His brigs were chased by the Easterlings, shipmen of the Hanse Towns, who were a piratical race; and he ran his vessels ashore on the coast of Holland. He was well-treated by the governor; and obtained a place of refuge at the Hague. Edward’s brother-in-law, the duke of Burgundy, would have been much better pleased to have heard of his death, as Comines avers. The earl of Warwick was one of the few men of whom Charles the Rash stood in fear; and he apprehended the great earl’s vengeance if he protected the outcast, and showed hostility to the house of Lancaster. His clever minister, Comines, declared that the duke’s alliance was with the king and kingdom of England, and whoever the English took for king should be so to the state of Burgundy. In this low condition of his affairs at home, and the neutrality of his great relative abroad, the chances of Edward’s return were but small indeed. It became a merit of the crafty amongst his old friends to speak slightly of him. The earl of Oxford, one of the most steadfast of the Lancastrians, had gone to Norwich in November 1470, to ascertain the state of parties. Sir John Paston, the stout Yorkist, who had such good cheer at the marriage of Edward’s sister, now writes to his brother, “If ye could find the means, Master Roos and ye, to cause the mayor in my lord’s ear to tell him, though he should bind my lord to conceal it, that the love of the country and city resteth on our side, and that other folks be not beloved, nor never were, this would do no harm.”‡ The “other folks” would soon render it more difficult than ever for Sir John Paston, and many like him, to say which was “our side.”

On the 2nd of March, 1471, there is a little fleet in the harbour of Flushing, and Edward the exile goes on board one of the ships. He has received some secret succour from the duke of Burgundy, and has contrived to gather two thousand Englishmen under the White Rose banner. The wind is unfavourable; but he prefers remaining on shipboard to turning back from his enterprise. On the 11th the wind changes; and the little fleet sails to the coast of Norfolk. On the 12th, in the evening, the

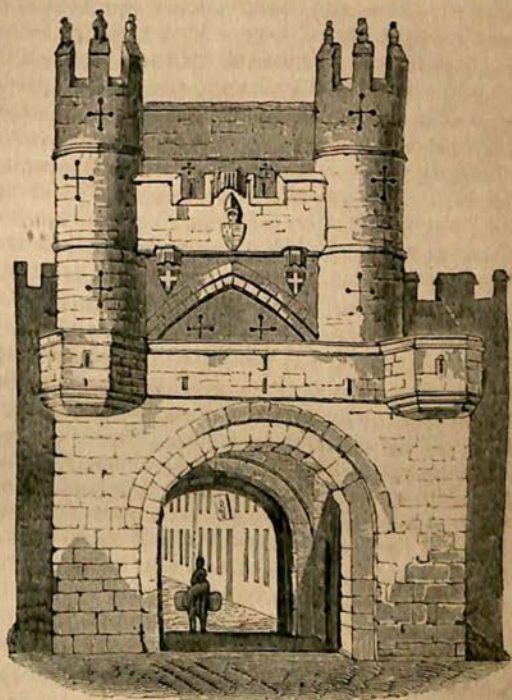
* Caxton’s Postscript to “Cicero de Amicitia,” translated by the earl of Worcester.

† Comines.

‡ Paston Letters; letter ccvii.

adventurer is before Cromer; but he learns that "it might not be for his weal to land in that country," for that the earl of Oxford was there in force: and the duke of Norfolk and other friends were "put in ward about London." * They again stood out to sea, and were exposed to a furious storm for two days and nights, which scattered the vessels, so that the leaders were each compelled to act upon their individual responsibility, and land where they best could. Edward, with his usual intrepidity, went ashore, with a very few followers, at Ravenspur. Richard accomplished a landing four miles from Ravenspur; and Rivers at a distance of fourteen miles. There was no force at hand to

resist them; and the separated leaders at last joined; and marched on, setting forth that Edward came, not to claim the kingdom, but to ask only for the inheritance of his father, the dukedom of York. He arrived before the city of York on the 17th, when the recorder came out and declared that he should not be suffered to enter; but then came two burgesses, who conceded that in the quarrel of his father he should be received. "And so, sometime comforted and sometime discomfited, he came to the gates before the city." He boldly entered, with only sixteen or seventeen persons, and harangued "the worshipful folks which were assembled a little within the gates." The wearied and hungered men were refreshed; and the next morning marched forward without the slightest molestation. Even Montacute, the brother of Warwick, allowed them to pass Pomfret Castle in safety. The servant of king Edward, who writes this "Historie" of his arrival, says that "though all the king's fellowship at that season were not many in number, yet they were so habiled † and so well-picked men, and in their work they had on hand so willed, that it had been right hard to have put them to any distress." Onward they went, past Wake-



Monk Bar, York.

Onward they went, past Wake-

* We here quote—and shall do so in subsequent passages without special reference—from the curious "Historie of the Arrival of King Edward IV.," published by the Camden Society—a narrative which is the best authority for the details of one of the boldest enterprises on record.

† Disciplined—made skilful.

field and Doncaster, to Nottingham, and thence to Leicester and Coventry. Here, on the 29th of March, Edward rested before Coventry, having received some accession of force on his march. Warwick was in the walled city, with six or seven thousand men. The deadly enemies were negotiating for three days, without avail; and then Edward marched to the town of Warwick, "where he was received as king, and so made his proclamation from that time forward." The secret compact with Clarence was now to be completed. The duke drew towards Edward with four thousand men; and in a fair field out of Warwick, towards Banbury, the two brothers met between their two hosts, "where was right kind and loving language betwixt them two, with perfect accord knit together for ever hereafter." Clarence then endeavoured to mediate between Warwick and his brother, but "all such treaty brake and took none effect." On the 6th of April the Yorkist army moved to Northampton, and keeping its straight course for the capital, on the 9th was at St. Alban's. Neville, the archbishop of York, assembled a force of six or seven thousand men in London, and "caused Henry, called king, to take a horse and ride from Paul's through Cheap, and so made a circuit about to Wallbrook." Fabyan, who knew the temper of the people, says, "the which rather withdrew men's hearts than otherwise." They saw the poor feeble king, a passive instrument of others, without any real power to carry out the kind impulses of his nature. They knew there was one at hand who had a strong will, wondrous energy, and, best of all, invariable good fortune. Comines, with that touch of the sarcastic which belonged to his peculiar experience of the crooked ways of the world, says that the sums which Edward owed to the tradesmen of London made them rejoice at the prospect of his restoration; and that the ladies of quality and citizens' wives, who were proud of his gallantries, compelled their husbands to declare for him. There was no resistance. The archbishop obtained a conditional promise of pardon; and on the 11th, when Edward entered the city, and rode straight to Paul's, the prelate there delivered king Henry to his great enemy. The next day was Good Friday. On the Saturday Edward led his army out of London; for Warwick had rapidly followed him in his march, and had halted at Barnet. His hope was to have surprised Edward in London whilst he was occupied in the solemnities of the great festival of the Church. The energy of the king was ready for every emergency. On that Easter eve, the 13th of April, the advanced guard of the Yorkists have encountered the outposts of the Lancastrians, and have driven them out of the town of Barnet. Warwick's main force is encamped upon the high ground about half a mile beyond. In the dimness of nightfall, Edward's army is marching up the steep hill upon which the town is built; and in closed ranks and profound silence they pass through the narrow street, and past the ancient church, and so on to the open plain. "It was right dark," says the eye-witness, so that the king could not see where his enemies were embattled; and, therefore, took up a position much nearer to them than he had supposed. "But he took not his ground so even in front afore them as he would have done, if he might better have seen them; but somewhat a-syden-hand" [on one side]. The ground to the east suddenly declines from the elevated plain; and if Edward took his position "a-syden-hand" in this direction, he would have obtained an accidental advantage of some importance. Warwick had ordnance to defend his front; and as the

tramp of men broke the silence "he shot guns almost all the night;" but "it so fortun'd that they alway overshot the king's host." They were nearer than Warwick's gunners thought, and they were upon lower ground. There is something solemn in this array of two enemies, in darkness and deep silence, each ignorant of the exact position of the other—the darkness and the silence interrupted at long intervals by the flash and the boom of a single gun. The morning came, but the obscurity did not vanish. There was little light on Barnet Heath on that Easter morning, though peaceful thousands in other parts of England might have risen to see the sun dance, in the beautiful superstition that the firmament gave a token of gladness at this holy dawning. "The king, understanding that the day approached near, betwixt four and five of the clock, notwithstanding there was a great mist, and letted [hindered] the sight of either other," commenced the attack. In that mist English against English fought for three hours—madly, blindly—the left wing of the Yorkists, under Hastings, beaten and flying, whilst the king was rushing on in the centre, unconscious of the discomfiture—the right wing under Gloucester successfully attacking Warwick, whose men, as Oxford returned from his pursuit of Hastings' flying Yorkists, mistook him for an enemy, and received him with a terrible discharge of arrows. All became confusion. Warwick fell fighting on foot; and so his brother Montacute. The king-maker had the advantage of numbers and of position. The mist, which even in these days of cultivation and drainage rises from the clay lands below Barnet, probably saved Edward from defeat. His random attack, on that dark April morning, was successful in its impetuosity, through the obscurity which prevented any combined movement of assault on his part, or of resistance on the part of his enemy. Edward fought hopefully, in the ignorance that a third of his army had sustained a defeat. Warwick fought desperately without the animating conviction that in another part of the field he had been victorious. Seldom has such a great result been produced out of blind chance and confusion. Edward was completely master of the field where seven thousand Lancastrians fell.* On the afternoon of that Easter Day, the king marched back to London, and rode straight to Paul's; and there was thanksgiving and gratulation, and the steeples gave forth their merry peals, and the people shouted for the young victorious king; and the poor dethroned Henry, who had been led out to Barnet, was led back to the Tower. Many an unhappy wretch who had fought against Edward now crept into some hiding-place in London. One Lancastrian who was wounded thus writes to his mother to beg her alms, "for by my troth my leechcraft and physic and rewards to them that have kept me and conducted me to London, have cost me since Easter-day more than five pounds, and now I have neither meat, drink, clothes, leechcraft, nor money." †

The great struggle was not yet over. Queen Margaret had gathered a large army of foreigners and exiles; and she landed at Weymouth, on the very day that Warwick had fallen at Barnet. This force had embarked at

* A column was erected in 1740, with this inscription: "Here was fought the famous battle between Edward the 4th and the Earl of Warwick, April the 14th, anno 1471, in which the Earl was defeated and slain."

† Paston Letters, vol. v., 4to, p. 3.

Honfleur on the 24th of March, and had again and again been driven back by stress of weather. There soon gathered around the queen Somerset, and Devonshire, and other staunch friends. On Easter Monday the news was brought of the battle of Barnet. "She was right heavy and sorry," says Edward's official account. "She like a woman all dismayed for fear fell to the ground," writes Hall. They marched to Exeter, gathering the men of Devonshire and Cornwall as they proceeded; and then took the direct way to Bath. Edward supplied the place of the killed and wounded of his men, and assembled his forces around him at Windsor, where he kept the feast of St. George on the 23rd of April. On the 24th he marched forth, seeking his enemies in the west. By weary marches, "in a foul country, all in lanes and stony ways, betwixt woods, without any good refreshing," the Lancastrians reached Tewkesbury, and there determined to make a stand. They took up a strong position "in a close even at the town's end; the town and the abbey at their backs; afore them, and upon every hand of them, foul lanes and deep dikes, and many hedges, and hills and valleys, a right-evil place to approach." Edward had followed them, by forced marches, finding little provision on his way, and on the 3rd of May "lodged himself and all his host within three miles of them." They met on Saturday the 4th of May. Strong in their positions, the Lancastrians repulsed the attacking army; but Somerset boldly led his men into the open field by bye-paths, and fiercely attacked Edward's flank. He was unsupported by Lord Wenlock, who was to have followed Somerset; was soon overpowered and driven back to his intrenchments, with great slaughter; and in the frenzy of despair he killed his companion in arms, whose treachery or fear had betrayed him in the hour of need. The king and his brother Richard pursued their advantage with their wonted impetuosity; and the unfortunate remnant of the adherents of the Red Rose "took them to flight,"—some "into lanes and dykes, where they best hoped to escape the danger,"—many were drowned at a mill-stream, "in the meadow fast by the town"—many ran towards the town, many to the church, to the abbey, and elsewhere, as they best might. The kingdom was won.

It is now for the first time that we find Richard of Gloucester a conspicuous personage in our historical relations. He has been the companion of his brother in his short exile, and has returned with him to fight by his side in his great victories. He is now under twenty years of age. If we may believe the description furnished by one who, in after years, was his bitter enemy, he was "little of stature, ill-featured of limbs, crook-backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right, hard favoured of visage." * From a less suspicious source—that of John Stow the antiquary, who was born about 1525—we learn that Stow "had spoken with some ancient men, who from their own sight and knowledge affirmed, that he was of bodily shape comely enough, only of low stature." † In his conduct at the decisive day of Tewkesbury, the gallantry of the knight is held to have been tarnished by the cruelty of the assassin. The usual account is derived from Polydore Vergil, whose History was written in Latin in the reign of Henry VII. He says, "Edward, the prince, and excellent youth, being brought a little after [the

* "History of King Richard the Third," attributed to Sir Thomas More, but if written by him, compiled from the statements of Cardinal Morton.

† Strype. Life of Stow, prefixed to "Survey of London," 1720.

battle] to the speech of king Edward, and demanded how he durst be so bold as to enter and make war in his realm, made answer, with bold mind, that he came to recover his ancient inheritance: hereunto king Edward gave no answer, only thrusting the young man from him with his hand; whom, forthwith, those that were present, George, duke of Clarence, Richard, duke of Gloucester, and William, lord Hastings, cruelly murdered." * On the other hand there is the contemporary account of the servant of Edward IV., who says, "In the winning of the field, such as abode hand-strokes were slain incontinent: Edward, called prince, was taken fleeing to the townwards, and slain in the field." † Another early record, that of Warkworth, a Lancastrian, gives the same account of young Edward's death in the field, with a circumstantial variation: "And there was slain in the field prince Edward, which cried for succour to his brother-in-law, the duke of Clarence." ‡ The victory of Tewkesbury was followed by the executions of the duke of Somerset and other Lancastrian leaders who, "divers times," were brought before the king's brother, the duke of Gloucester and constable of England, and the duke of Norfolk, marshal of England, their judges, and so were judged to death." § The judicial slaughters were rendered more atrocious than the ordinary ferocities of both parties after victory, by the circumstance that their fallen enemies were dragged from the sanctuary of the abbey of Tewkesbury, in spite of the promise of Edward that those who had there taken refuge should be pardoned.

On the 7th of May, king Edward marched from Tewkesbury to Worcester. On the 11th, he was at Coventry, where queen Margaret, who had been discovered in a small house of religion, where she had taken refuge, was brought to him, and went on to London in the train of the victor. The movements of the king were quickened by the news of an attack upon London by William Falconbridge, who had kept the Channel as admiral by Warwick's appointment. He is described as "a man of much audacity, and factious withal, whom evil life especially stirred up to disturb the commonwealth." || He gathered a great power of the Kentish people about him, who advanced to London, proclaiming that they were come to deliver king Henry. But when the news of Edward's victory arrived, the citizens gave no encouragement to this enterprise, and shut their gates against the adventurer, who had an evil reputation as a pirate who had been spoiling on the coast whilst the country was in commotion. He made a desperate assault on the city with a land force and with ships; set fire to the houses in three places; but being bravely repulsed by the armed citizens, retired to Blackheath, and afterwards to Sandwich, which he fortified. This daring resistance to the victorious government was not to be disregarded. Edward arrived in London, with thirty thousand men, on the 21st of May. On the 22nd, he was on his march towards Canterbury, accompanied by his brother Richard, who, within a few days, received the submission of Falconbridge. There is the following circumstantial record of an event which took place on the 21st of May, in which the duke of Gloucester is held to have again manifested "the spiteous and cruel" nature which is ascribed to him: "The same night that

* Early Translation, p. 152—Camden Society. † History of the Arrival, &c. p. 30.

‡ Chronicle, p. 18.

§ History of the Arrival, &c., p. 31.

|| Polydore Vergil, p. 153.

king Edward came to London, king Henry, being inward in prison in the Tower of London, was put to death, the 21st day of May, on a Tuesday night, between eleven and twelve of the clock, being then at the Tower the duke of Gloucester, brother to king Edward, and many other. And on the morrow he was chested and brought to Paul's, and his face was open that every one might see him; and in his lying he bled on the pavement there." * Opposed to this statement of the murder is the Yorkist account, that when Henry came to have knowledge of the fatal reverses of his friends and the death of his son, "he took it to so great despite, ire, and indignation, that, of pure displeasure and melancholy, he died, the 23rd day of the month of May." † The circumstance that Richard was in the Tower, "with other," on that one night when he rested in London, is a slight foundation upon which to build the charge of the murder of Henry. Polydore Vergil, writing at a time when it was convenient to lay the chief sins of the house of York upon him who had lost a crown, says, "the continual report is that Richard, duke of Gloucester, killed him with a sword." Fabyan writes, "of the death of this prince [Henry VI.] divers tales were told: but the most common fame went that he was sticked with a dagger by the hands of the duke of Gloucester." ‡ In the same hearsay style we find in More's "History,"—"He slew with his own hands king Henry the Sixth, being prisoner in the Tower, as men constantly say, and that without commandment or knowledge of the king, which would undoubtedly, if he had intended that thing, have appointed that butcherly office to some other than his own born brother." What immediate good the "born brother" would have derived in setting himself "that butcherly office" is not shown. Let us not load this youth with more burthens of evil than he will have to bear in his riper years of guilty ambition. If Henry was put to death, which is more than probable, it was politic in cardinal Morton to give such a colour to the event in his relations to More, as would transfer the guilt from the father of the wife of Henry VII., whose devoted minister the cardinal was, and fix it upon the uncle of that wife, whose memory could be safely assailed when there was no one left to care for him or defend him.

* Warkworth's Chronicle, p. 21.

† History of the Arrival, &c., p. 38.

‡ Chronicle, p. 662.



Court of Edward IV.

CHAPTER XI.

Total depression of the enemies of the house of York—The Court of Edward IV., its splendour and ceremony—Patronage of the new art of Printing—Disputes of Clarence and Gloucester as to Gloucester's marriage—Invasion of France—Adroitness of Lewis XI.—Death of the duke of Burgundy—Trial and condemnation of Clarence—Scotland—Death of Edward IV.—Accession of Edward V.—Jealousy of the family of Woodville by the great nobles—Arrest of Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey—Gloucester and Buckingham enter London with the king—The queen flies to Sanctuary—Gloucester appointed Protector—His friends obtain important posts—Coronation of Edward V. fixed—Arrest and execution of Hastings—Gloucester proclaims that his life is threatened—The duke of York removed to the Tower—Alleged marriage of Edward IV. previous to his union with Elizabeth Woodville—Sermon at Paul's Cross—The duke of Buckingham harangues the citizens at Guildhall—The illegitimacy of Edward's children declared—Gloucester takes the crown—Execution of Rivers and others—Coronation of Richard III.—Examination of the evidence that Richard III. caused the sons of Edward IV. to be murdered.

ALL the enemies of the house of York are swept away by the sword or the axe, or are in prison or in exile. Margaret of Anjou is a captive in the Tower, with a small allowance. The duke of Exeter, who had escaped from Barnet to the sanctuary of Westminster, perishes at sea the next year. Vere, the earl of Oxford, after having kept the coast of the Channel in alarm with a little fleet, and taken Mount St. Michael, in Cornwall, surrenders upon condition that his life should be spared, and is confined for eleven years in the castle of Ham, a prison that in future history will have far more importance than in connection with the wars of the Roses. The earl of Pembroke, with his nephew, the young earl of Richmond, have been cast by a storm on the coast of Brittany, and remain there during the reign of

Edward. Some who have been hostile to the Yorkists, such as Dr. Morton, who will rise to great power, and Sir John Fortescue, have submitted to the favourite of fortune. Many persons, who, as Fuller somewhere says, in playing their cards could scarcely know which was the trump, easily obtained their pardons; the course being that some friend of the successful party should procure the seal of the king, and that the chancellor should confirm "the bill."* For a while the Court of Edward is one of the most gay and magnificent in Europe, as indeed it was before the sudden revolution of 1470. There is a very curious account of the reception, by Edward and his queen, in 1466, of a Bohemian nobleman, in which a native of Nuremberg, one of his suite, furnishes some details of the wearisome ceremonies of the royal life. The Bohemian lord—having been feasted himself, whilst the king was making presents to trumpeters, pipers, players, and heralds, in the most lavish manner—"was conducted into a costly ornamented room where the queen was to dine; and there he was seated in a corner that he might see all the expensive provisions. The queen sat down on a golden stool alone at her table; and her mother and the king's sister stood far below her. And when the queen spoke to her mother or to the king's sister, they kneeled down every time before her, and remained kneeling until the queen drank water. And all her ladies and maids, and those who waited upon her, even great lords, had to kneel while she was eating, which continued three hours. After



Court Fool and Buffoon. (Harl. MS. 4379.)

dinner there was dancing, but the queen remained sitting upon her stool, and her mother kneeled before her."† It is scarcely to be wondered that king Edward too frequently stole away from this frightful etiquette, to be merry after his own vicious fashion; or that he "would a hunting ride, some pastime for to see."‡ The court fool, with his jests and his antics, must have been a welcome relief to the three hours of dining and kneeling.

But in the court of England, after the re-establishment of the house of York, there were more rational occupations than

the processions and banquets of the great days of ceremony, as that day was on which the Bohemian lord was received. There were literary tastes in those times

* See Paston Letters, vol. v. p. 7.

† Extract translated in the "Athenæum," November 16, 1844, from the "Travels of Leo von Rozmital through the West of Europe."

‡ Percy, "Reliques," vol. ii.

which had so recently witnessed the waste and ferocity of civil war. Edward was himself a reader. In his "Wardrobe Accounts" there are entries for binding his Titus Livius, his Froissart, his Josephus, and his Bible; as well as for the cost of fastening chests to remove his books from London to Eltham. The brother of the queen was the patron of Caxton, who brought his art to England in 1474. For Caxton's press the accomplished Rivers translated "The Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers," which was printed at Westminster in 1477; and he afterwards translated two other works for Caxton. Our first printer was intimately connected with the family of Edward IV.



Earl Rivers presenting his book, printed by Caxton, to Edward IV.

He had "a yearly fee," as he says, from Margaret the duchess of Burgundy, king Edward's sister, while he resided at Bruges; and by her command he proceeded with his "Historyes of Troye," a translation from the French, which the critical duchess looked over, and found "defaute" of his English.*

* In my Biography of Caxton, of which a new edition appeared in 1854, I adopted the opinion that Caxton had an employment at Bruges, in the court of "the lady Margaret." In a very curious volume, "Notice sur Colard Mansion, Libraire et Imprimeur de la Ville de Bruges," Paris, 1829, the author, M. de Prat, shows that Caxton and Mansion, who commenced printing at Bruges in 1475, were each carrying out the same views of popularising knowledge, Mansion having produced Boëthius and Ovid's Metamorphoses in French, as well as "L'Art de bien Mourir," which works Caxton also undertook in English. But M. de Prat, by the discovery of an entry in the register of civil judgments in Bruges, shows that in 1469 a case was determined of which there had been a previous arbitration by "William Caxton, merchant of England, master and governor of the merchants of the English nation;" and that, in May, 1469, "the said William Caxton was necessarily absent from the said city of Bruges." Was he not absent to learn the new art? and were not his labours as an author carried on with reference to his ultimate purpose of becoming a printer, although this very book of the "Historyes of Troye" might have been printed with the types of another at Cologne? He says that the translation and work was begun at Bruges in 1468, and ended in the holy city of Cologne in 1471. The translation would not have occupied three years, unless the translator had been engaged, to some extent or other, in its

He dedicates the first book which he printed to the duke of Clarence. He receives a payment, by order of Edward IV., in 1479, of the large sum of twenty pounds "for certain causes and matters performed by him for the said lord the king." It is manifest that at a period when the number of original writers was very few, the king and his court lent a willing aid to the great discovery which was to make knowledge a common property, in causing, as Caxton says earl Rivers did, "books to be imprinted and so multiplied to go abroad among the people."

The public triumphs of the house of York seem to have done little to secure the brotherly union of its members. The great earl of Warwick had two daughters; one married to the duke of Clarence, the other contracted to the son of Henry VI., who fell at Tewkesbury, in his seventeenth year. They were the heiresses of the enormous possessions of Warwick; and Clarence appears to have had no inclination to divide the great wealth of the Nevilles and the Beauchamps with any other. He concealed Anne, the younger sister, from the pursuit of Gloucester, who was her suitor. In February, 1472, sir John Paston writes that the family are "not all in charity," adding, "the king entreateth my lord of Clarence for my lord of Gloucester; and, as it is said, he answereth that he may well have my lady his sister-in-law, but they shall part no livelihood, as he saith." Gloucester was not a man to be put off in this fashion by his brother; so he did contrive "to have my lady his sister-in-law," discovering her, as the gossip of the day relates, in the disguise of a cook-maid. The quarrel went on; and in April, 1473, sir John Paston again writes, "The world seemeth queasy here; for the most part that be about the king have sent hither for their harness, and it is said for certain that the duke of Clarence maketh him big in that he can, showing as he would but deal with the duke of Gloucester; but the king intendeth, eschewing all inconvenience, to be as big as they both, and a stifler atween them." The question how the "livelihood" should be parted, was settled in 1474, by the parliament dividing the great fortune of Warwick between the two royal brothers, leaving the widow of Warwick, most unjustly, a very wretched provision. Richard had been appointed Chief Seneschal of the duchy of Lancaster, and resided officially at Pomfret Castle.* The son and only child of Richard and Anne was born at Middleham Castle, in 1473, which had been the property of the earl of Warwick. The local historians represent Richard to have been "popular in the north, where he was best known." † Another says, "Richard, represented as a monster of mankind by most, was not so esteemed in these northern parts." ‡

There have been three years of repose in England. The quiet suits ill with the restless nature of king Edward. His voluptuous habits have produced their usual consequence, satiety. A war with France was ever popular in England; and the king employs the years of 1473 and 1474 in preparation for a new conquest of the provinces which had been lost during the minority of Henry VI. The duke of Burgundy and the duke of Bretagne

typographical execution. "I have practised and learned, at my great charge and dispense, to ordain the said book in print," are his words at the end of this volume. In 1474 he was a printer at Westminster. I am indebted for a knowledge of M. de Prat's "Notice," to my accomplished friend, M. Octave Delepierre.—C. K.

* Plumpton Correspondence, p. 26.

† Surtees, "History of Durham."

‡ Drake's York.

urged on the revival of the ancient claims to the French crown. The parliament voted supplies with a profuse liberality, which the tax-payers did not entirely approve. "The king goeth so near us in this country, both to poor and rich, that I wot not how we shall live, unless the world amend." * On the 20th of June, 1475, Edward sailed from Sandwich with fifteen hundred men-at-arms, fifteen thousand archers, and a great number of foot-soldiers and artillery. Comines says that the embarking and the landing these forces at Calais occupied three weeks. Before the king sailed, he sent a herald with a letter, in which he demanded the crown from Louis XI., as his right and inheritance—written, adds Comines, in such an elegant style "that I can scarcely believe any Englishman wrote it." The purity of the language, and the arrogance of the demand, were alike indifferent to the French king; who took the herald into a private room; gave him a magnificent present of three hundred crowns; and "was much revived by what he got out of" Edward's messenger. The whole account of this invasion of France, as told by the most interesting of the early memoir-writers, is a comedy full of amusement, instead of the monotonous tragedy that is the more natural and usual chronicle of the quarrels of princes. As an exhibition of character, the narrative of Comines is perfect.

The duke of Burgundy had deceived Edward as to the amount of assistance he would render in the attempt upon France. He gave the English a cold welcome at Peronne. The constable of St. Pol, instead of being friendly to Edward, and delivering up the fortress of St. Quentin, fired upon an English detachment who went to take possession of the place. Lewis of France, who was in real terror at the presence of the English king, had a scheme for getting rid of him which he wisely preferred to fighting. He had a trick of whispering in people's ears; and he whispered to Comines to send for a certain lord's servant, and propose to him to go disguised as a herald to the camp of the English king. The man was frightened; but Lewis well tutored him, and he was dressed up with a coat of arms made out of the banner of a trumpet. Lewis himself had no heralds, as other princes had. "He was not so stately or vain." The mock herald was well received at the English camp; and he played his part so well, that a negotiation was opened through commissioners. The original demand of Edward for the French crown first dwindled to a claim for Normandy and Gascony, and ended in a proposal for a large pension, as the French called it, as the condition of leaving France. The wily Lewis feasted the English at Amiens; sent Edward three hundred cart-loads of the best wines of France; and bribed his nobles without stint. The two kings met at Picquiny, and there a peace was sworn between them, upon the conditions of present and future money payments; of a marriage between the son of Lewis and a daughter of Edward; and the release of Margaret of Anjou. Then Lewis invited Edward to Paris, "in a jocular way," saying, "he would assign him the cardinal Bourbon for his confessor, who would willingly absolve him if he committed any sin." Edward was delighted with the raillery, and promised to come, somewhat to the discomposure of Lewis; for he whispered to Comines, "His predecessors have been too often in Paris and Normandy already, and I do not care for his company so near." One only of the greater nobles of the train of Edward evinced displeasure at these negotiations, in

* Margaret Paston, writing on May 23, 1475.

which the king of France had cajoled and degraded the English—that one was Richard of Gloucester. At the interview between the kings Gloucester was not present, “as being averse to the treaty.” That man is truly unfortunate whose best actions are held to proceed from the worst motives. Of Richard, one who lived in a court where there was little display of high principle, says —“Out of the deep root of ambition it sprang, that, as well at the treaty of peace that passed between Edward IV. and Lewis XI. of France, concluded by interviews of both kings at Picquiny, as upon all other occasions, Richard, the duke of Gloucester, stood ever upon the side of honour, raising his own reputation to the disadvantage of the king his brother, and drawing the eyes of all, especially those of the nobles and soldiers, upon himself.”* Comines asked a Gascon in the English service how many battles Edward had won, and the answer was, nine: how many he had lost—and the reply was, never but one, and that was this in which the French had outwitted him. The duke of Gloucester might have been as sagacious as the Gascon, without being sensible of his country’s shame only through the “deep root of ambition.”

With the treaty of Picquiny, its bribes and its cajoleries, its heartless compacts and hollow friendships, the chivalrous grandeur of England had come to an end. The pageant was played out. The world was henceforward to be governed by that state-craft of which Lewis the Eleventh was the greatest example. There was one prince who continued to rely upon force, with an occasional mixture of fraud, in which game he was a child when opposed to his practised adversary. His high-blown pride was humbled at Granson and Morat by the Swiss whose poverty he despised; and Charles of Burgundy perished in his mad career in 1477. Edward returned to England more disgraced than his brother-in-law, when the mountaineers broke into his camp, and carried off his gold and his jewels, his rich armour and his silk pavilions. Edward came home to an indignant people with a disappointed army. His soldiers compensated themselves for the loss of plunder in France by pillaging their own countrymen. The king went in person with the judges to try the offenders, and hung every one without mercy who was apprehended for the least theft.†

The marriages of the great, at this period, when the increase of possessions appears to have been the dominant passion, were a fruitful source of dissimulation and enmity. Clarence has lost his wife by poison; and the duchess of Burgundy is a widow. There is a letter of Edward to his ambassador in Scotland, in which, in 1477, he writes that the king of Scots desires two marriages connected with the royal line; one that the duke of Clarence should marry a sister of the king of Scots, and that a brother of that king, the duke of Albany, should marry the duchess of Burgundy: “Ye shall say, that for so much as this desire proceedeth of his entire love and affection anent us, we thank him as heartily as we can; and for so much also as after the old usages of this our realm, no estate or person honourable communeth of marriage within the year of their doole [widowhood], we therefore as yet cannot conveniently speak in this matter. Nathless, when we shall find time convenable [suitable] we shall feel their dispositions, and

* Bacon, “History of Henry VII.,” p. 3.

† The Croyland Chronicle says, “si in furto vel latrocinio *deprehensus*.”

thereupon shew unto him the same in all goodly haste." * The king did feel the disposition of his brother Clarence; and found that the ambitious duke desired to wed the only daughter and heir of Charles of Burgundy, in which desire he was seconded by the widowed duchess, her step-mother. Edward resolutely opposed this scheme; and the brothers became enemies. Clarence estranged himself from his brother's court. At this time two of his dependants, Thomas Burdett and John Stacy, were accused of having "worked and calculated by art magic, necromancy, and astronomy, the death and final destruction of the king and prince," and they were tried and executed. Clarence asserted their innocence before the council; and was immediately arrested by the king, and committed to the Tower, on the 16th of January, 1478. Edward forced on his brother's condemnation, by appearing in person to maintain a charge of treason against him. The obsequious peers found the imprudent prince guilty, and sentence of death was pronounced upon him by the duke of Buckingham, who acted as high steward. On the 7th of February the Commons, by their speaker, demanded the execution of the sentence; and within ten days it was announced that the duke had died in the Tower. The drowning in a butt of malmsey wine was a rumour of the period. The suspicion that the duke of Gloucester was implicated in the condemnation of Clarence rests upon no evidence whatever. The insinuation against him is thus stated by More: "Some wise men also ween, that his drift, covertly conveyed, lacked not in helping forth his brother of Clarence to his death; which he resisted openly, howbeit somewhat, as men deemed, more faintly than he that were heartily minded to his wealth." †

The few remaining years of the life of king Edward were not years of ease and prosperity. The chroniclers say that his remorse for the death of Clarence was constant and bitter; and that "he was wont to cry out in a rage,—O unfortunate brother, for whose life no man in this world would once make request." ‡ England, in 1479, was visited with a frightful pestilence. Whilst his subjects in London and elsewhere were perishing around him, Edward was enduring bitter mortification in his private affairs. He had a passion for contracting alliances for his children, even while they were in their cradles. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was contracted, as we have seen, to the Dauphin of France by the treaty of Picquiny; but Lewis began to give indications that the treaty would only endure as long as suited his convenience. His daughter Cecily was engaged to the son and heir of the king of Scotland; and the dowry of the lady had commenced to be paid by instalments. From the time of the death of James I., who was murdered in a conspiracy of his nobles in 1437, the kingdom had been the scene of intestine conflicts. James II. came to the crown when six years old, and his reign was a constant struggle with the great families of Douglas and Livingston and other feudal lords. He was killed at the siege of Roxburgh in 1460. James III. was also a minor when he came to the throne. He was of a contemplative and indolent nature, and fell into the hands of favourites. The Boyds, who had long governed, were at last dispossessed of their power:

* Ellis, "Original Letters," Series I., vol. i. p. 16.

† History of King Richard the Third, Singer's edition, p. 10.

‡ Polydore Vergil, p. 168.

and the duke of Albany and the earl of Mar, the brothers of James, took the lead in the management of affairs, but soon excited the suspicion of the king that they aspired to the royal authority. Mar was put to death. Albany escaped to France. At this juncture James III. and Edward IV. quarrelled. The marriage treaty was broken off; and in 1480 there was war between England and Scotland. The duke of Gloucester, who was Warden of the Marches, commanded the English forces. Berwick was invested, but without success; and the two armies were content with occasional forays upon the borders. In 1482, the duke of Albany was encouraged by Edward in a rebellion against his reigning brother; and he engaged to hold Scotland as a fief of England, and to surrender Berwick. That important fort was now besieged by Gloucester and Albany. James raised an army and marched towards the borders; but his turbulent nobles seized the king, and hanged his associates, two of whom were artists. Albany and Gloucester marched on to Edinburgh; and the rebellion and the war with England were ended, by Albany swearing to be a true and faithful subject, and Gloucester obtaining the strong post of Berwick, which ever after remained an English possession. In 1483 Lewis of France broke off the contract which he had made with the king of England for the marriage of the Dauphin and the Lady Cecily. He saw a more advantageous union for his son in the daughter of Mary of Burgundy. Edward was furious, and immediately determined for war. But he who was "inclining to be fat" when Comines saw him at Picquiny, was now enfeebled in mind and body by long indulgence in every excess. His anger was expressed in paroxysms of rage without any determinate plans. A serious illness succeeded a slight ailment, and he died on the 9th of April, 1483, in the forty-second year of his age. He was buried in the new chapel of St. George at Windsor, to which the remains of Henry VI. were afterwards removed.

"And blended lie th' oppressor and th' opprest."

At the death of his father, Edward, prince of Wales, was twelve years and a half old. He was residing in considerable state at Ludlow Castle, with a council, amongst whom were his maternal uncle, earl Rivers; his half-brother, sir Richard Grey; sir Thomas Vaughan, sir William Stanley, sir Richard Croft, and sir Richard Hawte. Ordinances for the regulation of the prince's daily conduct were drawn up by his father a short time before his death, which prescribe his morning attendance at mass, his occupation "at his school," his meals, and his sports. No man is to sit at his board but such as earl Rivers shall allow; and at this hour of meat it is ordered "that there be read before him noble stories, as behoveth a prince to understand; and that the communication at all times, in his presence, be of virtue, honour, cunning, [knowledge] wisdom, and deeds of worship, and of nothing that shall move him to vice." * The bishop of Worcester, John Alcock, the president of his council, was the prince's preceptor. The queen's relations and friends were those who exclusively surrounded the heir to the throne. During the life of Edward IV. the jealousy which the ancient nobility

* Quoted in Turner's "History," from MS. in British Museum, vol. iii. p. 383. See also "Grants of Edward V.," Introduction by Mr. John Gough Nichols, p. 8.

entertained of the Woodville family was in some degree repressed; although the catastrophe of the duke of Clarence was probably connected with those court dissensions. But when the youthful prince suddenly became king Edward the Fifth, a struggle for power during his minority would be the almost inevitable issue of the position of parties. We must look back upon the events of forty years to understand how the whole system of English government had been a contest for dominion between factions and individuals, without any leading principle of public good giving even a colour to this course of intrigue, insurrection, and civil war. In this system two generations of great ones had been trained, with occasional intervals of tranquillity; but at no period with the conviction that the peace and order of the realm was established upon a solid basis. If we regard the revolutionary events which followed the death of Edward IV. as the result of the daring ambition of one man, Richard of Gloucester, we shall imperfectly comprehend the bold and unscrupulous measures which placed him on the throne. When Edward IV. was on his death-bed he is reported to have called the marquis of Dorset, the queen's son by her first husband, and Lord Hastings, his chamberlain, to his side, and implored them to be in amity, saying, "If you among yourselves in a child's reign fall at debate, many a good man shall perish, and haply he too, and ye too, ere this land find peace again."* The prophetic king could scarcely have expected that the troubles of "a child's reign" should have so instantly followed the expiration of his own strong rule.

Gloucester was in the north at the time of his brother's death. It has been related that he was employed in the Scotch marches at this period of Edward's decease, and that, entering York with a train of six hundred knights and esquires, he celebrated the obsequies of the departed king in the minster, and there himself swore fealty to Edward V., his example being followed by all present. The "Records" of York have been published, and they contain many curious facts of this period. No such ceremony is mentioned in these registers of the city. † Richard, however, went on to London with a large number of his followers, with the alleged purpose of assisting at the coronation, which had been fixed for the 4th of May. Meanwhile, the marquis of Dorset had removed the royal treasure out of the Tower, of which he was the governor; and had equipped a fleet, commanded by the queen's brother, sir Edward Woodville. There had been dissensions in the Council, Hastings having protested against Rivers conducting the young king to London with an overwhelming military force. On the 24th of April Edward V. left Ludlow, with Rivers, Vaughan, Grey, and a retinue not exceeding the number which had been prescribed by the Council; and they travelled on until they reached Northampton. There Gloucester and Buckingham arrived the same day; but the king had gone forward to Stony-Stratford, Rivers remaining at Northampton. It is argued, on one hand, that this was a scheme to prevent Gloucester seeing his nephew; ‡ while, on the other hand, it is affirmed that Rivers returned to Northampton from Stony-Stratford, to show his respect for Gloucester. § There can be little

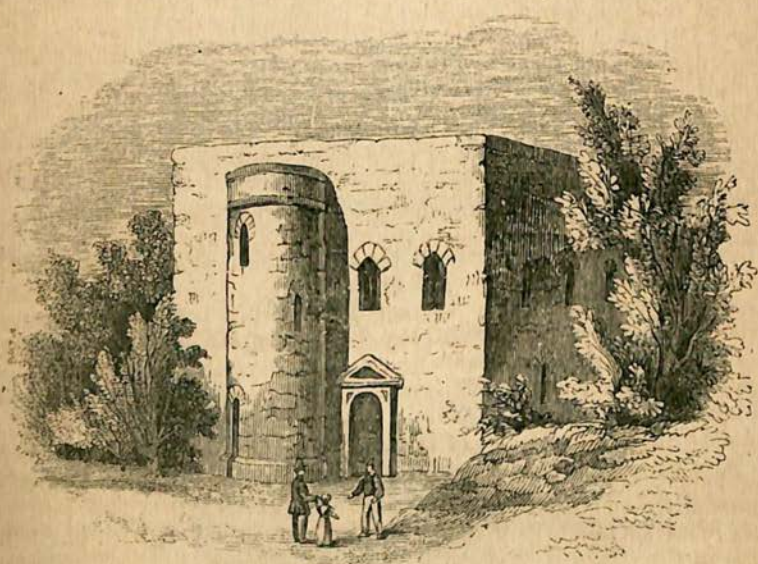
* More, "History of Richard III." Singer's edit. p. 17.

† See "Grants," &c., p. xxiii. ‡ Turner, vol. iii. p. 408.

§ Lingard, vol. v. p. 324.

doubt that each party was preparing to out-manœuvre the other, and that each was advancing to the perpetration of some decided act of treachery and bloodshed, such as we designate in modern times by the gentle name of *coup d'état*. It appears tolerably clear that the two most important men in the country, Gloucester and Buckingham, both of the royal blood, were intended to be omitted in the state arrangements; for in commissions issued as early as the 1st of May their names were not inserted, while those of Dorset, Rivers, and Hastings were prominent.*

At this juncture, the first decided blow was struck by the two ambitious dukes. They passed the evening of the 29th of April in social companionship with Rivers; and then "the dukes secretly, with a few of their most privy friends, set them down in counsel, wherein they spent a great part of the night." † The next morning they surrounded Rivers in his inn, and arrested him. They then



The Sanctuary at Westminster, from a sketch in 1775.

rode on to Stony-Stratford, "where they found the king with his company ready to leap on horseback, and depart forward, to leave that lodging for them, because it was too strait for both companies." ‡ There was more fearful work to be done before the frightened boy could "leap on horseback." The dukes arrested Lord Grey and Sir Thomas Vaughan, and brought the king back to Northampton. "He wept and was nothing content, but it booted not." The news of these sudden demonstrations went on to London; where the misgivings of the queen drove her to leave the palace of Westminster, and take refuge in the adjoining Sanctuary with her second son. There the archbishop of York and chancellor, Rotherham, went to her with a consolatory

* "Grants," &c., Introduction, p. xiv.

† More, p. 24.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

message from Hastings; but she would take no comfort and "sat alone alow in the rushes, all desolate and dismayed." * The chancellor with singular 'imprudence, left the Great Seal with the queen, but secretly got it back again. The state of London at this juncture is graphically described by More;—the Thames full of boats of the duke of Gloucester's servants; the citizens gathered in groups, to discourse of these strange events; lords, knights, and gentlemen, putting on their harness, and assembling in companies. At a meeting of the Council, Hastings maintained that Gloucester and Buckingham had commanded the arrests, not for the king's jeopardy but for their own safety. On the 4th of May, Edward the Fifth publicly entered the city, being met at Hornsey by the mayor and aldermen; the duke of Gloucester bearing him "in open sight most reverently to the prince, with all semblance of lowliness." † The peers took the oath of fealty to Edward. At a great council of prelates, nobles, and citizens, Gloucester was appointed protector. On the 14th of May, new commissions of the peace were issued into several counties, where his name appears as "Protector of England." ‡ From that time, as we learn from the form of official documents, the supreme power is wielded in the name of "Edward, by the grace of God king of England and France and lord of Ireland," acting "by the advice of our most entirely beloved uncle the duke of Gloucester, protector and defender of this our realm of England during our young age."

The grants from the crown during the brief reign of Edward V., show how suddenly and how completely the king's signet had become the instru-

Signature of Edward V.

ment for the ruin of his mother's kindred and friends, and the elevation of those who were in the interest of the protector. On the 14th of May, there is a letter to certain men to go to the sea with ships to take sir Edward Woodville. Those of the prince of Wales's court who had been previously arrested—Rivers, Vaughan, Grey and Hawte—were kept prisoners at various castles. Buckingham, the great adviser and advocate of Richard, received immediate rewards for his services. Appointments were heaped upon him in a few weeks, as constable of royal castles, and keeper of royal forests; but his chief promotion was to the government of the principality of Wales. Rivers had administered the Welsh affairs as governor of the prince, and would have necessarily become the viceroy, if the queen's party had triumphed. Northumberland was found in the post of warden of the Scotch marches and captain of Berwick, and contracts were immediately made with him for the defence of the border. Lovell secured a grant of the castle and honour of Wallingford. Catesby was made chancellor of the earldom of March. John, lord Howard, afterwards created duke of Norfolk, received

* More, p. 30.

† *Ibid.*, p. 34.

‡ "Grants," &c. p. xii.

the appointment of steward of the duchy of Lancaster, south of the Trent; but he had a stronger motive of interest to bind him to Richard—the expectation of the inheritance of the Mowbrays, which had been withheld from him.* When we look at the authentic records from which these particulars are derived, we see the unwearied labour with which the protector built up his own power in the name of his nephew. The filling up of the smallest offices does not appear to have been beneath his notice. The keeper of a gaol, and the bailiff of a park, are as summarily displaced and successors appointed, as the constable of a castle and the viceroy of a province.

The opening of parliament was fixed for the 25th of June. The Lord Chancellor, John Russell, Bishop of Lincoln, had prepared a speech for the opening of Edward the Fifth's parliament, the draft of which remains amongst the Cotton MSS. in the British Museum; and from a passage which says that one of the causes for assembling the parliament was to establish the authority of the lord protector, it may be inferred that the chancellor, the chief officer of the government, was unacquainted with the plot, if it were formed at an early stage of the protectorate, for raising Richard to the throne.† On the 5th of June letters were addressed to fifty persons, commanding them to attend at the Tower of London four days before the 22nd of that month, when they were to receive knighthood at the coronation. The public aspect of affairs at this crisis is described in a letter written by Simon Stallworthe, one of the officers of the chancellor, to Sir William Stonor. The importance of private correspondence to support the narratives of the chroniclers of this eventful period is pointed out in the interesting volume in which this letter, and another from the same person, appear.‡ Stallworthe says, writing "in haste from London," on the 9th of June, "Master Stonor, after due recommendations, I recommend me to you. As for tidings, since I wrote to you we hear nought new. The queen keeps still at Westminster [with] my lord of York, my lord of Salisbury, with others more, which will not depart as yet."§ He then proceeds to say that the goods of my lord marquis [Dorset] were taken wherever found; and that the prior of Westminster was, and is, in great trouble for certain of these goods delivered to him. "My lord protector, my lord of Buckingham, with all other lords, as well temporal as spiritual, were at Westminster in the council-chamber, from ten to two [o'clock], but there was none that spake with the queen. There is great business against the coronation, which shall be this day fortnight, as we say; where I trust ye will be at London, and there shall ye know all the world. The king is at the Tower. My lady of Gloucester came to London on Thursday last." Within four days of the date of this letter, when "all the world" was gathering towards London to be present at the coronation of king Edward the Fifth, an event took place which gave warning of some impending change.

Lord Hastings, the attached friend of Edward the Fourth, if real friendship is compatible with a companionship in licentious pursuits, had gone along with

* See Mr. Nicholls' Introduction to "Grants," pages xxiv. to xxvi.

† The speech is given in the valuable volume of "Grants," &c., p. xxxix.

‡ "Excerpta Historica," 1831.

§ "My lord of Salisbury" was the queen's brother, the bishop of Salisbury.

Gloucester and Buckingham in the arrest of the queen's kindred and friends. It is recorded, in the narrative ascribed to More, that on the 13th day of June it was devised by the assent of Hastings that Rivers and the others should be beheaded at Pomfret; and subsequent historians assert that they were so beheaded on that day. The date of the will of earl Rivers, the 23rd of June, shows the inaccuracy of this statement, and, in some degree, relieves Hastings from this charge against him. On the 13th of June, then, took place that wonderful scene, which, first painted by More, has been reproduced in imperishable colours—enamelled, as it were—by Shakspeare. It is Friday, the 13th of June. Many lords are assembled in the Tower, arranging the solemnity of the coronation. At nine o'clock the protector enters, excusing himself that he was so late in attendance, saying he had been sleeping. "And after a little talking with them, he said unto the bishop of Ely: 'My lord, you have



Chapel of Ely House, Holborn.

very good strawberries at your garden in Holborn; I require you let us have a mess of them.' 'Gladly, my lord,' quoth he, 'would God I had some better thing as ready to your pleasure as that.' And therewith in all the haste he sent his servant for a mess of strawberries. The protector set the lords fast in communing, and thereupon praying them to spare him for a little while, departed thence. And soon after one hour, between ten and eleven, he returned into the chamber among them, all changed with a wonderful sour

angry countenance, knitting the brows, frowning and fretting, and gnawing on his lips, and so sat him down in his place.”* The protector, after a while, asked what they were worthy to have that compassed his destruction; and Hastings replied that they deserved to be punished as heinous traitors. The denunciations of Gloucester pointed at the queen, and others with her. “Then,” said the protector, “ye shall all see in what wise that sorceress and that other witch of her counsel, Shore’s wife, with their affinity, have by their sorcery and witchcraft wasted my body. And therewith he plucked up his doublet sleeve to his elbow upon his left arm, where he showed a werish, withered arm, and small as it was never other. And thereupon every man’s mind sore misgave them, well perceiving that this matter was but a quarrel.”† The relation then goes on to state that every man knew that Gloucester’s arm was such from his birth; and that Shore’s wife, whom the queen hated as the mistress of her husband, was the least likely to be of her counsel. Then Hastings, who is affirmed to have doted on Shore’s wife, “answered, and said ‘Certainly, my lord, if they have so heinously done, they be worthy heinous punishment.’ ‘What,’ quoth the protector, ‘thou servest me, I ween, with ‘ifs’ and with ‘ands’; I tell thee they have so done, and that I will make good on thy body, traitor.’ And therewith, as in a great rage, he clapped his fist upon the board a great rap. At which token given, one cried ‘treason,’ without the chamber. Therewith a door clapped, and in come there rushing men in harness, as many as the chamber might hold. And anon the protector said to the lord Hastings, ‘I arrest thee, traitor.’ ‘What, me, my lord?’ quoth he. ‘Yea, thee, traitor,’ quoth the protector. And another let fly at the lord Stanley, which shrunk at the stroke and fell under the table, or else his head had been cleft to the teeth; for as shortly as he shrank, yet ran the blood about his ears. Then were they all quickly bestowed in divers chambers, except the lord chamberlain [Hastings], whom the protector bade speed and shrive him apace, ‘for, by St. Paul,’ quoth he, ‘I will not to dinner till I see thy head off.’ It booted him not to ask why, but heavily he took a priest at adventure, and made a short shrift, for a longer would not be suffered, the protector made so much haste to dinner: which he might not go to till this were done for saving of his oath. So was he brought forth into the green beside the chapel within the tower and his head laid down upon a long log of timber, and there stricken off.” The bishop of Ely who had “very good strawberries in his garden” was Morton, from whom More derived the animated details of this and other portions of his history. He also was arrested by the protector, in spite of his courtly politeness, and was committed to the custody of the duke of Buckingham. The agitation of the Londoners upon this summer morning, when the peaceful cry of “strawberries ripe” was heard in their streets amidst ominous looks and timid whisperings, is described by More: “Now flew the fame of this lord’s death swiftly through the city, and so forth farther about like a wind in every man’s ear. But the protector immediately after dinner, intending to set some colour upon the matter, sent in all the haste for many substantial men out of the city into the Tower. And at their coming, himself with the duke of Buckingham stood harnessed in old ill-faring briginders, such as no man should ween that they would vouchsafe to have

* More, p. 70.

† *Ibid.*, p. 72.

put upon their backs, except that some sudden necessity had constrained them. And then the protector showed them, that the lord chamberlain, and other of his conspiracy, had contrived to have suddenly destroyed him and the duke, there the same day in the council. And what they intended further was as yet not well known. Of which their treason we never had knowledge before ten of the clock the same forenoon. Which sudden fear drove them to put on for their defence such harness as came next to hand. And so had God holpen them, that the mischief turned upon them that would have done it. And this he required them to report." *

That Richard believed in a conspiracy against himself, might be inferred from a remarkable letter, addressed by him on the 10th of June to the mayor of York, in which he prays him "to come up unto us in London, in all the diligence ye can possible, after the sight hereof, with as many as ye can make defensibly arrayed; there to aid and assist us against the queen, her bloody adherents and affinity, which have entended, and daily do entend, to murder and utterly destroy us and our cousin the duke of Buckingham, and the old royal blood of the realm." † But this letter, preserved among the York Records, might have been a subtle device to assemble an armed force in London, from York and other towns, previous to the announced coronation. In another letter of Simon Stallworthe, dated the 21st of June, we have a hurried notice of the events which had occurred since his letter of the 9th, and of the apprehensions with which men's minds were filled. He says, "Worshipful sir, I commend me to you; and for tidings I hold you happy that ye are out of the press; for with us is much trouble, and every man doubts other. As on Friday last was the lord chamberlain headed soon upon noon. On Monday last was at Westminster great plenty of harnessed men. There was the deliverance of the duke of York to my lord cardinal, my lord chancellor, and other many lords temporal. And with him met my lord of Buckingham in the midst of the Hall of Westminster, my lord protector receiving him at the Star-Chamber door, with many loving words; and so departed with my lord cardinal to the Tower, where he is—blessed be Jesu's mercy. The lord Lisle is come to my lord protector, and waits upon him.‡ It is thought there shall be twenty thousand of my lord protector's and my lord of Buckingham's men in London this week—to what intent I know not but [except] to keep the peace. My lord [the chancellor] hath much business, and more than he is content withal, if any other ways would be taken." The writer then goes on to state that the archbishop of York—(the ex-chancellor, who left the great seal with the queen)—the bishop of Ely, and master Oliver King, are in the Tower; that their town houses were in sure keeping: and that it was expected that men of the lord protector would be sent to their places in the country. He then adds, "Mistress Chore [Shore] is in prison; what shall happen her I know not." Mistress Shore is one of those who lives in the world's remembrance, chiefly through More's description of her gentle influence over the mind of Edward IV. "Her he loved, whose favour, to say the truth (for sin it were to bely the devil) she never abused to any man's hurt, but to many a man's comfort and relief." Richard did not attempt to maintain his charge of

* More, p. 78.

† Drake's "York," quoted in Turner, p. 436.

‡ Lord Lisle was of the queen's party, being uncle to the marquis of Dorset.

sorcery and conspiracy against her, but seized her goods; and the bishop of London put her to penance for her alleged vicious life, "going before the cross in procession upon a Sunday, with a taper in her hand." She lived till the time of Henry VIII. It appears from a letter written by Richard to his chancellor after he became king, that after the death of Hastings other important personages were enslaved to her charms. Richard represents that his solicitor, Thomas Lynom, "marvellously blinded and abused with the late wife of William Shore, now being in Ludgate, hath made contract of matrimony with her;" and that he "intendeth to our full great marvel to proceed to the effect of the same." He adds, "We, for many causes, would be sorry that he so should be disposed. Pray you, therefore, to send for him, and, in that ye goodly may, exhort and stir him to the contrary." He then thus directs the bishop: "If ye find him utterly set for to marry her, and none otherwise will be advertised; then, if it may stand with the law of the church, we be content the time of marriage deferred to our coming next to London; that, upon sufficient surety found of her good bearing, ye do send for her, and discharge him of our said commandment, committing her to the rule and guiding of her father, or any other by your discretion, in the mean season."*

The duke of Gloucester kept his household in Crosby-place; and here, according to More, "by litle and litle all folk withdrew from the Tower." The general council of the realm was held at the Tower. The protector had a special council at Crosby-place. More also writes that lord Stanley had said to Hastings, that he "much misliked these two several councils." Out of the private deliberations of Crosby-place in all likelihood resulted the removal of the duke of York from his mother's protection in the Sanctuary at Westminster, which took place on the 16th of June. But the general council assented to the removal; declared that it was "good and reasonable;" and the archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Bouchier, pledged himself for the boy's safety. We have seen by Stallworthe's letter that the removal of the young duke from the Sanctuary was a public act, done at Westminster Hall in the presence of many principal persons. Whether they were induced by fear or by state policy, it is now tolerably clear that Richard was working with the concurrence of the great majority of prelates and nobles; and that the whole course of affairs was now tending to give him the crown without opposition. There is a passage in the well-informed French contemporary which has scarcely been borne in mind in the usual narratives of the sudden events of this June of 1483. Comines says, speaking of Richard drawing the duke of York out of the Sanctuary, "the conclusion was this: By the assistance of the bishop of Bath (who had been formerly one of king Edward's council, but, falling afterwards into disgrace, had been removed from court, made prisoner, and paid a round sum for his ransom) he executed his design." He proceeds to say, that "the bishop discovered to the duke of Gloucester" that he had married king Edward IV. to a beautiful young lady, which secret marriage had taken place before the king's marriage with Lady Elizabeth Woodville. Comines again says, "The bishop having discovered this mystery to the duke of Gloucester, he gave his assistance to

* Quoted by Turner, "History," vol. iii. p. 450, from Harl. MS. 432.

the execution of the barbarous designs of the duke." * If Robert Stillington, the bishop of Bath and Wells, who had been chancellor in the time of Edward IV., revealed this mystery to Gloucester after he had assumed the protectorate, it is easy to conceive how this revelation would have given a new impulse to his ambition. On the 22nd of June, Ralph Shaw, the brother of the lord mayor of London, delivered a sermon at Paul's Cross, taking as his text, "The multiplying brood of the ungodly shall not thrive, nor take deep rooting from bastard slips, nor lay any fast foundation." † Of this sermon, Fabyan, who was a resident in the city at that time, is probably the most accurate reporter. He says, that the protector, with the duke of



The Great Hall, Crosby Place.

Buckingham, and other lords being present, "by the mouth of Dr. Ralph Shaw, in the time of his sermon, was there showed openly that the children of king Edward the Fourth were not legitimate, nor rightful inheritors of the crown, with many dis-slandrous words, in preferring of the title of the said lord protector, and of disannulling of the other." ‡ The ecclesiastics of that age, if they gave their confident belief to the story that Edward had been married, or even contracted, to another lady previous to his marriage with the queen, without a papal dispensation, would have agreed in pronouncing the princes illegitimate. On the 24th of June, two days after the Paul's Cross Sermon, the duke of Buckingham harangued the citizens at the Guildhall, rehearsing the right and title which the protector had to be pre-

* Memoirs, book v. chap. xviii.

† Wisdom, chap. iv. v. 3.

‡ Chronicle, p. 669.

ferred to the crown of England. Fabyan commends the sugared words of the duke, with a curious appreciation of his fluent oratory, which he says was "without any impediment of spitting." It is recorded by More that Buckingham, attended by the mayor of London and many others, went on the 24th of June to Richard, at Baynard's Castle, and there solicited him to become their king. On the 25th the parliament had been summoned; but a supersedeas had been received on the 21st of June, by the sheriffs of York,* which renders it clear that the choice of Richard to be king was not an open



The Hall. Guildhall.

act of the legislature. There was some assembly on that 25th of June, for in the next parliament a statute was passed, reciting that in a Bill presented by many lords, spiritual and temporal, and others of the commons, in great multitude, the crown was claimed for Richard, as his father's heir, in consequence of a pre-contract of matrimony having been made by Edward IV. with dame Eleanor Butler, daughter of the earl of Shrewsbury, by which his

* York Records.

children became illegitimate, and that the line of the duke of Clarence had been attainted. On the 26th of June Richard duke of Gloucester sat down in the marble chair of Westminster Hall as king of England. There is a remarkable document, being instructions from Richard to lord Mountjoy, and others, to explain to the garrison of Calais, who had taken the oath of fealty to Edward V., what they were to do with reference to that oath, under the altered circumstances of the accession of the lord protector to the throne. He directs these commissioners to say, "that howbeit such oath of allegiance was made soon upon the death of the said king Edward IV. to his son, not only at Calais but also in divers places in England, by many great estates and personages being then ignorant of the very sure and true title which our sovereign lord that now is, king Richard III., hath and had the same time to the crown of England. That oath notwithstanding, now, every good true Englishman is bound, upon knowledge had of the said very true title, to depart from the first oath *so ignorantly given to him to whom it appertained not*, and therefore to make his oath of new, and owe his service and fidelity to him that good law, reason, and the concord assent of the Lords and Commons of the Royaume have ordained to reign upon the people, which is our said sovereign lord king Richard III., brother to the said king Edward IV. late deceased, whom God pardon; whose sure and true title is evidently showed and declared in a Bill of Petition which the lords spiritual and temporal and the Commons of this land solemnly porrected [presented] unto the king's highness at London, the 26th day of June. Whereupon the king's said highness, notably assisted by well near all the lords spiritual and temporal of the Royaume, went the same day unto his palace of Westminster, and there in such royal honourable apparel within the great hall there took possession, and declared his mind that the same day he would begin to reign upon his people, and from thence rode solemnly to the cathedral church of London, and was received there with procession, and acclamation of all the people in every place, and by the way that the king was in, that day." *

On the day on which Richard "took possession," or soon after, the accomplished Rivers, with Grey, Vaughan, and Hawte, went through some form of trial before the earl of Northumberland, and were beheaded at Pomfret. There is a singular passage in the will of Rivers, made at the castle of Sheriff Hutton on the 23rd of June, which is, at least, a tribute to the power of the protector, if not to his justice. After appointing his executors, he says, "Over this, I beseech humbly my lord of Gloucester, in the worship of Christ's passion, and for the merit and weal of his soul, to comfort, help, and assist, as supervisor, for very trust, of this testament, that my executors may with his pleasure fulfil this my last will, which I have made the day aforesaid." † There is a composition of earl Rivers, written during his imprisonment, which is as touching as this last appeal to his great enemy. It is a "Balet," transcribed by the contemporary historian, Rous, from the unfortunate lord's manuscript. The old chivalrous spirit led the victims of state-poly to look with as much calmness at death upon the block as at

* Harl. MS. 433, given in Ellis, "Original Letters," Series II., vol. i. p. 148.

† The will is printed in "Excerpta Historica," p. 240.

death in the battle-field. It was the decree of "fortune," which they received without shrinking:—

"Somewhat musing, and more mourning,
In remembering the unsteadfastness,
This world being of such wheeling,
Me contrarying, what can I guess ?

"I fear, doubtless, remediless,
Is now to seize my woful chance ;
For unkindness, withouten less, [lessening]
And no redress, doth me advance

"With displeasance, to my grievance,
And no surance of remedy ;
Lo, in this trance, now in substance,
Such is my dance, willing to die.

"Methinks, truly, bounden am I,
And that greatly, to be content ;
Seeing plainly Fortune doth wry
All contrary from mine intent.

"My life was lent me to one intent ;
It is nigh spent. Welcome Fortune !
But I ne went [thought] thus to be shent,
But she it meant, such is her won [wont]."

On the 6th July, 1483, Richard III., with his queen, Anne, were crowned at Westminster. There is a minute account of this ceremony, which not only shows that it was conducted with the usual magnificence ; but that the great number of dukes, earls, lords, and knights, present on that occasion indicated, if such general observances can indicate any real affection, the unanimity with which the claim of Richard was regarded. The king and queen walked from Westminster Hall to St. Edward's shrine, "upon red cloth, bare-foot." Abbots were there, and bishops, with mitres and crosiers ; Northumberland and the pointless sword ; Stanley, bearing the mass ; Kent and Lovell and Surrey, bearing the other swords ; Suffolk, with the sceptre ; Lincoln with the cross and ball ; Norfolk with the crown ; Buckingham bearing the king's train. Amongst the bishops, he of Bath and Wells, Stillington, walked on one side of the king. Earls and barons preceded the queen ; my lady of Richmond bare her train ;* and the lady of Suffolk, the duchess of Norfolk, and twenty other ladies followed. The banquet succeeded the crowning. At the second course, "came riding into the hall Sir Robert Dymoke, the king's champion, and his horse trapped with white silk and red, and himself in white harness, and the heralds of arms standing on a stage amongst all the company. Then came riding up before the king his champion, and there he declared before all the people,—if there be any man will say against king Richard the Third why he should not pretend the crown. And anon all the people were in peace awhile. And when he had all said, anon all the hall cried, King Richard, all with one voice." †

The question whether the two sons of Edward IV. were murdered in the Tower by command of Richard, interesting as it is as a great historic doubt, would have had no bearing upon future events, but for the pretensions of a

* Mother of Henry VII.

† From a Roll, printed in "Historica Excerpta," p. 380.

young man in the next reign to be the identical duke of York who had escaped from his "unnatural uncle."* These pretensions, which so long disturbed the tranquillity of Henry VII., would have been dissipated beyond all possibility of success, had that crafty king brought forward distinct and absolute proof of the circumstances which preceded the disappearance of Edward V. and his brother. Without unduly anticipating the general course of the narrative, we must state what Henry VII. really did, in 1493, eight years after he took the crown in Bosworth field, to prove the alleged imposture of the pretended duke in establishing the fact of the murder of the two princes. Bacon, who in his "History of the reign of Henry VII.," relates the career of the youth called Perkin Warbeck with an absolute conviction of the imposture, thus describes the course which Henry adopted "to make it manifest to the world that the duke of York was indeed



Anne, Queen of Richard III.

murdered." He says, that of four persons supposed to be implicated, only two were alive, sir James Tyrrel and John Dighton; that these two the king committed to the Tower, and examined touching the manner of the death of the two princes; and that they agreed in a tale to this effect: That Richard having directed a warrant to Brackenbury, the lieutenant of the Tower, to put them to death, was by him refused; that Richard then directed a warrant to sir James Tyrrel to receive the keys of the Tower

* So termed in a proclamation of Perkin Warbeck.

for one night, for the king's special service ; that Tyrrel, with his two servants, Miles Forest and John Dighton, repaired to the Tower, and he stood at the stair-foot, whilst these villains executed the murder, by smothering them in their beds ; that Tyrrel saw their dead bodies, which were buried under the stairs ; and that Richard, taking exception to the dishonourable place of their burial, the bodies were removed by the priest of the Tower to some other place, which could not be known. "Thus much," adds Bacon, "was then delivered abroad to be the effect of those examinations. But the king nevertheless made no use of them in any of his declarations ; whereby, as it seems, those examinations left the business somewhat perplexed. And as for sir James Tyrrel he was soon after beheaded in the Tower-yard for other matters of treason. But John Dighton, who it seemeth spake best for the king, was forthwith set at liberty, and was the principal means of divulging this tradition. Therefore this kind of proof being left, so naked, the king used the more diligence for the tracing of Perkin." * If the evidence against Richard rested upon this sole averment, we should at once see how open it is to suspicion—how naked is this kind of proof. Two men were apprehended charged with the committal of a great crime, the absolute manifestation of which to the world would have saved the reigning monarch such an amount of insurrection and estrangement of popular regard as "did thoroughly try his sitting, being of force enough to have cast an ordinary rider out of saddle." † The more important of these men, sir James Tyrrel, was released from his imprisonment, was employed by Henry VII., and was not beheaded "for other matters of treason" till ten years after "those examinations, which left the business somewhat perplexed." The servant of Tyrrel, John Dighton, "who, it seemeth, spake best for the king, was forthwith set at liberty." He, who told the tale which the king was desirous of having believed, "was the principal means of divulging this tradition." When, let us inquire, did the "tradition" assume the distinct shape which is given to it in Bacon's "Life of Henry VII.?" It was first printed in "Grafton's Continuation of the Metrical Chronicle of John Hardyng," in 1543, half a century after the time when the "tradition" was delivered ; and from that relation, which was subsequently published as "The History of King Richard the Third (unfinished), written by Master Thomas More, then one of the under-sheriffs of London, about the year of our Lord, 1513," did Bacon derive his circumstantial story. We have already alluded to the doubt whether More was the author of this "History of King Richard;" but there can be no doubt that the private information there contained was derived from cardinal Morton, the bishop of Ely, whom Richard arrested in 1483 ; who escaped and joined Richmond in 1484 ; who was subsequently archbishop of Canterbury and cardinal ; and was lord chancellor from the time of Henry's accession till his own death in 1500. More, who was born in 1480, became a page in the house of the lord chancellor in 1495 ; and in Morton's conversation with a boy of wonderful talent, this "tradition" amongst many other relations which are strongly tinged with bitter animosity to Richard III., may have assumed the circumstantial shape in which every chronicler from that time transmitted it. In one

* History of Henry VII., ed. 1622, p. 120.

† Speed, quoted in a valuable paper by Sir Frederic Madden, in "Archæologia," vol. xxvii.

important circumstance, however, More's relation differs from that of Bacon. He says that the confession of Tyrrel was made when he was in the Tower upon the charge of treason against Henry VII., and that both he and Dighton were then examined. As the general tone of Bacon's work is laudatory of Henry VII., it is strange that he should, on the contrary, have stated that the examination of Tyrrel and Dighton, and the king's attempt to trace the history of Perkin, when his pretensions became formidable, were made at the same period, viz. in 1493—and that the effect of these examinations was delivered abroad, but that the king made no use of them in his declarations. Before the publication of More's history, in 1543, the narratives of the death of these princes were of a character far more vague. Polydore Vergil, who wrote his history, by the command of Henry VII., relates very briefly that Brackenbury refused to murder the princes, but that James Tyrrel, "being forced to do the king's commandment, rode sorrowfully to London; and, to the worst example that hath been almost ever heard of, murdered those babes of the issue royal;" adding, "but with what kind of death these sely [innocent] children were executed is not certainly known." * Polydore's history was commenced in 1505 and completed in 1517. There is another narrative published in 1529, compiled and printed by John Rastall, the brother-in-law of More, which says there were "divers opinions" of the manner of the death of the young princes; and, after relating that one was smothered, and the other had his throat cut, states that the bodies were put in a chest, which being placed on board a ship going to Flanders was thrown over the hatches into the black deep; and he adds, "which saying, divers men conjectured to be true, because that the bones of the said children could never be found buried, neither in the Tower, nor in no other place." † Fabyan says "the common fame went that king Richard had within the Tower put unto secret death the two sons of his brother." Comines speaks of Richard as one "who had caused the two sons of king Edward, his brother, to be put to death," and adds that "our king [Louis XI.] looked upon him as an inhuman and cruel person." The historian of Croyland, another contemporary writer, says that it was set abroad that the two sons of Edward IV. were deceased, but by what manner of violence was unknown. We have thus briefly referred to the materials upon which the modern historian must rest his view of this mysterious transaction. Some of these statements are too vague, and others too suspiciously precise, to induce with us any confident opinion. The "Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London"—the register-book of that fraternity—has this simple and impressive entry, under the date of the first year of Richard III. "And the two sons of king Edward were put to silence." ‡

Here we might leave the question in its original obscurity, if it were not necessary to mention a circumstance which has been held to be a decisive corroboration of the narrative published as sir Thomas More's. In 1674, some alterations were going on in the White Tower, to prepare it for the reception of papers from the Six Clerks' Office. In making a new staircase into the chapel of that tower, some bones were found under the old staircase

* Early Translation, published by the Camden Society, p. 152.

† Quoted in Supplement to Walpole's "Historic Doubts."

‡ Published by the Camden Society, 1852, p. 23.

whose proportions "were answerable to the ages of the royal youths." Charles II. caused them to be removed to Henry the Seventh's Chapel, where a latin inscription, upon marble, records the discovery, after a lapse of a hundred and ninety-one years, of these remains of Edward V. and the duke of York, who were confined in the Tower, put to death, and secretly and ignominiously buried, by command of Richard. The decided nature of this inscription shows how absolute was the belief in the seventeenth century in the ordinary relations of these tragical events of the fifteenth. There was little scepticism then amongst historians; and one chronicler repeated and amplified what another chronicler had handed down. The value of this discovery of bones in the Tower will be differently estimated by different minds. The murder of the princes, regarded without reference to the historical narratives and conjectures, is so consistent a sequel to the other circumstances of violence which accompanied the accession of Richard to the throne, that it would require some absolute proof in the support of a contrary belief, to disturb what rests upon the popular opinion of generation after generation. Even the local traditions which connect the gateway called "The Bloody Tower" with this tragedy, will not readily be shaken by the evidence of the diligent antiquary, that in the reign of Henry VIII. it was called "The Garden Tower." *

* Bayley's "History of the Tower," p. 257.



The Bloody Tower.





Great Seal of Richard III.

CHAPTER XII.

Spirit of an age reflected by Chroniclers—Mixed character of Richard—Revolt of Buckingham—Suppression of the revolt—Indifference of the people—Salutary Laws of Richard's parliament—Statutes now first printed, and in English—Encouragement to printers and sellers of books—Daughters of Edward IV.—Deaths of Richard's son and his queen—Henry, earl of Richmond—Inadequate preparations against invasion—Battle of Bosworth-field—Death in battle of Richard III.

IN the true spirit of historical observation, Dr. Arnold, noticing the memoirs of Comines as belonging "to the last stage of an old state of things," remarks how striking they are from their perfect unconsciousness that the notions which the middle ages had tended to foster were "on the point of passing away." As a result of this unconsciousness, Comines, who records the crimes of his master Lewis XI., speaks of him as an admirable prince; and Froissart never permits the atrocities which he describes as knightly deeds to interfere with his eulogies of his chivalrous heroes.* These chroniclers, as well as others less celebrated, necessarily reflect the spirit of their age; and their insensibility to the real character of actions which now excite our unmeasured indignation was the result of the general standard of moral judgment in the great body of their contemporaries. Thus, as far as we can discover, the accession of the duke of Gloucester to the crown was not an unsanctioned usurpation, resting only upon the resolute will of one man, surrounded by a few unscrupulous partisans, and having the command of a

* "Lectures on Modern History," Lecture ii.

strong military force. Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey, Hawte, have been swept away by sudden tyranny. The heir of the last king, to whom the nobles of the land have twice sworn fealty, is, with his brother, in mysterious confinement; which, according to the natural destiny of deposed princes, will probably end in secret murder. And yet, in less than a fortnight after Richard had seated himself on the marble bench of Westminster Hall, thirty-five of the peers of England, and seventy of her knights—names amongst the highest in the land—do homage at his coronation. There is nothing to indicate that the usurper has an insecure seat—that the violence which these great men have witnessed or thoroughly known was far out of the ordinary course of events. There had been a long training in the outrage and dissimulation of a disputed succession; and if their moral sense was not so completely blunted as that of the chief perpetrator of the revolution of 1483, their prostration before the despot of the hour was so absolute as to throw a colour of legality over all his proceedings. Nor is it to be affirmed that no principle of public policy was mingled with their ready submission to his will. They had a natural dread of the insecurity of minorities and protectors, and of struggles for power amongst unprincipled favourites. They were familiar with depositions and “sad stories of the death of kings.” These were the invariable accompaniments of the inordinate power of a turbulent aristocracy; and when Buckingham, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Northumberland—the highest of the nobles—were ranged on the side of Richard, the herd of lesser lords of the soil did not trouble their consciences with thoughts of the probable fate of the children of their late master. One had leapt into the throne whom they knew for a man of courage and sagacity, as ready to defend his own interests, as to uphold those who served him and depress those who were open enemies or cold friends. During the next half century of our history, we shall see how much more completely, even than in the case of Richard, the directing minds of the country were subjected to the absolute will of the monarch; and, therefore, how imperfect is the evidence furnished by proclamations of council, and statutes of parliament, and verdicts of peers, of a regard for the public welfare overriding the baser influences of selfishness and cowardice, to sanctify, as some would believe, the caprice, injustice, and cruelty of regal pride and passion.

The character of Richard was an extraordinary mixture of hateful and amiable qualities, of either of which we must not attempt altogether to judge by the opinions of our own times. Those who had served him he loaded with benefits. Foremost amongst these was the duke of Buckingham, to whom by letters patent, dated a week after the coronation, he assigned the estates which Buckingham derived in right of his descent from Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford, which had been withheld from him by Edward IV. Nor had Richard any petty feelings of revenge towards the representatives of those whom his policy had cast down. About the same time, he released the estates of Hastings from forfeiture, in favour of his widow and her children. He secured her jointure to the widow of Rivers, and bestowed a pension on lady Oxford, whose husband was in prison. He moved about amongst the people as though he had no sense of having committed wrongs which would make him obnoxious; going a progress to Reading, Oxford, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Worcester, Warwick, Coventry, Leicester, Nottingham, York. At the great

city of the north, Richard and his queen were again crowned in the minster. During the progress, he administered justice against offenders, and "heard the complaints of poor folks." All seemed to promise a reign of peace and security, however troubled were its beginnings. But insurrections suddenly sprung up in various parts of the country. On the 10th of October the duke of Norfolk writes to sir John Paston, from London, that, "the Kentishmen be up in the Weald, and say that they will come and rob the city;" and prays him to come to him, "and bring with you six tall fellows in harness." * On the 12th of October Richard himself writes a remarkable letter to his chancellor, John Russell, who at that time was sick in London; in which he says, "Whereas we, by God's grace, intend briefly to advance us towards our rebel and traitor, the duke of Buckingham, to resist and withstand his malicious purpose, as lately by our other letters we certified you our mind more at large; for which cause it behoveth us to have our great seal here." In a subsequent portion

Signature of Richard III.

of this letter, in Richard's own hand-writing, he urges the chancellor to send the seal, if he is unable to come himself; and adds, "here, loved be God, is all well and truly determined, and for to resist the malice of him that had best cause to be true, the duke of Buckingham, the most untrue creature living." † Amongst the mysterious events of this reign; none are more incapable of a wholly satisfactory explanation than this sudden revolt of the man who had been the chief instrument of placing Richard on the throne; who had been his counsellor, agent, and abettor in every act, whether of violence or craft, up to the time of his taking the crown. We have only, for interpreting these secret passages, the very doubtful relation contained in Grafton's "Chronicle," which purports to be a continuation of More's "History." This narrative takes up the story where More breaks off, in a dialogue between the duke of Buckingham and Morton, bishop of Ely, who was committed to the duke's charge after his release from the Tower. Out of the long-winded orations of these two personages, we collect that Morton incited the duke's ambition, by suggesting that he, "the very undoubted similitude and image of true honour," was meet to be a ruler of the realm, in preference to "a blood-supper and child-killer." Then, that Buckingham, having slept upon the suggestion, entered upon a defence of his conduct in taking part with the duke of Gloucester to be Protector, and further to consent "that he might take upon him the crown, till the prince [Edward V.] came to the age of four and twenty years, and were able to govern the realm." Next, that when he was "credibly informed of the death of the two young innocents, his own natural nephews," he abhorred the sight and company of Richard, so that he could not abide in his court; and thought that he would take arms and aspire to be king himself, as heir of the house of Lancaster, till he by accident recollected that Margaret, countess of Richmond (now wife to Lord Stanley),

* "Paston Letters," letter ccccxxviii.

† Ellis, "Original Letters," Series II., vol. i. p. 169.

had a prior claim. And lastly, that Buckingham and Morton agreed that Henry, earl of Richmond, the son of Margaret, should wed Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Edward IV., and thus uniting the houses of Lancaster and York should bring to confusion "the bragging boar, that with his tusks raseth every man's skin." This apocryphal account is so clearly a manufacture after the accession of Henry VII., that it is worthless, except for the fact that Buckingham concerted with Morton a general insurrection against the rule of Richard, and that they put themselves in communication with Richmond. "High-reaching Buckingham," and miscalled "shallow Richmond," were each descended from John of Gaunt, by Catherine Swynford, the issue of this irregular union having been legitimated. Margaret, countess of Richmond, was the great grand-daughter of the duke of Lancaster, and so was Margaret, countess of Stafford, the mother of Buckingham. But the father of Richmond's mother was the elder branch. Her husband was Henry, earl of Richmond, who was the son of Owen Tudor, a gentleman of Wales, whom Catherine, the widow of Henry V., had married. But Buckingham was also descended from Thomas of Woodstock, the youngest son of Edward III., and thus his pride of descent might have been doubly operating upon his wayward mind. The narrative attributed to More,—very different in its pithy style from the Continuation,—says of Buckingham, "the duke was a high-minded man, and evil could bear the glory of another; so that I have heard of some that said they saw it, that the duke at such time as the crown was first set upon the protector's head, his eye could not abide the sight thereof, but wryed his head another way." * It is easy to comprehend, in the absence of positive facts, that the subtle Morton might naturally work upon this weak scion of the house of Lancaster, to persuade him that, one game of ambition having been played out, and he no more than constable of England and justiciary of Wales, whilst Richard of York was king, there was another game to be played by the two representatives of the Red Rose, in which the caprices of fortune might leave the more experienced pretender a clear road to the throne. The assumed hostility of Buckingham to Gloucester on account of the murder of the two princes, is utterly inconsistent with the statement of a contemporary, that when Richard was being enthroned at York in September, the time when Buckingham and Morton were plotting at Brecknock,—there was no suspicion that the princes had ceased to live. "Whilst these things were passing in the north, king Edward's two sons remained under certain deputed custody, for whose release from captivity the people of the southern and western parts began very much to murmur." † For the release of the princes the same historian says that a rising was about to take place, when it was reported that they were dead; and that then the conspirators turned to Richmond as the object of their enterprise. Early chronicles and modern histories detail with much minuteness the negotiations which preceded the outbreak; involving communications between the countess of Richmond and the duke of Buckingham through sir Reginald Bray, for the distinct object of placing her son on the throne; plots between the countess and the widow of king Edward, carried on through one Lewis, a physician; messengers passing to and fro between the countess and her son in Brittany; the heads of the plot going about in

* "History," Singer's edit., p. 187.

† Croyland Chronicle.

England inciting the commonalty to revolt ; and, finally, the earl of Richmond sailing with five thousand Breton soldiers, and attempting a landing in Dorsetshire, simultaneously with the proclamation of himself as the coming king in Devonshire, Wiltshire, Kent, Berkshire, and Wales.* This extensive organisation of the scattered materials for another revolution in a wonderfully short time, according to the received accounts, is perfectly incompatible with the belief of any sudden impulses on the part of Buckingham and other Lancastrians in concert with the Woodville family, to set up Richmond because Edward V. was removed by assassination. We have seen from Richard's letter to his chancellor that, previous to the 10th of October, he was aware of Buckingham's revolt. More relates that Buckingham, "both with great gifts and high behests, in most loving and trusty manner," departed from Richard at Gloucester ; and going to his castle at Brecknock, the bishop of Ely being there in custody, "waxed with him familiar." This friendly parting at Gloucester took place in the beginning of August. That the plot of Morton, Buckingham, and Richmond could have been matured after the knowledge of the deaths of the princes in the Tower, which More says was determined by Richard during his sojourn at Warwick, is almost an impossibility. The king was receiving the Spanish ambassador at Warwick in the second week of August. In two months he was intending to advance "against our rebel and traitor the duke of Buckingham." There can be little doubt that the scattered party of the Lancastrians turned their regards upon the earl of Richmond, the nearest lineal representative of that house, from the time when the direct succession of the house of York, in the person of Edward V., had been set aside. Had this king remained upon the throne in his "young age," the energy of the protector would, in all likelihood, have been incessantly demanded to prevent a renewal of the civil war through the pretensions of Buckingham or Richmond. When the crown was usurped, and the issue of Edward IV. declared illegitimate, the hopes of the adherents of the Red Rose, would naturally become stronger ; and the actual removal of the princes in the Tower by death, or the popular belief that they were dead, would as materially forward the policy of Richmond as the policy of Richard. The report of their death, which preceded the outbreak of the conspiracy of 1483 only about a month, does not furnish the slightest proof that their murder had been accomplished by Richard, or that they did not remain in some secret custody at the period when Buckingham was in insurrection, and Richmond about to land with a Breton force in Dorsetshire.

The revolt of 1483 was soon quelled by the energetic king. On the 23rd of October he issued a characteristic proclamation from Leicester, in which he offers high rewards for the apprehension of Buckingham and other conspirators. He marched with a considerable army to Salisbury, the junction of Buckingham's forces with the foreign troops of Richmond being expected to be attempted in the south-western counties. Buckingham moved boldly out from Brecon "with a great power of wild Welshmen, whom he, being a man of great courage and sharp speech, had thereto rather enforced and compelled by lordly and strait commandment than by liberal wages and

* Whether by accident or design, Polydore Vergil has carried forward the date of these events a whole year, making the sailing of Richmond from Brittany occur in October, 1484, "the second year of king Richard."

gentle retainer." * Not only with Buckingham's levies, but with other bands of the feudal lords, was the ancient zeal for the cause under whose banner the men served fast passing away. Buckingham experienced a series of disasters, which ended in his discomfiture. For ten days the Severn was overflowing the whole country through continual rains, which flood, says Grafton, "they call to this day the great water, or the duke of Buckingham's great water." The Welshmen, without victual or wages, deserted him. The duke was compelled to fly. The terrible Richard had appointed a vice-constable of England, to supersede the power of Buckingham as constable; and he used the great seal to arm his new officer, sir Thomas Ashton, with authority to judge all traitors, "without the noise and formality of trial, and without regard to any appeal whatsoever to proceed to execution." When Richard put on the despot, he did the work of tyranny most thoroughly as far as he chose to go. Under this commission, Buckingham, who had been betrayed by one of his servants, was executed at Salisbury on the 2nd of November; the other confederates dispersed. The chiefs fled to the continent; some of inferior note were taken and put to death. Richmond, whose fleet had been scattered by a storm, thought it prudent to return without any attempt to land. In Brittany, he and the marquis of Dorset, son of Elizabeth Woodville, met to devise new plans; and there, in the cathedral of Vannes on the following Christmas-day, they pledged themselves to another attempt, and Richmond swore to marry Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Edward IV., if he should obtain the crown.

In this abortive revolt against the power of Richard, we see nothing like a popular movement on one side or the other. The faithful adherents of the king, such as the duke of Norfolk, gathered their "tall fellows in harness," and stood by the man whom they had placed on the throne. Buckingham impressed his Welshmen, and a few lords and knights prepared their tenants for the field. But there was no signal demonstration in London or the great cities. The peaceful and industrious people of town and country were utterly weary of these feudal struggles, and had sunk into the worst state of public feeling,—that of indifference. Richard and his advisers appear to have partially comprehended the spirit of their time, and to have endeavoured to discharge their duty to the people by wise legislation and impartial justice. Bacon says of this king that he was "jealous of the honour of the English nation, and likewise a good law-maker, for the ease and solace of the common people." At the same time Bacon objects that "the politic and wholesome laws which were enacted in his time," were only "to woo and win the hearts of the people, as being conscious to himself that the true obligations of sovereignty in him failed and were wanting." † Bacon lived at a period when "the ease and solace of the common people," to be promoted by wholesome laws, were scarcely thought to be amongst "the true obligations of sovereignty." The maligned Richard, in the statutes of his one parliament, showed that he was in advance of his age.

The triumph of the king, in the failure of the plans of Buckingham and Richmond, would naturally tend to place his government upon a more secure basis. He found a parliament ready enough to confirm his title, by passing

* Grafton.

† History of Henry VII., p. 2, ed. 1622.

an Act for the settlement of the crown upon him and his issue; in which the illegitimacy of the children of Edward IV. was affirmed, and his widow is styled "sometime wife to sir John Gray, knight, late naming herself and many years heretofore queen of England." But this parliament, which was held at Westminster on the 23rd of January, 1484, did something beyond this confirmation of Richard's claims, and the attainder of those who had been concerned in the recent revolt. In the address which the protector delivered to the meeting which invited him to assume the crown, he used these remarkable words: "For certainly we be determined rather to adventure and commit us to the peril of our life and jeopardy of death, than to live in such thralldom and bondage as we have lived long time heretofore, oppressed and injured by extortions and new impositions against the laws of God and man, and the liberty, old policy, and laws of this realm, wherein every Englishman is inherited."* This was not a mere boast of the hour. Edward IV. had been accustomed to plunder his subjects under the name of "Benevolences;" which practice the duke of Buckingham defined to be, "that every man should pay, not what he of his own good will list, but what the king of his own good will list to take."† The statute of Richard "to free the subject from Benevolences" denounces these "new and unlawful inventions" as the cause of "great penury and wretchedness," and ordains that no such exactions shall in future be made, but that they be "annulled for ever." The "Act for Bailing of Persons suspected of Felony" provides that on arrests for mere suspicion of felony, every justice of the peace shall have power to bail; and that the goods of persons apprehended for felony shall not be seized before conviction. "An Act for returning of sufficient Jurors" aims at the proper administration of justice, by requiring that no juryman be summoned but such as are of good name and fame, and have twenty shillings a year in freehold land, or twenty-six shillings and eightpence in copyhold. "An Act against privy and unknown feofments" secures the transfer of property to the buyer against the claims of the heirs of the seller. "An Act for Proclamation upon Fines levied"‡ is repeated in almost the exact words by a statute of Henry VII.§ "It is surely strange," says Mr. Hallam, "that those who have extolled this sagacious monarch [Henry VII.] for breaking the fetters of landed property (though many of them were lawyers) should never have observed that whatever credit might be due for the innovation should redound to the honour of the unfortunate usurper."|| It is unnecessary here to enter upon a technical explanation of the provisions of this Act. By a decision of the courts of law in the time of Edward IV., the practice of barring estates tail—that is, of permitting their alienation in despite of entail—by what is called a common recovery, was established. The statute of Richard, by enacting that a fine levied in the courts, with due proclamation, should, after five years, be a bar to all claims, gave security to possession, and thus facilitated the transfer of lands, and in so doing broke down one of the chief foundations of the feudal system.

A great legal authority, looking at these acts of Richard III.—fifteen alto-

* Rolls of Parliament. See Hallam's "Middle Ages," chap. viii., part iii.

† More, "History of Richard III."

‡ Cap. vii., 1 Richard III., in the Statutes published by authority, vol. i. p. 482.

§ 4 Henry VII., c. 24.

|| "Constitutional History," vol. i. chap. i.

gether—says of this, his only parliament, “ We have no difficulty in pronouncing it the most meritorious national council for protecting the liberty of the subject, and putting down abuses in the administration of justice, which had sat since the time of Edward I.”* But in opening the volumes of our laws, as printed by authority “ from original records and authentic manuscripts,” we are struck with a change upon the face of these statutes of Richard III., which indicates as true a regard for the liberty of the subject as the laws themselves. For the first time the laws to be obeyed by the English people are enacted in the English tongue. But, beyond this, they are the first laws of the land which were ever printed. In the legislation of this short and troubled reign, and in the mode of promulgating a knowledge of the laws, there is the evidence of some master mind breaking down the trammels of routine and



Bas-relief on Gutenberg's Monument: Examining a Matrix.

prescription. The commercial acts are not marked by any advance beyond the principle of protection, except in one striking instance, in which an exception is made to the old system of fettering the dealings, and restricting the liberty, of alien traders. There was one commodity which was to come into the land as freely as the light from heaven; there was one class of foreign merchants whose calling was to be encouraged, for in their hands were the great instruments of all national progress. Let us give this memorable enactment in its original English: “ Provided alway that this acte, or any part therof, or any other acte made or to be made in this present parliament, in no wise extende or be prejudiciall any lette hurte or

* Lord Campbell, “ Lives of the Chancellors,” vol. i. p. 404.

impediment to any artificer or merchaunt straungier of what nacion or contrey he be or shalbe of, for bryngyng into this realme, or sellyng by retail or otherwise, of any maner bokes wrytten or imprynted, or for the inhabitynge within the said realme for the same intent, or to any writer, lymper, bynder, or imprynter, of suche bokes, as he hath or shall have to sell by wey of merchaundise, or for their abode in the same realme for the exercisyng of the said occupacions ; this acte or any parte therof notwithstanding." There could be no greater homage to the memory of Gutenberg, the inventor of printing, than this law, enacted fifteen years after his death, which said to his fellow craftsmen of every nation that no English restrictions upon aliens should touch them. The power, now for the first time exercised, of securing a better obedience to the laws by a wider publicity, demanded such a tribute



Cold Harbour.

to the merchants and artificers of knowledge. Richard and his counsellors stood upon the threshold of a new state of society ; and this encouragement of transcribers, printers, and sellers of books, showed that they understood what was one of the characteristics of their time. But the spirit of the feudal ages was still a living presence. As the commercial classes were pressing forward to the honours which wealth commanded, and the gates of knowledge were opened wider, the claims of blood came to be regarded even more than when the only social distinction was that of lord and vassal. The knight-riders, pursuivants, heralds of kings, were more than ever required to be the

arbiters of rank, and the tracers of genealogies. Richard III. raised the heralds into an incorporation, and bestowed upon them the royal house of Cold Harbour. They became the worthy depositaries of the nation's family antiquities.

One of the measures of Richard's parliament was to annul all letters-patent granting estates to "Elizabeth, late wife of sir John Gray." The relict of Edward IV. still remained with her daughters in sanctuary. But on the 1st of March, 1484, the king, in the presence of lords spiritual and temporal, and the mayor and aldermen of London, made oath *verbo regio* upon the holy Evangelists, that if Elizabeth, Cecile, Anne, Katherine, and Bridget, the daughters of dame Elizabeth Gray, would come out of the sanctuary, and be guided, ruled, and demeaned after him, he would see that they should be in surety of their lives and suffer no hurt or imprisonment, but that they should have everything necessary as his kinswomen; and that he would endow such as were marriageable with lands to the yearly value of two hundred marks, and provide them gentlemen born as husbands; and that their mother should receive of him seven hundred marks annually for her support.* This family, accordingly, came out of their place of refuge, and submitted themselves to the guidance of Richard. In the next month, he, who was suspected of having destroyed his brother's sons, sustained himself the heaviest of human afflictions. His own son, Edward, the only child of his marriage with the daughter of Warwick, died at

Middleham Castle. The unhappy parents were almost driven mad by the intelligence.† But the king had too many enemies to watch, to sit down in hopeless grief. He declared his nephew, John de la Pole, earl of Lincoln, his heir; and applied himself to counteract the schemes of Richmond, by negotiating with the duke of Brittany to deliver him up. But Richmond was in many respects his intellectual equal; and he had secret friends in the English court as useful as the spies whom Richard employed to watch the motions of his rival. He suddenly fled from Vannes with a few servants, and succeeded in entering France, where he claimed the protection of Charles VIII. The earl of



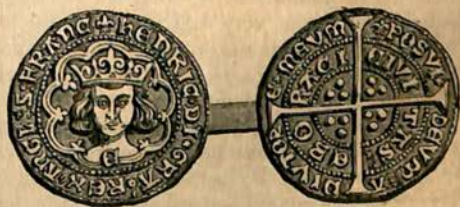
Female Costume in the time of Richard III.

Oxford, one of the most constant of the Lancastrians, escaped from his prison at Ham, and joined Richmond, to whom other adherents gradually

* The document is given at length in Ellis, "Original Letters," 2nd Series, vol. i. p. 149.

† "Pene insanire." Croyland Chron.

flocked. The king spent the year in active preparation for the possible invasion. He kept his Christmas at Westminster with great splendour; and it was remarked that his niece Elizabeth was dressed in robes of the same fashion and colour as those of his queen. Scandal upon this hint took up its courtly vocation; and the rumour went that as the queen was in ill health he contemplated marriage with his niece. On the 16th of March, 1485, the queen died. Here was a new occasion for fastening one more horrible suspicion upon the evil reputation of Richard; and therefore Polydore Vergil makes a doubt "whether she were despatched by sorrowfulness or poison." An eulogist of Richard, sir George Buck, affirms that he had seen a letter written to the duke of Norfolk by Elizabeth of York, in which she called the king "her joy and maker in this world; and said that she was his in heart and thought; withal insinuating that the better part of February was past, and that she feared the queen would never die." Although such a marriage was not beyond the bounds of papal dispensation, Richard felt that the rumour was injurious to him. Within a month after the death of the queen, on the 11th of April, before the mayor and citizens of London, he solemnly disavowed the intention which had been imputed to him. It has been justly observed that his title to the crown would not have been strengthened by marrying a woman whom the law had declared illegitimate; and as justly inferred that "the whole tale was invented with the view of blackening Richard's character, to gratify the monarch in whose reign all the contemporary writers who relate it flourished."* But they told the story, as against Richard, without the slightest hint that the lady who became the wife of Henry VII. was enamoured of the man who was held to be the destroyer of her brothers; but on the contrary they said that she abhorred his proposals. After the death of Richard's queen, Elizabeth was removed to Sheriff Hutton Castle, where her cousin, the earl of Warwick, the son of the duke of Clarence, was kept in a sort of honourable captivity. Historians, who can scarcely avoid dwelling too much upon the intrigues of courts, are indignant with the widow of Edward IV. that at this time she was in friendly relations with Richard, and induced her son, the marquis of Dorset, to attempt to return to England. He was detained by the king of France, who gave assistance to the project of Richmond; and the preparations for invasion went forward. Richard appears to have somewhat too much despised his adversary. He was in London from the beginning of the year till the middle of May. There had been no parliament to grant him a subsidy; and he, by a solemn legislative act, had declared against "Benevolences." He was too straitened for money to make large warlike preparations. Fabyan, who personally knew whatever actions of the king



Groat of Richard III.

* Sir N. H. Nicolas, "Memoir of Elizabeth of York," p. lii., prefixed to her "Privy Purse Expenses."

bore upon the pockets of the citizens, says, of this period, that "king Richard spared not to spend the great treasure, which, before, king Edward IV had gathered, in giving of great and large gifts;" and that "he borrowed many notable sums of money of rich men of this realm, and specially of the citizens of London, whereof the least sum was forty pounds. For surety whereof he delivered to them good and sufficient pledges."* This is explicit enough; and yet we constantly find it stated that Richard lost his small share of the affections of the citizens by adopting the system of Benevolences, though not in name.† He who gives "good and sufficient pledges" for a loan, can scarcely be said to pursue the same system of extortion as he who compels a gift without an intention of repayment.

The earl of Richmond had been acquainted with misfortune from his first years. Comines says, "he told me not long before his departure from this kingdom, that from the time he was five years old he had always been a fugitive or a prisoner."‡ According to outward appearances and ordinary calculations, his enterprise for the English crown was not likely to improve his lot. The same observer regarded Richmond as without money, without power, without reputation, and without right; and he describes the three thousand Normans that were furnished to the earl by the king of France, as "the loosest and most profligate persons in all that country."§ But Richmond had better support than his outward power of three thousand vagabond Normans. There was a systematic organisation of the Lancastrian party in England, which Richard, with all his penetration and caution, and with his reputation for striking hard when he did strike, very insufficiently guarded against. He had no great military force at his command. Fourteen years had passed since the battle of Tewkesbury, when the people of the south had rallied round the banner of the White Rose. The Welsh had followed Buckingham, and were now ready to follow Richmond, who came with a genealogy from Cadwallader and king Arthur up to the Trojan Brute. Stanley, who could command many followers in Cheshire and Lancashire, and Northumberland, the great lord of the border country, were nominally for the king, and employed their authority as his accredited officers. The day of battle showed how dexterously they had been won over to betray him. The confidence of Richard in the fidelity of these nobles seems a judicial blindness, very different from the supposed temper of the man who "while he was thinking of any matter, did continually bite his nether lip, as though that cruel nature of his did so rage against itself in that little carcase."|| He indeed took some security in detaining the son of lord Stanley at his court, while the father went amongst his tenantry; but, beyond this, he seems to have had no suspicion of the treachery which Norfolk had to learn on the day when he fell, with his master "bought and sold." Henry of Richmond set sail from Harfleur on the 1st of August, and landed at Milford Haven on the 7th. Beyond the precaution of having beacons on the hills of the coast—"lamps fastened upon frames of timber"¶—the king had no sure means of being informed of the movements of his enemy. He took up a position at Nottingham, as the centre of the kingdom. But the

* Chronicle, 4to., p. 671.

† Book v. chap. xviii.

‡ Polydore Vergil, p. 227. Camden edit.

† See Lingard, vol. v., 8vo., p. 361.

§ Book vi. chap. x.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

landing of Richmond in Wales was a surprise. Norfolk, a day or two before the 15th of August, writes to sir John Paston, then sheriff, "letting you to understand that the king's enemies be a-land," and praying him to meet the duke at Bury, "that ye bring with you such company of tall men as ye may goodly make at my cost and charge, besides that which ye have promised the king; and I pray you ordain them jackets of my livery, and I shall content you at your meeting with me."* The records of York show that it was not till the 16th that the king's firm friends in that city despatched their officer to him to know whether they should send him aid; and four hundred men were accordingly ordered to march on the 19th. Richard is said to have despised his adversary as "a man of small courage and of less experience in martial art," and this, combined with his fear of taxing the people, made him inadequately employ the resources of the crown. The very materials of the old English arm of war were deficient, if we may judge from an act of 1484, of which a petition from the bowyers forms the preamble; they saying that from the want of "good and able stuff of bowstaves" the craft of bowyers is sorely diminished, and "thereby the land greatly enfeebled, to the great jeopardy of the same, and great comfort to the enemies and adversaries thereof." The want of preparation was, in some degree, the natural result of a period in which the industry of the nation had made remarkable progress, but in which the military arts had proportionably declined. The battle of the 22nd of August was fought with so few men on either side, that it would appear marvellous that it should have decided the fate of a kingdom, if we did not bear in mind that it was not fought by one section of an aroused population against another section similarly excited; but that the king himself, with a few faithful friends, was fighting with scarcely more power than that of a feudal partisan, and that when he, the first crowned sovereign since Harold that died in battle upon English ground, was struck down, the contest was at an end. In instructions to his chancellor to prepare a proclamation against Henry Tudor and other rebels, the king desires him to make known, "that our said sovereign lord willeth and commandeth all his said subjects to be ready in their most defensible array, to do his highness service of war, when they by open proclamation or otherwise shall be commanded so to do."† But this command was not of equal force as in the earlier days of the monarchy, or even in the recent time when Edward led forth the men of London to the hill of Barnet. The feudal chain which bound the lord to the king, and the vassal to the lord, had been impaired in many of its links. The sentiment of loyalty to the sovereign, founded upon the spirit of patriotism and not upon the obligations of feudal service, was scarcely yet created. That had to be born when the dominant power of the aristocracy was broken down, not so much by the force of arms or of law, as by the decay of the principle which was incompatible with the civilisation that more readily assimilated with the rule of one than the rule of many. With Richard, the last of the Plantagenets, expired the political system under which England had been governed by that house for more than three centuries.

* "Paston Letters," letter ccccxliii.

† Ellis: "Original Letters," Series ii., vol. i. p. 162.

Market-Bosworth, the nearest town of importance, gave the name to the decisive battle of the 22nd of August, 1485. "Not," says Burton, the old historian of Leicestershire, "that this battle was fought at this place (it being fought in a large, flat, plain, and spacious ground, three miles distant from this town, between the towns of Shenton, Sutton, Dadlington, and Stoke); but for this town was the most worthy town of note near adjacent, and was therefore called Bosworth-field." * Burton, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was familiar with the traditions that belonged to the scene of so important an event. In 1787, William Hutton, who had a true love for his nation's antiquities, without the pedantry of mere antiquarianism, described this battle-field. Its real name, he says, is Redmoor plain, from the colour of the soil; rather of an oval form, about two miles long and one broad; part waste land, part in grass, part in tillage. Near a wood at the south end is a spring called king Richard's well. No human being resides on this desolate field or near it. Twenty years after his first visit, Hutton again went to the field, and found the plain enclosed; fences grown up; Richard's well vanished; and the swamp where he is recorded to have fallen become firm land. It is thus that the material improvement of a country obliterates the physical traces of its history. Dr. Parr, in 1812, found the spring by digging; and by way of preserving the popular memory of a great English event, wrote a pompous Latin inscription to be inscribed on a local monument. The form of the ground, with an amphitheatre of hills bounding the plain to the south-east and south-west, and a rivulet called "the Tweed," will now furnish little assistance to him who goes to seek some illustration of the descriptions of the chroniclers. The facts of this battle may be soon told. On Sunday, the 20th of August, Richard marched from Nottingham to Leicester, at the head of his troops, riding on a white horse, in full armour, and a crown on his helmet. On the 21st he moved to the abbey of Mirivall, near Bosworth, and encamped on a rising ground called Anbeame or Amyon Hill. Richmond had crossed the Severn at Shrewsbury; had a conference at Stafford with Sir William Stanley, when it was agreed that the Stanleys should move towards Richard's camp, as if for his support; and on the 21st he reached Atherstone, by Tamworth. On the morning of the 22nd both armies advanced to Redmoor. Hutton, on his first visit, found traces of four camps. The largest, which he assigns to Richard, covers about eighteen acres; Richmond's, he says, covers six or seven acres; Lord Stanley's comprises about four acres, and Sir William Stanley's three acres. When the battle begun, Richard found the Stanleys opposed to him, and Northumberland stirring not a foot to his aid. No strategy could now be of avail. It was of little consequence that Richmond "had never set a squadron in the field." The men whom Richard had loaded with benefits deserted him in the hour of his need, with a treachery that proclaimed that the knell of chivalry was rung. The courage of his race sustained him to the end. He made a desperate onset upon that part of the battle-field where Henry was, after having maintained an unequal conflict for two hours, with the aid of those who remained faithful to him. Polydore Vergil, the eulogist of Henry, does justice to the valiancy of Richard in this last struggle: "King Richard, at

* Hutton's "Bosworth Field," with additions, by J. G. Nicholls, p. 181.

the first brunt, killed certain; overthrew Henry's standard, together with William Prandon, the standard-bearer; and matched also with John Cheney, a man of much fortitude, far exceeding the common sort, who encountered with him as he came; but the king with great force drove him to the ground, making way with weapon on every side. But yet Henry abode the brunt longer than ever his own soldiers would have weened, who were now almost out of hope of victory, whenas sir William Stanley with three thousand men came to the rescue. Then truly, in a very moment, the residue all fled, and king Richard alone was killed, fighting manfully in the thickest press of his enemies." •





CHAPTER XIII.

Richmond crowned in the battle-field—Henry VII. crowned at Westminster—His parliamentary title—Marriage with Elizabeth of York—Henry VII. suited to his times—Imposture of Lambert Simnel—Battle of Stoke—Alleged harsh treatment of the widow of Edward IV.—The earl of Warwick exhibited to the people—Unreal war and real taxation—An English army in France—A hurried peace concluded at Estaples—Its motives.

RICHARD III. lies covered with wounds in the marsh of Redland. It was a part of the policy of the victors to heap insult and degradation upon the poor remains of the man who chose rather to perish than to save himself by flight; and thus his body, "naked and despoiled, was trussed behind a poursuivant of arms, like a hog or a calf, the head and the arms hanging on the one side of the horse, and the legs on the other side, and all besprinkled with mire and blood was brought to the Gray-friars church at Leicester." Thus writes Grafton, one of the meanest of the eulogists of Henry VII. The earl of Richmond, he says, ascended to the top of a little mountain, and there rendered thanks to his soldiers and friends. "Then the people rejoiced and clapped their hands, crying up to heaven, King Henry, king Henry. When the lord Stanley saw the good will and gladness of the people, he took the crown of king Richard which was found amongst the spoil in the field, and set it on the earl's head, as though he had been elected king by the voice of the people, as in ancient times past in divers realms it hath been accustomed." In the evening the camp of Richmond, now king Henry VII., was removed to Leicester; and, two days after, the conqueror

went forward to London. He chose to consider himself to have won the crown of England by conquest; and he held to the delusion in his latter years, providing by his last will, "that our executors cause to be made an image of a king, representing our own person, the same to be of timber, covered and wrought with plates of fine gold, in manner of an armed man; and upon the same armour a coat-armour of our arms of England and France, enamelled, with a sword and spurs accordingly; and the said image to kneel upon a table of silver and gilt, and holding betwixt his hands the crown which it pleased God to give us, with the victory of our enemy at our first field." * Henry, earl of Richmond, who came to put down an usurper, was himself an usurper in every sense. Bacon has clearly stated the dilemma in which the new king was placed. He had been engaged to marry the lady Elizabeth, under the compact by which he was to be supported in his pretensions. This claim, through the daughter of Edward IV., was most likely to content the people, who had become attached to the house of York, and were satisfied of the clearness of their title to the throne. But relying upon the title to be obtained by this marriage, he would only have been a king by courtesy. "Neither," adds his historian, "wanted there even at that time secret rumours and whisperings,—which afterwards gathered strength and turned to great troubles—that the two young sons of king Edward IV., or one of them, which sons were said to be destroyed in the Tower, were not indeed murdered, but were conveyed secretly away, and were yet living: which, if it had been true, had prevented the title of the lady Elizabeth." † As to his own title, as the representative of the house of Lancaster, "he knew it was a title condemned by parliament, and generally prejudged in the common opinion of the realm." ‡ As to the third title, that of conqueror, he felt that it would provoke terror, and that even William I. forbore to use that claim in the beginning. He put on the name and state of a king, therefore, without proclaiming any title, in the first instance; and thus, the needy adventurer of August, 1485, was crowned king of England and France, on the 30th of October. But a parliament being held on the 7th of November, when the speaker was presented to the king,—who had received his crown on the battle-field, from his Norman vagabonds, as Comines describes his soldiers, and from the deserters of Richard, "as though he had been elected by the voice of the people,"—he spoke of his accession, "as well by just hereditary title as by the sure judgment of God, which was manifested by giving him the victory in the field over his enemy." § But the parliament would not accept the vain pretension of an hereditary title, nor the insolent one of a title by conquest. The desire for tranquillity and a peaceful succession was paramount; and a title was made for Henry VII. as king *de facto*. By the Act of Settlement it is ordained, "in avoiding all ambiguities and questions, that the inheritance of the crowns of the realms of England and of France," &c., shall "be, rest, remain, and abide, in the most royal person of our now sovereign lord king Henry VII., and in the heirs of his body, lawfully coming, perpetually, with the grace of God so to endure, and in none other." ||

* Sir N. H. Nicolas, "Memoirs of Elizabeth of York," p. lxiii.

† "History of Henry VII.," p. 4.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ Rolls of Parliament.

|| Statutes, by Authority, vol. ii. p. 499.

The parliament, however, would not bestow the crown upon this branch of the house of Lancaster without a regard to the condition which was likely to prevent future disputes. Before its prorogation in December, the speaker of the Commons prayed the king, "that in consideration of the right to the realms of England and France being vested in his person and the heirs of his body, by the authority of the said parliament, he would be pleased to espouse the lady Elizabeth, daughter of king Edward IV., which marriage they hoped God would bless with a progeny of the race of kings." The Lords rose, and bowing to the throne, intimated that they assented to this desire.



Elizabeth, Queen of Henry VII. From the Tomb in his Chapel at Westminster.

Henry expressed his willingness to comply with the request; and the marriage took place on the following 18th of January. In consequence of their relationship, a dispensation was necessary; but it appears that no efforts had been made to obtain it, until after this parliamentary declaration.

The mode in which the question of Henry's title was determined by the parliament is some evidence that the ancient spirit of the great council of the realm was not extinct. The Lords and Commons would not allow themselves to be considered the representatives of a conquered people; nor would they admit a claim of lineal descent which would be resisted by a powerful party, if not by a majority of the nation. The accident, for it was scarcely more, of the victory of Bosworth Field, had left the way clear for the adherents of

the house of Lancaster to regain their lost position; and a qualified submission to the favoured of fortune was the most prudent and honest course. There could have been no enthusiasm for the personal qualities of Henry; which were not of a nature to command the admiration of an age in which the military virtues were still held as the proudest adornment of a ruler of men. The new king was essentially different in character from any one of the Plantagenet race. He was not intellectually weak, as Henry VI.; nor incapable of self-government, as Edward II. and Richard II. But he had none of the heroic qualities—the thirst for glory, the pride, the high courage, the resolute will, which were the attributes of the first, the third, and the fourth Edward—of Henry IV. and Henry V.—of Richard III. The spirit of the feudal ages had no longer a representative. But Henry VII. brought to the throne a character which was eminently fitted to the requirements of a new state of society. The work which he had to carry forward had been partially accomplished in the wars of York and Lancaster, by the outpouring of the blood, the waste of the resources, the attainders and forfeitures of the dominant nobility. The new king was to build up the monarchy upon the complete subjection of the aristocracy as a caste separate from the people; and he was to do this, not by force but by sagacity—not by terror but by subtlety—not by lavish expenditure but by ever-grasping acquisition. If this first sovereign of the house of Tudor had carried forward his policy, which was essentially arbitrary, amongst a people without that reverence for ancestral freedom which was almost an instinct, he and his successors might have established a despotism as severe as that which in some other European countries followed a similar triumph of the regal prerogative. But Henry VII.,—although indifferent enough to the rights of the people, and always ready to increase his hoarded riches by cunning extortion rather than by parliamentary taxation,—preserved the country in order and tranquillity; and thus the practical liberties of the people were constantly advancing with their industrial prosperity. We shall have occasion to relate a succession of attempts to disturb the rule of this king; but the indifference with which the bulk of the English community regarded them is the best proof that the policy of this man was fitted for his time. The period of Henry VII. was that of the invention of printing, and the discovery of America. The spread of knowledge and the extension of commerce were soon to work mighty changes in all nations; and England was in a great degree fortunate to have passed under the rule of a king who would not retard the progress of improvement by clinging to the worn-out systems of the middle ages.

The desire for the union of the houses of York and Lancaster was a popular sentiment to which Henry gave little encouragement when he had the reins of power in his hands. "His aversion to the house of York was so predominant in him," says Bacon, "as it found place, not only in his wars and councils, but in his chamber and bed."* He had sworn at Vannes to marry Elizabeth of York; but he showed no alacrity in performing his oath. Although the marriage was solemnised in January 1486, the public honour of the queen's coronation was deferred till late in the year 1487. The chief adherents of Richard III. had been attainted, in the usual course of such

* "History of Henry VII.," p. 16.

revolutions. But Henry also held the property of a great body of Yorkists within his grasp, by revoking, on his own authority, all grants of the crown made since 1454-5, when the influence of Richard, duke of York, began to preponderate. There was one representative of that house, whom he held in dread, even in the moment of his victory at Bosworth. Edward, earl of Warwick, the son of the duke of Clarence, had been placed by Edward IV. at the castle of Sheriff Hutton, from the time of his father's death in 1478. The young prince remained there during the reign of Richard III. The first exercise of authority by Henry was to remove the earl of Warwick to the Tower, out of whose dreary walls he never passed. The temper of the king towards the Yorkists produced an injudicious rising in 1486, under lord Lovel and Thomas and Humphrey Stafford. This was soon quelled. In Ireland, the partisans of the house of York had filled the chief offices, under the earls of Kildare, since the accession of Edward IV. The love for that house was still the prevailing feeling; and, in reliance upon this fidelity, two remarkable attempts to shake the power of Henry VII. had their first manifestations in Ireland.

Henry, after the insurgents under Lovel and the Staffords had dispersed, continued his progress through the midland and northern counties. The queen remained at Winchester. Here, in September, she gave birth to a son, who received the name of Arthur. The partisans of the house of York chose this period for the development of a plot, apparently most wild and purposeless, founded upon a reliance upon popular credulity almost beyond belief. In the spring of 1487 a youth appeared in Ireland, calling himself Edward Plantagenet, earl of Warwick. The son of Clarence when committed to the Tower was about fifteen years of age. The youth who presented himself to the earl of Kildare, the lord deputy, at Dublin, was accompanied by a priest of the name of Simons, and he represented himself as the earl of Warwick, who had escaped from his confinement in the Tower. Either his pretensions were implicitly believed by Kildare, or he was a party to the scheme, which had evidently been promoted by persons of influence. In a letter written by king Henry, four years after, he says, "not forgetting the great malice that the lady Margaret of Burgoigne beareth continually against us; as she shewed lately in sending hither of a feigned boy, surmising him to have been the son of the duke of Clarence, and caused him to be accompanied with the earl of Lincoln, the lord Lovel, and with a great multitude of Irishmen and of Almaines."* The hostility of Margaret of Burgundy to Richmond, the husband of her niece, was possibly the result of his neglect of that niece, and of his general oppression of the Yorkists. But her countenance of an imposture, which could be so readily exposed by producing the real son of Clarence, who was well known, and the subsequent adherence of persons of high position to the conspiracy, can scarcely be explained upon any rational principles of human conduct, except we believe that the pretended earl of Warwick was set up as a feeler of public opinion. Bacon, speaking of Margaret of Burgundy, says, "it was not her meaning, nor no more was it the meaning of any of the better and sager sort that favoured this enterprize and knew the secret, that this disguised idol should possess

* Ellis, "Original Letters," Series I., vol. i. p. 19.

the crown ; but at his peril to make way to the overthrow of the king ; and that done they had their several hopes and ways."* The earl of Lincoln and lord Lovel were of these "better and sager sort ;" and they, with two thousand troops, under an experienced captain, Martin Swartz, set sail from Flanders in March, and landing at Dublin, the pupil of Simons the priest was proclaimed king as Edward VI. Lincoln, the son of the eldest sister of Edward IV., had been nominated as his heir by Richard III. ; but in taking up the cause of the simulated king, in whose name writs had been issued, and a parliament convoked, at Dublin, he made no assertion of his own pretensions. With "a great multitude of Irishmen and Almans," Lincoln and Lovel landed on the Lancashire coast, encamped near Ulverstone, and marched through Yorkshire towards Newark. Very few joined the band who proclaimed Edward VI. the head of the house of York. The number of the insurgents, and their foreign auxiliaries, amounted to eight thousand men. At Stoke-upon-Trent, on the 4th of June, the vanguard of Henry's army, under the earl of Oxford, was attacked by this ill-appointed force, of which few understood regular warfare except the Germans. The cavalry of the earl of Oxford soon obtained a victory, in which one-half of the insurgents were slaughtered. The earl of Lincoln, lords Thomas and Maurice Fitzgerald, Sir Thomas Broughton, and the brave Martin Swartz, fell in the field. Lord Lovel escaped ; but was no more heard of. The seat of this family was Minster-Lovel in Oxfordshire, and that house being pulled down early in the eighteenth century, "in a vault was found the person of a man, in very rich clothing, seated in a chair, with a table and a mass-book before him, the body of whom was yet entire when the workmen entered, but upon admission of the air soon fell to dust ; from whence we may reasonably conclude that it was the fate of this unhappy nobleman to have retired to his own house after the battle before mentioned, and there to have trusted himself to some servant, by whom he was there immured, and afterwards neglected, either through treachery or fear, or some accident which befel that person." †

The pretended earl of Warwick, and Simons the priest, were captured at the battle of Stoke. The youth, who was named Lambert Simnel, was



A Knight armed. (Reign of Henry VII.)

* "History of Henry VII.," p. 21.

† "Genealogical History of the House of Yvery," quoted in preface to "Liber de tiquis Legibus," p. cccxxxiii.

treated by the king "as an image of wax that others had tempered and moulded," and was taken into a mean office in Henry's kitchen. "He turned a brooch that had worn a crown." The priest was committed to prison, and was never more heard of; "the king loving to seal up his own dangers." Thus Bacon describes the issue of this mysterious imposture. But he also says that when Henry knew that the earl of Lincoln was slain, he declared to some of his council that "he was sorry for the earl's death, because, by him, he said, he might have known the bottom of his danger." The historian of Henry VII. relates, as every chronicler had related before him, that, in consequence of this attempt to set up a representative, although a false one, of the house of York, "it was one of the king's first acts to cloister the queen-dowager in the nunnery of Bermondsey, and to take away all her lands and estate; and this by a close counsel, without any legal proceeding, upon far-fetched pretences that she had delivered her two daughters out of sanctuary to king Richard, contrary to promise." Recent investigations have been held to render this alleged persecution of the widow of Edward IV. more than doubtful. Before Lincoln's rebellion she was chosen to be the god-mother of Henry's first-born son. After the battle of Stoke, it was proposed by the king that she should marry the king of Scotland. She might have been confined, it is admitted, when Lincoln's attempt became serious; as the earl of Dorset, her son, was also confined. He was released at the coronation of Henry's queen, in November, 1487. The actions of this king were so inscrutable, and he was so accustomed to walk in crooked paths, that it is very difficult in his case, as we believe, to set up a few isolated facts against a general testimony. Thus, when we find the queen-dowager attending her daughter, in 1489, when ambassadors from France were received at Court, we are furnished with no absolute disproof, as alleged, of her enforced seclusion at Bermondsey. Nor is the mere proposal that she should marry the king of Scotland any evidence that Henry did not regard her with suspicion, and treat her with harshness.* She might be paraded for state purposes before the ambassadors; and her name might be used in a negotiation with Scotland for some covert purpose, never intended to be realised. The hypothesis of some modern historians as to the cause of her alleged confinement at Bermondsey—having "no worldly goods," as appears by her will, wherewith to reward any of her children according to her heart and mind—is, that she was kept in poverty and durance, to prevent her revealing the existence, and taking measures for establishing the rights, of one of the sons of king Edward IV., who was still living. Bacon says that the proceedings against the dowager-queen, being even at that time [1487] taxed as rigorous and undue, "make it very probable there was some greater matter against her, which the king, upon reason of policy, and to avoid envy, would not publish." In judging of this question of the forced seclusion of the mother of Henry's wife, we must bear in mind that there are two recorded facts which appear to contradict the less precise statements of historical writers. But these are scarcely enough to justify the antiquarian contempt with which, in this instance, the ordinary relations are regarded: "Such, however," says

* Sir N. H. Nicolas and Dr. Lingard consider these facts as conclusive against the statements of Bacon and the previous chroniclers, Polydore, Hall, and Grafton.

Sir H. N. Nicolas, "is history as it is represented by chroniclers, and such are the effects of historians repeating the statements of their predecessors."* Let us have all due respect for records; but let not such solitary notices of uncorroborated circumstances be held sufficient to turn aside the whole current of ordinary testimony. When such testimony is evidently coloured for a particular object—as the unmeasured vituperation of Richard III.



Bermondsey.—Remains of the Conventual Buildings.

evidently was by those who wrote in the interests of him whose succession had a shadow of justice arising out of Richard's alleged crimes—it may reasonably be suspected. But it can scarcely be imputed to "the ignorance or the prejudices of writers to whom implicit credence has been generally given"—chroniclers who wrote with a similar bias towards Henry VII.—that they all agree in relating some actions highly discreditable to him, such as his severity towards the mother of his queen, his prejudice against the queen herself, and his unrelenting hostility to the great body of the supporters of the house of York.

There was one straitforward proceeding connected with the insurrection of 1487, which was a remarkable deviation from Henry's ambiguous policy. He publicly exhibited the real earl of Warwick to the people, in a procession from the Tower to St. Paul's; and he allowed him, for a short time, to be seen at his palace of Shene. The serious nature of the insurrection, however ridiculous its pretence, convinced him also that it was necessary to pursue a course of more outward respect for the feelings of those who thought that the union of the two houses was a better foundation for security and peace, than his own pretensions of hereditary right. After the long-delayed coronation

* "Memoirs of Elizabeth of York," p. lxxxii.

of his queen, a due provision was made for her maintenance, and she appeared with proper state upon public occasions.

The period had arrived when the foreign policy of England was to assume a very different character from that of the feudal times. It was no longer a question whether provinces of France should belong to the English crown; and costly wars be undertaken that English nobles should be lords in Normandy and Poitou. But England could not separate herself from the affairs of the continent; and her internal administration had still an almost inevitable relation to foreign alliances and foreign quarrels. The principal European monarchies having become, to a great extent, consolidated, the policy of each government was conducted upon a broader scale than that of disturbing a nation by stimulating a revolt of petty princes against their suzerain. The contests for dominion were now to be between kingdom and kingdom. The schemes of rival princes for accessions of territory, or preponderance of influence through inter-marriages, were to raise up political combinations amongst other states, whose sovereigns, armed with the powers of war and peace, would carry on their diplomacy, chiefly according to their own personal views of what was necessary for aggrandisement or security. In England, where the ambition of the monarch was limited by the power of parliament to give or withhold supplies, the disposition to rush into distant quarrels was in some degree regulated and restrained. King Henry pursued a cautious and almost timid policy in his foreign relations. It was fortunate for the material progress of the country that, in the complicated questions of European supremacy which were arising, he followed the direction of his own subtlety, rather than the promptings of the national spirit. He taxed his people for the ostentation of war, and then put their subsidies into his own purse. He was a benefactor to this land, however, in his anxiety to preserve peace between England and Scotland, at a period when the internal troubles of Scotland, and the death of James III. in battle with his rebellious nobles, might have tempted a more warlike ruler into new projects of conquest and concentration of power.

Henry VII. had the strongest obligations of gratitude to the duke of Brittany, who had sheltered him in his period of exile and poverty. The duke Francis was advanced in years. Charles VIII. of France was in the flush of youth, with a sort of rash chivalrous spirit, which was mixed up with the same love of secret policies as belonged to his intriguing father. During the period of his tutelage under a regency, a quarrel had arisen between the governments of Brittany and France, and war was declared against Brittany. That country was distracted by rival parties, the chief object of contention being who should marry Anne, the rich heiress of Francis, and thus be ruler of the duchy after his death. There were several candidates for this prize. The French government thought it a favourable time to enter upon a war, for the real purpose of preventing the marriage of the Breton heiress to either of her suitors, and for the annexation of Brittany to France. Henry VII. was appealed to for assistance by both parties in the contest. The sympathies of England went with the weaker state in this struggle. Henry would declare for neither, but offered himself as a mediator. Charles VIII. was now of an age to act for himself; and he carried war into Brittany, and besieged the duke in his capital of Rennes. Henry, meanwhile, had been employed in his

natural vocation of state-craft; promising assistance to the friend of his adversity, but never rendering it; asking his parliament for means to resist the dangerous aggrandisement of France; and, having obtained a grant of two-fifteenths, concluding an armistice with Charles. By the end of 1488, when Francis of Brittany had died, his country was overrun by the French. Henry was now compelled to do something. He promised an English army to the orphan princess Anne; and at the same time he contrived to let Charles understand that if the English people compelled him into war, his troops should act only on the defensive. At the beginning of 1489 he again went to parliament, and demanded an aid of a hundred thousand pounds. Seventy-five thousand were granted to him. He raised a force of six thousand archers and sent them to Brittany, according to his engagement with Anne that this force should serve in her cause for six months. The French king knew precisely what this meant; avoided any engagement with the English, who as carefully kept out of his way; and at the end of six months the little army returned home. Meanwhile the crafty king learnt that it was somewhat unsafe to play these tricks of cunning with the English people; for a violent insurrection had broken out in the northern counties, to resist the payment of the tax raised for this mockery of war. "This, no doubt," says Bacon, "proceeded not simply of any present necessity, but much by reason of the old humour of these countries, where the memory of king Richard was so strong, that it lay like lees in the bottom of men's hearts, and if the vessel was but stirred it would come up." Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland, who had betrayed Richard on Bosworth Field, enforced the payment of the subsidy. "A harsh business was fallen into the hands of a harsh man;" and the revolted people murdered him. As a general movement, the insurrection was soon suppressed by the earl of Surrey. The tax had not yielded what was expected; and in 1490, the king again went to parliament for further aid to carry on the pretended war. He was again at his favourite work of diplomacy; entering into alliances with Ferdinand of Spain, and Maximilian, king of the Romans, for the alleged purpose of restraining the growing power of France, but each having a private and special object. Maximilian wanted the princess Anne and the duchy of Brittany; Ferdinand aimed at the restitution of Rousillon; all that Henry sought was to get money wherever he could, either as a bribe from France, or as a repayment of expenses from Anne. Maximilian was the most open of these royal schemers. He gave manful assistance to the oppressed Bretons, and the princess entered into a contract of marriage with him. Charles of France now put forward his pretensions to the hand of the lady. The contract was void, he said, because Brittany was a fief of France, and the lord could control the marriage of an heiress who was his vassal. This argument was supported by the emphatic presence of a French army; and the princess, who resisted till resistance was no longer possible, was forced into a marriage which she hated, and into the conclusion of a treaty which placed the province, so long independent, under the French dominion. Whilst these events were ripening, Henry had been employing the pretence of war as a reason for extorting money under the system of "Benevolences," which had been annulled by the parliament of Richard. In October, 1491, he proclaimed his intention of punishing the French king. He again obtained a large grant from his faithful Lords and Commons, and

procured several laws to be passed which gave encouragement to the prosecution of a war, which had become a national object. But, having got the money, and encouraged many knights and nobles in raising men, he still delayed any active measures of apparent hostility through the spring, summer, and autumn of 1492. At length, in October, he landed at Calais with a well-appointed army, and invested Boulogne with twenty-five thousand infantry and sixteen hundred cavalry. The old military spirit of England was again predominant. But, for three months previous to this costly parade, the wily



Foot-Soldier of the time of Henry VII.

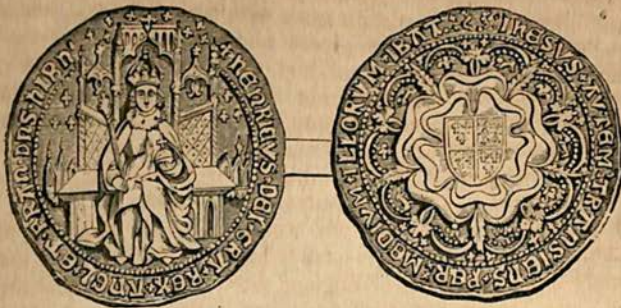
king had been negotiating a peace with Charles of France; and it appears in the highest degree probable that the treaty was actually signed when the English forces landed. Henry called a council within a week after his landing, and laid before them a rough draft of a treaty offered by France, which his subservient ministers advised him to sign. This was a public instrument, by which peace was concluded between the two crowns. There was another document, a private one, by which Charles was to pay a hundred and forty-nine thousand pounds to the money-making king of England. The advisers of Henry were handsomely bribed, as well as their master. The half-ruined chiefs of the expedition had no course but that of venting useless execrations

on their dissembling and rapacious sovereign, "who did but traffic in that war to make his return in money."* Henry, however, had a motive for pacification, which was even more imperative than his avarice. Charles of France had a guest at his court, who, if the king of England were really to become an enemy in earnest, might be let loose to work more damage to the house of Tudor than any failure in open warfare. One who called himself Richard, duke of York, was in France acknowledged as the rightful heir to the English throne, and surrounded with a guard of honour and other demonstrations of confidence and respect. When Henry had concluded the pacification, the French king commanded this Richard to leave his dominions. The peace was welcome to both kings, says Bacon: "to Henry, for that it filled his coffers, and that he foresaw, at that time, a storm of inward troubles coming upon him, which presently after broke forth." These "inward troubles" form the subject of one of the most curious and controverted passages of English history,—the story commonly known as that of Perkin Warbeck. The story would not be worth relating in detail if we were to accept the dogmatic assertion that "the legitimacy of Perkin Warbeck is a mere freak of paradoxical ingenuity." † We shall endeavour to put together a brief narrative of this remarkable claim to the crown, as far as possible from authentic materials; not resting wholly on the common supposition that the two sons of Edward IV. were murdered, or confidently arguing that the younger escaped, and re-appeared to demand his inheritance; but rather accepting the more safe conclusion of Mr. Hallam, that "a very strong conviction either way is not readily attainable." ‡

* Bacon.

† "Edinburgh Review," June, 1826, p. 2.

‡ "Middle Ages," chap. viii. part iii.



Sovereign of Henry VII.

CHAPTER XIV.

A young man received at Cork as the second son of Edward IV.—Ex-parte accounts of Perkin Warbeck—Letter from "Richard Plantagenet" to Isabella, queen of Spain—Henry requires the surrender of Richard from the duke of Austria—Arrests and executions in England—Sir William Stanley impeached by Clifford, whom Henry had bribed—Arrests in Ireland—Statute regarding allegiance to a king de facto—Richard, so-called, in Scotland—Correspondence of Bothwell—Difficulties of an imposture—Invasion by the Scots—The Cornish insurrection—Captivity of the adventurer—Alleged treason of the earl of Warwick—Warwick and his fellow-prisoner executed.

It was about the beginning of 1492, when king Henry was busied in making a great show of preparation for war with France, that a small merchant-vessel from Lisbon entered the Cove of Cork, and landed a young man who was amongst the passengers. Bacon has described him as of fine countenance and shape; "but more than that, he had such a crafty and bewitching fashion, both to move pity and to induce belief, as was like a kind of fascination or enchantment to those that saw him or heard him." The rumour went through Cork that he was the second son of Edward IV.; and the citizens, encouraged by John Water, who had been their mayor, became enthusiastic in his behalf. The earl of Desmond, who had been devotedly attached to the house of York, declared in favour of this supposed representative of that house; and the earl of Kildare offered him some assistance. Bacon says that "he wrote his letters unto the earls of Desmond and Kildare to come in to his aid, and be of his party, the originals of which letters are yet extant." But the young man remained only a short time in Ireland; and then passed over to France, as we have before indicated.* After the peace of Estaples, he left the court of Charles VIII., and proceeded to Flanders, where he claimed the protection of Margaret, duchess of Burgundy, the sister of Edward IV. To this princess, whom the friends of Henry called Juno, because they believed she was to him the cause of every mischief, as Juno was

* See *ante*, p. 219.

to Æneas, is assigned by all the chroniclers the scheme of raising up an impostor, and preparing him for his part before his appearance in Ireland. Hall says, "she kept him a certain space with her privily, and him with such diligence instructed, both of the secrets and common affairs of the realm of England, and of the lineage, descent, and order of the house of York, that he, like a good scholar not forgetting his lesson, could tell all that was taught him promptly."* Bacon is more minute, stating that the duchess described to him, whom "she kept by her a great while, but with extreme secrecy," whatever related to the person of Richard, duke of York; and made him have an accurate impression of the features and manners of Edward, and his queen, their family, and all those who would have been about the princes in their childhood. To these statements it has been objected that the duchess of Burgundy was married out of England seven years before Richard of York was born, and having never returned was little capable of entering into minute circumstances connected with the English court.† But the "Wardrobe Accounts of Edward IV." show that this sister of Edward was in England for six weeks, in 1480, and thus could have acquired the intimate knowledge with which she formed her apt scholar.‡ The circumstances which the chroniclers relate of the life of this young man, before his alleged instruction at the court of the duchess of Burgundy, are in many respects inconsistent with what is certain in his subsequent career, especially when they attempt any great exactness. Hall's notice of his early years, in its vague generalisation, is less suspicious. He says that this youth, "travelling many countries, could speak English and many other languages, and from the baseness of his birth was known to none almost; and, only for the gain of his living, from his childhood, was of necessity compelled to seek and frequent divers realms and regions." When the young man's adherents had been sacrificed to the vengeance of Henry, and he was reduced to the condition of a degraded captive, he is related to have "read openly his own confession written with his own hand." § Bacon calls this document, which he says was printed and dispersed abroad, "an extract" of such parts of the confession "as were fit to be divulged;" and he truly describes it as "a laboured tale of particulars of Perkin's father, and mother, and grandsire, and grandmother, and uncles, and cousins, and from what places he travelled up and down." In this "confession" there is not a word of the duchess of Burgundy; and the whole period of the young man's life, from his birth "in the town of Tournay in Flanders" to his coming from Portugal to Cork, is attempted to be accounted for, by relating his various services under Flemish, Portuguese, and Breton masters, especially his service for a whole year with a knight that dwelt in Lisbon, "which said knight had but one eye." This narrative might readily excite Bacon's contempt, however strong his conviction of the so-called Perkin being an impostor, were it only for the absurd statement that when the young man landed in Cork, the people of the town, because he was arrayed in some of his master's fine silken clothes, laid hold of him; and maintained, first, that he was the son of the duke of Clarence; next, that he

* Chronicle, 7th year of Henry VII.

† "Historie Doubts."

‡ Sir N. H. Nicolas.

§ This confession is given by Hall, as "the very copy." Fabyan and Polydore Vergil offer no account of such a document.

was the illegitimate son of Richard III.; and lastly, called him duke of York, "and so against my will made me to learn English, and taught me what I should do and say." This confession sets out with declaring that his father's name was John Osbeck, who was comptroller of the town of Tournay. King Henry, in instructions which he gave, in 1494, to a herald employed as his confidential envoy, says, "It is notorious that the said garçon is of no consanguinity or kin to the late king Edward, but is a native of the town of Tournay, and son of a boatman who is named Warbec; as the king is certainly assured, as well by those who are acquainted with his life and habits, as by some others his companions, who are at present with the king; and others still are beyond the sea, who have been brought up with him in their youth."* Bernard André, the poet-laureat of Henry VII., states in his MS. life of his patron, that Perkin, when a boy, was "*servant* in England to a Jew named Edward, who was baptised, and adopted as godson by Edward IV., and was on terms of intimacy with the king and his family."† Speed, mistranslating André's words, makes Perkin the *son* of the Jew, instead of the servant; and Bacon amplifies the error, and transforms John Osbeck into the convert Jew, who, having a handsome wife, it might be surmised why the licentious king "should become gossip in so mean a house." Hume adds, "people thence accounted for that resemblance which was afterwards remarked between young Perkin and that monarch." The surmise of Bacon, grounded upon the error of Speed, is clenched into the positive assertion of Hume as to a popular belief for which there is not the slightest ground.

We may now turn from the ex-parte statements which represent the young adventurer as of low birth and mean education, to an undoubted document in which he sets forth his own history. It is a Latin letter written to Isabella, queen of Spain, wife of king Ferdinand, and is dated from Dendermonde, August 25, 1493.† This letter is so interesting, that we take the freedom of re-publishing that portion of it which relates the early history of him who subscribes himself, "Richard Plantagenet, second son of Edward formerly king, duke of York, &c."

"Most serene and most excellent Princess, my most honoured Lady and Cousin, I commend me entirely to your Majesty. Whereas the prince of Wales, eldest son of Edward formerly king of England, of pious memory, my dearest lord and father, was miserably put to death, and I myself, then nearly nine years of age, was also delivered to a certain lord to be killed, it pleased the Divine Clemency that that lord, having compassion on my innocence, preserved me alive and in safety; first, however, causing me to swear on the holy sacrament, that to no one should I disclose my name, origin, or family, until a certain number of years had passed. He sent me therefore abroad, with two persons, who should watch over and take charge of me; and thus I, an orphan, bereaved of my royal father and brother, an exile from my kingdom, and deprived of country, inheritance and fortune, a fugitive in the midst of extreme perils, led my miserable life in fear, and weeping, and grief, and for

* From the very valuable collection of "Documents relating to Perkin Warbeck," published by Sir Frederic Madden in "Archæologia," vol. xxvii. p. 165. † *Ibid.*, p. 163.

† This most curious letter, first published by Sir Frederic Madden, is in the British Museum. The paper in the "Archæologia" gives a copy of the original, as well as a translation.

the space of nearly eight years lay hid in divers provinces. At length, one of those who had charge of me being dead, and the other returned to his country, and never afterwards seen, scarcely had I emerged from childhood, alone and without means, I remained for a time in the kingdom of Portugal, and thence sailed to Ireland, where being recognised by the illustrious lords, the earls of Desmond and Kildare, my cousins, as also by other noblemen of the island, I was received with great joy and honor. Thence being invited by the king of France, with many ships and attendants, and having been promised aid and assistance against Henry of Richmond, the wicked usurper of the kingdom of England, I came to the aforesaid king of France, who received me honorably, as a kinsman and friend. But on his failing to afford me the promised assistance, I betook myself to the illustrious princess, the lady duchess of Burgundy, sister of my father, my dearest aunt, who, with her known humanity and virtue, welcomed me with all piety and honor; out of regard also to her, the most serene king of the Romans, and his son, the archduke of Austria, and the duke of Saxony, my dearest cousins, as likewise the kings of Denmark and Scotland, who sent to me their envoys, for the purpose of friendship and alliance. The great nobles of the kingdom of England did the same, who execrate the proud and wicked tyranny of this Henry of Richmond.* The letter then concludes with a touching appeal to Isabella, on account of their consanguinity, that she should influence the king of Spain to pity the numerous calamities of the house of York, and further him with assistance.

At the time when the so-styled "Richard Plantagenet" wrote this letter from Dendermonde, a town belonging to the archduke of Austria, Henry had despatched an embassy to the archduke as sovereign of Burgundy, to protest against his affording any assistance to an adventurer of low birth, maintaining that the sons of Edward were murdered in the Tower by their uncle, "which to believe or affirm otherwise would be the height of madness."† The ambassadors were also directed to declare Margaret of Burgundy as the instigator of this plot against the king of England.‡ The envoys of the king, Sir Edward Poyning and Dr. Warham, demanded the surrender of him who called himself Richard of York, or his expulsion from the territory of the archduke. The council of the sovereign of Burgundy was divided in opinion as to the pretensions of the adventurer; and it was returned for answer, that the archduke would render him no aid, but that he could not control the duchess Margaret, who, on the lands which she held as her dower, was wholly independent. Henry was indignant at this practical rejection of his demand; and, by way of revenge, strictly prohibited all

* Sir Frederic Madden conceives that a proof of the imposition of Perkin is furnished in this letter, by the assertion that the duke of York was "nearly nine years of age" at the time of his escape, when he was really in his eleventh year. Sir F. Madden, upon the testimony of a herald, believes that the second son of king Edward was born in 1472. His birth has been commonly referred to 1473. Sir H. Nicolas says, "The date of the birth of this prince has not been exactly ascertained, but it may be assigned to the year 1472." The princes were in the Tower in June, 1483.

† The king's examination of the supposed murderers was made at this period, according to Bacon. See *ante*, p. 191.

‡ The substance of the instructions to the ambassadors is given by Polydore Vergil. See "Documents relating to Perkin Warbeck," p. 160.

intercourse between England and Flanders, and removed the mart of English cloth from Antwerp. He had made a hasty peace with France, that the pretensions of one whom he professed to regard as a contemptible impostor should not be put forward and advocated; and he now inflicted the most serious injury upon the commerce of England, because the son of the boatman of Tournay was not surrendered to him. It seems incredible that the facts of this young man's origin and education, which Henry professed to have received from his companions, and those brought up with him in their youth, should not have been known to the ministers of the archduke Philip. If the same inquiries at Tournay, as Henry alleged to have been made, had established the imposture, it is scarcely to be believed that respect for the dowager-duchess of Burgundy's fraudulent schemes would have led the archduke to encounter the hostility of Henry, who had ample means of injury at his command.

The pretensions of the adventurer in Flanders gradually found powerful but secret supporters in England. In August, 1494, Henry had instructed his envoy to declare to the court of France, that "there is no nobleman, gentleman, or person of any condition in the realm of England, that does not well know that it is a manifest and evident imposture." * The same agent was sent a second time to the French king, with instructions dated the 30th of December in the same year, to express the indifference which Henry affected to feel for this attempt to shake his title. Yet at this time the subtle king was engaged in corrupting Sir Robert Clifford to betray the associates who had sent him to Flanders; and to whom Clifford had reported that the young man was the indubitable "White Rose." On the 20th of January, 1495, there is this significant entry in the privy purse expenses of Henry VII.:—"Delivered to Sir Robert Clifford, by the hand of Master Bray, 500*l*." Towards the end of 1494, lord Fitzwalter, Sir Simon Mountford, Sir Thomas Thwaites, Robert Ratcliffe, and others, were arrested on a charge of high treason, and were proved to have corresponded with the friends of Richard abroad. All received sentence of death; and Mountford, Thwaites, and Ratcliffe were at once executed. On the 7th of January, Clifford, who was considered by some to have been a spy from the beginning, arrived from Flanders; and, throwing himself on his knees before the king, humbly supplicated for pardon, when he was certain that he should receive a reward. He was commanded to tell all he knew; and forthwith impeached Sir William Stanley. The rich and powerful knight, who had saved the life of the earl of Richmond on Bosworth Field, when the onslaught of Richard would have been fatal without such interposition—the faithful chamberlain of king Henry VII.—was accused of favouring the pretensions of the "garçon" in Flanders, and had said, that were he sure that he was the son of Edward, he would never fight against him. He had one quality which obliterated from the king's mind all claims of ancient friendship. He was enormously rich; and when Henry knew that Stanley's head had fallen on the sawdust of the scaffold on Tower-hill, he had the further satisfaction of putting forty thousand pounds of money and plate into his own treasury, and of securing lands to the crown worth three thousand annual pounds. There are two

* Instructions to Richmond, King-at-arms, "Archæologia," vol. xxvii. p. 165.

entries in his "Privy Purse Expenses" which show that this dear friend of Stanley was not wholly wanting in generosity on the last occasion in which friendship could be exhibited. The king gave "To sir William Stanley, at his execution, 10*l*."—supposed to be a reward to the headsman; and he paid 15*l*. 19*s*. for his "burial at Syon." *

Whilst these severe measures were proceeding in England, against those who had taken an interest in the fortunes of the young man who was supported by Margaret of Burgundy, Sir Edward Poynings, appointed the deputy of Ireland, was employed with an army "to search and purge all such towns and places where Perkin was received, relieved, or favoured." † The earl of Kildare was arrested, and sent to England. A parliament was called by the deputy, in which some salutary laws were enacted; recent English statutes were declared to have the force of law; and it was provided that all measures brought before the Irish legislature should have the previous approval of the king and council in England. Henry chose to deal with clemency towards those who had supported the adventurer who landed at Cork in 1492. He reversed the attainder of the earl of Kildare; pardoned the earl of Desmond; and only excepted from his mercy lord Barry and John Water. In the middle of July, 1495, a bold effort was made by "Richard" to land at Deal, with a portion of his foreign troops. The inhabitants repulsed the invaders, and made prisoners of a hundred and sixty-nine, all of whom Henry caused to be hanged. Their young leader returned to his protectress, after an ineffectual attempt to besiege Waterford. But, early in 1496, Henry concluded a commercial treaty with Philip, the archduke, to which an article was annexed that the rebels of either prince should be expelled from their territories, if required. In a few months, the young man, driven out from the Burgundian provinces, was dwelling in honour at the court of James IV., in Scotland, having arrived there with a considerable military force. At this period a statute was passed, which indicates that the Lords and Commons thought it necessary to take some measure of security, that in a possible change of dynasty the supporters of the reigning king should not be exposed to the renewal of such persecutions as had occurred in the times of Henry VI. and Edward IV. The act declares, that "subjects are bounden to serve their prince and sovereign lord *for the time being*, in his wars for the defence of him and the land, against every rebellion, power, and might reared against him." It then enacts that no person for the same "true service of allegiance" shall be "convict or attaind of high treason nor of other offences for that cause." ‡ This constitutional principle, thus solemnly set forth at a time when there was a doubtful claimant of the crown in arms, and a true Plantagenet in prison, is evidence that the probability of a real war for the succession was strongly impressed upon those who had everything to risk in such a conflict.

The employment of spies was an established principle of the government of Henry. There are repeated entries in his book of "Privy Purse Expenses" of payments to these dangerous tools. In one place the entry is "To a fellow with a beard—a spy, in reward, 1*l*." In another, "To two monks, spies,

* "Privy Purse Expenses," published in "Excerpta Historica," p. 101.

† Hall.

‡ Statutes, by Authority, 11 Henry VII. c. 1. p. 568.

in reward, 2l." He had his men, too, ready for bold acts of violence as well as treachery. One of his most devoted instruments was Ramsay, lord Bothwell, who was ambassador from James III. of Scotland to Henry, and who was proscribed in the parliament which James IV. called at Edinburgh, in 1488. In 1491 Bothwell was in England, and was in the intimate confidence of Henry; for he concluded an agreement with sir Thomas Todde that he, and the earl of Buchan, should seize the persons of king James and his brother, and deliver them to the king of England. In a statute of that year, all Scots are commanded to depart the realm, because the king of Scotland and his subjects will not observe treaties of amity; "for the which it is better to be with them at open war than under such a feigned peace." According to the indenture which Bothwell signed, Henry had advanced on loan 266*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, to excite an act of treachery against his neighbour-king, at the time of this "feigned peace." There was no open war, nor had there been for some years, when the adventurer from Flanders appeared at the Scottish court. But James IV. had no cause to love Henry, and he gave a ready welcome to him who was prepared to dispute the throne of England with its possessor. He treated him in every respect as the real duke of York; and he gave the most absolute proof of his conviction of the truth of his pretensions by bestowing upon him in marriage his own kinswoman, lady Catherine Gordon. At the court of James IV., the young man so favoured was attended by fourteen hundred men, of all nations. It appears from a very curious paper, dated at Rouen, in March, 1496, purporting to disclose a plot against the life of Henry VII., that the men and money with which the self-styled duke of York was supplied came from Maximilian, king of the Romans, and not from the duchess of Burgundy. The prior of St. John of Jerusalem is accused in this paper of being privy to the conspiracy; and it is alleged that "when Perkin Warbeck was in Flanders, a servant of his often wrote letters to the said prior of St. John," in one of which it was stated in words of secret signification, "how the Merchant of the Ruby was not able to sell his merchandise in Flanders at the price he demanded, on which account he had gone to the court of the king of the Romans." The "Merchant of the Ruby" is further explained to be "Perkin Warbeck."* With other help, then, than that of Margaret of Burgundy, he has come to show his merchandise to James of Scotland. But Henry of England is not sleeping. Wherever there is danger, there he has his spies. Ramsay, lord Bothwell, has obtained a licence for his return to the Scottish court. His relations with Henry are amongst the deepest secrets. He enters into the palace of James; he sees his guests; he is informed of his councils. His business is to obtain the best intelligence for the king of England, and to perpetrate any atrocity that is within his power, either by corruption or violence. Through two extant letters of this most accomplished spy, we have a distinct view of the position of the so-called Richard, in the autumn of 1496† We learn, from the first letter, that the war which James was contemplating in favour of the adventurer was against the will of the nobles and the people; and that Bothwell

* This singular narrative first appears in Sir F. Madden's paper in the "Archæologia," vol. xxvii.

† Ellis, "Original Letters," Series I., vol. i. pp. 22 to 32. The letters of Bothwell are in the Scotch dialect.

had won over the brother of James to promise that he would not join the host against Henry. But he also informs the king that he has been busy about the matter that Master Wyat propounded to him; and that "my lord of Buchan takes upon him the fulfilling of it." My lord of Buchan is the worthy who bargained with Henry to seize his young king, James IV.; and now he is ready to enterprise another matter,—which is, "in the long night," to make a prisoner "within his tent" of that guest of the king of Scotland whom Henry dreads; "for he has no watch but the king's appointed to be about him; and they have ordained the Englishmen and the strangers to be at another quarter." There came a man, Bothwell says, on the 25th of August, out of Carlisle to "Perkin," and "Perkin" brought him to the king; and that the man came from the brother of lord Dacre, as he learnt from secret information. The Northumberland men came to meetings between them and Scotsmen. He then urges Henry to be prepared for attack. In a second letter, Bothwell protests that "all this long time I have remained under respite and assurance within the realm of Scotland, and most in the court about the king, giving attendance and making labours to do your grace the best service I can, and have full oft-times solicited the king's highness, and all the well-advised lords of this realm, to leave the favour and support they give to this feigned boy." The king, he goes on to say, with all the whole people of his realm he can make, and Perkin and his company with him, in number fourteen hundred of all nations, will enter England on the 17th of September, "in the quarrel of this same feigned boy." In another passage we see that "the feigned boy" treated upon affairs of national import as a sovereign prince, not eagerly catching at any prospect of assistance, but deliberating upon terms as if he were already lord of the realm which he claimed: "Sir, the second day of September the king sent for his lords that were nearest about him, and caused them to pass into the chamber of council, and thereafter called Perkin to them, and they laid many desires to him, both anent the restorance of the seven sheriffdoms, the delivery of the castle and town of Berwick; and also for the listing of the king's army, and for charges made upon him and his company, to bind him to pay one hundred thousand marks within five years after his entry. To this asked he delay until the morn; and on the morn entered he in the council, and took with him sir George Neville, Lound the priest, and Heron; and after long communing has bound him to deliver Berwick, and to pay for the costs made on him fifty thousand marks in two years, and thus is this taken up in writing." The lord Concessault—he who was captain of the guard of honour when the adventurer was first welcomed by the king of France—comes to the Scottish court, professing that he was sent to offer a mediation between England and Scotland. The crafty Bothwell goes on to say, pressing Henry to be "privy," that he had wormed out of the lord Concessault, that he had offered the king of Scotland a hundred thousand crowns to send Perkin into France. He adds, "I think his coming hither has done but little good, for he and the boy are every day in counsel." The traitor to his country constantly urges Henry to come quickly and make war in Scotland, setting forth the poverty of James, "who had not a hundred pounds till he had coined his chains and his plate." The following is one of the most curious passages of the correspondence: "Sir, here is come out of Flanders Roderick de la Lane, with

two little ships and three hundred of Almains. I stood by when the king received him in presence of Perkin; and thus he said in French: 'Sir, I am come here according to my promise to do your highness service, and for none other man's sake am I come here; for an I had not had your letters of warrant, I had been arrested in Flanders and put to great trouble for Perkin's sake.' And he came not near Perkin. And then came Perkin to him, and he saluted him, and asked how his aunt did; and he said, 'Well.' And he inquired if he had any letters from her to him, and he said he durst bring none, but [what] he had for the king. And surely he has brought the king sundry pleasant things for the war, both for man and horse."

We may judge from such authentic materials for history how difficult must have been the part which the young man had to play at the court of Scotland; married to a beautiful woman of the royal blood, whose love would have turned to hate against a low-born impostor—surrounded by jealous nobles—moving in presence of Henry's spy—and subject to the prying inquiries of the French ambassador, who told Bothwell "how great inquisition was made to understand of Perkin's birth, both by the admiral and him." And yet he seems to have borne all this ordeal without blemish; for Bothwell states that he showed the French ambassador a paper about the origin of "the feigned boy," drawn up by Meautis, Henry's French secretary, and the ambassador "plainly said he never understood it, but rather trowed the contrary." At this season, a letter is written by the young man, dated from Edinburgh, October 18th, to Sir Bernard de la Forse, who had been employed by Edward IV., and had been the envoy of Richard III. to Spain; in which he desires the knight to be to him "as loving, faithful, and kind counsellor and friend, as ye were unto our said father;" praying him to do him the service of ascertaining "the good heart and mind that our most dear cousin, the king of Spain, beareth toward us;" and promising that he would be ready to perform any good in his power to him, and to "our right trusty and well-beloved servant, your son, Antony de la Forse, which hath full lovingly given his long attendance upon us in sundry countries." The autograph signature to this letter, "Your friend Richard of England," is, as the fac-simile shows, "very remarkable from its bold and thoroughly English character, and would cause one to believe that the education of Perkin, in this respect, must have been attended to with considerable care."* In many other respects his education could not have been neglected. His abilities and acquirements must have been tested at the court of James, a poet himself and an encourager of letters, who brought the art of printing into Scotland. An ignorant impostor, qualified only by cunning for the difficult game he had to play, would have found himself ill at ease in the company of Gawin Douglas and William Dunbar. Whatever be the contradictory evidence which prevents us yielding an unqualified belief that this was the son of Edward IV., it is manifest that for years he sustained his part, without betraying by a single accident of self-consciousness that he was a deceiver, whose temporary elevation would only make his ultimate fall more humiliating. The theory that he was set up to act this part, as the

* Sir F. Madden, "Archæologia," vol. xxvii. p. 184.

child Lambert Simnel had done before him, to prepare the way for the succession of the earl of Warwick, appears irreconcilable with the fact of the open nature, and continuance, of the support which he received from the duchess of Burgundy, the king of the Romans, and the king of Scotland. The employment of the men and money at his command, however supplied, was wholly within his own power.

The winter was approaching, when James IV. and his adopted ally advanced with an army into Scotland. A proclamation signed R. R. was issued in the name of "the king of England;" which set forth the escape of the son of Edward IV. from the Tower, and his residence abroad, with little variation from the statement made to Isabella of Spain. It denounced Henry Tydder as a false usurper of the crown of England; called upon the people to arm in the cause of the true king; and promised rewards to such as should take or distress his mortal enemy. The king of Scotland had come to aid his righteous quarrel, and after the usurper was subdued would return peaceably into his own kingdom. This appeal to the people of England was wholly unsuccessful. If there had been no doubt whatever of the identity of the duke of York, it is very questionable if the nation generally would have stirred in a new war of succession. With the exception of the battle of Stoke, there had been internal peace for eleven years. Before the battle of Bosworth there had been no sword of Englishman drawn against Englishman for fourteen years. A quarter of a century of almost unbroken peace had enabled a generation to settle down in the quiet pursuits of industry, under a king essentially pacific. If Henry would abstain from grinding them by subsidies, and maintain order and security of property, they were as contented to be governed by the house of Tudor as by the house of York. The people would fight for their own liberties, but not for a barren title. But when an army of Scots, headed by the king of Scotland, entered England, the sturdy Northmen looked upon that invasion as the act of the ancient national enemy, and the fierce hatreds of centuries were again in full force. No alliance could have been more unpropitious than this; and it was felt to be so in the care with which the proclamation affirmed that the Scots came only in "true and faithful love and amity." James and his friend marched back to Scotland, their army having done much mischief, but having produced no political results.

The invasion of England, and the natural excesses which accompanied it, offered a fit occasion for Henry to demand a large grant from parliament. The tax was paid without resistance in most parts of the kingdom. But in Cornwall, the people were instigated by one Flammoock, an attorney, and by a farrier, to take up arms; for they said the northern counties ought to pay for the means of defence, with which the western had no concern. Sixteen thousand insurgents commenced a progress to London, to demand the punishment of the king's ministers, archbishop Morton and sir Reginald Gray, as the promoters of the tax. Lord Audely placed himself at their head, when they had reached Wells. At Blackheath they encamped. A battle took place on the 22nd of June. At the bridge at Deptford they obstinately defended the passage against the king's troops. But the bridge was forced; and they fled in consternation. There was a great slaughter, and many hundred prisoners were taken. Audely was beheaded, and the attorney and

the farrier were hanged. Henry treated the prisoners with a politic mercy, and they returned home. During this insurrection James again crossed the border, and besieged Norham castle. But he retreated before the earl of Surrey. The ambassador of Ferdinand of Spain now undertook to mediate between James and Henry; and a truce was finally concluded. Henry required that Perkin should be given up, but without success. The disappointed pretender to the crown of England now quitted the court of James, having received a safe conduct from his chivalric supporter. He departed from Scotland with four ships, and a small body of followers. Once more he addressed himself to his old friends at Cork, but received no encouragement. He then sailed to the coast of Cornwall; and in September landed at Whitsand Bay. The Cornishmen, still disposed for revolt, flocked to the standard of Richard the Fourth. He seized St. Michael's Mount; and there he left his wife, Catherine, the faithful sharer of his fortunes. The enterprise now began to wear a more serious aspect than at any former period. Before the

Autograph of Henry VII.

adventurer had reached Exeter he had six thousand men under his command. King Henry himself has related the issue, in a letter to the bishop of Bath and Wells, dated from Woodstock, the 20th of September.* Perkin, he says, is landed; "our commons of Cornwall take his part, but no gentleman. On the 17th of September he came before Exeter, and attacked the east gate and the north gate, but they were so defended that he lost three or four hundred of his company." The king then encloses a letter from the earl of Devonshire, which describes another attack on the 18th. A local record states that the north gate was burnt, and that the insurgents forced an entrance into the town by the east gate, but were repulsed by the citizens.† The insurgents and their leader then quitted Exeter, without molestation; and proceeded to Collumpton, where, says the earl, "many of his company departed from him, and I trust more will." On the 25th of September, the king himself writes to one of his nobles: "Cousin, trust for certain that upon Thursday about midnight, Perkin fled from his company at Taunton, and took no leave nor licence of them."‡ It appears that very heavy fines were levied upon many persons who had favoured these western insurrections, amounting, in Somerset, Dorset, Wilts, Hampshire, and Devon, to nearly ten thousand pounds; so that some support was given to these rash enterprises beyond that of the class whom Hall calls "dung-hill ruffians." Amongst those so fined were four abbots. The forsaken adventurer rode through that autumn night from Taunton to the monastery of Beaulieu, in the New Forest, whose ruins still show its ancient importance. Here he demanded sanctuary on the 21st of September. The privileged retreat was quickly surrounded by the king's forces; and in a few days he surrendered, upon a promise that his life should

* Ellis, "Original Letters," Series I., vol. i.

† *Ibid.*, p. 39, in note.

‡ *Ibid.*

be spared. Henry was most anxious to secure the wife of the captive; and having effected his object without difficulty, he placed her under the protection of his queen. Her beauty obtained for Catherine the name of "The White Rose," when the utterance of that name with sympathy was no longer dangerous.

Fabyan, the Londoner, briefly relates, that, on the 28th of November, "Perkin was brought through the city unto the Tower, and there left as prisoner." Others state that he was taken leisurely on horseback through the city to the Tower, and then back again to Westminster. The story of his confessing his imposture in the presence of his wife rests upon no credible authority, and is not mentioned by Fabyan, Hall, or Bacon. The confession which he is stated to have made, of which Bacon speaks so contemptuously, was then dispersed abroad.* A letter from the king to the mayor of Waterford states, that "The said Perkin came unto us to the town of Taunton, from whence he fled; and immediately after his first coming, humbly submitting himself to us, hath of his free will openly showed, in the presence of all the lords here with us and all nobles, his name to be Pierce Osbeck, whence he has been named Perkin Warbeck." † It is precisely the same tale which Henry desired his herald to promulgate about "the garçon," in 1494. There is no copy set forth of the evidence so taken before "all the lords;" no attesting witnesses to the statement. It was altogether what Bacon describes as "the king's manner of showing things by pieces and dark lights." During seven months' imprisonment of Henry's captive, he was not treated with indignity. He was allowed to take exercise on horseback; for there is an entry in Henry's "Privy-Purse Expenses," of a payment, at the rate of 5*s.* a-day, during three months of 1498, "for Perkyn's horse-meat;" and another payment of 11*s.* "for Perkyn's riding-gown." ‡ There is no distinct statement of his abiding place at this period. He was not concealed; but there was little chance that he could have been identified as the real duke of York, who purported to have escaped from the Tower fifteen years before, or ascertained to be an impostor, through casual glances at his person. Elizabeth, the widow of Edward IV., died in the very year when this adventurer first landed at Cork. The queen of Henry VII., and her sisters, probably never saw him. He was as effectually deprived of all opportunities of private communication with others, as if he had been shut up within stone walls. According to Hall, his apparent freedom was an insupportable durance; for "the king appointed certain keepers to attend upon him, which should not, the breadth of a nail, go from his person." In June, 1498, he escaped, and fled towards the coast. But he was in the toils. "Every by-way and lane was set abroad with the king's guard." In his despair, he turned back from the road to the sea, and threw himself into the priory of Sheen. The prior obtained from the king a promise that the fugitive's life should be spared; and the Tower then became his close prison. Hall relates, that upon being conveyed to London, "Perkin was brought to the court again to Westminster, with many a curse and reproach, and was one day set fettered in a pair of stocks before the door of Westminster hall."

* See *ante*, p. 221.

† Note of Sir F. Madden in "Archæologia," vol. xxvii. p. 188.

‡ "Excerpta Historica," p. 117.

The chronicler adds, that the next day he was exhibited in the same way before the Standard in Cheap, and there "read openly his confession, written with his own hand." There was another prisoner in the Tower, who had there pined for fourteen years, Edward, earl of Warwick. From June, 1498, to November, 1499, these young men were fellow-prisoners. They probably had some means of intercourse, open or secret, during these sixteen months. In March, 1499, another pretended earl of Warwick appeared in Kent, and was announced from the pulpit by a friar of the order of St. Augustine. The poor tool, Wulford, was hanged, and the friar was imprisoned. Hall writes, that the friar set on foot this scheme, "to the intent to bring this earl into disdain and hatred." Men were not slow to believe that "this was but the king's device." * The earl of Warwick stood in the way of Henry's family projects. A negotiation was proceeding to marry Arthur, prince of Wales, to Catherine, the daughter of Ferdinand of Spain. "Ferdinand," says Bacon, "had written to the king in plain terms, that he saw no assurance of his succession as long as the earl of Warwick lived; and that he was loth to send his daughter to troubles and dangers." The suggestion was not thrown away upon such an unprincipled schemer as Henry VII. "Lady Catherine herself, a sad and a religious woman, long after, when king Henry the Eighth's resolution of a divorce from her was first made known to her, used some words,—that she had not offended, but it was a judgment of God, for that her former marriage was made in blood,—meaning that of the earl of Warwick." † On the 21st of November, 1499, an indictment was preferred before the Lord High Steward and the Peers against the earl of Warwick for high treason. It set forth that two men, Thomas Astwood, one of Warwick's keepers, and Robert Cleymound, had, in August, conspired with him to make him king. They were to seize the Tower, and there defend themselves; or to obtain the royal treasure there, blow up the powder-magazine, and in the confusion escape. But it was also averred in the same wonderful document, that it was intended to make "Peter Warbeck, of Tournay," king. Cleymound, it was affirmed, with the assent of Warwick, knocked on the floor, Warbeck being confined beneath, and called out, "Perkin, be of good cheer and comfort; and afterwards the earl made a hole in the floor, to the intent that he might converse with him concerning the said treason." The chronicler states that Perkin, "by false persuasions and liberal promises, corrupted Strangeways, Blewet, Astwood, and long Roger, his keepers, being servants to sir John Digby, lieutenant; insomuch that they, as it was at their arraignment openly proved, intended to have slain the said master, and to have set Perkin and the earl of Warwick at large." ‡ Two of these keepers were hanged; but Cleymound, who appears to have been so active and so confided in, vanishes, when the purpose is served for which he was in the Tower, in some capacity or other, that would enable him to act the betrayer. Upon this tissue of contradictory charges, set forth in Warwick's indictment, the two young men were convicted. The earl of Warwick, wholly ignorant of the ways of the world, was induced to plead guilty. His companion in misfortune went through some form of trial, of which there is no record. He was arraigned as a foreigner. The doubtful Plantagenet was

* Bacon, p. 194.

† *Ibid.*, p. 196.

‡ Hall, p. 401.

executed at Tyburn,—his old friend John Water, of Cork, suffering with him,—on the 23rd of November. The earl was beheaded within the Tower on the 28th of the same month. “One fierce and strong wave,” says the old chronicler, with a touch of pity, “devoured and swallowed both their lives.” *

* Hall, p. 488.



Perkin Warbeck's Groat: a silver coin, in the British Museum.



Statue of Lord Bacon, the historian of Henry VII., at St. Albans.

CHAPTER XV.

Edmund de la Pole, duke of Suffolk—Marriage of Prince Arthur to Catherine of Arragon—The Court of Henry VII.—Henry's passion for wealth—Treaty with Scotland—Death of Prince Arthur—Contract of Prince Henry with Arthur's widow—Death of Henry VII.—Extortions through Empson and Dudley—Tendency towards absolute monarchy—Few parliaments during this reign—State of the Clergy—Monastic establishments—Population—Agriculture—Maritime Discovery—Commerce—Regulations of internal trade—Wages—Vagrancy—Criminal Laws—Public Health—Feasts—National Pride—Pageants—Sports.

AFTER fifteen years of a reign in which "the times were rough, and full of mutations and strange accidents,"* Henry VII. sits steadily on his throne. There is only one Plantagenet connexion left to give him more trouble, Edmund de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, the brother of the earl of Lincoln, whom Richard III. declared his heir. He had manifestly wronged this nobleman, by withholding from him his property, and his true title of duke, pretending that the attainder of the elder brother cancelled his right. After the oppressed man, who appears to have been rash and ill-conducted, had fled abroad, and several persons had been executed upon a charge of conspiracy with him, the king contrived to get hold of him upon a promise to spare his life, and he shut him up in the Tower, leaving to his successor his pious command to put the prisoner to death. From the commencement of the sixteenth century

* Bacon, "Dedication of History of Henry VII. to Prince Charles."

to the end of Henry VII.'s reign, we have neither revolts nor wars. But the policy of the king has brought about two events, which will have a powerful influence on the future destinies of this country—the marriage of his son, Arthur, prince of Wales, to Catherine of Arragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella; and the marriage of his daughter, Margaret, to James IV. of Scotland.

In 1485 queen Isabella gave birth to Catalina, her youngest child. Arthur, the eldest son of Henry VII. and of Elizabeth of York, was born in 1486. Their second son, Henry, was born in 1491. Catalina, or Catherine, was educated with religious strictness; and she, as well as her sisters, acquired, under the most competent masters, a complete knowledge of Latin. "She is remarkably learned," wrote Erasmus; and he adds, "not merely with reference to her sex." The young princes of England were educated with the same attention to the studies of ancient learning, never held in higher esteem than in that age of its revival. It is recorded by André, the preceptor of prince Arthur, that he had read Homer and Thucydides; Virgil, Lucan, and Ovid; Cicero and Quintilian; Cesar, Tacitus, and other Roman historians. The younger brother was equally remarkable for his acquirements. There is a Latin letter from Henry to Erasmus, written in 1507, which the great scholar commends for its elegance. When prince Arthur was not four years old, and the Spanish princess not five, the two politic kings arranged a treaty for the union of these children. This agreement of 1489 was confirmed by one more precise in 1490; by which Catherine's portion was to be two hundred thousand gold crowns; and one-third of the revenues of the principality of Wales, the duchy of Cornwall, and the earldom of Chester, were to be settled upon her. In subsequent years the projected union was kept in view by new conventions; and in 1499, when Arthur had reached his twelfth year, the marriage ceremony was performed; the Spanish princess being represented by proxy. In 1501 Catherine arrived; and the ceremonials were again gone through at St. Paul's on the 6th of November. There were then banquets and tournaments and pageants; and "all the nobility were set on pleasure and solace, and the king himself was principally given to joy and rejoicing."* Before this period the annual expenses of the royal household were set at 13,059*l*.† With the avaricious habits of the king, the court was not an extravagant one; though there were occasional splendours and entertainments of a costly nature. Francesco Capello, the Venetian ambassador, was at this court in 1502; and in a very curious "Relation of the Island of England,"‡ probably written by his secretary, it is said of the king, "Though frugal to excess in his own person, he does not change any of the ancient usages of England at his court, keeping a sumptuous table; as I had the opportunity of witnessing twice that your Magnificence dined there, when I judged that there might be from six hundred to seven hundred persons at dinner."§ In the "Privy Purse Expenses" of this king, we have an insight into the nature of his personal expenses, which the Italian notices as "frugal to excess." In one characteristic expenditure he was most extravagant. On

* Hall, p. 495.

† Stat. 11 Hen. VII. c. 62.

‡ Translated by Charlotte Augusta Sneyd. Camden Society.

§ "Italian Relation," p. 46.

the 25th of March, in the year of Arthur's marriage, we find the following entry:—"Delivered and paid by the king's commandment for divers and many jewels brought out of France, against the marriage of my lord prince, 14,000*l.*" * The editor of this record says, "his desire for the acquirement of jewels scarcely knew any bounds; and on them alone he spent 110,000*l.*" It appears to us that this investment of money in jewels was a part of the habitual prudence of the king. Some of his wealth thus lay in a small compass; was of a generally received value; and was available in any evil turn of fortune. In architecture he disbursed large sums. His palace at Richmond, and his chapel at Westminster, were of the most costly of these works. Beyond these matters, he was frugal even when he meant to be generous. He saw the policy of encouraging navigation and discovery, if such encouragement should be without cost to himself; and in March, 1496, he granted letters-patent to John Cabot and his two sons, to sail at their own cost and charges, with five ships, for the discovery of new countries, upon condition that the king should have a fifth of the profits. In 1497 we have this entry of money drawn from the privy purse: "To him that found the new isle, 10*l.*" The discoverer of Newfoundland had no mighty reward. In 1502, Henry gives "To men of Bristol that found the isle, 5*l.*" He was more liberal to one from whose science he expected immediate results, than to the hardy navigators who were carrying the English flag to shores before unknown. He gives "to a multiplier in the Tower of London, 33*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*" The "multiplier" was an alchemist. The Christmas festivities of the court do not appear to have been very expensive. The king occasionally draws a few pounds to play at cards. He gives 1*l.* "to four players of Essex, in reward," and another 1*l.* "to the French players." On his own players he bestows 2*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* in reward. The "players of the king's interludes" formed a regular part of the royal establishment, consisting of four performers, who each received five marks annually.† Noblemen had their players, who performed at court. The regular drama was not yet created. It is probable that these "interludes" were something different from the "miracle plays" which were enacted in Coventry and other towns by the inmates of religious houses. There is a curious account by Warton of "a moral interlude and a pithy, written by Maister Skelton, laureate," entitled "The Negramansir;" in which the characters are a necromancer, the devil, a notary, Simony and Avarice.‡ This was "played before the king and other estates at Woodstock, on Palm Sunday." Out of such materials were the court entertainments composed, as well as those which were played in the palaces of noblemen and bishops; in which "Belzebub with a beard," as in Skelton's play, and the old contest between the "Vice" and the devil formed the chief subjects of amusement. In some of the lives of sir Thomas More this anecdote is related: "The cardinal [Morton] often would make trial of his pregnant wit, especially at Christmas merriments, when, having plays for recreation, this youth would suddenly step up amongst the players, and never studying before upon the matter, make often a part of his own invention; which was so witty and so full of jests, that he alone made more sport and laughter than all the players

* "Excerpta Historica," p. 125.

† See Mr. Collier's "Annals of the Stage," vol. i. p. 37.

‡ "History of Ancient Poetry," vol. iii. p. 165.

besides." * We must not linger amidst these outward shows of a courtly life, which, if we could look beneath the surface, was, in all likelihood, as dull and formal as the temper of the sovereign could render it. We find payments to minstrels, morrice-dancers mummings fools, tumblers, bear-wards; and



Ludi, or Court Masqueradings. (Harleian MS. 4379.)

higher artists were not disregarded, for "an Italian, a poet," "the Blind-poet," and "a Rymer of Scotland," come in for their rewards. But in that palace of Richmond, which Henry raised up out of the ashes of the older palace of Shene, abided that evil spirit, Avarice, which Skelton presumed to satirise, and to hand over to his principal personage to be tormented. The ridicule was somewhat bold, at a time when the king had discovered how his vast income could be largely increased without asking parliament for subsidies. The annual revenue from the royal estates, and the properties which had lapsed to the crown, were estimated at about one hundred and seventy thousand pounds, of which forty thousand were derived from customs † Henry is, according to Bacon, reported to have died worth one million eight hundred thousand pounds. We shall presently have to show the course which was pursued by this most extortionate of capitalists. The ingrained covetousness and cunning of the man,—for "of nature, assuredly, he coveted to accumulate treasure," ‡ and "neither did he care how cunning they were that he did employ, for he thought himself to have the master-reach" §—

* Quoted from Hoddesdon's Life, in Dibdin's edit. of "Utopia," vol. i. p. 48.

† See "Italian Relation;" in which there is a minute account, apparently derived from some official source.

‡ Bacon, p. 236.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

these qualities made him, to use plain words, a royal swindler. He went far beyond his age as an exaggerated representative of the newly-born spirit of money-making, as opposed to the ancient spirit of violence. He



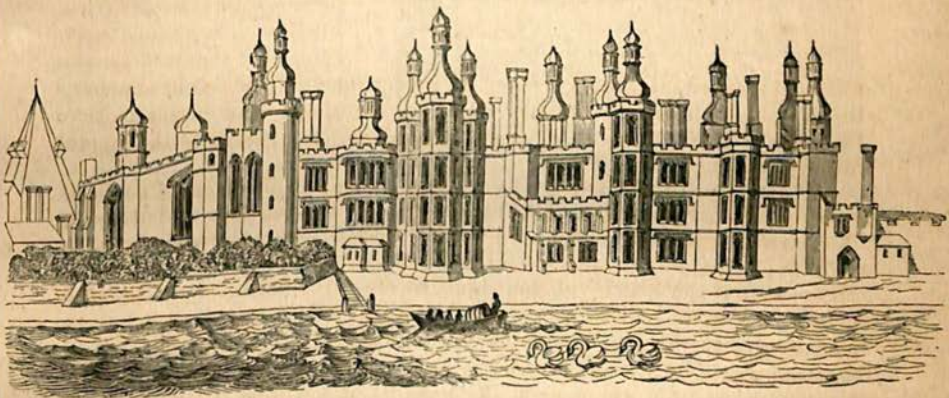
Mummers.

carried it forward into that unscrupulous passion for wealth, which has rendered the grasping accumulator so detestable at all times, and in no times more to be despised than in our own, when he is too often regarded as the highest model of commercial wisdom.

In January, 1502, a treaty was concluded between England and Scotland, in which a perpetual peace was to be cemented by the marriage of James with the eldest daughter of Henry. There had been a long negotiation upon the subject of this union; and some doubts were expressed in the council of Henry that if the king's two sons were to die without issue, "the kingdom of England would fall to the king of Scotland, which might prejudice the monarchy of England. Whereunto the king replied, 'that if that should be, Scotland would be but an accession to England, and not England to Scotland, for that the greater would draw the less.'" Bacon related this when the oracular opinion of Henry had been realised in the union of the two crowns. The marriage of Margaret took place by proxy; but, on account of her youth, her departure to Scotland was deferred till July, 1503. Meanwhile, an event of great import had taken place. Arthur, prince of Wales, who kept his court at Ludlow, died in April, 1502, only four months after his marriage. The two kings, who were wonderfully matched in their ability at bargain-making, now negotiated for the marriage of young prince Henry with his brother's widow. A year passed in determining whether the princess Catherine should be returned to her father, with the hundred thousand crowns which had been paid as a moiety of her dowry,—than which nothing could be more disagreeable to Henry; or whether Ferdinand should advance another hundred thousand crowns, and the second marriage be legalised by a dispensation from the pope. The dispensation was obtained; and the marriage-contract was completed in 1503, with a solemn ceremonial. On this occasion a form was gone through, in which a person was appointed to object that the marriage

was unlawful, and another to defend it as "good and effectual in the law of Christ's church."* Mr. Hallam suggests that "there seems to be something in this of the tortuous policy of Henry VII." From the same cause it might arise that, before Henry was fifteen, he protested, in legal form, against the contract which had been made during his nonage. This marriage, which was not solemnised during the life of Henry VII., probably excited some scruples beyond the circle of the court. It was a contract which had memorable results, "the secret providence of God ordaining that marriage to be the occasion of great events and changes."†

Elizabeth, the queen of Henry VII., died in February, 1503. In that year the king was busied in the stipulations of Prince Henry's marriage-contract, and the parade of his daughter Margaret's progress to Scotland. But the widower was afterwards seeking for an advantageous alliance for himself; and he tried his fortune in three quarters, in each of which there was a prospect of a large marriage-portion. The deceased king of Naples had bequeathed an immense sum to his queen. There was heavy disappointment; for the agents of Henry described her as perfect in all endowments, except that of



Richmond Palace. (From an old Drawing engraved in "Vetusta Monumenta," vol. ii.)

the expected fortune, which the reigning king refused to pay. Isabella, queen of Castile, in her own right, was now dead, and her daughter Juana, the wife of the archduke Philip, received the sceptre of Castile from her father, Ferdinand, now king of Arragon. Philip had a sister, Margaret; and the Castilian sovereigns having been thrown on the shores of England in a tempest, Henry seized his opportunity, and detained them, on various pretences, for three months, till Philip had agreed that his sister should marry the king of England, with a portion of three hundred thousand crowns. But while this negotiation was proceeding to completion, Philip died; and then king Henry thought that the widow, Juana, would give him a far nobler portion in the crown of Castile, than the Margaret who was promised to him. But Ferdinand

* Hallam, "Constitutional History," vol. i. chap. ii., Note.

† Bacon, p. 207.

of Arragon steadily refused to allow his daughter Juana, who was of deranged intellect, to come within the toils of the wily negotiator with whom he had



Henry VII.'s Chapel.

fought so many battles of statecraft. Meanwhile the Spanish monarch withheld that part of the portion of Catherine which was promised to be paid upon her marriage with prince Henry; and the English king, to annoy her father, treated the widow of one son and the betrothed of another, with a harshness which indisposed her for the completion of her second marriage. At length two instalments of that marriage-portion were extracted from Ferdinand, according to an agreement that they should be paid half-yearly. Henry the Seventh died before the third and fourth became due.* That event took place at Richmond Palace on the 21st of April, 1509. He had been in weak health for several

years; and the prospect of his danger induced him to do some acts of mercy, such as satisfying the creditors of small debtors, and forgiving offences against the crown, with the exception of murder and felony. But the latter years of his life were disgraced by the extortions of his officers, who wrested the law to do the same work of plunder as had been accomplished by the sword and the fetter in the days of baronial tyranny. "He was touched," says Bacon, "with remorse for the same;" but the extortions "went on with as great rage as ever." In his will he declared "that his mind was, that restitution should be made of those sums which had been unjustly taken by his officers." His historian thinks that he happily died in his prosperity, "to withdraw him from any future blow of fortune; which, certainly, in regard of the great hatred of the people, had not been impossible to have come upon him." He was buried at Westminster, in the magnificent chapel which he built beside the abbey.

The chief extortions which this king practised, through two lawyers, Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley, were carried on by prosecutions against persons

* Dr. Lingard has given this account of the circumstances which delayed the marriage of Henry and Catherine, as derived by him from Spanish documents. The receipt for the second instalment, in 1508, was signed by the two Henries.

of substance, especially the rich merchants of London, under obsolete laws, in which false witnesses, called promoters, were systematically employed. There can be no stronger testimony against these enormities than an eloquent and fearless passage in the "Utopia" of Sir Thomas More; in which he describes what might happen if "some king and his counsel were together, whetting their wits and devising what subtle craft they might invent to enrich the king with great treasures of money." These worthies suggest—the alteration of the standard of money; a pretence of war to raise taxes, and then make peace with great solemnity and holy ceremonies; a revival of old and moth-eaten laws, to exact fines for their transgression; prohibitions of many things under penalties, to be remitted by dispensations for money, and by selling privileges and licences; and, lastly, to corrupt and overawe the judges "that they may, in every matter, dispute and reason for the king's right." No one can doubt that More,—who at the time when this book was published, 1516, was a privy-counsellor of Henry VIII.,—distinctly pointed at the political system of Henry VII., unexampled for its combination of tyranny and meanness. He sums up with this bitter satire against that system: "To conclude, all the counsellors agree and consent together, with the rich Crassus, that no abundance of gold can be sufficient for a prince, which must keep and maintain an army: furthermore that a king, though he would, can do nothing unjustly. For all that men have, yea, also the men themselves, be all his. And that every man hath so much of his own as the king's gentleness hath not taken from him. And that it shall be most for the king's advantage, that his subjects have very little or nothing in their possession, as whose safeguard doth herein consist that his people do not wax wanton and wealthy through riches and liberty; because where these things be, there men be not wont patiently to obey hard, unjust, and unlawful commandments. Whereas, on the other part, need and poverty doth hold down and keep under stout courages, and maketh them patient perforce, taking from them bold and rebelling stomachs."*

It is the opinion of the historian of our "Constitutional History," that "there had evidently been a retrograde tendency towards absolute monarchy between the reigns of Henry VI. and Henry VIII."† An Italian historian, Biondi, who wrote in the time of James I., describes our mixed constitution as "a well-constituted aristocratic-democratic monarchy"—(aristodemocratica monarchia). It was the policy of the first Tudor to impair, if not to destroy, the aristocratic branch, before the democratic had acquired any great political force. The Venetian secretary says, "of these lords, who are called *milites*, there are very few left, and these diminish daily;" and he adds that the king, Henry VII., had "appointed certain military services to be performed by his own attendants and familiars, who he knows can be trusted upon any urgent occasion."‡ These were the yeomen of the guard, a body first instituted by this king, but solely for domestic security and parade. They were, according to a record, "proved archers, strong, bold, and valiant men." But with their damask jackets, embroidered with vine branches and the red rose, they were more fitted to "stand in passages upon a row, when the king's

* "Utopia," Introductory Discourse.

† Hallam, "Constitutional Hist.," chap. i.
VOL. II.

‡ "Italian Relation," p. 39.

highness moved from chamber to chamber," than to bring their bright halberds into the battle-field. The Tudor king did not establish his partial despotism by the military arm. His great instrument for reducing the pride and power of the nobles was by fine and forfeiture. The earl of Northumberland might keep his solemn state at Warkworth and Prudhow; have his council, his chamberlain, his treasurer, his constables, his chaplains, with a hundred and sixty-six persons in his regular household.* The third duke of Buckingham might entertain four hundred and fifty-nine guests at Thornbury Castle, in 1507.† But if either of these great lords, or any other, gathered round them a body of habitual retainers, the Statutes of Liveries, which were disregarded in the preceding reigns, were now to be strictly enforced. All retainers were held unlawful, but those who received wages as household servants; and for each retainer a fine of 5*l.* per month was enforced.‡ Bacon has an amusing anecdote which is highly characteristic of Henry VII. and his times: "There remaineth to this day a report, that the king was on a time entertained by the earl of Oxford,—that was his principal servant, both for war and peace,—nobly and sumptuously, at his castle at Henningham. And at the king's going away, the earl's servants stood, in a seemly manner, in their livery coats, with cognisances, ranged on both sides, and made the king a lane. The king called the earl to him, and said: 'My lord, I have heard much of your hospitality, but I see it is greater than the speech. These handsome gentlemen and yeomen, which I see on both sides of me, are sure your menial servants.' The earl smiled, and said, 'It may please your grace, that were not for mine ease. They are most of them my retainers, that are come to do me service at such a time as this, and chiefly to see your grace.' The king started a little, and said: 'By my faith, my lord, I thank you for your good cheer, but I may not endure to have my laws broken in my sight. My attorney must speak with you.' And it is part of the report, that the earl compounded for no less than fifteen thousand marks." How the nobles were ground in what Bacon calls "Empson's and Dudley's mills," may be seen in the following entry in one of the accounts of sums received by Dudley, which still exists: § "Delivered three exemplifications, under the seal of King's Bench, of the condemnation of the lord Bergavenny, for such retainers as he was indicted of in Kent, amounting unto, for his part only, after the rate of the months, 69,000*l.*" ||

One of the early statutes of this reign,—“An Act giving the Court of Star-Chamber authority to punnyshe divers mysdemeanours,”—has been occasionally represented as the origin of that oppressive court, which, growing more and more arbitrary under the Tudors and Stuarts, was at last finally abolished by statute in the 16th year of Charles I. In that statute it was said that “the judges of the Star-Chamber had not kept themselves within the points limited by the statute 3rd Henry VII.” These points were offences by maintenance, liveries, and retainers; untrue returns of sheriffs; taking money by juries; and great riots and unlawful assemblies. This court was probably useful and necessary in many respects; although it

* See the Northumberland Household Book.

† “Archæological Journal,” No. xxxi. p. 278.

‡ Statute, 19 Hen. VII. c. 14.

§ Harleian MS. in the British Museum.

|| This account is given at length in Mr. Turner's “History of England,” vol. iv. p. 156.

was open to the charge of being such an instrument of arbitrary power as was exercised by the council of the earlier kings, who met in what was called the Star-Chamber. The members of the Court of Star-Chamber of Henry VII. were limited, as well as its objects; consisting of the chancellor, treasurer, and keeper of the privy seal, with a bishop and temporal lord of the council, and the chief justices of the King's Bench and Common Pleas, or two other justices in their absence. But even with these limitations, both of the objects and ministers of the court, it is easy to see that its formal establishment by statute, thus sanctioning encroachments such as those of the council which many previous statutes had endeavoured to suppress, was a step towards depriving the subject of the right of being tried by his peers. That Henry wielded this instrument for oppressive purposes we may readily believe. During this reign, there was little opportunity afforded to parliament to demand remedy of grievances. There were only seven parliaments called under this king, who was twenty-four years on the throne. From the first to the twelfth year there were six parliaments. There was then an interval of seven years, during which no parliament was held. That of the 19th year was the last. In dispensing with subsidies, Henry got rid of the privilege which was the sole check upon prerogative. The Lords and Commons appear to have surrendered the Constitution into his keeping, when it was enacted that, as the king was not minded, for the good and ease of his subjects, to call another parliament for a long time, he should have power to reverse and annul all attainders, and pardon all forfeitures, and that his letters-patent should be as valid as acts of parliament.

At the commencement of the reign of Henry VII., the long immunity of the clergy from any interference of the legislature with their course of life, however criminal, was in a slight degree interrupted by a statute, which recognises the existence in the commonwealth of "priests, clerks, and religious men openly noised of incontinent living." The "Act for bishops to punish priests and other religious men for dishonest life," provides that they may be committed to ward and prison, upon examination and other lawful proof, and that no action of wrongful imprisonment shall arise out of such commitment.* But by a statute of three years later we learn how frightful were the exemptions from the course of justice which persons in holy orders obtained. The "benefit of clergy," which remained partially in force till abolished in the reform of the criminal law in 1828, was originally devised to exempt all those who could plead their clerkship (*privilegium clericale*) from temporal jurisdiction; and in an age of very general ignorance all those were held to be clerks who could read. The statute of Henry VII. recites that "persons lettered" have been the more bold to commit murder, robbery, and other mischievous deeds, because they have been continually admitted to the benefit of the clergy upon trust of the privilege of the church." The Act, therefore, provides that if a person not in orders shall have once been admitted to such benefit he shall not be again so admitted; but be marked with M. upon the brawn of the left thumb, if convicted of murder, and with T. if for any other felony; and be then delivered to the ordinary. Persons in orders, if asking their clergy a second time, are required to

* Statute, 1 Henry VII. c. 4.

produce letters of orders, or a certificate from the ordinary.* The offender, so handed over to the ordinary, almost invariably escaped with total impunity, or with some slight punishment. Another enormous abuse was that of Sanctuary, which was not abolished by law till the reign of James I.† This privilege of sanctuary was often connected with what is styled in the law-books "Abjuration of the realm." In the "Relation of the Island of England," there is a curious and amusing description of the custom of sanctuary and of abjuration, which is essentially confirmed by other authorities: "The clergy are they who have the supreme sway over the country, both in peace and war. Amongst other things, they have provided that a number of sacred places in the kingdom should serve for the refuge and escape of all delinquents; and no one, were he a traitor to the crown, or had he practised against the king's own person, can be taken out of these by force. And a villain of this kind, who, for some great excess that he has committed, has been obliged to take refuge in one of these sacred places, often goes out of it to brawl in the public streets, and then, returning to it, escapes with impunity for every fresh offence he may have been guilty of. This is no detriment to the purses of the priests, nor to the other perpetual sanctuaries; but every church is a sanctuary for forty days; and, if a thief or murderer, who has taken refuge in one, cannot leave it in safety during those forty days, he gives notice that he wishes to leave England. In which case, being stripped to the shirt by the chief magistrate of the place, and a crucifix placed in his hand, he is conducted along the road to the sea, where, if he finds a passage, he may go with a 'God speed you.' But if he should not find one, he walks into the sea up to the throat, and three times asks for a passage; and this is repeated till a ship appears, which comes for him, and so he departs in safety. It is not unamusing to hear how the women and children lament over the misfortune of these exiles, asking 'how they can live so destitute out of England;' adding, moreover, that 'they had better have died than go out of the world,' as if England were the whole world."‡ Henry VII., however, procured a bull from pope Innocent VII. to enable the civil power to remove from sanctuary those who went out to commit crimes and return again; with other limitations of the privilege, especially as to matters of treason.

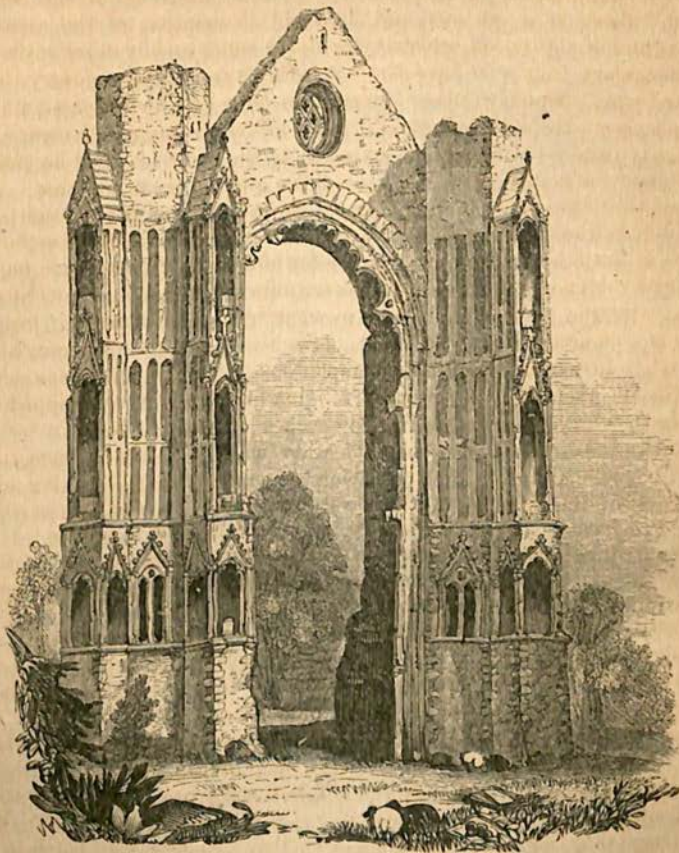
At the end of the reign of Henry VII. the monastic establishments were at the culminating point of their wealth and luxury. Some of the gross profligacy which gave the appearance, if not the reality, of justice to their violent suppression was the subject of papal admonitions in 1490. But in their hospitality and their magnificence they commanded much popular support; and nothing seemed so unlikely as that in thirty years they should be swept away. There was scarcely a cloud, "no bigger than a man's hand," to give sign of the coming storm. It is only when we have evidence of the real contempt which the higher order of minds, even amongst churchmen, felt for the impostures which contributed so mainly to the riches of the monastic shrines, that we discover how doubtful was that tenure of popularity which rested more upon vain delusions than upon the real benefit which the people derived from the teachings of religion. Henry VII. went in pilgri-

* 4 Henry VII. c. 13.

† The Sanctuary at Westminster, of which we have made repeated mention, was pulled down in the reign of George I.

‡ Page 34.

mage to Walsingham in 1487, and "visited our Lady's Church, famous for miracles." We have seen how other great persons went this pilgrimage in the times of Edward IV., and how zealous they were for "Our Lady's House of Walsingham."* But amongst the visitors of this shrine at the beginning of the sixteenth century was one who has recorded what he saw



Walsingham Abbey.

with a sly gravity, which shows how the wonders had come to be regarded by the thoughtful and the learned. Hundreds of pilgrims might still travel many a weary mile, believing that God had set the galaxy in the heavens to be their guide by night, that they might find

"Unto the town of Walsingham,
Which is the right and ready way." †

But there were others who went there to smile at the extent of human

* See *ante*, p. 125.

† "Percy's Reliques," vol. ii. p. 79.

credulity. When Erasmus had journeyed to Walsingham he saw strange sights which he has described in his "Colloquies." A guide attends him, like the modern cathedral-verger. "The joint of a man's finger is exhibited to us, the largest of three. I kiss it; and I then ask, Whose relics were these? He says, St. Peter's. The Apostle? He said, Yes. Then, observing the size of the joint, which might have been that of a giant, I remarked, Peter must have been a man of very large size. At this, one of my companions burst into a laugh; which I certainly took ill, for if he had been quiet the attendant would have shown us all the relics." To exhibit some of the more important objects to be worshipped a canon of the church came forward; and when the learned sceptic inquired, as civilly as he could, by what proofs he was assured that "what looked like ground chalk, mixed with white of egg," was the milk of the Virgin, "the canon as if possessed by a fury, looking aghast upon us, and apparently horrified at the blasphemous inquiry, replied 'What need to ask such questions, when you have the authenticated inscription?'" The question was asked through an interpreter, a friend of the great scholar of Rotterdam. This was Aldrich, afterwards provost of Eton, and bishop of Carlisle. To Canterbury Erasmus also went, with his admirable friend, dean Colet,* the founder of St. Paul's School; whom he, with his quaint humour, calls "a somewhat unmanageable companion—a learned and pious man, but not so well affected to this part of religion [the reverence for relics] as he could wish." They saw the amazing riches of the shrine of St. Thomas; and in the sacristy a box of black leather was produced, and when it was opened "immediately all knelt and worshipped." It contained "some torn fragments of linen, most of them retaining marks of dirt," which were affirmed to have belonged to the holy martyr. Colet, an Englishman "of no small consequence," was requested to accept one of these rags; but he "not sufficiently grateful, drew it together with his fingers, not without some intimation of disgust, and disdainfully replaced it." There is a little hospital still existing at Harbaldown, near Canterbury, which Erasmus and his friend passed in returning to London. It was "a hospital for a few old men, one of whom runs out as soon as they perceive any horsemen approaching. He sprinkles his holy water, and frequently offers the upper part of a shoe, bound with a brazen rim, in which is a piece of glass resembling a jewel. Those that kiss it give some small coin." When the shoe was stretched out, the friend of Erasmus "asked what the man wanted. He said, that it was the shoe of St. Thomas. On that my friend was irritable, and turning to me, he said,—What! do these brutes imagine that we must kiss every good man's shoe?" † These relations are important, as showing how gross were the superstitions of England a few years only before the Reformation; and how, during more than a century, when it had been dangerous to evince any disrespect for the corruptions of the church, the spirit of the early Reformers had not died out. In answer to a question by his interlocutor in the Colloquy, whether Colet was a Wickliffite, Erasmus answers, "I do not

* Colet is called "Gratian," in the Colloquy; but there is no doubt of the identity of Gratian with the Dean of St. Paul's.

† Those parts of the Colloquies which relate to Walsingham and Canterbury are translated by Mr. J. G. Nicholls, with excellent notes—1349.

think so, although he had read Wickliffe's books; where he got them I cannot say,'”

Although the material wealth of England had been decidedly increasing during the reign of Henry VII., we have abundant evidence that its natural resources were very imperfectly brought into operation. The population appeared to the Venetian traveller not to bear any proportion to the fertility of the land and the riches of the cities. In passing from Dover to London, and from London to Oxford, the country appeared to him to be very thinly inhabited. He inquired, also, of those who rode to the north of the kingdom, and of those who went to Bristol and into Cornwall, and found there was no difference in their report upon this point. The population at the beginning of the sixteenth century has been estimated at four millions; but the data for this conclusion are scarcely to be relied on.



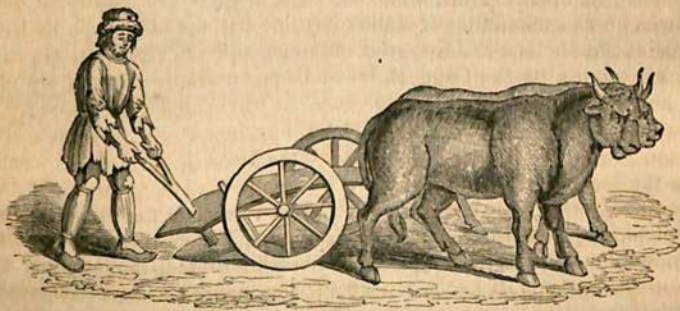
Erasmus.

In an Act of 1488-9, “concerning the Isle of Wight,” it is recited that the isle is “late decayed of people;” * and in an Act of the same session, “against pulling down of towns,” it is declared, that “where, in some towns, two hundred persons were occupied and lived by their lawful labours, now be there occupied two or three herdmen.” † The grievance to which this decay of population is ascribed, is the conversion of tilled land into pasture; and the consolidation of farms and farmholds “into one man’s hold and hands, that of old time were wont to be in many several persons’ holds and hands, and many several households kept in them, and thereby much people multiplied.” This is the process of which More so bitterly complains, but of which he judged with the half-knowledge of his time on all economical questions. “Forsooth, my lord, quoth I,”—he is addressing Morton,—“your sheep, that were wont to be so meek and tame, and so small eaters, now, as I hear say, be become so great devourers and so wild, that they eat up and swallow down the very men themselves. They consume, destroy, and devour whole fields, houses, and cities: for look, in what parts of the realm doth grow the finest and therefore dearest wool,—there, noblemen and gentlemen, yea, and certain abbots, holy men, no doubt, not contenting themselves with the yearly revenues and profits that were wont to grow to their forefathers and predecessors of their lands, nor being content that they live in rest and pleasure, nothing profiting, yea, much noying the weal public, leave no

* 4 Hen. VII., cap. 16.

† 4 Hen. VII., cap. 19.

ground for tillage. They inclose all into pastures; they throw down houses; they pluck down towns, and leave nothing standing, but only the church to be made a sheep-house. And, as though you lost no small quantity of ground by forests, chases, lands, and parks, those good holy men turn all dwelling-places and all glebe land into desolation and wilderness." The houses thrown down, and the towns plucked down, were the wretched hovels,—“the houses made of sticks and dirt,”—of which the Spaniard took note in the time of queen Mary.* But it was not the wretchedness of the buildings that caused them to be removed, but the absence of those means of life which were more abundantly found half a century later, when the same Spaniard said, “These English have their houses made of sticks and dirt, but they fare commonly so well as the king.” In the time in which Henry VII. legislated, and More declaimed against the decay of population through pasturage, the tillage of the land was so unprofitable that it afforded no return for the employment of capital. It yielded only a miserable subsistence to those who worked it, with imperfect instruments; with no knowledge of the rotation of crops; with no turnip husbandry to fatten sheep less wastefully than in the pastures; with no sufficient knowledge of the value of manures. The very process by which, upon a true application of commercial



intercourse to agriculture, the land might be improved, was reprobated by the author of the “Utopia,” in the enforcement of his mistaken benevolence. The rich men, he says, buy great cattle “abroad very cheap, and afterwards when they be fatted in their pastures, they sell them again exceeding dear.” The difference between cheapness and dearness was a clear addition to the national wealth. The employment of capital in the feeding of sheep, being the more profitable mode of its use, speedily produced a greater demand for the labour of the whole country, than the ancient mode of cultivating small patches of land by the cottier-tenantry, who had succeeded the serfs of the earlier times. The pastures were furnishing employment to the manufacturers, the retailers, the merchants, of the great towns; and the profit of the pastures would, in course of time, bring about that larger system of tillage which would more perfectly unite the operations of the shepherd and the ploughman under the same tenancy. It is not to be imagined that, at the period of which we are speaking, pasturage had superseded tillage. The Venetian

* Harrison, “Description of England,” p. 187, in Holinshed’s Chronicles.

traveller, speaking of the general aspect of the country, says, "England is all diversified by pleasant undulating hills and beautiful valleys, nothing being to be seen but agreeable woods, or extensive meadows, or lands in cultivation."* But he also says, "Agriculture is not practised in this island beyond what is required for the consumption of the people; because, were they to plough and sow all the land that was capable of cultivation, they might sell a quantity of grain to the surrounding countries."† It was more profitable to export wool and broad-cloth than to export grain; and no legislation and no philosophy could compel the application of capital to the growth of corn where it could be more advantageously applied to the growth of sheep. The indirect stimulus which a judicious investment of accumulated wealth in one branch of industry must produce upon all industries, was not then understood; nor was it understood during succeeding periods of growing prosperity. It is scarcely understood even in our own day. The belief that land and trade could not prosper together, was a fallacy which the more sagacious of the economists of the seventeenth century did not succeed in exploding; and which has scarcely yet ceased to haunt the imaginations of a few whom experience will not make wise.

The discovery of Newfoundland by Cabot, which was not followed up by any settlement upon the island at that time, arose out of the spirit of enterprise which was excited amongst the maritime nations of Europe by the great success of Bartholomew Dias, of Columbus, and of Vasco de Gama. The passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope, partially effected by Dias in 1487, and completed by Vasco de Gama in 1498; and the discovery of the New World by the great Genoese whom Ferdinand and Isabella so tardily supported—these influenced but slowly the growth of English commerce. When the brother of Columbus, after being captured by pirates, obtained an audience of Henry VII., the king desired him to send for the man who had been labouring, for seven tedious years, to make his magnificent project comprehended by the courtiers and monks of the Spanish monarchy. At this juncture Queen Isabella had taken up the cause of the ardent navigator; and he had set out upon that expedition whose triumph was to give a new direction to the intercourse of the whole human race. That Henry would have offered his jewels for the cost of the great adventure, as Isabella did, is very doubtful. But gradually his subjects profited by these momentous discoveries; although the parsimony which forbade the king directly to support any adventurers gave little example to the English merchants to embark in the direct trade to the East or the West. The products of India and of the West Indian islands became branches of English commerce; and the people obtained a more extended enjoyment of foreign luxuries by their comparative cheapness in the marts of Portugal and Spain. The commercial enterprises of the country were necessarily restricted by its legislation, adapted to some imaginary necessity for accomplishing a good or preventing an evil. Such was the statute "against bargains grounded in usury;" by which it was enacted "that all manner of persons lending money to and for a time, taking for the same loan anything more besides or above the money lent, by way of contract or covenant at the time of the same loan," should forfeit half the

* "Italian Relation," p. 20.

† *Ibid.*, p. 10.

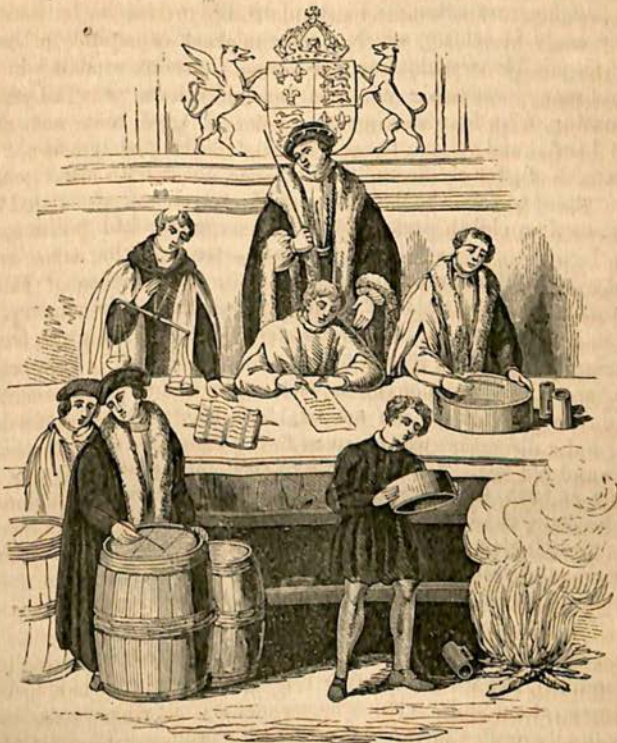
money so lent.* It is evident that accumulated wealth, so locked up by law, could not be used to profit in furnishing aid to the most promising enterprise; and that very much of the capital of the country must be hoarded and unemployed. The visible wealth of the people in plate was the admiration of foreigners. "There is no small innkeeper, however poor and humble he may be, who does not serve his table with silver dishes and drinking cups; and no one who has not in his house silver plate to the amount of at least 100*l.* sterling, is considered by the English to be a person of any consequence." This observer adds, "The most remarkable thing in London is the wonderful quantity of wrought silver."† The accumulation of capital in the form of plate was the result of the law which forbade any investment which would produce interest upon loan. And yet legislation here, as in all other cases which interfere with the natural laws of exchange, was not altogether effectual; for the same traveller remarks, of the English traders, "they are so diligent in mercantile pursuits, that they do not fear to make contracts on usury."‡ They had the boldness to carry on commerce upon borrowed capital—a proof that the industry of the country had become, to some extent, energetic and self-reliant. Another law, of the same contracted nature, was the more stringent re-enactment of a statute of Edward IV. which had expired, forbidding coin of England or any other country, or plate, bullion, or jewels, to be carried out of the kingdom, "to the great impoverishing of the realm."§ This fallacy, that a country is rich in proportion as it receives money in foreign commercial transactions and pays none, was kept up for several hundred years in the delusion called Balance of Trade. How this law interfered with the extension of commerce, and the consequent ability of the consumers to be supplied at the cheapest rate, may be easily conceived. Its oppression of the voyager from the shores of England may be understood from the instance of Erasmus, who, returning to his own country from Dover, was stripped by the king's officers of all his money, except six angels, the amount permitted to be carried out of the realm. The poor scholar's little treasure was what he had earned by imparting his stores of learning to the youth of the country that thus despoiled him. We can scarcely blame the enactment which forbids the wines of Gascony to come in except in English ships, navigated by English mariners, for the principle has endured till our own time. The ship-owners and mariners were encouraged by the navigation law; but the English consumers were deprived of the competition which would bring their wine at the cheapest rate, and with the most constant supply. That such laws are necessary in the infancy of commerce may be maintained by reference to the practice of all imperfectly civilised communities. Unquestionably they are mischievous when the natural laws of exchange have strength to rise above the artificial aids that impede their freedom of action, forbidding nations that would hold out the hand of fellowship to each other from supplying their mutual necessities.

The principle of regulating the prices of commodities still went on, as we have related of previous periods, without reference to any of the circumstances that must render an invariable price unjust, even if it were possible to be

* 11 Hen. VII., cap. 8.
 † *Ibid.*, p. 23.

† "Italian Relation," pp. 29 and 42,
 § 4 Hen. VII., cap. 23.

generally enforced. The complaint of the Commons, that hat-makers and cap-makers "sell their hats and caps at an outrageous price,"—averring that what they buy for sixteen pence they sell for three shillings—is simply evidence of the absence of competition. We may be quite sure that when it was enacted that no hatter should sell the best hat above the price of twenty-pence, the purchaser really obtained no cheaper commodity; that he lost in quality what he gained in price.* But it was long before governments



Henry VII.'s trial of Weights and Measures. (From Harl. Coll.)

found out the absurdity of such interference with private dealings, in matters where an universal principle could not be applied. In the regulation of weights and measures, the state does most properly interpose its authority to establish uniformity; and it was the constant endeavour of the English kings to accomplish this, even before the time of Magna Charta. These regulations were, however, disregarded; as they inevitably must be in localities having imperfect communication with other districts. The parliament of Henry VII. adopted the system of sending measures and weights of brass to the chief officers of every city and borough.† But in four more years complaint was

* Statute, 4 Hen. VII., cap. 9.

† 7 Hen. VII., c. 3.

made that the ordinances for establishing a common standard had not been kept; and a new machinery was called into action for the safe conveyance of the brass weights and measures to cities and towns. The knights, citizens, and burgesses of parliament were to convey them, or cause them to be conveyed, to the places where they were to be kept in safe custody. The care which Henry VII. personally devoted to the examination of weights and measures is indicated by an old illumination, which shows him busied in superintending the proof of the standards in his Exchequer Chamber.

There had been no attempts to regulate Wages for half a century. In 1495 a new scale is set up, which, after the short experience of one year, it was found impossible to maintain; and it was therefore repealed in 1496, for "divers and many reasonable considerations and causes."* The price of corn was fluctuating, from four shillings a quarter in 1495, to twenty shillings a quarter in 1497; and we can therefore well believe that it was not "for the common wealth of poor artificers," that the carpenter, with his sixpence a day, should be content to earn the fortieth part of a quarter of wheat in 1497, when he had obtained an eighth part in 1495. His wages would not rise proportionately with the price of necessaries; but in the power of making a free contract he would find some mitigation of the hardships of a famine season. It is evident from the tone of the legislation of Henry VII., that the labouring and indigent classes were regarded with a little more consideration than in the times which had immediately succeeded those of the system of slavery. Vagrancy, by the law of Richard II., was synonymous with crime, and to be repressed by the stocks and the prison.† By an act of 1504, the penalties were somewhat mitigated, and a discretion was given as to the amount of punishment in cases of sickness and old age. The preamble of this statute, which is the same as a previous act of 1495, is some proof that the "quality of mercy" was sweetening, drop by drop, the bitter draught which poverty had to swallow:—"Forasmuch as the king's grace most entirely desireth amongst all earthly things the prosperity and restfulness of this his land and his subjects of the same, to live quietly and surely to the pleasure of God and according to his laws, willing always of his pity and intending to reduce them thereunto by softer means than by extreme rigour," &c. The cruelty of the laws against vagrancy, however modified, was seen by More:—"They be cast into prison as vagabonds, because they go about and work not, whom no man will set at work, though they never so willingly proffer themselves thereto."‡ But,—if the wanderer was in this reign treated with a little lenity, however pursued with savage cruelty in the next reign,—the thief, in most cases, was hanged without mercy. "To praise that strait and rigorous justice which at that time was executed upon felons, who were, for the most part, twenty hanged together upon one gallows," § was the easy solution of a difficult problem for three centuries. The "certain layman, cunning in the laws," who made an eulogium upon the "strait and rigorous justice," in the presence of More, said, as his successors continued to say, "seeing so few escaped punishment, he could not choose but wonder and marvel how and by what evil luck it should so come to pass, that thieves nevertheless were, in every place, so rife and so rank." The Venetian

* See *ante*, p. 113.

† "Utopia," vol. i., p. 61.

‡ See *ante*, p. 14.

§ "Utopia," vol. i. p. 49.

traveller records that, "people are taken up every day by dozens, like birds in a covey, and especially in London; yet, for all this, they never cease to rob and murder in the streets."* Erasmus, in one of his letters, says that the harvest of highway-robbery is abundant amongst the English. Crimes of violence appear to have been far more common than the fraudulent offences for which the age of Elizabeth was so remarkable. The transition from the times of feudal service to those of independent labour was a necessary cause that the discharged serving-man of a decayed house—"who was wont with a sword and a buckler by his side to jet through the street with a bragging look"—should take a purse instead of wielding a spade. It was an age of stews and ale-houses, of dice and cards; and these temptations produced their usual effects, when there was gross ignorance and low morals; unsettled



General Costume in the reign of Henry VII.

employment; sanctuaries to flee to; and judgment to be arrested by the ability to read a verse of the Bible.

The sanitary condition of London and the great towns was not wholly disregarded. In the session of parliament of 1856 was passed "An Act to repeal certain statutes which are not in use." Amongst them was "An Act that no butcher slay any manner of beasts within the walls of London." † Did the statute fall into disuse when London had no longer walls? For when we still see the streets which this old statute describes as round St. Paul's, "envenomed by corrupt airs engendered in the said parishes by reason and occasion of the slaughter of beasts," we may ask what effective

* "Italian Relation," p. 36.

† 4 Hen. VII., c. 3.

substitute is provided for its repeal? In many things we have persevered in clinging to the follies of our ancestors, and not unfrequently we have rejected their "wisdom." In matters concerning the health of populous places, the sage warnings of past experience have been treated as delusions. The Sweating-sickness was the terror of England at the beginning of the sixteenth century, as the Plague was in the seventeenth, and the Cholera in the nineteenth. Filth, and imperfect ventilation, were amongst the main causes of epidemic disease at each of these periods. Erasmus saw that the English so constructed their rooms as to admit no thorough draught; and says, "Before I was thirty years old, if I slept in a room which had been shut up for some months without ventilation, I was immediately attacked with fever." The close air of the English houses, in his sensible opinion, ripened into pestilence. The dirt even of the better households of the sixteenth century was most striking to the Rotterdam scholar, who came from a land of cleanliness: "The floors are mostly of clay, and strewed with rushes. Fresh rushes are periodically laid over them, but the old ones remain as a foundation for perhaps twenty years together." The abominations which Erasmus mentions as collected in these successive layers need not be here particularised.

"It would contribute to health," says the same observer of our manners, "if people ate and drank less, and lived on fresh rather than salt meat." The feasts of the metropolitan city were as magnificent in the days of Henry VII. as in our times—and, it would appear, quite as stupid. The Venetian traveller saw the mayor's banquet at the Guildhall, where a thousand people were seated at table; and "this dinner lasted four hours or more." At the sheriff's dinner he also observed "the infinite profusion of victuals." He adds, "I noticed how punctiliously they sat in their order, and the extraordinary silence of every one." The habit of feasting and being feasted—the dinners of parade which the satirist of our own days so justly ridicules amongst the manifold follies of vulgar ostentation—was a part of the old English character: "They think that no greater honour can be conferred or received than to invite others to eat with them; and they would sooner give five or six ducats to provide an entertainment for a person than a groat to assist him in any distress." * Courtesy to strangers, and to each other, which was also a peculiarity of the English, has scarcely so maintained its ancient ascendancy. "They have the incredible courtesy of remaining with their heads uncovered, with an admirable grace, whilst they talk to each other." † This was the formality of self-respect and of respect for others, in a high-minded people. The old pride of the English was national. "Above all things," says Erasmus, "take care not to censure or despise any individual things in the country; the natives are very patriotic, and truly not without reason." ‡ The Venetian says, "They think that there are no other men than themselves, and no other world but England; and whenever they see a handsome foreigner, they say that he looks like an Englishman." The "lords of human kind" have now, for the most part, absorbed the pride of country into a narrower circle. It is the pride of possession, the dignity of his own estate, his stock, his house, his carriage, his liveries, his dinners, and his wine, that now marks the high-blown patriotic native. His country is chiefly

* "Italian Relation," p. 22.

† *Ibid.*, p. 22.

‡ Letter of 1527.

valued as comprehending whatever ministers to his individual glory and gratification.

The périlous joustings of the lists of the king's manor of Shene;* the solemn banquets of Guildhall; the Lords of Misrule at the festivals of the court and the city; the Masks and Disguisings of royal and noble palaces,—these were but reflections of the spirit of activity and enjoyment that abided



Maypole before St. Andrew Undershaft.

in the people, amidst many physical privations and a general absence of what we call comfort. The "antique pageantry" of Christmas, the old merriments of Easter and May-Day, were transmitted from a higher antiquity. It was the poetry of the mixed British, Roman, and Saxon race, blending with the festivals of the early Christian church, and popularly kept up in the mixed excitement of reverence and frolic. These ceremonies, in their original simplicity so associated with the love of nature—with the holly and ivy of December, the linden of the early spring, the blossoms of the life-stirring May—were especially attractive to the inhabitants of the crowded towns. The citizens of Cornhill had danced under the May-pole beneath St. Andrew's church from time immemorial. The parishes had joined from the earliest

* Sir James Parker was slain in a combat in the lists of Shene, in 1492.

days of their guilds, to go forth to the woods to fetch in the May. They had lighted the bonfires in the streets, as their fathers had lighted them; and the players at bucklers were there, as they were of old. The parish clerks performed their interludes in Smithfield as in the time of the second Richard. The wrestlers contended before the mayor and aldermen, and the archers went out into Finsbury Fields, as their fathers before them. The Marching Watch lighted up the gabled roofs of the city of Lud, as it had done, time out of mind, when every man's door was "shadowed with green birch, long fennel, St. John's wort, orpine, and white lilies;" * Seven hundred burning cressets sent up their "triumphant fires;" and the two thousand men of the marching watch came on with the cresset-bearers, each armed with arquebuss and bow and pike, their bright corslets glittering in the pitchy flame, whilst the waits of the city played their merriest tunes, and the morrice-dancers kept time to their inspiring notes. It was an institution that dated from the time of Henry III. There was a reality in this marvellous pageant, of which Stow writes with the enthusiastic pride of a London citizen. The men of the watch were the organised guardians of the city,—its voluntary police, under the orders of its magistrates. The poetry of the old London life is reflected in many other elaborate descriptions by London's most honoured antiquary. And he feels, too, that these seasons of civic display and of common rejoicing called forth a spirit of love out of the depths of the heart, which might be too often slumbering in the struggle for personal gain and honour in the great mart of commerce. Such is the sentiment which he infuses into his account of the simple hospitalities of the London streets, in the twilight hours of June and July: "On the vigils of festival days, and on the same festival days after the sun setting, there were usually made bonfires in the streets, every man bestowing wood and labour towards them; the wealthier sort, also, before their doors near to the said bonfires, would set out tables on the vigils, furnished with sweet bread and good drink, and on the festival days with meats and drinks plentifully, whereunto they would invite their neighbours and passengers also to sit and be merry with them in great familiarity praising God for the benefits bestowed on them."

* Stow. See p. 39 of Mr. Thom's cheap and valuable edition.

Henry VIII



HENRY VIII.



CHAPTER XVI.

Accession of Henry VIII.—Conviction of Empson and Dudley—Marriage of Henry with Catherine of Aragon—Their coronation—The young king's sports and feats of arms—Impending war with France—The Balance of Power—The pope to be supported—Causes of quarrel with Scotland—English expedition to Spain—Wolsey the real minister—Rise of Wolsey—Naval warfare—Ravages on the coasts—Henry's expedition to France—Siege of Terouenne—Maximilian joins the English army—Battle of the Spurs—Capitulation of Tournay—James IV. invades England—Battle of Flodden Field—Death of James.

THE reign of Henry VIII., according to the computations in official records, commenced on the 22nd of April, 1509, his father having died on the 21st. It is held to be an erroneous idea, that the kings of England always ascended the throne the moment the preceding sovereign died.* The new sovereign was "entering into the flower of pleasant youth," and England was "called then the golden world, such grace of plenty reigned then within this realm."† The kingdom was at peace with all foreign powers. James IV. of Scotland was Henry's brother-in-law. Catherine of Aragon, the daughter of Ferdinand, remained in England, under the peculiar circumstance of being contracted in marriage to the young king, against which contract he had himself protested. Louis XII. was king of France. Maximilian was emperor.

The first act of Henry VIII. and his council was the arrest of Sir Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley, the ministers of the extortions of Henry VII.

* Sir N. H. Nicolas, "Chronology of History," p. 314.

† Cavendish, "Life of Wolsey," Singer's edit., p. 79.

Many of the false witnesses, or promoters, who were employed by these criminal agents of a greater criminal, were also apprehended; and, in the language of the time, "wore papers,"—that is, they stood in the pillory each with a paper describing his offences. The prosecution of Empson and Dudley was a signal instance of the abuse of justice, however politic it might have been to appease the clamours of those whom they had injured. They defended themselves before the council with eloquence, and with a show of truth. They acted, as they declared, according to the commissions with which they were entrusted, and they conformed to precedent and the letter of the law. The charges against them failed; for the real offender was their lord the king, who had benefited by their practices. But it was expedient to punish them; and a ridiculous charge of treason against the reigning monarch was got up against them, it being pretended that they conspired to



Queen Catherine. From a Miniature by Holbein.

seize the person of Henry on the death of his father, and to assume the functions of government. Empson was convicted on this charge by a jury at Northampton, and Dudley by a jury in London. The parliament passed a bill of attainder against them at the beginning of 1510; and they were executed in the following August. But out of the treasury, which Henry VIII. found amply supplied in part through their evil labours, there came no relief to their victims. Some laws were made to prevent such abuses in future—an easier duty than that of restitution.

The doubtful position of the princess Catherine was soon relieved by the determination of Henry to complete the contract of marriage which had been legalised by a papal dispensation in 1503. They were publicly united by the archbishop of Canterbury on the 7th of June, 1509. Catherine was dressed in white, and wore her hair loose,—the fashion in which maidens were customarily married. Their coronation took place at Westminster on the 24th of June. There is a curious document still existing which manifests the attention which the young king paid to his own affairs. It also shows the tendency of his mind, even at this early period, to assert the dignity of the crown in matters of church government. This document is the coronation oath of the kings of England, altered and interlined by the hand of Henry.*



Henry VIII. in his suit of tilting armour.

The original form says, "The king shall swear at his coronation that he shall keep and maintain the right and the liberties of the Holy Church of old time granted by the righteous Christian kings of England." The copy, as interlined, reads, "The king shall swear that he shall keep and maintain the lawful right and the liberties of old time granted by the righteous Christian kings of England to the Holy Church of England, not prejudicial to his

* Cotton MS See Ellis, "Original Letters," Second Series, vol. i. p. 176.

jurisdiction and dignity royal." The early education of Henry had led him to the consideration of ecclesiastical questions. Whether, in this modification of the accustomed oath, the king "looked to something like supremacy in the Church of England, at the very outset of his reign;"*—or whether it was a general assertion of that dominant spirit which could brook no control and admit no superiority,—the interlineations are equally consistent with the character of the man whose individual will was to produce the most signal consequences to the country over which he asserted his "dignity royal" for thirty-eight years.

The parliament of the first year of Henry's reign had granted a subsidy of tonnage and poundage, as the customs duties upon certain exports and imports were called. These taxes were granted for the defence of the realm and the keeping of the sea. There were no circumstances to call for an especial provision beyond this ordinary revenue. The ministers of the crown moved in their accustomed course, without any trouble from apprehended dangers at home or abroad. The commonalty were gratified by the vengeance inflicted upon the legal harpies of the preceding reign; and there were no higher violations of the laws, to be met by more stringent legislation, than "the great and costly array and apparel used within this realm, contrary to good statutes;" which excess "hath been the occasion of great impoverishing of divers of the king's subjects, and provoked many of them to rob and to do extortion and other unlawful deeds to maintain thereby their costly array." † Archbishop Warham, the chancellor; bishop Fox, lord privy seal; and Howard, earl of Surrey, lord treasurer, were the king's chief ministers. For two years the narratives of the chroniclers are chiefly limited to descriptions of the king's feats of chivalry and his exercise in all manly sports. ‡ In his second year, at the feast of Pentecost at Greenwich, "his grace, with two other with him, challenged all comers to fight with them at the barriers with target and casting the spear; and, that done, with two-handed swords." In the use of the old English long-bow "his grace shot as strong and as great a length as any of his guard." On May-Day, "his grace being young, and willing not to be idle, rose in the morning very early to fetch May or green boughs, himself fresh and richly apparelled, and clothed all his knights, squires, and gentlemen in white satin, and all his guard and yeomen of the crown in white sarsnet." In these Mayings queen Catherine sometimes accompanied her active consort; and very harmless bands of archers shot their flights at the command of Robin Hood, their chief; and the courteous outlaw feasted the gallant company in green arbours decked with flowers. When the king entered the lists to joust, and won the prize which the queen bestowed, "all young persons highly praised, but the ancient fathers much doubted, considering the tender youth of the king, and divers chances of horses and armour." They "fain would have him a looker-on, rather than a doer." It was not in the disposition of this king to be "a looker-on." He soon made for himself more exciting occupations than his daily exercise "in shooting, singing, dancing, wrestling, casting of the bar, playing at the recorders, flute, virginals, and in setting of songs and making of ballads." He was to show himself "the most Christian king," by higher feats than

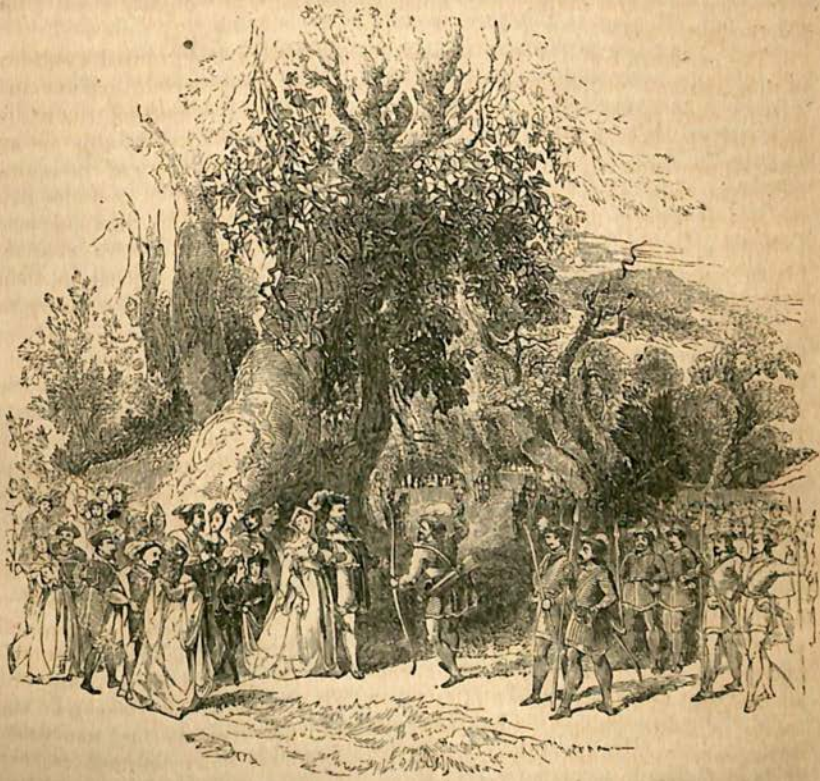
* Ellis, "Original Letters," Second Series, vol. i. p. 176.

† 1 Hen. VIII. c. 14.

‡ See especially Hall, from whom we quote a few passages.

that skill in music by which "he did set two goodly masses, every of them five parts, which were sung oftentimes in his chapel, and afterwards in divers other places." In the third year of his reign king Henry was preparing for war with France and Scotland.

The Statute of 1511-12, which grants a subsidy to the king of "two whole fifteenths and tenths," in the preamble says, "We your humble subjects in this present parliament assembled, well knowing and perceiving that the



Henry VIII. Maying at Shooter's Hill.

French king, ancient enemy to this your realm of England, daily obtaineth with great strength and power many great cities, towns, and countries, in the parts of Italy and other parts beyond the sea; and also of his high and insatiable appetite and mind, not contented with region and dominions of France, giveth his assistance to the duke of Gueldres against the archduke and prince of Castile, your near ally, and against his subjects of Flanders; and if he may therein prosper and obtain, it is greatly to be presumed that the same country shall be utterly destroyed and subdued, to the inestimable loss and damage of this realm."* From this recital we see that the impending

* 3 Hen. VIII. c. 22.

war with France was essentially different in one material principle from any previous war in which England had engaged with a continental power. It was a war—if the preamble to the statute correctly interprets the royal counsels—for the maintenance of the Balance of Power in Europe. In the possible success of Louis of France against Ferdinand of Spain, was to be dreaded “the inestimable loss and damage of this realm.” The principle thus asserted, in carrying out its necessary consequence of taxation of the people, has been continued to be asserted in the same way for three centuries and a half. Success in this never-ending labour appears as remote as at the first hour when the professors of state-craft threw kingdoms and provinces, now into one scale and now into another, to make the obstinately unresting beam for a moment level. But a war for maintaining the Balance of Power could scarcely appeal to the enthusiasm of the nation for support, and especially to the clergy, the most influential portion of the nation. In 1512, the object of a war with France is more precisely defined. It is to be a war for the “reformation of the schismatic demeanour” of the French king against “our holy father the Pope,” who has placed France under an interdict, which the said French king “despising, will not thereby reform himself.” The Holy Father, “for the succour, maintenance, and defence of his person and of our mother Holy Church, and for the ceasing of the said schism and errors, hath written and sent for aid and assistance unto our said Sovereign Lord, and to many other Christian princes.” * How Henry would rejoice in such an appeal cannot be doubted. He was trained from his earliest years in the study of the school divinity; and was as vain of his intellectual accomplishments as of his personal prowess. A contest in which he could at once display his zeal for the Church and his passion for “the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war,” if not for its hardships, was a tempting opportunity for this king of England, who had just reached the period when youth is passing into manhood. The real circumstances of this European contest, in which England might well have remained neutral without any loss of power and dignity, may be briefly told.

At the commencement of the reign of Henry VIII., the papal throne had been filled during six years by Julius II.,—a pontiff who united the characters of the priest and the warrior, and was equally prepared to uphold the claims of his church, and increase the extent of his dominions, with sword or with interdict. His real policy was to render Italy independent,—a project not to be suddenly accomplished by arms, when opposed to Louis of France, or Maximilian the emperor, or Ferdinand of Spain; but to be gradually furthered by sowing dissensions amongst the temporal princes. He had joined with these sovereigns in curbing the power of the Venetians by the League of Cambray, in 1508. He now professed to dread the ambition of France, and openly defied Louis by the invasion of the territories of his friend the duke of Ferrara. The French king sent an army from Milan to the support of his ally. Julius retired to Bologna, where in 1510 he was besieged by a French army, but without success. In 1511 that papal city was taken; and Louis took the bold step of calling a general Council “for the reformation of the Church, both in its head and its members.” He had

* 4 Hen. VIII. c. 19.

the support of his own clergy and of five cardinals. But the pope called another Council, and set in action the spiritual weapons of deposition and excommunication. The princes of Christendom were invited to join the "Holy League" for the defence of the Roman Church and the extinction of schism. The impetuous king of England eagerly rushed to enrol himself amongst the supporters of the pope, who gratefully flattered him with the promise that the king of France should no longer be "the most Christian king," and that the orthodox Henry should bear that honoured title. But there was something in the prospect of a war more tempting to the pride and presumption of Henry than the flatteries of "our holy father." The old dream of the conquest of France—the circumstances being wholly changed which could give the slightest encouragement to a hope of such an issue—came once again before the eyes of an English king, with all its delusive images. In the fifth year of Henry's reign this gay vision was embodied in the preamble to a statute, which shows "the king, our sovereign lord, greatly desiring to recover the realm of France, his very true patrimony and inheritance, and to reduce the same to his obedience." * When Henry went with this avowal to parliament, his warlike career had been marked by some successes which might have intoxicated even a less wilful and arrogant ruler.

There was another ancient quarrel of the kings of England, which the government of Henry appears to have kept up with some of the passion and prejudice which a sound policy would have rejected. There were reasonable causes of complaint on both sides between England and Scotland; but when the king asked for a subsidy in the third year of his reign, the quarrel with France being then ripening, the king of Scots is termed by the parliament, "very homager and obediencer of right to your highness." † A famous Scotch privateer, Andrew Barton, with his two brothers, had conducted a naval war against the Portuguese, under letters of marque from James IV. The statute of the 3rd of Henry alleges as an offence of Scotland that the king "hath lately taken your subjects with their ships and merchandises on the sea." These captures were made by the Bartons; and the earl of Surrey fitted out two ships to repress these assaults on English vessels, which were not the less obnoxious because they were under colour of search for Portuguese goods. Sir Thomas Howard, the son of Surrey, met Andrew Barton in his ship the *Lion*, cruising in the Downs; and in a desperate engagement the daring privateer fell mortally wounded on his deck. A smaller vessel belonging to this family was taken by another Howard. It is recorded of Surrey, that when the exploits of the Bartons were made known in Henry's council, he said, "The king of England should not be imprisoned in his kingdom, while either he had an estate to set up a ship or a son to command it." ‡ When James IV. demanded satisfaction for the death of his brave mariner, Henry replied that kings should disdain to quarrel about the fate of a pirate. But there were other causes of difference less national in their character. Henry VII. had bequeathed some valuable jewels to his daughter Margaret, the queen of Scotland. Her brother, with a meanness which might be supposed alien to his ordinary proud and impulsive bearing,

* 5 Hen. VIII. c. 1.

† 3 Hen. VIII. c. 22.

‡ Lloyd, "State Worthies," ed. 1670, p. 143.

withheld this legacy. During the progress of the quarrel with France, Henry sent Dr. Nicolas West, afterwards bishop of Ely, to the Scottish court, to endeavour to detach James from the French interest; and the skilful agent in a letter to his master thus relates a conversation with queen Margaret: "And therewith she asked if your grace had sent her legacy; and I said yea, which I was ready to deliver her, so that the king would promise to keep the treaty of peace. And she asked, 'and not else?' and I said, no: for if he would make war, your grace would not only withhold that, but also take from them the best towns they had." * Well might Margaret write, with bitter irony, to her "best beloved brother," with reference to this conversation, "we cannot believe that of your mind, or by your command, we are so friendly dealt with in our father's legacy." The family alliance, which should have ripened into a national alliance between England and Scotland, was broken; and in May, 1512, James IV. concluded a league with France.

In June, 1512, an English force was sent to Spain, under the marquis of Dorset. These ten thousand Englishmen, who were intended for the conquest of Guienne, remained inactive near Fontenabia, whilst Henry's ally, Ferdinand, was carrying out his own projects in the conquest of Navarre. There is a curious picture of a raw and undisciplined English force, given in a letter of Dr. William Knight, addressed to "The right honorable M. Thomas Wolsey, Almoner to the King's grace of England." "The army," he says, "doeth earthly nothing, but feed and sleep;" they mutinied for advance of pay to eightpence a day; they were not practised "how we should behave us in wars, as all other men do, and as all that ever I read of have done, specially when the army is unlearned, and hath not seen the feats of war." † This communication to the king's almoner indicates the position which Thomas Wolsey now filled. We learn from his biographer, that in the expedition to France, in 1513, Wolsey was essentially the war-minister: "He being nothing scrupulous in anything that the king would command him to do, although it seemed to other very difficile, took upon him the whole charge and burden of all this business; and proceeded so therein that he brought all things to a good pass and purpose in a right decent order, as of all manner of victuals, provisions, and other necessaries, convenient for so noble a voyage and puissant army." ‡ Strange as it may seem that a priest of the king's household should have the organisation of a great warlike expedition, it will appear less strange when we bear in mind that some of the highest offices of the state were filled by churchmen. At the commencement of his career of power, Wolsey, in his position of almoner, appears to have stood to the king in the relation of secretary. But his abilities were so commanding, his services so important, and his adaptation of his counsels to the royal will so politic, that we shall soon recognise him as the most influential of Henry's ministers. He "ruled all them that before ruled him," § even before he occupied the highest position of a subject, second only to the king, and scarcely inferior to him in the command of all the solid power and vain pomp of greatness. Let us look back upon the rise of this extraordinary favorite of fortune.

* Ellis, "Original Letters," First Series, vol. i. p. 64.

† *Ibid.*, Second Series, vol. i. p. 191.

‡ Cavendish, p. 81.

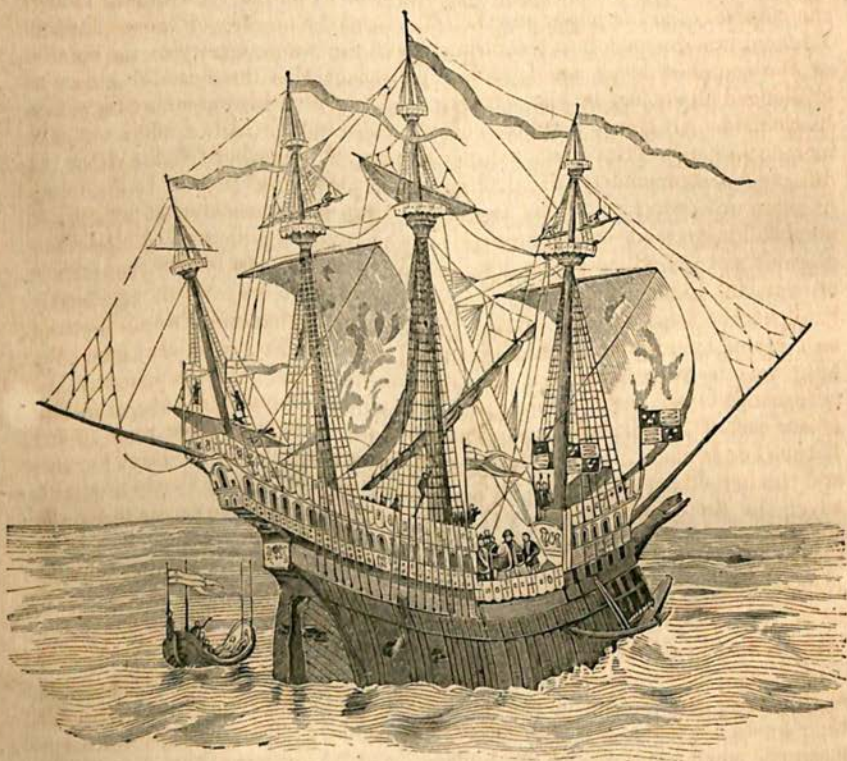
§ Cavendish, p. 86.

Thomas Wolsey, according to Cavendish, "was an honest poor man's son, born in Ipswich." There is a tradition that his father was a butcher; and, very probably, before the modern division of occupations the butcher of Ipswich was a grazier and landowner. The son was educated at Oxford, where he took his degree of bachelor of arts at the age of fifteen. That he was preparing to enter the church appears from his father's will, dated in 1496, wherein he says, "I will that if Thomas my son be a priest within a year next after my decease, then I will that he sing for me and my friends by the space of a year, and he to have for his salary ten marks." Thomas Wolsey became a priest and a fellow of Magdalen College; and having been tutor to the sons of the marquis of Dorset, received from him the benefice of Lymington in 1500. He subsequently was appointed one of the chaplains of Henry VII. His promotion in that court arose out of his capacity to seize upon a fit occasion for the display of remarkable energy. It is an attribute of genius thus to make its opportunities, whilst the ordinary man passes them by. Henry VII., in his matrimonial speculations after the death of his queen, desired to send a confidential messenger to the emperor Maximilian, then in Flanders; and Wolsey was recommended for the office. Having received his instructions from the king, he left Richmond at noon; took the ferry-boat for Gravesend; went on with horses to Dover; had a quick passage to Calais; discharged his commission to the emperor on the second night; travelled back to Calais the next day; and was again at Richmond on the fourth evening. This was an extraordinary journey for those times. Presenting himself to the king on the following morning, he was angrily asked why he had not set forth on his travel. That he had accomplished his mission was no doubt a matter of admiring wonder; but that haste might have been fatal if the ambassador's judgment had not been as remarkable as his energy. The king had despatched a pousuivant with additional instructions, which reached Wolsey as he returned. He had accomplished what was desired, through the exercise of his own discretion. Henry VII. knew the value of such a servant, and presented the quick-witted chaplain with the deanery of Lincoln. Henry VIII. found this able man ready for his service when he came to the throne, and he made him one of his council. To the pleasure-loving son, Wolsey was of more value than to the careful father. The young Henry was "nothing minded to travail in the busy affairs of his realm." The almoner would "disburthen the king of so weighty a charge and troublesome business, putting the king in comfort that he shall not need to spare any time of his pleasure, for any business that should necessarily happen in the council, as long as he, being there and having the king's authority and commandment, doubted not to see all things sufficiently furnished and perfected."* That Wolsey had thus found "a plain path to walk in towards promotion" is clearly shown by his biographer.

The army of Guienne had returned to England, without accomplishing any object beyond facilitating the conquest of Navarre by Ferdinand. The English fleet under sir Edward Howard made deacents on the coast of Brittany, and committed the usual ravages. There was a naval engagement off

* Cavendish, p. 81.

Brest, which was called a victory, though the largest ship in the English navy, the Regent, was burnt. So important was the loss of this ship deemed, that Wolsey, writing to bishop Fox, said, "keep this tidings secret to yourself, for there is no living man knoweth the same here but only the king and I." The king immediately commanded a magnificent vessel to be built, which figures in history as the "Henry Grace Dieu." In the following spring of 1513, Brest was blockaded. Sir Edward Howard, having made a vow that he would never more see the king till he had revenged the death of sir Thomas Knyvet, who perished in the flames of the Regent, attempted to cut out a squadron moored in a bay strongly fortified, and fell a victim to the principle which has given England so many naval victories, that temerity at sea



Henry Grace Dieu. From a picture in Greenwich Hospital.

becomes a virtue. The evil that was inflicted upon the French coasts was naturally encountered by a similar infliction upon the English coasts. There is a statute of 1512 for the especial erection of bulwarks from Plymouth to the Land's-end, and in all other landing places, which furnishes sufficient evidence that the practical despotism of the government touched every man, however humble. To assist in the defence of their country against invasion

necessarily demands some personal privation, from the high and the lowly. But the government which enacted that all inhabitants of the maritime districts should be compelled to work at such bulwarks, with their own instruments, and to receive no compensation for their toil, was a government that hesitated not to rob the poor of their only capital, their power of labour, to spare the rich, whose property was chiefly imperilled by the probable assaults of a hostile force. Those who came not to work and to starve, at the summons of the mayors and constables, were to be committed to prison.* The builders of the pyramids, with their scanty fare of onions and garlic, were in a happier condition than the free English under Henry VIII.

Ferdinand of Castile, with his usual adroitness, had concluded a truce with Louis XII. He had possessed himself of Navarre, and the object with which he drew England into a war was accomplished. But Henry, with Maximilian, the emperor, and the pope (now Leo X.), formed a new league against France. England was dragged into a continuance of the war, contrary to the opinion of the soundest heads amongst her politicians, that the boastful king who challenged all comers at the barriers might exhibit his pageantry on a real battle-field. Of Henry's animal courage there can be little doubt; but, like many other men possessing natural bravery, he was wholly unfitted for the duties of a commander. He had one great object ever present to his mind, in peace or in war; to display Henry the king, in his presumed superiority of mind and body, made doubly impressive by his regal magnificence. A more vain-glorious and self-willed coxcomb never wore a crown. In his first experience of war, in 1513, his qualities were exhibited in a way which sufficiently betokens the total absence of real greatness of character. Two divisions of an army of twenty-five thousand men had sailed for France in May; and the king was to accompany the last division in June. He committed the governance of the realm to his queen, leaving his commands for the execution of the earl of Suffolk, who had remained shut up in the Tower since 1506.† Richard de la Pole, his brother, had accepted a command in the French army; and the hereditary jealousy of the "White Rose" stirred up the feeling with which the first and second Tudor regarded every possible claimant to the Plantagenet blood. The two divisions of the English army, under the earl of Shrewsbury and Lord Herbert, were besieging Terouenne, a strong town of France, near the Flemish frontier, when Henry, on the 15th of June, set forth toward Dover, from his royal manor of Greenwich, accompanied by his queen and a great retinue, to head the third division. It was the 30th of June before the king and his courtiers went on ship-board; and "took leave of the queen and of the ladies, which made such sorrow for the departing of their husbands that it was great dolour to behold."‡ The spirit of the Roman matrons, which once abided in English women, seems to have somewhat passed away from this luxurious court. Ostentatiously sailing near Boulogne, firing guns and sounding trumpets, the king's fleet reached Calais. Wherever Henry appears, we derive from the old chronicler the most intricate details of his magnificent wardrobe; and for three weeks he lingered at Calais, exhibiting his "garment of white cloth of gold, with a red cross," and

* 4 Hen. VIII., c. 1.

† See *ante*, p. 234.

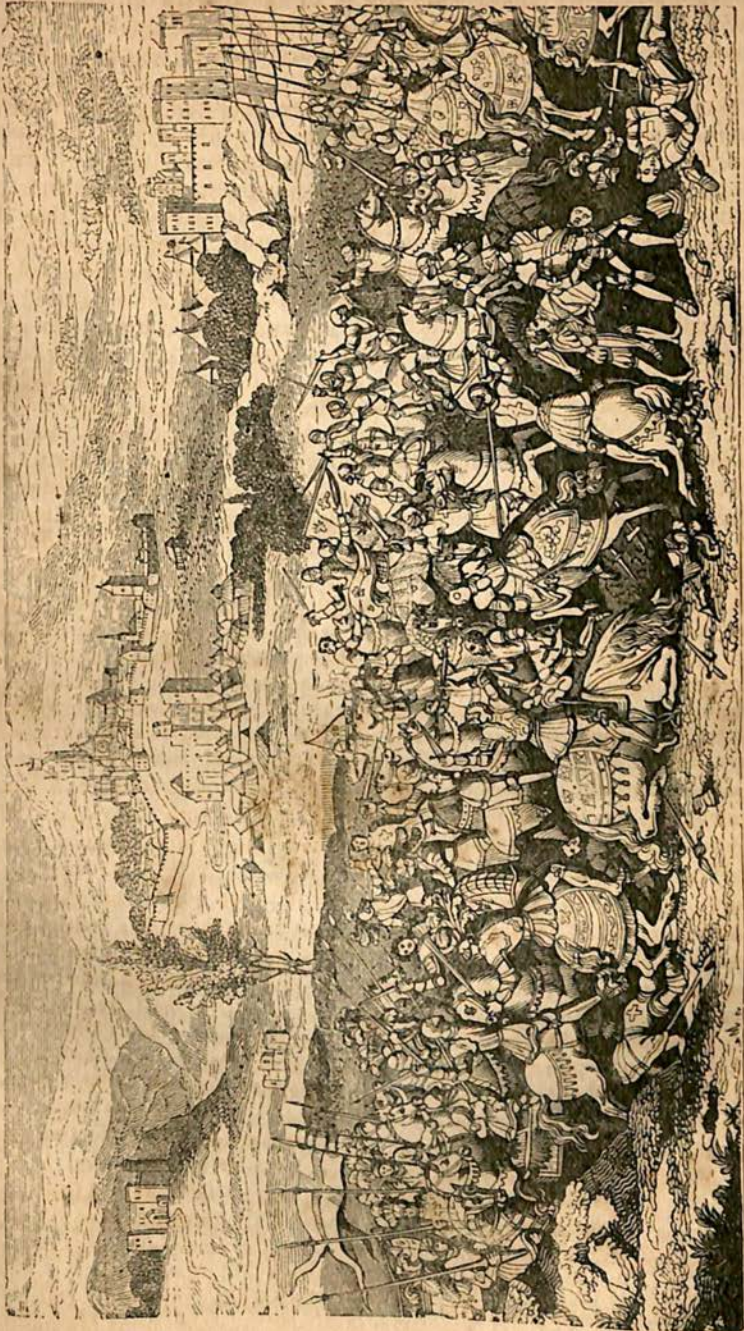
‡ Hall's Chronicle, p. 539. The narrative of this chronicler, who wrote in the time of Edward VI., is full of such minute details.

surrounded by the six hundred archers of his guard, "all in white gaber-dines." At length he marched on towards Terouenne, and reached the camp on the 4th of August. On the 12th, Maximilian was to join him. Henry was now in his great element, and "prepared all things necessary to meet with the emperor in triumph." How the noblemen of the king's camp were gorgeously apparelled; how their coursers wore trappings of gold and silver, with little bells of gold; how the king was in a garment of great riches in jewels, and armed in a light armour,—these trifles are most elaborately depicted. All this unwarlike display is made doubly absurd by the contrast that the emperor and his men came all in plain black cloth. Maximilian was a real warrior, and also a judge of human character. He was poor; and he and his soldiers took the wages of England. He was wise; and called himself the king's soldier, and wore the cross of St. George and the Red Rose. The good simple queen Catherine, upon hearing of this incense to her lord, writes to Wolsey, "I was very glad to hear the meeting of them both, which hath been to my seeming the greatest honour to the king that ever came to prince."* But Maximilian trusted more to the experience beneath the plain black cloth than to the presumption arrayed in cloth of gold. A large body of French cavalry had advanced on the 16th of August for the relief of Tournay. The emperor led his German cavalry and the English mounted archers against this formidable force, far exceeding his own in number. Henry followed with the infantry. At the first shock the French gendarmes, to the number of ten thousand, were seized with some inexplicable panic, and in spite of their practice in war fled before the charge of Maximilian, leaving their best officers in the field. Amongst these was one of the most distinguished of the soldiers of France,—he, who in his gallant and honourable career, won the name of "the knight without fear and without reproach." Maximilian and Henry received the illustrious Bayard, and his companions in misfortune, with the courtesy of the chivalric times. Terouenne, after this remarkable victory, was feebly defended; and being surrendered on the 27th of August, its fortifications were destroyed. The French themselves, laughing at the panic-stricken flight of their army, called this "The Battle of the Spurs."

If we may judge from a passage of another letter of queen Catherine, this skirmish was reckoned by the king a marvellous triumph: "The victory hath been so great that I think none such hath been ever seen before." † But no advance was made into France. There was a grand display to be made when Terouenne was taken possession of; and Henry was invited by the archduchess Margaret to visit her in her court of Lisle, where there were tempting banquets, plays, masques, and other pastimes, to solace him for his privations under his silken pavilions. Here he met his wife's nephew, prince Charles of Spain,—the future dictator of Europe. One more feat was accomplished before the king returned home. Tournay was besieged, and capitulated on the 29th of September. One Englishman was benefited by this capture; for Wolsey received the rich bishopric of Tournay. After three weeks of the accustomed parade,—of tilts in the market-place, and of jousts in which "the king and the lord Lisle answered all comers," the

* Ellis, First Series, vol. i. p. 85.

+ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 84.



Battle of the Spurs. From the ancient picture at Hampton Court.

campaign was ended; and Henry was again in England on the 24th of November.

During this continental expedition, whose useless triumphs and vain pageantries had swallowed up a great subsidy, there had been a far more serious warfare upon English ground. Whilst Henry encamped before Terouenne, Lyon, king-of-arms of Scotland, arrived with a letter from James IV., to which the king of England desired to send a verbal answer of reproach and defiance. But the herald refused to deliver the insulting message of Henry, that James was his vassal, and that he would expel him from his realm. A letter in more sober style was therefore written; but all the mortal strifes of the king of Scotland were at an end before the missive was

Signature of Henry VIII. Cotton MS. Vespasian, F. 13.

received. The circumstances that indicated an approaching war between England and Scotland were in full operation before Henry crossed the Channel.

The continual border-feuds of the two nations kept alive the general spirit of hostility between them; and "prudence, policy, the prodigies of superstition, and the advice of his most experienced counsellors, were alike unable to subdue in James the blazing zeal of romantic chivalry."* The invasion of England can scarcely be attributed wholly to this blazing zeal of the Scottish king; for the army which he led from Edinburgh comprised every race and class of the population, and was commanded by the most powerful of the Scottish nobility. Of those who opposed the invasion the earl of Angus was the most prominent. The stout old man's prudence was treated as pusillanimity, and he retired in just indignation before the shock of war showed the soundness of his judgment. The "messenger from heaven," who is reported to have warned James against this expedition, as he sat "very sad and dolorous, making his devotion to God," and then "vanished away as he had been a blink of the sun or a whip of the whirlwind,"†—even this could not shake the resolve of the king, disposed as he was to alternations of levity and superstition. The miraculous cry that was heard at midnight from the market-cross of Edinburgh, summoning earls and barons by name to appear within forty days before their master, Plutock (Pluto), could not shake the courage of those who were going forth with spear and battle-axe to meet the English bowmen. In Holyrood the gallant James has banqueted and danced for the last time; and on the 22nd of August he has crossed the Tweed, and has sat down with many thousand men, the feudal array of the kingdom, before the castle of Norham. After being invested for six days the governor surrendered the place, although it was considered impregnable. Three other border fortresses, Wark, Etall, and Ford, successively fell. The earl of Surrey, to whom was entrusted the defence of the English border, was at Pontefract. He set up the standard of St. George at

* Scott, "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," vol. i. p. 107.

† Pitscottie, quoted in Notes to "Marnien."

Newcastle; and with a numerous force marched on to Alnwick, which he reached on the 3rd of September. According to the practice of chivalry Surrey offered battle to James, on the following Friday, in a message which he sent by a *poursuivant-at-arms*. The king of Scotland courteously accepted the challenge. To an insolent defiance from lord Thomas Howard, that he had come to justify the death of Andrew Barton, and would neither give nor receive quarter, the king returned no answer. "The king lay upon the side of a high mountain called Flodden, on the edge of Cheviot, where was but one narrow field for any man to ascend up the said hill to him, and at the foot of the hill lay all his ordnance. On the one side of his army was a great marish, and compassed with the hills of Cheviot, so that he lay too strong to be approached of any side, except the English would have temerarily run on his ordnance."* James was rash; but he kept his strong position, in spite of a taunting message from Surrey to take up a ground where the battle might be fairly tried. The English commander was an experienced soldier; and he showed his knowledge of strategy by an unexpected and masterly movement. The Till, a branch of the Tweed, lay between the two armies. Surrey had crossed this river on the 8th of September, at a distant point from Flodden; by which manœuvre he deceived James as to his real intentions; but on the morning of the 9th he suddenly re-crossed it, with his van and cannon, at Twissel-bridge, near the junction of the Till with the Tweed, and the remainder of his army passed a ford. Surrey was now in a position in which he could cut off the communication of James with his supplies from Scotland. The English were marching rapidly to secure the eminence of Branksome, when the Scots descended the heights of Flodden to seize this position, setting fire to their tents. The king, who had made no attempt to prevent the English crossing the Till, had now "his enemies before him on a plain field," as his wish is declared to have been. The battle began at four o'clock in the afternoon of the 9th of September.

"The English line stretched east and west,
And southward were their faces set;
The Scottish northward proudly prest,
And manfully their foes they met." †

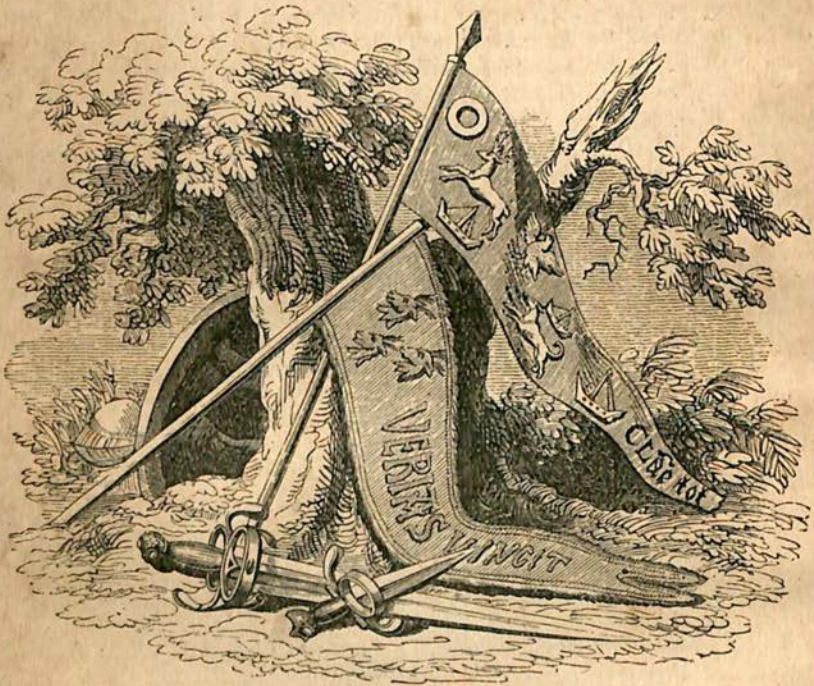
Each of the sons of Surrey commanded a division of the right wing; Surrey himself was in the centre; Sir Edward Stanley headed the left wing. The Scottish earls Huntley and Home, who commanded their left wing, attacked the Howards with a vigour that might have decided the battle, had not lord Dacre come to their aid with the reserve of horse. The Scottish right wing, which chiefly consisted of Highlanders, was unable to stand up against the archers of Lancashire. James and Surrey met in close conflict in the centres of their armies. Never was king in the extremity of danger surrounded by more gallant supporters. But though he and his knights were struggling in no unequal strife with Surrey, whose standard was nearly won, the rapid triumph of Stanley over the right wing enabled him to attack the Scottish centre in the rear. James fell within a lance's length of Surrey.

* Hall, p. 560.

† Old Poem of "Flodden Field," quoted in Notes to "Marmion."

None of his division were made prisoners. They all perished with their king. As night came on Surrey drew back his men. Before the dawn the Scots had left the field. The loss of the Scottish army has been computed at ten thousand men; that of the English at about seven thousand. "Scarce a family of eminence but has an ancestor killed at Flodden," says Scott. In the words of the ballad,—

"The flowers of the forest are a' wede away."



Sword and dagger of James IV., and two Knights' Banners, used at the Battle of Flodden Field.



Henry VIII. and his Council. (From Hall's Chronicle, 1548.)

CHAPTER XVII.

Ravages in Scotland, and on the coasts of the Channel—Peace with France and Scotland—Francis I. and Charles of Spain—Conquest of Milan—Wolsey, cardinal and legate—Position of the Church—Affair of Richard Hunne—Election for the Empire—Proposed meeting between Henry and Francis—Arrival of Charles at Dover—The embarkation—Characteristics of the two kings—Field of the Cloth of Gold—Meeting with Charles V.—Conviction and execution of the duke of Buckingham.

THE intelligence of the slaughter of Flodden was received in England with the unmixed exultation that necessarily arose out of what was deemed a national triumph. The time was yet distant when Englishmen and Scots should regard each other as children of the same soil, having in a great degree the same origin, speaking the same language with slight variation, and having more natural sympathies than conventional antipathies. The amiable queen

Catherine, who in August described herself as "horrible busy in making standards, banners, and badges" for this war," writes to the king, after the victory, "this battle hath been to your grace and all the realm the greatest honour that could be, and more than [if] ye should win all the crown of France." † When the king returned, Surrey was created duke of Norfolk, and his son Thomas the earl of Surrey. Honours were also bestowed upon other leaders. But the desolation of Scotland had not extinguished the high spirit of the country; and, after a short time, there were inroads made from the Scottish border, as well as from the English, of which the ferocity on either side was equally balanced. In 1514, lord Dacre, describing the "robbing, spoiling, and vengeance in Scotland," adds, "which I pray our Lord God to continue." Thus men appealed to the Author of all good in support of their perpetration of all evil. It was long before war came to be regarded as a great calamity, and before it was held that its inevitable miseries should be inflicted as lightly as possible upon non-combatants. Such warfare as that of the forays of England and Scotland was only to be duly estimated when the military class ceased to be the preponderating power in either state.

England made great preparations for war against France in the beginning of 1514; but the actual hostilities were confined to ravages on the coast of the Channel. An attack of the French upon the Sussex shore presents a curious contrast to such a possible enterprise in our own day. "About this time [May] prior John, great captain of the French navy, with his galleys and foists, ‡ charged with great basilisks and other great artillery, came on the border of Sussex, and came a-land on the night at a poor village in Sussex called Brightelmstone; and ere the watch could him descry he set fire on the town, and took such poor goods as he found. Then the watch fired the beacons, and people began to gather; which seeing, prior John sounded his trumpet to call his men aboard, and by that time it was day. Then six archers which kept the watch followed prior John to the sea, and shot so fast that they beat the galley-men from the shore, and prior John himself waded to the foist." § The bold prior was shot with an arrow in the face; and he offered an image of himself, with the identical arrow sticking in the waxen cheek, in gratitude to our Lady at Boulogne for saving his life by miracle. On the coast of Normandy an English commander burnt twenty-one villages and towns. But Louis of France was too wise to continue a contest in which his own safety was so imperilled. Henry of England had a sister, Mary, now in her seventeenth year. Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, had won her affections; but, in treating for peace, when the king of France asked her hand, she was consigned to age and decrepitude, instead of to the most gallant of English knights. Mary was crowned queen of France on the 5th of November, 1514. On the 1st of January, king Louis was dead. On the 9th of January, the widowed queen wrote to Wolsey, signing herself, "your loving friend," to declare, that "as it shall please the king my brother and his council, I will be ordered." || Charles Brandon was sent to bring the queen from France. She came to England as his wife. Henry was indignant, but his anger passed away; and "cloth of frize" was "match'd

* Letter to Wolsey, Ellis, First Series, vol. i. p. 83.

† *Ibid.*, p. 88.

‡ Foists are light and quick-sailing boats.

§ Hall, p. 568.

|| Ellis, First Series, vol. i. p. 121.

with cloth of gold,* without the risk that might have attended the "great and high displeasure" of the king at another period of his life. At the time of the treaty with France peace was also concluded with Scotland.

The political events of the first ten years of the reign of Henry VIII. appear but as the prologue to the great drama which is about to be enacted. Louis XII. of France, in January 1515, is succeeded by his son-in-law Francis I., then in his twenty-first year. In 1516 Ferdinand of Spain dies, and is succeeded by his grandson, Charles, the son of Juana, the imbecile daughter of Ferdinand. His father, the archduke Philip, died in 1506, so that the young prince had already inherited the Netherlands, when he came to the crowns of Aragon and Castile, of Naples and Sicily. The frontiers of France, on the side of Flanders and on the side of the Pyrenees, were thus in the hands of this monarch, a youth of sixteen. That war would be the result of this dangerous propinquity would have been more than probable under the most moderate of princes. But Francis and Charles were each extravagantly ambitious, though essentially different in personal character. The first act of the enterprising king of France was to make good his claim to the duchy of Milan. The pope, Leo X., opposed this claim, in conjunction with Ferdinand of Spain, and with the Swiss. Francis rapidly passed the Alps; and having won the great victory of Marignano, entered Milan as conqueror in October, 1515. He had recovered that ascendancy in Italy which France had lost. England had therefore more reason to fear that the balance of power would be deranged, than when she went to war to resist the alleged ambition of Louis XII. But Francis, after some ineffectual attempts on the part of England's ally, Maximilian, adroitly propitiated the favour of Wolsey; and the possession of Tournay was relinquished by Henry upon a payment to him of six hundred thousand crowns. Wolsey had been declared a cardinal in 1516. He received the great seal as chancellor in the same year; and he was nominated papal legate in 1517, with the high powers that belonged to the office of *legatus à latere*. From 1515 to 1523 no parliament was summoned. Henry and his great minister governed the kingdom at their sole will. In 1519; the emperor Maximilian died; and from that time the political affairs of Europe received an expansion which indicated the influence of higher agencies than the mere passions and caprices of individual sovereigns.

To understand the relative positions of Henry, the king, and of Wolsey, his chancellor, we must constantly bear in mind that the English minister was also the representative of the papal supremacy. The cardinal and legate wielded his great power and displayed his extraordinary magnificence, not in opposition to the prerogative of the king or in rivalry with his dignity, but in strict conformity with the desire of Henry to be the faithful son and devoted champion of the Roman Church. He had raised his almoner from comparative obscurity to be archbishop of York; and with that preferment Wolsey absorbed other ecclesiastical

* There was a picture at Strawberry Hill, of Brandon and Mary, with this inscription on a label affixed to Brandon's lance:—

“Cloth of gold do not despise,
Though thou be match'd with cloth of frize;
Cloth of frize, be not too bold,
Though thou be match'd with cloth of gold.”

revenues which furnished him with almost unbounded wealth. The magnificence of the cardinal's household, the number of noblemen and gentlemen daily attending upon him—the sumptuousness of his menial servants, his master-cook even wearing satin and velvet—his processions, with his silver crosses and silver pillars, his cardinal's hat and his great seal—his banquets to the king, with masks and mummeries, dancings and triumphant devices—all these exhibitions would have been scarcely endured by the most jealous of monarchs had they merely emanated from the ostentation of the courtier and statesman. In the magnificence of the great churchman Henry might believe that his people would recognise and humbly bow before the paramount authority of the Church. The vast abilities and the lofty ambition of the king's powerful minister, might practically invest the temporal government with the real ecclesiastical supremacy. The great cardinal was pope in England; but he was also the devoted servant of the crown. The period in which Wolsey was in full possession of these extraordinary powers was one in which the European mind was strongly agitated by signs of approaching change. The wealth, luxury, and immunities of the Church were offensive to a large portion of the laity. The spirit of the Lollards was not wholly trodden out in England. In Germany a new antagonist to the corruptions of the papacy had arisen, whose voice filled a wider area than that of Wycliffe. The spirit with which Martin Luther first denounced the abomination of the sale of Indulgences might naturally suggest the fear that other iniquities would be laid bare. The time for effectually suppressing opinions was past; for the printing-press would do its work in spite of papal bulls and excommunications. Leo X., even without yielding to that foreign influence which is supposed to have given Wolsey the cardinal's hat, would naturally look to one so able of himself, and so favoured by circumstances, to keep England safe from the contaminating opinions of the monk of Wittenberg. The appointment of Henry's great minister as the papal legate was concurrent with the time when Luther first challenged the power of the pope to absolve the sinner from the penalties of Divine justice. Leo affected to make light of the dispute between the professor of Wittenberg and the Dominican monk, who was selling his indulgences as openly as any other merchandise was sold. The danger might not appear to him imminent; but the pope was too acute a politician not to secure for himself the services of a man of such commanding influence as Wolsey. The choice was a wise one; for as long as Wolsey was in power, though he was a church-reformer in a limited degree, he maintained the papal supremacy inviolate in England. When his reign was over, the delegated authority of Rome was snatched for ever from the hands that had previously kept the world in awe. The political despotism of the king was the instrument, under God's providence, by which the inestimable blessing of freedom from the yoke of the Romish church was secured, without which all civil freedom would have quickly passed away. That Wolsey had a perfect understanding with his royal master as to the parts which each was to sustain in matters of ecclesiastical controversy, may be inferred from the position which each took in 1515. By an Act of Henry VII., the "benefit of clergy" was regulated, so as to inflict some penalty upon murderers and robbers. In the fourth year of Henry VIII., 1512, a Statute was passed, which recites, that "robberies, murders, and felonies daily increase more and more, and

be committed and done in more heinous, open, and detestable wise, than hath been oft seen in times past, and the persons so offending little regard the punishment thereof by the course of the common law, nor by reason of any statute heretofore made, but bear them bold of their clergy." The Act then exempts from the benefit of clergy all murderers, highway-robbers, and burglars, "such as be within holy orders only except." The Act could not be passed through the House of Lords without granting the exception to "such as be within holy orders;" and a provision was added that it should only endure for a year. Reasonable and just as this Statute was, as far as it went, the ecclesiastical authorities regarded it as an encroachment upon the privileges of the Church, and they prevented its renewal on the expiration of the first year. Murderers and robbers might again "bear them bold of their clergy." A certain abbot of Winchelcomb, in 1515, denounced from the pulpit at Paul's Cross all those who had assented to the Act of 1512. The temporal lords then addressed the king, beseeching him to repress the increasing extravagance of the pretensions of the churchmen; and after a long debate before Henry in council, the bishops were moved to order the zealous abbot to recant his opinions. This they refused to do, justifying all his proceedings. A violent controversy now sprung up between the parliament and the convocation, which became more serious from a remarkable incident of the same period, which agitated the people of London far more than the dispute about the franchises of the church. There was a paltry quarrel between the incumbent of a parish in Middlesex and Richard Hunne, a merchant tailor of London, about the right of the clergyman to a piece of linen, which he claimed as what was called "a mortuary." The tailor was sued in the spiritual court, then sitting under the authority of the pope's legate; and he, by the advice of his counsel, took out a writ against his pursuer. The bold citizen held that the clerk of Middlesex was guilty of a *præmunire*, or offence against the king's majesty, in bringing his subjects under a foreign jurisdiction. A counter-charge of heresy was got up against Hunne. He was imprisoned in the Lollards' Tower at St. Paul's; and, being brought before the bishop of London, was terrified into an admission of some of the crimes of which he was accused, one of which was that he had in his possession the epistles and gospels in English, and "Wycliffe's damnable works." He was sent back to his prison, and two days after was found hanging in his cell. A coroner's inquest charged the bishop's chancellor and other officers with murder; but it was maintained by them that the heretic had committed suicide. The bishop and the clergy had the incredible folly to begin a new process of heresy against the dead body, which was adjudged guilty; and according to the sentence burnt in Smithfield. "After that day the city of London was never well affected to the popish clergy."* Dr. Horsey, the bishop of London's chancellor, was hiding from the warrant out against him, on the finding of the coroner's inquest; and the temper of the Londoners is described in a letter of the bishop to Wolsey, in which he says, "if my chancellor be tried by any twelve men in London, they be so maliciously set in favour of heretical wickedness (*in favorem hereticæ pravitatis*) that they will cast and condemn

* Burnet, "History of the Reformation," book i.

any clerk though he were as innocent as Abel." This affair was eventually compromised. But the previous dispute was kept up by the Convocation summoning before them Dr. Standish, who had conducted the discussion against the abbot of Winchelcomb, to defend the opinions which he had declared before the king in council. The matter was again referred to Henry ; who called the Lords, some of the Commons, and the judges, before him at Baynard's Castle. Wolsey, as cardinal, knelt before the king, and, in the name of the clergy, protested that none of them intended to do anything that might derogate from his prerogative ; and implored that the king, "to avoid the censures of the Church, would refer the matter to the decision of the pope and his council at the court of Rome." Henry, with that determination to uphold his prerogative which was an abiding principle of his government, said, "By the permission and ordinance of God we are king of England, and the kings of England in times past had never any superior but God alone. Therefore know you well that we will maintain the right of our crown, and of our temporal jurisdiction as well in this, and in all other points, in as ample manner as any of our progenitors have done before our time." Rebuking then the spirituality for interpreting their decrees at their own pleasure, he left the matter as it stood. The king and the cardinal had each shown themselves wise in their generation. There was no papal interference to assert the demands of the clergy. There was no trial of the bishop's chancellor to uphold the claims of civil justice. "This was the only thing in the first eighteen years of the king's reign that seemed to lessen the greatness of the clergy, but in all other things he was a most faithful son of the see of Rome." *

The ostentation of Wolsey, as far as we may infer from the character of his display, was the result rather of policy than of temperament. He filled the two highest offices in the country, secular and ecclesiastical. He had been raised from the ranks of the people to be chancellor and cardinal. He was surrounded by a proud nobility, with whom he was "the butcher's cur." He exhibited the pomp of his high stations to demand the respect which would have been withheld from his talents and learning, under the cloud of the meanness of his birth. It was an age of display, when the king set the example to his court of the most extravagant splendour, which many of the nobles ruined themselves to imitate. The simplicity of private life, of which More, as chancellor, afterwards furnished so admirable a pattern, was scarcely compatible with Wolsey's great position as an ecclesiastic. He was the representative of the pomp and luxury of Leo X. ; and he had the same exalted ideas as the pope evinced of bestowing a magnificent patronage upon learning and the arts. "Thus passed the cardinal," says Cavendish, "his life and time, from day to day, and year to year, in such great wealth, joy, and triumph, and glory, having always on his side the king's especial favour." But it was not that favour alone which upheld Wolsey. His position as the greatest of English ecclesiastics commanded the reverence that might have been denied to his civil abilities ; his just administration in his court of equity ; and the extraordinary influence over a despotic king, by which, for so long a period, he preserved him, with one or two exceptions, from any sanguinary course of jealousy or revenge, or any blood-guilty violation of the rights of the people

* Burnet, book i.

Wolsey's real worth was duly estimated by More, a very competent judge, who said of his administration of the powers of the great seal, "he behaves most beautifully." Still, the sumptuous churchman commanded a respect which the wise chancellor might have scarcely propitiated. In his hour of misfortune the duke of Norfolk said to him, "I regarded your honour, for that ye were archbishop of York, and a cardinal, whose estate of honour surmounteth any duke now living within this realm." * It was this reverence to his spiritual dignity which made him capricious and overbearing in his civil relations. Skelton has reproached him with his haughtiness to the nobility—

"He saith they have no brain
Their estate to maintain." †

The same bitter satirist declares of Wolsey that no man dare come to his speech; of the truth of which charge, we have evidence in a letter to the earl of Shrewsbury from his chaplain, who danced attendance upon the proud minister at Guildford and Hampton-Court for many days, to have an answer to his lord's letter:—"Upon Monday last, as he walked in the park at Hampton-Court, I besought his grace I might know if he would command me any service. He was not content with me that I spoke to him. So that who shall be a suitor to him may have no other business but give attendance upon his pleasure." ‡ To a servant of the deputy of Calais, who pressed for an answer to a letter, Wolsey said, "If ye be not content to tarry my leisure depart when ye will." His biographer says, "I assure you, in his time, he was the haughtiest man in all his proceedings alive." Some allowance must be made for this minister's position. No man in the highest office ever had more labour to perform; no servant of a king ever had a more difficult master to manage. Upon his death-bed he said of Henry to sir William Kingston, "He is sure a prince of royal courage, and hath a princely heart; and rather than he will either miss or want any part of his will or appetite, he will put the loss of one-half of his realm in danger. For I assure you I have often kneeled before him in his privy chamber on my knees, the space of an hour or two, to persuade him from his will and appetite, but I could never bring to pass to dissuade him therefrom. Therefore, Master Kingston, if it chance hereafter you to be one of his privy council, as for your wisdom and other qualities ye are meet to be, I warn you to be well advised and assured what matter ye put in his head, for ye shall never put it out again." §

With a king and a minister whose individual characters would naturally give such a colour to her foreign policy, England found herself, in 1519, essentially involved in the complicated meshes of continental negotiations. The league with Francis I., in 1518, provided for the strictest amity between England and France; and by a special treaty the marriage of the dauphin with Mary, the daughter of Henry, was arranged. The death of the emperor Maximilian in January, 1519, introduced new complications in European politics. Some time before his death Maximilian had made an extraordinary

* Cavendish, p. 280.

† "Why come ye not to Court?" vol. ii. p. 30, in Mr. Dyce's excellent edition.

‡ Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 4. This letter also appears, with some variations, in Lodge's "Illustrations," vol. i. p. 28.

§ Cavendish, p. 389.

offer of resigning the empire to Henry; but Dr. Cuthbert Tunstall, the king's ambassador, had clearly shown him that this was little more than an interested scheme of the needy emperor; and pointed out to Henry how impossible it was that he should be chosen, under the laws of the empire, adding, "I am afraid lest the said offer being so specious at the first hearing was only made to get thereby some money of your grace."* When Maximilian died, the ambition of Henry revived. Richard Pace, an accomplished scholar and able diplomatist, was sent on a secret mission to Germany to sound the electors. But there were two other candidates for the imperial dignity, whose claims were far more natural and reasonable than those of an



Charles V. of Spain.

insular king. Francis, king of France, then in his twenty-fifth year, wielded without control the power and resources of the most compact monarchy of continental Europe. Of a bold and impassioned nature, of a chivalrous bearing, energetic and enterprising, he was beloved by his own people, and had commanded the respect of other nations by his brilliant success in his career of arms. Charles of Spain, then in his nineteenth year, united in himself the sovereignty of the largest European dominions. Of a rare sagacity, of inflexible determination, of perfect self-command, he was formed

* Ellis, First Series, vol. i., p. 137.

by nature and by education to pursue a career of ambition, in which the subtle negotiator would command as great success as the skilful warrior. At this early period his force of character could be little understood; and the danger to be apprehended, from his grasping ambition calling into action his great resources, would appear dim and remote. The election for the empire was the first occasion in which Europe felt the real power of a prince who could command the riches of Flanders and of Spain; and who would employ them with all the subtlety that he might derive from the lessons of his favourite book, "The Prince" of Machiavel. The desire of the king of England, next to that of his own election, was that neither Francis nor Charles should obtain that accession of power. But his envoy intrigued in vain to accomplish either of these wishes. At the commencement of the contest Henry had promised his support to Francis. Towards its end he gave his interest to Charles. Each of these monarchs had bribed the needy electoral princes to an enormous extent. The skilful management of Charles secured his unanimous election. The rivalry thus excited lasted through their lives; and for twenty-eight years the emperor and the king of France, with short intervals of peace, warred against each other with unrelenting animosity; and in the support of one or the other rival England shifted sides, with little regard to the dignity of the crown or the interests of the people. But it must not be forgotten that the right course for the government of Henry to pursue was essentially of difficult and doubtful choice, if her insular position were not to free England from the obligation of interference with foreign politics. But even if she could have safely kept aloof from the temptation of aspiring to be the arbiter amongst contending kings, there were two circumstances which prevented her looking with a self-reliant calmness upon the preponderance of France or the concentrated power of the house of Austria. On one hand Henry was constantly urged by his own weak ambition to recover the English rule in France, and therefore to seek the depression of the French king. On the other, the varying interests, spiritual and political, of the see of Rome, had an important influence on the policy of Henry's minister, whose own ambition constantly looked to acquiring for himself the dignity of the sovereign pontiff. It was a time when a double policy was held to be the safest by those whose interests were involved in the struggle between the two great rivals. It is related of Pope Leo X., that he avowed "that when he had concluded a treaty with the one party, he did not, on that account, cease to negotiate with the other."* Not the least of the difficulties of the papacy was the necessity of looking to some support in the struggle that seemed approaching between the infallible Church and the bold opposers of its corruptions. The historian of the popes has truly said of Luther, "The appearance of such an actor on the world's stage was too significant a fact not to invest him with high political importance."† In the councils of England that importance was soon sensibly felt.

On the 12th of March, 1520, a solemn instrument was prepared by Wolsey, for the regulation of a meeting between Henry and Francis, before the end of the following May. It was drawn up with a strict regard to an equal weighing of the honour and dignity of the two kings. The equality of their

* Ranke, "History of the Popes," vol. i. p. 85.

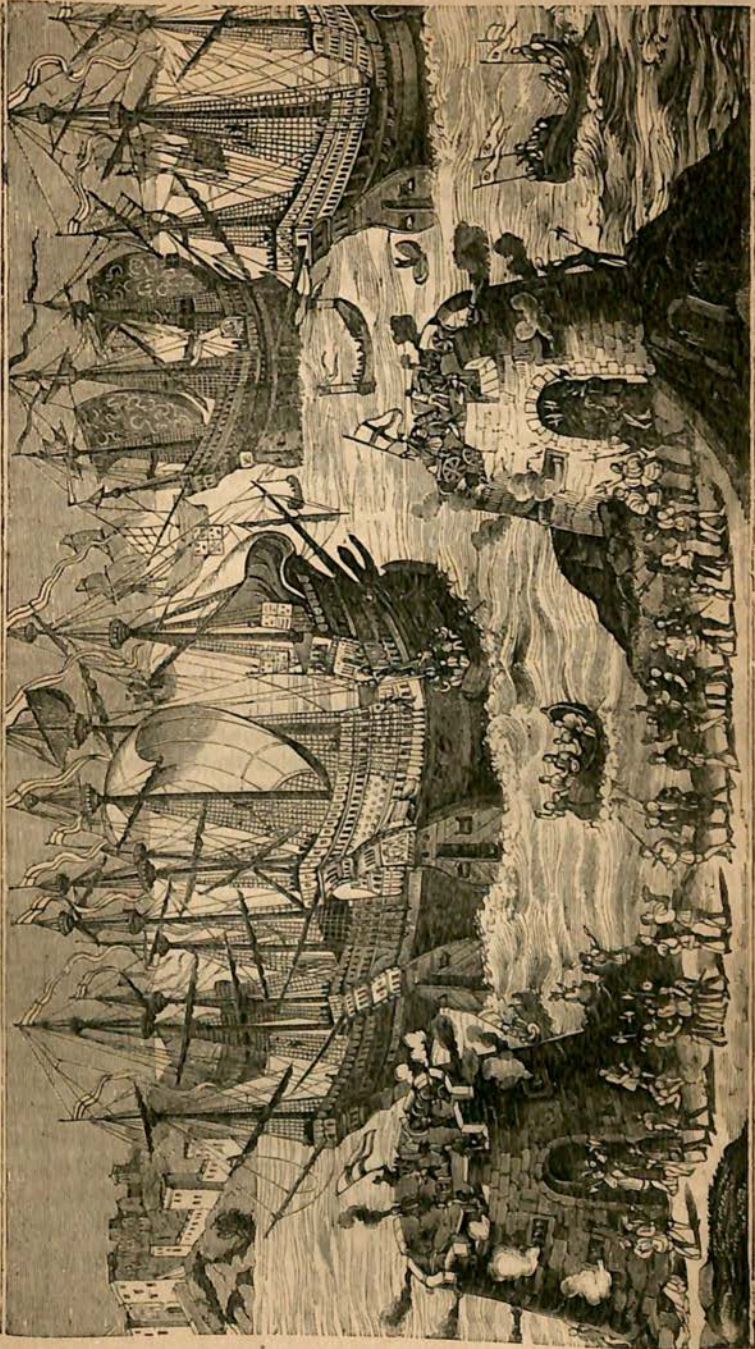
† *Ibid.*, p. 86.

personal merits is also flatteringly asserted in this document: "As the said serene princes of England and France be like in force corporal, beauty, and gift of nature, right expert and having knowledge in the art militant, right chivalrous in arms, and in the flower and vigour of youth," they are to "take counsel and dispose themselves to do some fair feat of arms." * The place of meeting was to be between the English castle of Guisnes and the French castle of Ardres. The curious "Chronicle of Calais" records, that on the 19th of March, the commissioners of king Henry landed, "to oversee the making of a palace before the castle gate of Guisnes; wherefore there was sent the king's master-mason, master-carpenter, and three hundred masons, five hundred carpenters, one hundred joiners, many painters, glaziers, tailors, smiths, and other artificers, both out of England and Flanders, to the number in all two thousand and more." The temporary palace was of stone walls and framed timber, with glazed windows, and canvas roofs. These particulars are curious, as showing how labour could be organised in England for the rapid completion of a great work, at a period when we are accustomed to think that the national industry was conducted upon a very small scale. Henry was highly flattered by the proposal of Francis, "to meet with us within our dominion, pale, and marches of Calais, whereas heretofore semblable honour of pre-eminence hath not been given by any of the French kings to our progenitors or ancestors." † Wolsey took care to modify the offer, so that his sovereign's "honour of pre-eminence" should not be offensively asserted. The vast preparations at Guisnes went forward day and night, to construct a palace whose principal rooms were to be larger than in any house in England—whose canvas roofs were to be "curiously garnished"—whose walls were to be flourished with "histories," which Master Barclay, the poet, was to devise; and, in despite of the fears of the directors of the work, the building approached its completion after two months' labour. On the 21st of May, Henry and the queen set forth from Greenwich toward the sea-side. On the 25th they arrived at Canterbury, at which city the feast of Pentecost was to be kept. Slowly had the court travelled, for there was something to be accomplished before the great interview at Calais should take place. Another personage was to appear upon the scene, by the merest accident, at the exact moment when he was wanted. Tidings were brought to Canterbury, that Charles, the emperor elect, was on the sea, in sight of the coast of England. He was on his passage from Spain to visit his dominions in the Netherlands. He could not pass the English shores without landing to behold the king whom he so revered, and the aunt he so dearly loved. Wolsey hastened to Dover to welcome Charles, who landed at Hythe. The "*Deus ex machina*" was produced, to the wonderment of all spectators, and no one saw the wheels and springs of the mechanism. The politic young statesman won the hearts of the English, who rejoiced "to see the benign manner and meekness of so great a prince." ‡ Henry came to Dover. They kept the Whitsuntide together at Canterbury, "with much joy and gladness;" and on the last day of May Charles sailed to Flanders from Sandwich, and Henry from Dover to Calais.

* Hall, p. 602.

† Letter of Henry to Sir Adrian Fortescue, in Appendix to "Chronicle of Calais," p. 78.

‡ Hall, p. 604.



Embarkation of Henry VIII. at Dover.

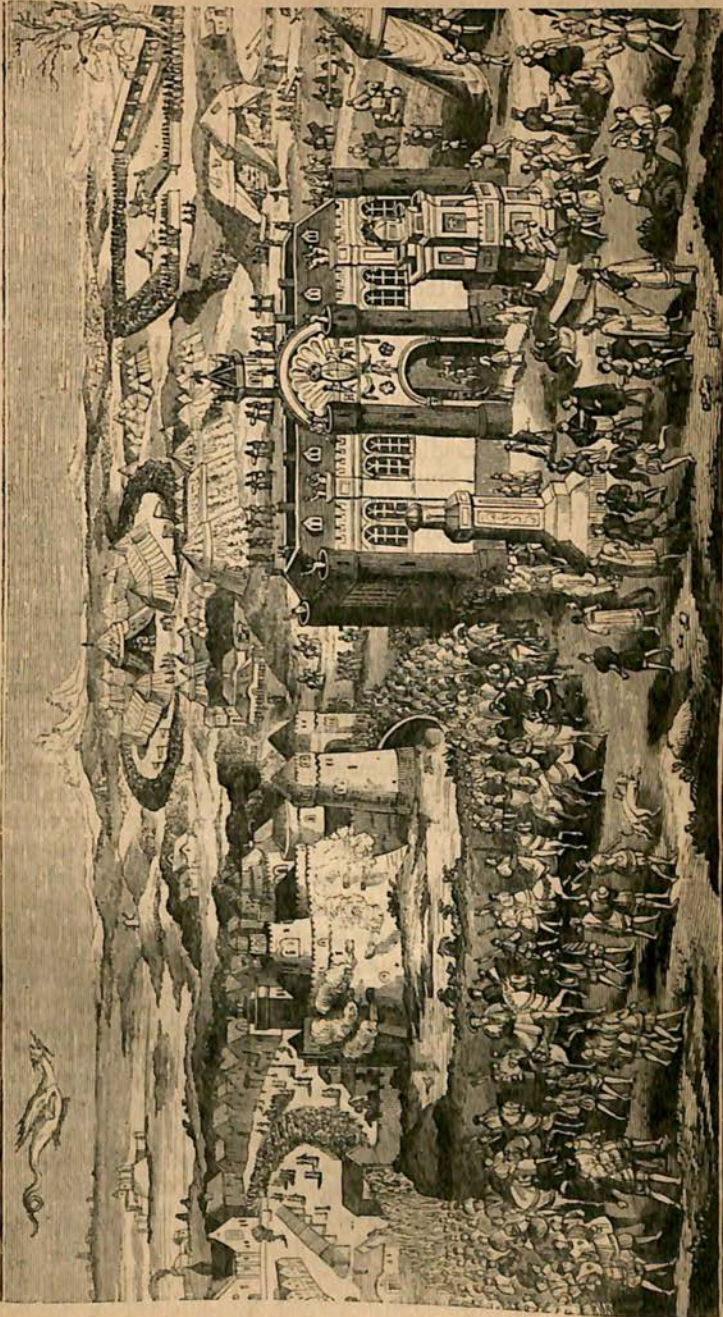
The character of this royal embarkation has been handed down to us in an ancient painting. The thousands of visitors who now range freely through the state-apartments of Hampton Court, and who are familiar with the solid grandeur of a modern English fleet, look with natural curiosity upon the unwieldy hulls, the decks covered with blazonry, the painted sails, of the sixteenth century, and think how a single steam-frigate would consign all this bravery to sudden destruction. With a fair wind such a navy might safely cross the channel. The low towers of Dover have vomited forth their fire and smoke; and in a few hours the guns of Calais salute the English king. The great palace was ready, with its ceilings draped with silk, and its walls hung "with rich and marvellous cloths of arras wrought of gold and silk." But while Henry was contemplating his splendours, Wolsey was busy arranging a treaty with Francis. The friendship of England was to be secured by a renewal of the treaty of marriage between the dauphin and the princess Mary. There can be little doubt that at this very time the cardinal was bound to the interests of the emperor, with the full concurrence of his royal master. Yet the play was to be played out. Henry was to meet the French king with such a display of the magnificence of his court as might challenge any rivalry. But Francis, possessing much of the same temper, was not to be outdone in pageantry.

"To-day the French
All clinquant, all in gold, like heathen gods,
Shone down the English; and, to-morrow, they
Made Britain, India; every man that stood,
Show'd like a mine." *

The dramatic poet has described this famous meeting in a short dialogue. Hall, the chronicler, who was present, elaborates these "fierce vanities" in many quarto pages. On the 7th of June, the two kings met in the valley of Andren. Titian has made us acquainted with the animated features of Francis. Hall has painted him with coarser colours; as "a goodly prince, stately of countenance, merry of cheer, brown coloured, great eyes, high-nosed, big-lipped, fair breasted and shoulders, small legs, and long feet." Holbein has rendered Henry familiar to us in his later years; but at this period he was described by a Venetian resident in England as "handsomer by far than the king of France. He is exceeding fair, and as well proportioned in every part as is possible. When he learned that the king of France wore a beard, he allowed his also to grow, which being somewhat red, has at present the appearance of being of gold." † It is scarcely necessary to transcribe the complimentary speeches, and the professions of affection which are related to have passed at this meeting. The two kings did not come to the appointed valley, surrounded each with an amazing train of gorgeously appareled gentlemen and nobles, and with a great body of armed men, without some fears and suspicions on either side. The English, if we may believe the chronicler, were most wanting in honourable confidence. The English lords and their

* Shakspeare, "Henry VIII." Act i. Scene 1.

† From a letter of Sebastiano Giustiniani in 1519, quoted in Ellis, First Series, vol. i. p. 177.



The Field of the Cloth of Gold.

attendants moved not from their appointed ranks. "The Frenchmen suddenly brake, and many of them came into the English party, speaking fair; but for all that, the court of England and the lords kept still their array." *

The solemnities of "The Field of the Cloth of Gold," as the place of this meeting came to be called, occupied nearly three weeks of that June of 1520. Ten days were spent in the feats of arms for which Wolsey had provided. There was tilting with lances, and tourneys on horseback with the broad sword, and fighting on foot at the barriers. The kings were always victorious against all comers. But from the court of the emperor there came no knight to answer the challengers. The lists were set up close to the Flemish frontier, but not a gentleman of Spain, or Flanders, or Brabant, or Burgundy, stirred to do honour to these pageantries. "By that," says Hall, "it seemed there was small love between the emperor and the French king." On Midsummer-day the gaudy shows were over. The kings separated after an exchange of valuable presents,—Francis to Paris, Henry to Calais. Here the English court remained till the 10th of July. It was in vain that the French king had come unattended and unarmed into the English quarter, to show his confidence in the friendship of his companion in feats of chivalry. In vain had the French nobles put all their estates upon their backs to rival the jewelled satins and velvets of England. On the 11th of July Henry met the emperor near Gravelines; and the emperor returned with him to Calais. After a visit of three days, Charles accomplished far more by his profound sagacity than Francis by his generous frankness. Wolsey was propitiated by presents and promises; Henry by a studied deference to his superior wisdom. Hall has recorded that during the pomps of the valley of Andren, on the 18th of June, "there blew such storms of wind and weather that marvel was to hear; for which hideous tempest some said it was a very prognostication of trouble and hatred to come between princes." The French, in this second meeting between Henry and Charles saw the accomplishment of the foreboding beginning to take a definite form.

In the roll of illustrious names of nobles and knights at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, the name of the duke of Buckingham stands at the head. He was there one of the four judges of the jousts, deputed on the king's part. High as he was in wealth and honours, he might have deemed that the evil destinies of his line were at an end; and that, whilst his father had died on the scaffold under Richard III., and the three preceding heads of his house had fallen in civil warfare, he might have securely passed through life to the death of the peaceful. But any lineal descendant of Edward III. was still unsafe, especially if his pride of ancestry were not held in check by unrelaxing prudence. The father of this Edward Stafford perished through his vain conviction that he was "meet to be a ruler of the realm;" † and the son, although a man of ability, was tempted by the ever-present thought of his high descent, to commit himself by some unguarded though trifling acts, of which his enemies took advantage. His chief enemy is said to have been Wolsey; and the cause of the cardinal's enmity is held to have arisen out of Buckingham's

* Hall, p. 610.

† See *ante*, p. 195.

dissatisfaction with the expense of the great pageantry at Guisnes. But the jealousy of Henry had been exhibited in 1519; when sir William Bulmer, who had quitted the king's service to enter that of the duke, had to acknowledge his fault in the star-chamber, and to implore the mercy of the king. Henry forgave the offence; but said, "that he would none of his servants should hang on another man's sleeve; and that he was as well able to maintain him as the duke of Buckingham, and that what might be thought by his [Bulmer's] departing, and what might be supposed by the duke's retaining, he would not then declare."* The king had now entered upon that course of action which rendered his subsequent career so fearful and so odious. He could cover up his hatreds till the moment arrived for striking his victim securely. After eighteen months had passed since he had rebuked sir William Bulmer, and darkly hinted at some evil motive of the duke in retaining him in his service, the mine, which had been warily constructed, exploded under Edward Stafford's feet. He was suddenly sent for from his castle of Thornbury, to appear in the king's presence. He was watched by the king's officers to Windsor; and there perceived that he could not escape. He rode to Westminster, where he took his barge, and landed "at the cardinal's bridge;" but Wolsey refusing to see him, the duke said, "Well, yet will I drink of my lord's wine, ere I pass;" and he was brought, with much reverence, into the cellar. On his way to London, his barge was boarded, and he arrested. His fate was soon determined. On the 13th of May he was indicted before his peers, the duke of Norfolk presiding. Charles Knyvet, a discarded officer of the duke, was the chief witness against him; and deposed to certain words of Buckingham said to himself and lord Abergavenny, which, even if true, could not be fairly wrested into an overt act of treason. A monk of the Charterhouse, who pretended to a knowledge of future events, "had divers times said to the duke that he should be king of England; but the duke said that in himself he never consented to it." † The judicial inference was, that he had committed the crime of imagining the death of the king; and that his words were satisfactory evidence of such imagining. Buckingham was convicted; and Norfolk pronounced the sentence. The heroic attitude of the man in this his hour of agony, needs no exaltation by the power of the poet. He said to his judges, "May the eternal God forgive you my death as I do. I shall never sue to the king for life, howbeit he is a gracious prince, and more grace may come from him than I deserve." The duke was beheaded on the 17th of May.

In the early part of the reign of Henry VIII., there were many reversals of attainders that had been passed in the previous reign. There was then evidently a merciful desire for the oblivion of political offences; and for restoring to their estates and honours the heirs of those unfortunate persons who had suffered the penalties of treason. ‡ There was no hesitation in the avowal that it was possible that an attainted person might have been unjustly condemned. In the case of Henry Courtney, earl of Devonshire, the preamble to the Act of reversal says that his father was convicted of high treason "by the sinister means and untrue informations of certain malicious and evil

* Hall, p. 599.

† Hall, p. 623.

‡ See various Statutes from the first year to the sixth of Henry VIII.

disposed persons made unto your noble father, of famous memory."* This open acknowledgment of the possibility of an unjust conviction, under the forms of law, might have led the king who would show no mercy to Buckingham, judged as he was upon the most frivolous accusations, to think that the declaration of his high will might have some effect in calling forth such "untrue representations." The time was not yet arrived when he should find his ready instruments of despotism in the highest of the land; and when he should be able to perpetrate, through his slaves in a parliament, the murders which the oriental despot could effect by a single sign to the eunuchs of the seraglio. He tasted of blood when he put Buckingham to death; and after a few more years, during which his will, being unquestioned, was less tyrannical, he showed that his relish for it was not to be satisfied to his dying hour.

* 4 Hen. VIII. c. 9, first printed in the Statutes by Authority.



Bas relief. Meeting of Henry and Francis.



Wolsey and his Suite.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Luther—King Henry writes a book against his doctrines—His title of Defender of the Faith—League and war against France—Wolsey levies contributions on property—Jealousy of foreigners ; Evil May-Day—A Parliament assembled—Great debate upon the demand for a subsidy—Affairs of Scotland—Siege of Jedburgh—Duke of Suffolk makes war in France—Battle of Pavia—Francis a prisoner—Taxes levied without authority of Parliament—Insurrection in Suffolk—The illegal demand abandoned.

In the year 1521 Henry had been king for twelve years. Possessed of considerable ability and some learning, his mind was not so wholly occupied by pleasures and pageantries as in the flush of youth. He sought for a higher excitement in theological controversy. There was a daring innovator, who had proceeded from attacking the open sale of indulgences for sin to question the foundations of the authority of the Church. Martin Luther had been first despised in his supposed obscurity ; but his preaching and writing had produced an effect in Europe, which had stirred up the luxurious Leo X. to apprehend that a poor monk, with no power but his zeal and courage, might become troublesome to the repose even of the most splendid of pontiffs. At length, in 1520, the pope issued a bull, declaring certain passages of Luther's writings heretical ; denouncing the penalties of excommunication against him unless he should recant ; and threatening the same penalties against all princes who should neglect to secure the heretic. In January, 1520, Luther, for having denied the pontifical supremacy, was expelled from the communion of the Church. The emperor Charles V. was called upon to punish the Reformer ; but the elector of Saxony induced the emperor to let the question be tried before a diet of the empire. In April,

the diet met at Worms. Luther entered the town, singing the noble hymn called by his name: The multitude who surrounded the monk repeated the inspiring words, "Our God is a strong citadel;" and the hymn of Luther became the rallying song of the Reformation. Before the emperor, the electors of the empire, princes, bishops, Luther avowed that the writings denounced by the pope were his; and refused to retract any proposition he had set forth, unless from the authority of the Holy Scriptures it could be proved to be erroneous. The Reformer was proof against the threatenings or the persuasions of this assembly. He was allowed to depart, with a safe-conduct for twenty-one days. Maurice of Saxony knew the danger which Luther incurred if he went at large. He caused him to be seized and carried to the castle of Wartburg. In this solitary fortress the proscribed man was secure; though the emperor had placed him under his ban. Here, in his mountain solitude, he wrote some of his most powerful treatises against what he deemed the abuses of religion—against auricular confession, clerical celibacy, monastic vows, prayers for the dead. Here, in his enthusiastic moods, he struggled against the spiritual dangers by which he fancied himself surrounded; and in his meditations upon the doctrines of revealed religion built up a system of theology that should take the place of the principles that he held to be corrupting. So passed the year 1521 with the great reformer. If the princes of Germany who were opposed to Luther had been unable to inflict any serious injury upon his person or his opinions, there was a prince in England who felt himself called upon to extinguish him by a mortal blow. There is a letter from Richard Pace to Wolsey, dated the 16th of April, in this year, which describes the king, upon the arrival of Pace with the pope's bull against Luther, "looking upon a new work of the said Luther." When the king gave dispraise to the book, Pace delivered the pope's bull and his brief; "with the which the king was well contented; here, at length, showing unto me that it was very joyous to hear these tidings from the pope's holiness at such a time as he had taken upon him the defence of Christ's church with his pen." The king declares his purpose to send his book not only to Rome, but also "into France and other nations as shall appear convenient;" and Pace, in rapture, writes, "So that all the Church is more bound to this good and virtuous prince for the vehement zeal he beareth unto the same, than I can express." * Henry, in his book, denominated Luther "the arch-heretic." Luther replied to the king's work in a tone of scurrility which deformed most of the learned controversies of these times. But Henry obtained what he regarded as a great distinction. He had been promised the title of "the Most Christian king" by Julius II.; but the king of France retained that honour when he had appeased the pope. Henry now demanded from pope Leo the title of "Defender of the Faith;" and the pope bestowed that distinction upon him by bull, dated the 11th of October. The successor of Leo confirmed the title.† The book of Henry on "the Seven Sacraments," against Luther, written in Latin, was published in London in 1521, and in Antwerp in 1522. It produced as little effect upon

* Ellis, Second Series, vol. i. p. 286.

† Dr. Lingard has shown that the title was given to Henry, personally, without any grant of inheritance.

weeks. War was declared against France; but the means of carrying on war were wanting. The chronicler, whose tedious descriptions of the processions and banquets when the emperor was in London we willingly pass over, has left us a picture of Wolsey sitting as a commissioner of property-tax, which is a curious illustration of manners as well as of political history. On the 20th of August, the cardinal sends for the mayor, aldermen, and most substantial commoners of the city; and tells them that the king had appointed commissioners throughout the realm, "to swear every man of what value he is in moveables." He then desires to have an account which may enable him to swear all such as are worth a hundred pounds and upwards; the king only deriving a tenth part. "Sir," said a merchant, "if it may please you, how shall this tenth part to the king be delivered?" "In money, plate, or



Shilling of Henry VIII.

jewels," said the cardinal. "O, my lord," answered one, speaking for the aldermen, "it is not yet two months since the king had of the city twenty thousand pounds in ready money in loan, whereby the city is very bare of money. For God's sake remember this, that rich merchants in war be

bare of money." The cardinal dismissed them with, "Well; this must be done, and therefore go about it." But the aldermen came again before the cardinal, and humbly besought him that they might not be sworn for the true value of their substance; for the true valuation to them was unknown; and many an honest man's credit was better than his substance; and therefore they feared to incur the peril of perjury. "Well," said the cardinal, "since you dread the crime of perjury it is a sign of grace; and therefore I will for you borrow of the king a little. Make you your bills of your own value likely to report your fame, and then more business needeth not; for you see what two costly armies the king hath ready against both France and Scotland. Therefore now show yourselves like loving subjects, for you be able enough. I dare swear the substance of London is no less worth than two millions." The citizens answered, "the city is sore injured by the great occupying of strangers." "It shall be redressed, if I live," said the cardinal; "but on Saturday next I shall appoint one to receive your bills; and he that is of credit more than substance, let him resort to me, and I will be secret and good to him."*

The loud complaint against "the great occupying of strangers," was of a grief to London, which four years before had produced fatal consequences. "Evil May-day" was too recent to have passed out of the mind of Wolsey, when he promised a redress which he well knew it was out of his power to accomplish. The king might imprison Frenchmen and Scots, and seize their goods, as he did on the occasion of this war; but the industry of aliens,

* Hall, v. 645

and of the Flemings especially, was of too vital importance to be interfered with, by that jealousy of unreasoning traders and artisans which had already produced fatal results. On the 1st of May, 1517, "the great shaft of Cornhill," famous from the time of Chaucer, had been taken down from the iron hooks upon which it hung over the doors of Shaft-alley, and was set up with much rejoicing before the south door of the church of St. Andrew the Apostle, called St. Andrew Undershaft. It towered above the steeple, decked with its green boughs and its May-garlands.* But there was gloom



Playing at Bucklers. Maids dancing for Garlands.

amongst the rulers of the city; for a rumour had gone forth, that in consequence of the preachings of a doctor of divinity, named Bell, who was excited by one Lincoln, a broker, the citizens would rise in a body and expel and slay the aliens, who were supposed to interfere with the English traders. The Flemings, especially, kept together in their fraternities; and their number was so great, that on a Sunday in the previous Lent six hundred had assembled together to shoot at the popinjay. This was the favourite game of the Netherlanders; and Henry himself had been elected king of the popinjay by the good lieges of Tournay. It would appear from a statute

* See Stow's "Survay," edit. by Mr. Thoms, p. 54.

passed about this period, that the artificers of London had to bear greater charges for scot and lot, and paid a higher price for house-rent and provisions, than in any other place within the realm. They had also to fill the offices of constable; and upon these humbler citizens fell the unpleasant duty of "skavenship," or street-cleaning.* Aliens, who were exempt from the burdens of citizenship, were therefore objects of jealousy; but they were still more so from the fact, that whatever prohibitory laws existed against foreign manufactures were necessarily inefficient so long as the native productions were dearer than those of the strangers. When, therefore, Doctor Bell preached that if it were not for the Dutchmen, who brought over wrought goods, "Englishmen might have some work and living," he naturally "excited young people and artificers to bear malice" to these aliens. On this May-day, therefore, Wolsey, as chancellor, sent for the mayor and aldermen, and warned them of a danger that he heard was impending. A council of the city was called in the evening; and the recorder and sir Thomas More came



General Costume in the reign of Henry VIII. (Selected from Holbein.)

from the cardinal with a command, that every man, with his servants, should be within his house at nine o'clock. Proclamation was made; but proclamations were not readily diffused amongst the busy and pleasure-loving youths of the city. In Cheap, the young men were playing at their manly game of "bucklers" at this hour of nine. An officious alderman commanded them to disperse; and being asked "Why?" by one of the youths, had him taken into custody. Then went forth the well-known cry of "Prentices and clubs;" and "out of every door came clubs and weapons." There was no rest in London on that night. The oratory of Doctor Bell might have been harmless, if the people had been left in quiet. But once roused, there was no limit to their violence. The houses of foreigners in Whitechapel were rifled; for therein dwelt alien shoemakers, a class of artisans who have

* 7 Hen. VIII. c. 5.

always provoked English jealousy. The affair became an insurrection. The lieutenant of the Tower fired his ordnance upon the city. The earls of Surrey and Shrewsbury came with their armed bands. Three hundred of the rioters were committed to prison; and, after a trial, thirteen were hanged as traitors, "because the king had amity with all Christian princes, and they had broken the truce and league." The remainder of the prisoners, being taken with halters round their necks to Westminster-hall, came before Henry in person. Wolsey gave them "a good exhortation;" and when a general pardon was pronounced, "all the prisoners shouted at once, and altogether cast up their halters into the hall roof, so that the king might perceive that they were none of the discreetest sort."*

In April, 1523, a parliament met at the Blackfriars. It was the first parliament that had been assembled since 1516. The representative principle of the constitution might have merged in a monarchical despotism, if the warlike plans of the government could have been carried out by forced loans and benevolences, such as Wolsey exacted from the citizens of London. The inquisitions into their substance and credit irritated the traders of the capital, in spite of the promises of the great cardinal to be "secret and good to them." Men then felt indignant, as they will always feel, at having their private affairs laid bare for fiscal purposes. In the provinces the commissioners of the crown had less chance than Wolsey of making the industrious contribute to the demands of the state in a manner which they knew to be illegal. To the parliament, therefore, of 1523, the king applied for a subsidy.

The chancellor left to an inferior dignitary, the bishop of London, the duty of opening the session, which usually devolved upon the holder of the great seal. Bishop Tonstall told the assembly that the king had called the high court of parliament together for the remedy of mischiefs, and for making new statutes which may be to the high advancement of the commonwealth. Sir Thomas More, who had become one of the king's council, was nominated Speaker; and he, "according to the old usage, disabled himself in wit, learning, and discretion."† But Wolsey vouched for the king's knowledge of More's qualities, "by long experience in his service." The next business of the parliament was to be something of more pressing import than "the remedy of mischiefs," and the enactment of new laws. On the 29th of April Wolsey came to the House of Commons, and having set forth the broken promises of the king of France, and declared the intention of the king of England and the emperor to "make such war on France as hath not been seen," demanded a fifth of every man's goods and lands, which would amount to 800,000*l.* There are contradictory accounts of the manner in which Sir Thomas More treated this sweeping claim. Hall says that the Speaker declared that "of duty men ought not to deny four shillings in the pound." The debate on this occasion, as given by an historian of the time of Charles I.,‡ is thought to have been an invention of the writer. But a passage in the earlier chronicler may give us some notion of the resources of the country at, or near, this period. The demand of the subsidy, with the previous loan, amounting to 1,200,000*l.*, "could not be had in coin in the whole kingdom." It

* Hall, pp. 586 to 591.

† *Ibid.*, p. 652.

‡ Lord Herbert, "History of Henry VIII."

had been said there were forty thousand parish churches in England; "but it may be proved there are not fifteen thousand parishes." "How many parishes were there in England, except those in cities and towns, which could spare one hundred marks," which sum would be required, to make up 1,000,000*l.* from fifteen thousand parishes? * A commission was appointed to reason with the chancellor, and to induce him to beseech the king to be content with a smaller sum; "to the which he currishly replied, that he would rather have his tongue plucked out of his head with a pair of pincers, than to move the king to take any less sum." † Again Wolsey came to the House with all the pomp with which he was surrounded on state occasions. He "desired to be reasoned withal; to whom it was answered, that the fashion of the nether house was, to hear and not to reason, except amongst themselves."

Wolsey indignantly retired; and the sturdy Commons,—with a temper which showed that no courtly influence or intimidation could break down the ancient spirit which the long line of kings, with all their feudal power, had respected,—debated amongst themselves for fifteen or sixteen days. A sketch of this debate has been preserved to us in a letter from a member to the earl of Surrey: ‡ "Please it your good lordship to understand, that sithence the beginning of the parliament there hath been the greatest and sorest hold in the lower house, for payment of two shillings of the pound, that ever was seen, I think, in any parliament. This matter hath been debated and beaten fifteen or sixteen days together. The highest necessity alleged on the king's behalf to us that ever was heard of; and, of the contrary, the highest poverty confessed, as well by knights, squires, and gentlemen of every quarter, as by the commoners, citizens, and burgesses. There hath been such hold that the house was like to have been dissevered; § that is to say, the knights being of the king's council, the king's servants and gentlemen of the one party; which in so long time were spoken with, and made to say yea; it may fortune, contrary to their heart, will, and conscience. Thus hanging this matter, yesterday the more part being the king's servants, gentlemen, were there assembled; and so they, being the more part, willed and gave to the king two shillings of the pound of goods or lands, the best to be taken for the king. All lands to pay two shillings of the pound from the lowest to the highest. The goods to pay two shillings of the pound, from twenty pounds upwards; and from forty shillings of goods to twenty pounds to pay sixteenpence of the pound; and under forty shillings, every person to pay eightpence. This to be paid in two years. I have heard no man in my life that can remember that ever there was given to any one of the king's ancestors half so much at one grant. Nor, I think, there was never such a precedent seen before this time. I beseeke Almighty God it may be well and peaceably levied, and surely paid unto the king's grace, without grudge, and especially without losing the good will and true hearts of his subjects, which I reckon a far greater treasure for a king than gold or silver. And the gentlemen which must take pain to levy this money among the king's subjects, I think, shall have no little business about the same."

* Hall, p. 656.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Ellis, First Series, vol. i. p. 290. Also in Strype, "Ecclesiastical Memorials," vol. i.

§ A division was likely to have taken place—a rare occurrence.

The act for this subsidy contains a number of the most stringent clauses for enforcing its assessment by commissioners and its collection; and we may well believe that those appointed to levy the money had "no little business about the same." For the enactment touched the great industrious class of the community, down to every person taking daily, weekly, or yearly wages, to the yearly value of twenty shillings.* Masters were to hold in their hands the amount of the subsidy charged upon their servants. The apprehended difficulty of obtaining payment in the coin of the realm is shown by a provision that plate might be received by the collectors. The humbler classes of the people thus directly taxed would naturally groan under their burthens; but they would also feel that the taxation which included them gave them the strongest claim to participate in all the privileges of freemen. We shall presently see that they made their voices heard in the highest places when the demands of the crown became more onerous; and were attempted to be enforced without the sanction of parliament. In this struggle the clergy resisted the demands of the crown as strenuously as the Commons; and during four months the amount of the grant was debated in Convocation.

After the royal treasury had been thus replenished, the war with France and Scotland was carried on with a vigour which the command of money would naturally produce; and with a ferocity which utterly disregarded the miseries of the humble and industrious, whose labours enable the productiveness of the earth to go forward and repair the desolations of ambition. In Scotland, especially, there was an infliction of misery upon the peaceful inhabitants, which, at a period when learning and the arts had some general cultivation, far exceeded the atrocities of what are called "the dark ages." The realities of chivalry had vanished; but its cruelties remained, with the empty pageantries that stood in the place of the stern virtues of "the invincible knights of old." Political morality was utterly despised in the cabinets of princes. Henry had always his political agents and spies in the Scottish court, as his father had before him. In 1516, the lord warden of the marches writes to Wolsey, England and Scotland being then at peace, "I labour and study all that I can to make division and debate * * * I have secret messages from the earl of Angus, and other * * * And also I have four hundred outlaws, and give them rewards, that burn and destroy daily in Scotland."† To follow out the history of Scotland during the peace that succeeded the battle of Flodden, is to trace the personal history of Margaret, the sister of Henry, who appears to have inherited her full share of the passions and caprices of her brother. In 1514 she married the earl of Angus. But the duke of Albany, brother to James III., being invited by the Scottish parliament to assume the regency, Margaret and her husband fled to England, after a fruitless contest with the government. Her two sons were separated from her. Henry addressed the Scottish parliament in the insolent tone which occasionally manifested his nature, desiring that Albany might be banished from the kingdom. He was told, with a spirit that belonged to the descendants of Bruce, that the parliament would resist any attempt to overthrow the government of their choice. Lord Dacre, the warden of the marches,

* Stat. 14 & 15 Hen. VIII. c. 16, printed only in the Statutes by Authority.

† Ellis, First Series, vol. i. p. 132.

had thus a fair field in which to sow "division and debate." In 1517 Albany went to France: and Margaret, having been permitted to reside in Scotland, the contests of factions again broke out. She desired Angus to be regent,—a demand which the council resisted. Angus was a faithless husband; and the queen-mother resolved upon a divorce. But Henry effected a hollow reconciliation; and, after the fiercest contests between the factious nobles, Angus became supreme in the conduct of the government. Margaret was again dissatisfied with her husband; and having sought a divorce in the court of Rome, induced Albany to return to Scotland. Her son, James V., was then nine years old. Henry did not scruple to instruct Wolsey to oppose the divorce, on the ground that his own sister intended to murder her son. Wolsey writes to the king, in 1521, that he had caused the pope's orator to



English Foot-Soldier. *

interfere for the prevention of the projected separation, "by means whereof the said divorce shall not proceed when the pope shall be informed that the same is procured only for marriage between the duke of Albany and the queen, whereby the destruction of the young king shall ensue."* It was the

* State Papers of Henry VIII., vol. i.

object of the English government to raise up impediments in the way of Albany, who was a man of vigour and ability; and every effort of corruption was made by the English agents to produce disorder in the country. In 1522, Henry repeated his demand that Albany should be removed from power; and the parliament again disclaimed his right of interference. The borders of the Tweed were then ravaged by the earl of Shrewsbury. Albany raised an army of eighty thousand men. But he effected nothing; for lord Dacre, with singular address, operated upon his fears that a great force was advancing from England, to consent to a month's suspension of hostilities. Wolsey described Albany's conduct as that of "a coward and a fool." Albany now returned to France; and the earl of Surrey, who in 1522 had ravaged France from Calais to Amiens, took the command of the army to invade Scotland. His first exploit was to destroy Jedburgh—"which town," he writes, "is so surely burnt that no garrisons nor none other shall be lodged there, unto the time when it shall be new builded." In the same letters Surrey relates a remarkable occurrence, which curiously exhibits the superstition of an English army: "After that, my said lord [Dacre] returning to the camp, would in nowise be lodged in the same, but where he lay the first night; and he being with me at supper about 8 o'clock, the horses of his company brake loose and suddenly run out of his field in such numbers that it caused a marvellous alarm in our field; and our standing watch being set, the horses came running along the camp, at whom were shot above one hundred sheafs of arrows and divers guns, thinking they had been Scots that would have assaulted the camp. Finally the horses were so mad that they ran like wild deer into the field, above fifteen hundred at the least in divers companies, and in one place above fifty fell down a great rock and slew themselves; and above two hundred and fifty ran into the town, being on fire, and by the women taken and carried away, right evil brent; and many were taken again, but finally by that I can esteem by the number of them that I saw go on foot next day, I think there is lost above eight hundred horses, and all with folly for lack of not lying within the camp. I dare not write the wonders that my lord Dacre and all his company do say they saw that night, six times, of spirits and fearful sights. And universally all their company say plainly the devil was that night among them six times. Which misfortune hath blemished the best journey that was made in Scotland many years. I assure your grace I found the Scots at this time the boldest men and the hottest that ever I saw any nation; and all the journey, upon all parts of the army, kept us with so continual skirmish that I never saw the like. If they might assemble forty thousand as good men as I now saw fifteen hundred or two thousand, it would be a hard encounter to meet them." * The other exploits of Surrey in Scotland are thus recorded in a letter of Wolsey:—"The earl of Surrey so devastated and destroyed all Tweedale and March, that there is left neither house, fortress, village, tree, cattle, corn or other succour for man; insomuch that some of the people that fled from the same, afterwards returning and finding no sustenance, were compelled to come unto England begging bread, which oftentimes when they do eat, they die incontinently for the hunger passed. And with no imprisonment, cutting off their ears, burning them in their faces, or

* Ellis, First Series, vol. i. p. 217.

otherwise, can be kept away." Albany had now returned to Scotland; and, after crossing the English border, suddenly retreated before Surrey; and his two failures having deprived him of his popularity in Scotland, he-quitted his native country for France, and returned no more. Margaret, the queen-mother, disgraced herself by renewed immoralities; and her husband, having become regent, the Scottish court and people were freed from her habitual arrogance and her capricious schemes.

In 1523, Henry attempted to realise a part of his declaration to parliament, which is embodied in the preamble to the act of subsidy:—"His highness hath employed, and intendeth to employ, not only his mind and study, with labour and travail of body and jeopardy of his own royal person, to the adventure of this war, but also the utmost of his own substance and treasure." He did not jeopardise his own royal person; but he sent Charles Brandon, the duke of Suffolk, to invade France. The period was favourable to the enterprise; for the duke of Bourbon, one of the highest nobles of France, and constable of the kingdom, having cause for private dissatisfaction with Francis, the king, had fled from France, to join the confederacy against his sovereign. Francis was intent upon recovering his power in Italy; and was advancing with an army to the Alps. By a plan of operations combined with the emperor, the English were to invade France, the Spaniards attack Guienne, and the Germans make an inroad into Burgundy. The English expedition was a failure; unless a march towards Paris and a devastation of the country could be called a success. The operations of the allies were deferred till October. Winter set in with furious rains and intense frost. The troops of England were perishing; and Suffolk, having retreated, disbanded his army. But he had previously sent "the lord Sandes in post to the king," who travelled to Windsor, and there "declared his message; which was that his people that were in the French ground abode much misery; for the weather was wet, the ways deep, long nights and short days, great journies and little victual, which caused the soldiers daily to die."* The king promised to send succour; and declared his will that the army "should not break." But "the soldiers would not abide." The enterprise was at an end. The duke of Suffolk returned to Calais; and there he lingered for a season, till he was assured that his head was safe if he ventured to England.

The chair of St. Peter was a second time vacant during the period in which Wolsey had been a cardinal. Upon the death of Adrian, he was again a candidate for the pontificate. His pretensions were supported by the English king, but he again had to endure the disappointment of his ambition. Giulio de Medici was elected; and took the title of Clement VII. As a cardinal he had always supported the cause of the emperor Charles against his rival Francis. The temporal interests of the popedom had now so completely neutralised the spiritual power of the head of the church, that the movements of Rome must be regarded in its secular aspects if we would comprehend, even to a slight extent, the movements of European policy. The Italians ardently desired independence; and they fancied that the blessing was to be attained through the preponderance of the pope as a temporal prince. Clement was now in alliance with the emperor, as Adrian had been;

* Hall, p. 671.

but the Italian people looked with natural dread upon the alliance. The domination of Spain or of France was equally hateful to them. They hoped for no good to themselves, whatever should be the issue of the war between the emperor and the king of France. Before the summer of 1524, the French were driven out of Italy. They had lost the noble Bayard: their own countryman, the duke of Bourbon, was carrying on the contest with the fierceness which generally marks the conduct of the apostate from his faith or his country. Francis was resolved to make another effort to regain Milan. He turned from the pursuit of the imperial army, which he had followed to the gates of that city, that he might undertake the siege of Pavia. This was in October. For three months the siege was conducted with various success; and Francis, with characteristic rashness, detached a part of his army to invade Naples. The governor of Pavia, in February, 1525, saw famine approaching, and wrote to the general of the imperial army:—"Come to us, or we must cut our way to you." They did come. On the 24th of February, the French king moved his troops out of their intrenchments. A general battle took place; and Francis, after fighting with the gallantry of the elder chivalry, was taken prisoner. Bourbon, now the commander of the imperial army, came before his captive sovereign, and asked to be permitted to kiss his hand. The French king refused. Bourbon, with tears, said that if his counsel had been followed, he would not have sustained this reverse. Francis made no direct reply, but ejaculated, "Patience! since fortune hath failed me."

The fall of Francis called forth no sympathy from Henry of England. A solemn thanksgiving for the victory of Pavia was offered at St. Paul's. The cardinal officiated, and the king was present. The ambition of Henry to be lord of France now revived. He proposed that the emperor and himself should invade France; that the French dominions should be his, as his lawful inheritance; and that Charles should take the Burgundian provinces. But to accomplish these mighty undertakings was difficult with an empty treasury. The last parliament had been troublesome. They refused to give all that the king required. They had asserted the old freedom of the Commons of England to deliberate amongst themselves, without instruction from the minister of the crown. A subsidy was therefore demanded without the intervention of parliament; and commissioners were appointed to levy the illegal claim of the sixth part of every man's substance. From the clergy more was demanded. The resistance was universal. The temper of the nation may be collected from a letter of the archbishop of Canterbury to Wolsey: "It hath been showed me in a secret manner of my friends, the people sore grudgeth and murmureth, and speaketh cursedly among themselves, as far as they dare, saying that they shall never have rest of payments as long as some liveth, and that they had better die than to be thus continually handled, reckoning themselves, their children, and wives, as despoiled, and not greatly caring what they do, or what becomes of them. * * * * They fear not to speak that they be continually beguiled, and no promise is kept unto them; and thereupon some of them suppose that if this gift and grant be once levied, albeit the king's grace go not beyond the sea, yet nothing shall be restored again, albeit they be showed the contrary. * * * * I have heard say, moreover, that when the people be commanded to make fires and tokens of joy for the taking of

the French king, divers of them have spoken that they have more cause to weep than to rejoice thereat. And divers, as it hath been showed me secretly, have wished openly that the French king were at his liberty again, so as there were a good peace, and the king should not attempt to win France, the winning whereof should be more chargeful to England than profitable, and the keeping thereof much more chargeful than the winning. Also it hath been told me secretly that divers have recounted and repeated what infinite sums of money the king's grace hath spent already in invading of France, once in his royal person, and two other sundry times by his several noble captains, and little or nothing in comparison of his costs hath prevailed; insomuch that the king's grace at this hour hath not one foot of land more in France than his most noble father had, which lacked no riches or wisdom to win the kingdom of France, if he had thought it expedient." But such warning was of little use. The people said, "if men should give their goods by a commission, then it would be worse than the taxes of France, and England should be bond and not free." The clothiers of Suffolk had been frightened into submission by the king's commissioners; but the men who worked for the clothiers now showed the agents of despotism where the burthen of oppressive taxation must chiefly fall. The narrative of Hall is deeply interesting, and shows of what solid stuff—the sturdy compound of acute feeling and plain sense—the Anglo-Saxon was composed. The people of Suffolk had begun "to rage and assemble themselves in companies." The duke of Suffolk was for subduing them by the strong hand, and directed that their harness should be taken from them. The people now openly rebelled; and the duke called upon the gentlemen to assist him. But they would not fight against their neighbours. More moderate councils prevailed. "The duke of Norfolk, high treasurer and admiral of England, hearing of this, gathered a great power in Norfolk, and came towards the commons, and of his nobleness he sent to the commons, to know their intent, which answered, that they would live and die in the king's causes, and to the king to be obedient: when the duke wist that, he came to them, and then all spake at once, so that he wist not what they meant. Then he asked who was, their captain, and bade that he should speak; then a well-aged man of fifty years and above, asked license of the duke to speak, which granted with good will. My lord, said this man, whose name was John Greene, sith you ask who is our captain, forsooth his name is Poverty, for he and his cousin Necessity hath brought us to this doing. For all these persons and many more, which I would were not here, live not of ourselves, but all we live by the substantial occupiers of this country, and yet they give us so little wages for our workmanship, that scarcely we be able to live, and thus in penury we pass the time, we, our wives and children; and if they by whom we live be brought in that case that they of their little cannot help us to earn our living, then must we perish and die miserably. I speak this, my lord: the cloth-makers have put all these people, and a far greater number from work; the husbandmen have put away their servants, and given up household; they say the king asketh so much that they be not able to do, as they have done before this time, and then of necessity must we die wretchedly: wherefore my lord, now, according to your wisdom, consider our necessity.' The duke was sorry to hear their complaint, and well he knew that it was true: then he said,

Neighbours, sever yourselves asunder, let every man depart to his home, and choose further four that shall answer for the remnant, and on my honour I will send to the king and make humble intercession for your pardon, which I trust to obtain, so that you will depart. Then all they answered they would, and so they departed home.”*

Of this attempt to tax the people without the consent of parliament, Mr. Hallam has said, “In the most remote and irregular times it would be difficult to find a precedent for so universal and enormous an exaction; since tallages, however arbitrary, were never paid by the barons or freeholders, nor by their tenants, and the aids to which they were liable were restricted to particular cases.”† The despot now learnt that his absolute rule was to have some limit. But for the artisans of Suffolk, England, at this period, would probably have passed into the condition of France, where the abuse of the royal power had long before deprived the people of their rights. “The courage and love of freedom natural to the English commons, speaking in the hoarse voice of tumult, though very ill supported by their superiors, preserved us in so great a peril.” Henry, with a meanness equal to his rapacity, affected not to know “that the commissioners were so straight as to demand a sixth of every man’s substance.” Wolsey took the blame upon himself. Pardons were issued for all the rioters; the commissions were revoked; and the old trick of a voluntary “benevolence” was again resorted to. The rich did not dare to show the spirit of the poor; and they yielded to irregular exactions in the form of gifts and loans, under the terror of such speeches as one which Wolsey made to the mayor and aldermen of London:—“It were better that some should suffer indigence than the king at this time should lack; and therefore beware, and resist not, nor ruffle not in this case, for it may fortune to cost some their heads.”‡

* Hall, p. 700.

† “Constitutional History,” vol. i. c. 1.

‡ Hall, p. 696.



Remains of the Gate House of Wolsey's College, Ipswich.

CHAPTER XIX.

Release of the king of France—Spirit of the Italians—The Sack of Rome—Character of the armies at Rome—The divorce of queen Catherine agitated—Difficulties of Wolsey—His embassy to France—He returns to new difficulties—Anne Boleyn at the English court—War declared against the emperor—Commission from the pope on the question of the divorce—Cardinal Campegius in England as legate with Wolsey—Interview of the legates with Catherine—Temper of the people in England—Opening of the legatine commission—Wolsey surrenders the great seal.

AFTER the capture of Francis I., the emperor made no attempt to follow up his success by any bold measures against France. He was without the means of paying an army to invade his rival's territories; and was too prudent, even if he had possessed the necessary finances, to risk an assault upon a brave and proud nation, who would maintain the integrity of their own kingdom though their king was a captive. Charles V. told the English envoys that it was best to be quiet. "The deer was in the net, and thought need only to be taken for the division of his skin."* He concluded an armistice with France for six months. He had complaints to make against

* Legrand, "Histoire du Divorce," vol. i. p. 41. This curious book furnishes valuable materials for the history of this period; especially in the letters of Jean du Bellay, bishop of Bayonne, who formed one of an embassy from France to England.

the English government. His ambassador had been insulted. A secret envoy of France had been in communication with Wolsey in London. He had discovered that the princess Mary, who had long been contracted to him, had been the object of a matrimonial negotiation both with France and with Scotland. Charles now demanded that the contract should be fulfilled. Henry declined to complete the arrangement, on account of the youth of his daughter; and insisted that the marriage should depend upon the ability of the emperor to give him the crown of France, or his willingness to surrender Francis to him, the king of England's, keeping. Charles, it is said, assumed an arrogant tone in these negotiations; but there was a greater impediment to friendship than his haughty bearing. He had no money to give Henry or his profuse minister. A treaty was entered into with the government of France, under the regency of the queen-mother, in which this essential condition of an alliance was amply provided for. But whilst the French cabinet made the most lavish engagements with Henry and Wolsey, having the full consent of the parliament of Paris, a protest was solemnly recorded against these conditions, that Francis might at some future time repudiate the contracts made in his absence. The conduct of each of the governments exhibits the low cunning of the most unscrupulous chafferers, instead of the high faith that should belong to all the transactions of great nations. The policy of England now more and more inclined to a league with France, which was completed in August, 1525. Meanwhile, Francis remained in captivity—first in Italy and afterwards in Spain. Negotiations for his release were at length entered into at Madrid, he having, after repeated refusals, consented to restore Burgundy to the emperor. After being a prisoner for more than a year, the king of France was released; and when his foot touched the French territory, he exclaimed, "Now I am again a king!" French historians say that after his capture he wrote, "All is lost, except honour." When he became free, all was gained at the price of honour. He refused to ratify his engagement for the surrender of Burgundy, to which he had solemnly sworn. The pope dispensed with his oath; and Henry instructed his ambassadors to urge him to violate it. In these dishonourable transactions the apprehension of the power of Charles V. might have influenced the secret conduct of the English government; as the same fear impelled the court of Rome, and other Italian states, to open hostility with the emperor.

The war upon which the pope entered against the emperor, in 1526, has a claim upon our sympathy; for it was a war for the independence of Italy. Clement VII. engaged in this war as a temporal prince; but his position as bishop of Rome had a material influence upon its results. The able historian of the popes shows that a strong feeling of common interest had arisen throughout Italy at this crisis. He says—"I am persuaded that their vast literary and artistical pre-eminence above all other countries was the main cause of this. The arrogance and rapacity of the Spaniards, as well leaders as common soldiers, was intolerable; and it was with a mixture of scorn and rage that the Italians beheld these half-barbarian strangers, masters in their land."* The passionate aspirations for a national unity—such feelings as have vainly blazed up again and again during three centuries—were expressed

by Giberto, the confidential minister of Clement VII.: "This time it is not a question of a petty vengeance, a point of honour, or a single city. This war will decide the deliverance or the eternal slavery of Italy."* Had that distracted country possessed a leader in a temporal prince, endowed with qualities such as might have competed with the decision of character that distinguished Charles V., she might have then emancipated herself from foreign sway. She has borne the yoke to this hour; and she probably will continue to bear it as long as the head of the Roman Church is also a secular ruler. The interests of the papacy, and the welfare of Italy, have been, in too many cases, wholly conflicting.

The doctrines of Luther had made considerable progress in Germany. Many pious and moderate men had adopted them from an earnest principle. The worldly-minded had taken their sides in the contest of opinions, from the hope of political or personal advantage. The turbulent and discontented of the cities, and the fierce adventurers of the mercenary armies, saw in the general hatred of the papal power a coming opportunity for spoliation. Clement VII. had stirred up this spirit into a bitter hostility to himself amongst the Germans, by his rupture of an alliance with the emperor. George Frundsberg, a German noble of great influence, had raised an army of sixteen thousand men, with small pay and large promises. In November, 1526, his fierce lance-knights crossed the Alps, made more ferocious even than their ordinary temper by hunger and all destitution. "If I get to Rome," said their leader, "I will hang the pope."† Bourbon, now the general of the emperor's armies in Italy—he who had endured the reproach of the dying Bayard, at the battle of Rebec, for being in arms against his prince and his country—had no resources for the supply of a mutinous army of various nations but the plunder of some hostile state. In January, 1527, he marched from Milan at the head of twenty-five thousand men. The winter was one of uncommon severity. The troops were wholly unprovided with necessaries. All the munitions of war were wanting. Spaniards, Italians, Germans, Flemings, starving and blaspheming, marched on for two months with no success but the plunder of the villages on their route. They dared not attack Placentia; for the confederate army hovered about them. They had no artillery to besiege Bologna. Clement, meanwhile, had concluded a separate treaty with Lannoy, one of the imperial generals, for a suspension of arms. Bourbon refused to be a party to the arrangement. He was the commander of men who, if he disappointed their hopes of booty, would turn and rend him. His plans were yet undecided. Florence or Rome were alike capable of furnishing plunder to his soldiers. At last, he moved out of Tuscany towards Rome. The pope made no attempt to defend the passes of the Roman territory. He repaired the breaches in the old city-walls; he erected a few new works; he armed the artificers. But in this hour of danger he appears to have relied too securely upon his spiritual weapons. He excommunicated Bourbon and his troops, denouncing the Germans as Lutherans and the Spaniards as Moors. On the 5th of May, Bourbon and his men were encamped before the magnificent capital; and as they gazed upon its domes and towers, they were told that the treasures which

* Ranke, vol. i. p. 104.

† *Ibid.*, p. 107.

had there been accumulating for centuries would be theirs at the morrow's dawn. On that morrow the eternal city was assaulted in three separate attacks. The morning was misty; and their approach to the suburbs was unperceived. There was a brave resistance of the few who defended the outworks. Bourbon leapt from his horse; and planting a scaling-ladder against the wall, shouted to his men to follow him. A ball from the ramparts terminated his career. His death produced no relaxation in the ardour of his followers. Their prey was before them; and in a few hours the devoted city was in their hands. The pope and his cardinals shut themselves up in the castle of St. Angelo. The scene that followed has been described by Guicciardini, and by the historian of Charles V. The elaborate description of Robertson is familiar to the majority of readers. There is an incidental narrative of Gibbon which has some remarkable peculiarities. His spirited outline in which the atrocities at the taking of Rome by the troops of Charles V. are compared with those of the Goths in the beginning of the fifth century, offers a brief summary of the lamentable results of the assault of Bourbon. "The ravages of the barbarians whom Alaric had led from the banks of the Danube were less destructive than the hostilities exercised by the troops of Charles V., a catholic prince, who styled himself Emperor of the Romans. The Goths evacuated the city at the end of six days, but Rome remained above nine months in the possession of the Imperialists: and every hour was stained by some atrocious act of cruelty, lust, and rapine. The authority of Alaric preserved some order and moderation among the ferocious multitude which acknowledged him for their leader and king; but the constable of Bourbon had gloriously fallen in the attack of the walls; and the death of the general removed every restraint of discipline from an army which consisted of three independent nations." Robertson has distinguished between the character of these different forces: "Whatever excesses the ferocity of the Germans, the avarice of the Spaniards, or the licentiousness of the Italians could commit, these the wretched inhabitants were obliged to suffer." Gibbon ascribes the same qualities to the Italians and Spaniards; but of the Germans he says, they "were less corrupt than the Italians, less cruel than the Spaniards; and the rustic, or even savage, aspect of these Tramontane warriors often disguised a simple and merciful disposition." What Gibbon adds of the Germans is more important than their national characteristics: "They had imbibed, in the first fervour of the Reformation, the spirit, as well as the principles, of Luther. It was their favourite amusement to insult, or destroy, the consecrated objects of catholic superstition; they indulged, without pity or remorse, a devout hatred against the clergy of every denomination or degree, who form so considerable a part of the inhabitants of modern Rome; and their fanatic zeal might aspire to subvert the throne of Antichrist,—to purify, with blood and fire, the abominations of the spiritual Babylon."* Gibbon is impartial in his hatred of religious fanaticism: "Many of the Castilians who pillaged Rome were familiars of the Holy Inquisition." A recent writer, of great ability, has endeavoured to associate the persecuting and ribald spirit of some of the early reformers with the terrible lessons that were learnt at the Sack of

* "Decline and Fall," vol. iv. p. 109, Dr. Smith's edit.

Rome: "There is said to have been among the followers of the duke of Bourbon (whether he was among the mock cardinals who rode in procession on asses, I do not know) an Englishman, of low birth, vicious habits, and infidel principles, who afterwards became of terrific importance to the Church of England." * The "ruffian," so conjectured to have been at Rome in 1527, was Thomas Cromwell. The connexion which Gibbon desires to show between the spirit of Luther—"the furious spirit," as he expresses it in a note—is not more a proof of the ferocity of the reforming temper of Germany, than of the provocation which the impostures and mummeries, the greediness and luxury, of the Roman Church, had offered to rough and ignorant men, with strong understandings and not wholly without "merciful dispositions." The enormities against which Luther fought were of a character to make the people hate and despise them, when they could do so without the dread of the gibbet and the stake. That they should have been handled delicately by the multitude is somewhat too much to expect from human nature. If Thomas Cromwell learnt his statesmanship in the plunder of Rome, as is inferred, the lessons derived from the exhibition of Luther's spirit must have been somewhat neutralised, if, as we are told, at the time when this event happened, "he had no preference and no respect for either popery or protestantism, and acted under no principle but that which taught him to do the best he could for himself." † Instead of ascribing the outrages of 1527 to the fanatic zeal of the young Reformation, it might therefore be safer to assign such effects of unbridled wickedness chiefly to individual selfishness, and to believe that the fanaticism in such case is only the cloak under which the rapacious man does the best he can for his own dirty profit. At any rate we may believe that fanaticism was the weed that grew up amongst the corn in a prolific soil; not confounding the abuse of a great principle with the principle itself.

The intelligence of the triumph of his arms, and of the excesses which disgraced it, produced in the emperor a singular attempt of policy to discriminate between the spiritual and the temporal power of the pope. By his command the people were called upon to mourn in his dominions, and to offer up prayers for the deliverance of the pontiff. This has been called "hypocrisy." ‡ It was an attempt to refine upon an occurrence which in the eyes of the multitude was a victory over the papal power, desecrated by wielding the carnal weapon. The people of England took this broad view of the question. Our English chronicler, who is a tolerably faithful expositor of the popular feeling, says,—"The king was sorry, and so were many prelates; but the commonly little mourned for it. * * * * The pope was a ruffian. * * * * He began the mischief and was well served." § Wolsey, according to the same authority, called upon the king to show himself a defender of the Church; and Hall puts this answer into Henry's mouth: "I more lament this evil chance than my tongue can tell; but when you say that I am Defender of the Faith, I assure you that this war between the emperor and the pope is not for the faith, but for temporal possessions and dominions." We may take such formal speeches in the old historians for what they are

* Dr. Maitland, "Essays on the Reformation," p. 228.

† Macintosh, "History," vol. ii. p. 130.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ Hall, p. 728.

worth—the setting forth of current opinion. The policy of the English government resolved itself into sending Wolsey as ambassador to France.

There is a passage in the chronicler which is as “the straw thrown up to show which way the wind blows.” Hall, with reference to the projected embassy, says,—“This season began a fame in London that the king’s confessor, being bishop of Lincoln, called Doctor Longland, and divers other great clerks, had told the king that the marriage between him and the Lady Catherine, late wife to his brother, Prince Arthur, was not good, but damnable; and the king hereupon should marry the duchess of Alençon, sister to the French king, at the town of Calais this summer; and that the viscount Rochfort had brought with him the picture of the said lady; and that at his return out of France the cardinal should pass the sea to go into France to fetch her. This rumour sprang so much that the king sent for sir Thomas Seymour, mayor of London, and strictly charged him to see that the people should cease of this communication, upon pain of the king’s high displeasure.”* There can be no doubt that the question of the divorce had been agitated at this period; and it having been made matter of close discussion, “a fame in London” might have spread out of those secret counsels. Wolsey left the court on his embassy on the 3rd of July, 1527. On the 1st of July, he had sent a despatch to the king, in which he declares his trouble that, in consequence of a message which he had sent to his highness, it has been supposed that he, Wolsey, doubted “of your secret matter.” He adds, “For I take God to record, that there is nothing earthly I covet so much as the advancing thereof:” † On the 5th of July, the cardinal writes a most elaborate despatch to Henry, in which he describes an interview which he had with the archbishop of Canterbury, Warham, at sir John Wiltshire’s house, near Dartford, where he lodged on the first night of his journey. The subject of their conversation was “of your secret matter, and such other things as have been done therein.” Wolsey showed the archbishop “how the knowledge thereof is come to the queen’s grace, and how displeasantly she taketh it.” It was the business of Wolsey to make the primate an instrument for advancing the king’s great object: “I have sufficiently instructed him how he shall order himself, in case the queen do demand his counsel in the said matter.” Henry’s zealous minister had also an interview with bishop Fisher, which he relates with great minuteness. The bishop was reserved; but Wolsey thus attacked him, to obtain from him a knowledge of the point upon which the queen had desired his advice, but of which the bishop affirmed that he knew nothing: “I replied and said, ‘My lord, ye and I have been of an old acquaintance, and the one hath loved and trusted the other, wherefore postponing all doubt and fear ye may be frank and plain with me, like as I, for my party, will be with you.’” The bishop still maintaining that he only conjectured what the matter was, Wolsey communicated to him the king’s desire for a divorce, “taking an oath of him to keep it close and secret.” Having explained to the prelate that the king’s doubts of the legality of his marriage had been first raised by the bishop of Tarbes, when he came to negotiate a matrimonial alliance between Francis and the princess Mary, Wolsey induced Fisher to impute “great blame unto the queen, as well for giving so light credence in

* Hall, p. 728.

† State Papers, published by the Record Commissioners, vol. i.

so weighty a matter; as also, when she heard it, to handle the same in such fashion as rumour and bruit should spread thereof." The unhappy queen was to remain impassive whilst "the great and secret affair" was maturing for her destruction. The pliant bishop doubted not but that if he might speak with her, and disclose unto her all the circumstances of the matter, "he should cause her greatly to repent, humble, and submit herself to your highness." The spirit of this injured woman was not understood by those who were thus labouring to render her a meek instrument of her own degradation.

The difficulties with which Wolsey was surrounded in this affair of the divorce appear to have been constantly in his mind during this journey to France. He was suspected by Catherine; for the queen, as he told Fisher, had said that it was by his "procurement and setting-forth a divorce was purposed." He dreaded the knowledge of the scheme being disclosed to the emperor; and therefore informs the king that according to his desire that Francis Philip's going into Spain "should be letted," he would endeavour so to order it that the traveller might be "stopped in some convenient place, without suspecting that the same proceedeth either of your highness or of me."* On the 29th of July he thus expresses his deep solicitude for the accomplishment of the king's purpose:—"Daily and hourly musing and thinking on your grace's great and secret affair, and how the same may come to good effect and desired end, as well for the deliverance of your grace out of the enthralled; pensive, and dolorous life that the same is in, as for the continuance of your health, and the surety of your realm and succession, I consider how the pope's holiness' consent must concur," &c.† Of that consent Wolsey had no doubt, if the pope could be delivered from his imprisonment at Rome. "In case the said peace cannot be by these means brought to effect, whereupon might ensue the pope's deliverance, by whose authority and consent your grace's affair should take most sure, honourable, effectual, and substantial end." He adds, as to the disposition of the pope, "who, I doubt not, considering your grace's gratitude, would facily [easily] be induced to do all things therein that might be to your grace's satisfaction and purpose." Here was one of the sunken shoals upon which Wolsey's policy was wrecked. Another shifting sand, equally dangerous, was the secret passion of the king for a lady of his court, which the cardinal appears to have considered as one of those capricious intrigues in which Henry, during even the happiest hours of his married life, indulged. The queen was now upwards of forty years of age; the king was in his thirty-sixth year. "The surety of your realm and succession," as expressed in Wolsey's letter to the king, of the 29th July, was the panacea which the statesmen of Henry's time applied to their consciences, when they were called upon to sanction any outrageous act of the royal will. In the case of the divorce of queen Catherine there was greater peril to the succession in the agitation of the question, than in the peaceful continuance, to the end, of that marriage which had given a female heir to the throne; and which the virtues of the queen, during eighteen years, had reconciled to the scrupulous doubters of the dispensing power which had first sanctioned the union. The princess Mary was born in 1516. Her education was carefully attended to, her accomplishments were various. In 1525 she was regarded

* State Papers, vol. i. 19th July.

† *Ibid.*, 29th July.

as the future queen of England, if we may judge from the circumstance that a vice-regal court was assigned her "to reside and remain in the marches of Wales." In the spring of 1527, when the bishop of Tarbes came upon an embassy to England, to demand her hand in marriage for Francis or one of his sons, the princess was at Greenwich. It was at this time that the doubt of the validity of the royal marriage with Catherine of Aragon was first raised. Within three months the divorce was the subject of the anxious thoughts of Henry's minister. On the 18th June, though Henry had thrown many obstacles in the way of princess Mary's marriage when the ambassadors were in England, Wolsey received a commission to settle the alliance with the king of France. It was one of the objects of his embassy. The succour of the pope in his misfortunes, in concert with Francis, was another object. Why Henry and his minister so ardently desired that the pope should be free, had a more imperative motive than the defence of the Church. During the imprisonment of Clément in the castle of St. Angelo, Henry was the only person who displayed any sympathy, by sending him supplies for his urgent necessities. Wolsey saw the means by which the pope might "facily be induced" to give Henry "satisfaction." Wolsey was mistaken in the final issue of his complicated schemes; but his sagacity was not at fault in his first movements. The pope made no absolute promises to Henry, but he allowed him to think a divorce possible, "as soon as ever the Germans and the Spaniards were driven out of Italy."* To conclude a league with France against the emperor was the mode in which this possibility was to be realised.

The pageantry of Wolsey's embassy, in 1527, has been described with great minuteness by Cavendish, one of his gentlemen-ushers. His mode of travelling, riding "like a cardinal, very sumptuously, on a mule trapped with crimson velvet," was not favourable to rapid progress. He rested at Canterbury; and at the feast of St. Thomas, when the monks sang in the litany, "Holy Mary, pray for our father Clement," he wept very tenderly. He landed at Calais, and before setting forward addressed all his suite, on the deportment they should observe, and on "the nature of the Frenchmen." He told them that it was their habit to commune with Englishmen in the French tongue, as though they understood every word: "therefore, in like manner, be ye as familiar with them again as they be with you. If they speak to you in the French tongue, speak you to them in the English tongue, for if you understand not them, they shall no more understand you." The cardinal, with that *bonhomie* which evidently made him beloved amidst all his haughtiness, turning to one of his gentlemen, a Welshman, said, "Rice, speak thou Welsh to him; and I am well assured that thy Welsh shall be more diffuse [obscure] to him than his French shall be to thee." Francis, with the queen-mother and a gorgeous court, came to meet the cardinal near Amiens. They remained at Amiens for more than two weeks, "consulting and feasting each other divers times." At Compiègne, to which the king and the cardinal travelled together, the chancellor of France and Wolsey had a violent dispute about the terms of the treaty; and the English minister hastily left the king of France's council, "wondrously offended." He was entreated to be reconciled, even by the queen-mother herself. He

* See Ranke, vol. i. p. 125.

at length yielded; and accomplished more than he could attain before the quarrel. "He had the heads of all the council so under his girdle that he might rule them all there as well as he might the council of England."

Wolsey, having fulfilled his mission, returned to England in the autumn of 1527. His magnificent reception by Francis—his banquetings and his boar hunts,—were not without some drawbacks of personal discomfort. A libellous book was published in France, about his embassy; of which the cardinal

complained, saying, "that if the like had been attempted within the realm of England, he doubted not but to see it punished according to the traitorous demeanour and deserts."* There was no redress after the complaint. Wolsey, with all his sagacity, had not learnt that the new power of the press was least dangerous when least controlled by despotic authority. The French did not look kindly upon the politic cardinal. "Some lewd person," says Cavendish, "whosoever it was, had engraved in the great chamber window where my lord lay, upon the leaning-stone there, a cardinal's hat with a pair of gallows over it, in derision of my lord." But he had greater inquietudes when he arrived home. He had risen at Compiègne at four o'clock in the morning, to write letters to the king, and had continued writing with only his nightcap and keverchief on his head till four o'clock in the afternoon. The cardinal had not only made a favourable treaty with France, and had added new strength to his own legatine authority in England, but was so confident in the matter of the divorce, that he had promised the mother of Francis that a princess of her house should wear the English crown within a year. Henry, at that time, was looking nearer home for a mistress or a wife.

In an old manor-house at Hever, near the river Eden, in Kent,—which under a license of Edward III. had assumed the character of a castle—dwelt Sir Thomas Boleyn, the grandson of a rich citizen of London, who was descended

from an honourable Norfolk family. Here was born to him a daughter Anne. In that sequestered place was her childhood passed—happy



Brass of Sir Thomas Bullen, in Hever Church.

* Cavendish, p. 183.

had she never gone beyond the moated walls of her father's house, to see more of the living world than she knew when she knelt in her village church, amidst the tenants of the manor. When Mary, the sister of Henry VIII., married Louis XII., in 1514, Anne Boleyn, then only seven years of age, was taken with her. Upon the widow of the French king returning to England as wife of Charles Brandon, the little Kentish girl remained in the household of the daughter of Louis, who afterwards became the wife of Francis I. This queen died in 1524; and Anne remained in France with the duchess of Alençon, the sister of Francis, till after the battle of Pavia, when she returned to England. Cavendish speaks of her influence at the court of Henry, before the embassy of Wolsey in 1527. She was one of the maids of honour to queen Catherine. It is clear that before the death of the earl of Northumberland, in 1526, the king had interfered to prevent her marriage with his son, "and even as my lord Percy was commanded to avoid her company, even so she was commanded to avoid the court, and sent home again to her father's for a season."* Wolsey interfered in this matter between the two lovers; saying that the king intended to have preferred the lady unto another person, with whom he had opened the matter. Percy married a daughter of the earl of Shrewsbury; "wherewith Mistress Anne Boleyn was greatly offended, saying, that, if it ever lay in her power, she would work the cardinal as much displeasure."† The lines of Sir Thomas Wyatt were considered by his grandson, who wrote a memoir of the unfortunate lady, to express the character of her charms:—

" A face that should content me wondrous well,
Should not be fair, but lovely to behold;
Of lively look, all grief for to repel
With right good grace; so would I that it should
Speak, without words, such words as none can tell."‡

Her beauty was that of expression. The court of Francis I. was not the purest for an attractive girl to be brought up in; but the scandalous age was unable to fix any charge upon her but that of her "lively look," before the period when she had the misfortune to captivate a royal voluptuary. The passion of Henry has influenced the destinies of England to this hour.

In October, 1527, a splendid embassy from France arrived in London, comprising the Marshal de Montmorenci, the bishop of Bayonne, and two other eminent persons. They came to invest Henry with the order of St. Michael. The cardinal vied with the king in giving them the most splendid entertainments. Wolsey feasted them at Hampton Court, which he still occupied, although he had presented it to Henry in 1525 to propitiate his good will, or to avert his passing wrath. Some of Wolsey's buildings still remain, whose spacious courts and broad oriel windows show something of its palatial magnificence; and whose ornamental brick chimneys, and gateways decorated with carvings and terra-cottas, exhibit the foreign taste that was beginning to prevail in English architecture. Wolsey was in high spirits at this season. He was late in his arrival at a sumptuous banquet to the strangers. The trumpets had warned them to supper. But the host had

* Cavendish, p. 129.

† *Ibid.*, p. 129.

‡ "Songs and Sonnets."

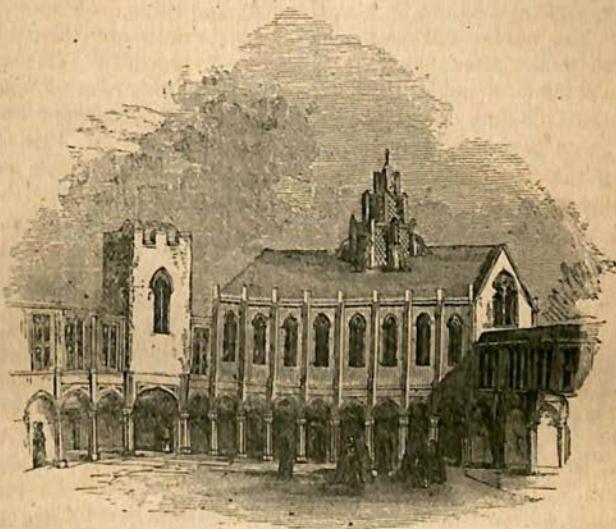
not come. "Before the second course, my lord cardinal came in among them, booted and spurred, all suddenly." Without shifting his riding apparel, he "sat himself down in the midst of the table, laughing and being as merry as ever I saw him in all my life." The days of trouble were at hand: "The long-hid and secret love between the king and Mistress Anne Boleyn began to break out into every man's ears. The matter was then by the king disclosed to my lord cardinal; whose persuasion to the contrary, made to the king upon his knees, could not effect. The king was so amorously affectionate, that will bare place, and high discretion banished for the time."*

At the beginning of 1528, war was formally declared against the emperor by France and England. "Guyon, herald for the French king, and Clarendieux for the king of England, the 14th day of January, in the city of Burgos, in Castile, came before the emperor, being nobly accompanied with dukes, marquises, earls, and barons, in his great hall, and there made their defiance." * * * * The nobles and gentlemen present "drew out their swords, and swore that the defiances then made should be revenged." † This war against Charles was most unpopular in England. The clothiers could not sell their broad-cloths; the bulk of the people, who were suffering from a great dearth of corn, could not obtain their wonted supplies out of Flanders. The conduct of the emperor towards England was marked by extreme moderation. He had thrown the blame of the quarrel upon Wolsey; alleging that he had provoked the war because the emperor would not satisfy his rapacity, or place him by force in the chair of St. Peter. Of the members of the French commission for the investment of Henry with the order of St. Michael, Jean du Bellay, bishop of Bayonne, remained as ambassador. His correspondence with the French government during the eventful years of 1528-9 presents us with incidental views of the state of England—the politics of the court, and the feelings of the people—more precise and life-like than we can derive from any other source. This clear-sighted bystander saw more of the game than the players. On the 16th of February, 1528, Bellay writes, "I think that he (the cardinal) is the only one in England who desires the war in Flanders." He describes how the London merchants had refused to go upon 'Change, so that the manufacturers being unable to sell their cloth, there might be revolt in the provinces. On the 23rd he says, that those who would gladly see Wolsey come to ruin, rejoice when everything goes wrong, and say, "These are the works of the legate." The government did not wholly set itself against the popular voice. An armistice was concluded between England and the Netherlands, whilst hostilities went on as between England and Spain. Meanwhile, the pope having been released from his confinement in December, 1527, it was the great object of Wolsey to obtain that favourable judgment of the king's "secret affair," which he had so confidently held out. In February, 1528, upon the urgent representations of Dr. Stephen Gardiner and Dr. Edward Fox, who had been sent to Rome, Clement granted a commission authorising Wolsey, as legate, with the aid of one of the English prelates, to inquire into the sufficiency of the dispensation for Henry's

* Cavendish, p. 204.

† Hall, p. 741-2. It is singular that Mr. Froude (Note in vol. i. p. 130) should have overlooked this most explicit statement. He says, referring to Hall, p. 744: "Hall says it war] was declared. I do not find, however, that there was a positive declaration."

marriage with his brother's widow, and to pronounce accordingly upon the validity or invalidity of that marriage. Wolsey shrank from this fearful responsibility; the more so that the king expressed himself satisfied. He had to encounter technical objections which in the ardour of his political views he had overlooked. When Henry knew of his honest doubts he chafed with indignation. Wolsey obtained a new commission from the pope, dated in June, 1528, in which cardinal Campegius was associated with him to try this great question of the legality of the marriage. The bishop of Bayonne, before the arrival of Campegius in England, says that Wolsey had to endure much anxiety in this matter, upon which Henry had set his heart. To the cardinal "the king uses the most terrible terms, because he fancies he is cooling." The great minister is talking of retiring from the affairs of the



Christchurch in the sixteenth century.

world. He walks with the French ambassador, and tells him "of the progress of his life to this hour, and by what means he had risen to such honour." Wolsey added, that "if God should give him grace to behold the hatred of the two peoples [the French and English] removed; a firm and perpetual peace accomplished between the sovereigns, as he hoped speedily to establish; and the laws and customs of the country reformed, as he would do if peace should come;—moreover, the succession of the kingdom assured, principally where this marriage is concerned and a heir male be born—then immediately he would retire and serve God for the remainder of his life."* What the reforms were that Wolsey pointed at in this remarkable exposition of his

* Legrand, vol. iii. Letter of 20th August, pp. 157—168. Mr. Froude renders this declaration thus: "If he could only see the divorce arranged, the king re-married, the succession settled, and the laws and the church reformed, he would retire," &c. The words of the original are, with reference to the purposed reform, "*les Loix et Costumes du pays reformées.*"

political aspirations is not clear. It has been objected to him that he desired to supersede the Common law of England by the Civil law. That he even hinted at a reform of the Church may be greatly doubted. Of his express mention of such a purpose there is not a word in the ambassador's letter. He had suppressed some of the most insignificant of the monasteries by a special authority as legate; and he had devoted their revenues to his noble foundation of Christ-church, at Oxford, and his college at Ipswich. But that he contemplated any change approaching in the least degree to carrying out the principles of the Reformation, is a theory which his devotion to the see of Rome will scarcely warrant us in believing.

The alliance with France did not proceed satisfactorily in its influence upon secular politics, any more than it did in forwarding the great object of Henry's desire in the submission of the pope to his will in the matter of the divorce. If the emperor had been controlled by the armies of France in Italy, and by the dread of more active hostility from England, Clement would probably have been subservient to the English king, and Wolsey's policy would have triumphed. But at the moment when the forces of Francis, under Lautrec, the French general, had been successful at every point over the Imperialists, and were besieging Naples with every prospect of success, the malaria fever and the plague swept off his men with a rapidity far more fatal than the most sanguinary battle; and the miserable remnant of his army capitulated to the forces of Charles in September, 1528. The emperor was now predominant. The Germans and the Spaniards were not driven out of Italy, as Clement had thought probable. The aunt of Charles was the queen against whom the ungracious measure of the divorce was directed. He was naturally and honestly opposed to the project. The pope was obliged to resort to equivocation and half-measures. Wolsey was left to do his best with an imperious master and a discontented people.

Cardinal Campegius arrived in England on the 9th of October. He was to be received triumphantly; but he declined all solemnities, "being sore vexed with the gout." The chronicler says that, "on the coming of this legate, the common people, being ignorant of the truth, and in especial women and other that favoured the queen, talked largely, and said that the king would for his own pleasure have another wife, and had sent for the legate to be divorced from his queen."* On the 8th of November, Henry summoned an assembly to his palace of Bridewell, and set before them the danger of the realm should he die without a true heir to the throne; the doubts that had been raised about the legitimacy of his daughter; and the care with which he had sought counsel of the greatest clerks in Christendom, having sent for the legate, as a man indifferent, to know the truth and to settle his conscience. † The king had set forth his own opinion in a treatise upon the question of his divorce, which, as he expressed himself in one of his letters to Anne Boleyn, "maketh substantially for my matter, in writing whereof I have spent above eleven hours this day, which causeth me now to write the shorter letter to you now at this time, because of some pain in my head." ‡ After the king had expounded his "matter" to the assembly in his

* Hall, p. 754.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Henry's letters to Anne are printed in Grove's "Life of Wolsey." Also in the "Harleian Miscellany;" where the eleven hours of the above quotation appear as *four*. Vol. i. p. 198, ed. 1808, 8vo.

palace, the two legates waited upon the queen, who was also there lodged ; and " declared to her how they were deputed judges indifferent between the king and her." Hall, in his magniloquent style, puts a long and violent oration into the mouth of the queen. Cavendish also relates an interview between the queen and the legates, in his own graphic manner, so full of natural touches that we may willingly put aside any doubts of its authenticity :—

" With that she came out of her privy chamber with a skein of white thread about her neck, into the chamber of presence, where the cardinals were giving of attendance upon her coming. 'At whose coming, quoth she, 'Alack, my lords, I am very sorry to cause you to attend upon me ; what is your pleasure with me ?' 'If it please you,' quoth my lord cardinal, 'to go into your privy chamber, we will show you the cause of our coming.' 'My lord,' quoth she, 'if you have anything to say, speak it openly, before all these folks ; for I fear nothing that ye can say or allege against me, but that I would all the world should both hear and see it ; therefore I pray you speak your minds openly.' Then began my lord to speak to her in Latin. 'Nay, good my lord,' quoth she, 'speak to me in English, I beseech you ; although I understand Latin.' 'Forsooth, then,' quoth my lord, 'madam, if it please your grace, we come both to know your mind, how ye be disposed to do in this matter between the king and you ; and also to declare secretly our opinions and our counsel unto you, which we have intended of very zeal and obedience that we bear to your grace.' 'My lords, I thank you then,' quoth she, 'of your good wills, but to make answer to your request I cannot so suddenly, for I was set among my maidens at work, thinking full litle of any such matter, wherein there needeth a longer deliberation, and a better head than mine, to make answer to so noble wise men as ye be ; I had need of good counsel in this case, which toucheth me so near ; and for any counsel or friendship that I can find in England, (they) are nothing to my purpose or profit. Think you, I pray you, my lords, will any Englishman counsel or be friendly unto me against the king's pleasure, they being his subjects ? Nay, forsooth, my lords ! and for my counsel, in whom I do intend to put my trust be not here ; they be in Spain, in my native country. Alas, my lords ! I am a poor woman lacking both wit and understanding sufficiently to answer such approved wise men as ye be both, in so weighty a matter. I pray you to extend your good and indifferent minds in your authority unto me, for I am a simple woman, destitute and barren of friendship and counsel here in a foreign region ; and as for your counsel I will not refuse but be glad to hear." It would appear that Cavendish, waiting upon the cardinal, heard what passed in "the chamber of presence." He adds, "And with that she took my lord by the hand and led him into her privy chamber, with the other cardinal ; where they were in long communication. We, in the other chamber, might sometime hear the queen speak very loud ; but what it was we could not understand." *

The winter of 1528-29 was, in London, a season of great excitement. The court and the people were at issue. The sycophantic and unscrupulous of the higher classes were crowding to win the smiles of the triumphant lady whom the king did not hesitate to proclaim as the object of his affections.

* Cavendish, p. 227.

On the 9th of December, the bishop of Bayonne gave a minute account of the state of affairs in London: "Mistress Boleyn [Mademoiselle de Boulan] has at last come here; and the king has placed her in a beautiful lodging, which he has finely decorated, close to his own; and every day there is a greater court about her than, for a long time, has been about the queen."* Of the popular feeling he thus speaks: "I think that, little by little, they would accustom this people to endure her, that when the time comes to give the last blow it should not produce much surprise. * * * * An order has been issued that only ten shopkeepers of each nation shall reside in London." This banishment of strangers of three nations from the capital applied, we may suppose, to Flemings, Spaniards, and Germans. Its effect must have produced the most extensive derangement of commercial affairs, if, as is here said, "more than fifteen thousand Flemings would in consequence be removed." The people were suspected of a disposition to revolt. "There has been a search for fire-arms and cross-bows; and wherever they are found in the city they are taken away, so that they are left with no worse weapon than the tongue." With the great there was less indignation: "As to the nobles, the king has made them so understand his fantasy, that they speak more soberly than they were wont to do." Amidst all this open and suppressed dislike of the proceedings of the court, the national spirit was surging up at the notion of foreign dictation. The emperor, knowing his popularity in England, had threatened that he would expel Henry from his kingdom by his own subjects. Wolsey repeated this before an assembly of a hundred gentlemen. They were silent; but one at last said—"By those words the emperor has lost a hundred thousand hearts in England." Wolsey laboured hard to make Charles hated and Francis beloved in England; "but," says the French ambassador, "it is a hard thing to strive against nature."†

Seven months elapsed between the arrival of cardinal Campegius in London and the opening of the legatine court, which he and Wolsey were authorised to hold. That these delays were the consequence of the pope's indecision—his dread of offending the emperor, and his fear of England and France—there can be small doubt. It was a time of anxiety for Wolsey that might make him well desire to escape from this position of danger to his own diocese—to do his duty as a churchman, instead of piloting the vessel of the state in these stormy waters. At length on the 18th of June, 1529, the court of the legates was solemnly opened, by reading the commission of the pope to the judges of the cause. "That done, the crier called the king, by the name of 'king Henry of England, come into the court, &c.' With that the king answered, 'Here, my lords.' Then he called also the queen, by the name of 'Catherine, queen of England, come into the court, &c.' who made no answer to the same." This is the account which Cavendish gives. Burnet denies that the king appeared, except by proxy; and says that the queen withdrew after reading a protest against the competency of the judges. The historian of the Reformation is clearly in error. There are many collateral proofs that the king was present. Cavendish makes the queen, kneeling, thus address the king, "in broken English:—" "Sir, I beseech you for all the loves that hath been between us, and for the love of God, let me have justice and right,

* Legrand, tom. iii. p. 231.

† Legrand, tom. iii. p. 233.

take of me some pity and compassion, for I am a poor woman and a stranger born out of your dominions. I have here no assured friend, and much less indifferent counsel; I flee to you as to the head of justice within this realm. Alas! sir, wherein have I offended you, or what occasion of displeasure have I designed against your will and pleasure; intending (as I perceive) to put me from you? I take God and all the world to witness, that I have been to you a true, humble, and obedient wife, ever conformable to your will and pleasure, that never said or did anything to the contrary thereof, being always well pleased and contented with all things wherein you had any delight or dalliance, whether it were in little or much, I never grudged in word or countenance, or showed a visage or spark of discontentation. I loved all those whom ye loved only for your sake, whether I had cause or no; and whether they were my friends or my enemies. This twenty years I have been your true wife or more, and by me ye have had divers children, although it hath pleased God to call them all out of this world, which hath been no default in me." The remainder of Catherine's speech dwells upon the circumstances of her second marriage—the wisdom of Henry VII. and of Ferdinand, who would not have promoted it had it not been good and lawful. The queen then rose, and "took her way strait out of the house." Henry commanded the crier to call her again, of which she was informed by her receiver, Master Griffith, who supported her with his arm. "On, on," quoth she, "it maketh no matter; for it is no indifferent court for me, therefore I will not tarry. Go on your ways."* Henry, according to the same authority, made a speech, touching his griefs and necessities, and Catherine's goodness.

The queen not again appearing, she was declared contumacious. The legates continued to sit till the 30th of July; having examined witnesses, and received documentary evidence, touching the marriage of prince Arthur. They then adjourned without coming to any decision. During the sittings of the court, Wolsey had to endure the anger of him whose passion was as uncontrollable as it was dangerous. At the breaking up of the court, one day, he was sent for by the king. "And to accomplish his commandment he went unto him, and being there with him in communication in his grace's privy chamber from eleven until twelve of the clock and past at noon, my lord came out and departed from the king and took his barge at the Black Friars, and so went to his house at Westminster. The bishop of Carlisle being with him in his barge, said unto him, (wiping the sweat from his face,) 'Sir,' quoth he, 'it is a very hot day.' 'Yea,' quoth my lord Cardinal, 'if ye had been as well chafed as I have been within this hour, ye would say it were hot.'"[†]

The expected fall of the great cardinal was the political revolution which might now be accomplished at any moment. The queen was removed from the court; and Anne accompanied the king in his pleasure-progress during the hunting season. Campegius having made suit to return to Rome, he and Wolsey set out to meet the king at Grafton; "before whose coming there rose in the court divers opinions that the king would not speak with my lord cardinal." But when Wolsey came into the presence of Henry, and knelt before him, "he took my lord up by both arms, and caused him to stand up;

* Cavendish, p. 213—17.

† *Ibid.*, p. 225.

whom the king, with as amiable a cheer as ever he did, called him aside, and led him by the hand to a great window, where he talked with him and caused him to be covered."* Henry "dined that day with Mistress Anne Boleyn, in her chamber, who kept there an estate more like a queen than a simple maid." The picture which Cavendish then presents is a curious illustration of the manners of the period, as well as of its politics:—

"As I heard it reported by them that waited upon the king at dinner, that Mistress Anne Boleyn was much offended with the king, as far as she durst, that he so gently entertained my lord, saying, as she sat with the king at dinner, in communication of him, 'Sir,' quoth she, 'is it not a marvellous thing to consider what debt and danger the cardinal hath brought you in with all your subjects?' 'How so, sweetheart?' quoth the king. 'Forsooth,' quoth she, 'there is not a man within all your realm worth five pounds, but he hath indebted you unto him,' (meaning by a loan that the king had but late of his subjects). 'Well, well,' quoth the king, 'as for that there is in him no blame; for I know that matter better than you or any other.' 'Nay, sir,' quoth she, 'besides all that, what things hath he wrought within this realm, to your great slander and dishonour. There is never a nobleman within this realm, that if he had done but half so much as he hath done, but he were well worthy to lose his head. If my lord of Norfolk, my lord of Suffolk, my lord my father, or any other noble person within your realm, had done much less than he, but they should have lost their heads or this.' 'Why, then, I perceive,' quoth the king, 'ye are not the cardinal's friend?' 'Forsooth, sir,' then quoth she, 'I have no cause, nor any other that loveth your grace, no more have your grace, if ye consider well his doings.' At this time the waiters had taken up the table, and so they ended their communication."

Wolsey never again saw king Henry. When Michaelmas term commenced on the 9th of October, he went with his usual state to the Court of Chancery: it was the last time that he there sat as chancellor. On the 17th of October he surrendered the great seal, not without some contest with the dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk; and retired from his noble palace of York Place, to that humbler dwelling of Esher, whose tower still recalls the memory of the most influential man of his time.

* Cavendish, p. 239.

EDWARD VI.



MARY.



Wolsey's Tower at Esher.

CHAPTER XX.

Wolsey quits York Place—His progress to Esher—Thomas Cromwell—He defends Wolsey in Parliament—Sir Thomas More, Chancellor—Statutes against ecclesiastical abuses—Resistance of the Clergy—Heresy—The king discharged of his debts by statute—Christmas at Greenwich—Embassy to the pope—Cranmer—Opinions of the Universities on the divorce—Wolsey in his see of York—His popularity—Is arrested on a charge of treason—His death, and the king's lament.

WOLSEY has left, and for ever, his palace of York Place. In its gallery hung with cloth of gold,—in its gilt chamber and its council chamber,—his cupboards are thrown open, and give to view his astonishing hoards of gold and silver plate, “whereof some was set with pearl and rich stones.” His velvet, satin, and damask stuffs; his richest suits of copes; his thousand pieces of fine holland cloth;—these visible riches are placed upon divers tables, with an inventory upon every table. All these effects—every thing that he possessed—were taken from him, under the sentence of the Court of King’s Bench, that his lands, goods, and chattels were forfeited, and that his person was at the mercy of the king. The charge against him was, that, as legate, he had violated the statutes of præmunire, by exercising his powers under a foreign authority. To this charge Wolsey answered: “I have the king’s license in my coffers under his hand and broad seal, for exercising and using

the authority thereof [of the legatine prerogative] in the largest wise, the which now remaineth in the hands of my enemies."*. In departing from the scene of his magnificence, the minister, thus abandoned by his preacherous master, says, "It hath pleased the king to take my house ready furnished for his pleasure at this time."† His barge waits at those stairs where poor Buckingham landed and sought him in vain. "At the taking of his barge," says Cavendish, "there was no less than a thousand boats full of men and women of the city of London, wafting up and down in Thames, expecting my lord's departing, supposing that he should have gone directly from thence to the Tower, whereth they rejoiced." He adds: "I dare be bold to say that the most part never received damage at his hands." Who can wonder at the curiosity of this multitude to witness the ejection of the great statesman who had governed them for twenty years! All the harshness of a harsh time would be attributed to him. His ecclesiastical magnificence had been paraded too long before them, to amaze and subdue as of old. Wolsey was the representative of a Church that was becoming more proud and insolent as its true greatness was fast perishing. "The authority of this cardinal," writes the contemporary chronicler, "set the clergy in such a pride that they disdained all men."‡ In his temporal office of chancellor the fallen judge had been a protector of the poor. But every man in high office was to some extent an oppressor: "the people be ever pilled and polled by hungry dogs."§ And so Wolsey went on amidst the thousand boats to Putney, pitied by the few, scorned by the many who "watch the sign to hate." There was one in his train to whom in that hour all the changes of his own adventurous life must have been rendered doubly vivid by local associations. Thomas Cromwell, the son of a fuller of Putney; the agent of a factory at Antwerp; the trooper in the duke of Bourbon's army at the sack of Rome; the rough tool of Wolsey in the suppression of some of the smaller monasteries,—he, through the fall of his great master, is once more likely to be cast upon a frowning world, and have to fight some new battle for preferment, perhaps even for safety. The cavalcade passes through Putney town. The cardinal has knelt in the dirt when a messenger from the king has brought him a ring in token of the royal favour. He has parted with his poor fool upon Putney-neath—the faithful fool, "who took on and fired so in such a rage when he saw that he must needs depart," even though he was sent to make sport for a jovial king, instead of abiding with a humiliated priest. Wolsey has reached his desolate house of Esher, wholly unprovided with common necessities,—with "beds, sheets, tablecloths, cups, or dishes." It is ten years since he was wont to say to the Venetian ambassador, "I shall do so and so."|| He now writes to Dr. Stephen Gardiner, praying him to extend his benevolence towards him; and begging for pecuniary help from the sovereign who has stripped him of everything. These are his abject words: "Remember, good Mr. Secretary, my poor degree, and what service I have done, and how now, approaching to death, I must begin the world again."¶ Well might the French ambassador write, of one who had gone through such a terrible trial to a proud spirit, that Wolsey could say nothing so expressive

* Cavendish, p. 276.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 348-50.

‡ Hall, p. 774.

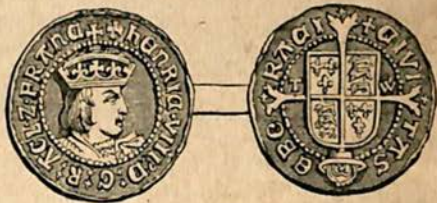
§ Cavendish, p. 252.

|| Despatches of Giustiniani, translated by R. Brown.

¶ Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 9.

of his pitiable condition, as what was spoken in his face, "reduced to half its usual size." *

It is All-hallown-tide, the 1st of November, when a strange scene occurs in the Great Chamber at Esher. Cavendish, the gentleman-usher, sees Thomas Cromwell leaning on the window, with a primer in his hand, repeating his matins. But "he prayed not more earnestly than the tears distilled from his eyes." Cavendish asks, "Why, Master Cromwell, what meaneth all this your sorrow?" Cromwell answers, "It is my unhappy adventure, which am like to lose all that I have travailed for all the days of my life, for doing of my master true and diligent service." He is in disdain, he says, with most men for his master's sake; and then he imparts something to Cavendish, in confidence: "Thus much will I say to you, that I intend, God willing, this afternoon, when my lord hath dined, to ride to London, and so to the court, where I will either make or mar, or I come again." The bold man accomplished the purpose upon which he had mused amidst his prayers and tears. He returned from London, and told Cavendish, "that he had once adventured to put in his foot, where he trusted shortly to be better regarded, or [ere] all were



Wolsey's Groat.

done." He had whispered some words of magical import into the ears of the king, which saved Wolsey for a season, and made himself, in due time, the most powerful of Henry's servants. The parliament met on the 3rd of November. Thomas Cromwell, through some sudden influence, became a member. Sir Thomas More, as chancellor, in his opening speech, had thus harshly spoken of his predecessor. The people he said were the sheep, and the king the shepherd: "And as you see that amongst a great flock of sheep some be rotten and faulty, which the good shepherd sendeth from the good sheep, so the great wether which has of late fallen, as you all know, so craftily, so scabbedly, yea, and so untruly juggled with the king, that all men must needs guess and think that he thought in himself, that he had no wit to perceive his crafty doing." † But Cromwell was in the Commons'-house, there to save the great wether from the knife. "There could nothing be spoken against my lord in the parliament-house," says Cavendish, "but he would answer it incontinent, or else take until the next day; against which time he would resort to my lord to know what answer he should make in his behalf." The articles exhibited by the Lords against Wolsey—such as his writing to Rome, "Ego et Rex meus"—his putting the cardinal's hat on his York groat—his sending large sums to Rome—and similar charges of ecclesiastical assumption, were evidently held insufficient to sustain any accusation of offence "to the prince's person or to the state," as Wolsey himself alleged. It was not Henry's purpose then to crush Wolsey. We may be sure that Cromwell would not have dared to defend him if the king

* Legrand, tom. iii. p. 370.

† Hall, p. 764.

had willed his condemnation. The future was too doubtful to allow the king utterly to destroy a cardinal of the Roman see, whilst there was anything to hope in the matter of the divorce from the decision of the pope. Amongst the charges against Wolsey was one which was probably introduced to make the spiritual lords his severe judges: "He hath slandered the church of England in the court of Rome, for his suggestion to be legate was to reform the church of England." It was an offence to suppose that the church needed reformation. The reforms of Wolsey had touched only "small monasteries," as he wrote to the king, "wherein neither God is served ne religion kept." The endowments of Ipswich and Oxford were his alleged purpose in the appropriation of these monastic revenues. The abbot of York, offering the cardinal three hundred marks to save the priory of Romburgh, in Suffolk, from being united to St. Peter's of Ipswich, desires that his grace would "accept my poor mind towards your most noble acts."* It is related of Cromwell that, in speaking of what might come after the fall of his master, he said, "New statesmen, like fresh flies, bite deeper than those which were chased away before them."† When Cromwell uttered this aphorism, the time was not come when the churchmen would have interpreted the saying as prophetic of his own career.

There had not been a parliament called since 1523. During the legatine rule of Wolsey, the pecuniary exactions of the church had become oppressive to all ranks of the people. The spirituality had grown essentially worldly-minded; and any attempt to resist their encroachments was stigmatised with the terrible name of heresy. In the six weeks of their session the Commons asserted their determination to set some bounds to a power which was more obnoxious, because more systematic in its pecuniary inflictions, than the illegal subsidies and compulsory loans of the crown. That acute observer, the bishop of Bayonne, saw the storm brewing when the protecting shield of Wolsey was removed from the clergy. On the 22nd of October he writes, "It is not yet known who will have the great seal; but I firmly believe that the priests will not touch it again, and that they will have terrible alarms at this parliament."‡ Sir Thomas More, as we have seen, received the seal. There was a certain point of reform to which More would go; but not a step beyond. The reformers of doctrine were as obnoxious to him as to Wolsey; who in his dying hours sent a request to the king, "in God's name, that he have a vigilant eye to depress this new pericious sect of Lutherans."§ More had the reputation of leaning "much to the spiritual men's part in all causes."|| But, though a rigid Catholic in doctrine and discipline, he was too wise and honest not to see that the rapacity of the officials of the church, and the general laxity as to pluralities and non-residence, were shaking the foundations of ecclesiastical authority, even more than the covert hostility of the dreaded Lutherans. We cannot doubt that it was with his sanction that three important statutes were passed in this parliament of the 21st year of Henry. The statutes themselves furnish a sufficient evidence of their necessity. "An act concerning fines and sums of

* "Letters relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 3.

† Lloyd's "State Worthies," ed. 1670, p. 59.

‡ Cavendish, p. 329.

§ Legrand, tom. iii. p. 377.

|| Hall, p. 771.

money to be taken by the ministers of bishops and other ordinaries of the holy church for the probate of testament," recites a statute of Edward III., made "upon the complaint of his people for the outrageous and grievous fines" so taken; and a further statute of Henry V. It then proceeds to declare "that the said unlawful exactions of the said ordinaries and their ministers be nothing reformed nor amended, but greatly augmented and increased, against right and justice, and to the great impoverishment of the king's subjects."* This was a grievance which touched every owner of property. Sir Henry Guildford declared in parliament, that as executor to Sir William Compton he had paid for the probate of his will, to the cardinal and the archbishop of Canterbury, a thousand marks. But there was another species of exaction which fastened upon the dead with the rapacity of the vulture,—and reached even the humblest in the land. This was the taking of mortuaries, or corpse presents; which the statute describes as "over excessive to the poor people, and other persons of this realm."† The chronicler, reciting this grievance, says, "for the children of the defunct should all die for hunger, and go a-begging, rather than they would of charity give to them the sely cow which the dead man ought [owned], if he had only one."‡ By these two statutes the fees upon probates, and the demand for mortuaries, were brought within reasonable limits. There were other causes of complaint against the ecclesiastics. It was objected, that spiritual persons occupied farms; bought and sold at profit various kinds of produce; kept tan-houses and breweries,—all which practices were declared unlawful, and were prohibited under heavy penalties. The dissatisfaction they provoked is indicated in the recital of the benefits to be expected from their abolition,—"the increase of devotion, and good opinion of the lay fee toward the spiritual persons."§ The same statute regulates the holding of pluralities, and enforces residence; but the exceptions are so numerous that we may readily believe that there was a wide door open for the evasion of its penalties. In spite of the reforming act there would be still too many churchmen "living in the court in lords' houses, who took all of the parishioners, and nothing spent on them at all;" and too many "well-learned scholars in the universities, which were able to preach and teach, having neither benefice nor exhibition."||

That the ecclesiastics would stoutly resist such attacks upon long-continued abuses, which in their minds had assumed the shape of rights, was a necessary result of their extensive power. No vital blow had as yet touched the strong fabric of their prosperity; but this assault upon its outworks portended danger close at hand. Their resistance was as unwise as it was useless. Fisher, the aged bishop of Rochester, in defending the churchmen in parliament, denounced the petitions of the Commons upon the subject of probates, mortuaries, non-residence, and other causes of complaint, as intending "to bring the clergy in contempt with the laity that they might seize their patrimony;" and he said, "see what a realm the kingdom of Bohemia was, and when the church went down, then fell the glory of the kingdom: now with the Commons is nothing but 'down with the church,' and

* 21 Hen. VIII. c. 5.

† Hall, p. 765.

§ 21 Hen. VIII. c. 13.

† *Ibid.*, c. 6.

|| Hall, p. 765.

all this, me seemeth, is for lack of faith only." * At this speech the Commons were indignant, and complained to the king through their Speaker, that in the bishop's saying about 'lack of faith,' they were held as infidels and not as Christians. The bishop made what the chronicler calls "a blind excuse;" he declared that he applied the words to the Bohemians. During the progress of the discussions in parliament on these bills there was much railing on both sides. The spiritual persons regarded the promoters of these measures as heretics and schismatics, and defended their own practices by prescription and usage. The laity retorted in the words of a barrister of Gray's Inn,—“The usage hath ever been of thieves to rob on Shooter's hill—ergo, it is lawful.” In this first great quarrel of the Church and the Commons there were wounds inflicted which never healed.

At a time when ancient habits of implicit obedience to authority were in some degree passing away, and men began to think and talk of the principles of government, whether in Church or State, we can easily imagine that the exactions of the clergy, thus repressed, had produced a far deeper hostility from their meanness and injustice than from their pecuniary amount. On every side there were the evidences of the vast endowments of the English church;—splendid cathedrals, rich abbeys, shrines of inestimable value, bishops and abbots surrounded with baronial splendour, ample provision for the working clergy. And yet all the wealth of this church, acknowledged to be greater than that of any other church in Christendom, could not protect the people from the irritating demands which were generally made at the season of family affliction, and pressed too often upon the widow and the fatherless. These oppressions were more keenly felt because, however the Commons might disavow the accusation, there was a doubt, very widely spread, of the infallibility of the Church, which doubt bishop Fisher denominated “lack of faith.” It was not only the dislike of proctors, and summoners, and apparitors—a dislike as old as the days of Chaucer—which influenced many sober and religious persons; but the craving for some higher teaching than that which led to the burning of the English Testament in St. Paul's Churchyard. Many copies of Tyndale's translation had been brought into the country, “which books the common people used and daily read privily; which the clergy would not admit, for they punished such persons as had read, studied, or taught the same, with great extremity.” † Wolsey made strenuous efforts to restrain the printing of the Scripture in the people's tongue; as we learn from a most interesting letter of Anne Boleyn to Cromwell, after she became queen: “Whereas we be credibly informed that the bearer hereof, Richard Herman, merchant and citizen of Antwerp, in Brabant, was in the time of the late lord cardinal put and expelled from his freedom and fellowship of and in the English house there, for nothing else, as he affirmeth, but only for this—that he did both with his goods and policy, to his great hurt and hindrance in this world, help to the setting forth of the New Testament in English.” The queen, therefore, prays the powerful secretary, to restore “this good and honest merchant” to his liberty and fellowship. ‡ It is painful to think that whilst this toleration sprang out of the kind heart and

* Hall, p. 766.

† *Ibid.*, p. 771.

‡ Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 46.

clear understanding of "Mistress Anne," the equally kind nature of Sir Thomas More was so crusted over by his rigid habits of submission to the discipline of the church, that for the use and study of Tyndale's and Joy's Testaments, "he imprisoned and punished a great number, so that for this cause a great rumour and controversy rose daily amongst the people."* These persecutions against the possessors of the Testament were a part of that system of accusations for heresy, which had rendered England a terrible country for earnest men and women to live in, who sought a higher guide to duty than the absolute direction of the priest. Contrary to the statute of Henry IV., which, however to be condemned as sanctioning the persecution of the Lollards, required that they should be openly proceeded against, accused persons were now subjected to secret examination; were detained in custody for unlimited periods; were discharged without amends; or consigned to the stake if condemned of heresy, or to make purgation and bear a faggot to their shame and undoing. These examinations were conducted in the mode invariably pursued by spiritual authorities committing the most frightful wickedness in the assured belief that they were thus saving souls: "Upon the examination of the said accusation, if heresy be ordinarily laid unto the charge of the parties so accused, then the said ordinaries or their ministers are to put to them such subtle interrogatories concerning the high mysteries of our faith, as are able quickly to trap a simple unlearned, or yet a well-witted layman without learning, and bring them by such sinister introductions soon to their own confusion."† Under "such subtle interrogatories" we may believe that many a person was set upon the scaffold at Paul's Cross, to bear the faggot and to be preached at, like James Baynham, in 1531. Lucky were those who thus escaped upon their submission. Those of the heroic mould, who could look death in the face for conscience sake—as this lawyer did, who refused to accuse his friends in the Temple, or to show where his books were, recanting his former abjuration,—such had to abide the fires of Smithfield, and find an honourable place in the Protestant martyrology.

Wolsey was a bold financier, and his projects, as we have seen, were not always successful when he attempted to raise money without the instrumentality of parliament. But when Wolsey was gone, there appeared less



James Baynham doing penance.

* Hall, p. 771.

† Petition of the Commons, 1529, given at length in Mr. Froude's "History," as transcribed by him from the MS in the Rolls' House.

scrupulous managers of the royal revenues than the unhesitating cardinal. The king had obtained very large sums, by way of loan, from public bodies and from individuals, in 1525, when the insurrections of Suffolk, compelled him to withdraw the demand for a sixth of every man's substance. Those who had lent the money,—and Wolsey had used his rhetoric most unsparingly to swell the number,—“reckoned surely of the payment of the same, and therefore some made their wills of the same, and some other did set it over to other for debt.”* The Lords and Commons had the audacity to renounce all claims to these loans, not only for themselves, but for every man to whom the king was indebted, in consideration of his highness's constant labours to defend his kingdom, to uphold the church, and to establish peace amongst his subjects. For, say they, his highness “hath been fain to employ, not only such sums of money as hath risen and grown by any man's contribution made unto his grace by his said loving subjects, but also, over and above the same, sundry other and excellent sums of his own treasure and yearly revenues, which else his grace might have kept and reserved for his own use.”† After this avowal, we may understand better how hard a struggle it has been to attain the principle and practice of a constitutional monarchy, the leading idea of which is, that the high place and prerogative of the crown is a trust for the benefit of the people; and that its hereditary revenues, after setting aside a fitting portion for the royal dignity, are for maintaining the safety and peace of the realm. It required all the insolent despotism of a Tudor to humiliate the parliament to an assertion that the enormous revenues which the Plantagenets had never hesitated to spend for public objects, were to be deemed as private funds, “which his grace might have kept and reserved to his own use.”

The parliament, which had accomplished such salutary reforms, and also perpetrated such gross injustice, was prorogued on the 17th December. “After the parliament was thus ended, the king removed to Greenwich, and there kept his Christmas with the queen, in great triumph; with great plenty of viands, and divers disguisings and interludes, to the great rejoicing of his people.”‡ In quoting this passage from the chronicler, Mr. Froude attributes this great rejoicing to a feeling of exultation at the church reforms effected by the parliament: “Lay England celebrated its exploits as a national victory.”§ We fear that “lay England” was moved to its rejoicing by more vulgar considerations than the historian ascribes to this festive season. The statement of the chronicler must be compared with his previous notices of occasions of popular enthusiasm. We will take one of the third year of Henry: “The king this year kept the feast of Christmas at Greenwich, where was such abundance of viands served, to all comers of any honest behaviour, as hath been few times seen.” The “all comers” would shout over “the great plenty of viands,” though “when the release of the loan was known to the commons of the realm, lord! so they grudged, and spoke ill of the whole parliament.”|| Some simple people probably rejoiced that the king “kept his Christmas with the queen.” Those who saw the inside of the palace would not have hastily judged that the affair of the divorce was at an end

* Hall, p. 767.

‡ Hall, p. 768.

† 21 Hen. VIII. c. 24.

§ “History,” vol. i. p. 233.

|| Hall, p. 767.

because the great cardinal had fallen, and no mention was made of this unhappy matter in the parliament. On the 31st of December, there is this record in the king's 'Privy Purse Expenses: ' "Item, the last day delivered by the king's commandment to my lady Anne, Cx li." At the end of November there is paid the enormous sum of 217*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.* "to Walter Walsh, for certain stuff by him prepared for Mistress Anne, of divers persons, as appeareth by a bill." During this holiday-time we find, in the same book of expenses, evidence that one of Henry's early follies had not been extinguished by politics and polemics. In the second year of his reign Hall has this remark: "The king this time was much enticed to play at tennis and at dice, which appetite certain crafty persons about him perceiving, brought in Frenchmen and Lombards to make wagers with him.* In his twenty-first year, the privy-purse keeper "delivered to the king's own hands for to game therewith, now at this time of Christmas," 100*l.*; and on Twelfth night, 112*l.* 10*s.* 0*d.* In January there are four entries of payments for moneys lost by the king "at game: "—To Domingo, 400*l.*; to sir Thomas Palmer, 338*l.* 10*s.* 9*d.*: to Master Seymour, 376*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*; to my lord of Suffolk, 102*l.* 10*s.* 0*d.*† The royal custom has survived amongst us in many a notorious example. The loans advanced by honest creditors are repudiated; the gambling debts to "crafty persons" are scrupulously discharged. He who said that "kings are fond of low company," must have had Henry, amongst others, in his mind. Domingo, and Palmer, were two hangers-on of the court, who made the king thus pay for their powers of amusement,—far more ignoble servants than his fools, Somers, Sexton, and Williams. Skelton, seven years before the king lost 400*l.* to Domingo, had celebrated the court doings of this worthy, who was a Lombard:—

" Domingo Lofmelyn,
That was wont to win
Much money of the king
At the cards and hazarding."‡

But after these Christmas revelries, Henry's intimate sharpers walking off with their plunder, he has serious business on his hand. The disguisings and interludes of Greenwich, with Mistress Anne ever the gayest of the throng, whilst the queen sits in her solitary chamber, make the king more and more impatient on the subject of the divorce. The emperor is to be crowned by the pope at Bologna, in February, 1530. On the 23rd of January we find that the sum of 1743*l.* 8*s.* 0*d.* is paid "by the king's commandment for the depechement of my lord Wiltshire and others, in their journey towards the emperor." "My lord of Wiltshire" was Anne Boleyn's father. The "others" were Doctor Stokesley, elected bishop of London, and Doctor Henry Lee, the king's almoner. With them were also "divers doctors both of law and divinity." Amongst these was Thomas Cranmer, who was an inmate of the house of the earl of Wiltshire. This divine, who occupies so prominent a part in the history of the Reformation, had now reached the discreet age of forty. He had obtained at the university of Cambridge a reputation for talent and learning; and Wolsey had offered him a fellowship in

* Hall, p. 520.

† Sir N. H. Nicolas, "Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII.," pp. 4—17.

‡ Skelton's Works, Mr. Dyce's edit., vol. i. p. 68.

his new college at Oxford. This Cranmer declined. An accidental circumstance led to his passing from his quiet studies to the dangerous intrigues of the court. Whilst the sweating sickness prevailed at Cambridge, in 1528, Cranmer resided with a friend at Waltham Abbey. Gardiner and Fox, afterwards bishops, met him at the table of his friend; and the conversation turning upon the agitated matter of the divorce, he expressed his opinion that the question, whether a man might marry his brother's widow, might be settled upon scriptural authority, expounded by learned divines, which opinions could be obtained as well in England as from Rome. The notion was communicated to the king; and Cranmer had to work out his lucky idea in a book which he was desired to write. He maintained that the marriage of Henry was condemned by the authority of the Scriptures, and that of councils and fathers of the church; and that the pope had no power to give a dispensation opposed to those sources of belief. In the embassy to the emperor, which was truly an embassy to Clement VII., Cranmer was associated to defend his own propositions.

The pope was at Bologna, an unwilling agent in the humiliation of Italy. The war with the imperialists had desolated the fairest spots of Lombardy. Famine and pestilence had completed the misery which war had begun. There is a letter from sir Nic. Carew to Henry, dated from Bologna, the 12th of December, which presents as striking a picture as was ever drawn of the wide-spreading misery produced by the contests of ambition. In travelling fifty miles they saw no creature stirring in rural industry, except three women gathering grapes rotting upon the vines. In Pavia the children were crying about the streets for bread. There was neither horse-meat nor man's meat to be found. "There is no hope many years that Italia shall be restored, for want of people."* Clement, the weak and vacillating bishop of Rome, but the patriotic Italian prince, had, amidst this misery, to place the crown on the head of Charles, as king of Lombardy and emperor of the Romans. The ceremony took place at Bologna on the 24th of February. One who was present at the coronation, and stood between the throne of the emperor and the pope, says that Clement "endeavoured to put on the most cheerful countenance in giving the emperor the sword, and placing the first crown on his head;" but he adds, "I believe that he never in his life performed a ceremony which so nearly touched his heart. For several times, when he thought that no one was observing him, he breathed such heavy sighs that his robe [chape] heavy as it was, was heaved up, as might well be seen."† Before the emperor departed from Bologna the earl of Wiltshire had arrived. He had a difficult office to perform—that of moving the pope to a decided course, in the presence of Charles, who had very sufficient reasons for strenuously resisting the demands of Henry. He had to conciliate the emperor, by offering the restitution of queen Catherine's original dowry. He had to work upon the pope's fears, by intimating that "the Defender of the Faith" would pursue his own career, if the holy see was inimical, without bending to its authority. To the father of Anne Boleyn the emperor objected that he was an interested party in the case; and although the earl replied

* State Papers, vol. vii. p. 226.

† Letter of the bishop of Tarbes, dated February 24. Legrand, tom. iii. p. 386.

with spirit, that he was there only as the subject and servant of his master, and to express the scruples of his conscience and his firm intention no longer to live in sin, Charles maintained a resolute attitude of hostility to the whole proceeding.* The unhappy pope was in a fearful perplexity. He said to the bishop of Tarbes, several times, that he cared not how the marriage of Henry should be accomplished, by dispensation of the legate in England, or otherwise. All that he desired was to shift his personal responsibility.† The embassy returned home, having effected nothing. Cranmer remained, with the desire to contend the matter in a public disputation; but he was not permitted thus to support the opinions of his treatise, or to set forth the favourable decisions of some foreign universities which had been already obtained.

The declarations which were gathered from the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and from universities and ecclesiastical bodies in France and Italy, were favourable to the desires of the king of England, as they pronounced against the lawfulness of his marriage with his brother's widow. It has been a subject of historical contention whether these opinions were given with perfect fairness; or whether intimidation and bribery were not resorted to. Into this discussion it is scarcely necessary for us to enter. There are some characteristic letters of Henry, which clearly enough show that the younger members of the university of Oxford were frightened into a submission which the seniors readily yielded. When such a sovereign sent to the convocation his command that they should not lean "to wilful and sinister opinions of your own several minds;" and desired the heads of houses to conduce and frame the young persons into order and conformity; for "if the youth of the university will play masteries as they begin to do, we doubt not but they shall well perceive that non est bonum irritare crabrones" [it is not good to disturb a hornet's nest]—then, we may be sure, it was quite unnecessary surreptitiously to affix to the decision the university seal gotten out "by strange subtil means," as queen Catherine intimated. Cambridge also admitted the unlawfulness of the marriage, according to the divine law; but gave no answer upon the question whether the pope had power to grant a dispensation. In March, 1531, these opinions were laid before the House of Commons; and More, as chancellor, said, "Now you of this Commons House may report in your countries what you have seen and heard; and then all men shall openly perceive that the king has not attempted this matter of wil' or pleasure, as some strangers report, but only for the discharge of his conscience, and surety of the succession of the realm."‡ More, in his inmost heart, disliked the whole measure, and these official words must have come very hesitatingly from his lips. The religious plea, "for the discharge of his conscience;" and the political plea of the "surety of the succession of the realm," were the self-deceptions with which Henry covered the impulses of his own passions, prompting him to the grossest cruelty and injustice. The able historian who sets up the state necessity as an excuse for many of the enormities of this reign, considers that this question was one "vitally affecting the interests of a great nation;" and avers that "the laity, with the alternative

* In a second letter of the bishop of Tarbes. Legrand, iii. p. 400.

† Legrand, iii. p. 400.

‡ Hall, p. 780.

before them of civil war, and the returning miseries of the preceding century, could brook no judgment which did not answer to their wishes.* Is it to be believed that the remote possibility of a disputed succession had thus interested the laity,—by which term we understand the body of the people,—to become enthusiastic supporters of the king's personal desire to put away the companion of more than half his life,—the mother of a daughter to whom their allegiance would have been readily transferred on the event of the king's death, without the slightest chance of civil war? The English people were not then, nor have they been at any time, so ready to encounter a great present difficulty for a contingent danger. The general opinion is pretty clearly set forth by the contemporary chronicler: "When these determinations were published, all wise men in the realm much abhorred this marriage: but women, and such as were more wilful than wise or learned, spake against the determination, and said that the universities were corrupt, and enticed so to do,—which is not to be thought." The voice of nature spoke by the mouths of "women and such as were more wilful than wise or learned." They understood not the subtleties by which the so called "wise men" justified oppression. Those who desired the reform of the church did not see that this harsh measure was a step towards purity of doctrine. The foreign Protestants were decidedly hostile to what was held, by friend and by foe, not as a religious question, or a national question, but was denominated "the king's cause."

Whilst the earl of Wiltshire is vainly exercising his diplomatic skill upon the pope and the emperor, and Cranmer is as vainly endeavouring to convince the Italian priests and the German Lutherans that a papal dispensation was of no avail, Wolsey has passed out of political life; and is doing his duty with a heartiness deserving of all respect. In the first prostration of his powerful mind, when he saw nothing before him but poverty and disgrace, he wrote to Cromwell from Esher, "Mine only comfort. At the reverence of God leave me not now, for if ye do, I shall not longer live in this wretched world."† But Cromwell writes comfortable letters to his fallen master; who, next to the means of his future subsistence, has the deepest anxiety about the maintenance of his colleges, of which he dreaded the dissolution. He urges with a warmth that does him honour, that "great pity it is that for my commission in the præmunire, these poor scholars should suffer, either by dissolution of their body corporate, or by taking away any notable portion of their lands." Early in February, Wolsey received a general pardon; and having been assured of the temporalities of the see of York, he took up his residence in the archiepiscopal city. The council had agreed to advance him a sum for the expenses of his journey, to which the king had added a thousand pounds. A circular letter was also sent with the royal signet, calling upon the nobles and gentlemen of the country to show themselves as regarded him, "of toward and benevolent mind, using, entreating, and accepting him as to his dignity doth appertain."‡ The archbishop had now confidence in the kindness of Henry. He told Cavendish that in the matter of the præmunire he thought it better to take all blame upon himself "than to stand in trial with the

* Froude, "History," vol. i. p. 250.

† State Papers, vol. i. p. 359.

‡ Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 17.

king ;” and he added,—“There was a continual serpentine enemy about the king that would, I am well assured, if I had been found stiff-necked, have called continually upon the king in his ear (I mean the night-crow) with such a vehemency that I should, with the help of her assistance, have obtained sooner the king’s indignation than his lawful favour: and his favour once lost (which I trust at this present I have) would never have been by me recovered.” * Wolsey was deceived in his reliance upon his sovereign’s “lawful favour.” Upon the gratitude or generosity of that man no friend could rely. “The king,” says Hall, “all this year dissembled the matter, to see what he [Wolsey] would do at length.” What he did was in the highest degree commendable. He lived with rational hospitality instead of ostentatious grandeur. “He kept a noble house, and plenty of both meat and drink for all comers, both for rich and poor, and much alms given at his gates . . . He used much charity and pity among his poor tenants and other . . . He was much more familiar among all persons than he was accustomed, and most gladdest when he had an occasion to do them good.” † This is the tribute of an affectionate follower. After he was dead, a book was published, bearing an official character, in which it was said, that “he gave bishops a right good example how they might win men’s hearts.” There is a most interesting letter from Cromwell to Wolsey, dated from London the 18th of August, in which the tone is that of sincerity and affection, mixed with some familiar advice, which sufficiently shows the altered positions of the proud cardinal and his once humble retainer. The magnificence which the great minister had practised for twenty years, had become too much a part of his nature to be wholly changed for true simplicity of life in his altered fortunes: “Sir, I assure your grace, that ye be much bound to Our Lord God, that in such wise hath suffered you so to behave and order yourself, in those parts, to attain the good minds and hearts of the people there; the report whereof in the court and elsewhere in these parts, is and hath been to the acquiring and augmenting the good opinions of many persons towards your grace; beseeching your grace, therefore, to continue in the same, after such a sort and fashion as ye may daily increase, not only in the favour of the people there, but also here and elsewhere, to the pleasure of God, and the prince. And notwithstanding your good, virtuous, and charitable demeaning and using yourself, in those parts, is not by your enemies interpreted after the best fashion, yet always follow and persevere ye attemperately in such things as, your worldly affections set apart, shall seem to stand best with the pleasure of God, and the king. Sir, some there be, that doth allege that your grace doth keep too great a house and family, and that ye are continually building; for the love of God, therefore, I eftsoons, as I often times have done, most heartily beseech your grace to have respect to everything, and, considering the time, to refrain yourself, for a season, from all manner buildings, more than mere necessity requireth; which I assure your grace shall cease, and put to silence, some persons that much speaketh of the same.” ‡

Within little more than two months after this warning of Cromwell, the enemies of Wolsey prevailed for the accomplishment of his complete ruin.

* Cavendish, p. 316.

‡ State Papers, vol. i. p. 366.

† *Ibid.*, p. 318.

Whether the influence of "the night-crow" operated upon the royal mind, so as to render the complaints of an impulsive and frank-speaking woman the chief incentive to a dire malignity, can only be conjectured. Wolsey had offended Anne Boleyn in 1528, by appointing a prioress to be an abbess of Wilton, when Henry had promised her that such appointment should not be made.* He perhaps had more seriously offended her by his hesitating conduct in the matter of the divorce. But no new cause of offence, to the king or to herself, is revealed by any authentic historical documents. On the 4th of November, the time approaching for his installation at York as archbishop, Wolsey was sitting at dinner at Cawood Castle, when he was told that the earl of Northumberland was come into his hall, with a great company. Wolsey went to receive him, and proffered him the hospitality of his house. He led the earl into his bed-chamber, "where," as the courteous host he said, "is a good fire," and there "ye may shift your apparel until your chamber be made ready." Cavendish kept the door as gentleman usher. "These two lords standing at a window by the chimney, in my lord's bed-chamber, the earl trembling said, with a very faint and soft voice unto my lord (laying his hand upon his arm), 'My lord, I arrest you of high treason.'" Wolsey was committed to the custody of the earl's people, Cavendish having been chosen to attend upon him as the chief person, and taking an oath that was prescribed to him. In a few days they departed, amidst the tears and prayers of the archbishop's household. As he passed out of the gates of Cawood Castle, three thousand people surrounded him, exclaiming, "God save your grace, God save your grace! The foul evil take all them that hath thus taken you from us." The unhappy man must have had some cheering thoughts in that ominous hour. He was not wholly deserted. He had earned the blessings of the poor. He remained at Sheffield-park for a fortnight, under the charge of the earl of Shrewsbury. Here he became ill. Thither came Master Kingston, the constable of the Tower. Wolsey knew well what the presence of that officer implied. Kingston said some soothing words to him, such as gaolers were sometimes wont to speak to state prisoners. He replied, "Master Kingston, all these comfortable words which ye have spoken be but for a purpose to bring me into a fool's paradise: I know what is provided for me." After three days' riding, the sick man and his guards reached Leicester Abbey; and he was received by torch-light, with great reverence, on a Saturday night. "Father abbot, I am come hither to leave my bones among you," were his memorable words. On the following Tuesday he was at the point of death; when he uttered these more memorable words to Master Kingston: "If I had served God as diligently as I have done the king, he would not have given me over in my gray hairs." He died on the 29th of November, aged 59. Cavendish, after the funeral, repaired to London; and was sent for by the king to come to Hampton Court. Henry was shooting at the rounds in the park. The gentleman-usher leant against a tree; when Henry came suddenly behind him, and slapt him on the shoulder, telling him to wait till he had made an end of his game. Cavendish then discoursed with him for more than an hour. One rankling grief was upon the sovereign's mind, with reference to the friend and adviser of twenty years. A

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 314

sum of fifteen hundred pounds had been entered in Wolsey's accounts, which entry the earl of Northumberland had seen. Kingston had pressed the dying man to account for the money, who said that he had borrowed it to distribute amongst his servants, and for his own burial; and had placed it in the hands of an honest man. The chief business of this magnanimous king with Cavendish was to obtain the knowledge where this treasure was hidden; and Cavendish told him. "Well, then," quoth the king, "let me alone, and keep this gear secret between yourself and me, and let no man be privy thereof; for if I hear any more of it, then I know by whom it is come to knowledge."* * He had broken the great heart of his too faithful servant; but he thought only of the contents of the money-bags, to be appropriated to jewels for my lady Anne, and to wagers with Domingo.

* Cavendish, p. 398.



Ruins of Leicester Abbey.



Queen Anne Boleyn. (From a Painting by Holbein.)

CHAPTER XXI.

A great field of English history now to be entered upon—The clergy visited with heavy penalties for submitting to Wolsey as legate—The pope's sentence on the divorce still protracted—The pope threatened—Frith and Tyndale, the reformers—Act regulating payment of Annates to Rome—Retirement of More—His official character—Severe laws—The poisoner's cauldron—Laws against gipsies—Laws against vagabonds—Infamous severity of the statute against vagabonds of 1536—Henry and Anne Boleyn in France—Marriage of Henry with Anne—Cranmer elevated to the primacy—He pronounces the marriage of Henry with Catherine unlawful—Coronation of queen Anne—Catherine's refusal to accept the title of Princess Dowager.

WE are entering upon a great field of our history, in which, amidst the most crooked and uncertain paths, we have to feel our way at every step. Those who have set forward on this difficult journey with the most determined resolution to see nothing but good in the wide prospect before them, have obliterated many of the traces of the dangerous and thorny roads by which a desirable end was to be reached. Those who have shut their eyes to this good have been ever looking back upon the level plains out of which they have emerged into this rugged and in many respects desolate region. More than three hundred years have passed since the greatest revolution in our country,—the reform of religion,—was commenced in England. More than

a hundred and fifty years have passed since it was thoroughly accomplished. The passions and prejudices which belonged to such a mighty change still survive amongst us, in a modified shape. They still give a colour to our political feelings and to our religious life. Let us endeavour to tell this wondrous story with a strict regard to the evidences upon which a true narration must be founded; and, above all things, let us, in every statement, never attempt to compromise our natural hatred of oppression and cruelty, by regarding them other than as the means by which the "Divinity that shapes our ends" saw fit to accomplish a paramount good by the strong hand of evil instruments. •

In January, 1531, the parliament met after a long prorogation. The manifest abuses of the church had been restrained by the statutes of 1529; and the failure of its feeble resistance had shown how weak it was to stand up against any new attack, however unjust. Wolsey was ruined for having violated, with the king's consent, the statutes of *præmunire*. The clergy were now subjected to prosecution in the King's Bench for having obeyed the power of Wolsey as legate, which obedience was held to bring them within the charge of being his "fautors and abettors." The church felt its danger; and in convocation it was resolved to avoid the forfeiture of the moveable property of the offending bishops and others, by offering the king a large sum of money. To effect this compromise an act was passed by which the king grants, "out of his high goodness and great benignity," a pardon to his spiritual subjects, they having "given and granted to him a subsidy of one hundred thousand pounds." * This act extended to the province of Canterbury. That of York had to pay a smaller sum in the following year. But there was a great preliminary difficulty in effecting this compromise. It was required in the grant that the king should be styled "the protector and only supreme head of the church and clergy of England." The acknowledgment, after much contention, was made, with the addition of the words, "as far as the law of Christ will allow." Dr. Lingard holds that the introduction of these words served to invalidate the recognition. The acknowledgment, whether conditional or otherwise, was probably intended to intimate to the pope that little regard would be paid to his authority if the procrastination of the divorce were longer continued. This measure had now been more than three years in agitation, and it appeared as far as ever from a conclusion under the papal authority. Henry was in dread of being cited to Rome; and in April, 1531, desires his ambassador, Dr. Benet, to use every means "to put over the process, as long as ye may;" and yet, "as of yourself privily to say to the pope, that ye be advertised from your friends out of England, such as be learned in the laws and of our council, that it were the plainest entry the pope might make to the destruction of his whole authority, to strike upon this point to call us to Rome." † The king desired that the cause should be decided in an indifferent place, by indifferent judges. The emperor was wholly opposed to the process being removed from Rome; and urged the pope to make no more delays in the matter. ‡ The emperor had with the pope "a voice potential." We cannot trace the course of these tedious negotiations, which all tended to one end,

* 22 Hen. VIII. c. 15
VOL. II.

† State Papers, vol. vii. p. 297.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 817.
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—the destruction of the papal power in England. Henry saw this clearly enough ; and told his ambassador to say to the once honoured pontiff,—“ here lieth a great number in wait to hear of open dissention between the pope and Us ; and as soon as that trumpet bloweth, they will think a most propice [propitious] occasion to strike at his power, which is in all points abhorred, as he and other his predecessors hath used it.”* Yet at this period was the king so far from connecting his impatience of the papal power with any favour to the doctrines of the reformers, that he has instructed Vaughan, his ambassador in the Netherlands, “ to advise a young man named Frith, to leave his wilful opinions and errors, and to return into his native country ;” and, through Cromwell, has also desired that good and wholesome exhortations for his conversion and amendment should be given to Tyndale. Frith did return ; and, as Cranmer very unfeelingly wrote in 1533, was “ to go unto the fire.” Tyndale remained in the Netherlands, to be first imprisoned, and then strangled, by the persecutors of the reformers there, in 1536, after having published his admirable translations of the Scriptures, which the “ Defender of the Faith” proscribed. We cannot forbear extracting a passage from the letter of Vaughan to Henry VIII., describing the noble answer of this eminent man to the ambassador’s offer of Henry’s “ pity and compassion :”—“ I assure you,” said he, “ if it would stand with the king’s most gracious pleasure to grant only a bare text of the Scripture to be put forth among his people, like as is put forth among the subjects of the emperor in these parts, and of other Christian princes, be it of the translation of what person soever shall please his majesty, I shall immediately make faithful promise never to write more, nor abide two days in these parts after the same, but immediately to repair into his realm, and there most humbly submit myself at the feet of his royal majesty ; offering my body to suffer what pain or torture, yea, what death, his grace will, so this be obtained ; and till that time I will abide the asperity of all chances, whatsoever shall come, and endure my life in as many pains as it is able to bear and suffer. And as concerning any reconciliation, his grace may be assured, that, whatsoever I have said or written in all my life against the honour of God’s word, and so proved, the same shall I, before his majesty and all the world, utterly renounce and forsake, and with most humble and meek mind embrace the truth, abhorring all error, sooner at the most gracious and benign request of his royal majesty, of whose wisdom, prudence and learning, I hear so great praise and commendation, than of any other creature living. But if those things which I have written be true, and stand with God’s word, why should his majesty, having so excellent a gift of knowledge in the Scriptures, move me to do anything against my conscience ?” †

That a great crisis was approaching in the papal relations of the English church, must have been sufficiently apparent to the ecclesiastics and statesmen of 1532, in the passing of “ An Act concerning the payment of Annates to the court of Rome.” The statute recites that the Annates, or first-fruits of archbishoprics and bishoprics, “ were first suffered to be taken within the realm for the only defence of Christian people against the infidels, and now they be claimed and demanded as mere duty, only for lucre, against all right

* State Papers, vol. vii. p. 298.

† *Ibid.*, p. 303.

and conscience." * This statute limits the payment upon the papal bulls for consecration to five pounds for each hundred of yearly value; and in the case of the denial of such bulls provides for consecration in England without the papal authority. But, the king's quarrel with Rome not yet having come to a final rupture, Henry was empowered to give or withhold his assent to the Act, by letters patent. The statute, to use the familiar language of modern times, gave the king power to put on the screw. How this qualifying power was to be used may be seen in a letter from the duke of Norfolk to Benet, of the 22nd of February, 1532: "Notwithstanding the infinite clamours of the temporality here, in parliament, against the misusing of the spiritual jurisdiction; yet in his highness doth remain to stop all such effects; and will do so, unless ill and unkind handling enforce him to consent to the same." † The king did not confirm the Act of January, 1532, till July, 1533, when he had finally broken with Rome. It was not in the interest of his people, who were injured by the papal exactions, that he put an end to them. Henry had entered upon a bold course, not without very serious danger. If his strength of will had been supported by any higher principle than that of the most intense self-love, we might go a great way with his admirers in giving due praise to his constancy and courage in "this great argument." Those who were in his confidence made no resistance to the papal domination except with reference to the king's personal griefs. "You may surely affirm to his holiness," writes Norfolk to Benet, "that notwithstanding the church hath in this realm many wringers at their high authorities, yet nothing hurtful shall be done, unless the fault be in him in proceeding wrongfully and ungrately against the king." ‡ In this, we see none of the unshackled action of a representative government—none of the just influences of a people long nurtured in habits of freedom. We see that if the one despot were propitiated, the church might abuse "its high authorities," how many soever were complaining under them.

As we proceed in the history of this reign we shall have to relate the enactment of tyrannical laws, and the unlicensed perpetration of cruel and sanguinary deeds, which sufficiently indicate the unbridled will of the head of the government. During the administration of Wolsey, with the exception of the execution of Buckingham, we have no record of legal slaughters, and little encroachment upon popular liberty. The change is supposed to have been produced when the ascendancy of Wolsey, through his able administration of public affairs, and his adroitness in making his sovereign believe that he was the real pilot of the state vessel, was removed. Sir Thomas More, who succeeded Wolsey as chancellor, was a thoroughly conscientious minister; but he was in a false position. He held the great seal only about two years and a half, and then resigned his office. Retiring, with small provision of fortune, but richly endowed with a contented and happy nature, he wrote to Erasmus, that "he had obtained what, from a child, he had continually wished—that, being freed from business and public affairs, he might live for a time only to God and himself." During his tenure of high place, the persecution of heretics was not violent. Erasmus has said, that it was a sufficient proof of his clemency that while he was chancellor no man was put

* 23 Hen. VIII. c. 20.

† State Papers, vol. vii. p. 349.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 349.
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to death "for these pestilent dogmas." But he took part in the examination of heretics before the council; sanctioned their imprisonment; and caused a boy and a bedlamite to be whipped for "ungracious heresy," according to his own statement. That More, at this period, should have manifested a devoted attachment to the doctrines of the church without entertaining some of its persecuting spirit, was scarcely to be expected, even from his beautiful nature. But there is nothing, even in the statements of the zealous and credulous historian of the Protestant martyrs, to warrant a modern writer in saying of More, "no sooner had the seals changed hands than the Smithfield fires recommenced."* We have already mentioned the case of William Baynham, sometimes called Baynard. He suffered death by burning at Smithfield, according to Fox, on the 30th of April, 1532. There is a "Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London," in which such events are minutely recorded; and the only entry of this nature, from the removal of Wolsey from the chancellorship to the appointment of More's successor, is this, of the 23rd year of Henry, 1532: "And also this year was William Barnard, a man of law, and two more with him, burned in Smithfield for heresy, *in May*." More surrendered the great seal on the 16th of May. We ought to pause upon this contradiction to the date given by Fox, before we decide that Erasmus stated what was untrue.

Whilst More was chancellor, and in that capacity the framer of new laws, it may be worth inquiring whether, in matters unconnected with ecclesiastical affairs, we can trace an equally savage spirit as that which is subsequently forced upon our notice. We are asked by the historian of this period to regard a statute of 1531 with especial attention, "because the temper which this Act exhibits is the key to all which has seemed most dark and cruel in the rough years which followed; a temper which would keep no terms with evil, or with anything which, rightly or wrongly, was believed to be evil, but dreadfully and inexorably hurried out the penalties of it.†" The statute thus prominently put forward as indicating the temper of the nation and of the parliament—"the English were a stern people,"—was one which arose out of the attempt of one Richard Rouse to poison the family of the bishop of Rochester; and it was enacted that poisoning should be deemed high treason, without having any advantage of clergy, and that Richard Rouse, and all future poisoners, should be "boiled to death." We are told by the historian, that "the poisoner's cauldron was the fresh expression of the thought of the parliament of the Reformation."‡ And yet the crime of poisoning was so punished, ten years before Henry VIII., "considering that man's life, above all things, is chiefly to be favoured," caused the statute to be passed. We have the following undoubted record under the 13th year of Henry: "This year was a man sodden in a cauldron in Smithfield; and let up and down divers times till he was dead, for because he would have poisoned divers persons."§ In the same Chronicle we have a record of the fate of Richard Rouse, in which the same horrible barbarities, probably relics of an earlier period, were practised as in 1522. "This year [1532] was a cook boiled in a cauldron in Smithfield, for he would have poisoned the bishop of Rochester, Fisher, with

* Froude, History, vol. ii. p. 83.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 239.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ "Grey Friars' Chronicle," Camden Society, p. 30.

divers of his servants ; and he was locked in a chain, and pulled up and down with a gibbet at divers times till he was dead." * Certainly this punishment was not "the fresh expression of the thought of the parliament." Was it any peculiar result of the energetic and reforming spirit in the parliament, as the historian holds, that a statute was passed "concerning Egyptians?" The act says, without any covert meaning, that "many outlandish people, calling themselves Egyptians, using no craft nor faict [practice] of merchandise, have come into this realm, and gone from shire to shire and place to place in great company ; and used great subtle and crafty means to deceive the people ; bearing them in hand that they by palmistry could tell men's and women's fortunes, and so, many times, by craft and subtilty have deceived the people of their money, and also have committed many and heinous felonies and robberies." † This description of the gipsies might apply to the times of George III., and even later, as well as to the times of Henry VIII. The historian regards these fortune-telling impostors as "ready-made missionaries of sedition," who, "in telling fortunes, might readily dictate policy." ‡ They were to depart out of the country, upon pain of imprisonment and forfeiture of goods, under the statute of 1531. There is a letter of Cromwell, six years later than this statute, in which he desires the president of the marches of Wales to cause the "Gipcyans" to depart beyond the sea, or to execute them, in default of obedience, without hesitation. § The statute dealt with them mildly. When Cromwell wrote this letter, England was under the reign of terror. But that they were regarded as political agents cannot be inferred from the charge against them, expressed in that letter, of "falsehoods, felonies, and treasons." Treason, in 1538, was a word of very wide signification. There is another statute of 1531, which is regarded by the same writer as pointing, as well as the statute for the Egyptians, "to the growth of a disturbed and restless disposition, the interruption of industry, and other symptoms of approaching social confusion ; and at the same time they show us the government conscious of the momentous nature of the struggle into which it was launched." This other statute is "An Act concerning punishment of beggars and vagabonds." We might believe from this talk about "interruption of industry,"—"social confusion,"—"momentous struggle,"—taken alone, that the parliament of the 22nd year of Henry VIII. was the first that had attempted to deal with that great question of vagabondage, which had arisen out of the transition from feudal service to free labour. On the contrary, the same writer, in another part of his work, has very fully traced the course of legislation as to beggars and vagabonds. || Nearly a century and a half had passed since, by the 7th of Richard II., it was enacted that vagabonds should be put in the stocks, or sent to gaol, there to remain "till the coming of the justices for deliverance of gaols," who would do with them what "best shall seem by the law." The statute of the 11th of Henry VII. "against vagabonds and beggars," retained the stocks, but dispensed with the prison, as too expensive. ¶ The statute of the 22nd of Henry VIII. authorises justices to give a license to impotent persons to beg, within certain limits ; but those who solicited alms without

* "Grey Friars' Chronicle," p. 35.

† Froude, vol. i. p. 293.

|| Froude, vol. i. p. 66 to 78.

‡ 22 Hen. VIII. c. 10.

§ Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 100.

¶ See *ante*, pp. 14 and 252.

such letter under seal, were to be whipped and set in the stocks. But if any person, "being whole in body, and able to labour, was found begging, every such idle person was to be whipped at the end of a cart, and enjoined to return to the place where he was born, or where he last dwelt for three years, and there put himself to labour like as a true man oweth to do." He was to beg his way home; but if he wandered from the prescribed way, or exceeded the prescribed time, in his perilous journey, he was "in every place to be taken and whipped." One who has spent a long, thoughtful, and active life in labouring for the cure of pauperism with the truest regard for the poor, has justly said of this statute, "No provision is made for sustaining the weak, or for helping the strong to find employment; and therefore, notwithstanding the severity of the punishments awarded, the statute was sure to fail of accomplishing the object for which it was designed."* The legislators were wholly unprovided with any resource for those able-bodied persons who desired to work, but could find no employer. It was not the fault of the legislators. There was no surplus capital to stimulate employment. The labour-market was full. But in five years more there was a fiercer temper to be displayed towards the unhappy wanderer; and we know well to whom to ascribe its origin. There is a letter from Thomas Dorset, curate of St. Margaret's, Lothbury, to the mayor of Plymouth, in which he informs the mayor that "the king's grace came in among the burgesses of the parliament, and delivered them a bill, and bade them look upon it and weigh it in conscience; for he would not, he said, have them pass on it, nor on any other thing, because his grace giveth in the bill." The writer then goes on to state the contents of this bill: "There shall be a provision made for poor people. The gaols shall be rid; the faulty shall die; and the other shall be acquit by proclamation or by jury, and shall be set at liberty, and pay no fees; and sturdy beggars and such prisoners as cannot be set a work, shall be set a work at the king's charges, some at Dover, and some at the place where the water hath broken in on the land, and other more places. Then if they fall to idleness, the idler shall be had before a justice of peace and his fault written. Then if he be taken idle again in another place, he shall be known where his dwelling is, and so at the second mention he shall be burned in the hand; and if he fail the third time *he shall die for it.*" † The date of this letter is uncertain. It must have been written before the passing of the statute of 1536, which materially varies from this account of Henry's bill, as derived from "a burgess of the parliament." The particular clauses of the act of 1536, which contain some salutary regulations as to "a provision made for poor people," will be noticed in a future chapter. But one clause sufficiently shows that "he shall die for it" was looked upon as the great cure for the evil of "rufflers, sturdy vagabonds, and valiant beggars." Whipping for the first offence. If after having been once taken and whipped, and a second time apprehended, to be whipped again, and "the upper part of the gristle of the right ear clean cut off." If taken a third time, so mutilated, he shall be committed to gaol, and

* "History of the English Poor Law," by Sir George Nicholls, vol. i. p. 120.

† This letter was first published in "Excerpta Historica," p. 289. It is also printed in "Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 86.

at the next quarter sessions, if indicted of wandering, loitering, and idleness, and found guilty, "he shall have judgment to suffer pains and execution of death as a felon, and as an enemy of the commonwealth." *

"The blind mole casts
Copp'd hills toward heaven, to tell, the earth is throng'd
By man's oppression; and the poor worm doth die for it." †

The evil was beyond the cure of legislation, for it was an economical evil. The wickedness was in proposing so awful and yet so futile a corrective of an almost unavoidable condition of society.

The letters of the bishop of Bayonne present us a vivid picture of the court of Henry in the summer of 1532. In July he writes from Ampthill to "the Great Master" in France—de Montmorency—to show him how confidential and familiar is his intercourse with the king and Mistress Anne. It is intended that there shall be a meeting in the autumn between Henry and Francis; and the ambassador writes that he well knows that the greatest pleasure which the king of France could offer to his brother of England, was, that he should invite him to bring the Lady Anne in his company to Calais; and that in the same way Francis should bring the queen of Navarre with him to Boulogne. "I cannot tell you," says the subtle minister, "whence this advice comes, for I have made oath not to do so." Let not the queen come, he adds—the queen was the sister of the emperor—for Henry so hates the Spaniards that he would as soon see the devil; and above all "keep away all imperialists; and all those who are reported to be mockers and jcerers, for such are hated of this nation more than anything in the world." The bishop is in high good humour. The king rides with him every day to the chase; and Mistress Anne, and the bishop in a hunting jacket and cap which she has given him, stand together to shoot the deer as they pass in the green alleys of Ampthill park.‡ At this season the king was in progress; and we find that the hounds were carried in a cart from hunting-ground to hunting-ground; and that the smith of the household went about with locks and bolts from place to place, to make the king's chambers secure: "Paid to the smith that carryeth the locks about with the king, in reward, 7s. 6d." § On the 11th of October, Henry, with the Lady Anne, who had been created marchioness of Pembroke, landed at Calais; where they remained, with a most numerous attendance, till the 13th of November. The two kings met in a valley between Calais and Boulogne, on the 20th of October; and Francis brought his two sons, who had been redeemed from their captivity as hostages after the battle of Pavia. But he did not bring the queen of Navarre. He danced with the Lady Anne, who after supper, at a feast at Calais, came in "with seven ladies in masking apparel;" and "the lady marchioness took the French king, and the countess of Derby took the king of Navarre; and every lady took a lord;" and "the French king talked with the marchioness of

* 27 Hen. VIII. c. 25. Mr. Froude has fallen into an error in stating that "the sturdy vagabond" was, by the earlier statute, condemned, on his second offence, to lose the whole or part of his right ear (p. 77). That punishment was distinctly limited to persons "using crafty and unlawful games and plays, and some of them feigning themselves to have knowledge in physic, physiognomy, palmistry, and other crafty science."

† Pericles, act i. scene 1.

‡ Legrand, tom. iii. p. 555-557.

§ "Privy Purse Expenses," p. 238.

Pembroke a space." The chronicler, who devotes many pages to the account of these festivities, disposes of the great event which follows, in a few words: "The king, after his return, married privily the lady Anne Boleyn, on Saint Erkenwald's day, which marriage was kept so secret that very few knew it." * We have better evidence than Hall's, as to the time of this marriage. Saint Erkenwald's day was the 14th of November, the day on which the king returned to Dover. Cranmer, in a letter of the 17th of June, 1533, writes to Hawkins, the English ambassador at the emperor's court, after describing queen Anne's coronation on the 1st of June, "But now, sir, you may not imagine that this coronation was before her marriage, for she was married much about St. Paul's day last, as the condition thereof doth well appear by reason she is now somewhat big with child. Notwithstanding it has been reported throughout a great part of the realm that I married her; which was plainly false, for I myself knew not thereof a fortnight after it was done." † St. Paul's day—the day on which the old monkish rhymes tell us if it "be fair and clear, it doth forbode a fruitful year"—is the 25th of January.

At this season, then, was the union of Henry and Anne completed by the forms of the church, without waiting for the divorce of queen Catherine by the papal court, or otherwise. The rumour of this extraordinary event travelled abroad, how few soever might know of it. It was known at Brussels on the 22nd of April; when the queen asked Hackett, the ambassador, if he had any news out of England? "I told her grace, as it is true, that I had none. She gave me a look, as though she should marvel thereof, and said to me, 'J'ai des nouvelles qui ne me semblent point trop bonnes,' and told me touching the king's marriage." ‡ Cranmer, having been long absent on his mission, returned to England in November, 1532, with a reputation for "prudent and gentle demeanour." § The aged archbishop of Canterbury, Warham, who preceded Wolsey as chancellor—the friend of Erasmus—the prelate who presented a remarkable contrast to Wolsey in his simple habits and his contempt of riches—died in August, 1532. Cranmer was offered the primacy. He for some time steadily refused, alleging his own unworthiness for so great a charge. There was an obstacle which must have weighed upon his conscience, though he eventually broke through it—he was married. At last, however, he consented. He was too necessary for the policy of the king to allow his own scruples to have any force against the royal will. He was appointed by papal bull, in February, 1533,—the last bishop of the English church who received the pall from Rome. He was consecrated on the 30th of March; and in taking the oath, still in force, of obedience to the pope, he publicly protested that by this oath he did not intend to restrain himself from any thing he was bound to, either by his duty to God, or the king, or the country.||

The great object of Cranmer's promotion to the highest ecclesiastical office in the realm was soon apparent. Cranmer himself writes that in the matter of the divorce, "the convocation had determined and agreed according

* Hall, p. 793.

† Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 89.

‡ State Papers, vol. vii. p. 451.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

|| The ancient guard-room of Lambeth Palace is now hung with portraits of archbishops, amongst which the earliest is that of Warham, by Holbein.

to the former consent of the universities." The course of proceeding for the archbishop was resolved on "by the king and his learned council." * On the 11th of April Cranmer writes a letter to Henry, in which he states that "the rude and ignorant common people" are not a little offended about the "uncertainty of succession;" and are angry that the clergy do not provide a remedy for "such inconveniences, perils, and dangers as the said rude and ignorant people do speak and talk to be imminent." He therefore implores



The Guard-Room—Lambeth Palace.

his highness, "for the exoneration of my conscience towards Almighty God, to licence me, according to mine office and duty, to proceed to the examination, final determination, and judgment on the said great cause." † The king graciously grants such licence. Cranmer repaired to Dunstable. Queen Catherine was summoned to an ecclesiastical court held there on the 8th of May; she refused to come; and being declared contumacious, the final sentence, that the marriage of Henry was null and void, was pronounced on the 23rd of May.

In the proceedings at Dunstable queen Catherine resolutely refused to take any part. Cranmer went through the forms of his office with a show of impartiality. Bedyll, the clerk of the council, writes to Cromwell, "my lord of Canterbury handleth himself very well, and very uprightly, without any evident cause of suspicion to be noted in him by the counsel of the said lady Catherine, if she had any present here." ‡ But there was a necessity for the final despatch of the divorce which would brook no delay. Henry, with an impatience that circumstances had rendered natural, had issued his orders for the coronation of queen Anne on the 1st of June. On the 23rd of May, Cranmer writes to the king, "I have given sentence in your grace's great and weighty cause;" and he adds that he had sent a procuracy

* Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 35.

† State Papers, vol. i. p. 390.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

“concerning the second matrimony;” on which subject he desires to know the king’s further pleasure, “for the time of the coronation is so instant, and so near at hand, that the matter requireth good expedition to be had in the same.”*

Cranmer has himself fully described the grand ceremonial of queen Anne’s coronation: “The Thursday next before the feast of Pentecost, the king and the queen being at Greenwich, all the crafts of London thereunto well appointed, in several barges decked after the most gorgeous and sumptuous manner, with divers pageants thereunto belonging, repaired and waited altogether upon the mayor of London, and so, well furnished, came all unto Greenwich, where they tarried and waited for the queen’s coming to her barge. Which so done, they brought her unto the Tower, trumpets, shaums, and other divers instruments all the ways playing and making great melody, which, as is reported, was as comely done as never was like in any time nigh to our remembrance. And so her Grace came to the Tower on Thursday at night,



Old Palace at Greenwich.

about five of the clock, where also was such a peal of guns as hath not been heard like a great while before. And the same night and Friday all day, the king and queen tarried there; and on Friday at night the king’s grace made seventeen knights of the Bath, whose creation was not only so strange to hear of, as also their garments stranger to behold or look on; which said knights the next day, which was Saturday, rode before the queen’s grace throughout the city of London towards Westminster Palace, over and besides the most part of the nobles of the realm, which like accompanied her grace throughout the said city; she sitting in her hair upon a horse litter, richly apparelled, and four knights of the five ports bearing a canopy over her head. And after her came four rich charettes, one of them empty, and three other furnished with divers ancient old ladies; and after them came a great train of other ladies and gentlewomen: which said progress, from the beginning to the

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 396.

ending, extended half a mile in length by estimation or thereabout. To whom also, as she came alongside the city, was shewed many costly pageants, with divers other encomiums spoken of children to her; wine also running at certain conduits plenteously. And so proceeding throughout the streets, passed forth unto Westminster Hall, where was a certain banquet prepared for her, which done she was conveyed out of the back side of the palace into a barge and so unto York Place, where the king's grace was before her coming, for this you must ever presuppose that his grace came always before her secretly in a barge, as well from Greenwich to the Tower as from the Tower to York Place.

"Now then on Sunday was the coronation, which also was of such a manner.

"In the morning there assembled with me at Westminster Church the bishop of York, the bishop of London, the bishop of Winchester, the bishop of Lincoln, the bishop of Bath, and the bishop of Saint Asaph, the abbot of Westminster with ten or twelve more abbots, which all revested ourselves in our pontificalibus, and, so furnished, with our crosses and crosiers, proceeded out of the abbey in a procession unto Westminster Hall, where we received the queen apparelled in a robe of purple velvet, and all the ladies and gentlewomen in robes and gowns of scarlet, according to the manner used before time in such business. And so her grace, sustained of each side with two bishops, the bishop of London and the bishop of Winchester, came forth in procession unto the church of Westminster, she in her hair, my lord of Suffolk bearing before her the crown, and two other lords bearing also before her a sceptre and a white rod, and so entered up into the high altar, where, divers ceremonies used about her, I did set the crown on her head, and then was sung *Te Deum*, &c. And after that was sung a solemn mass, all which while her grace sat crowned upon a scaffold which was made between the high altar and the quire in Westminster Church; which mass and ceremonies done and finished, all the assembly of noble men brought her into Westminster Hall again, where was kept a great solemn feast all that day; the good order thereof were too long to write at this time to you."*

Having this authentic description of a "pageant so gorgeous at the moment, so typical of worldly vanities to look back upon, we may spare to translate the marvellous relations of Hall, essentially the court chronicler, into modern imagery. We pass over his banners and streamers, his tapestry and escutcheons, noting only one or two passages that the archbishop, not so familiar with what touched the people, has forborne to notice. When the queen landed at the Tower, the king "received her with loving countenance at the postern by the water-side and kissed her; and then she turned back again, and thanked the mayor and citizens with many goodly words." The expression of Cranmer, "she sitting in her hair," is explained by the chronicler: "her hair hanged down, but on her head she had a coif with a circlet about it, full of rich stones." At the banquet, the queen was served with great variety of dishes; and by way of contrast to modern manners, we may mention that two countesses stood, one on each side, during all the

* Letter to Hawkins, ambassador to the emperor; Ellis, First Series, vol. i. p. 36.

dinner, "which divers times in the dinner-time did hold a fine cloth before the queen's face when she list to spit." While Westminster saw these festive solemnities, there was another queen at Amptill, solitary, sick at heart, yet sustained by her unconquerable will to defy the oppression with which she was pursued. There is no more touching picture than the report of lord Mountjoy, her chamberlain, of the demeanour of this resolved princess, when, on the 3rd of July, persons from the council waited on her to deliver certain articles on the king's behalf. She called her chamberlain and all her servants into her privy chamber, for, she said, she thought it a long season since she saw them. She was lying upon a pallet, having "pricked her foot with a pin, so that she might not well stand nor go, and also sore annoyed with a cough." The commissioners began to read their charge. "But as soon as we began to declare and read, that these articles were for our instructions to move unto the Princess Dowager, at the first she made exception to that name, saying that she was not Princess Dowager, but the Queen, and the King's true wife." * No entreaties, no threats, could ever move her from this declaration. The divorce was founded upon the implication that her maiden white was not truly worn at her marriage. † She persisted to the end in contradicting that material averment in the process against her. In the very tenderest point in which she could be touched, that of her love for her daughter, she was immovable. When it was urged that her resolve to bear the name of Queen should be "an occasion that the King should withdraw his fatherly love from her honourable and most dearest daughter, the Lady Princess," she answered, as to the princess, "that she was the king's true begotten child, and as God had given her unto them, so for her part, she would render her again unto the king, as his daughter, to do with her as shall stand with his pleasure; trusting to God that she would prove an honest woman. And that neither for her daughter, family, possessions, or any worldly adversity or displeasure that might ensue, she would yield in this cause, to put her soul in danger." ‡

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 397.

† See *ante*, p. 259.

‡ State Papers, vol. i. p. 400.



London Bridge, Southwark side.

CHAPTER XXII.

Birth of the Princess Elizabeth—Preparations for throwing off the papal power—Statute of Appeals—Cranmer's judgment declared illegal by brief of the pope—Statute for punishment of heresy—Burning of Frith—Act of Succession—Elizabeth Barton, the Holy Maid of Kent—Her execution with others—Fisher and More implicated in her proceedings—Oath to be taken according to the Act of Succession—Fisher and More, declining to swear to the preamble, sent to the Tower—Act of Supremacy—First Fruits and Tenths given to the king—New definitions of treason—The monks of the Charterhouse refuse to acknowledge Henry the Head of the Church—Their execution—Burning of Hollanders for Heresy—Fisher and More decline to make answer to questions as to the Supremacy—Their condemnation—Their deaths.

At the beginning of September, 1533, queen Anne Boleyn is at Greenwich, awaiting the event which would determine the succession to the throne. In anticipation of this event, learned clerks had to prepare formal letters purporting to come from the queen herself; and a letter to lord Cobham, which has been preserved, was ready for the signet of the queen to be affixed. On the 7th of September, certain blanks are to be filled up: "Whereas it has pleased the goodness of Almighty God, of his infinite mercy and grace, to send unto us, at this time, good speed in the deliverance and bringing forth of a Princess." In two passages of this letter the final *s* has been added to the first written word "Prince."* The birth of a daughter was a disappointment to the king. It would probably have been more so, could he have looked into futurity, and have seen that under the reign of this princess, the religion of the country would be firmly placed upon a much

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 407.

broader basis than his own narrow views of ecclesiastical reform; and the honour of the country far more nobly sustained against foreign enemies than in his petty wars of personal ambition. The christening of Elizabeth was performed at Greenwich, with extraordinary magnificence. Cranmer was a prosaic godfather. Poetry has made him an eloquent prophet.*

It is unnecessary for us here to trace the political intrigues on the part of the pope, the emperor, and the king of France, through which the final separation of England from the control or interference of the Holy See was so long protracted. There had been various movements early in 1533, towards this end. The parliament had passed the Statute of Appeals,—the title of which sufficiently shows its general object: “An Act that the Appeals in such cases as have been used to be pursued to the See of Rome, shall not be from henceforth had nor used but within this realm.” † The opening of this statute, setting forth the independence of the sovereignty of England, presents a fine example of the strength of the English language—its grand organ-swell—as it was written in Tyndale’s bible, and some other works of this period: “Where, by divers sundry old authentic histories and chronicles it is manifestly declared and expressed that this realm of England is an empire, and so hath been accepted in the world, governed by one supreme head and king, having the dignity and royal estate of the imperial crown of the same; unto whom a body politic, compact of all sorts and degrees of people, divided in terms and by names of Spirituality and Temporality, be bounded and owing to bear, next to God, a natural and humble obedience; he being also institute and furnished by the goodness and sufferance of Almighty God, with plenary, whole, and entire power, pre-eminence, authority, prerogative, and jurisdiction, to render and yield justice and final determination to all manner of folk, residents or subjects within this his realm, in all causes, matters, debates, and contentions happening to occur, insurge, or begin within the limits thereof, without restraint or provocation to any foreign prince or potentate of the world.” This statute was a declaration of war, and the pope received it as such. But he still hesitated. Strong influences were brought to bear upon him; but he still forbore to declare England out of the bosom of the church. In July, by a brief, Cranmer’s judgment was declared illegal; and the king was held to have incurred the penalties of excommunication. But the final thunderbolt was yet in the uplifted hand. Meanwhile the government proceeded boldly in preparing the people for the great impending change. There is a very curious Minute of Council of the 2nd of December, 1533, in which it is ordered, that such as shall preach at Paul’s Cross, shall, from Sunday to Sunday, teach and declare to the people, that he that now calleth himself pope, is only bishop of Rome, “and hath no more authority and jurisdiction, by God’s law, within this realm, than any other foreign bishop hath, which is nothing at all; and that such authority as he hath claimed heretofore, hath been only by usurpation.” ‡ The mode in which opinion was to be influenced, in a time before newspapers and reviews, is curiously shown in a duplicate, with variations, of this Minute, by which a strict commandment was to be given to

* Shakspeare, “Henry VIII.” act v. scene 4.

† 24 Hen. VIII. c. 12.

‡ State Papers, vol. i. p. 411.

the mayor, aldermen, and common-council of London, "that every of them in their houses shall liberally speak at their boards, and also teach their servants to declare, that he that calleth himself the pope is but the bishop of Rome." The same principle was ordered to be declared to their families by the nobility of the realm; "and to command their said families to bruit the same in all places where they shall come."* It was little matter now whether the king were excommunicated and England placed under an interdict. There could be no effectual reconciliation now with Rome. Practically, the final separation was accomplished. The people were appealed to; and the appeal touched them in one of the most sensitive parts of their nationality. They forgot the origin of the contest, and looked only to its results as their deliverance from a thralldom.

The time was come for renouncing the authority of the bishop of Rome; but true religious freedom appeared as distant as in the reign of Henry IV., when the Lollards were regarded as public enemies. The statute of the 25th of Henry VIII., "for punishment of heresy," declares that speaking



Smithfield, in the sixteenth century.

against the pope or his decrees is not heresy; but that heretics, upon lawful conviction and refusal to abjure, or after abjuration shall relapse, "shall be committed to lay power to be burned in open places, for example of other, as hath been accustomed." In the same letter in which Cranmer describes the coronation of queen Anne, he relates, with an indifference which makes us shudder, the fate of two victims of persecution:—

"Other news have we none notable, but that one Fryth, which was in the Tower in prison, was appointed by the king's grace to be examined before me, my lord of London, my lord of Winchester, my lord of Suffolk, my lord-chancellor, and my lord of Wiltshire, whose opinion was so notably erroneous, that

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 411.

we could not dispatch him, but was fain to leave him to the determination of his ordinary, which is the bishop of London. His said opinion is of such nature that he thought it not necessary to be believed as an article of our faith, that there is the very corporal presence of Christ within the host and sacrament of the altar; and holdeth of this point most after the opinion of Æcolampadius. And surely I myself sent for him three or four times to persuade him to leave that his imagination, but for all that we could do therein he would not apply to any counsel; notwithstanding now he is at a final end with all examinations, for my lord of London hath given sentence and delivered him to the secular power, where he looketh every day to go unto the fire. And there is also condemned with him one Andrew, a tailor of London, for the said self-same opinion."*

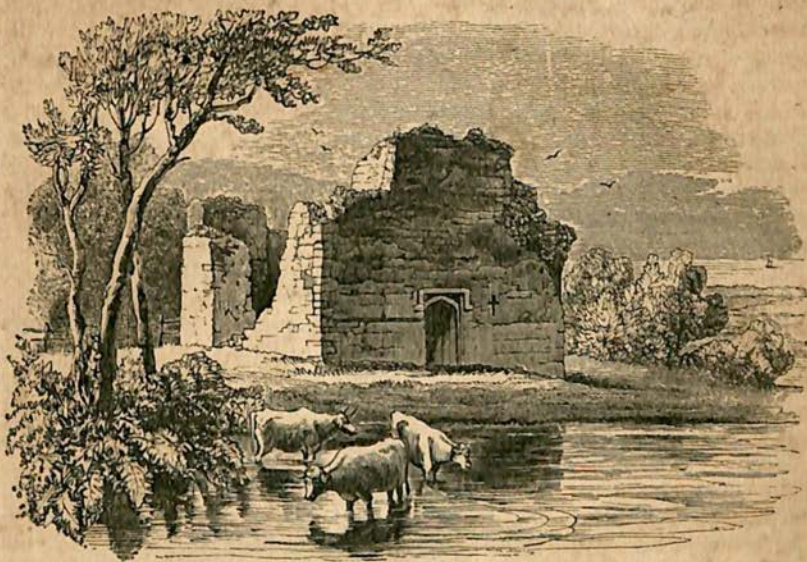
If those who were thus groping their way in the dark morning of the Reformation did not hesitate to punish for opinions which they secretly cherished, we can comprehend how they would show little mercy to those who were inciters of opposition to the political and religious attitude of the government. The "Act for the establishment of the king's succession"† brought within the penalties of treason all the covert hostility of many of the people to the divorce and the second marriage. This statute declared the first marriage unlawful and void;—the second marriage "undoubtful, true, sincere, and perfect." The king's issue by the lady Anne were pronounced to be the inheritors of the imperial crown, and every manifest deed by writing or printing, to the prejudice of this marriage, or this succession, was to be taken as high treason; and if by spoken words, as misprision of treason. The attainder and execution of Elizabeth Barton, the Nun of Kent, and of some who believed in her; and the charges against bishop Fisher and sir Thomas More, in connection with this delusion, furnish a remarkable illustration of the spirit that prevailed in this dangerous crisis.

In the parish of Aldington there dwelt a servant-girl, afterwards a nun of the priory of St. Sepulchre's in Canterbury, named Elizabeth Barton. In the words of the statute for her attainder, she "happened to be visited with sickness, and by occasion thereof brought in such debility and weakness of her brain, because she could not eat nor drink by a long space, that in the violence of her infirmity she seemed to be in trances, and spake and uttered many foolish and idle words."‡ In this parish where Elizabeth Barton dwelt, there was a chapel dedicated to the Virgin, called Court-a-Street; and it was pretended that there she was miraculously restored to health. At a season of less public excitement, her "foolish and idle words" would have taken some ordinary course. But the feeble mind of this woman was impressed by the talk of those around her; and her fantastic dreams took the perilous shape of revelations about the divorce then impending. The pretensions of this "holy maid of Kent," as she was called, were not suddenly developed under the popular irritation about the king's marriage. In a letter written in 1533, to Cromwell, by the prior of Christ's Church in Canterbury, it is shown that "trances and revelations" of Elizabeth Barton commenced seven or eight years before that time—that is, four years

* Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 40.
‡ 25 Hen. VIII. c. 12.

† 25 Hen. VIII. c. 22.

before the fall of Wolsey; and that archbishop Warham took an interest in these matters, and appointed Doctor Bockyng, the cellarer of Christ's Church, to be her "holy father." The prior, who writes this letter, had known her only about two years; and she showed him, at such times, that she had revelations and special knowledge, "concerning my lord of Canterbury that was (my lord cardinal), and also the king's highness, concerning his marriage; so that she



Court-a-Street Chapel, in the Parish of Aldington, Kent.

said if he did marry another woman his grace should not reign king past one month afterward; and also she said that she had been with the king's grace, and showed him thereof two times at the least; and also she said then she had showed the same unto my lord of Canterbury, that was my lord Warham.* Out of the ravings of this poor servant-girl, who afterwards, at the instance of Warham, became a professed nun, was got up a mighty charge of conspiracy, in which bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More were implicated. The ravings of this woman were of the most extravagant nature. She saw the king, Anne Boleyn, and the earl of Wiltshire, walking in a garden; and a little devil whispering in the lady's ear to send her father with a great bribe to the emperor. She saw evil spirits struggling for Wolsey's soul after his decease. She saw persons whom the angel of God had appointed to be at her death, when she should receive the crown of martyrdom. † The Act of Attainder of Elizabeth Barton, and others, enters into a most minute history of what are deemed their treasonable practices: and Richard Maister, the parson of Aldington, and Edward Bockyng, are stated to have written books to persuade the people that she was a holy

* "Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 20.
VOL. II.

† Letter to Cromwell, *ibid.*, p. 14.

person, and then to have suggested to her that she should have a revelation that if the king were divorced and married again he should no longer be king, "and that he should die a villain's death." Of this alleged conspiracy, as principal traitors, the nun, the parson of Aldington, the cellarer of Christ's Church, and five other persons, were tried in the Star Chamber, and suffered the penalties of treason, on the 21st of April, 1534. One of these, Henry Gould, is declared, in the Act of Attainder, to have related the pretended revelations "to the lady Catherine, the princess dowager, to animate her to make commotions in this realm against our said sovereign lord." He is accused of saying that she should prosper and do well, and that the lady Mary, the king's daughter, should prosper and reign. Of misprision of treason, others were arraigned; for that, believing in the revelation of the king's death, they had concealed it from him. Amongst these, the most eminent person was Fisher, bishop of Rochester. He was the only prelate who had the courage to refuse to sign a declaration, in 1527, that the king's marriage was unlawful. He stood alone in the Convocation in resisting the denial of the pope's supremacy. That he should have provoked the bitter hostility of Henry and his ministers was an inevitable result of this firmness. If we doubt his judgment we must admire his conscientiousness. In a very elaborate letter of Cromwell to the bishop, he is reproached for having "conceived a great opinion of the holiness of this woman;" but that he attempted no means for the discovery of her falsehood. Cromwell adds, with great severity, but with an intimate knowledge of human nature, "Here I appeal your conscience, and instantly desire you to answer, whether if she had shewed you as many revelations for the confirmation of the king's grace's marriage, which he now enjoyeth, as she did to the contrary, ye would have given as much credence to her as ye have done; and would have let the trial of her and of her revelations to overpass these many years, where ye dwelt not from her but twenty miles, in the same shire, where her trances, and disfigurances, and prophecies in her trances were surmised and counterfeited." * Cromwell entreats the bishop to make submission to the king for having kept these revelations from his grace's knowledge. Fisher's excuse was that the nun had declared that she had told them to the king himself. She said the same to the priest of Christ's Church. It is clear that no excuse would avail; and least of all, one which the bishop incautiously set up, as we learn from Cromwell's reply: "Ye lay unto the charge of our sovereign, that he hath unkindly entreated you with grievous words and terrible letters, for showing his grace truth in this great matter [the divorce], whereby ye were disaffected to show unto him the nun's revelations." The opportunity was come to punish the bishop with something beyond "grievous words and terrible letters." By the statute concerning Elizabeth Barton, he was attained, with five others, "of misprision and concealment of treason." † Sir Thomas More narrowly escaped. He had conversed with the nun of Kent in the convent of Sion. He was examined before the Council. It is said that his name was originally introduced into the bill of attainder. But if as brave as Fisher the ex-chancellor was more wary. He was released. When his daughter had obtained information that his name was put out of the bill,

* Letter to Cromwell, "Suppression," &c., p. 30.

† 25 Hen. VIII. c. 12.

he replied to her joyful congratulations—"In faith, Meg, *quod differtur non aufertur*—what is postponed is not abandoned." The whole story of the holy maid of Kent affords as much evidence of the delusions that, in all ages, have influenced the enthusiastic votaries of the Roman church, as of the systematic impostures which have been as frequently attributed to them. The act of attainder states that "the false, feigned, and dissimulated hypocrisy, cloaked sanctity, revelations, and feigned miracles of the said Elizabeth, are plainly confessed before the king's most honourable council by the said offenders"—the nun, Master, Bockyng, and others. Of the mode of this trial we have no record. A contemporary foreigner, bitterly adverse to the old religion, states that the king "racked them with intolerable tortures, and brought to light the mummery contrived by them." * This traveller relates that one of the modes in which the priests managed to spread abroad the report of Elizabeth Barton's miraculous knowledge, was to obtain the secrets of those who made their confessions to them, and then to reveal them to the nun, who astonished them by her knowledge of their most hidden acts and thoughts. That Warham and Fisher—perhaps even More—were amongst the deluded, may be attributed to that superstition from which the learned and the enlightened were not wholly free, in an age when the true and the false of religious belief were not clearly to be seen through the cloud of ceremonial observances; when the pretensions to miraculous powers, which still lingered round the shrines of a thousand saints and martyrs, imposed to some extent upon the clearest understandings. The concluding clause of the statute itself justifies us in attributing the widely-spread credence in this pretended revelation to a spirit of fanaticism rather than to a settled purpose of overthrowing the government. It states that a great multitude of the king's subjects, "inclined to newfangledness," have heard these false revelations, and have concealed the same, and not like true liegemen informed the king or his council; through which they deserve to suffer the penalties of treason. But all persons not attainted by this act are acquitted and pardoned, of the king's most gracious benignity, "at the humble suit and contemplation of his most dear, entire, and well-beloved wife, queen Anne."

The "Act for the establishment of the king's succession" contained a final clause that all the nobles of the realm, spiritual and temporal, and all other subjects of full age, should take an oath to maintain and defend this act; and, upon their refusal so to do, should be held guilty of misprision of treason. The oath, which was taken by some lords and commoners in parliament before its prorogation on the last day of March, 1534, was to be taken by all who were called upon to appear before the commissioners appointed by the king. On the 13th of April, Sir Thomas More was summoned to attend before the archbishop of Canterbury and the other commissioners at Lambeth. As he left his house at Chelsea,—that house which Erasmus described as something more noble than the academy of Plato, "a school and exercise of the Christian religion,"—he had a presentiment that he should never return to it. He could not trust himself to kiss and bid farewell to those he loved, as he was wont to do when he entered his boat. He passed out of his garden to the river-side, suffering none of his household to follow, "but pulled the wicket

* "Travels of Nicander Nucius," Camden Society, p. 62.

after him, and shut them all from him." The strength of his love might have triumphed over his resolve to dare the worst rather than to affirm what he did not honestly believe. His soul triumphed in that hour of struggle; and he whispered to his son-in-law, "I thank our Lord, the field is won!" The result of his examinations at Lambeth was his committal to the Tower, after being kept in ward four days. The difficulty in which More and his friend, the aged bishop of Rochester, were placed, may be best understood through an extract of a letter from Cromwell to Cranmer. The archbishop, with that disposition to compromise which he was as ready to employ for the benefit of others as of himself, had expressed his opinion "that it were good the bishop of Rochester and master More should be sworn to the Act of the king's succession and not to the preamble of the same." In that preamble was contained a declaration of the unlawfulness of the king's first marriage, and of the legality of his second; and a disclaimer of foreign authority in the realm, by which was meant the spiritual authority of the see of Rome. Henry was indignant at Cranmer's merciful suggestion; and desired Cromwell to say, that "the king's highness in no wise willeth but that they shall be sworn as well to the preamble as to the act. Wherefore his grace specially trusteth that ye will in no wise attempt or move him to the contrary; for, as his grace supposeth, that manner of swearing, if it shall be suffered, may be an utter destruction of his whole cause, and also to the effect of the law made for the same."* More and Fisher would not swear to the preamble, although they would swear to defend the succession. They were committed to the Tower, under a despotic authority which was subsequently introduced into a statute, that the certificate of the commissioners setting forth a refusal to take the oath "should be taken as strong and as available in the law as an indictment of twelve men lawfully found of the same refusal."† In prison they remained till the summer of 1535, till the time was ripe for that final deliverance which has no terrors for the just. Meanwhile they were attainted by the parliament that assembled on the 3rd of November, 1534, of misprision of treason; and were convicted "to all intents and purposes" as if they had been "lawfully attainted by the order of the common law."‡

The parliament thus assembled in November, 1534, had some root-and-branch work to perform, at the bidding of their imperious master. The first law which they passed was "an act concerning the king's highness to be Supreme Head of the Church of England, and to have authority to reform and redress all errors, heresies, and abuses in the same."§ This is a short statute; but of high significance. There was no power now to stand between the people of England and the exercise of unbridled despotism. The most arbitrary man that had ever wielded the large prerogatives of sovereignty had now united in his own person the temporal and spiritual supremacy. The ecclesiastical authority which had regulated the English church for eight hundred years was gone. The feudal organisation which had held the sovereign in some submission to ancient laws and usages of freedom was gone. The Crown had become all in all. The whole system of human intercourse in England was to be subordinated to one supreme head—King

* Letter in the Rolls House, quoted by Mr. Froude, vol. ii. p. 227.

† 26 Hen. VIII. c. 2.

‡ 26 Hen. VIII. cc. 22 & 23.

§ 26 Hen. VIII. c.

and Pope in one. The most enslaving terror was to uphold this system throughout the land. The sheriff in every county was to be a spy upon the clergy, and to report if they truly spoke of the king as supreme head of the church, without any cloak or colour. No Amurath of the Turks could write more insolently to his provincial slaves than Henry of England wrote to his sheriffs, that if they failed in this service, "Be ye assured that we, like a prince of justice, will so extremely punish you for the same, that all the world beside shall take by you example, and beware, contrary to their allegiance to disobey the lawful commandment of their sovereign lord and prince." * The higher clergy were terrified into the most abject prostration before this spiritual lord. The bishop of Bath and Wells writes to Cromwell, on the 21st of February, 1535, informing him of a circumstance of which he thought it fit to advertise him, "by my fidelity to God and to the king." Doctor Carsley, a canon of Wells, in "bidding of the beads," called upon the congregation to pray for the king, "for the lady Catherine the queen, and also, by express name, for the lady Elizabeth their daughter." The poor old man of eighty was terrified when his mistake was shown him, and protested that he knew no queen but the lady Anne. "The word scaped him unawares," says the bishop. And yet such is the fear of the o'er-passing tyranny, that the bishop writes a long despatch to tell "the whole and plain truth," about so insignificant a matter as the "*lapsus linguæ*," as he calls it, of one who had mumbled a form of bidding prayer for a quarter of a century, and forgot that he was now, by statute, to banish such trivial fond records from the table of his memory. †

The new dignity of the king was to conduce as much to his profit as his honour. The Lords and Commons crawl at his feet in this parliament of 1534-35, and humbly request that he will be pleased, as their "most gracious sovereign lord, upon whom and in whom dependeth all their joy and wealth," to receive the first fruits of all spiritual dignities and promotions; and also an annual pension of one tenth part of all the possessions of the church. ‡ A subsidy granted in the same parliament followed the accustomed precedent. But the dangers of every man's position were multiplied in new definitions of treason. It was now enacted, not only that those who desired or practised any bodily harm to the king or queen should be deemed traitors,—but that whoever, by writing or words, published that the king was a heretic, schismatic, tyrant, infidel, or usurper of the crown, should be subject to the penalties of high-treason. There was one further little sentence in this statute which was far more dangerous than that which made it treason to call the king ill-names. Whoever sought to deprive the king, the queen, or their heirs apparent "of the dignity, title, or name of their royal estates," was now declared to be a traitor. To deny the king the title of Supreme Head of the Church was, therefore, treason. § To refuse to swear to the succession was only misprision of treason. The Act for the supremacy had no such terrible penalty. This one line of the statute of new treasons, thus brought in so gently and covertly, would have brought half England to the block, if conscience had prevailed over panic-stricken lip-service. Strong as our convictions may be, at this day, that such rough and cruel handling of

* Circular, printed in Fox.
‡ 26 Hen. VIII. c. 3.

† State Papers, vol. i. p. 427.
§ 26 Hen. VIII. c. 13.

long-cherished opinions was to be ultimately productive of inestimable blessings, we cannot shut our eyes to the certainty that these enactments must have produced a temporary misery and political degradation, never equalled by any action of the government, from the days of the conquest. Had such measures been tried upon a less sturdy race, instead of a race that never, in the worst times, lost the instinct of freedom, and in this passing evil saw a great future good, the civil and ecclesiastical tyranny of this stage of the Reformation might have driven us into that intellectual servitude, upon which the true liberty of the Book of Life might have beamed in vain, when that Book was at length permitted to be opened.

We learn from a letter of Audley, the lord-chancellor, to Cromwell, at what time the statute which so fearfully extended the definition of treason came into operation. In answer to a question touching a monk of Worcester, Audley gave his opinion that words spoken by the monk "had been treason,

without doubt, if they had been spoken since the first day of February;" but that words spoken of the king or the queen before that time were only misprision of treason.* The Act, no doubt, sealed up the lips of the people, and bitter thoughts were left to smoulder in their bosoms. But the clause which made it treason to deprive the king of any name or dignity was so administered as to render silence itself treasonable. If under examination a satisfactory answer was not given as to the king's title of Supreme Head of the Church, the gibbet or the block were ready for the offender. On the 3rd of May the first grand experiment was made of the working of this statute. Let us take the most literal record we can find of an event which must have



A Carthusian.

struck terror throughout the land. "Also the same year, the 3rd day of May was Holyrood day, and then was drawn from the Tower unto Tyburn the three priors of the Charter-houses, and there hanged, headed, and quartered; and one of the prior's arms was set up at the gate into Aldersgate-street." † Within those quiet walls, where now exists one of the few retreats which our country provides for the reduced and deserving of the middle classes; where a sound and liberal education of the young now goes forward in peace and security,—there, some three centuries ago, a body of religious men set apart from the world, of exemplary conduct, of zealous piety, were

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 442.

† "Grey Friars' Chronicle," p. 37.

suddenly startled, as if a falcon had come to flutter their dove-cot. Bedyll, the clerk of the council, wrote to Cromwell, in August 1534, that some of these brethren "be minded to offer themselves in sacrifice to the great idol of Rome." He described them "as careless men, and willing to die." He thinks, "if it were not for the opinion which men had, and some yet have, in their apparent holiness, which is and was, for the most part, covert hypocrisy, it made no great matter what became of them, so their souls were saved."* This is the language of a worldly-minded man, who was incapable of understanding why men should prefer to die in an earnest belief than to live to make a profession which they abominated in their hearts. He cared nothing what became of them; yet he dreaded the odium that might fall upon those who hunted them to the death. He wishes "they were dead indeed, by God's hand, that no man should run wrongfully into obloquy for their just punishment." The prior of the London Charter-house, John Haughton, after a short imprisonment in 1534, had sworn to the Act of Succession, and so had his brethren. But they were with difficulty brought "to good conformity." It was not the policy of the government to let them alone. They were respected by the people of London. They were hospitable and charitable. The new statute of treasons was to be tested upon them. If they yielded and acknowledged the supremacy, their example would reconcile others of lower reputation. If they refused, their punishment would terrify the boldest into submission. They had committed no outward offence. They were to be slaughtered for an opinion. There were two houses connected with the London priory; and their priors came to Cromwell, and with Haughton entreated to be excused answering the questions which they expected to be addressed to them. They were sent to the Tower. They refused to accept the Act of Supremacy when brought before Cromwell and others. They were tried by a jury upon this refusal; of course found guilty; and condemned on the 29th of April. From the Tower to Tyburn was a wearisome and foul road for these poor men to travel on hurdles, in their ecclesiastical robes, on a May morning. It was the first time that clergymen had suffered in England without the previous ceremony of degradation. In that dreary procession through busy streets, and through highways by whose sides pitying and wondering multitudes stood to behold this strange and portentous sight, these earnest men quailed not. In the presence of the executioner they quailed not. To the last they refused to submit to a law of the king and the parliament which they held to be contrary to the superior law of their church. They were not the last of these Carthusians who fell in this conflict. Other monks were hanged and headed. But there were ways of killing, slower but as sure, not unknown to the agents of tyranny. Thirteen months after these executions, the loyal Thomas Bedyll writes to Cromwell, "that the monks of the Charterhouse here at London, which were committed to Newgate for their traitorous behaviour long time continued against the king's grace, be almost dispatched by the hand of God, as it may appear to you by this bill inclosed, whereof, considering their behaviour and the whole matter, I am not sorry."† After the execution of Haughton and his brethren, the monks who had submitted

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 422.

† "Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 162.

remained in their desolated house. But there were supernatural terrors around them, in which we may see the prevailing thoughts of their lonely watchings. John Darley relates that father Raby, a very old man, had died in 1534; and that he had said to the dying monk, "good father Raby, if the dead man come to the quick I beseech you to come to me," and he answered "yea." The story thus continues: "And since that I never did think upon him till Saint John day, Baptist, last past. Item, the same day at five of the clock at afternoon, I being in contemplation in our entry in our cell, suddenly he appeared to me in a monk's habit, and said to me, 'why do ye not follow our father?' [the late prior] And I said, 'wherefore?' He said, 'for he is a martyr in heaven, next unto angels.' And I said, 'where be all



Cloisters, Charter-House.

our other fathers which died as well as he?' He answered and said, 'they be well, but not so well as he.'"* Such were the imaginations that lingered round the cells and cloisters of the stricken house, more consolatory, in their tender glimpses of the world of spirits, than the thoughts of those scoffers and time-servers, who were as yet unprepared to give any safer anchorage for earnest minds than in the old havens which they were destroying—dilapidated and unsafe harbours of refuge, but better than the stormy seas upon which men were driven out, without compass or beacon.

This was not a time when the execution of men for denying the king's right to be head of the church implied that there would be any relaxation

* "Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 34.

of the old system of persecution for doctrinal opinions. One of the spies who denounced the poor brethren of the Charterhouse, a certain Jasper Fylloll, writes to Cromwell, "It is no great marvel though many of these monks have heretofore offended God and the king by their foul errors, for I have found in the prior's and proctor's cells three or four sundry printed books from beyond the sea, of as foul heresies and errors as may be; and not one or two books be now printed alone, but hundreds of them." The Act "for the punishment of heresy," passed in 1534, is immediately followed in the statute-book by "An Act for Printers and Binders of Books."* By this act the statute of Richard III., which allowed the free importation of



Dutch Printing-office.

printed and written books, is repealed. There is nothing said about the suppression of dangerous opinions; but it is merely stated that, as there are enough of printers and binders in England, no foreign books are to be sold by retail. The Dutch printing-offices, then in full activity, were unpleasant neighbours to a government which undertook to regulate every man's opinion. It was a time of fear; for the Lutheran doctrines had been carried to an excess by religious and political fanatics; and the political tenets which bore any resemblance to those of the Anabaptists, might be spread to the danger

* 25 Hen. VIII. c. 15.

of all civil society. Within three weeks of the execution of the Carthusians, nineteen men and six women, born in Holland, were examined in St. Paul's church as to their opinions. Stow, who records this in his Chronicle, speaks only of their confessions as to the more abstruse points of doctrine, especially of infant and adult baptism; nothing of those principles as to society and government which led to the excesses of 1532, when the baker of Haarlem and the tailor of Leyden made themselves masters of the city of Munster, and there preached and practised the wildest extravagances. Of the nineteen men and six women who were apprehended in London, fourteen were condemned and were burnt. Latimer, who had known what persecution for heresy was, when he was examined in 1532 before six bishops, and "heard a pen walking behind the arras"—the pen of one appointed to write his answers—even he dismisses the Hollanders with these words: "The Anabaptists that were burnt here in divers towns in England (as I heard of credible men, I saw them not myself) went to their death, even *intrepide*, as ye will say, without any fear in the world, cheerfully. Well, let them go." He argues, and justly, that it was not to be inferred that he who so dies "dieth in a just cause." * He omitted to say that such fortitude is a proof that the men believed their cause to be just; and that the stake was no test of its error.

The parliament is prorogued. The king is moving from palace to palace in that midsummer of 1535. There are two prisoners in the Tower under attainder for misprision of treason. John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, would have soon ceased from troubling the government; for he had seen eighty summers. It was mercy, however, to remove him from his hard fare and scant clothing—"only some old rags were left to cover him." † Under the roof of the same prison was Sir Thomas More. He was of a more vigorous age; but long confinement had bent his body and weakened his emaciated limbs. There came into the Tower, on the 14th of June, certain commissioners, deputed to interrogate these two prisoners; and to the question whether he had received or written any letters during his imprisonment, More gave one answer which sufficiently indicates the sympathy between these doomed men: "since he came to the Tower he wrote divers scrolls or letters to Mr. Doctor Fisher, and received from him some other again; whereof the most part contained nothing else but comforting words from either to other; and declaration of the state that they were in, in their bodies; and giving of thanks for such meat or drink that the one had sent to the other." ‡ But More had been subjected to previous interrogatories, to which he alluded in another answer on the 14th of June: "Also saith that since the last examination of him, this examinant did send Mr. Fisher word, by a letter that Mr. Solicitor had shewed him, that it was all one not to answer, and to say against the statute what a man would, as all the learned men of England would justify, as he [Mr. Solicitor] said then. And therefore he said he could reckon upon nothing else but the uttermost." § He had written, he said, to his daughter, Mr. Roper's wife, that what the end should be, he could not tell; "but whatsoever it were, better or worse, he desired her to take it patiently,

* Sermons. Fourth Sermon before King Edward VI.

‡ State Papers, vol. i. p. 433.

† Burnet's "Reformation."

§ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

and take no thought therefor, but only pray for him." Margaret, the best beloved of his children, did not take it patiently, but "used great vehemence and obscuration, to persuade him to incline to the king's desire." And thus, More, upon hearing the interrogatories of the commissioners touching the king's suptrnacy, incurred the peril which Mr. Solicitor had pointed out—"he sayeth that he can make no answer."

At this crisis of their fate an incident occurred which hurried Fisher to the scaffold, and, as a natural consequence, More followed. Clement VII. died on the 25th of September, 1534. He was no more to be troubled with the threats of Charles or Francis; no more to hesitate about excommunicating Henry, and placing England under interdict. His successor, Paul III., probably thought that the government of the stubborn islanders might be won back by courtesy; and in this desire, as he protested, he sent a cardinal's hat to bishop Fisher. "He shall have no head to wear it," exclaimed the indignant king. Fisher declared that he would not accept the honour which he had never sought. On the 17th of June he was taken before a special commission at Westminster Hall. The official record of this trial is a brief one: "Pleads not guilty. Venire awarded. Verdict, guilty. Judgment as usual in cases of treason." He died, by simple beheading, on the 22nd of June. On the 1st of July, the special commission again sat. More tottered into the hall, leaning upon his staff—into that hall which he had often entered, in the pomp of chancellor, with mace and seal borne before him. The axe now marshalled him on his certain road. His robes of office were now exchanged for a coarse woollen gown. He stood at the bar before his successor, Audley, as his judge. He was charged not only with refusing to acknowledge the king's supremacy, but that he had positively denied it. We have seen that "Mr. Solicitor" had been with him in the Tower. By "Mr. Solicitor" was the charge to be proved, in the betrayal of a confidential communication, and the distortion of the prisoner's words into a meaning beyond his intention. That man, Robert Rich, had played the same infamous part in the trial of Fisher. One who fills the office of Chief Justice of England, with the honesty that is an attribute of the judges of our time, speaks of Rich as "one who has brought a greater stain upon the bar of England than any member of the profession to which I am proud to belong."* No inquisitor of the Holy Office ever abused the frankness of a prisoner more than this base fellow, Rich, who was afterwards lord chancellor. He went to the Tower with another person to remove More's books. The great scholar, seeing his daily solace thus taken from him, preserves his equanimity while the cherished volumes are being packed up. Rich, with the apparent friendliness that has always marked the intercourse of lawyers, however different their opinions, begins to talk about the great cause of dispute for which More was a prisoner. "Suppose there were an act of parliament that all men should take me for king," said Rich, "would not you take me for king?" More, who knew something of the history of the English monarchy, replied, "Yes, sir, that I would. A parliament may make a king and depose him."† Rich

* Lord Campbell's "Lives of the Chancellors," vol. i. p. 570.

† Mr. Proude says, "If this was the constitutional theory, divine right was a Stuart fiction." It was. In another place he holds, from this, that More had "republican opinions." That does not follow.

then said, "suppose there were an act of parliament that all the realm should take me for pope, would not you then take me for pope?" More answered, "your first question applied to temporal government—but suppose the parliament should make a law that God should not be God, would you then, Mr. Rich, say so?" It was this conversation that "Mr. Solicitor" betrayed and exaggerated. More was moved to anger against this treachery, and told Rich, in the course of his defence, that he "always lay under the odium of a lying tongue;" and that he had trusted no secret of his conscience respecting the king's supremacy to one of whom he had so mean an opinion. The verdict of guilty was pronounced. He returned in a boat to the Tower; and there, when he landed, his daughter Margaret fell upon his neck, and lovingly kissed him, again and again. On the 6th of July he was beheaded. His composure and his harmless pleasantries, even when his head was on the block, have been held by some as indicating a levity incompatible with true piety. One who himself knew how a Christian should die, has thus spoken of More's demeanour: "That innocent mirth which had been so conspicuous in his life, did not forsake him to the last. He maintained the same cheerfulness of heart upon the scaffold which he used to show at his table. His death was of a piece with his life. There was nothing in it new, forced, or affected. He did not look upon the severing of his head from his body as a circumstance that ought to produce any change in the disposition of his mind; and as he died under a fixed and settled hope of immortality, he thought any unusual degree of sorrow or concern improper on such an occasion as had nothing in it which could deject or terrify him."* That Henry would show any mercy to Fisher, the friend of his infancy, or to More, his able minister in many high offices, was not to be expected from his nature. He felt towards his ex-chancellor as he felt towards the old soldier whom the earl of Sussex desired to spare, after his condemnation for having been engaged in the Lancashire insurrection. Thus Henry decided in 1537: "Concerning the old man, whom you wrote to have respited, upon the lamentation he made at the bar, and the allegation of his service, thrice, heretofore against the Scots, and otherwise, done unto Us: Albeit we cannot but take your stay [respite] of him in good part, yet, considering he hath so often received our wages, and would nevertheless at the last be corrupted against Us, we think him for an example more worthy to suffer than the rest, that before had none experience of our princely puissance, nor had received any benefit of Us; and so remit him unto you to be executed, according to his judgment given for his offences committed against Us."† We desire no truer illustration of the character of this king. We must seek for its parallel in Dante's "stream of blood,"

"Where tyrants their appointed doom receive." ‡

* Addison, "Spectator," No. 349.

† State Papers, vol. i. p. 541.

‡ "Inferno," canto xii. Wright's translation.



CHAPTER XXIII.

Cromwell vicegerent—Visitation of the Monasteries—Delinquencies of monastic inmates, in some cases—Official corruption—Examples of duty performed by male and female heads of houses—Dissolution of the smaller monasteries—Parliamentary attempts to regulate prices and the quality of manufactures—Such endeavours futile or injurious—Death of Queen Catherine—May-day at Greenwich—Previous summoning of a special Commission—Arrests—Queen Anne imprisoned in the Tower—Her deportment—Her letter to the King—Cranmer's letter to him—True bills found against Anne, her brother, and four others—Trial of the four commoners—Trial of Anne Boleyn and Lord Rochfort—Execution of the five men pronounced guilty—Account of the execution of Anne by an eye-witness—Marriage of Henry to Jane Seymour—General remarks on the question of Anne Boleyn's guilt or innocence—Parliament and a new law of succession—The Princess Mary.

THOMAS CROMWELL has not suffered the grass to grow under his feet since he went to the king, in 1529, to "make or mar it." During seven years of momentous change, from the position of the servant of a fallen master—very likely himself to be hanged, as some men said—he has been raised through a succession of offices—master of the jewels, chancellor of the exchequer, secretary of state—to wield the most potent ecclesiastical authority as the king's vicegerent. The archbishops and bishops may direct the consciences of the clergy. Cromwell will look after their revenues. It has been truly observed that "Cromwell, after the fall of his master, Wolsey, gained on the affections of Henry VIII. till he acquired as great an ascendancy, and nearly as much power, as the cardinal had possessed during the preceding part of the reign; and, whatever office he happened to hold, he was looked up to as the mover of the entire machine of the state." This

observation is founded upon the whole tone of official correspondence from 1531 to 1540, when this powerful minister fell from his slippery elevation.*

In that department of the British Museum called "the Cottonian Library,"—a most valuable collection of MSS. made by Sir Robert Cotton early in the seventeenth century—there is a volume of letters and documents which furnish the most minute information as to the Visitation of the Monasteries,—the measure which preceded their dissolution. In the Chapter-house at Westminster were formerly many bundles of documents known as the Cromwell Papers; † from which the volume in the British Museum was probably a selection. At various times some of these most curious papers have been published. They exhibit, not only the means of forming a correct estimate of many of the real bearings of the great ecclesiastical revolution, but furnish many incidental views of a condition of society which was soon to be swept away, and leave no traces but ruined walls and sculptured columns, where the ivy creeps and the bat hides. The first Statute for the dissolution of the smaller monasteries, which immediately follows the visitation of 1535-6, says, of "the small abbeys, priories, and other religious houses of monks, canons, and nuns," that "many continual visitations have been heretofore had, by the space of two hundred years and more." ‡ Wolsey, as we have seen, suppressed some of these houses; and his servant Cromwell had experience of the mode of conducting such operations. But Wolsey applied their revenues to noble uses. How Cromwell applied them we feel to this hour—every time that a church is to be built, or a school founded, by voluntary aid.

In the height of summer in 1535, three learned doctors set forth upon excursions into various parts of England, each having in his pocket a commission from the "vicegerent of the king in all his ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the realm." Dr. Layton is a most amusing correspondent of the vicegerent; and many a hearty laugh must there have been between the minister and "sundry divers fresh and quick wits, pertaining to his family; by whose industry and ingenious labours divers excellent ballads and books were contrived and set abroad concerning the suppression of the pope and all popish idolatry."§ Dr. Layton has capital stories to tell of the prior of Maiden Bradley, in Wilts, about his relics; and of his less ancient realities, namely, six children, of whom his sons "be tall men waiting upon him." || The worthy commissioner sent some of the curiosities to Cromwell, such as "Mary Magdalene's girdle." Articles of more intrinsic value were in his keeping: "I have crosses of silver and gold, some which I send you not now, because I have more that shall be delivered me this night by the prior of Maiden Bradley himself." The visitors anticipated that clause of the Act for the Suppression, which gave the king "all the ornaments, jewels, goods, and chattels" of the heads of the monastic houses, from the 1st of March, 1535. This was a large power to be entrusted to the visitors, and they never neglected to exercise it. They had rougher work to perform, which Dr. Layton,

* Introduction to State Papers, vol. i. part ii.

† These are now in the Record Office, and the State Paper Office.

‡ 27 Hen. VIII. c. 28.

§ Fox, "Martyrs," quoted in Dr. Maitland's "Essays on the Reformation," p. 237.

|| "Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 58.

at any rate, appears to have set about with hearty goodwill, however odious that work may seem to our more fastidious notions of the office of a gentleman. At Langdon, in Kent, was a small abbey, founded in 1192. It had several doors besides the front gate—"starting-holes" as the commissioner calls them. Dr. Layton comes suddenly upon Langdon, with his retinue; and descending from his horse orders his servants "surely to keep all back-doors and starting-holes." The abbot's lodging joined upon the fields and wood; and there the commissioner knocked and knocked, but heard nothing, "saving the abbot's little dog that, within his door fast locked, bayed and barked." The valiant doctor of law seized a pole-axe, and dashed the abbot's door in pieces; "and about house I go with the pole-axe in my hand, for the abbot is a dangerous desperate knave, and a hardy." Out of one of the starting-holes "rushed a tender demoiselle," who was conveyed to prison at Dover; "and I brought holy father abbot to Canterbury, and here in Christchurch I will leave him in prison."* There are too many such stories in these letters. But we have one painful feeling in reading them—even more painful than the exposure of hypocrisy and licentiousness—the tone in which these matters are spoken of. We heartily agree in the opinion of one who, in common with all earnest men, hates scoffers:—"One would think that the sight of such an abomination of desolation as they professed to see, must have filled all who had anything like the love of God in their hearts, or even the fear of God before their eyes, with grief and consternation." †

Dr. Layton and Dr. Legh have gone together to Fountains Abbey. They write that the abbot is defamed by the whole people for his profligate life, and



Fountains Abbey.

for his dilapidation of the house and wasting of the woods. Before the commissioners came he possessed himself of a jewel, and a cross of gold; and sold them, with plate of the house, to a goldsmith of Cheap. The commissioners properly compelled the abbot to resign. He joined the Yorkshire insurrec-

* "Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 75.

† Maitland, p. 225.

tion in 1536, and was hanged. A writer who derives this relation from the same source as ourselves, says that "tourists, who in their day-dreams among these fair ruins are inclined to complain of the sacrilege which wasted the houses of prayer," may study with advantage the account of the "moral ruin," of which "the outward beautiful ruin was but a symbol and a consequence."* May we not add that the historian, who presents this account of the low morality of the ancient clergy, might have also given us the following glimpse of the noble aims of the new statesmen? To Cromwell, the learned commissioners wrote, in the same letter which describes the frauds of the abbot, these significant words:—"There is a monk of the house, called Marmaduke, to whom Mr. Timms left a prebend in Ripon church, now abiding upon the same prebend, the wisest monk within England of that coat, and well learned—twenty years officer and ruler of all that house,—a wealthy fellow, which will give you six hundred marks to make him abbot there, and pay you immediately after the election."† That this mode of propitiating favour was perfectly understood before the final destruction of the monastic houses was resolved upon, may be inferred from a letter of Latimer, of all men; who does not hesitate to write to Cromwell to avert the suppression of the priory of Great Malvern, by saying, "If five hundred marks to the king's highness, with two hundred marks to yourself for your good will, might occasion the promotion of his intent, at least way for the time of his life, he doubteth not to make his friends for the same."‡

But, however Latimer, in common with other honest men, might have compromised with the political corruption of the time, he appears at this stage of the Reformation, and indeed at a later period, not to have thought that an unmixed good was to be attained by the total annihilation of the religious houses. Pleading for this prior of Great Malvern, he says, "He would be an humble suitor to your lordship, and by the same to the king's good grace, for the upstanding of his foresaid house, and continuance of the same to many good purposes; not in monkery, he meaneth not so, God forbid; but any other ways as should be thought and seem good to the king's majesty, as to maintain teaching, preaching, study with praying, and, to the which he is much given, good housekeeping, for to the virtue of hospitality he hath been greatly inclined from his beginning."§ In a sermon before Edward VI. Latimer says, "Abbeys were ordained for the comfort of the poor."|| That the monastic establishments might have been retained, or their revenues applied, for purposes of Christian education, was the opinion of the more conscientious reformers. That retreats for females, set apart from the world to do offices of piety and charity, would be institutions compatible with the most enlarged freedom of religious opinion, is not disproved by any allegations of the laxity of some nunneries, when thousands of helpless beings were turned forth, under vows of chastity, into a world for the struggles of which they were so unfitted. The abbot of Faversham, who had been in his office from the time of Henry VII., was threatened with removal on account of his advanced age. The old man had some ideas of what his duties were, when he wrote, "If the chief office and profession of an abbot be, as I have

* *Fronde*, vol. ii. p. 423.

† *Ibid.*, p. 149.

‡ "Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 101.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

|| First Sermon before Edward VI.

ever taken it, to live chaste and solitarily, to be separate from the intermeddling of worldly things, to serve God quietly, to distribute his faculties in refreshing of poor indigent persons, to have a vigilant eye to the good order and rule of his house and the flock to him committed in God, I trust, your favour and benevolence obtained (whereof I right humbly require you), I myself may and am as well able yet now to supply and continue these parts as ever I was in all my life."* Let us not, in charity, believe that all these men were of lying tongues and evil lives. Let us not imagine that all nuns were sensual and ignorant. The very commissioners themselves speak of many nunneries as above all suspicion. The prioress of Catesby is represented as a wise, discreet, and very religious woman; her nuns devout and of good obedience. "The said house standeth in such a quarter, much to the relief of the king's people, and his grace's poor subjects there likewise more relieved."†

If we may form an opinion from the preamble of the statute of 1536, by which religious houses not above the yearly value of two hundred pounds were given to the king, the framers of the act, and the parliament which assented to it, intended the suppression of the monasteries there to stop. The statute proposes that the members of the smaller houses shall be removed to "divers great and solemn monasteries of this realm, wherein, thanks be to God, religion is right well kept and observed." This was deliberately asserted, after the visitation had been proceeding for more than six months. The statute of 1539, simply entitled, "An Act for dissolution of Abbeys," swept the whole monastic system away, without assigning any reason beyond the flagrant untruth, that the abbots, abbesses, and other governors of the houses, "of their own free and voluntary minds, goodwills, and assents, without constraint, coercion, or compulsion," had since the 4th of February, 1536, assigned their possessions to the king, and renounced all title to the same. We merely notice this final act of confiscation here; and pass on to the general course of our narrative.

The act for the dissolution of the smaller religious houses was passed in March. The parliament was dissolved on the 4th of April. It had existed for seven years, during which it had assisted in some of the greatest changes of internal policy which England had ever witnessed. It had laboured, too, as previous parliaments had laboured, in devising remedies for social evils, after the prescriptive fashion of believing "that laws could regulate prices, and that industry was to be benefited by enacting how manufacturers should tan leather or dye cloth, and what trades should be carried on in particular towns. It is held to be evidence of the calmness with which the statesmen of this parliament proceeded in their great work of ecclesiastical reform, that they passed "acts to protect the public against the frauds of money-making tradesmen; to provide that shoes and boots should be made of honest leather; that food should be sold at fair prices; that merchants should part with their goods at fair profits." Such battles against "those besetting basenesses of human nature, now held to be so invincible that the influences of them are assumed as the fundamental axioms of economic science," are declared to be more glorious "than even the English constitution or the English

* "Suppression," &c. p. 104.
VOL. II.

† Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 72.

liturgy."* Without looking further than the records of this parliament, we may venture to suggest that these victories had no permanent influence in making any product cheaper or better, but were the greatest obstacles to improvement, and therefore prevented a wider diffusion of things convenient for man. Was the manufacture of cloth likely to be improved, when the various dyeing woods that were brought to Europe after the discovery of America—"Brazil, and such other like subtleties"—were forbidden to be used? † Could the yeoman and the labourer obtain a better or a cheaper coat, when graziers and husbandmen were prohibited from weaving, fulling, or shearing cloth in their houses? ‡ The statutes for regulating the prices of land confess the utter fruitlessness of such enactments: "Forasmuch as dearth, scarcity, good cheap and plenty of cheese, butter, capons, hens, chickens, and other victuals necessary of man's sustenance, happeneth, riseth, and chanceth of so many and divers occasions, that it is very hard and difficult to put any certain prices to any such things,"—yet, upon any complaint of the enhancing of prices "without reasonable cause," proclamation shall be made at what rate they shall be sold.§ One more glimpse at these notable expedients "to compel all classes of persons to be true men" in spite of "the fundamental axioms of economic science." The regulating parliament decrees that flesh is to be sold by weight; that beef and pork are to be sold at a halfpenny a pound; and mutton and veal at three farthings.|| But there are some others to be consulted in this matter besides the butchers. What if the graziers will not sell fat cattle to the butchers at a proportionate rate? The next session an act is passed to compel them.¶ But one inevitable consequence ensues—it is not remunerative to the graziers to breed and fatten cattle; so in two years more a scarcity ensues, the direct result of the legislation. And then, "the king's highness, well considering the great dearth of all manner of victuals which be now, and since the making of the said statutes," suspends their operations for four years, and leaves graziers and butchers to settle the prices of meat "without pain, imprisonment, forfeiture, or penalty."**

In the last days of December, 1535, "the Lady Dowager" lies on her death-bed at Kimbolton. Her physician "moved her to take more counsel of physic: whereunto she answered she would in no wise have any other physician, but only commit herself to the pleasure of God." †† In her last hours she wrote a brief letter to Henry; chiefly to commend her daughter and her maids to his respect. Its opening sentence was one of solemn warning: "The hour of my death now approaching, I cannot choose but, out of the love I bear you, advise you of your soul's health, which you ought to prefer before all considerations of the world or flesh whatsoever; for which yet you have cast me into many calamities, and yourself into many troubles. But I forgive you all, and pray God to do so likewise." The world and the flesh were to bring that man into other troubles, and produce even more terrible calamities. Catherine died on the 7th of January, 1536.

* Froude, "History," vol. i. p. 405.

† 24 Hen. VIII. c. 2.

‡ 25 Hen. VIII. c. 18.

§ 25 Hen. VIII. c. 2.

|| 24 Hen. VIII. c. 8.

¶ 25 Hen. VIII. c. 1.

** 27 Hen. VIII. c. 9.

†† Bedyngheld to Cromwell, December 31. State Papers, vol. i. p. 451.

In the February following, Anne Boleyn had a premature delivery of a dead son. There was again disappointment to the king. His desire for an heir had become a passion,—more dangerous in mingling with his inconstancy and caprice, and his sensual estimate of the female character. There is a beautiful passage in the “Memoir of Anne Boleyn,” by George Wyatt, written at the close of the 16th century, but unpublished till our own times, in which, speaking of this February of 1536, he says of the queen: “Being thus a woman full of sorrow, it was reported that the king came to her, and bewailing and complaining unto her of the loss of his boy, some words were heard break out of the inward feeling of her heart’s dolours, laying the fault upon unkindness.” He adds, “Wise men in those days judged that her virtues were here her defaults; and that if her too much love could as well as the other queen have borne with his defect of love, she might have fallen into less danger.” Catherine bore her fate patiently, as long as she was queen. Anne could not bear to hold the dignity as a neglected wife. However justly we may blame the weakness of Anne in permitting the royal lover to be for years at her feet, while the question of the divorce was depending, we see, after the marriage, a frank and affectionate helpmate,—cheerful, gay—(“the lark is gay, the innocent are gay,”)—kind to her dependents; earnest in looking at the Scriptures as the rule of life; of unbounded charity. “She had distributed, in the last nine months of her life, between fourteen and fifteen thousand pounds to the poor.”* But she had bitter enemies. She was regarded as a heretic; and no suspicion could more ensue her the king’s hatred than this;—nor the hatred of her uncle, the duke of Norfolk. The moment it was perceived that the king was cooling upon his “most entirely beloved wife,” as he had so often proclaimed her to be, there were agents ready to procure her ruin. A poet—and poets sometimes see as clearly as historians into the secret passages of the past—has connected the fall of Anne Boleyn with the machinations which were prompted by “that awful spirit of fanaticism—the more awful, because strictly conscientious—which was arrayed against our early Reformers.”† The Society of which Loyola was the founder was not regularly organised till 1540; but his most energetic proselytes were earlier in full activity. With such secret agents about Henry, to hint that the want of an heir was an intimation of heaven’s displeasure at his second marriage, as of the first; with Gardiner abroad, to suggest that the emperor would never acknowledge the lawfulness of the issue of queen Anne; with one in the court, young and fair, with whom the king had evidently a perfect understanding; and with Anne herself, having habitually an unconstrained demeanour to those about her, which might be construed into levity and even guilt,—there could be no great difficulty in setting “the sordid slave” Audley, and “the base and profligate” Rich—(we use Lord Campbell’s designations of these men)—to manufacture evidence, and to ground indictments for treason upon a statute that admitted of no such construction. There were secret investigations going on in April. Henry, according to his rule and habit, was smiling upon his victim while the axe was sharpening. He had long practised the art of

* Burnet, book iii.

† Milman, Introduction to “Anne Boleyn; a Dramatic Poem.”

hiding his thoughts under the mask of familiarity and kindness. "Three may keep counsel," he said to Cavendish, "if two be away; and if I thought that my cap knew my counsel, I would cast it into the fire and burn it." * And so, after a special commission was ordered to assemble, notice having been issued on the 24th of April, the usual festivities took place at Greenwich on the 1st of May; and Henry sate by the side of Anne as they gazed upon the tournament. In the lists was her brother, lord Rochfort—one of that band of courtly poets who engrafted the smoothness of Italian verse upon our rougher English—the contemporary of Surrey and Wyatt—the accomplished scholar—the courtier of "admirable discourse." He was soon to say, as in a poem attributed to him, "My lute be still, for I have done." † At that tournament lord Rochfort was the challenger of sir Henry Norris. To the real incidents of that day, which we may sufficiently trace from authentic relations, report added that Anne dropped a handkerchief which Norris picked up, and that Henry's jealousy was thus stung into madness. Hall, who in his Chronicle is excessively brief in his relations of these events, says, "On May-day were a solemn jousts kept at Greenwich; and suddenly from the jousts the king departed, having not above six persons with him, and came in the evening from Greenwich in his place at Westminster. Of this sudden departing many men mused, but most chiefly the queen." One who was a servant of sir Henry Norris has given us a glimpse of what passed in this hasty ride to London of the king and his six attendants. "Upon May-day, Mr. Norris justed; and, after justing, the king rode suddenly to Westminster; and all the way, as I heard say, had Mr. Norris in examination, and promised him his pardon in case he would utter the truth. But what soever could be said or done, Mr. Norris would confess nothing to the king; whereupon he was committed to the Tower in the morning." ‡ Of Anne's position and behaviour, on that night of doubt and fear when the king left her at Greenwich, we hear nothing. From Tuesday, the 2nd of May, to the day of her death on Friday the 19th, the record is very clear of the mode in which she bore her inflictions. The letters of the constable of the Tower, sir William Kingston, tell the unhappy story very fully.§

It appears that the queen was examined by some of the council at Greenwich. "I was cruelly handled at Greenwich," she says to Kingston, "with the king's council, with my lord of Norfolk: he said, 'tut, tut, tut,' and shaking his head three or four times." They accompanied her to the Tower, on the 2nd, and on their departing, says Kingston, "I went before the queen into her lodging; and then she said unto me, 'Mr. Kingston, shall I go into a dungeon?' 'No, madam; you shall go into your lodging that you lay in at your coronation.' 'It is too good for me,' she said, 'Jesu, have mercy on me;' and kneeled down weeping a great pace, and in the same sorrow fell to a great laughing, and she hath done so many times since." She desired to

* "Life of Wolsey," p. 399.

† See Warton's "English Poetry," Park's edit., vol. iii. p. 316.

‡ From a memorial to Cromwell, by George Constantine, giving an account of a conversation which he held in Pembrokeshire. "Archæologia," vol. xxiii.

§ These letters were much injured by fire in the Cotton Library in 1781. Strype had printed many passages entire, copied before the fire. We give the extracts as they stand in Mr. Singer's edition of Cavendish.

have the sacrament in her chamber, that she might pray for mercy; "for I am as clear from the company of men, as for sin, as I am clear from you, and am the king's true wedded wife." She pressed Kingston to know where lord Rochford was—"O, where is my sweet brother?" She exclaimed, "O Norris, hast thou accused me; thou art in the Tower with me, and thou and I shall die together: and, Mark, art thou here too?" The cruel handling of the council was upon her mind. Mark was the musician—his name Smeaton. The memorial of Constantine thus speaks of him: "I cannot tell how he was examined; but upon May-day in the morning he was in the Tower. The truth is, he confessed it; but yet the saying was that he was first grievously racked." According to Kingston, the queen kept harping upon Norris, and speaking of him as if he had made advances to her, for which she had reproved him, and said she could undo him if she would. She had been persuaded that Norris had spoken lightly of her, but Norris had said to her almoner that he would swear she was a good woman. This talk does not appear to have chiefly taken place before the constable of the Tower, but was reported to him by one Mistress Cosyn, who was appointed to lie with the queen on her pallet,—lady Boleyn, her uncle's wife and her domestic enemy, being also there. Out of such talk it would be easy to prepare solemn depositions; and Kingston, with the true wisdom of the gaoler-spy, says, "I have everything told me by Mistress Cosyn that she thinks meet for me to know." The queen spake, too, of Weston (sir Francis Weston), who had said that he loved her; and in telling this, "she defied him." From time to time her mind is dwelling upon the threats and insinuations of Norfolk and the king's council, as these treacherous women question her; and she wanders in her distracted talk from one to the other of those who had been mentioned as being implicated in her dishonour. There is nothing which indicates anything more than the affection which these men naturally bore to a kind and perhaps too condescending mistress, in any one of her rambling and indiscreet sentences. It would be difficult to extract a proof of guilt, or even of levity, from this her account of the poor musician, Mark. At Winchester he came to her lodging to play upon the virginals: "I never spake with him since, but upon Saturday before May-day, and then I found him standing in the round window in my chamber of presence; and I asked why he was so sad, and he answered and said it was no matter,; and then she said, 'You may not look to have me speak to you as I should to a nobleman, because you be an inferior person.' 'No, no, madam, a look sufficed me.'"

When the queen first came into the Tower, she said, "Mr. Kingston, shall I die without justice?" and he answered "the poorest subject the king hath has justice;" and therewith she laughed. It was the laugh of despair. Yet she made an effort to touch the heart of the king; and she said to Kingston, "I shall desire you to bear a letter from me to Master Secretary." A copy of a letter to the king, with the words written upon it, "From the Lady in the Tower," is to be seen amongst the Cotton MSS. in the British Museum. The handwriting is supposed to be of the latter time of Henry VIII. It has been much injured by fire; but the entire letter, with which this burnt MS. corresponds in the parts untouched, is printed in Lord Herbert's history, and by Burnet, who refers to the MS. in a marginal note. We make no apology for printing this beautiful composition at length; whose

authenticity sir James Mackintosh and sir Henry Ellis concur in believing, as well as Mr. Froude, who has no belief in Anne Boleyn's innocence:—

“ Sir,—Your grace's displeasure, and my imprisonment, are things so strange unto me, as what to write, or what to excuse, I am altogether ignorant. Whereas you send unto me (willing me to confess a truth, and so obtain your favour) by such an one whom you know to be mine ancient professed enemy, I no sooner received this message by him, than I rightly conceived your meaning; and if, as you say, confessing a truth indeed may procure my safety, I shall with all willingness and duty perform your command.

“ But let not your grace ever imagine that your poor wife will ever be brought to acknowledge a fault, where not so much as a thought thereof preceded. And, to speak a truth, never prince had wife more loyal in all duty, and in all true affection, than you have ever found in Anne Boleyn, with which name and place I could willingly have contented myself, if God and your grace's pleasure had been so pleased. Neither did I at any time so far forget myself in my exaltation, or received queenship, but that I always looked for such an alteration as now I find; for, the ground of my preferment being on no surer foundation than your grace's fancy, the least alteration was fit and sufficient, I knew, to draw that fancy to some other subject. You have chosen me, from a low estate, to be your queen and companion, far beyond my desert or desire. If then you found me worthy of such honour, good your grace let not any light fancy, or bad counsel of mine enemies, withdraw your princely favour from me; neither let that stain, that unworthy stain of a disloyal heart towards your good grace, ever cast so foul a blot on your most dutiful wife, and the infant princess your daughter. Try me, good king; but let me have a lawful trial, and let not my sworn enemies sit as my accusers and judges: yea, let me receive an open trial, for my truth shall fear no open shame. Then shall you see, either mine innocency cleared, your suspicion and conscience satisfied, the ignominy and slander of the world stopped, or my guilt openly declared. So that, whatsoever God or you may determine of, your grace may be freed from an open censure; and mine offence being so lawfully proved, your grace is at liberty, both before God and man, not only to execute worthy punishment on me as an unfaithful wife, but to follow your affection already settled on that party, for whose sake I am now as I am, whose name I could some good while since have pointed unto: your grace being not ignorant of my suspicion therein.

“ But, if you have already determined of me, and that not only my death, but an infamous slander must bring you the enjoying of your desired happiness; then I desire of God, that he will pardon your great sin therein, and likewise my enemies, the instruments thereof; and that he will not call you to a strait account for your unprincely and cruel usage of me, at his great judgment seat, where both you and myself must shortly appear, and in whose just judgment, I doubt not, whatsoever the world may think of me, mine innocency shall be openly known, and sufficiently cleared.

“ My last and only request shall be, that myself may only bear the burthen of your grace's displeasure, and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen who, as I understand, are likewise in strait

imprisonment for my sake. If I ever have found favour in your sight; if ever the name of Anne Boleyn hath been pleasing in your ears, then let me obtain this request; and so I will leave to trouble your grace any further, with mine earnest prayers to the Trinity to have your grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all your actions. From my doleful prison in the Tower, this sixth of May.

“Your most loyal and ever faithful wife,

“ANNE BOLEYN.” *

The day after Anne had been imprisoned in the Tower, Cranmer wrote a remarkable letter to the king.† He commences by saying that he had been commanded by Mr. Secretary, in the king's name, to repair to Lambeth, and there to wait his pleasure. Out of kindness or policy his aid in the inquiries of the council was thus forbidden. He then adverts to the common rumour, and to the consequent “deep sorrows of your grace's heart,” and thus proceeds:—“I cannot deny but your grace hath great causes many ways of lamentable heaviness; and also that in the wrongful estimation of the world your grace's honour of every part is so highly touched (whether the things that commonly be spoken of be true or not), that I remember not that ever Almighty God sent your grace any like occasion to try your grace's constancy throughout, whether your highness can be content to take of God's hand as well things displeasent as pleasent.” He then proceeds to exhort the king to imitate the example of Job, in his “willing acceptation of God's scourge and rod.” After this introduction he summons courage to come to the point upon which it required all his discretion to speak:—“And if it be true that is openly reported of the queen's grace, if men had a right estimation of things they should not esteem any part of your grace's honour to be touched thereby, but her honour only to be clearly disparaged. And I am in such a perplexity that my mind is clean amazed. For I never had better opinion in woman than I had in her, which maketh me to think, that she should not be culpable. And again, I think your highness would not have gone so far, except she had surely been culpable. Now I think that your grace best knoweth, that next unto your grace I was most bound unto her of all creatures living: Wherefore I most humbly beseech your grace to suffer me in that, which both God's law, nature, and also her kindness bindeth me unto, that is, that I may with your grace's favour wish and pray for her, that she may declare herself inculpable and innocent. And if she be found culpable, considering your grace's goodness towards her, and from what condition your grace of your only mere goodness took her, and set the crown upon her head, I repute him not your grace's faithful servant and subject, nor true unto the realm, that would not desire the offence without mercy to be punished, to the example of all other. And as I loved her not a little, for the love which I judged her to bear towards God and his gospel; so if she be proved culpable, there is not one that loveth God and his gospel that ever will favour her, but must hate her above all

* The force and elegance of the diction have led some to believe that this letter was beyond the ability of Anne. Its modern form has, perhaps, been injurious to a conviction of its authenticity; and therefore we append it as a note, as the MS. now exhibits it, with the mutilated part in italics. (See end of this chapter.)

† This letter is printed by Burnet (book iii.), who says he copied it from the original.

other; and the more they favour the gospel, the more they will hate her. For then there was never creature in our time that so much slandereth the gospel. And God hath sent her this punishment, for that she feignedly hath professed his gospel in her mouth, and not in heart and deed." What follows very clearly indicates the inclination of Anne to a true reform of religion, founded upon the knowledge of the Scriptures; and the influence which she had exercised upon Henry's opinions. But it also shows how wavering Cranmer thought the mind of that man, who bore a two-edged sword, to punish those who clung to the papal power and those who sought any expansion of spiritual belief. "I trust that your grace will bear no less entire favour unto the truth of the gospel than you did before: forasmuch as your grace's favour to the gospel was not led by affection unto her, but by zeal unto the truth." Then comes this significant postscript:—

"After I had written this letter unto your grace, my lord chancellor, my lord of Oxford, my lord of Sussex, and my lord chamberlain of your grace's house, sent for me to come unto the Star Chamber; and there declared unto me such things as your grace's pleasure was they should make me privy unto. For the which I am most bounden unto your grace. And what communication we had together, I doubt not but they will make the true report thereof unto your grace. I am exceedingly sorry, that such faults can be proved by the queen, as I heard of their relation. But I am, and ever shall be, your faithful subject." When Cranmer knew nothing of the charges against the queen, he used very strong language,—“offence without mercy to be punished”—“God hath sent her this punishment.” When the lord chancellor, and others, have made him privy to such things as the king desired him to know, he is only “exceedingly sorry that such faults can be proved by [of] the queen as I heard of their relation.” If he had heard enough to justify a charge “without mercy to be punished,” would he not have used even stronger language than in the first portion of his letter? The charges against the queen were so awful, as set forth upon her so-called trial, that he must have suppressed that letter which said, “I never had better opinion in woman than I had in her, which maketh me to think that she should not be culpable.”

On the 10th and 11th of November true bills were found by grand-juries of Middlesex and of Kent, against the queen, her brother, Henry Norris, William Brereton, Francis Weston, and Mark Smeaton, setting forth that the queen had incited them, including lord Rochfort, to commit the most odious crime; that they had at various times compassed and imagined the king's death; and that the king, “having within a short time before become acquainted with the before-mentioned crimes, vices, and treasons, had been so grieved that certain harms and dangers had happened to his royal body.” The grand-juries that found that the disease which was incident to the king's gross habit, and of which he died—ulceration of the legs—was produced by grief—a grief so short-lived as to permit him to marry again within nine days of this finding—were not likely to be very scrupulous upon returning true bills to any indictment presented to them. On the 12th of May, the four commoners were tried by a jury at Westminster. They were convicted, and were executed on the 17th. These four men did not confess upon the scaffold to the crimes with which they were

accused. As men about to die they confessed their sins generally. According to the letter of a bystander, "who heard them, and wrote every word they spake,"* Norris said that he deserved to die, "but the cause wherefore I die judge not, but if ye judge, judge the best." Of the other three he says that they "in a manner" confessed all. But when he comes to particulars the "all" evaporates in general admissions of a sinful life. A Portuguese, who has given a most minute account of these executions, says, of the four commoners, "they besought the bystanders to pray for them, and that they yielded themselves to death with joy and exceeding gladness." †

The last scene of this dismal tragedy quickly opens. On the 15th of May a select number of peers assembled in the Tower—twenty-seven in all. The duke of Norfolk presided. The queen was arraigned; and pleaded not guilty. There is no record of the trial; no tittle of the evidence is preserved. The verdict was "Guilty;" the judgment, "to be beheaded or burned at the king's pleasure." The same form was gone through with lord Rochfort; with the usual sentence of death for treason. Lawyers are perplexed now to know under what statute any one of those accused could have been found guilty of treason. The evidence was not open to the world, for the proceeding "was enclosed in strong walls." ‡ A Flemish gentleman, in London at the time, complains of the absence of witnesses upon these trials. Then, and long after, in trials for high treason the witnesses were not confronted with the prisoners; and it was held sufficient to read out their depositions. We can thus, easily understand how, on such a state-trial, to be accused was necessarily to be condemned. On the morning of her execution, Anne Boleyn requested Kingston to be present while she received the sacrament, and then declared her "innocency." She had been brought before Cranmer, before her trial, to be examined upon some mysterious point which enabled him to pronounce a sentence of divorce. Burnet says it was in consequence of a pre-contract with the earl of Northumberland. This the earl denied upon oath. When she died for alleged adultery, she was by law proclaimed not to have been the king's wife at all.

Lord Rochfort was executed with the four commoners on the 17th of May. On the 19th, Anne was brought out to die on the Tower-green. Kingston thus wrote of his last interview with her within the prison-walls: "She sent for me, and at my coming she said, 'Mr. Kingston, I hear say I shall not die afore noon, and I am very sorry therefore; for I thought then to be dead and past my pain.' I told her it should be no pain, it was so subtle. And then she said, 'I heard say the executioner was very good, and I have a little neck,' and put her hand about it, laughing heartily. I have seen many men and also women executed, and they have been in great sorrow; and to my knowledge this lady hath much joy and pleasurè in death."

The Portuguese sojourner in London has left the most detailed account of this deed, which startled Europe as much as the cruel end of Fisher and More. Anne was beheaded with a sword, "which thing had not before been

* Constantine's Letter to Cromwell, in "Archæologia."

† Letter written from London on the 10th of June, from a Portuguese gentleman to a friend in Lisbon, translated by Lord Strangford. "Excerpta Historica," p. 260.

‡ Wyatt

seen in this land of England." She was habited in a robe of black damask. The speech which the foreigner assigns to her differs in no essentials from that given by Stow, but is somewhat fuller; and is not open to the suspicion of being curtailed by the English chroniclers of the time: "God's friends, I am not come here to excuse or to justify myself, forasmuch as I know full well that aught that I could say in my defence doth not appertain unto you, and that I could draw no hope of life from the same. But I come here only to die, and thus to yield myself humbly to the will of the king my lord. And if in my life I did ever offend the king's grace, surely with my death I do now atone for the same. And I blame not my judges, nor any other manner of person, nor anything save the cruel law of the land by which I die. But be this, and be my faults as they may, I beseech you all, good friends, to pray for the life of the king my sovereign lord and yours, who is one of the best princes on the face of the earth, and who hath always treated me so well, that better could not be: wherefore I submit to death with a good-will, humbly asking pardon of all the world.' Then with her own hands, she took her coifs from her head, and delivered them to one of her ladies, and then putting on a little cap of linen to cover her hair withal, she said, 'Alas, poor head! in a very brief space thou wilt roll in the dust on this scaffold; and as in life thou didst not merit to wear the crown of a queen, so in death, thou deservest not a better doom than this. And ye, my damsels, who, whilst I lived, ever shewed yourselves so diligent in my service, and who are now to be present at my last hour and mortal agony, as in good fortune ye were faithful to me, so even at this my miserable death ye do not forsake me. And as I cannot reward you for your true service to me, I pray you take comfort for my loss; howbeit, forget me not; and be always faithful to the king's grace, and to her whom with happier fortune ye may have as your queen and mistress. And esteem your honour far beyond your life; and in your prayers to the Lord Jesu, forget not to pray for my soul.'

"And being minded to say no more, she knelt down upon both knees, and one of her ladies covered her eyes with a bandage, and then they withdrew themselves some little space, and knelt down over against the scaffold, bewailing bitterly and shedding many tears. And thus, and without more to say or do, was her head stricken off; she making no confession of her fault, and only saying, 'O Lord God, have pity on my soul;' and one of her ladies then took up the head, and the others the body, and covering them with a sheet, did put them into a chest which there stood ready, and carried them to the church which is within the Tower."

There is nothing which the Drama could add to move terror and pity, when the curtain should drop upon the closing scene of this tragedy. But History has one fact to add, still more awful. It is the one fact which shows us how more terrible is the condition of a man utterly heartless and shameless, who, having moved all the instruments of so-called justice to accomplish the death of the wife of his most ardent devotion—and having in this accomplishment also procured her child to be held illegitimate, as he had willed as to the child of a former wife—at length is joyous and triumphant. Queen Anne was beheaded on the 19th of May. On the 20th Henry was married to Jane Seymour. The council exhorted him, we are told, to marry immediately, for a state necessity. Nature cries out against the outrage upon all the

decencies of life; but the political philosopher says, "he looked upon matrimony as an indifferent official act which his duty required at the moment."* We can find no reasonable cause to doubt that from the first step to the last, the charge was got up, the indictments prepared, the juries selected, the peers upon the trial nominated, the marriage with Jane Seymour settled,—and last, but not least significant fact, a new parliament called for the sole purpose of making a new law of succession, before the cannon of the Tower had announced that Anne had perished. That parliament met on the 8th of June. We know not the date of the writs of summons; but it was absolutely impossible that the elections could have taken place, and Peers and Commons have been in their places within eighteen days of the execution of Anne, had not those writs been issued at the same time as the order for a special commission was issued, namely, on the 24th of April. Even this date



Queen Jane Seymour From a drawing by Holbein

would only allow forty-three days. The writs for a new parliament were usually returnable in three months. The death of the queen was manifestly "a foregone conclusion."

The recent historian of this period, as we venture to think, has carried his admiration of the self-asserting force of character in Henry VIII. to an extent which blinds him to the hideousness of the acts in which that force is too often exhibited. Mr. Froude has given us this alternative—to

* Froude, "History," vol. ii. p. 502.

receive his history, in its endeavours to prove a "human being sinful whom the world has ruled to be innocent," as "a re-assertion of the truth, or the shame of noble names which have not deserved it at our hands." * .Which are the "noble names?" Cranmer? the amiable and timid, who furnishes the most direct evidence that he believed in Anne's innocence, but did not dare to assert it. Cromwell? to whom his master's word was as the breath of his nostrils. Audley? who in begging, again and again, for a due share of the plunder of the monasteries, makes this forcible appeal to the king's favour, "I have in this world sustained great damage and infamy in serving the king's highness, which this grant shall recompense." Rich? the betrayer of Fisher and More—the branded perjurer—the slavish flatterer, who, when Speaker of the House of Commons in 1537, compared Henry to Solomon for prudence, to Samson for strength, and to Absalom for beauty,—the very sun which warmed and enlightened the universe. Norfolk? the declared enemy of his niece, Anne,—he, who upon an offence given to Henry by some of his family, in 1541, deprecates the anger of the king by avowing that he had betrayed the words of his mother-in-law; and, using not the language of an Englishman but of a slave dreading the bowstring, lays himself at Henry's feet as a "poor wretch," and claims as a merit, "the small love my two false traitorous nieces, [Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard] and my mother-in-law, have borne unto me." † Fitzwilliam? who is distinctly accused, in Constantine's letter to Cromwell, of having deceived the unhappy Norris into making some false confessions, which he recanted in the most positive manner upon his arraignment and at his execution—Fitzwilliam? the king's treasurer, to whom Baynton deploras that only one will confess—(the racked musician), "wherefore it should much touch the king's honour if no further appear." The lives of six persons were as nothing compared with "the king's honour." Such are some of the leading men in this proceeding—the "noble names" that are to make us accept the accusations against Anne Boleyn, as confirmed by her judges, "as proofs of Holy Writ." We are told that, "if the Catholics could have fastened the stain of murder on the king and the statesmen of England, they would have struck the faith of the Establishment a harder blow than by a poor tale of scandal against a weak, erring, suffering woman:" and that "the Protestants, in mistaken generosity, have courted an infamy for the names of those to whom they owe their being, which, staining the fountain, must stain for ever the stream which flows from it." Are we for ever to read history under the fear that if we trust to the everlasting principles of justice—to our hatred of oppression—to our contempt for sycophancy and worldly-mindedness—we may be "staining the fountain" which we regard as a well of life? Is there no firmer resting-place for true thought than is to be found in the debateable ground between Catholics and Protestants? Is there no common platform of historical evidence upon which both can meet to examine such questions honestly and temperately? What, in truth, have the personal motives which led to the rejection of papal supremacy—what the seizure of first fruits and tenths by the crown—what the avarice that prompted the destruction of the monasteries—what the burnings for heresy—what the "six articles" of 1539, by which all men were to be "regimented" into belief—what have

* Fruede, vol. ii. p. 540.

† State Papers, vol. i. p. 721.

these to do with with the Protestant "fountain," or the "stream which flows from it?" Still less ought the verdict of him who thoughtfully weighs the almost total absence of satisfactory evidence against Anne Boleyn in the one scale,—and the undeniable wilfulness, cruelty, revenge, and lust of Henry in the other,—to be considered as an imputation against the strength of the principles on which the worship of Protestant England rests. Let us be thankful that, under the dispensations of God, there were very few righteous men called to do the evil work that accompanied the overthrow of the papal power—for we must acknowledge that the righteous men could not have done it so quickly and so effectually. But let us not compromise our moral sense by having what is called "a state necessity" proposed to us as the rule of wisdom and virtue. History may be so written as to make some believe that despotism is the only safeguard for a nation's prosperity and happiness. It has been so written in by-gone times, and the sophistry is struggling for revival. But let this pass. Anne Boleyn sleeps in the chapel in the Tower, where so many other victims of tyranny sleep; and in spite of every laborious detraction, her fate will not be remembered without honest tears.



St. Peter's Chapel in the Tower of London.

The bishops and abbots, quaking for fear—the lay lords and commoners, with a scent of spoil—thus got together within three weeks of the appalling events that were probably still imperfectly rumoured in distant parts of the kingdom, were told by Audley, the chancellor, of the great cause of their being unexpectedly summoned. The king desired them to determine as to

the succession of the crown; for he knew, confessed the chancellor, that, he was "himself obnoxious to infirmities, and even death itself." Amazing acknowledgment! The candid Audley adds, "a thing very rare for kings to think of." Had the king bad dreams, when all should have gone, "merry as a marriage bell?" Did he see where "death keeps his court,"—

"Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp—
Allowing him a breath, a little scene
To monarchise, be feared, and kill with looks!" *

Somebody, perhaps, had told him, in as gentle language as was used to the dauphin of France, that kings sometimes did die. But, with that morbid craving for power after the grave is closed upon him, that marks the selfish and tyrannous man, whether there is a crown to be disposed of or a house and lands, king Henry contrived that his parliament should pass the most unconstitutional statute that had ever attempted to convert the ancient monarchy into a personalty, making the crown a chattel, for any royal flatterer to take by bequest, and "put it in his pocket." England was delivered over, bound hand and foot, to Henry by the prostration of this parliament. It was enacted—the issue of the marriage with Catherine being rendered illegitimate by a previous statute, and by reason of a divorce pronounced before the execution of the late lady Anne for treason, her daughter Elizabeth was therefore illegitimate, that marriage being "never good nor consonant to the laws,"—that the oath taken to uphold that succession was to be superseded by another oath to maintain the issue of the late marriage with the king's "entirely beloved wife" queen Jane; and that all who should assert the lawfulness of the issue of the former marriages should be guilty of high treason. Here were two daughters of the king precluded from inheriting the throne. Naturally enough, the people would consider whom they were to obey, if there should be no issue of this third marriage. Never was the danger of a disputed succession more imminent. Was the danger, likely to be removed by an enactment that, on failure of issue, the king might limit the descent of the crown, by letters patent, or by his will, to any person in possession or remainder, who shall be obeyed accordingly, whether male or female? The object was that Henry might bequeath the crown to his illegitimate son, the duke of Richmond. But the object was defeated by One greater than King, Lords, or Commons. The duke died whilst the bill was passing through parliament.

Mary, the king's first daughter, is now a little more than twenty years of age; Elizabeth is scarcely three years. Mary has incurred the greatest perils by her undaunted refusal to receive the marriage of her mother as unlawful. "For a great while she could not be persuaded to submit to the king; who, being impatient of contradiction from any, but especially from his own child, was resolved to strike a terror in all his people by putting her openly to death." † Burnet adds, that Cranmer induced the king to relax from this atrocious resolve. But the princess was kept from court, and lived in great

* Richard II., act iii. scene 2.

† Burnet, "History of the Reformation," part ii. book ii.

seclusion. There is a story, for which no authority is given, that Anne Boleyn, on the last evening of her life, fell on her knees before the wife of the lieutenant of the Tower, requesting her to go to the lady Mary, and in the same way kneeling before her, beg her to pardon an unfortunate woman the wrongs she had done her.* Be this true or not, it is clear that the removal of Anne was considered an opportunity for the lady Mary again to approach her stern father. Cromwell appears to have been solicitous to effect a reconciliation; and partly by his threats, and partly by his entreaties, the unhappy woman was led to make a complete renunciation of all her former opinions—to accept the king as the Supreme Head of the Church; to “utterly refuse the bishop of Rome’s pretended authority, power, and jurisdiction within this realm;” and to recognise the marriage of her mother with the king as unlawful, by God’s law and man’s law. The abject style in which the daughter creeps in the dust before the parent—the fulsome flattery in which she endeavours to propitiate his favour—are proofs of the terror which that man inspired, and of the arts which all who came within the reach of his power exercised to disarm his ferocity. Thus Mary writes: “As I have, and shall, knowing your excellent learning, virtue, wisdom, and knowledge, put my soul into your direction; and by the same hath and will, in all things from henceforth, direct my conscience, so my body I do wholly commit to your mercy and fatherly pity; desiring no state, no condition, nor no manner degree of living, but such as Your Grace shall appoint unto me; knowing and confessing, that my state can not be so vile, as either the extremity of justice would appoint unto me, or as mine offences have required and deserved.” † She was well instructed. She had at length learnt the parrot note with which the despot, so vain-glorious of his “learning, virtue, wisdom, and knowledge” was to be approached. She had no opinion, when asked to declare herself upon doctrinal points, but “such as she should receive from the king, who had her whole heart in his keeping.” Upon pilgrimage, purgatory, and relics she had no guide but the king’s “inestimable virtue, high wisdom, and excellent learning.” She saved her head by this duplicity, for which it would be scarcely fair to blame her; but she took her revenge for a long suppression of her real opinions, by exacting conformity to them when the gibbet and the stake were at her own command.

* Lingard, vol. vi. p. 323.

† State Papers, vol. i. p. 457.

NOTE to page 375.

LETTER OF ANNE BOLEYN TO HENRY VIII.,

In the Cotton Library. The parts burnt are in Italics.

STR,

Your Grace's displeasure and my imprisonment are things soe *strange* unto me, as what to wrighte, or what to excuse, I am altogether ignorant. Whereas you send unto me, (willing me to confesse a truth, and soe to obteyne your favour) by such an whome you know to be mine antient professed enemy, I noe sooner received this message by him, then I rightly conceived your meaning; and if as *you say*, confessing a truth indeed may procure my saftie I shall vse all willingnesse and dutie perform your command. But let not your Grace *ever* imagine that your poore wife will ever be brought to *acknowledge* a fault, where not soe much as a thought ever proceeded. *And to speake* a truth, never a prince had wife more loyall in all duty, and in all true affection, then you have ever found in *Anne Bolen*, with which name and place I could willingly have contented myself, if God and your Grace's pleasure had so bene pleased. Neither did I at any time soe farre forgett my selfe in my exaltation, or reheaved queenshipp, but that I alwayes looked for such an alteration as now I finde; for the ground of my preferment being on noe surer foundation than your Grace's fancye, the least alteration was fit and sufficient (I knowe) to draw that fancye to some other subjecte. You have chosen me from a low estate to be your queene and companion farre beyond my desert or desire; if then you found me worthy of such honour, good your Grace let not any light fancye, or bade counsell of my enemies withdraw your princely favour from me; neither lett that stayne, that unworthy stayne of a disloyall hart towards your good Grace, ever cast so foule a blott one your most dutifull wife, and the infant princessse your daughter. Trye me, good king, but let me have a lawfull tryall; and let not my sworne enemyes sit as my accusers and judges; yee let me receive an open tryall, for my truth shall feare noe open shames. Then shall you see either mine innocency cleered, your suspition and conscience satisfied, the ignominye and slander of the world stopped, or my guilt openly declared. Soe that whatsoever God or you may determine of your Grace may be freed from an open censure, and mine offence, being soe lawfully proved, your Grace is at liberty both before God and man, not only to execute worthy punishment on me as an unfaithfull wife, but to follow your affection already settled one that partie, for whose sake I am now as I am, whose name I could some good while since have pointed unto, your Grace being not ignorant of my suspition therein.

But if you have already determined of me, and that not only my death, but an infamous slander must bring you the joying of your desired happines, then I desire of God that he will pardon your great sinne herein, and likewise my enemyes the instruments thereof, and that he will not call you to a straight accompt for your unprincely and cruell usage of me, at his generall judgement seat, where both you and my selfe must shortly appeare, and in whose just judgement I doubt not, what soever the world may thinke of mee, mine innocency shall be openly knowene, and sufficiently cleared. My last and only request shall be, that my selfe may only beare the burthen of your Grace's displeasure; and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen, whome as I understand are likewise in straight imprisonment for my sake. If I ever have found favoure in your sight, if ever the name of Ann Bolen have ben' pleasing in your eares, then let me obteyne this request; And soe I will leave to trouble your Grace any further. With mine earnest prayer to the Trinitie to have your Grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all yo^r actions, from my dolefull prison in the Tower the 6th of Maye,

Your most Loyall and
ever faithfull Wife,
ANN BOLEYN.

The Lady
to the Kinge he
of the Towe

At the foot of the MSS. the following memorandum appears in the same handwriting. The part destroyed by fire is supplied in italics:—

*On the King sending a messenger to Queen Ann Bolen in the Tower willing her to confesse the truth, she said that she could confesse noe more, then shee had already done. But as he sayd she must conceale nothing she would add this, that she did acknowledge her selfe indebted to the king for many favours, for raying her first to be * * * next to be a Marques, next to be his Queene, and that now he could bestowe noe further honor upon her than if he were soe pleased to make her by martirdome a saint.*

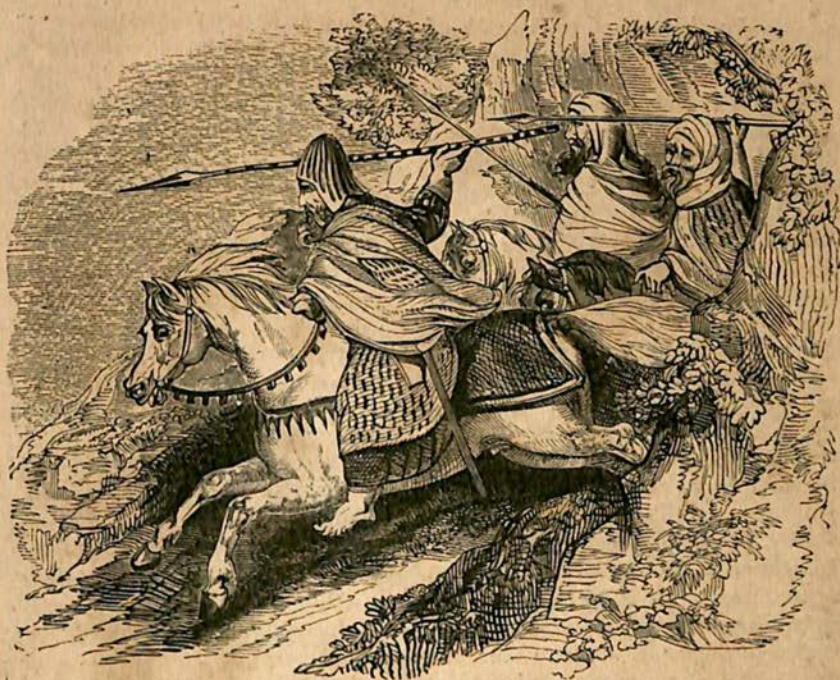
ELIZABETH



FLONNY

SPENSER

MARY, Queen of Scots.



Irish Chieftains. Illumination in Harleian MS.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Ireland—Its condition in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII.—The English Pale—Regions beyond the Pale—Surrey, lieutenant-governor—The earl of Kildare arrested—Rebellion of 1534—Thomas Fitzgerald—Murder of archbishop Allen—Progress of the rebellion—Fitzgerald surrenders—He and his uncles attainted and executed—Violated promises—Supremacy of Henry established—Disregard of the real welfare of the country—Attempts to make Ireland yield revenue—Irish fashions of dress—Character of the natives.

WHEN Froissart, travelling in England towards the end of the fourteenth century, falls in acquaintance with Sir Henry Cristall, "an honest man and a wise," he received from this squire a romantic account of his captivity during seven years in Ireland. Cristall was in the service of the earl of Ormond, who was warring against the native Irish; and on one occasion, following his master in the pursuit of a band that was retreating before the English archers, his horse took his bridle in his teeth, and ran away with him into the thick of the Irishmen. "One of them," he said, "by lightness of running, leapt up behind me, and embraced me in his arms, and did me none other hurt; but so led me out of the way, and so rode still behind me, the space of two hours, and at last brought me into a secret place, thick of bushes, and there he found his company, who were come thither, and scaped all dangers,

for the Englishmen pursued not so far. Then, as he showed, he had great joy of me, and led me into a town* and a strong house, among the woods, waters, and meres." The name of this chief was Brian Costeret. He gave Cristall his daughter in marriage, who bore him two children during his seven years' experience of this free life in solitary places. But the kind-hearted Irishman was taken prisoner, as he was riding the horse which Cristall rode when he was captured. That horse was recognised in the English camp; and the adventure ended by Brian being released upon condition that he should give up the long-lost Cristall, with his family. "With great pain," says the narrator, "he made that bargain, for he loved me well, and my wife his daughter, and our children."† Of the mode of existence in the Irishman's "strong house among the woods" we have no further glimpses. We only see the affectionate and hospitable nature of the man who saved and succoured his enemy—a nature which he shared with the majority of his countrymen. From the time of Strongbow there had been such constant interfusion of the races; and if neglect and oppression had not counteracted the natural influences of this disposition towards a cordial agreement between the natives and the settlers, we should not have to describe, as we now propose to do, the unhappy condition of Ireland at this period of the reign of Henry VIII. The materials for such description are now most abundant. Instead of taking the account which Spenser gives, in the reign of Elizabeth, as the starting-point in the history of evils which have endured to our own generation, and which have so materially influenced the course of public events in England, we have only to open the mass of State Papers which belong to half a century earlier, to exhibit a condition of society of which there was no parallel in the Europe that had emerged from barbarism.

The English Pale, to which all early notices of Ireland refer, anciently comprised all the eastern coast from Dundalk bay to Waterford harbour, extending some fifty or sixty miles inland. The term "pale" is thus explained: "When Ireland was subdued by the English, divers of the conquerors planted themselves near to Dublin, and the confines thereto adjoining; and so, as it were, inclosing and impaling themselves within certain lists and territories, they feared away the Irish, insomuch as that country became mere English, and thereof it was termed the English pale."‡ In 1515 the pale was so reduced in its extent, that a line drawn from Dundalk to Kells, from Kells to Maynooth, from Maynooth to Kilcullen, and then towards Dublin, under the Wicklow mountains, would comprise all the English pale from the sea.§ This was a small district to have the rule of a large country; and we shall see that, practically, a very narrow portion of the island could be considered as under the English governance. There were, at the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII. sixty regions, inhabited by those whom this reporter of the "state of Ireland" in 1515, calls the "king's Irish enemies." These regions, "some as big as a shire," were governed by chief captains, calling themselves kings, princes, dukes, or arch-dukes;

* *Town*, in England as well as Ireland, was the term for any collection of dwellings however small—settlements around the "strong house" of the chief.

† Froissart, "Lord Berners' Translation," vol. ii. p. 620, ed. 1812.

‡ Stanihurst, in Holinshed, p. 10; ed. 1586.

§ The precise boundary is given in the "State of Ireland," 1515; "State Papers," vol. ii. p. 22.

obeying no law but that of force; their very successions depending upon the strongest arm and the hardest sword. In each of these regions of Ulster, Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, we find the names of the chief captains, from "the great Oneylle, chief captaine of the nation, within the countrey of and region of Tyreown, to Omullmoy de Pherkeall, chief captaine of his nation," in Meath. Names that are still familiar to us call up remembrances of bitter animosities, rebellions, proscriptions—ranting demagogues and wily priests sowing the dragons' teeth, whilst the rich soil bore no corn, and the labourer starved where there was no security for the funds out of which labour is supported. But in old times, as in recent, the smaller beasts of prey were as voracious as the larger: "In every of the said regions there be divers petty captains, and every of them maketh war and peace for himself." A greater evil than that of the Irish great captains "living only by the sword," was that of "thirty great captains of English noble folk, that followeth the same Irish order, and keepeth the same rule, and every of them maketh war and peace for himself"—the Desmonds, Fitzgeralds, and Fitzmaurices, the Butlers, Dillons, and DeLameres. In the few districts subject to the king's writs—those within the pale—the people were so oppressed by the courts of law, that they were glad to abandon their freeholds for ever. In the marches, not subject to the king's law, they were as much oppressed by individual extortion. The reporter of 1515, looking at the inevitable consequences of such misrule, exclaims, "What common folk in all this world is so poor, so feeble, so evil-beseen in town and field, so bestial, so greatly oppressed and trod under foot, and fared so evil, with so great misery and with so wretched life, as the common folk of Ireland."* The oppression of the poor was universal. The noble folk, whether English or Irish, were oppressors. They seized upon horse meat and man's meat "of the king's poor subjects by compulsion, for nought, without any penny paying therefor,"—which robbery was called "coyn and livery." The Deputy and his Council were extortioners. The church was wholly abandoned to lucre; none preaching or teaching but the mendicant friars. In every department of lay or spiritual rule, the private weal, and not the common weal, was alone regarded. This plain-speaking denouncer of evils that had been growing for two hundred years, writes, that the people despaired of a remedy for these complicated miseries, and said, "no medicine can be had now for the said infirmity, but such as have been had afore this time; and folks were as wise that time as they be now; and since they could never find remedy, how should remedy be found by us?"†

There are many official letters and memorials, of subsequent dates, which all agree in setting forth the turbulence of the people and the tyranny of the rulers. Whether English or Irish, there was scarcely one in authority who was not a plunderer or extortioner. Under Wolsey the government of Ireland had been principally committed to the earl of Kildare, who was ready enough to burn and destroy in the lands of rebellious chieftains, but was himself suspected of "seditious practices and subtle drifts." The earl of Surrey, who won his earldom at Flodden, was sent to Ireland as lord-lieutenant in 1520; whilst Kildare was in England. Surrey took a soldier's view

* State Papers, vol. ii. p. 10.

† *Ibid.*, p. 17.

of the position of the country, but one which indicated slight statesmanship; "After my poor opinion, this land shall never be brought to good order and due subjection, but only by conquest."* But the warlike earl is not sanguine about his scheme; for Wales, he says, was not conquered by Edward I. in less than ten years; and as Ireland is five times as large as Wales, he doubted if it could be so soon won. But there was a greater difficulty in Surrey's mind. Even if conquered, the land must be re-peopled. "For if these country people of the Irish should inhabit, undoubtedly they would return to their old ill-rooted customs, whensoever they might see any time to take their advantage, accordingly as they have ever yet done, and daily do." Having delivered this advice—pointing out that money was wanting for men, victuals, artillery, and fortresses—the lord-lieutenant begs to serve his grace in any other place than in this troublesome land. Surrey goes home. Kildare comes back. The feuds between the two great rival chiefs, Kildare and Ormond, become more bitter than ever: and Kildare is again suspected of encouraging revolt. But Wolsey dares not remove him from his office of deputy, for he dreads that the earl's "kinsfolks, the O'Connors, and other such wild Irish lords, would, for revenge, over-run the whole English pale." Kildare was the head of what was then deemed "the Irish party"—a party not so desirous of separation from England, as of using the English connection, not as the means for promoting the real improvement of the country, but for their individual aggrandisement. Kildare, at last, carried his schemes too far. In 1534 he appears to have been preparing to defy the English government; for he furnished his castles with arms and ammunition out of the royal stores; and it was said that "all the parchments and wax in England" would not bring him thither again. The earl, however, obeyed the royal summons, though slowly and unwillingly. He was committed to the Tower, upon his arrival in London. But his son, lord Thomas Fitzgerald, was permitted to return to Ireland as the vice-deputy appointed by his father. The consequences of this somewhat rash confidence were unexpected; but they were the natural results of a long period of misgovernment, through which "neither the English order, tongue, nor habit was used, nor the king's laws obeyed, above twenty miles in compass." †

The earl of Kildare arrived at his last resting-place, the Tower of London, in February, 1534. He was subsequently attainted by act of parliament, for traitorously levying war in Ireland, for slaying the king's faithful subjects, and for carrying away munitions of war from the king's fortresses to his own castles. ‡ When the young Fitzgerald—who was known by the name of "the silken lord," from the splendid trappings of his horses—knew that his father was in imminent danger, and apprehending that the power of the race of Geraldines was coming to an end, he suddenly rose in open revolt. In June, 1534, Cromwell is apprised by Robert Cowley of the "rebellion of the earl of Kildare's son, and brethren, with their adherents." He states that they have committed "infinite murders, burnings, and robbings in the English pale, about the city of Dublin." One sentence in the letter of Cowley may have led to a belief that this rebellion was as much a religious as a political movement: "And, as I am very credibly informed, the said earl's son,

* State Papers, vol. ii. p. 73.

† *Ibid.*, p. 162.

‡ 26 Hen. VIII. c. 25.

brethren, kinsmen, and adherents do make their avaunt and boast, that they be of the pope's sect and band, and him will they serve against the king and all his part-takers; saying further that the king is accursed, and as many as take his part, and shall be openly accursed."* The opinion that the emperor, Charles V., was in communication with the earl of Desmond, and through him with the Geraldines, appears to have been a rumour in Waterford. In the disorganised condition of Ireland, the deputy, Skeffington, an Englishman—who was to succeed Kildare—not yet having arrived with any military force, the time was favourable for a bold attempt to supersede the English authority altogether. That Henry at that time was threatened with excommunication, was a stirring matter that might have been agitated amongst men prepared to throw off their allegiance; but that the rejection of the papal supremacy in England was the occasion of this revolt in Ireland, seems an overstrained inference from the facts as they appear in official records and other relations. Staniburst, the chronicler of Irish affairs, makes no mention of the employment of such a motive for insurrection. The religious element might have been slightly mixed up with the social turbulence—as it ever has been since, whenever the wretchedness of the people is to be roused into fierce hatred; but in our view, this rebellion in Ireland is not "significant, chiefly because it was the first in which an outbreak against England assumed the features of a war of religion."† Looking at this passage of Irish history, with a knowledge of the distracted condition of the country, the hatreds of the rival chiefs, the almost total absence of legitimate authority, the universal dominion of brute force, we regard the quarrel of Henry with the pope as a coincidence with this rebellion, but the very least of its causes.

The opening scene of this Irish revolt, as described by the chronicler, has a deep human interest. On St. Barnabas' day, the 11th of June, lord Thomas Fitzgerald, at the head of seven score horsemen, in their shirts of mail, rode through the streets of Dublin, and passing through Dame's Gate, crossed the river to St. Mary's Abbey, where the Council were sitting. The lord Thomas took his seat as vice-deputy. Then the council-chamber was suddenly filled with his armed followers; and he rose, and thus spake: "Howsoever injuriously we be handled, and forced to defend ourselves in arms, when neither our service nor our good meaning towards our prince his crown availeth, yet say not hereafter, but in this open hostility which here we profess and proclaim, we have showed ourselves no villains nor churls, but warriors and gentlemen. This sword of estate is yours, and not mine; I received it with an oath, and have used it to your benefit. I should stain mine honour if I turned the same to your annoyance. Now have I need of mine own sword, which I dare trust. As for the common sword, it flattereth me with a painted scabbard, but hath indeed a pestilent edge, already bathed in the Geraldines' blood, and now is newly whetted in hope of a further destruction. Therefore save yourselves from us, as from open enemies. I am none of Henry's deputy—I am his foe. I have more mind to conquer than to govern; to meet him in the field than to serve him in office. If all the hearts of England and Ireland, that have cause thereto, would join in

* State Papers, vol. ii. p. 198.

† Froude, vol. ii. p. 306.

this quarrel (as I hope they will), then should he soon aby (as I trust he shall) for his cruelty and tyranny, for which the age to come may lawfully score him up among the ancient tyrants of most abominable and hateful memory."

This speech—so resolved and daring, and yet so characteristic of the high feelings of a gentleman—carries with it a dramatic propriety, very different from the ordinary speeches which the chroniclers invent for their heroes.* It is to be lamented that, in their subsequent proceedings, the Geraldine and his supporters did not maintain their declaration that they were "no villains nor churls, but warriors and gentlemen." When they rushed forth from the council chamber, orders were given for their arrest; but the authorities of Dublin did not dare to execute the command, and some of the Council retired for safety to the castle. There was a contest between the citizens and the insurgents, in which the rebels were successful; and they were thus enabled to lay siege to the fortress. Amongst those who had taken refuge there was John Allen, the archbishop of Dublin; who, having been one of Wolsey's chaplains, was appointed by the cardinal to this dignity—an able statesman, systematically opposed to the Geraldines and their party. When the castle was besieged, Allen, knowing the hatred in which he was borne by the insurgents, escaped by night in a vessel in which he hoped to cross to England. By accident or treachery the boat was stranded near Clontarf; and after he had been a few hours on land, he was seized at a village called Artane, and there barbarously murdered, while lord Thomas stood by. The prior of Kilmainham, writing to the king, says, "The archbishop of Dublin, being in ship to depart towards England, Thomas, son to the earl of Kildare, caused him to be taken and brought before him, and there in his sight, by his commandment, was cruelly and shamefully murdered, and other divers of his chaplains and servants that were in his company." † Robert Relye, who was present, stated upon his examination that he could not say whether it was by the command of lord Thomas, or not, that the murder of the archbishop was committed. He acknowledged that he was sent to Maynooth, one of Kildare's castles, with a casket which his master, lord Thomas, had taken from the prelate: and that his master "afterwards sent one Charles, his chaplain, to the bishop of Rome, to the intent, as he heard, of obtaining absolution for killing the bishop." ‡ Upon this most doubtful evidence it is assumed that the massacre of "a heretic archbishop" was a venial and acceptable act for which Rome would willingly grant forgiveness; and of this detestable murder we are told, "Such was the pious offering to God and holy Church on which the sun looked down as it rose that fair summer morning over Dublin bay." § Again we repeat our conviction, founded upon a careful examination of the entire circumstances, that John Allen did not perish because he was "a heretic archbishop," but because he had been one of the most efficient instruments in opposing the schemes of the Geraldines; that "holy Church," and its contest for supremacy with Henry of England, had furnished no incentive and no

* Mr. Froude quotes this from Campion's "History of Ireland," and from Leland. The speech, as given by us from Stanhurst, is nearly as Mr. Froude gives it, with only one material variation. Stanhurst says of Henry, "then shall he soon aby, as I trust he shall, for his cruelty and tyranny." In Mr. Froude's version we have, "then should he be a by-word, for his *heresy*, *leebery*, and *tyranny*."

† State Papers, vol. ii. p. 201.

‡ State Papers, vol. ii. p. 201, note.

§ Froude's History, vol. i. p. 233.

motive for this rebellion, beyond the ancient belief that the country was held by the English king as a fief of the papal see ; and that it is the result alone of that uncharitable spirit calling itself Protestant, which the historian ought to reject, if the party-politician cannot lay it aside, that we are to be informed at this day, when religious differences as they regard Ireland and the Irish ought to be repressed rather than stimulated, that such as these murderers "were the men whose cause the Mores and the Fishers, the saintly monks of the Charterhouse, and the holy martyrs of the Catholic faith, believed to be the cause of the Almighty Father of the world." * The "holy Church" of Catholic Ireland pronounced its curse "against Thomas Fitzgerald and others for killing of the archbishop of Dublin," according to the horrible formula of those times ; saying "let no man be to them merciful ;" invoking the God of mercy, to "send to them, and every of them, hunger and thirst, and strike them, and every of them with pestilence," and with "madness, blindness, and woodness of mind ;" and calling upon "all the multitude of angels, that they be accursed before them, and in their sight as spirits condemned." † If this cruel and blasphemous presumption of erring man has passed away, and is held utterly alien to the Christian temper, it is chiefly because, when we think of the wise and good of past times, we forget whether they were Roman Catholic or Protestant ; and do not believe, in a spirit of intolerance, that "the Mores and the Fishers," in opposing the supremacy of Henry VIII., would have given a direct or an indirect sanction to the murderers of a "heretic archbishop."

Fitzgerald, after the atrocious slaughter of John Allen, with a small force did enormous mischief within the English pale, burning and destroying houses and farms, and wasting the growing corn. In the gallant resistance which he made to the rebellion, Butler, now earl of Ormond and Ossory, pursued the same mediæval system, which ever disregarded the sufferings of the many. The siege of Dublin castle was slowly conducted by an inconsiderable rebel band ; whom the citizens at length resisted, and arrested as traitors. The delusive hopes which the Geraldines had entertained, that their cause would be adopted by the settlers of the pale, as the means of overthrowing the English rule, were wholly dissipated by the spirit of the Dublin citizens. The belief that the old rivalry of the Kildares and Ormonds might be closed by dividing the kingdom between them, was destroyed by the faithful conduct of Ossory : "The traitor, Thomas, then sent to the earl of Ossory, how that, if he would withdraw his duty from the king, he would depart and divide all Ireland with him, and accept him as his father, offering to make partition of his own inheritance with him ; whereunto he answered, that if his country had been wasted, his castles won or prostrate, and himself exiled, yet would he never shrink to persevere in his duty to the king, to the death." ‡ The notion that the Emperor and the Pope would furnish prompt assistance in the wild enterprise of lord Thomas was, no doubt, entertained by him. He sent a priest on a voyage to Spain, and afterwards to proceed to Rome, with documents "which should prove that the king held this land of the see of Rome ; alleging the king and his realm to be heretics, digressed

* Froude, History, vol. II. p. 283.

‡ State Papers, vol. II. p. 250.

† State Papers, vol. II. p. 217.

from the obedience of the same, and the faith Catholic;" at the same time promising, in return for aid, "that he will hold the same land for them and pay tribute yearly." * There is an official paper by Allen, the master of the rolls, which says; "the Irish men, of long continuance, have supposed the regal estate of this land to consist in the bishop of Rome, for the time being, and the lordship of the kings of England here to be but a governance under the obedience of the same, which causeth them to have more respect of due subjection unto the said bishop than to our sovereign lord." † To this ancient delusion lord Thomas appealed, as might have been done in the times of Richard II. But in spite of such an incitement to revolt, there were very few of the great Irish chiefs who gave Fitzgerald their support. The contest went on for some months after the arrival of sir William Skeffington, the English deputy, without any signal success; but at last the castle of Maynooth was taken by Skeffington, after ten days' siege. Twenty-six of the prisoners were executed. "A priest," says the official despatch to the king, "which was privy with the traitor, deposeth that the emperor promised to send hither, against your grace, ten thousand men by the first day of May; and the king of Scots promised to give aid to your rebel likewise." ‡ The first of May, 1535, came; but no aid from Spain or Scotland. Lord Thomas was carrying on a war of depopulation. In August, the chief justice and the master of the rolls, who had been absent in England, write to Cromwell—"We marvelled to consider the state of this country at our landing, so far altered from the condition that we left it at our departure; for in the county of Kildare there be eight hundreds, or baronies, and six of them were, in effect, all burnt; few or no people inhabiting there, but leaving their corn in the ground to the traitors." § The end of this desperate outbreak—the result, not of any marked oppression of the English government, but of its more cruel neglect—was shortly at hand. A vigorous commander, lord Leonard Grey, came, as it was supposed, to take the civil and military authority from the procrastinating Skeffington. But the deputy, not yet superseded, was roused into vigour. He compelled the submission of O'Connor, the chief who most faithfully adhered to Fitzgerald; and the "great traitor," lord Thomas, had no chance but to yield himself up, or to escape to a foreign country. He writes a letter to lord Leonard Grey, who was a relative of the Kildares, in which he says, "I heartily desire your lordship to be intercessor betwixt his grace and me, that I may have my pardon for me, and mine life and lands; the which shall not be undeserved to the uttermost of my power; and if I cannot obtain my foresaid pardon, I have none other to do, but shift for myself, the best that I can, trusting in God." || Skeffington writes, on the 24th of August, that Fitzgerald had yielded himself "without condition." The Council of Ireland, on the contrary, write to the king, on the 27th of August, that lord Leonard Grey will proceed to London with his prisoner; "beseeching your highness, most humbly, that according the comfort of *our* words spoken to the same Thomas to allure him to yield him, ye would be merciful to the said Thomas, especially concerning his life." ¶ Norfolk saw that if Fitzgerald were

* State Papers, vol. ii. p. 222.
 § *Ibid.*, p. 263.

† *Ibid.*, p. 480.
 ¶ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 237.
 ¶ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

executed, having received such inducements to yield, "surely the Irish men shall never after put themselves into none Englishman's hands;" and he therefore counsels that his punishment should be deferred.* Lord Thomas was committed to the Tower, in which prison his father had died. At the beginning of 1536, the five uncles of the young rebel were apprehended through treachery; which the Council call "the politic and surest conveying of the matter." They being sent to London, the six members of this unhappy family were hanged at Tyburn, on the 3rd of February. There was no trial. An Act of Attainder was passed, by which Thomas Fitzgerald, James, John, Richard, Oliver, and Walter, then in the Tower of London, should suffer execution of death for their treasons.† That lord Thomas especially deserved his fate there can be little doubt. That he surrendered upon terms held out to him is admitted by Henry himself, in a letter to Skeffington; and the king owned that he was embarrassed by this circumstance: "If he had been apprehended after such sort as was convenable to his deservings, the same had been much more thankful and better to our contentation."‡ But it was not in Henry's nature, nor indeed in that of the duke of Norfolk who had counselled delay, to stand upon the trifling point of broken promises. In the English rebellion of 1536, which we shall have presently to describe, the king-bitterly reproaches Norfolk for keeping faith; for "you fell to a point with the rebels," when previously "you said you would esteem no promise that you should make to the rebels, ne think your honour touched in the breach and violation of the same." § Shakspeare has exhibited prince John of Lancaster and the earl of Westmorland tempting the rebel lords in the time of Henry IV. to disband their forces and then arresting them;|| and Dr. Johnson complains that the poet passes over, without a note of censure, "this horrid violation of faith." Shakspeare was satisfied to exhibit the conduct of the treachery to make men hate the agents who accomplished it. We offer no comment upon the execution of Fitzgerald, beyond entering our protest against a doctrine which might be suited to the sixteenth century, but which is somewhat startling in the nineteenth. "How far," says Mr. Froude, with reference to lord Thomas, "a government is bound at any time to respect the unauthorised engagements of its subordinates is one of those intricate questions which cannot be absolutely answered."¶ Intricate! The English minister who would now dare to put a man to death, after assurances of safety from those in authority (as Fitzgerald was assured by the *authorised* representatives of king Henry), would be consigned to the everlasting infamy that cleaves to the betrayer; and if an eloquent casuist, some three hundred years after, should doubt whether the promise of a king's agent is binding upon his principal, he would—so strongly do we believe in the progress of the world in political morality—have to receive his own portion of the same natural hatred of dishonour,—he would excite the same instinctive disgust with which we read the famous axiom of Machiavelli—"a prince that is wise and prudent cannot, and ought not, to keep his *parole*, when the keeping of it is to his prejudice, and the causes for which he promised, removed."

* State Papers, vol. ii. p. 277.

† State Papers, vol. ii. p. 280.

‡ "King Henry" IV., Part II., act iv. scene 2.

§ 28 Henry VIII. c. 13.

¶ State Papers, vol. i. p. 510.

¶ Froude, History, vol. ii. p. 305.

The suppression of the Geraldine rebellion, if it had not been sullied by broken faith, and had been followed up by a large and benevolent policy, would have presented a fortunate crisis in the government of Ireland. There appears to have been no want of diligent counsellors for the improvement of the country, according to their limited views. The supremacy of Henry as "king of Ireland"—for the title was now changed from "lord"—was proclaimed without opposition. Monasteries were suppressed without disturbance. The rebellion had been clearly one of personal ambition, stimulated by the general disorganisation of civil society. But still no decided policy was resorted to for converting a land filled with wild tribes, living in the rudest manner under hostile chiefs, into a land to be made prosperous by industry, which alone was wanting to utilise its natural advantages. But for this end something was required besides soldiers and labourers. In 1538 the Council wrote to Henry describing their attack upon the district of the Cavanaghs. The land is won; but what is to be done with it? They would not banish all the inhabitants, but they would banish "the gentlemen and men of war; and having garrisons of men of war in certain principal places, to retain still the most of the poor earth-tillers there, which be good inhabitants."* The poor earth-tillers in the country of the Cavanaghs and elsewhere went on occupying the land, with little profit, till, with division and subdivision, it would no longer yield them sustenance. The soldiers were amongst the oppressors of the poor earth-tillers—the soldiers of a government parsimonious for public objects because extravagant in private expenditure. "The wages of your army is so small," say the Council, "as the soldiers, not being able to live therewith, much oppress your subjects, to their great grief."† There were occasionally some individual efforts made to win the people from their semi-barbarous life to learn the arts of civilisation. Sir Pierce Butler, earl of Ormond and Ossory, who died in 1539, with the aid of his energetic wife, the sister of Kildare, "planted great civility in the counties of Tipperary and Kilkenny; and to give good example to the people of that country, they brought out of Flanders and other countries divers artificers, who were daily kept at work by them, in their castle of Kilkenny; where they wrought and made diaper, tapestry, turkey carpets, curtains, and other like works."‡ Ormond was thus doing something as material for the welfare of the country as in quelling his nephew's rebellion. But the example did not spread. Private efforts can do little good in the attempt to force industry. When capital flows to a country through the regular course of exchange, then industry goes forward. Security was wanting for its employment, as it ever has been wanting in Ireland till our own day. It was in vain to lament that the gallowglass and kerne, who consumed the victuals of the land in idleness, did not apply to labour—tilling wastes, digging in mines, fishing in the bounteous seas. The moving and regulating power, with which labour profitably works, was wanting. The government, when it seized upon the monastic possessions, might have accomplished some of such good by a just application of the country's revenues. But there was a king who fancied that he was the state; and

* State Papers, vol. iii. p. 100.

† *Ibid.*, p. 101.

‡ MS. in British Museum, quoted in State Papers, vol. iii. p. 145.

thus he wrote, as to the religious houses of the countries brought under obedience: "The same shall be suppressed, and We to appoint such farmers to them as We shall think good, so as the whole revenues of them may come to our use, and profit."—"Our use and profit" was the burthen of his song: "You have devised by an Act to invest in Us the name and title of King of Ireland. We would you should amongst you consider, whether it be either honour or wisdom for Us to take upon Us that title of a King, and not to have revenues there, sufficient to maintain the state of the same." The country was impoverished by a long course of oppression and neglect. There is a chance of its being brought under the rule of law, and of the reign of brute force being at an end. The "King of Ireland" writes to his Council, trusting that "We shall have cause to commend your doings in the discreet training of the Irishmen to their due obedience, whereby they shall learn to know Almighty God, and grow into wealth and civility." To accomplish such a blessed end is he prepared to contribute out of his ample means? Will he assist the husbandman to cultivate the rich wastes; the miner to raise the precious ore to the surface; the fisherman to gather food from the seas and rivers? Will he make roads through the marshes and woods? He looks back grudgingly upon "the great sums of money bestowed already to bring the land to the conformity it is now at"—he sets forth many schemes by which the "submission" of the Irishmen should be made profitable to himself; he recommends the Council to "excogitate what you think may be added thereunto, as customs, tolls, gabelles, or any other things, which you shall think may be won further to our profit;" and, "among other things, we would you should devise, how to cause our revenues there to be shortlier and sooner paid, after the terms they be due, than they be at present." * Finally, he asks the Irish House of Commons for a Benevolence, which they had refused in the previous year. In vain the lord deputy and the Council plead for the wretched people: "The inhabitants of these your four shires of Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Uriel [Louth], have been so spoiled, oppressed, and robbed, as they be not of ability to give to your Grace any notable thing, otherwise than they be charged already." They adroitly recommend that the burthen should be shifted upon the countries out of the English pale;—countries where the Ormonds and O'Neills commanded the service of their naked kernes; where the English tongue was never heard; where the harper sang of the old glories of Ireland, when there was a king in every shire, each plundering for himself, and no foreign lord forbade any robbery but his own. Taxation, as the beginning of civilisation beyond the pale, was to roll on like a snow-ball. In Kilkenny and Tipperary, and Wexford and Waterford, say the Council, parties so charged there "will the more willingly further the levying of your revenues elsewhere." †

The notion of extracting a large revenue out of an impoverished or an unsubdued country, was doubtless as idle as the attempt to change the ancient customs of the people by royal mandate. In 1536 Henry writes to his "well beloved" of the town of Galway, straitly charging and commanding that they should perpetually observe certain articles set forth for their weal and profit: "Item, That every inhabitant; as well within the said town

* State Papers, vol. iii. p. 330.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 381.

as the suburbs of the same, do shave their over [upper] lips, called *crompeaulis*; and suffer the hair of their heads to grow till it cover their ears; and that every of them wear English caps. Item, That no man, nor man-child, do wear no mantles in the streets, but cloaks or gowns, coats, doublets, and hose, shapen after the English fashion, of the country cloth, or any other cloth shall please them to buy." * To these regulations for dress was added a command, "that every inhabitant within the said town endeavour themselves to speak English, and to use themselves after the English fashion; and specially that you, and every of you, do put forth your child to school, to learn to speak English." † Desirable as it might be that the two countries should be assimilated in dress and language, we know, from the experience of three centuries both in Ireland and Wales, that such changes are not effected by royal threats or penal statutes. In the reign of Elizabeth, as we learn from Spenser's description, "the ancient dress" was still worn. The mantle was still "a fit house for an outlaw, a meet bed for a rebel, and an apt cloak for a thief." The long matted locks, called *glibbes*, were still used for a disguise. The men were still close hooded, or skull-capped, despising "civil caps." The moustaches, or *crompeaulis*, still covered the upper lip. The gallowglass still went to battle with his hatchet and his darts,—the *kerne* with his darts and short bows. What the Irish were, as to dress, in the time of Henry VIII., they continued to be after the lapse of half a century. The children of the great chiefs might learn English, as Sir John Harrington found the sons of Tyrone learning it, to whom he gave his translation of Ariosto. But the rebellious earl had still his "boys" about him, "without shirts, who, in the frost, wade as familiarly through rivers as water-spaniels." Harrington says, "With what charm such a master makes them love him, I know not; but if he bid come, they come; if go, they do go; if he say do this, they do it." They lived, as Tyrone said, as "wolves, that fill their bellies sometime, and fast as long for it." ‡ But full or starving they were faithful. The charm was in the interchange of service and protection; in the reverence for claims that went back, through song and tradition, to the days of cairns and cromlechs. Nothing could weaken these claims, and convert a land of septs into a nation, but a real paternal government; and such a government was not likely to proceed out of the selfish despotism of the eighth Henry. Although he had some able advisers in the Irish Council, a detestable policy was at the root of their measures. There was ever suspicion where confidence might have begot allegiance; and a low treachery which met its reward in lip-service and conspiracy. A government must have been essentially base when its chief legal officer thus advises: "Because the nature of Irish men is such, that for money one shall have the son to war against the father, and the father against the child, it shall be necessary that the king's grace have always treasure here, as a present remedy against sudden rebellions." §

* By the Irish statute 23 Hen. VIII. c. 15, these orders were more stringently enforced, particularly as regarded the use of long locks, called *glibbes*, and wearing the Irish cloak.

† State Papers, vol. ii. p. 309.

‡ "Nugæ Antiquæ," vol. i. p. 248.

§ J. Allen to Sentileger, State Papers, vol. ii. p. 485.



Reading Abbey, as the Ruins appeared in 1721.

CHAPTER XXV.

Three years without an English parliament—Proclamation for the abolition of holidays—The Lincolnshire insurrection—Demands of the insurgents—The king's answer—The Yorkshire insurrection—The Lancaster Herald at Pomfret—Negotiations with the Yorkshire rebels—They disperse—Disturbed state of the Northern counties—Second rebellion—The rebels defeated—Executions—Martial law proclaimed—Birth of prince Edward—Death of queen Jane—Immediate proceedings for a new marriage of the king—Position of Cranmer and Cromwell—The Bible set up in parish churches—Papists and heretics—Trial of Lambert before Henry—Burnings in Smithfield—Surrenders of the larger religious houses—Visitations of the Commissioners—Relics and images—"Abomination of living" in monasteries—Concealment of property—Abbot of Glastonbury—Deprivations—Pensions—Plunder—Destruction of monastic houses.

THE English parliament soon did the work which it was called together to do in 1536; and the executive, seeing vast pecuniary resources within its reach, did not care for three more years to be troubled with a representative body. Henry, with his new queen, was passing the autumn amidst "the large green courts" and "the wild forest" of Windsor; happy, if it were possible, in forgetfulness of the past. Yet startling memories must sometimes have obtruded upon him—slight associations that must have for a moment disturbed his selfish complacency. Thus, when he looked upon the dedication to him of Coverdale's first Bible, and saw the mode in which the name of his queen was introduced,—by printing J. A. over the original A. N., so that "Anne" might be changed to "Jane,"—the clumsiness of the substitution might have suggested the moral deformity of his own work. But he soon had stirring occupation. A large body of his English subjects were in rebellion.

On the 2nd of October, 1536, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were to hold their Visitation at Louth. The smaller monastic houses had been suppressed. The progress of the official inquiry into the condition of all houses of religion appeared only a prelude to their final extinction. The parochial clergy were called upon, in the king's name, no longer to teach that there was any virtue in relics or images; or that pilgrimages were beneficial exercises of faith. They were also to make known the royal proclamation for the abolition of many holidays, especially those of the harvest-season. There appears some principle of utility in declaring that the harvest-time holidays were "much to the hindrance of the gathering in of corn, hay, fruit, and other such-like necessary and profitable commodities." But even a material good cannot suddenly be effected, nor ought it to be, when it is revolting to the ancient habits of a people. The ecclesiastical reformers saw, in some of these holidays, the superstitions of the earlier times of the Church engrafted upon the customs of Roman heathenism. They did not see how they had a still deeper foundation in the natural feelings of the human heart. The



The Hock-Cart.

harvest-time was, to the great body of the people, a time of uncontrollable gladness; for their food became cheap after the long period of privation which they had to endure, when their small stores of barley and rye were exhausted. Potatoes were then unknown. The esculents of the garden were little cultivated. Under these circumstances the labourer was not very likely

to neglect his reaping to make holiday before the harvest was wholly gathered. But in the final ceremony of the hock-cart, when the last load of corn was crowned with flowers; when the rude image, derived from the classic Ceres, rode on the wain; when the shouting crowd would "bless the cart," and "cross the fill-horse," and

"some with great
Devotion stroke the home-borne wheat;"*

it may readily be imagined that the early reformers, who were not yet prepared to deal with essential differences in a spirit of religious liberty, would strive to suppress such popular traces of "the old learning." On the 2nd of October, then, in Louth, the ecclesiastical commissioners, instead of proceeding quietly to their occupation, found a great body of peasantry in arms, clamouring for their holidays; and proclaiming that they were gathered together for the maintenance of the faith, which was about to be destroyed. The course of this Lincolnshire insurrection, and of one more formidable which followed in Yorkshire, may be minutely traced in the official letters and proclamations of the period.

The "Answer to the Petitions of the Rebels and Traitors of Lincolnshire," by Henry, fully shows what was the character of their demands. They objected to the councillors that were about the king, and the prelates that he had appointed. He replies that he had never read nor heard, that "princes' councillors and prelates should be appointed by rude and ignorant common people;" and he adds, "how presumptuous then are ye, the rude commons of one shire, and that one of the most brute and beastly of the whole realm, and of least experience, to find fault with your prince, for the electing of his councillors and prelates."† This was not a polite expression from a king to his lieges; but probably the inhabitants of the fenny country, of old the seat of a peculiar population, were more than commonly opposed to innovations, and might therefore be rated as "brute and beastly" in manifesting the ancient Saxon stubbornness. According to this rough answer of the king, they objected "to the suppression of religious houses and monasteries." The parliament, said the king, had granted them to him. There were none suppressed but where there was abomination of living. He derided the alleged hospitality of those who spent the substance of their goods in nourishing vice. Their possessions were much better in the hands of their sovereign lord, who spent his own possessions in the defence of his people. It was the same with the First Fruits, to which they also objected. When they demanded a release from the subsidy which had been granted, he answered, "Think ye that we be so faint-hearted that, perforce, ye of one shire,—were ye a great many more—would compel us with your insurrections and such rebellions to remit the same?" So Henry reasoned with these angry men, and told them no more to intermeddle with the weighty affairs of the realm. His arguments were supported by the approach of some military force, under the duke of Suffolk, and the earls of Shrewsbury, Rutland and Huntingdon. The prior of Oxney, and a leader named Melton, who assumed the name of Captain Cobler, could no longer keep together the terrified

* Herrick.

† State Papers, vol. i. p. 463.

pands, when the king's troops were nigh at hand, and the royal proclamation had somewhat appeased them. It may appear strange, that a monarch so despotic as Henry should have entered into discussion, through his proclamations, with rebels in arms. But the danger was not foreseen. The earth was heaving, and toppling down old institutions; but the Crown was fancied to be safe. The king was terribly alarmed. Wriothesley wrote to Cromwell, "his grace's pleasure is, you shall go to the Jewel-House in the Tower, and there take as much plate as you shall think his grace shall not necessarily occupy, and put it strait to coining. His grace appeareth to fear much this matter, specially if he should want money."* On the 13th of October the Lincolnshire rebels dispersed; and the Lancaster herald, who had read and posted up his proclamation at Louth, went on to Pontefract, where he had a more obstinate assembly to deal with. His report is one of the most curious pictures remaining of the state of English society.

Thomas Myller, Lancaster Herald, was approaching the town of Pomfret, wearing the king's coat of arms, when he overtook a large number of the rebels, "being common people of the husbandry." They saluted him gently, and gave honour to his badge of office. The herald asked, why they were in harness; and they said it was for the commonwealth, and that if they did not so, the commonalty and the church would be destroyed. Some of them the herald persuaded to disperse, telling them that the notion that the king was about to tax them when they wedded, or christened, or buried, was a false rumour. Riding into the town the herald was about to fix his proclamation on the market-cross, when he was prevented, and commanded to go to the castle. He passed through three wards, full of harnessed men, "very cruel fellows;" and was brought into the hall, full of people. He got upon the high table, and showed the cause of his coming; when he was conveyed into another chamber. There sat Robert Aske, the captain of the rebellious host; with the archbishop of York, lord Darcy, and other honourable persons. But Aske sat there, "keeping his port and countenance, as though he had been a great prince, with great rigour, and like a tyrant." He gave no reverence to the herald's tale, but demanded a sight of his proclamation; and then told him that it should not be read at the market-cross, nor in any other place amongst his people; and he set forth the articles of reformation which he sought, and for which he would die. "And I fell down of my knee before him," says the herald, "showing him how I was a messenger, and charged by the king's council to read the proclamation, which I brought, for my discharge." But Aske declared that he should not read it; led him by the arm out of the castle; and there proclaimed that he that wore the king's coat should go safe, under pain of death. That bending of the knee to Robert Aske cost Thomas Myller his life. He was indicted for high treason in kneeling down before traitors, with the king's most honourable coat of arms on his back, and so encouraging and comforting them; and he suffered death at York, in the following year.†

Straitened for want of money; having no standing army at his command; relying upon the prompt aid of nobles, some of whom were not favourable to extreme changes in religion,—the king appears to have conducted himself in

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 492.

† *Ibid.*, p. 435.

the beginning of these insurrections with some prudence and moderation. It was a great crisis, and he met it, under all its difficulties, with the decision of character which belonged to him for good or for evil. His pecuniary means were so scanty that Wriothlesley, the Secretary of State, wrote to Cromwell, on the 21st of October, "I think your lordship should not only do the king high service to send him, for his help, four or five hundred pounds with speed, but win his heart therewith for ever."* Henry, from his castle of Windsor, gives minute directions for the movements of the few troops which the duke of Norfolk and the other nobles had with them. He commends "the politic device" of Norfolk. He exhorts him "never to give stroke" unless he thought he had some great advantage over the rebels. He trusted very much to his own elaborate answers to the demands of the insurgents. But, however, indicating his vigilance and energy, these documents are curiously indicative of the capricious and jealous temper of the king, rather than of the sober consistency of responsible advisers. He promises mercy, and threatens vengeance, in a style which exhibits more of weakness than of strength. His "most noble and princely heart," he says to the rebels, "is touched with more mercy, pity, and compassion of you, and of your poor wives and innocent children, than your deserts have merited;" but if you "continue one whole day longer, after the receipt hereof, we shall execute all extremity against you, your wives, and children, without mercy, to the most terrible and fearful example of all others whilst the world shall endure hereafter."† In his correspondence he shows his despotic character to those who were striving to serve him. He is exceedingly indignant that Norfolk recommended a free general pardon, and a parliament to be summoned. The crafty nature of the man is abundantly shown in these instructions. His agent, sir John Russell, brought the pardon in his pocket, to be used only in the last necessity. But meanwhile Norfolk was to hold out to the rebels hopes that he might obtain such pardon from the king; and, if they made any special conditions, to keep them in suspense for twenty days, until new forces were brought up. What he meant is indicated by his subsequent reproach to Norfolk that he "fell to a point to the rebels," when he had declared that he would not hold his honour violated if he kept no promise made to them.‡ There were forty thousand of the insurgents in arms on one side of the river Don, with the king's forces on the other side. The chroniclers record that no battle took place, because the shallow stream "suddenly rose of such a height, depthness, and breadth, that the like no men that there did inhabit could tell that ever they saw it there before."§ No blood was shed in fight. Shrewsbury writes on the 29th of October that the rebels had dispersed, and the king's army was dissolved. It was this which provoked Henry's indignation. Yet he was compelled to yield to circumstances; and he emulated the prudence of Norfolk, by writing a courteous letter to Aske, the leader of the insurgents, inviting him to come to him, as "we have conceived a great desire to speak with you, and to hear, of your mouth, the whole circumstance and beginning of that matter."|| The pardoned rebel went to the king; and he returned, to receive Henry's letter,

* State Papers, vol. i., p. 489.
 § Hall, p. 823.

† *Ibid.*, p. 470. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 514 and p. 510.
 || State Papers, vol. i., p. 523.

thanking him for "his good endeavours for the stay of such our subjects, as have been moved or inclined to a new commotion." * The disturbed state of the northern counties at this time, January 1537, is graphically described in two letters from Ralph Sadler to Cromwell. He was proceeding on an embassy to Scotland. Between Doncaster and York, there were bills posted up on the church doors, with these words, in effect: "Commons, be ye true amongst yourselves, and stick one to another, for the gentlemen have deceived you; but yet, if need be, ye shall lack no captains." † Passing from York to Newcastle, he found the people much excited by a report that the duke of Norfolk was coming "with a great army and power, to do execution, and to hang and draw, from Doncaster to Berwick, in all places northward, notwithstanding the king's pardon." ‡ He reached Darlington about six o'clock in the evening; and having entered his inn, about thirty or forty persons assembled in the street, with clubs and bats, and a large crowd soon gathered together. The host of the inn said that when any one came out of the south, they always thus gathered, to hear news. Sadler observed that such assemblies were unlawful, and that the heads of the town ought to lay some of them by the heels. "God defend," said the prudent host; "for so might we bring a thousand men in our tops within an hour." The innkeeper pacified them, in some sort. But they demanded to know when the duke of Norfolk would come, and with what company; and Sadler sent them word that he would be at Doncaster on Candlemas-day, and bring none with him but his household servants. At Newcastle, the mayor and aldermen had reasoned and threatened the commons into obedience; and had placed cannon upon the walls and gates, which ordnance the merchants had brought out of their ships; and they had made new gates of iron upon the bridge, and had victualled the town for a whole year. Such preparations sufficiently show that the character of this northern revolt was very formidable;—that the mass of the people, so rarely stirred into insurrection, were agitated by a deep feeling, stronger than their habitual obedience to their political rulers; and that the name which had been given to their dangerous enterprise, The Pilgrimage of Grace, expressed a sentiment well calculated to make them feel as heroes and martyrs. They broke out again into open rebellion in February. A parliament, to be held at York, had been promised by Norfolk on the first outbreak. The promise was not kept; and the leaders, lord Darcy, Aske, and others, were again in arms. Yet the men of influence, for the most part, adhered to the government. Norfolk writes from Pomfret, on the 3rd of February, "I think never man was more welcome, of my degree, to the gentlemen of the country, than I am; which, without doubt, is most principally for their own safeguards, being in the greatest fear of the people that ever I saw men." § But Norfolk had come with other company than those of his own household. The insurgents made an attack upon Carlisle, and also upon Hull. They were unsuccessful; and their leaders were taken prisoners. Martial law was proclaimed; and, says the chronicler, threescore and fourteen of them were hanged on Carlisle walls. There was a terrible interval for the leaders of the insurrection. In the brief entries in the chronicle of a religious fraternity of London, we have a more fearful picture

* State Papers, vol. i., p. 529.

† *Ibid.*, 526.‡ *Ibid.*, 530.§ *Ibid.*, 534.

of the severities which followed the northern tumults than in the most elaborate descriptions. On the 29th of March, which was on Maundy Thursday, the Lincolnshire men were hanged, and headed, and quartered. They had been brought out of Newgate to the Guildhall in ropes, and there had their judgment. On the 14th of May, lord Darcy and lord Hussey were condemned at Westminster. On the 25th of May, Sir John Bulmer, and five others, of whom three were ecclesiastics, were executed at Tyburn; and the lady Bulmer was burnt at Smithfield. On the 2nd of June, sir Thomas Percy, sir Francis Bigod, and three others, of whom two were ecclesiastics, were hanged and headed at Tyburn. On the 20th of June, lord Darcy was beheaded at Tower-hill.* We may add that lord Hussey was executed at Lincoln; sir Robert Constable at Hull; and Robert Aske and the unfortunate Lancaster herald at York. But if the commands of the king were not disobeyed,—a very unlikely circumstance—there was a far more terrible vengeance than these executions of the leaders. Thus writes Henry to Norfolk, on the 22nd of February, commending him for having displayed the king's banner; "by reason whereof, till the same shall be closed again, the course of our laws must give place to the ordinances and estatutes martial. Our pleasure is, that, before you shall close up our said banner again, you shall, in any wise, cause such dreadful execution to be done upon a good number of the inhabitants of every town, village, and hamlet, that have offended in this rebellion, as well by the hanging them up in trees, as by the quartering of them, and the setting of their heads and quarters in every town, great and small, and in all such other places, as they may be a fearful spectacle to all others hereafter that would practise any like matter; which we require you to do, without pity or respect, according to our former letters." The king adds to this command one equally stringent. Norfolk is to repair to certain specified abbeys, and all other places where there has been resistance to the suppression, or conspiracy, where "you shall, without pity or circumstance, now that our banner is displayed, cause all the monks and canons that be in any wise faulty, to be tied up, without further delay or ceremony, to the terrible example of others." Seven months after, his highness grows merciful, and begs Norfolk, "concerning punishment," to "remember they be our subjects, though evil men and offenders." †

It would seem, from a curious passage in Hall's Chronicle, that in this season of trouble there was sympathy for the northern rebels even in the neighbourhood of Henry's palace of Windsor: "In this time of insurrection, and in the rage of hurley-burley, even when the king's army and the rebels were ready to join, the king's banner being displayed, and the king's majesty then lying at Windsor, there was a butcher dwelling within five miles of Windsor which caused a priest to preach that all such as took part with the Yorkshiremen, whom he named God's people, did fight and defend God's quarrel; and further, the said butcher, in selling of his meat, one did bid him a less price of a sheep than he made of it, he answered, 'Nay by God's soul,

* Chronicle of the Grey Friars, p. 40.

† Thus we read in State Papers, vol. i., p. 537 and p. 565. It is from some higher authority, no doubt, that we are told, "The rebellion was put down; and in the punishment of the offenders there was unusual leniency; not more than thirty persons were executed, although forty thousand had been in arms."—Mr. Froude, in "Fraser's Magazine," January, 1857.

I had rather the good fellows of the north had it among them, and a score more of the best I have.' This priest and butcher were accused to the king's majesty's council of the treason above-said on the Monday in the morning, and the same day were both sent for, which confessed their treason, and so according to the law martial they were adjudged to die; and so the said Monday they were both examined, condemned, and hanged. The butcher was hanged on a new pair of gallows set at the bridge-end, before the castle gate; and the priest was hanged on a tree at the foot of Windsor bridge." The tree at Windsor bridge and the gallows at the castle-gate must have given Henry a satisfactory assurance of the efficacy of "ordinances and estatutes martial" in the distant rebellious districts. What his subjects thought of such exhibitions did not affect him.

On the 12th of October the same form of circular letter went forth as when the princess Elizabeth was born, to announce that queen Jane had given birth to a son. The event seems to have caused great gladness. Latimer, amongst others, is in extacies; and writes to Cromwell, "Here is no less joying and rejoicing for the birth of our prince, whom we hungered for so long, than there was, I trow, (inter vicinos,) at the birth of St. John Baptist."* But the queen was not destined to partake of the nation's joy. She died on the 24th of October.† On that day Cromwell wrote to lord William Howard, who was in France, that the infant "is in good health, and sucketh like a child of his puissance;" but that "our mistress, through the fault of them that were about her, which suffered her to take great cold and to eat things that her fantasy in sickness called for, is departed unto God."‡ Another passage in the same letter may scarcely appear credible. But there it stands in its undoubted authenticity: "Though his majesty is not anything disposed to marry again,—albeit his highness, God be thanked, taketh this chance as a man that, by reason, with force overcometh his affection, may take such an extreme adventure"—at the earnest entreaty of his Council "that his grace will again couple himself," the king desires that lord William Howard will report of "the conditions and qualities" of the French king's daughter, and of those of the widow of the duke de Longueville. Similar instructions, to inquire into the conditions and qualities of particular ladies, are immediately sent to ambassadors at other courts. On the 9th of December John Hutton writes from Brussels to Cromwell, speaking highly of the duchess of Milan; and in a letter of the same day to Wriothsley, he adds, "She is not so pure white as was the late queen, whose soul God pardon; but she hath a singular good countenance; and when she chanceth to smile there appeareth two pits in her cheeks, and one in her chin, the which becometh her right excellently well."§ Fortunately, perhaps, for herself, the dimpled duchess was not chosen, for she was in the degree of forbidden relationship to Henry's first queen, Catherine. Hutton gave other information as to eligible ladies. There was a maiden of fourteen who would have "a good dote." There was a widow, "of goodly personage." The duke of Cleves has a daughter; but, says the ambassador, "I hear no great praise neither of

* State Papers, vol. i., p. 571.

† The Chroniclers wrote that the queen died on the 14th. But the date is now clearly shown by extant letters.

‡ State Papers, vol. viii., p. 1.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

her personage nor beauty." Hutton is aware that in such ticklish affairs his frank opinions might get him into trouble; and he adds, "I have not much experience amongst ladies, and therefore this commission is to me very hard; so that, if in anything I offend, I beseech your lordship to be my mean for pardon." The time would come when Cromwell himself would regret that he had not imitated the prudence of the ambassador to the Netherlands; "leaving the further judgment to other that are better skilled in such matter,"* than directing his capricious master's choice, at the peril of his own head.

If we rightly interpret the policy of the counsellors of king Henry, it was their endeavour, by these toys, so to speak, to divert him from intermeddling with the desire of the reformers to effect a substantial change in religion. Cromwell, in his position of vicegerent, had an almost absolute power in regulating ecclesiastical affairs. In the parliament of 1539, we find that he had precedence before the archbishop of Canterbury. Cranmer, with his quiet and temporising habits, was under the control of Cromwell; but they each had a course of policy to be worked out with the greatest caution. In the suppression of the monasteries they would have the thorough support of the king, for his revenues would thence receive an enormous increase. In every form of resistance to the papal supremacy they would have the same countenance. But in the disputed matters of doctrine, their individual desires, if such they truly held, for an enlarged liberty of conscience, would be of no avail against an absolute ruler, who felt his inordinate vanity flattered in prescribing what his subjects should believe and what not believe. "Henry was a king with a pope in his belly," truly says an old and plain-spoken writer. They went forward in a course of inconsistency, hanging disobedient abbots, and racking and burning Lutheran reformers. There is nothing absolutely to hate in either of these men; but there is little to love. Cranmer was a servile tool. Cromwell was a bold and unscrupulous minister. They accomplished one good work, of which their intolerant master did not see the final result. They gave us the English Bible.

The circulation of Tyndale's English Testament, printed at Antwerp in 1526, had been prohibited by Henry, in his zeal against Luther and the reformed doctrines. Ten years later he was moved to consent to the publication of an English Bible. In August, 1537, Cranmer wrote to Cromwell to exhibit a Bible in English to the king, which was of "a new translation and a new print;" soliciting him "to obtain of his grace, if you can, a licence that the same may be sold, without danger of any act, proclamation, or ordinance heretofore granted to the contrary; until such time that we, the bishops, shall set forth a better translation, which, I think, will not be till a day after doomsday." † This was Coverdale's Bible, printed anew under the name of Matthews. In 1538, another Bible was printing in Paris by Coverdale and Grafton; and they write to Cromwell, sending specimens of the same, desiring "to be defended from the papists by your lordship's favorable letters." ‡ Another edition of the Bible was printed in 1538, known as "Cranmer's, or the Great Bible." These Cranmer appointed to be sold at 13s. 4d. each; unless Cromwell would give the printers

* State Papers, vol. viii., p. 7.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 581.‡ *Ibid.*, p. 576.

exclusive privileges, when they might be sold at 10s. In 1538, injunctions were given to the clergy to set up the Bible in parish churches; and to encourage the people to peruse it. In a few years that liberty was partially withdrawn. But the great principle was proclaimed in Cromwell's injunctions,

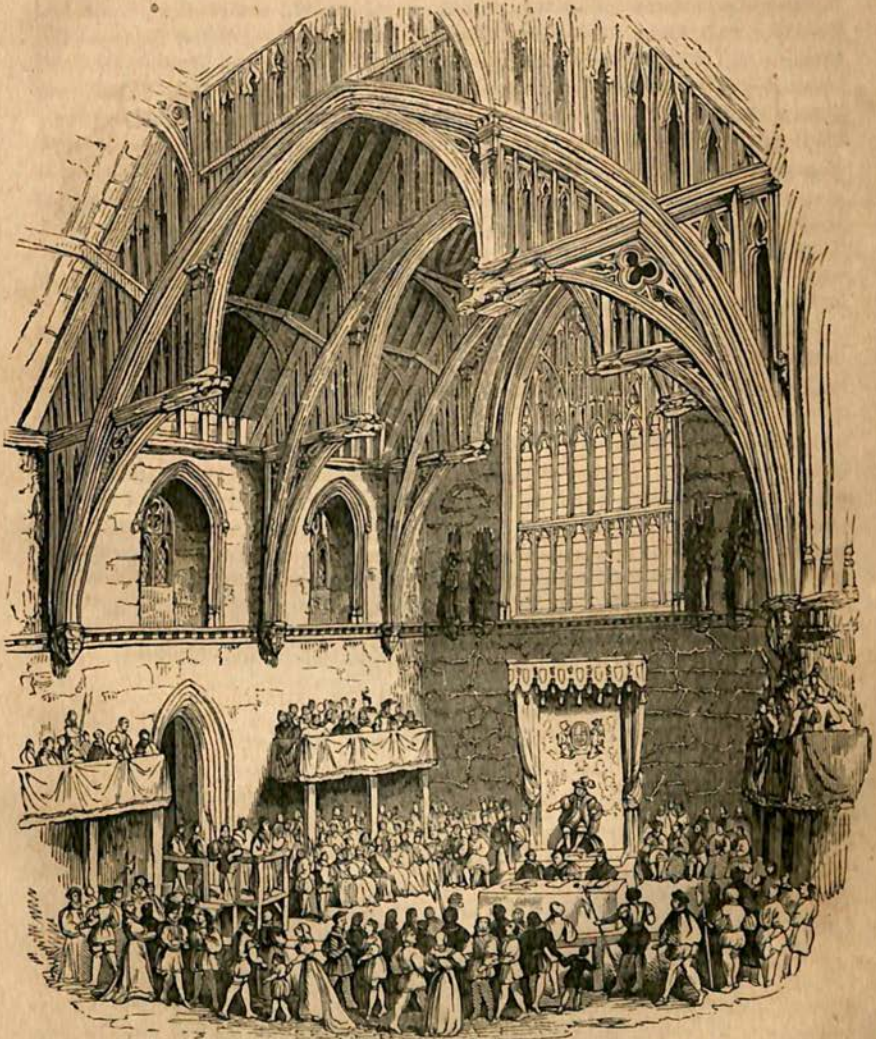


Henry VIII. delivering the Bible to Cranmer and Cromwell. (Being a portion of the Engraved Title-page of Cranmer's, or The Great Bible.)

that in the Scriptures was to be sought the way to eternal happiness, they "being the true lively word of God, which every Christian ought to believe, embrace, and follow, if he expected to be saved."

If the English people could have viewed the extraordinary anomalies of this period of the Reformation in England as we now view them, they would have probably subsided into that most unhappy condition of a nation—universal scepticism. There appear to us to have been no secure resting-places for honest opinion. Those who held, as many earnestly did, to the principles and forms of the old religion, based as it was upon obedience to one spiritual head of the church, were traitors. Those who, in rejecting the papal supremacy, rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, were heretics. The shrine of Thomas à Becket is plundered and destroyed; and a royal proclamation forbids him to be any longer received as a saint. Instead of the pilgrims to Canterbury wearing the steps of the high altar, there is a great crowd in Westminster Hall to hear a king confute a "sacramentarian." John Nicholson (known commonly as Lambert) has been accused of denying the corporal presence in the eucharist. Henry has renewed the old excitement of his polemical studies; and he causes it to be solemnly proclaimed that he will publicly examine and judge the heretic. He sits upon his throne dressed in white satin, with his guards all in white. He calls upon the unhappy man to declare his opinion, which, according to Burnet, did not differ from that then held by Cranmer and Latimer, being the Lutheran

doctrine of consubstantiation. The king, the bishops, and the accused, entered upon scholastic disputations, which lasted five hours. The poor unaided disputant, with ten opponents, one after another, engaging with him, and the king frowning in his most awful manner, was at last silenced ; and the



Trial of Lambert in Westminster Hall.

people in the hall shouted their applause at the royal victory. Lambert was then asked by Henry whether he would live or die ; and he answered, "that he committed his soul to God, and submitted his body to the king's clemency."

He was condemned to be burnt, and Cromwell read the sentence; and burnt he was in Smithfield, crying aloud in his agony, "None but Christ." It is fearful to see those whose memories we must regard with some respect mixed up with these horrors. The superstitions of the ignorant are pitiable. The zealotry of the wise and learned is revolting. There was an image in Wales called Darvell Gathern, to which the people resorted by hundreds, believing that the wooden block had power to save. Darvell Gathern was brought to London, and was burnt in Smithfield. But the "huge and great image" was brought under the gallows where an Observant friar, Forest, was hung in chains alive; and the idol being set on fire under the wretched man, who was accused of heresy and treason, they were consumed together. Worst of all, "there was also prepared a pulpit, where a right reverend father in God, and a renowned and pious clerk, the bishop of Worcester, called Hugh Latimer, declared to him (Forest) his errors; and openly and manifestly by the Scripture of God confuted them; and with many and godly exhortations moved him to repentance. But such was his frowardness that he neither would hear nor speak."*

After the great insurrections of 1536-7 had been effectually repressed, it became evident that the destruction of the larger religious houses would soon follow that of the smaller. It was not necessary for a parliament to be sitting to pass a second law of suppression. The government adopted the principle of terrifying or cajoling the abbots and priors into a surrender of their possessions. The ecclesiastical commissioners continued their work with larger powers. Their reports exhibit a dreary catalogue of abuses, which, however coloured by the prejudices and interests of the reporters, would afford some justification for the sweeping spoliation, if particular examples could be received as types of a general depravity. The records of these proceedings, imperfect as they are, present so many interesting points of historical information as to this great ecclesiastical and political revolution, that we shall endeavour to condense some of the facts, in addition to the details we have already given.†

The act of 1539, for Dissolution of Abbeys, recites that since the 4th of February, in the 27th year of the reign of Henry, divers heads of religious houses had voluntarily surrendered their possessions to the king. The 27th regnal year comprised the period between the 22nd of April, 1535, and the 21st of April, 1536. In that 27th year, after the 4th of February, there were four surrenders. In the 28th year there were three. In the 29th year there were twenty-four. In the 30th year there were a hundred and seventy-four. In the 31st year there were seventy-six. We may judge, therefore, what powerful influences were set in action, after the chances of a successful popular resistance were at an end.‡ The visitation of the commissioners had several objects—to search out and publicly expose the alleged impostures and depravities of the monastic life; to induce the abbots and monks to resign, and to arrange the terms of resignation; to appropriate the revenues and available property of these institutions. In addressing the rebels of Lincolnshire, in 1536, the king had said,—“There be none houses

* Hall's Chronicle, p. 826.

† See *ante*, p. 366.

‡ In Burnet (Records the Lists of Surrenders, as found in the Augmentation Office, are given.

suppressed, where God was well served, but where most vice, mischief, and abomination of living was used." * In carrying out a much more extensive measure of suppression, it became necessary to have materials for urging the same plea,

The impostures connected with images and relics are amongst the most curious manifestations of human credulity; and it was a necessary step in the establishment of a pure worship that the system of deceit, which was of no modern origin, should be thoroughly exposed. In 1538 Cranmer writes to Cromwell, "Because I have in great suspect, that St. Thomas of Canterbury his blood, in Christ's Church in Canterbury, is but a feigned thing, and made of some red ochre, or of such like matter, I beseech your lordship that Dr. Lee, and Dr. Barbour, my chaplain, may have the king's commission to try and examine that, and all other like things there." † The commissioners went to the abbey of Hales, in Gloucestershire, and reported of their finding "jewels, plate, ornaments, and money, besides the garnishing of a small shrine, wherein was reposed the counterfeit relic in times past." ‡ This counterfeit relic was "the blood of Hales," which Latimer made famous, by preaching at Paul's Cross that it was "no blood, but honey clarified, and coloured with saffron." But when the same plain-speaking bishop preached before Edward VI., he told a tale of "the blood of Hales," which shows how the most palpable imposture had established its stronghold, even in the mind of the supreme head of the Church. Henry himself believed that in the crystal vessel, opaque on one side, and transparent on the other, was held the blood that flowed in the Agony in the Garden. The pretended blood was shown or not according to the price paid for the sight. Latimer says, "What ado was there to bring this out of the king's head. This great abomination of the blood of Hales could not be taken a great while out of his mind. . . . Unpreaching prelates have been the cause that the blood of Hales did so long blind the king." § Barlow, bishop of St. David's, writes to Cromwell that he had openly detected the abuse of "the taper of Haverford-west;" "but sithence I chanced upon another taper of much greater credit, and of more shameful detestation, called Our Lady's taper of Cardigan, which I have sent here to your lordship, with convenient instructions of that devilish delusion." There was in the priory of Cardigan an image of the Virgin, with a taper in her hand, which "was found standing on the river Tyne, with the taper always burning; but being carried into Christ's Church, in Cardigan, the image would not stay there, "but was found three or four times in the place where now is builded the church of our Lady, and the taper burning in her hand, which continued still burning the space of nine years without wasting, until the time that one forswore himself thereon, and then it extincted, and never burned after." So stated the prior, in his examination. || Wales was the especial seat of these superstitions. There was an image at Bangor, worth to the friars "twenty marks by the year in corn, cheese, cattle, and money." ¶ But the counties nearer London had their relics, ancient and modern. At Caversham, near Reading, the friars

* State Papers, vol. i., p. 464.

† Suppression of Monasteries, p. 237.

|| Suppression of Monasteries, pp. 188—186.

‡ See *ante*, p. 246.

§ Seventh Sermon before Edward VI.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

showed "the holy knife that killed St. Edward," and "the holy dagger that killed king Henry."* At Reading abbey the relics "would occupy four sheets of paper to make an inventory of every part thereof." Walsingham, famous for these curiosities, contributed a more than common proportion to the bonfire which Cromwell made at Chelsea of these memorials of a perishing belief. At St. Paul's Cross some of the images were exhibited and broken in pieces. The famous rood of Boxley, of which the figure could



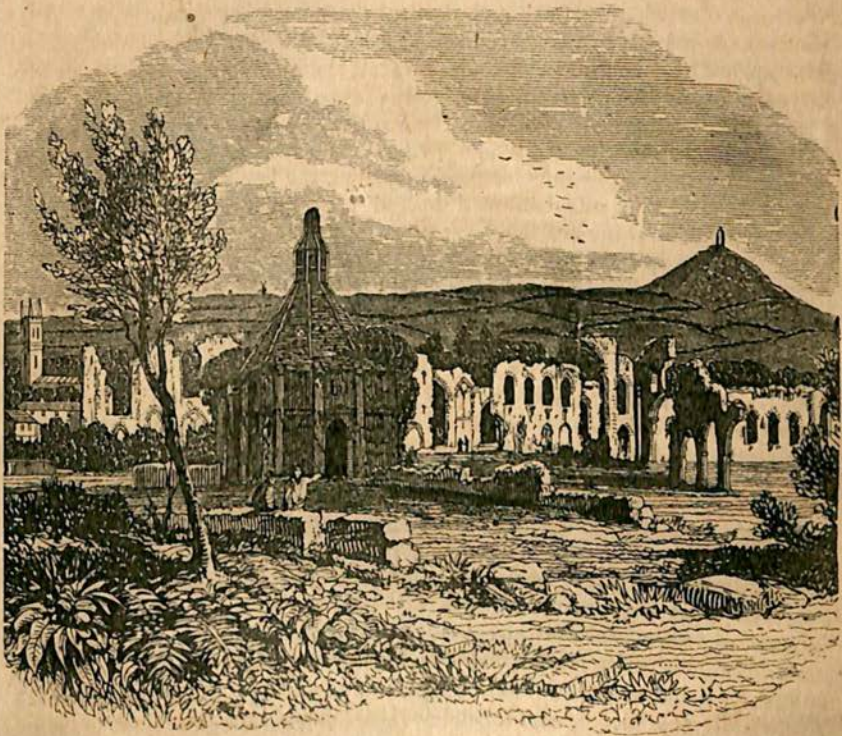
Elm formerly in St. Paul's Churchyard, on the spot where the Cross stood.

move his threatening eyes, twitch his nostrils, throw back his head, or nod approbation, is elevated on a scaffold, and goes through the performance at which past generations had trembled and wondered. The imposture is proclaimed from the pulpit; the image is cast down into the street; its machinery is disclosed; and amidst the hootings of the people is consigned to the flames.

The "abomination of living," of which the inmates of the religious houses were accused, are exhibited in these returns of the commissioners. Sometimes their neighbours have evil things to say of them; sometimes the monks themselves relate some of the evil doings of their brethren, at which they duly profess their horror. Richard Beerley, a monk of Pershore, implores Cromwell, as "the most gracious lord and most worthiest vicar that ever came amongst us," to "help me out of this vain religion." He says that monks come to matins drunk; play at cards, dice, and tables, with many other

* Suppression of Monasteries, p. 222.

vices.* In some cases an abbot and his monks were at variance; and the disorders of the house hastened its suppression. In the terror that preceded the surrenders and suppressions, some of these institutions became wholly disorganised. The brethren of the Charterhouse, in the isle of Axholm, write to the prior of Shene, that their father prior is daily conveying goods out of their house. He went to London, leaving the monks without money. Our husbandry, they say, is not looked upon; our land is not tilled; muck



Glastonbury.

is not carried; our corn lieth in the barn, and taketh hurt with vermin. All their servants are gone away.† The heads of some of the richer houses hid their valuables, or carried them off. At Glastonbury, the commissioners write to Cromwell, “we have daily found and tried out both money and plate, hid and muried up in walls, vaults, and other secret places;” and that “the abbot and the monks have embezzled and stolen as much plate and adornments as would have sufficed to have begun a new abbey. ‡ The abbot and the monks felt as the people of an invaded country feel when they conceal their treasures from the foreign marauders; and the commissioners felt as a

* Suppression of Monasteries, p. 133.

† *Ibid.*, 126.

‡ State Papers, vol. i., p. 620.

rapacious soldiery feel when their hopes of booty are disappointed. The abbot of Glastonbury had little chance against his persecutors. He was tried at Wells on the 14th of November, 1539; "and the next day put to execution with two other of his monks, for the robbing of Glastonbury church, on the Tor hill next unto the town of Glaston; the said abbot's body being divided in four parts, and head stricken off."* Richard Whiting's head was fixed on the abbey gate, to crumble into dust with the perishing fabric, once so glorious.

George Giffard, one of the ecclesiastical commissioners, ventures, however, to speak a good word in favour of the house of Woolstrobe, in Lincolnshire. The head of the house is well-beloved of all the inhabitants; the priests are of good conversation, living religiously; they employ their time in embroidering, writing books, making their own garments, carving, painting, or engraving. In the house, standing very solitary, such hospitality is kept that, unless there were singular good provision, the lands could not maintain the relief which is daily afforded to the poor inhabitants. But George Giffard trembles at his own boldness in writing the truth; for he says, that when he wrote to the Chancellor of the Augmentations in favour of the abbey of St. James and the nunnery of Catesby, the Chancellor showed his letter to the king, whereof "the king's highness was displeased, as he said to my servant, Thomas Harper, saying that it was like that we had received rewards which caused us to write as we did." † Is it to be wondered that we find few records of the virtues of the monks? And yet the unwelcome honesty will occasionally have its course. At the Benedictine nunnery of Polesworth, in Warwickshire, still picturesque in its ruins, the abbess was a discreet and religious woman, and the nuns of virtuous lives, by the fame and report of all the country. The nuns, it would seem, educated children of the neighbouring gentry, who boarded in the house to the number of thirty or forty, who were right virtuously brought up, "And in the town of Polesworth are forty-four tenements, and never a plough but one: the residue be artificers, labourers, and victuallers, and live in effect by the said house." ‡ The nunnery and its school were swept away. The artificers and labourers had to swell the number of vagabonds that were stocked, whipped, and hanged when the means of profitable industry were taken from them. The nuns of Polesworth protested against leaving and forsaking their habits and religion. They were unfitted for the ordinary duties of the world; and so were the whole regular clergy. They had, for the most part, small pensions assigned them, "of his grace's charity;" but we have hints and assertions that they were rarely paid. The commissioners made bargains for the crown, of which Tewkesbury may serve as an example. The clear yearly value of the possessions was 1595*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.* They gave the abbot the large annual sum of 266*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* Seven monks had pensions varying from 7*l.* to 16*l.* Twenty-seven monks had 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* each; making a total of 551*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* "And so remains clear, 1044*l.* 8*s.* 10*d.*" § In the smaller monasteries the ejected monks had pensions varying, according to their ages, from 4*l.* to 53*s.* 4*d.* But some monasteries were in a state of miserable poverty, with only a few acres of

* Lord J. Russell to Cromwell, Ellis, First Series, vol. ii., p. 98.

† Suppression of Monasteries, p. 136.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

§ Burnet, Records.

arable land, and the ruinous house that sheltered the half-starved inmates. Many of the convents were deeply in debt. The bishop of Dover writes, "many shall lose much money by the friars, the which will make a great clamour among the people." * But, whether the houses were rich or poor, resistance was useless. The abbot of St. Albans "sheweth himself so stiff, that, as he saith, he would rather choose to beg his bread all the days of his life than consent to any surrender." † The plan pursued in such cases is set forth in the commissioner's letter. It was to pass a sentence of deprivation on the abbot for alleged misconduct; "which done, the house will be in such debt that we think no man will take the office of abbot here upon him, except any do it only for that purpose to surrender the same to the king's hands; and by these means we think this thing may most easily and with least speech be brought to the king's highness' pleasure."

With the king's highness eager for the silver shrines, the parcel-gilt cups, the embroidered copes, the very lead and timber of the conventual buildings, to be turned into money; with grasping courtiers ready to bribe the king's vicegerent for grants of land and leases,—there was no difficulty in converting the monastic possessions to immediate advantage. It is lamentable to trace the degradation of a period when to bribe and be bribed was no disgrace. Audley, the chancellor, offers two hundred pounds to Cromwell for one job. Sir Thomas Elyot, a scholar, an accomplished writer, the friend of More, offers the vicegerent the first year's fruits of "some convenient portion of the suppressed lands." All this was natural. But the shamelessness of public men was never more clearly exhibited than in Elyot's slavish address to Cromwell, in which he beseeches him, "to lay apart the remembrance of the amity between me and sir Thomas More." He thinks so meanly of the king and of his minister, that he cannot ask a favour without declaring his base ingratitude to the memory of the man who was his dearest friend. With such a spirit in the rapacious suitors of the court, it was not likely that the work of spoliation should not be carried through most thoroughly. There were hungry claimants for the crumbs of the table, as well as for the sumptuous banquet. Stow records that the widow Cornwallis obtained a fair house and tenements of a dissolved priory by the timely present of some fine puddings to the king. Cromwell had a grant of Lewes abbey, besides many other valuable estates and manors. It was one of the first to be swept away. In 1537, Cromwell has a minute account from some officer, "how we had begun to pull the whole down to the ground;" and "with how many men we have done this." The superintendent brought from London seventeen persons—"these are men exercised much better than the men that we find here in the country." ‡ The first process, in all cases, was to strip the roofs of the churches and other buildings, and to cast the lead or make it up into fodders. At Jervaux, the nimble destroyers got down the lead; but "the said lead cannot be conveyed nor carried until the next summer, for the ways in that country are so foul and deep that no carriage can pass in winter." The careful Richard Bellasis, who has the superintendence of this work, is much distressed that he cannot sell the bells for above twenty-five

* Suppression of Monasteries, p. 241. † *Ibid.*, p. 250. Legh and Peto to Cromwell.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

shillings the hundred.* Sir Richard Rich was now chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, for managing the revenues of the suppressed houses. He writes to John Scudamore, one of the king's officers for the dissolved possessions, that he is informed "that the late monastery of Bordesley is defaced and plucked down, and the substance thereof sold to divers persons without profit or lucre paid or answered to the king's majesty's use for the same."† It was a season of general plunder and waste. Philip Hoby desires John Scudamore to let him have what is left of the stone of Evesham. The anxious Philip had obtained a grant of the monastery; and no doubt he made the best of his bargain: "As concerning the spoil or waste that ye wrote to me of that hath been done there, I assure you both I and mine be guiltless thereof."‡ When Leland visited Evesham soon after 1539, the abbey was called by him "the late abbey." John Scudamore had cleaned out the sixteen altars, and the hundred and sixty-four gilded pillars of its church. Chapter-house, library, refectory, dormitory—all were gone. The campanile of the cemetery alone remains to indicate its ancient splendour.

* Suppression of Monasteries, p. 165.

† *Ibid.*, p. 279.‡ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

Evesham.



[St. John's Gate. From Hollar.]

CHAPTER XXVI.

Parliament of 1539—Conformable knights and burgesses—A tractable parliament the instrument of tyranny—Complaints against the suppression of the abbeys—Act for the king to make bishops—Application of the revenues of religious houses—Six new bishoprics—Destruction of the Hospital of St. John—The Six Articles—Penalties under the Statute in which they are declared—Latimer and Shaxton resign their bishoprics—Reformers executed or expatriated—Arrests of the Pole family, and convictions—Margaret, countess of Salisbury—Anne of Cleves—Her progress to England—The king and his bride—The marriage declared invalid—Fall of Cromwell—His attainder—Queen Catherine Howard.

THE parliament which was summoned to assemble at Westminster on the 28th of April, 1539, met for the sole purpose of accomplishing a despotic revolution, with all the forms of representative government. Never had a parliament of England assembled under circumstances so full of strange anxiety. In the parliament of 1536, there were present fifteen abbots; and thirteen other abbots voted by proxy.* In the parliament of 1539, there were seventeen abbots present, and three sent their proxies. Unwillingly the abbots must have come. There could be no doubt that they were about to pass away from their high position in the state. No more would the mitred lords of Tewkesbury and St. Albans, of St. Edmondsbury and Tavistock, of Colchester and Malmesbury, ride to Westminster with their armed and liveried servants, with crowds on the highways kneeling for their blessing. The abbot of Glastonbury earnestly entreats to be pardoned for non-

* Lords' Journals, July 17.

attendance. "But if the king's pleasure be so, I would be gladly carried thither in a horse-litter, to accomplish his grace's pleasure and commandment, rather than to tarry at home."* He was not one of those who met to register their own fall. He had a harder fate than mere deprivation. In that parliament there were also present the two archbishops and eighteen bishops. There were forty-nine temporal peers summoned. If the ecclesiastics had mustered in their full strength, the spiritual and temporal peers would have been of equal number.† In the second session of the same parliament the proportion was changed, never again to be restored. The abbots had then vanished from the legislature. "His grace's pleasure and commandment" had been accomplished. But it was not accomplished without an amount of labour and management which might appear to be a characteristic of modern rather than of ancient times. The returns to the Lower House of knights and burgesses, who should be wholly conformable, was accomplished by the unremitting care of Henry's ministers. On the 17th of March, five weeks before the meeting of parliament, Cromwell writes to Henry, "For your grace's parliament, I have appointed your majesty's servant, Mr. Morison, to be one of them. No doubt he shall be ready to answer, and take up such as would crack or face with literature of learning, or indirected ways, if any such shall be, as I think there shall be few or none; for as much as I, and other your dedicate councillors, be about to bring all things so to pass, that your majesty had never more tractable parliament."‡ A "tractable parliament" was the machinery by which tyranny sought to do its work in England, after the old spirit of freedom had been crushed under the Tudor heel. It was necessary to put the drapery of representation over the naked form of despotism. One sound constitutional historian, in stating that the immense revolutions of Henry's time could never have been effected without the concurrence of parliament—that the spoliation of property, and the condemnation of the innocent, were accomplished by their acquiescence and co-operation—holds that their subservience was not ultimately injurious to public liberty, because "it accustomed the people to set no bounds to the authority of those who bestowed it on the king."§ But let us not forget that if the people had not been trained, by long traditions of individual liberty, to rely upon themselves, the subservience of parliament might have ultimately accomplished a more dangerous, because more complicated, tyranny than that of uncontrolled monarchical supremacy. Happily the roots of English freedom were too deeply imbedded in the soil, for the old tree to be destroyed by the storms of regal power, or the blights of representative corruption. The ancient spirit which upheld justice and civil rights survived in the most dangerous times, such as in other countries left the people grovelling before the throne. The essential difference was, that in England, from the earliest days, a great part of the administrative functions of government was wrought out by the people themselves. The local constitutions of the feudal ages had not been destroyed or changed. They were carried forward into the whole theory and practice of a state of society from which slavery and villanage had departed. They retained their strongholds

* State Papers, vol. i., p. 607.

† State Papers, vol. i., p. 603.

‡ See the list in Parliamentary History, vol. i., p. 533.

§ Mackintosh, History of England, vol. ii., p. 240.

in parish and borough—in the village vestry and the corporate guild. They survived in the constable and the justice of the peace. There were institutions besides those of crown and parliament. These might be tyrannous and corrupt; but the elements of freedom still abided with the people. "The imperfection of certain organs matters nothing, because the whole is instinct with life." * If Ralph Sadler, in 1539, could openly write to a new member to repair to 'him, "to speak with the duke of Norfolk by whom ye shall know the king his pleasure, how ye shall order yourself in the parliament-house," †—there were, no doubt, others who endured such domination in secret displeasure. The Saxon temper would chafe and fume, and would have to bide its time, even for a century. But it was the spark that, some day, would fly up in the face of tyranny. Even in the ashes of freedom lived its wonted fires.

The "act for dissolution of abbeys" was a formal statute, to make perfect the work that was practically accomplished. It vested the remaining monastic possessions in the king, of which the greater number had been surrendered; and it confirmed all future surrenders. It annulled leases granted a year previous to each surrender. Other business had preceded this enactment; but all other matters were of secondary importance, or depended upon the accomplishment of this measure. Of the public opinion as to this sweeping confiscation, Burnet says, "this suppression of abbeys was universally censured; and besides the common exceptions which those that favoured the old superstition made, it was questioned whether the lands that formerly belonged to religious houses ought to have returned to the founders and donors, by way of *reverter*; or to have fallen to the lords of whom the lands were holden, by way of *escheat*; or to have come to the crown." ‡ Lord Herbert says, "this rapine upon the Church, with the miserable ruin of themselves and houses, was divulged abroad in such terms as astonished the whole Christian world. For though the excessive number of them excused the king in some part, for the first suppression, the latter had no such specious pretext." In our day we properly look upon these institutions as having been, if not nurseries of vice and idleness, unsuited even to their own times, and as utterly incompatible with the progress of religious freedom, and therefore with national prosperity and happiness. But we should grossly err if we believed that they were wholly useless. Even Henry did not dare to appropriate these vast possessions without a pretence that he was about to devote some portion of them to great public uses. The act for the dissolution of the abbeys was followed by "an act for the king to make bishops." The preamble to the draft of this statute is written in king Henry's own hand: "Forasmuch as it is not unknown the slothful and ungodly life which hath been used amongst all those sort which have borne the name of religious folk; and to the intent that from henceforth many of them might be turned to better use as hereafter shall follow, whereby God's word might be the better set forth; children brought up in learning; clerks nourished in the universities; old servants decayed to have livings; almshouses for poor folks to be sustained in; readers of Greek, Hebrew, and

* De Tocqueville, "Society in France," translated by Henry Reeve, page 321.

† Letter in "Henry VIII.'s Scheme of Bishopricks," p. 101.

‡ Reformation, vol. i., p. 261, ed. 1681.

Latin to have good stipend; daily alms to be ministered; mending of highways; exhibition for ministers of the Church; it is thought unto the king's highness most expedient and necessary that more bishoprics and colleges shall be established."* Here is, indeed, a goodly catalogue of noble intentions. Who, after the effects of the first sudden change had passed away, could have failed to rejoice in seeing the Gospel preached, children educated, learning encouraged, the indigent assisted, the means of communication promoted! Here is a large project of civilisation, to be accomplished by the absorption of one-fifth of the lands of the kingdom into the possessions of the crown! What a noble title of the honest reformer would king Henry have attained by the realisation of these projects! The abbey-walls were pulled down; the lead melted; the timber sold; the painted windows destroyed. Alas! the records of the time show wonderful schemes for the establishment in each bishopric of preachers, readers, students, scholars, schoolmasters—large sums for alms, mending of highways—all to be "founded and established by the king's majesty's goodness." But the far greater part of these waste-paper projects remained wholly undone till the next reign, and then most grudgingly and imperfectly. "The king's majesty's goodness" remained satisfied that he should have a convenient fund to draw upon for the maintenance of his extravagant household and his absurd wars; for "the upholding of dice-playing, masking, and banquetting," with other recreations that are not suited to delicate ears. The king grew bolder in a short time; and when he went to parliament to sanction another spoliation, the abolition of the chantries—ancient endowments for almsgiving connected with obits, or praying for souls—he honestly said, speaking by the voice of the slavish parliament, that the revenues of the same should be devoted to the expenses of the wars against France and Scotland; and "for the maintenance of your most royal estate, honour, dignity, and estimation, which all your said loving subjects, of natural duty, be bound to conserve and increase by all such ways and means as they can devise."† Schools, alms-gifts, were attached to the smallest as well as the largest religious houses. These were all destroyed, when the funds for their support were swept into the king's exchequer. Henry's "goodness" was chiefly confined to the establishment of six new bishoprics, by his letters patent. This was a small performance of a large promise. Whilst he swept away the strongholds of the supremacy of Rome, he annihilated the greater part of those ancient possessions, out of which a pure religion might have been diffused over an instructed people. The magnificent endowments of ages that were past might have been preserved, not to perpetuate error, but to become living fountains of future piety and knowledge. It was the divine will that it should be otherwise; that, painfully and laboriously, the reformed faith might be built up upon sounder foundations than the temporal riches of an outworn institution.

The destruction of the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, in 1540, was as remarkable an example of the changes of opinion as the dissolution of the abbeys. Eighteen years only had passed since the heroic defenders of Rhodes had quitted their island for ever. When their conqueror, the Sultan

* 81 Henry VIII. c. 9.

† 37 Henry VIII. c. 4.

Solyman, had paid a tribute of respect to their grand-master, he said, "It is not without pain that I force this Christian, at his time of life, to leave his dwelling." Henry of England had less generosity than the infidel. The act of parliament which expelled the knights of St. John from their ancient priory in Clerkenwell—to appropriate its vast buildings "as a storehouse for the king's toils and nets for hunting, and for the wars"*—coldly says, that "considering that the isle of Rhodes, whereby the said religion took their old name and foundation, is destroyed by the Turks," it is "much better" that the possessions of the order should be "employed and spent within this realm."† L'Isle Adam, the defender of Rhodes, broke his heart when he learnt that a king, who still affected some of the pomp of chivalry, had destroyed the last link that connected the England of the sixteenth century with the glories of the Crusades.

The act for dissolution of abbeys is immediately followed in the statute-book by "an act abolishing diversity in opinions." The very title of this statute is sufficient evidence of its vain presumption. The king's majesty, being by God's law Supreme head of the whole Church and congregation of England, calling to mind the commodities which have ever followed unity of opinions, and the dangers of diversities of minds, especially of matters of Christian religion, caused certain articles to be discussed in parliament and in convocation. And also he "most graciously vouchsafed in his own princely person to descend and come into his said high court of parliament and council, and there, like a prince of most high prudence, and no less learning, opened and declared many things of high learning and great knowledge touching the said articles, matters, and questions, for an unity to be had in the same."‡ The statute then sets forth that the desired unity was to be "charitably established," by the observance, under the most tremendous penalties, of Six Articles. Fox calls this statute, "The whip with six strings." It was something more terrible than a whip. It breathed the amplest threats of the stake in Smithfield and the gallows at Tyburn. The first article sets forth the doctrine that "in the most blessed sacrament of the altar, by the strength and efficacy of Christ's mighty word, it being spoken by the priest, is present really, under the form of bread and wine, the natural body and blood of our Saviour," and that "after the consecration there remaineth no substance of bread and wine, nor any other substance but the substance of Christ." This article regarding the real presence thus involves a condemnation of the minuter difference from the orthodox doctrine which the Lutherans called consubstantiation, as distinguished from the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation. The Defender of the Faith, in his character of Supreme head of the Church of England, has utterly rejected the papal authority; he has declared against pilgrimages, images, and relics; he has destroyed the monastic institutions; he has even permitted the translation of the scriptures in the vulgar tongue;—but not one tittle will he relax from the enforcement of those doctrines of the Romanists which are the barriers to any true reformation. The other five articles are directed against those who preached the necessity of administering the eucharist, in both kinds, to the laity; who advocated the marriage of priests, or the non-

* Stow.

† 32 Hen. VIII. c. 24.

‡ 31 Hen. VIII. c. 14.
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observance of female vows of chastity or widowhood; who maintained that private masses were not lawful or laudable; who asserted that auricular confession was not expedient. The jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts upon such subjects was removed; and commissioners were appointed to examine accused persons, to commit to prison, to try before a jury of twelve men, and to pass sentence. Those who were convicted under the first article, "shall be deemed and adjudged heretics;" and "every such offender shall therefore have and suffer judgment, execution, pain, and pains of death by way of burning, without any abjuration, clergy, or sanctuary to be therefore permitted." Burnet remarks, that denying such offenders the benefit of abjuration was a severity beyond what had ever been put in practice before; for which remark Dr. Maitland sneers at the bishop's ideas of "honesty and martyrdom."* For any violation of either of the five other articles, by preaching or teaching in any school to the contrary, "every offender, on the same being therefore duly convicted or attainted," shall be adjudged a felon; "and shall therefore suffer pains of death, as in cases of felony." Any man or woman who had advisedly professed chastity or widowhood, and should afterwards marry, was to suffer the same penalty of death. Those who maintained doctrines against the articles where preaching was felony, were to lose lands and goods, and to be imprisoned; and for a second offence to suffer death.

This, then, from the 12th of July, 1539, when the act of the Six Articles was to take effect, to the end of the reign of Henry, was the England of the Reformation. It would be difficult to understand how such a statute could have passed, if the great body of the people had been inclined to a higher species of reformation than consisted in the destructive principle which assailed the externals of the Church. Cranmer was too yielding, and Cromwell too politic, to oppose the party which carried this statute, backed by the irresistible force of the king's will. The doctrinal reformers were clearly a minority. The political reformers had got all they wanted in the plunder of the ancient Church. The subservient courtiers, who had become impropiators, and provided half-starved monks to do the service of the altar at the cheapest rate, were wholly indifferent to the principles through which the continental reformers were daily waxing in strength. Cranmer spoke against the bill; but he finally sent away his wife, to evade its penalties, and locked up for a more convenient season the secret of his heart as to the real presence. Latimer, on the 11th of July, resigned his bishopric of Worcester. He was subsequently arrested, on a charge of having spoken against some of the Six Articles; and he wore out six years of his life in a close imprisonment in the Tower. Shaxton, the bishop of Salisbury, also resigned. But he had to endure something far more terrible than the close cell in which Latimer fortified his heart against all fear of man's power to harm. The story of Shaxton's fall will be told in its due order. An acute and learned writer, somewhat startled into another extreme by the exaggerated statements of bloody persecutions under the Six Articles, has given a list of all the martyrs whom Fox mentions as having been put to death during the time that the act was in force—that is, during the last seven years of Henry the

* "Essays on the Reformation," p. 255.

Eighth's reign.* These amount to twenty-eight. But, says this writer, speaking of the statute against diversity in opinions, "it was meant to frighten rather than to hurt, to intimidate and quiet the people rather than to destroy and slaughter them by wholesale. In the first place it caused many of the more violent partisans of the Reformation to quit the country; and, secondly, it made those who stayed at home more quiet and peaceable." He rightly attributes this act to the king, which we may readily infer from its preamble: "I believe that he was roused by an idea that the Church, of which he was resolved to be the supreme head, was likely to be overthrown by a torrent of what he considered infidelity and blasphemy; and that he devised, and insisted on, and would have, and carried such a measure as he thought was suited to check the frightful evil." † Be it so. He who had stalled his horses in monasteries, even before the dissolution, ‡ looked quietly on whilst painted windows were smashed, and consecrated bells were melted; saw noble libraries sold to grocers and soap-boilers; heard the cries of the unfed poor at the desolated abbey-gate, and consigned them to the beadle's whip; turned out ten thousand nuns into the wide world, to find resting-places where they might,—forbidden to marry under the pains of felony, with no strict or tender mother-abbess to watch over their ways;—he to oppose "a torrent of what he considered infidelity and blasphemy!" The profane songs—the plays and interludes, "tending any way against the six articles,"—the disturbances of congregations during the service of the mass—these things were evils. But it was a far greater evil to render England a land uninhabitable "by the more violent partisans of the Reformation;" by which "violent partisans" we understand that consistent body of earnest thinkers who have since been honoured with the name of Puritans. These were the men who did not rest



An English Abbess.

* Maitland; Essays, p. 259.

‡ Latimer's first sermon before Edward VI.

† *Ibid.*, p. 270.

satisfied that the king had "destroyed the pope, but not popery."* Whether twenty-eight persons were executed under the statute of the six articles, or twenty-eight hundred; whether ten reformers fled from England or ten thousand; whether the great mass of the people rejoiced in this persecuting law,—and, to use the words of Hooper in 1546, "the impious mass, the most shameful celibacy of the clergy, the invocation of saints, auricular confession, superstitious abstinence from meats, and purgatory, were never before held by the people in greater esteem"—we cannot, at this day, look upon such a law without horror, nor hesitate to entertain the most unmeasured disgust for its royal author and supporter. Our history tells of other tyrants, crafty and cruel as this Henry, who had slight regard for the life of man, and scrupled not to sacrifice friend and foe to their personal ambition. But this tyrant stands alone in his preposterous claim to unlimited obedience. He would absorb into himself all the inordinate powers of popes and councils, to prescribe what should be truth and what untruth. He would pretend to govern by parliament, according to the ancient laws of the realm, and yet procure his parliament to enact that his proclamations should have the force of statutes.† To the very last he looked upon the five millions of the people of England as his property; and the council that by his will were to govern during his son's minority were called his executors, "to keep up," says Mackintosh, "the language of the doctrine of ownership."

The general proceedings of the English government,—not halting between two opinions, but punishing and threatening whoever differed from the fluctuating and inconsistent dogmas of the supreme head of the English Church,—outraged the earnest partisans of "the new learning," and propitiated none of the vast body that cleaved to the old religion. The papal bull against Henry had been published, after a long delay; and the cardinal Pole, nearly allied in blood to Henry, had conducted negotiations to induce the emperor and the king of France to unite in hostilities against England. Neither of these powerful monarchs dared singly to brave the resentment of Henry; and they were too jealous of each other to join in any measures, such as those suggested for the conquest of England, or for removing its contumacious sovereign. But enough was done to provoke the revenge of Henry upon those who were within his reach. Reginald Pole was the grandson of George, duke of Clarence; and although educated by Henry, he published a book reflecting with bitterness upon the subject of the divorce of Catherine. The Tudor king, and the descendant of the house of York, thus became mortal enemies. Lord Montague, the elder brother of Reginald, with other relatives and friends of their family, were arrested in 1538, on a charge of treason. On the 13th of November, sir Thomas Wriothesley writes from Brussels to sir Thomas Wyatt, in Spain, to say that lord Montague had been sent to the Tower, with the Marquis of Exeter; that the king, through his special favour towards them, had "passed over many accusations made against the same of late by their own domestics," but that he was constrained to commit them to ward, "for avoiding of such malice as was prepened both against his person royal, and the surety of my lord prince, our only jewel after his majesty."‡ It is asserted that Geoffrey Pole,

* Letter of Hooper. † 31 Hen. VIII. c. 8. ‡ Ellis, Second Series, vol. ii. p. 109.

who was arrested at the same time, was a witness against his brother Montague and Exeter were convicted by their peers, and executed, with Sir Edward Neville, and other commoners, accused of treasonable and seditious offences.* The life of Geoffrey Pole was spared, for the remorse of a life-long imprisonment. The aged mother of the Poles, the countess of Salisbury, was arrested at her house at Warblington, near Havant, by the earl of Southampton and the bishop of Ely. They wrote to Cromwell, "We assure your lordship we have dealt with such a one as men have not dealt withal before us. We may call her rather a strong and constant man than a woman. For in all behaviour howsoever we have used her, she hath showed herself so earnest, vehement, and precise, that more could not be."* She maintained her innocence with such consistency, and the materials for an arraignment were so utterly wanting, that Cromwell resorted to an expedient which has brought as much disgrace upon his memory as any of his acts of spoliation. He put a question to the judges whether parliament might condemn a person accused of treason without a hearing—without trial or confession. A nice and dangerous question, said the obsequious ministers of justice; but parliament is supreme, and an attainder in parliament is good in law. The bill of attainder was passed against the countess of Salisbury; her grandson, the eldest son of lord Montague; and the marchioness of Exeter. The marchioness obtained a pardon. The grandson's fate is unknown. Let us finish this hateful story. After more than two years' imprisonment, on the 27th of May, 1541, Margaret Plantagenet,—the last in the direct line of that illustrious race,—was brought out to suffer death on Tower-hill. If anything could add to the terror of this murder, the scene at the execution would have made a people, too much familiarised to exhibitions of blood, start and wonder how England endured such atrocities. The unyielding countess refused to lay her head upon the block. It was for traitors so to die, and she was not guilty of any treason. She struggled against the force which held her down; and her gray hairs were covered with gore before the head parted from the body. Ten months before this terrible event took place, the chief instrument in the attainder of the countess of Salisbury had fallen by the same mockery of justice—and few pitied him :

"For 'tis the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar."

It has been considered as a proof of king Henry's undissembled grief at the loss of Jane Seymour, that he continued two years a widower.† We have seen that on the very day of her death his ambassadors were instructed to look out for a new consort. The real motive or the pretence was anxiety for the succession, which has been called "the ruling frenzy of Henry's mind."‡ Hutton had disparaged the personal charms of Anne, the daughter of the duke of Cleves, upon the first intimation of the king's desire again to wed.§ But Cromwell,—who felt the importance of a Protestant connexion at a period when the Romanists were using every effort to regain their ascendancy,—was

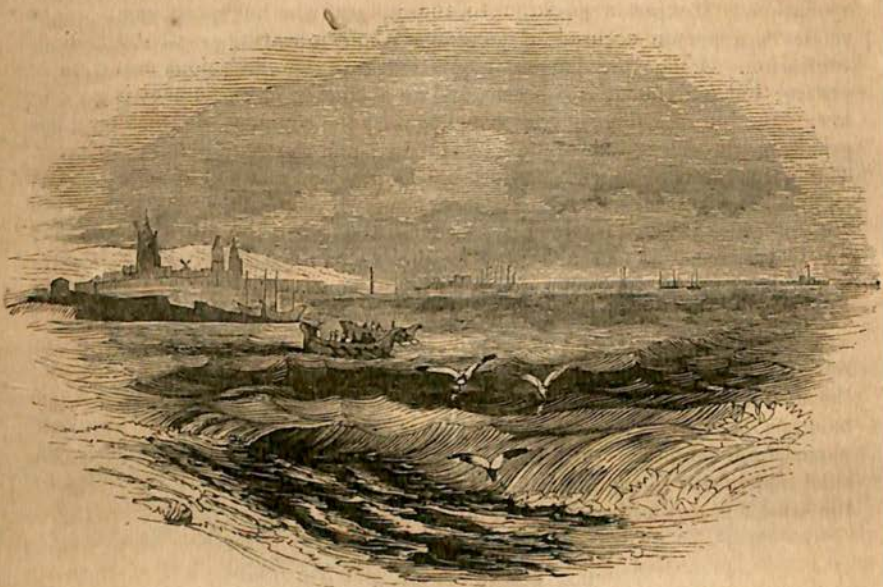
* Ellis, Second Series, vol. ii. p. 114.

† See Southey, "History of the Church," vol. ii. p. 77.

‡ Mackintosh, "History," vol. ii. p. 243.

§ See *ante*, p. 404.

not to be diverted from his determination to marry his master to this daughter of one of the princes of the German Confederacy, by vague statements that there was no great praise of her person. In March, 1539, Cromwell wrote to the king:—"Every man praiseth the beauty of the same lady, as well for the face as for the whole body, above all other ladies excellent. One amongst other purposes, said unto them of late, that she excelleth as far the duchess as the golden sun excelleth the silvery moon."* The "silvery moon" was the duchess of Milan, who is reported to have met Henry's advances by saying that she had but one head; if she had possessed two, one should have been at his majesty's service. In this affair the politic Cromwell was too eager. Nicholas Wotton and Richard Berde were sent to negotiate the marriage with Anne of Cleves. She was not bound, they wrote, by any covenants between the old duke of Cleves and the duke of Lorraine; she was at liberty



Calais from the Sea. From an old Print.

to marry wherever she would. She had been very straitly brought up, they said, by the lady duchess, her mother. She occupied her time mostly with the needle. She knew not French nor Latin, neither could she sing nor play upon any instrument; "for they take it here in Germany for a rebuke and an occasion of lightness that great ladies should be learned or have any knowledge of music." Her wit was good, and she would soon learn English. She was temperate in her diet:—"I could never hear that she is inclined to the good cheer of this country." Finally, "your grace's servant, Hans Holbein, hath taken the effigies of my lady Anne and the lady Amelie, and hath expressed

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 605.

their images very lively."* Thus wrote Wotton on the 11th of August, 1539. On the 12th of December, the lady Anne was at Calais, about to embark for England. She came from Dusseldorf, with a train of two hundred and sixty-three persons; and was received with the greatest state by Fitz-William, then the earl of Southampton, and four hundred noblemen and gentlemen, in coats of satin damask and velvet. The English admiral writes with honest pride of the exhibition he made of his country's naval power: "Her grace saw, as well the ship that is prepared for her passage, as other your grace's ships; which were not only right well appointed and trimmed with streamers, banners, and flags, but also no less well furnished with men standing on the tops, the shrouds, on the yard-arms, and other places accordingly; and their shot of



Anne of Cleves. From a Painting by Holbein.

ordnance therein marvellously well ordered. And surely not only she, but also all such strangers as were with her, much commended and liked the same; and though I say it, it was to be liked."† But the weather was unfavourable for embarkation; and Southampton entreated, with great humility, "that your majesty, of your gracious goodness and high wisdom, will consider that neither the wind nor the sea will be ordered at man's will." But Southampton has a greater difficulty to contend with than the wind or the sea. Anne of Cleves will not readily conform to the English notions of royal dignity. She prays

* Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 121. A miniature supposed to have been this identical picture was considered by Walpole the most perfect of Holbein's works. The Flemish fairness was remarkable.

† Southampton to Henry, State Papers, vol. viii. p. 208.

Southampton to come to supper with her, "and to bring some noble folks with me to sit with her, after the manner of her country. I showed her it was not the usage of our country so to do, and therefore besought her grace to pardon me of that, for I durst not consent thereunto." But again and again the princess repeated her request—"for this one night;"—for "she was much desirous to see the manner and fashion of Englishmen sitting at their meat." And so Anne of Cleves supped graciously with Southampton and eight other Englishmen. The earl begs for pardon if he had done amiss. Henry was perhaps not in the best humour at her freedom when he first met her, and was "marvellously astonished and abashed." Hans Holbein had been a flatterer. The king embraced her, but scarcely spoke twenty words, and did not offer the present he had prepared for her.* Sir Anthony Brown, the master of the horse, had gone before the king, and "was never so much dismayed in his life to see the lady so far unlike what was reported." † In the last month of his life, Cromwell was commanded by his master, on the peril of his soul, to write truly what he knew concerning the marriage with the princess of Cleves. What is fit to be repeated of this document is of curious interest. Anne was to be at Rochester on New Year's eve; and Henry declared to Cromwell that he would visit her privily, "to nourish love." The next day, at Greenwich, says Cromwell, "I demanded of your majesty, How ye liked the Lady Anne: your highness answered, as me thought, heavily, and not pleasantly—Nothing so well as she was spoken of; saying further, That if your highness had known as much before as ye then knew, she should not have come within this realm; saying, as by the way of lamentation, What remedy?" ‡ After Anne's public entry at Greenwich, the king called a Council; and the agents of the duke of Cleves were questioned about covenants, and touching a pre-contract of marriage with the duke of Lorraine's son and the princess. The deputies offered to remain prisoners till ample satisfaction was given upon both points. But when Cromwell informed the king of all the circumstances, "your grace," he says, "was very much displeased, saying, 'I am not well handled'—adding, 'If it were not that she is come so far into my realm, and the great preparations that my states and people have made for her; and for fear of making a ruffle in the world,—that is to mean, to drive her brother into the hands of the emperor and the French king's hands,—being now together, I would never have married her.'" Anne was called upon to make a protestation that there was no pre-contract; which she readily made; and which Cromwell reported to Henry: "Whereunto your grace answered in effect these words, or much like,—'Is there none other remedy, but that I must needs, against my will, put my neck in the yoke?'" There was no instant remedy; and the marriage ceremony was gone through. The king, whilst waiting for the bride in the presence chamber, said to Cromwell, "My lord, if it were not to satisfy the world and my realm, I would not do that I must do this day, for

* Modern history has its parallel scene. When George, prince of Wales, first met Caroline of Brunswick, lord Malmesbury says, "he embraced her, said barely one word, turned round, retired to a distant part of the apartment, and calling me to him said, 'Harris, I am not well; pray get me a glass of brandy.'"—*Malmesbury's Diaries, &c.*, vol. iii., p. 210.

† Strype, "Ecclesiastical Memorials."

‡ Cromwell's Letter in Burnet, vol. i., p. 193. The same letter is given by Sir H. Ellis, with considerable variations. The original in the Cotton Library is much injured by fire.

none earthly thing." In this temper Henry sulked and lamented: he "should surely never have any more children for the comfort of this realm" if this marriage should continue. A second experiment of the Calais executioner's sword might have been dangerous with a foreign princess. There was a "remedy," of a less serious nature. Anne of Cleves made no resistance to a separation, with an adequate provision. She was a woman of judgment, and no doubt heartily despised the fastidious sensualist. A Convocation was called, exactly six months after the marriage, which was empowered to determine its validity. On the 4th of July Henry wrote to Pate, his ambassador at the emperor's court, to inform Charles that the Lords and Commons, "perceiving some doubts to be in our last marriage with the daughter of Cleves," and wishing "to draw a most perfect certainty of succession," had requested him to commit the examination of the marriage to the bishops and clergy of the realm. The cunning politician adds, that the ambassador was on no account to explain what were the "grounds and causes of this motion."* On the 10th of July the marriage was declared invalid; the chief pretence being a doubtful pre-contract; and the unblushing argument, "that the king having married her against his will, he had not given a pure inward and complete consent."† Cromwell had gone to the block; and "Cranmer, whether overcome with these arguments, or rather with fear, for he knew it was contrived to send him quickly after Cromwell, consented with the rest."‡

Cromwell had gone to the block. On the 17th of April, 1540, the fortune of Cromwell seemed at its culminating point, for he was created earl of Essex. On the 12th of April a parliament had been assembled, which Cromwell had addressed as the king's vicegerent, and had declared that "there was nothing which the king so much desired as a firm union amongst all his subjects. * * * The rashness and licentiousness of some, and the inveterate superstition and stiffness of others in the ancient corruptions, had raised great distinctions, to the sad regret of all good Christians. Some were called papists; others heretics; which bitterness of spirit seemed the more strange, since now the Holy Scriptures, by the king's great care of his people, were in all their hands in a language which they understood."§ In this parliament he carried a bill for a great subsidy to be raised upon the laity and the clergy. The promises that the necessities of the state should be provided for out of the spoil of the church, were violated without the slightest apology. The odium of this taxation was solely laid upon Cromwell. The exorbitant demand "gained him an universal hatred amongst the people, and was one reason of his sudden fall after it."|| The minister's work was done. He had carried through a great revolution with comparative success. He had impartially racked, beheaded, and gibbeted papist and heretic. His loose papers of "Remembrances" show that he kept as careful memoranda of business to be done, as the most careful scrivener. Take a few specimens—

"Item, to remember all the jewels of all the monasteries in England, and specially for the cross at Paul's, of emeralds.

* State Papers, vol. viii., p. 374.

† Burnet, vol. i., p. 280.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

§ Burnet, and Parliamentary History.

|| Lord Herbert.

- “Item, the Abbot of Reading to be sent down to be *tried* and *executed* at Reading with his complices.
- “Item, the Abbot of Glaston to be tried at Glaston, and also to be executed there, with his complices.
- “Item, to see that the evidence be well sorted, and the evidence well drawn, against the said abbots and their complices.
- “Item, to remember specially the Lady of Sar [Salisbury].
- “Item, what the king will have done with the Lady of Sarum.
- “Item, to send Gendon to the Tower to be racked.
- “Item, to appoint preachers to go throughout this realm to preach the gospel and true word of God.”*

Well might Cromwell, in his adversity, write to Henry, “I have meddled in so many matters under your highness, that I am not able to answer them all; but one thing I am well assured of, that wittingly and willingly I have not had will to offend your highness; but hard it is for me or any other, meddling as I have done, to live under your grace and your laws but we must daily offend.”† The sky began to grow dark for Cromwell, at the very instant when parliament was to be prorogued, after the subsidy had been carried. On the 9th of May, a letter comes from the king to his “right trusty and well-beloved cousin”—in which the sign manual was affixed by a stamp—most probably as a mark of displeasure. The old familiar words are no longer written; but “our pleasure and commandment is, that forthwith, and upon the receipt of these our letters, setting all other affairs apart, ye do repair unto Us, for the treaty of such great and weighty matters, as whereupon doth consist the surety of our person, the preservation of our honour, and the tranquillity and quietness of you, and all other our loving and faithful subjects.”‡ On the 10th of June, he was arrested by the duke of Norfolk, while at the council table. The divorce of Anne of Cleves had not yet been mooted. Had Cromwell imprudently pressed upon Henry to cleave to a Protestant queen? Had Norfolk as resolutely urged upon his master, who now hated heretics more than papists, to consider the charms of his niece, Catherine Howard, who would support him in resisting the “rashness and licentiousness” that had come upon the land? There is no solution of these questions, beyond the fact that Cromwell was attainted for treason and heresy, by act of parliament, on the 29th of June. He was charged to have been “the most corrupt traitor and deceiver of the king and the crown that had ever been known in his whole reign.” It was alleged that “he, being also a heretic, had dispersed many erroneous books among the king’s subjects, particularly some that were contrary to the belief of the sacrament;” and that when some complained to him of the new preachers—such as Barnes and others—he said that their preaching was good; and “that if the king would turn from it, yet he would not turn. And if the king did turn, and all his people with him, he would fight in the field in his own person, with his sword in his hand against him, and all others.” Whatever crimes may be laid to the charge of Cromwell, no one can believe that he was the foolish braggart which these words imply. That he was an oppressor; that he received bribes; that he had made a great estate for himself by extortion, were no doubt true. Some of the public plunder

* See the curious extracts from the Cotton MS. in Ellis, Second Series, vol. ii. p. 120.

† Ellis, Second Series, vol. ii. c. 165.

‡ State Papers, vol. i. p. 628.

stuck to his fingers. He made as free with the lands and moneys of the king's subjects, as he did with the wooden house in Throgmorton-street, belonging to old Stow's father, which house he wanted out of the way when he built his own mansion: and so moved it upon rollers twenty-two feet, and seized the land upon which it stood.* Cranmer said with truth, though not with firmness, "that he thought no king of England had ever such a servant

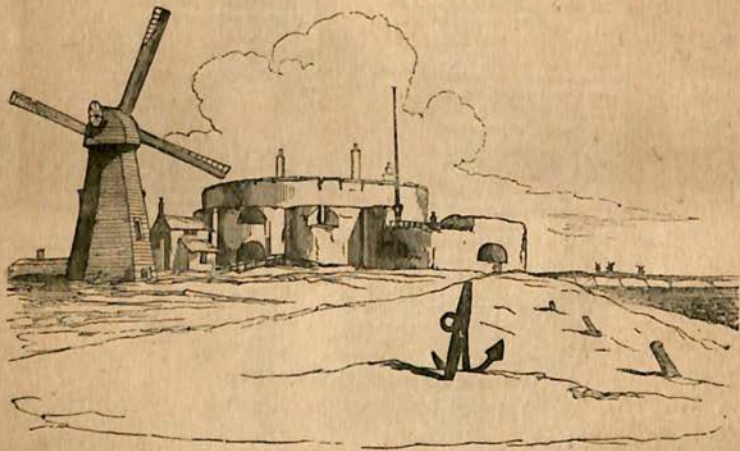


Queen Catherine Howard. From a Painting by Vander Werd.

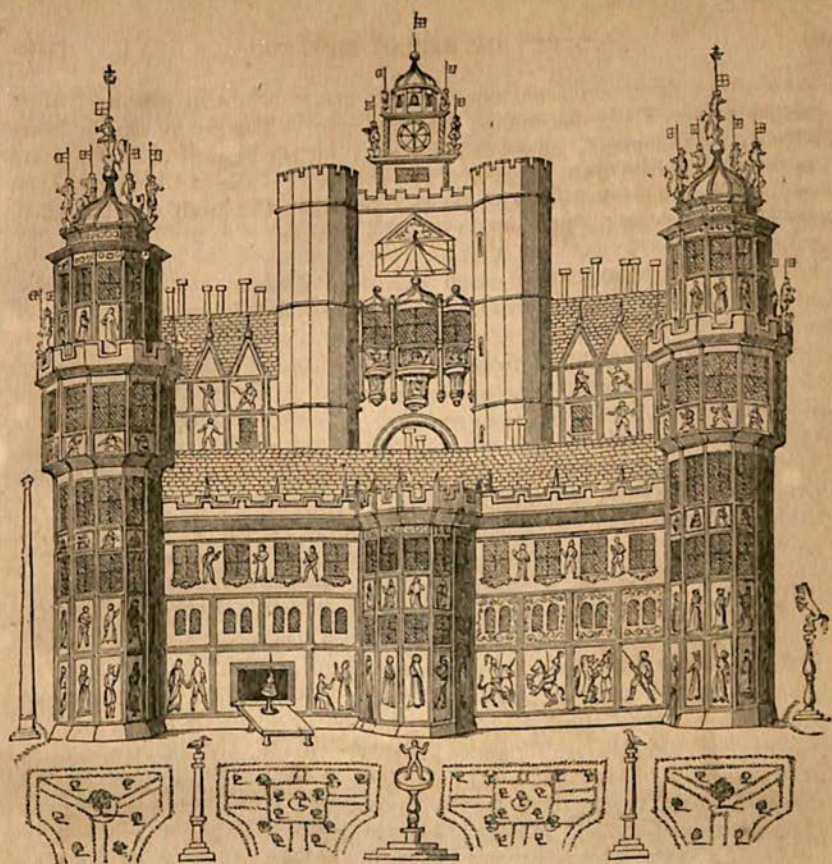
. but if he was a traitor, he was glad it was discovered." Though Cromwell was unscrupulous in carrying out the cruel judgments of his master and his base parliaments, he knew in his own case what was the justice which an Englishman had a right to demand. In his last letter to Henry, from the Tower, he says that he had been informed by the honourable personages who came to him, that "mine offences being by honest and probable witness proved, I was by your honourable lords of the Upper House, and the worshipful and discreet Commons of your nether House, convicted and attainted. Gracious sovereign, when I heard them I said, as now I say, that I am a subject and born to obey laws, and know that the trial of all laws only consisteth in honest and profitable witness Albeit, laws be laws." The principle of attainder, without hearing or confession, was not law. He perished by attainder; having in vain written to his remorseless

* "Survey of London." Thom's edit. p. 67.

master—who, however, sent him a little money while in prison—"Most gracious prince, I cry for mercy, mercy, mercy." The cry moved the heart of Henry for a moment; he dropt one tear. But the servant of twelve years was executed on the 28th of July. The divorce of Anne of Cleves had been completed four days before; and on the day when Cromwell was beheaded, king Henry married his fifth wife, Catherine Howard.



Sandown Castle; one of the fortresses erected by Henry VIII. in apprehension of an invasion by allies of the Pope.



Palace of Nonsuch, built by Henry VIII.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Three priests burned as heretics, and three hanged as traitors—Other executions for denying the supremacy—Queen Catherine Howard appears in public—Her shame discovered—Cranmer's Letter to Henry—Mercy promised to be extended towards her—Act of attainder against her and lady Rochford—New law of treason—Catherine Parr—War with Scotland and with France—State of Scotland under James V.—David Beaton—The first Scottish Reformer—Efforts to stop the progress of Lutheran opinions—James rejects the overtures of Henry—Invasion of Scotland by forces of the duke of Norfolk—James deserted by his nobles—Flight of Solway Moss—Death of James—Birth of the princess Mary of Scotland—Treaty for a marriage between prince Edward and the infant princess—The treaty broken off—Invasion of Scotland by earl of Hertford—Edinburgh taken—Kelso destroyed—Jedburgh burnt—Ravages of the southern districts—Proposition to assassinate cardinal Beaton—He is murdered in the following year—France invaded by Henry in person—Boulogne besieged and taken—Attempts of France to invade England—Francis and the emperor conclude a peace—French make continued efforts to retake Boulogne—Peace with France, in which Scotland is included—Anne Askew and others burnt as heretics—Duke of Norfolk and the earl of Surrey arrested—Surrey convicted of high treason and beheaded—Norfolk attainted—Death of king Henry.

THE public executioners had ample work in the dog-days of 1540. The record of Cromwell's fate by the chronicler of the Grey-friars is followed by

this entry: "And the 30th of the same month was Dr. Barnes, Jerome, and Garrard drawn from the Tower into Smithfield, and there burned for their heresies." The heretics were clergymen. The record then continues: "And that same day also was drawn from the Tower, with them, Doctor Powell, with two other priests; and there was a gallows set up at Saint Bartholomew's gate, and there were hanged, headed, and quartered." The traitors were condemned for affirming the legality of the marriage with Catherine of Arragon; one of them named Abel having been her chaplain. In the Beauchamp tower, whose walls are covered with the sad memorials of the wretched, is the carving of a Bell with an A. Below this is another memento of a condemned prisoner, DOCTOR : COOK.* He was the prior of Doncaster, and with six others was executed at Tyburn, on the 4th of August, for denying the royal supremacy. It may be doubted whether the people exactly comprehended the nice distinctions of these punishments. These sufferers of the 30th of July—three reformers, the stedfast opponents of the pope; and three devoted adherents to the supremacy of the pope—rode out of the Tower in sorrowful companionship, one of each being placed upon the same hurdle, by express desire of the king, that his impartiality might be duly exhibited. Arrived in Smithfield, they each went their several way, three to the gibbet, and three to the stake. It was a merry time at court, whatever tears might fall in Smithfield. Queen Catherine Howard appeared in public on the 8th of August—a beautiful girl, the very opposite of "the Flanders mare," whom Henry had rejected. Catherine, the "parvissima puella," as she was called, had fifteen months of what, in the language of romance, is termed uninterrupted felicity. When the little queen was travelling with her somewhat unwieldy lord in the north, in 1541, he then solemnly offered thanksgiving for the happiness he found in her society. On their return to London, Cranmer had a private audience of the king; and he exhibited a paper, which purported to be the examination of a servant of the duchess of Norfolk, setting forth the profligacy of the queen before her marriage, and alleging that her paramour formed one of her regal establishment. Let us pass over the revolting story, giving only a few extracts from a remarkable letter of Cranmer to the king. It is a touching exhibition of a sinful woman, plunged into the depths of despair:—"It may please your majesty to understand, that at my repair unto the queen's grace, I found her in such lamentation and heaviness, as I never saw no creature, so that it would have pitied any man's heart to have looked upon her; and in that vehement rage she continued (as they informed me, which be about her), from my departure from her, unto my return again; and then I found her, as I do suppose, far entered towards a frenzy, which I feared before my departure from her at my first being with her . . . And as for my message from your majesty unto her, I was purposed to enter communication in this wise; first, to exaggerate the grievousness of her demerits; then to declare unto her the justice of your grace's laws, and what she ought to suffer by the same; and last of all, to signify unto her your most gracious mercy; but when I saw in what condition she was, I was fain to turn my purpose, and to begin at the last part first, to comfort her by your grace's benignity and mercy

* Bayley, "History of the Tower," p. 160-1.

. . . and after I had declared your grace's mercy extended unto her, she held up her hands, and gave most humble thanks unto your majesty, who had shewed more grace and mercy than she herself thought meet to sue for, or could have hoped for, and then for a time she began to be more temperate and quiet, saying that she still sobbed and wept; but after a little pausing, she suddenly fell into a new rage, much worse than she was before. * * * * And for anything that I could say unto her, she continued in a great pang a long while; but after that she began something to remit her rage, and come to herself; she was mightily well until night, and I had very good communication with her, and as I thought, had brought her into a great quietness. * * * * The cause, that master Baynton sent unto your majesty, was partly for the declaration of her estate, and partly because, after my departure from her, she began to excuse, and to temper those things, which she had spoken unto me, and set her hand thereto; as, at my coming unto your majesty, I shall more fully declare by mouth."* The unhappy woman was thus solemnly assured by Cranmer, as he wrote to Henry, "of your grace's mercy extended unto her." The archbishop thought that he should be able to establish a precontract with Francis Derham which would have rendered the marriage of Henry invalid. The matter was not clear; and the promise of mercy was a mere breath of idle words.

The act of Parliament for the attainder of queen Catherine Howard includes the lady Rochford as an accomplice—she who had sacrificed her own brother in the case of Anne Boleyn. Derham, and another man involved in the accusation against the queen, had previously been hanged. The king's council on the 12th of November wrote to Paget, the English ambassador in France, stating the allegations against the queen; and "they are related with a circumstantial exactness, forming almost a contrast to the vagueness of all former proceedings of the like sort." † The ambassador writes on the 28th of November to Henry, detailing, with the greatest coolness, the discourses he had held on this terrible disclosure with the king of France and the queen of Navarre. Francis "swore, *par la foy de gentil homme*, that he was very sorry for the chance." But the French ambassador in London had told Francis more than Paget could communicate; particularly that "she would neither eat nor drink since the matter was known, but intended to kill herself; and that therefore knives, and all such other things as wherewith she might hurt herself, were taken from her;" with many of the odious particulars of the bill of attainder. "*Par la foy de gentil homme*, quoth the king, and laid his hand upon his breast, she hath done wondrous naughtily, and I am right sorry that my good brother should have such an occasion of unquietness." ‡ The parliament, desirous that condign punishment should not be delayed, requested the king not to trouble himself personally to give the royal assent to the bill of attainder against the queen and lady Rochford, but to agree to the same by letters patent. So the letters patent were granted; and the unhappy women were executed on the 12th of February. In the statute there is a remarkable clause, that any single woman of impure life who, before marriage with the king, should not confess the same, should be declared guilty of high treason.

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 691.

† Mackintosh, History, p. 230.

‡ State Papers, vol. viii., p. 635.

“To make the concealment of vices a capital offence was worthy of such a reign.”* Lord Herbert says that there were no more youthful candidates for the honour of Henry’s hand, after this enactment. There was no Sheherazade again to be found ready to trust the safety of her head to her power of amusing king Shahriar. Henry wisely rejected the chance of a fatal termination of another union, under this new law of treason, by obtaining the hand of a discreet widow, who had been twice before married. The maiden name of this lady was Catherine Parr. She became the queen of Henry in July, 1543. Before we enter upon her personal history, as connected with the two great religious parties into which England was now divided, we purpose to take a rapid view of the foreign relations of the kingdom to the end of Henry’s reign, involving as they did a war with Scotland and with France.



Queen Catherine Parr. From a Painting by Holbein.

The minority of James V. of Scotland was a disastrous period for his country. The regency was a constant object of contention between the factious nobles. The power of the great feudal chiefs had not been subjected, as it had been in England, to the superior power of the crown. A new element of discord was introduced by the progress of the new opinions in religion. The reforming spirit assumed a simpler character than in the neighbouring country, where it was mixed up with the personal quarrel of the

* Mackintosh, p. 231.

king with the papal see. It was the earnest spirit of the first Lollards, revived in the doctrines of Luther, and spread through Europe by his unwearied labours. But though the reformers were dreaded for their singleness of purpose, the old ecclesiastical power was completely ascendant. The fatal day of Flodden had cut off the most influential of the nobles; and those who remained were inferior in wealth, and therefore in authority, to a body which possessed half the land of the kingdom. The spiritual and temporal dominion appeared consolidated when David Beaton was appointed lord privy seal. Patrick Hamilton, the first Scottish reformer, was burnt by this persecuting prelate at St. Andrews, in 1528.* As early as 1525, the Scottish parliament had enacted, that—"forasmuch as the damnable opinions of heresy are spread in divers countries by the heretic Luther and his disciples, and this realm and liege has firmly persisted in the holy faith since the same was first received,"—no stranger arriving should bring any books of the said Luther or his disciples, on pain of forfeiture of ship and goods, with imprisonment.† But the books found their way; the doctrines were preached; and what this statute calls "filth and vice" became the secret food and medicine of earnest men in busy towns and secluded valleys. And so Patrick Hamilton, high-born, accomplished, went to the stake in his enthusiastic youthfulness. Beaton soon obtained the complete control of the young king. He negotiated his marriage with Mary of Guise, after James had lost his first wife, the princess Magdalen of France. Mary of Guise was a powerful instrument in confirming the devotion of the Scottish king to the ancient church; and Henry of England in vain endeavoured to tempt him to follow his example in seizing the monastic property. James, in whose mind the cause of Reformation was associated with the idea of rebellious subjects, refused to listen to these temptations; and, as it would appear from a letter of Wriothesley to some person in the Scottish court, written in 1541, the king of Scotland had set up pretensions to the title upon which Henry most valued himself, even at the time when he was shaking the pillars of the ancient church, and pulling down its corner-stones:—"It shall like you to understand, that upon the arrival of the said Mr. Sadleir, there were conveyed hither from Scotland sundry little books imprinted; and amongst others, one entitled 'The Trumpet of Honour,' wherein, in the very titling in the first front of the book, the king your master taketh upon him a piece of the title of the king's majesty, being the king your master therein called Defender of the Christian Faith, whereby his majesty should have great cause to think more than unkindness, if he would willingly take his title upon him. And the conjecture is the more pricking, because he added thereto the Christian Faith, as though there should be any other than the Christian Faith; which seemeth to have another meaning in it than one good prince can think of another, much less a friend of his friend, or a nephew of his uncle, if he would show himself to esteem his friendship."‡ Out of such sensitiveness, direct hostility would be pretty sure to arise.

Beaton, now a cardinal, had been to Rome in 1541, on a secret embassy. Henry determined to try the effect of a personal interview with his nephew, James; and it was agreed that they should meet at York in the autumn.

* The life of "the first preacher and martyr of the Scottish Reformation," has been published (1857) by the Rev. T. Lorimer.

† The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 295. ‡ State Papers, vol. v. p. 101.

Thither the king of England went, accompanied by Catherine Howard. But the king of Scotland was induced by the wily cardinal not to hold to the appointment. Henry was furious, and determined upon war. He resolved upon renewing the old claim of the English kings to the crown of Scotland; and the privy council directed the archbishop of York to search in "ancient charters and monuments" for a "clearer declaration to the world of his majesty's title to that realm."* A manifesto of enormous length was issued, entitled "A declaration containing the just causes and considerations of this present war with the Scots; wherein also appeareth the true and right title that the king's most royal majesty hath to the sovereignty of Scotland."† The duke of Norfolk entered Scotland with a large army in 1542; after the English warden of the east marches had sustained a defeat in Teviotdale. Having accomplished the usual destruction, Norfolk retreated to Berwick, for James was assembling an army in his front. The feudal chiefs gathered round the royal standard on the Borough Muir, as they had gathered under the standard of James IV. Onward they marched for the invasion of England. There was division amongst the host. The rebellious Douglasses were on the side of England. Many of the nobles were favourable to the principles of the Reformation, which their king opposed. The catastrophe came, without any real contest between the two armies. James was deserted by his nobles: "Pleaseth your grace, the king of Scotland the last day of October was at Lauder, and the Lords and Commons of his whole realm with him. The king was very desirous to be in England, but the lords would not agree thereunto; and upon this they returned, and are dispersed, and every man gone into his country."‡ The deserted James, in grief and indignation, returned to Edinburgh. An army of ten thousand men was, however, got together, under lord Maxwell; with which he proposed to enter England by the western marches. Maxwell crossed the border. But the spirit of jealousy destroyed any chance of success, even in burning and plunder; for one who is termed the king's minion, Oliver Sinclair, produced a commission giving him supreme command. The nobles refused to serve under him, and the clans mutinied. A body of English horse came up, who were believed to be the vanguard of the great army; and in a panic the Scots fled, with the loss of a large number of prisoners—some willing prisoners, as it has been asserted. The king gave himself up to despair. He immured himself in his palace of Falkland; would speak to no one; sickened; and sank under a slow fever, heart-broken, on the 14th of December. A week before, his queen had borne him a daughter—that Mary, whose long struggles with adversity form a striking contrast to the hopelessness of her father.

The lords who were taken at Solway Moss were first harshly treated by Henry, and then propitiated by indulgences. His first object was to negotiate a marriage between his son, Edward, and the daughter of James V., and thus to effect a natural union between the two countries. His second design was to demand the government of Scotland, as the guardian of the infant queen. The imprisoned nobles concluded a treaty with him, that they would deliver up Mary, and acknowledge him as their sovereign lord. They were released, and returned to Scotland to carry out their plan. But Cardinal

* State Papers, vol. v. p. 212.

† Hall, p. 816.

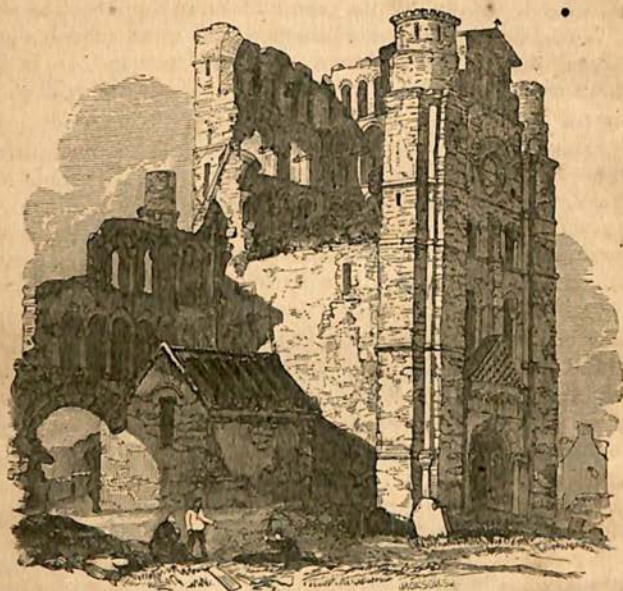
‡ State Papers, vol. v. p. 213.

Beaton produced a will of James V., appointing the cardinal governor of the realm, and guardian of the queen. The earl of Arran was presumptive heir to the throne; and he possessed sufficient power to obtain the regency, and drive Beaton from his usurped authority, the will being affirmed to be a forgery. But Arran belonged to the reforming party; and the church was as yet too strong to allow a dominion that placed its dignities and possessions in imminent peril. Arran was, after some time, during which Beaton had been imprisoned, gained over to the party of the church; and he became an instrument in the hands of the cardinal and the queen-mother. In December, 1543, Beaton became chancellor, and in the following January was constituted the pope's legate *à latere* in Scotland. He was now supreme in church and state; the friendship and alliance of the excommunicated king of England was renounced; and a treaty with England, which gave Henry some of his demands, was set aside. There was patriotism as well as intolerance in the policy of the papist faction. We cannot follow the dark intrigues of this period; in which some of the reformers were prepared to sacrifice their national independence, and the Romanists to hold their power by craft and persecution. As to any political morality on either side, the Englishman or Scot who wishes to trace his hatred of dishonour to the integrity of statesmen at this great transition period, will be disappointed. The people of Scotland, according to the most acute of observers, Ralph Sadler, would, in 1543, rather "suffer extremity, than come to the obedience and subjection of England: they would have their realm free, and live within themselves, after their own laws and customs." The kirkmen were against the unity of the two realms. The nobles, he thought, "in time would fall to the obedience and devotion of the king's majesty, whereupon the earl of Angus and his brother, with other lords prisoners, do make a perfect foundation."* Wherever we turn we find corruption and treachery; dark plots and contemptible rivalries.

Scotland was again invaded in May, 1544. The earl of Hertford arrived in the Firth with a powerful fleet, carrying a force of ten thousand men. He demanded that the infant queen should be immediately surrendered. The regent refused; and Hertford, with an additional force from Berwick, marched upon Edinburgh. One of the gates was battered down, and the city was entered and given up to conflagration and plunder. The castle held out; and some who had been willing to sell Scotland to England, appear to have felt that their duty was now to resist pretensions that were enforced by an invading army. Troops under the command of faithful Scots, and of those who had deserted the English cause, were marching upon Edinburgh in considerable numbers; and Hertford, after burning Leith, retired to Berwick. For two years the war was continued with the usual terrible inflictions upon the peaceful cultivators of the soil. The letters of Hertford in 1545, present a fearful picture of the ravages of his troops in border towns and fertile districts, which poetry and romance have made famous through every land. On the 5th of September Hertford moved with his army out of Newcastle. He had been directed to demolish the abbey of Kelso, and to construct a fortress upon its ruins. The abbey was taken by assault; but the ancient churchmen

* "Sadler to Parr," State Papers, vol. v. p. 271

had built too strongly for the massive walls to be thrown down by such engineering power as belonged to the sixteenth century. Hertford wrote that he could construct nothing tenable, under four or five months, out of those "buildings of stone, of great height and circuit,—which, to make any convenient fortress there, must of force be down and avoided." The noble ruin still shows that the difficulty was not over-rated. And so Hertford writes, "We have resolved to raze and deface this house of Kelso, so as the



Kelso.

enemy shall have little commodity of the same, and to remain encamped here for five or six days, and in the mean season to devastate and burn all the country hereabouts, as far as we may with our horsemen." Razed and defaced the great abbey was; and onward went the merciless destroyer in his allotted work. Thus his narrative continues:—

"As to-morrow we intend to send a good band of horsemen to Melrose and Dryburgh, to burn the same, and all the corn and villages in their way, and so daily to do some exploits here in the march; and at the end of the said five or six days to remove our camp, and to march to Jedworth [Jedburgh] to burn the same, and then to march through a great part of Tyvydale [Teviotdale] to overthrow their piles and stone-houses, and to burn their corn and villages, with all annoyance to the enemy that we can; which in our opinions would be such a scourge and impoverishing to the enemy, as they shall not be able to recover a long season."* Such were the "exploits" of warfare three hundred years ago,—exploits which the great believed just and

* State Papers, vol. v. p. 513.

honourable; and which men might still so believe if a stronger power than the will of princes and nobles had not arisen in the world—the power of public opinion founded upon the progress of knowledge. Yet even in those times there was a spirit of humanity growing up amongst the rude inhabitants of a country, accustomed from time immemorial to murderous forays. In another letter of the 18th of September, Hertford says that he had sent horsemen, who forayed, burnt, and wasted a great part of East Teviotdale; “and for the better execution thereof I sent with them one hundred Irishmen, because the borderers would not most willingly burn their neighbours.” The commander is perfectly aware of the ravages he is committing upon innocent people, and he glories in them. His description presents a picture of Scotland, very



Jedburgh.

different from the barrenness and imperfect culture that some assign to this early period:—“Surely the country is very fair, and so good a corn country, and such plenty of the same, as we have not seen the more plenteous in England; and undoubtedly there is burnt a wonderful deal of corn, for, by reason that the year hath been so forward, they had done much of their harvest, and made up their corn in stacks about their houses, or had it lying in shocks in the fields, and none at all left unshorn; the burning whereof can be no little impoverishment unto them, besides the burning and spoil of their houses.”* There is no intermission when “havoc” has been cried. From Kelso the main body of the army marched upon Jedburgh; and a detach-

* State Papers, vol. v. p. 513.

ment of fifteen hundred light horsemen advanced six or seven miles beyond, "brenning and devastating the country." The abbey of Jedburgh, still glorious in ruin, met the same fate as that of Kelso, though the demolition was not so complete:—"I caused the abbey, the Friars, and town of Jedburgh, and all the villages within two miles and more about the town, to be brent, where was destroyed also no little quantity of corn." •

Whilst the earl of Hertford was carrying forward this ignoble work in Scotland, king Henry and his Council were busy in negotiations far more disgraceful than the most barbarous open warfare. Cardinal Beaton was calling forth every means of resisting and annoying Henry; and Henry had commanded Hertford to spare no one in Scotland, who was allied in blood, or associated in friendship, with Beaton. He did not hate the cardinal because he burned and imprisoned the movers of the Reformation. He might have destroyed all the Lutherans in Scotland without offence to the intolerant king. He was the head of the papal faction—he upheld the supremacy of the pope—he was the opponent of Henry's designs upon the independence of Scotland, and thus no means would be too base to accomplish his destruction. Whilst Hertford was carrying on his war of devastation in 1545, the Privy Council of England wrote to inform him that the king had seen some letters from the earl of Cassilis to Mr. Sadler, "one containing an offer for the killing of the cardinal, if his majesty would have it done, and would promise, when it were done, a reward." Does Henry indignantly reject this proposal to remove his enemy by assassination? The letter of the Privy Council, which is signed by Wriothesley, the chancellor; the duke of Suffolk; the bishop of Winchester; and four other counsellors, has this answer to the proposition:—"His majesty hath willed us to signify unto your lordship, that his highness, reputing the fact not meet to be set forward expressly by his majesty, will not seem to have to do in it; and yet not misliking the office, thinketh good that Mr. Sadleir, to whom that letter was addressed, should write to the earl of the receipt of his letter containing such an offer, which he thinketh not convenient to be communicated to the king's majesty; marry, to write to him what he thinketh of the matter, (he shall say) that if he were in the earl of Cassel's place, and were as able to do his majesty good service there, as he knoweth him to be, and thinketh a right good will in him to do it, he would surely do what he could for the execution of it, believing verily to do thereby not only acceptable service to the king's majesty, but also a special benefit to the realm of Scotland, and would trust verily the king's majesty would consider his service in the same; as you doubt not, of his accustomed goodness to them which serve him, but he would do the same to him."* Beaton was murdered in 1546; and if the king of England was not an accessory, it was not for the want of inclination.

The guilt of the king of England and his government, in giving encouragement to the proposal to assassinate Cardinal Beaton, is a sufficient proof of the low morality of that age. Cassilis proposed the crime as "a special benefit to the realm of Scotland." The counsellors of Henry accepted it as "an acceptable service to the king's majesty." What was denominated "subtle policy," was a cloak for revolting wickedness. In judging of the

* State Papers, vol. v. p. 440.

men of this period we must consider what was the standard of opinion; and thence find occasion to be thankful that a higher standard has gradually been created, by which public servants, not of individual compulsion but of a necessary conformity, regulate their actions. Familiarity with bloodshed, with treachery, with pecuniary corruption, no longer has any support in a common example. But the guilt of political agents may appear less flagrant, because more in accordance with a prevailing spirit, when we are informed that one of the most zealous of the Scottish reformers did not hesitate to sanction the assassination which a ferocious noble proposed. Henry directed that the Scottish earls, with whom he was treating in 1544, should "cause the word of God to be truly taught and preached among them, and in their countries, as the mere and only foundation from whence proceedeth all truth and honour." * One of the most effective preachers was George Wishart. From a dispatch of Ralph Sadler, in 1544, it appears that "a Scottishman called Wysbert" brought him a letter, the object of which was to state that the Laird of Grange and the Master of Rothes "would attempt either to apprehend or slay the cardinal, at some time when he should pass through the Fife-land." The persons named in the letter were actually concerned in the murder. But Wishart had been seized while preaching in the town of Haddington; and being carried to St. Andrews, was tried for heresy before a special ecclesiastical commission, and was burnt on the 26th of March, 1546. There may be a doubt, however slight, whether Wishart the agent of assassination was Wishart the martyr. But the zealotry of those times would sometimes shut out the natural perceptions of "truth and honour," even from the eyes of the pious and enlightened. Knox speaks of the murder of Beaton in a tone of exultation; and Buchanan records it without any expression of disapproval. Beaton was murdered in the castle of St. Andrews. On the 29th of May, between five and six o'clock in the morning, armed men entered with masons and other workmen coming in to their labour. The workmen were thrust forth; the household servants driven naked from their dormitories; and the cardinal, hearing the din, came out of his chamber and was slain. The town-bell was rung; the provost and townsmen gathered round the castle; the murderers appeared on the wall, and "speered what they desired to see—one dead man?" They then brought the dead cardinal to the wall-head and hung him over the wall by one arm and one foot, and "bade the people see there their god." †

To complete our rapid view of the foreign affairs of the kingdom we pass from Scotland to France. In 1544 Henry went to his parliament with a long tale of his griefs. Out of his inestimable goodness, and like a most charitable, loving, and virtuous prince, he had for a long time loved and favoured Francis, the French king. He had freed his children from thralldom; he had relieved his poverty by loans of money. But now the ungrateful Francis had withdrawn the pension which he had been accustomed to pay; he had confederated with the Great Turk, common enemy of all Christendom; and he had stirred the Scots to resist his majesty, contrary to their duty and allegiance. ‡ The king, therefore, declares his intention to

* State Papers, vol. v. p. 387.
VOL. II.

† *Ibid.*, p. 560.

‡ 35 Hen. VIII., c. 12.

go to war with France as well as with Scotland—"to put his own royal person, with the power of his realm and subjects, in armour." But inestimable sums will be required for the maintenance of these wars. The faithful parliament, by this statute, again sanction the same species of robbery that the parliament of 1529 sanctioned; and for the alleviation of such charges, declare all loans made to the king in the two previous years of his reign to be entirely remitted and released, and all securities for the same to be utterly void.* Thus, with the proceeds of this swindle in his pocket, king Henry goes to the wars. He had previously propitiated the emperor, Charles V., by a compromise as to the succession to the crown, which recognised some claims in the person of the princess Mary, the emperor's niece. This was the third act for regulating the succession to the throne, which all persons were to accept and swear to, under the penalties of treason. The princess Mary had been declared illegitimate under the act of 1534. The princess Elizabeth had been declared illegitimate under the act of 1536. By this act of 1544, they were restored to their place in the succession, in default of issue of the king and prince Edward, but without any declaration of their legitimacy, which would have been to declare the divorces of their mothers unlawful.† The emperor and the king of England were now joined in a treaty for the invasion and partition of France. Charles was to claim Burgundy; Henry the ancient possessions of the Plantagenets, unless Francis would agree to certain conditions. The chivalrous French king spurned their pretensions; and so, in July, 1544, Henry put on his armour, and with thirty thousand men crossed the channel. The emperor was to enter France by Champagne, and the king by Picardy; and their united armies were to march to Paris. But no plan of mutual operations could detach the vain-glorious Henry from the pomp and circumstance of some gorgeous personal exhibition. He crossed the seas in a ship whose sails were of cloth of gold. He advanced at the head of the English and Imperial forces, to assist in the siege of Boulogne, which the duke of Suffolk was investing. "Armed at all points upon a great courser,"—as he is now exhibited in the armoury at the Tower,—he paraded his huge body before the besiegers, for two months. In vain the envoys of the emperor urged him to move forward, according to their compact. The emperor, said Henry, had taken some frontier forts, and he, the king, would have Boulogne. The lower town surrendered on the 21st of July. The upper town held out till the 14th of September. There had been a brave defence by the French governor against that portion of the English troops that were in earnest; whilst the royal showman was conducting his part of the business of war with the safer parade of a tournament. At length the great day of triumph arrived; for which he had broken faith with his ally. On the 18th of September he made his triumphant entry into Boulogne, which pageant Hall describes with a corresponding magniloquence:—"The king's highness having the sword borne naked before him, by the lord marquis Dorset, like a noble and valiant conqueror rode into Bulleyn, and the trumpeters standing on the walls of the town, sounded their trumpets, at the time of his entering, to the great comfort of all the king's true subjects, the same

* See *ante*, p. 328.

† 35 Hen. VIII. c. 1.

beholding. And in the entering there met him the duke of Suffolk, and delivered unto him the keys of the town, and so he rode towards his lodging, which was prepared for him, on the south side of the town. And within two days after, the king rode about all the town, within the walls, and then commanded that our Lady church of Bulleyn should be defaced and plucked down, where he appointed a moat to be made for the great force and strength of the town." But whilst the "noble and valiant conqueror" was listening



Henry VIII. in his later armour

to the trumpeters on the walls, Francis and Charles, with great wisdom, had concluded a separate peace. Henry had constituted queen Catherine regent, during his absence; and her letters to him show that she attended to his affairs with diligence, by sending fresh supplies of money and men.* He returned to England on the last day of September,—in no very placable humour, if we may judge from a letter of the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk.

* State Papers, vol. x. p. 12.

and others, in which they entreat the council to avert his majesty's wrath, "in our departing from Boulogne as we have done; whose displeasure is death unto us." *

But if Henry was slow in his projected march to Paris, Francis was the more ready to contemplate a march to London. There is a most curious letter from Vaughan to the king of England, dated from Antwerp, February 21st, 1545, in which he enters into a minute detail of a discovery communicated to him by a Flemish broker, of the mission of three spies to England, who were paid by the French government, to report upon the practicability of a plan of invasion. Two of these, who were men of Antwerp, had sailed in a hoy, with eleven packs of canvass, to be sold in London; where the third man was to meet them, in the house of a Fleming dwelling by the Thames. The first two had charge "to view the Isle of Sheppey, Margate, and the grounds between them and London; what landing there may be for an army, what soils to place an army strongly in." For, said he, "The French king purposeth, with his army that he appointeth, to land in the Isle of Sheppey and at Margate; to send great store of victuals, which shall be laden in boats of Normandy with flat bottoms, which, together with galleys, shall there set men a-land. He will send with his army no great ordnance, but small; and set upon such frame of wood as neither shall be drawn with horses, nor yet have wheels. This army the French king purposeth shall go so strong that it shall be able to give the battle; and is minded, if the same may be able to go through, to go to London; where (said he) a little without the same is a hill from which London lieth all open; and, with their ordnance laid, from thence the said army shall beat the town." The ambassador adds, "Where this hill should be so near London he could not tell me; but, as I guess, it must be about Finsbury or Moor-field." † This tale of the spies does not appear to have been altogether a delusion; for Paget, the secretary of state, when in Flanders in the following month, received corroborative information. This project of invasion seems altogether founded upon rather imperfect knowledge as to the topography of the country. But such a scheme was not utterly hopeless; for the English government was sorely straitened for money, and the means of defence were of the weakest kind. The religious dissensions, and the bad faith of their rulers in all pecuniary engagements, had made the loyalty of the nation a matter of doubt. That the people would have rallied round the king's standard the instant that an invader stepped upon the soil we may be nevertheless certain. In the summer of 1545, however, Francis was making strenuous efforts for the invasion of England; and the coasts had been specially surveyed for defence by the duke of Norfolk. New bulwarks were being constructed, and decayed ones repaired, along the coasts of the channel. But the commonest appliances were wanting for an effectual resistance on shore. At Portsmouth, the works could not be completed for want of tools. "As for shovels and spades," writes the duke of Suffolk, "we have had some from London; but as for mattocks we have had none." ‡ Money was equally wanting for defence. Wriothesley, the chancellor, writes that it is no use telling him, "pay, pay, prepare for this, prepare for that." He cannot pay.

* State Papers, vol. x. p. 114.

† *Ibid.*, p. 302.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 796.

The subsidy is gone; the lands are consumed; the plate of the realm molten and coined. Corn is scarce and excessively dear. The country will bear no more tax.* The king had drained as much as he could under the old plea of a "Benevolence;" and so little was there of the voluntary principle in the matter, that an alderman of London had been compelled to serve in the Scottish war because he was stubborn in holding fast his money. But the true defence of England was not wanting in this season of peril. According to a return of this date, there was a fleet in the channel, of a hundred and four vessels, carrying more than twelve thousand men. This fleet contained every variety of craft, from the *Henry Grace à Dieu*, of one thousand tons and seven hundred men, to the *Mary Winter* of Plymouth, of forty tons and thirty-two men. But of these hundred and four vessels, only twenty-eight were above two hundred tons. The fleet was in three divisions, the *Vanward*, the *Battle*, and the *Wing*. The watchword and countersign point to the traditionary origin of our national song: "The watchword in the night shall be thus, 'God save King Harry;' the other shall answer, 'And long to reign over us.'"[†] There was an indecisive action off Portsmouth, in July, 1545; and a serious misfortune in the accidental sinking of a large ship, with four hundred men, in the harbour of Portsmouth. The *Mary Rose* went down like the *Royal George*. The king was on shore, and saw his noble ship laid on her side and overset.

"It was not in the battle,
No tempest gave the shock."

The danger of invasion was soon overpast. The French sent assistance to the Scots; devastated the neighbourhood of Calais; and made the most strenuous efforts to retake Boulogne. At length a peace was concluded in June, 1546; one of the articles of which was that Boulogne should be restored to France, at the expiration of eight years, upon the payment of two millions of crowns, and another that Scotland should be included in the pacification. The remainder of Henry's reign was not disturbed by foreign warfare.

The marriage of Henry with Catherine Parr, in 1543, was probably brought about by the party of the Reformation, as far as any party could influence the king's personal inclinations. Unless the lady had been of singular discretion her own religious convictions might have been as dangerous to her as her light-heartedness was to Anne Bullen and her impurity to Catherine Howard. The persecutions for heretical opinions went fiercely on, whilst the solid principles of protestantism were gradually establishing themselves in the minds of the laity as the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures came to be more widely diffused. But the anti-reforming party had contrived to interpose a barrier between the people and the day-spring. In 1543 an act was passed which limited the reading of the Bible and the New Testament in the English tongue to noblemen and gentlemen; and forbade the reading of the same to "the lower sort"—to artificers, prentices, journeymen, serving-men, husbandmen, and labourers, and to women, under pain of imprisonment.[‡]

* State Papers, vol. x. p. 830.

† *Ibid.*, p. 814. "The Order for the Fleet." August 10, 1545.

‡ 34 & 35 Hen. VIII., c. 1.

We shall have occasion subsequently to notice this statute, which offers some curious illustrations of the state of popular knowledge. It may suffice here to regard it as a clear indication of the anomalous character of the ecclesiastical reform, as it had hitherto proceeded in England—a reform which let in the sunlight to the dark and decaying chambers of the ancient church, and then endeavoured to shut it out again, that the patchwork reparation might be concealed. The Act of the Six Articles was especially retained in full force by the statute of 1543 for the Advancement of True Religion; with the exception that there was a provision for allowing the clergy, accused of preaching contrary to the king's doctrines, to recant upon the first offence; to abjure and bear a faggot on the second offence; and not to be burned unless they refused to abjure, or committed a third offence. The chase of heretics thus became more prolonged and more amusing to the hunters. When the flying animal was caught the first time, he was saved for the chance of another run; and so of the second finding. But when the hounds a third time gave tongue, the poor wearied beast was left to the dogs.

One of the mightiest of the heretic-hunters was Stephen Gardiner. As chancellor and bishop he fills a large space in the history of the persecutions in the reign of Mary; but his earlier career is marked by his strenuous exertions to accomplish the divorce of Henry from Catherine of Aragon, by his negotiations and by his published writings. He had opposed the supremacy of the pope; and yet he clung to and asserted, with unflinching zeal, "doctrines and practices which the adherents to the pope maintain, but which protestants have rejected."* Cranmer, Latimer, and other early reformers, saw, with a truer judgment, that to reject the supremacy of the pope was necessarily to destroy the superstructure of which the papal authority was the foundation. But during the reign of Henry it was exceedingly difficult for conscientious reformers to carry forward their opinions to their logical conclusions. They looked on, not with indifference, perhaps with horror, whilst papists and sacramentarians were imprisoned and burnt with a fearful impartiality. After the death of Cromwell the prevailing spirit of the king's council was a desire to terrify the humbler classes of the people by the punishment of those who avowed heterodox doctrines. One singular example of the avidity with which this object was pursued is exhibited in a letter to the council in 1542, from Wallop, the ambassador to France, in which he says, that, "as touching the heretic," he has given thanks for the genteel offer of the French authorities; and the said heretic has been "delivered unto those I sent; whom I have this day sent to Calais according to the king's commandment."† The wretched fugitive, an Englishman named Denis Tod, thus handed over to his unmerciful countrymen, was burnt at Calais a few weeks after the date of this letter. If the heretic could not escape even when he put the sea between himself and his persecutors, we may readily believe how keen would be the search, and how unrelenting the punishment, when men who dared to think for themselves were found within the very precincts of the king's palace. At the time of Henry's marriage with Catherine Parr, that is in July 1543, there were four men of Windsor confined under charges of heresy—Anthony Peerson, a priest; Robert Testwood and John

* Maitland, "Essays on the Reformation," p. 396.

† State Papers, vol. ix. p. 96.

Marbeck, singing-men; and Henry Filmer, a townsman of Windsor. They were brought to trial at Windsor, on the 27th of July. Three were indicted that they had uttered words against the mass; and Marbeck that he had copied out an epistle by Calvin against it. The case of Marbeck shows how earnestly some men endeavoured to avail themselves of the knowledge which was opened to them by the reading of the Scriptures. This singing-man of Windsor College, when Matthew's Bible was published in 1537, borrowed a copy, and commenced transcribing it. But printed Bibles becoming more accessible, he was diverted from this labour, and employed himself in making a Concordance to the Scriptures, upon the plan of the Concordance to the Latin Vulgate. This unfinished manuscript was found when Marbeck's papers were seized. The four men were condemned. Three were burnt;



Burning of Peerson, Testwood, and Filmer, before Windsor Castle. From Fox's "Acts and Monuments."

but Marbeck was spared—at the request of Gardiner, according to some authorities, at the command of Henry, according to others; the king saying that Marbeck had employed his time better than those who examined him. It is added by Fox that when Henry heard of these executions, he said, "Alas, poor innocents."

Amongst the escapes of the suspected clergy, that of Cranmer is the most remarkable. It presents the almost solitary instance of the king interposing to save an old friend and servant from the intrigues of a powerful party. Cranmer triumphed over Gardiner in 1543, when Henry made him acquainted with the charges that were brought against him of being an encourager of heresy; and when Cranmer, discovering his secret enemies and pardoning them, earned the praise of the common voice—"Do my lord of Canterbury a shrewd turn, and he is your friend for ever."* Cranmer again triumphed in 1546; when the remarkable scene took place which Fox has described and Shakspeare has dramatised—carefully following his authority as to the incidents, but disregarding their date. The Council

* Shakspeare, "Henry VIII.," act v. sc. 2.

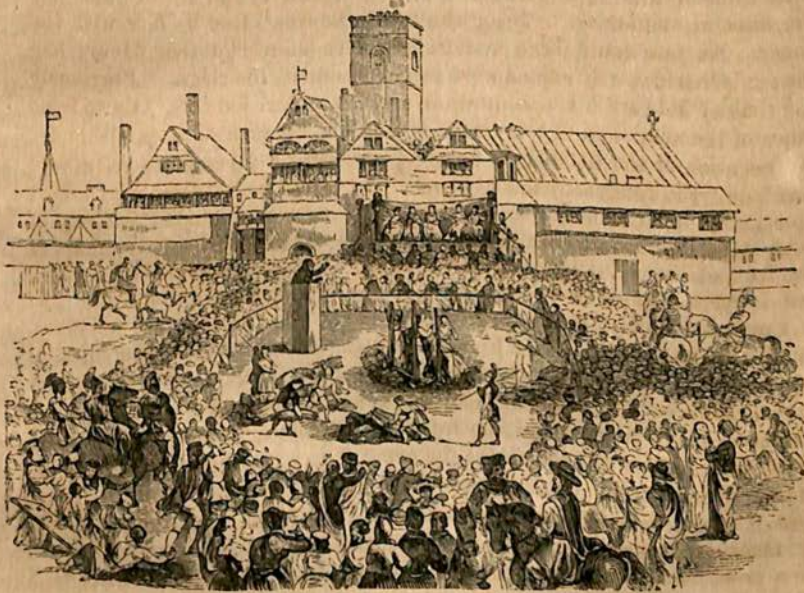
preparing to send the obnoxious prelate to the Tower; the doomed man kept waiting at the door, as if his disgrace were already accomplished; the accusations and the threats; the king's signet produced; the conspirators covered with shame—these circumstances make up a vivid picture, coloured no doubt in the original relation, and heightened by the poet's art. But there is one point in the narrative of Fox which stands out in the oratorical discourses which he gives between the king and the archbishop. When Henry says that the council had requested him to commit Cranmer to the Tower, "or else no man dare come forth as witness in those matters, you being a counsellor,"—and Cranmer replies, that he is content to go thither, that he may come to his trial, the king thus answers: "Oh, Lord, what manner of man be you? What simplicity is in you? I had thought that you would rather have sued to us to have taken the pains to have heard you and your answers together for your trial, without any such indurance. Do you not know what state you be in with the whole world, and how many great enemies you have? Do you not consider what an easy thing it is to procure three or four false knaves to witness against you?"* It was not the practice in state-trials to bring the "false knaves" face to face with the prisoner. No one could have a more complete knowledge than Henry had of the mode in which convictions were procured during his reign. "Previously to the time of Edward VI. and queen Mary," says Mr. Jardine, "there is no instance of the admission of the *vidæ voce* examination of witnesses, either for the prosecution or the defence, in cases of treason or other state offences." It was held "too dangerous to the prince" to produce witnesses who might be questioned by the accused. The evidence consisted almost entirely of written depositions and examinations, taken before the Privy Council or before commissioners. Interrogatories were previously prepared by the crown lawyers. These were submitted to the witnesses individually. If they were conformable in their answers it was well. If they were not so, the rack was introduced. The fear of torture was present to the mind of every witness. When the depositions had been shaped after the most approved fashion, the prisoner was subjected to the like tender interrogatories. The trial, so called, having come on, the counsel for the crown carefully noted what in the depositions was to be read and what omitted; and the officer of the court as carefully obeyed his directions. What chance a prisoner had of an acquittal may be readily conceived.† When king Henry interfered with the insane resolution of the archbishop to seek a trial, he truly said, "You will run headlong to your undoing if I would suffer you."

The searchers for heresy appear to have manifested great anxiety to fix their accusations upon persons of the royal court. During the persecution at Windsor false charges were made against sir Thomas Hoby and others. Dr. London, one of the least scrupulous of the commissioners appointed to ferret out the delinquencies of the religious houses, was now employed in an opposite direction. His charges against members of the king's household were held to be founded in perjury and conspiracy; and Dr. London and his

* Fox, "Acts and Monuments."

† See Jardine's "Criminal Trials," Introduction, vol. i. p. 25.

associates were set in the pillory. The unscrupulous doctor did not survive the disgrace.* The queen, whose Lutheran tendencies were more than suspected, had influence enough to save her friends for some time. That influence perhaps saved Cranmer. But the blow at last fell upon one of the most interesting of victims. Anne Askew, a lady known at court, if not about the queen's person, was an avowed protestant. She had been married against her will, and had been discarded by her bigoted husband for the strength of her convictions. Anne Askew delivered her opinions on the Eucharist with some imprudence; and was subjected to an examination by the bishop of London. She escaped for a time; but was again examined before the Council. Otwell Johnson, a merchant of London, writing to his brother at Calais, thus relates the issue, amongst other news: "Quondam bishop Saxon [Shaxton], Mistress Askew, Christopher White, one of Mistress Fayre's sons, and a tailor that came from Colchester or thereabout, were arraigned at the Guildhall, and received their judgments of my Lord Chancellor and the Council to be burned, and so were committed to Newgate



Burning of Anne Askew and others. From Fox.

again. But since that time the aforesaid Saxon and White have renounced their opinions; and the talk goeth that they shall chance to escape the fire for this viage. But the gentlewoman and the other men remain in stedfast mind; and yet she hath been racked since her condemnation, as men say; which is a strange thing in my understanding. The Lord be merciful to us all." † Burnet says that he had seen an original journal of the transactions in the Tower, which shows that "they caused her to be laid on the rack,

* Burnet, book iii. p. 327.

† Ellis, Second Series, vol. ii. p. 177.

and gave her a taste of it." But Burnet has doubts of the relation of Fox, that the chancellor, Wriothesley, when the lieutenant of the Tower refused "to stretch her more," threw off his gown, and himself "drew the rack so severely, that he almost tore her body asunder." Lord Campbell gives this horrid story without noticing the doubt of Burnet; and adds that Griffin, the solicitor-general, assisted in the detestable crime. Wriothesley was a determined bigot; and when the passions of the zealot and the policy of the statesman were combined, there was no atrocity from which the men of this time would shrink. Let us hope that in this case human nature was not so utterly degraded as the somewhat credulous historian of the English martyrs has represented. There was a disgusting scene in Smithfield which soon followed the torture of the high-minded woman, who, amidst her sufferings, would not utter one word to implicate her friends. Upon a bench under St. Bartholomew's church, sat the Lord Chancellor, the duke of Norfolk, the earl of Bedford, the Lord Mayor, and other dignitaries. There are three martyrs, each tied to a stake. The apostate Shaxton is to preach the sermon. It is rumoured that gunpowder has been placed about the condemned, to shorten their sufferings. The Chancellor and the other high functionaries have no compunction for their victims; but they are in terror for their own safety. Will not the exploding gunpowder drive the fire-wood where they sit? They hold a grave consultation, and are persuaded to sit out the scene. The gentlewoman and her fellow-sufferers die heroically—a noble contrast to the cowardice that quakes in the extremity of its selfishness upon the bench under St. Bartholomew's church.

Such were the scenes that marked the closing days of the life of Henry. He is a pitiable spectacle of human infirmity. Moved about by mechanical aid from chamber to chamber—a vast mass of obesity—there is one patient nurse for ever about him, soothing the paroxysms of his temper by endeavours to alleviate his bodily sufferings. But the belief in his own infallibility is as strong as ever; and he listens to the whispers of those who tell him that his queen, that faithful nurse, is a heretic. She is sincere in her opinions; and endeavours to influence him to go on with the work of Reformation. "A good hearing it is," he exclaims, "when women become such clerks; and a thing much to my comfort to come in mine old age to be taught by my wife."* Gardiner and Wriothesley seize the right moment when the old pride of the polemical despot is in the ascendant; and have his authority to prepare articles for Catherine Parr's impeachment. But the king passed out of life without a third queen's head falling on the scaffold in the Tower. His wrath was appeased; and, according to Fox, his anger fell on the bishop of Winchester, the scheming Gardiner. The story says that the queen diverted his fury by an adroit appeal to his self-love. "Kate, you are a doctor," said the king. "No, sir," she replied, "I only wish to divert you from your pain by an argument, in which you so much shine." Kate was again his friend and "sweetheart;" and when Wriothesley came with a warrant for the queen's arrest, he was driven away with the royal salute of "knave, arrant knave, beast, fool." We can scarcely receive these details amongst the authentic matters of history; though we may readily believe

* Fox.

that in the fierce contest of parties, at a time when the despot could be more readily than ever moved to sudden hatreds, the protestant tendencies of Catherine Parr might have been easily perverted into the means of her destruction,

But as the king was necessarily becoming a more passive instrument in the hands of others, the party of the Reformation was gaining strength. The earl of Hertford, afterwards famous as the Protector Somerset,—the uncle of the heir to the crown—was undoubtedly in the ascendant. How far may be imputed to his counsels the last iniquitous acts of Henry's reign must be a matter of conjecture rather than of proof. Hertford was a decided reformer. The duke of Norfolk, and his son the earl of Surrey, were as firm opponents of further changes. The Howards were of the ancient nobility—the Seymours were “new men.” There were political hatreds between them, as well as theological differences. Surrey had been superseded by Hertford in the lieutenancy of Boulogne. Norfolk acknowledged that he had been “quick against such as have been accused for sacramentaries.” There was one point in which the jealousy of Henry could be easily aroused against the Howards. They were of the blood royal by descent. They might aspire to the throne during the minority of the young prince Edward. Surrey had something of the wilfulness which mankind are too ready to ascribe to the poetical temperament. He who was the first and the most successful in familiarising English verse to a new accentuation—he who led the way in the use of blank verse, the noblest instrument of our noble language—the most accomplished scholar, the bravest gentleman—was punished at one time for eating flesh in Lent; and at another time for the coarse frolic of walking the streets at night, and breaking windows with a cross-bow. It was his impulsive and incautious nature which precipitated his fall. In 1546 he was imprisoned for using bitter language to the earl of Hertford. A few months later, he and his father, the aged duke of Norfolk, were committed to the Tower upon a charge of treason. This was in the beginning of December. The king was dangerously ill. There is an official paper, in the handwriting of Wriothsley, which contains the ground-work of the charges against Norfolk and Surrey. These are in the form of questions; and the two first questions, which contain interlineations by Henry himself in a tremulous hand, have reference to the principal charge upon which the father and son were condemned. It was high treason “to do any thing by word, writing, or deed, to the scandal or peril of the established succession to the crown.” The first question in the state paper is as follows:—“If a man, coming of the collateral line to the heir of the crown, who ought not to bear the arms of England but on the second quarter, do presume to change his right place, and bear them in the first quarter, leaving out the true difference of the ancestry; and, in the lieu thereof, use the very place only of the heir-male apparent; how this man's intent is to be judged; and whether this import any danger, peril, or slander, to the title of the prince or very heir-apparent; and how it weigheth in our laws?” The same inference is made in the second question,—“if a man presume to take into his arms an old coat of the crown, which his ancestor never bare, nor he of right ought to bear, and use it with a difference; whether it may be

to the peril or slander of the very heir of the crown?"* The sister of Surrey, the widow of the duke of Richmond, who spoke of her brother as "a rash man," and Mrs. Holland, a mistress of the duke of Norfolk, were witnesses against the Howards; but they only testified to their dislike of the Seymours and "the new nobility," with something about the royal arms. The "old coat,"—that of Edward the Confessor,—and the lions of England "in the first quarter," were the evidence for their condemnation. Wotton, the ambassador to Francis I., told that king, on the 22nd of December, that the matter was sufficiently proved, by the confession of Surrey, "both against himself and his father too."† What Surrey confessed is not recorded. He



Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey.

was tried by a jury, after the fashion of those times; and though he showed that he had borne the same arms for many years by a decision of the heralds, he was condemned; and on the 19th of January he went to the block. Norfolk was attainted, upon his confession of having borne the obnoxious arms; and the royal assent to the bill was given by commission. His execution was to have taken place on the 28th of January. Before that day dawned, Henry lay dead. His last moments were not soothed by an act of mercy to his aged servant. But Norfolk escaped, if escape it were, to linger in prison, while the Reformation, which he opposed, held on its inevitable course.

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 891.

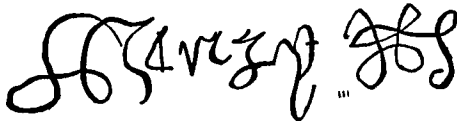
† "Despatch to the King," *ibid.*, vol. xi. p. 388.

Henry the Eighth died at two o'clock in the morning of the 28th of January, in his palace at Westminster. His death was concealed for three days. On the 31st of January, the Commons were summoned to the House of Lords, and Wriothesley wept while he announced the event. The Will of the king, by which the succession was defined, and the government of the realm during the minority of his son was regulated, was then read in part. Hertford and Paget had employed the three days of secrecy in determining the course to be pursued under the will, which was in their private keeping.* Some suspicions have arisen that the will was forged. The nation did not, in all likelihood, feel the loss of the most arbitrary monarch that had ever filled the English throne as a great calamity. On the 5th of February, the bishop of Winchester wrote to Sir W. Paget, secretary of state, "To-morrow, the parishoners of this parish and I have agreed to have a solemn dirige for our late sovereign lord and master, in earnest, as becometh us; and, to-morrow, certain players of my lord of Oxford's, as they say, intend, on the other side, within this burgh of Southwark, to have a solemn play, to try who shall have most resort, they in game or I in earnest." † The sorrow could not have been very violent when the players thought that a diversion would be welcome, even before the king's body was conveyed to earth at Windsor. Though Henry is said to have wrung Cranmer's hand on his death-bed, his last religious exercises were in accordance with the practice of the Romish church. In the same spirit were his funeral solemnities conducted: "The body lay in state in the chapel of Whitehall for twelve days, with masses and dirge sung and said every day; Norroy standing at the choir door, and beginning with these words, pronounced aloud, 'Of your charity, pray for the soul of the high and mighty prince our late sovereign lord, King Henry the Eighth.'" ‡

* Tytler, "Original Letters," vol. i. p. 18.

† *Ibid.*, p. 21.

‡ Hayward, "Life of Edward VI.



Autograph of Henry VIII.



Edward VI. and his Council. (From a Woodcut on the Title to the Acts of Parliament, 1551.)

CHAPTER XXVIII.

General notice of the condition of England, about the middle of the sixteenth century—Sources of information—Population—Parish Registers—Capital—Taxation—England a lightly taxed nation in these times—Evasions of subsidies—Sources of revenue—The royal household—Military expenditure—Military organisation—Archery—The Navy—Defence of the coasts—Civil administration—Despotism of the government—Bribery—Small salaries of officers—Parliaments—Their subserviency—The Nobility and Gentry—Justices of the Peace—Merchants become landed men—Commercial spirit entering into rural affairs—Aspect of the country districts—Inclosures—Monastic lands let as copyholds—New distribution of land—Effects upon the labouring population—Common and Several—Inclosures defended—The Statute of Vagabonds indicates an exceptional state of society—Its horrible enactments—The Statute repealed—Offences against property—Impostors—Agricultural industry—Distribution of the produce of land—Dearth—Rise of Rents and prices of commodities—Attempts to keep down prices and force sales—Debasement of the Coinage—Effects upon prices at home and upon exchange abroad—Sufferings of the labourers.

BEFORE we proceed in our narrative of the historical events of the reign of Edward VI., we propose to offer a general notice of the condition of England at the close of the long reign of Henry VIII.; including some aspects of society of which the features had become more distinct a few years later.

Between this state of social existence and our only possible point of view, the veil of three hundred years is interposed. Those whose lives were contemporary with the middle, or even with the close of the sixteenth century, might have beheld some things under a stronger light than we do; but even they saw only a part, and that part very indistinctly. If there had been no great social movement at that period, they might have formed a clearer judg-

ment of many circumstances of which they have left us a confused opinion. So the task of the historian would be more defined, if he could now look upon 'each change of many-coloured life,' and even upon the external face of nature in wilds and solitudes, without being disturbed by rapid transitions, which, like a shifting object in a photographic camera, preclude a distinct image. As it is, he is compelled, out of the most fragmentary and ill-assorted materials, to piece out a rough and imperfect picture, having the want of proportion and harmony which essentially belongs to such mosaic work. That was an age in which the foundations of all statistical inquiries was laid by the establishment of parish registers; but many generations had left in those books the brief records of their comings and their goings, before the larger uses of Registration were discovered. It was an age when Statutes contained long preambles, out of which we may draw conclusions as uncertain as those derived from some modern Parliamentary Reports; but in the Statutes themselves are to be found the best materials for a correct though limited account of life in England, from the peer to the beggar. Proclamations, Minutes of Council, Letters of Ministers—furnish incidental glimpses of society beyond the verge of chambers of state. The Chroniclers have their occasional value in addition to that of political annalists; but it is not from them that we must principally seek to trace the course of industry or the tone of morals. The foreign visitors, who note what seemed to them remarkable, too often deal in generalities; but they sometimes give minute touches which are of lasting interest. Our ambassadors to foreign courts present us contrasts with the state of their own country. The poets of manners were not as yet: for the drama, properly so called, had not risen into its office of a mirror of nature. Yet we may discover the routine life of the husbandman in one homely poet, who had the rare merit of describing what he knew. With a Diary or two, equally trustworthy whether the journal of a king or of a funeral-furnisher—with Wills, Trials—last, but not least valuable, Sermons—we may farther obtain facts or suggestions. With these aids, then, let us pick our way through somewhat difficult ground, and endeavour to leave some review of our footsteps, not wholly without accuracy. We can pretend to no completeness.

We have stated that at the beginning of the sixteenth century the Population was estimated, upon very uncertain data, at four millions.* We have no distinct materials for any such guess in the middle of that century; but twenty-five years later we have a precise statement, which enables us to form some judgment. Harrison records that, in the muster of able men for service in 1574 and 1575, the number amounted to 1,172,674.† Taking the able men as a fourth of the entire population, we have a total of upwards of four millions and a half. In the Injunctions of Cromwell to the clergy, a Book, or Register, was directed to be kept by every parson, vicar, or curate, for every church; in which, on each succeeding Sunday, the clergyman should enter the particulars of the weddings, christenings, and burials made the whole week before. This injunction was evidently neglected; for in the reigns of Edward VI., and of Elizabeth, the injunction was repeated. On the first attempt to enforce this most salutary measure, the people were "in great

* *Ante*, p. 247.

† "Description of England," book ii. c. 16.

fear and mistrust," as Sir Piers Edgecombe wrote to Cromwell. "Their mistrust is," he says, "that some charges, more than hath been in times past, shall grow to them by this occasion of registering these things."* It was the same fear which excited hostility to the census of 1801. The Parish Registers, of inestimable value as local and family records, were never regarded as the foundation of national statistics; and it was not till the Registration Act of 1836 was brought into full exercise by the most skilful organisation, and its deductions made available for the general benefit by scientific analysis, that we could ascertain the amount of one of the great elements of progress, the increase of population; and form a right judgment of the causes by which such increase was accelerated or retarded. As we proceed in our view of the condition of the people in the middle of the sixteenth century, we shall meet with constant complaints of the decrease of population. These are founded upon the most extravagant estimates of the number of the more ancient inhabitants; and an equally blind confidence in an alleged decrease "by laying house to house and land to land, whereby many men's occupancies were converted into one, and the breed of people not a little thereby diminished." † Henry VIII., we are thus informed, "lamented oft that he was constrained to hire foreign aid, for want of competent store of soldiers here at home. . . . He would oft marvel in private talk, how that, when seven or eight princes ruled here at once, one of them could lead thirty or forty thousand men to the field against another, or two of them a hundred thousand against a third, and these taken out only of their own dominions." ‡ It might have occurred to the king, if he had been less engrossed with matters beyond reason, to have also marvelled how such vast armies subsisted in the Saxon land of woods and morasses; especially when we find him, in his own days of improved cultivation, forbidding the Scottish king to pass with his train from France through the north of England, as "his highness could not have there victuals and other necessaries, for the furniture of his own train, when he should repair into those parts." §

The direct taxation of a people will always, to some extent, enable us to form a notion of their available Capital. The rate of subsidy in the time of Henry VIII. will show at how low an estimate the government fixed the power of the saving classes to contribute. By the "Act for the Subsidy of the Temporality" in 1542-3, || a grant payable in three years was made upon personalties. Upon subjects not worth more than five pounds, in coin, plate, stock, merchandise, corn in store, household stuff, and other moveable goods, and money owing above just debts, four pence in the pound was to be paid; with a rising scale of eight pence, sixteen pence, and two shillings, to twenty pounds and upwards. There was a double rate upon aliens. On real estates of one pound to five pounds annual value, eight pence in the pound was levied; from five pounds to ten pounds, sixteen pence; from ten pounds to twenty pounds, two shillings; above twenty pounds, three shillings. In 1545, there was another subsidy of two whole fifteenths and tenths, levied in the same manner. And yet this income and property tax, going as low as the persons who had only accumulated five pounds beyond their average earnings,

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 612.

† Harrison, book ii. c. 19.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ State Papers, vol. i. p. 536.

|| 34 & 35 Hen. VIII. c. 27.

produced a sum so inconsiderable, when compared with our modern experience of the extent of taxation, that we might wonder where the accumulation existed to enable the industry of the country regularly to go forward in a course of improvement. Wriothesley, the chancellor, writes to the council in 1545, "You see the king's majesty hath, this year and the last year, spent 1,300,000*l.* or thereabouts; and his subsidy and benevolence ministering scant 300,000*l.* thereof, I muse sometime, where the rest, being so great a sum, hath been gotten." * Having regard to the altered value of money, partly by the influx of silver into Europe, and partly by the debasement of the coin, we can scarcely reckon this three hundred thousand pounds at more than three millions. And yet that is a large revenue from taxation during two years. It is especially to be considered large when compared with the amount annually raised by taxes in the time of Charles II., which did not much exceed a million and a quarter, when the difference in the value of money was much less than at a hundred years previous. † Compared with other countries England was always a lightly-taxed nation, even up to the days of Sir Robert Walpole. With the exception of these occasional subsidies, and the duties upon goods exported and imported, the revenue was wholly derived from resources which Henry VIII. constantly asserted were his private possessions, but which the parliament as constantly took care should be applied, as far as possible, to public uses. The Venetian ambassador, Micheli, in a luminous description of England in 1557, addressed to his Senate, says, "The liberty of this country is really singular and wonderful; indeed, there is no other country, in my opinion, less burthened and more free. For they have not only no taxes of any kind, but they are not even thought of: no tax on salt, wine, beer, flour, meat, cloth, and other necessaries of life, which, in all parts of Italy especially, and in Flanders, are the more productive the greater is the number of inhabitants which consume them." ‡ It was this absence of taxation upon the necessaries of life, and upon the materials of industry, which enabled England to go so rapidly in advance of other nations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She still went forward, but with comparative slowness, in the eighteenth; and it was not till the nineteenth century had far advanced that the great obstacles to national prosperity were cast off, and we saw the wisdom of making the producer work under a lighter load, and the consumer enjoy at a diminished cost. The problem of reduced individual taxation and increased national revenue was only solved three hundred years after the times of which we are writing.

The amount produced by a subsidy will scarcely enable us to form any estimate of the available Capital of the country. The one divine of the age who boldly assails every moral delinquency, tells us that a fraudulent return of property was a customary sin: "When the parliament, the high court of this realm, is gathered together, and there it is determined that every man shall pay a fifteenth part of his goods to the king, then commissions come forth, and he that in sight of men, in his cattle, corn, sheep, and other goods, is worth an hundred marks, or an hundred pound, will set himself at ten pound; he will be worth no more to the king but after ten pound. Tell me, now, whether this be theft or no?" § "He will marry his daughter," says

* State Papers, vol. i. p. 831.

† Ellis, 2nd Series, vol. ii.

VOL. II.

† See Macaulay, vol. i. p. 237.

§ Latimer, "Sermon at Stamford."

the preacher, "and give with her four or five hundred marks, and yet at the valuation he will be a twenty pound man." The salve for the conscience, probably, was the general belief that the king was very well supplied with money without entrenching upon a daughter's marriage-portion. Henry VIII. had told his people that when he had driven the idle and luxurious monks from their possessions, he would apply their révenues to great-public uses. He had absorbed those revenues. He was richer than any king of England before his time. His ordinary income,—from the guardianship of Wards, of whose property while they were minors the crown had the usufruct; from Livery, or one year's income upon their succession, of those who held lands under the crown; from Reliefs, or sums paid on the renewal of military fiefs; from the Duchy of Lancaster; from the First-fruits of bishoprics; and from various other ancient sources,—amounted to about 150,000*l.* per annum. The seizure of church property was held to have doubled this permanent income. And yet we may wonder, with the prudent chancellor, how the king contrived to spend 1,300,000*l.* in two years; if we did not know that the crown was always in debt, and that it sometimes applied the sponge to its debts. Edward VI. was overwhelmed with debt, upon which he paid fourteen per cent. interest.* We shall have to notice, hereafter, some of the effects of one of the notable expedients of his reign, and of that of his father, for diminishing the debt by debasement of the coin—an expedient which, in the strictest sense of the image, could do nothing but commend the ingredients of the poisoned chalice to their own lips.

The household expenditure of the second Tudor sovereign was upon a larger scale than that of any of his predecessors. The Venetian ambassador says, "There is no nation which in its manner of living and ordinary expenditure is more extravagant than the English; because they keep more servants, with a greater distinction of offices and degrees in which such servants are placed. In this manner, to mention only one particular, in order to give an idea of other expenses of greater moment, the expense of the court in the mere article of living, that is, of eating and drinking, and of what solely relates to the table, amounts to from fifty-four to fifty-six thousand pounds sterling a-year." He is speaking of the time of Queen Mary, and says that not the fourth part was then expended as in the time of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. The cost of national defence, of ambassadors, judges, and other public servants, he holds to be small in comparison with the enormous household expenditure.† We may judge from later times of the cost of the great officers about the royal person—the lord steward, lord treasurer, lord great chamberlain, earl marshal, lord chamberlain, treasurer of the household, comptroller of the household, vice-chamberlain, cofferer, master of the horse. But we can form no idea from modern experience of the array of inferior officers. We know that Burke, in his great speech on economical reform, said that every attempt to regulate the civil list had failed, because the turnspit in the king's kitchen was a member of parliament. A statute of Henry VIII., which clearly bears the mark of his own master mind, regulates, with a tragi-comic attention to parade, the execution of a sentence by the lord steward upon an offender convicted on the verdict of a jury of the

* King Edward's Journal, in Burnet, p. 51, ed. 1683.

† Ellis, 2nd Series, vol. ii.

household for striking within the precincts of the palace. The offender is to lose his hand. The chief surgeon is to be present, to sear the stump when the hand is stricken off. The serjeant of the pantry is to give bread to the maimed man. The serjeant of the cellar is to be ready, with the same tenderness, with a pot of red wine. The serjeant of the ewry is to bring linen for the surgeon. The yeoman of the chandry is to bring seared cloths. The master cook is to be present with a dressing-knife, which he is to deliver to the serjeant of the larder, who is to hold the knife till execution be done. The serjeant of the poultry is to be ready with a cock for the surgeon to wrap about the stump. The yeoman of the scullery is to prepare a fire of coals, and the searing irons. The chief farrier is to heat the searing irons. The groom of the salcery is to bring vinegar. The serjeant of the woodyard is to provide the fatal block and beetle.* We may judge from this terrible array of household potentates, to give solemnity to the maiming of an unhappy offender against the sanctity of the king's palace, what an army of deputies there must have been to do the real work of the kitchen and the larder.

The parliament, in enacting the Subsidy of 1545, for the prosecution of the war against France and Scotland, employ the most humble language in presenting the grant to the king, beseeching him to accept their gift, even "as it pleased the great king Alexander to receive thankfully a cup of water of a poor man by the highway side." Wars did not touch the people of England, they justly say, as other nations not so happily situated. They were not afflicted with "spoils, burnings, and depopulations." "We," they declare, "so live out of all fear and danger as if there were no war at all; even as the small fishes of the sea in the most tempestuous and stormy weather do lie quietly under the rock or bank-side, and are not moved with the surges of the water, nor stirred out of their quiet place, howsoever the wind bloweth." † This flowery language expresses a great practical truth. To her wall of the silver sea, England owed her security from "the hand of war," during the five hundred years which had preceded the Tudor rule; and to this, more than to any other of her happy conditions, we are indebted for the constant progress of her industry, and the comparative lightness of her burthens. But, nevertheless, the cost of her defence, and her foreign armaments, was not inconsiderable, in the years when her government was not restrained by poverty or prudence from rushing into war. In the State Paper Office there is "a brief declaration of the whole military and naval expenses incurred by Henry VIII. and Edward VI. during their wars with France and Scotland." This abstract also includes the cost of suppressing the insurrection of 1549, and the charges of castles and garrisons. The total amount from September 1542 to September 1552, is 3,491,471l. ‡ This gives an annual military expenditure of 350,000l. The government was always embarrassed during these seasons of hostility. "The poor labourers,"—says Latimer, preaching before Edward VI. in 1550,—“gun-makers, powdermen, bow-makers, arrow-makers, smiths, carpenters, soldiers, and other crafts, cry out for their dues.

* 33 Hen. VIII. c. 12, clause iii.

† 37 Hen. VIII. c. 25, Preamble.

‡ "Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series," 1547-1580. Edited by Robert Lemon, p. 44. Published by authority, 1856.

They be unpaid, some of them, three or four months; yea, some of them, half a year; yea, some of them put up bills this time twelve months for their money, and cannot be paid yet." There was a large cost, and there were heavy arrears, although England had no standing army.

The military organisation of the sixteenth century did not materially differ from that of the fifteenth.* The nobles were still called upon, each to bring his quota of armed men into the field, when the king demanded their services. Cromwell was showing his private armoury to the Marshal de Castillon; and, when the marshal wondered at the store of harness and weapons, Cromwell said, "there were other particular armouries of the lords and gentlemen of this realm, more than the number of twenty, as well or better furnished than mine was." † Micheli conjectured that, in the time of Mary, twenty-five thousand troops could be raised, all provided with cuirasses and polished arms. But in all cases of apprehended danger, or for foreign service, the muster-roll was taken in every county, and in every city. England then possessed an armed population. Perlin, a French physician who came to England at the time of queen Mary's accession, says, "The labourer, when he cultivates the land, leaves in a corner of the field his buckler and sword, and sometimes his bow; for in this country it is as if all the world carried arms." ‡ There may be some exaggeration in this; but, without doubt, the bow, if not the sword and shield, was amongst the possessions of every man who had a recognised station in the commonwealth. In all emergencies the crown summoned the national force to its assistance. In 1549, king Edward, being with Somerset at Windsor, when the lords were seeking to drive the Protector from his sway, sends to the bailiff and constables of Uxbridge, "to levy all the force in their power, especially archers, and to bring them well victualled to Windsor Castle." § Archery was the national sport; and all other games were forbidden by statute. || Complaining of the decay of archery, Latimer says, "In my time my poor father was as diligent to teach me to shoot, as to learn me any other thing; and so I think other men did their children. He taught me how to draw, how to lay my body in my bow, and not to draw with strength of arms, as other nations do." The good bishop exclaims, with the enthusiasm of a patriot,—“It is a gift of God that he hath given us to excel all other nations withal: it hath been God's instrument, whereby he hath given us many victories against our enemies.” It was not the weapon alone that made the English formidable. Micheli, speaking of the means of defence possessed by us, says,—“The ardour in fighting would be shared by all, the veterans as well as the raw levies; because, as every body knows, there is not a nation in the world that esteems danger and death more lightly than the English.” Roger Ascham, writing from the Continent, declares that “England need fear no outward enemies. The lusty lads verily be in England. I have seen on a Sunday more likely men walking in St. Paul's Church than I ever yet saw in Augsburg, where lieth an emperor with a garrison.” The lusty lads held to the bow. The harquebuss came very slowly into use in England. To discharge the original hand-gun the match was held in the hand. The harquebuss had a trigger conveying the match to the priming.

* See *ante*, p. 104. † Letter in Cotton Library; quoted in Ellis, 2nd Series, vol. ii.

‡ “Description des Royaumes d'Angleterre et d'Escosse,” Paris, 1558. Reprint, p. 29.

§ Calendar of State Papers, p. 24.

|| 33 Hen. VIII. c. 9.

The musket was an improved harquebuss. Somerset had his musqueteers; but they were foreigners. Nor was our cavalry of so great importance as the vast body who could be called into the field at a day's notice, with the light skull-cap and the quilted jacket, the long bow and the pike. There was a general assessment in time of war for providing light horsemen and demi-lances; but, if we are to rely upon the intelligent Venetian, who presents such clear statistics of this period, the horses of England, though produced in greater number than in any other country of Europe, were "weak and of bad wind." They were fed merely on grass, he says. Horses fit for heavy cavalry, he adds, were not bred in England, but were imported from Flanders. The navy of this period has been noticed in the last chapter. The constant expense of keeping ships afloat was a bar to our early maritime efficiency. The hundred ships of Henry VIII. were dwindled to forty in the reign of Mary. But there were merchant vessels in every port, which could easily be armed in time of need. The royal ships were larger than those of other nations. When Philip of Spain came to wed Mary, the English admiral affronted the Spaniards by calling their ships mussel-shells.* The English shores were never unguarded. On every eminence there was a beacon and a flag-staff. If an enemy approached in the daytime, the signal fluttered from hill to hill. If in the night, a thousand watch-fires were ready to spread the alarm from the North Foreland to the Lizard, from the Naze to the Tyne. The people gathered at the point of danger from town and village. The noble and the esquire were at the head of their tenants. The portly alderman led forth his stout burghers and his nimble apprentices. Whatever was the discontent at home, Englishmen would fight to the death against the foreign enemy. The foreigner knew this; and left us to decide our quarrels amongst ourselves.

The ambassador of the Venetian Senate regarded the government of the Tudors as a despotism. The kings, he says, are absolute lords and masters. They govern through a Council, as the Grand Turk governs through the Bashaws. The Council, composed of the great household officers, and of other persons of rank, follow the king's person wherever he goes. Their mandates are obeyed as though they proceeded from the king himself. The State Papers of the reign of Henry VIII. show, however, how constantly the king himself attended to the administration of affairs. Undoubtedly Henry was a sovereign of great industry; of considerable talent; of various knowledge. But his inordinate self-love; his desire for personal display; his jealousy of every servant who was not a slave to his will, in the most unlimited abnegation of a free judgment,—these qualities, as he advanced in life, drove him into the most heartless and cruel despotism. By the force of terror, or the avidity for gain, every civil officer, whatever his rank,—a Cromwell or a Cranmer, a Norfolk or a Russell,—was a crouching menial. The ecclesiastics who filled civil offices were amongst the most abject, with the sole exception of Wolsey, who, by the extraordinary power of his intellect, held a divided sway with his master. That position Wolsey reached as the supereminent churchman as much as the accomplished statesman. After the domination of

* Tytler, "Original Letters," vol. i. p. 414.

the Romish church had been destroyed, the bishops who discharged civil functions were little more than ambitious sycophants. Latimer has given a striking picture of "unpreaching prelates" holding civil offices,—“placed in palaces, couched in courts, burthened with ambassages,”—lords of parliament, presidents, comptrollers of mints. The bold bishop says, “I would fain know who controlleth the devil at home in his parish, while he [the priest] controlleth the mint?”* The comptroller of the mint was usually a jobber of the rankest character. But all the civil officers were underpaid in their salaries. They all looked to grants and leases for their reward; and they all lived upon something even better than expectancy, for they all were bribed. The secondary offices were openly bought. There was small pay, but large peculation. It was in vain that Latimer cried out to the young king Edward, “Such as be meet to bear office, seek them out; hire them; give them competent and liberal fees, that they shall not need to take any bribes.”† In the letters of ambassadors we constantly find them complaining of the insufficiency of their pay. If they could bide their time, they received some place in which they might pillage without offence. The high places of the law were those in which the bribe was most regularly administered. When Bacon fell, in the next half century, for receiving bribes, he followed the most approved precedents, according to which chancellors and chief justices before him maintained their state and ennobled their posterity. The system went much lower. The bribery of juries was so common, that a man-killer with rich friends could escape for a crown properly administered to each quest-monger; for so the vendor of a verdict was called.

The later history of the reign of Henry VIII. is the history of the subserviency of Parliaments. The degradation of this great bulwark of English liberty in earlier times was now manifest to foreign observers. “In the beginning, and, indeed, many years after the introduction of parliaments, the liberty and security of those three estates [clergy, nobles, and commons] were such that even the lowest person of them might, without any danger, were it even against the king’s person, give free utterance to any expressions calculated for the public good, or dictated by zeal for his country; the kings in those times being looked upon rather as political and civil chiefs than as lords and masters, or monarchs, as they are at the present day.” The Venetian who writes thus, had accurately read English history. But he adds, with an equally accurate observation of matters of his own day, that the kings could keep out or bring in whoever they pleased as representatives. “They are at this time become so formidable and powerful that they may do even as they please; nor can anybody, whether it be in parliament or out of it, impunely, and, indeed, without utter ruin to himself, venture to stand up in opposition, or even to make the least show of resistance, to their pleasure. In short, servants they enter parliament, and servile are their proceedings therein.”‡ The addition of thirty-one members to the House of Commons, in 1536, by the legislative incorporation of Wales with England, though a measure of justice and of ultimate national benefit, necessarily secured a larger number of subservient representatives. The influence of

* Sermon of the Plough.

† Fifth Sermon before Edward VI.

‡ Micheli, Ellis, 2nd Series, vol. ii.

the crown in the principality had been so long predominant, that few Welsh members could have entered St. Stephen's chapel—for there, about the middle of this century, did the Commons sit—with any disposition to assert an independence which they did not find amongst their English fellows. By a special statute the knights of the Welsh counties were to be paid wages of four shillings a day, and the burgesses two shillings, during the continuance of the parliament, and during their journeys to and from the place of sitting. These were the wages of the English members, and they were levied by the



St. Stephen's Chapel

sheriffs and mayors; but it appears from this act for Wales that the assessment and the payment had in some cases been neglected.* The wages were a just payment for the loss of time in public service. The wages were not the cause of the general corruption. The crown was supreme, because the king's displeasure was death, and the king's smile promised a golden harvest.

* 35 Hen. VIII. c. 11.

The nobility and gentry for the most part dwelt in their respective counties. The more ambitious hovered about the court, and had their houses in London and Westminster. "There be some gentlemen in England," says Latimer, "which think themselves born to nothing else but to have good cheer in this world; to go a hawking and hunting."* There were public duties for all of them to perform, besides offices of hospitality and charity to their tenants and poor neighbours. The times were changed, when there was only one of the high-born in a wide parish, who was the absolute lord of the district. In that curious paper ascribed to Edward V^l., entitled "A Discourse about the reformation of my abuses," he says, "The grazier, the farmer, the merchant, become landed men, and call themselves gentlemen, though they be churls. . . . The artificer will leave the town, and, for his more pastime, will live in the country; yea, and more than that, will be a justice of peace, and will think scorn to have it denied him."† The great nobles knew the potency of that industrial strength that was quietly laying new foundations of civil liberty and equality of rights, even under a government that was destroying the old. The proud admiral, lord Seymour, said to the marquis of Dorset, "I advise you to make much of the head yeomen and franklins of the country, specially those that be the ringleaders, for they be men that be best able to persuade the multitude, and may best bring the number; and therefore I will wish you to make much of them, and to go to their houses, now to one, now to another, carrying with you a flagon or two of wine and a pasty of venison, and to use a familiarity with them, for so shall you cause them to love you."‡ The artificer wanted to be a justice of the peace. He saw the commonalty exercising judicial functions in towns—mayors, aldermen, sheriffs—and why not in the country? He had his desire when he gained the money-qualification. The office of justice of the peace was originally one of high dignity and power. The regular administration of the law by the judges in circuit abated the local authority which was often abused. An attempt was made by the government of Henry VIII., to extend the functions of the justices of the peace beyond their ancient courts of Quarter Session, by allowing them to divide themselves into districts, two at least in each district, and hold Petty Sessions. The statute of 1541-2, which gave this power, indicates how wide a field was presented to the local magistracy, for honest and intelligent or dishonest and ignorant action. They were to put in execution the laws against vagabonds; against retainers and giving liveries; they were to enforce archery and put down other games, called unlawful; they were to proceed against forestallers and regrators; all matters concerning victuallers and inn-holders came within their province. It was soon discovered that magisterial vigilance in excess might be as great an evil as magisterial supineness. In 1545 the six-weeks' sessions were abolished by statute, and the functions of the justices were again confined to their ancient Quarter Sessions; "as the king's most loving subjects are much travailed and otherwise encumbered by the keeping of the said six-weeks' sessions."§

"The merchants become landed men. The artificer will leave the town."

* Sermon on the Beatitudes.

† Tytler, "Original Letters," vol. i. p. 140.

‡ Burnet, "Records," vol. ii. p. 71.

§ 37 Hen. VIII. c. 7.

If we assign their due import to these words of Edward VI., we may be enabled, with the aid of some illustrative facts, to understand the material condition of England at this period. M. Guizot has indicated one of the great principles out of which a new state of things had arisen: "In the course of the sixteenth century, the commercial prosperity of England had increased with extreme rapidity; and in the same period territorial wealth, landed property, had in great measure changed hands. This progress of the division of land in England during the sixteenth century, through the ruin of the feudal aristocracy and other causes, is a fact to which sufficient attention has scarcely been given. All documents of that period show us the number of landed proprietors prodigiously increasing; and great part of the lands passing into the possession of the gentry, or lesser nobility [petite noblesse], and of the citizens [des bourgeois]." * What had taken place at an earlier period in the towns, was now taking place in the country districts. As the feudal tenants who had clustered round the baronial castle were now grown into independent burgesses, so the villains, having substituted rent for service, had grown into farmers and graziers, and so on to landed proprietors. Those of the towns, who had saved money as artificers or dealers, came to share the advantages which they saw were derived from the judicious occupation of land. There were some of the richest soils in the kingdom ready for occupation. There were some of the abbey lands to be sold or let, where flocks and herds had cropped the richest pastures, and the barns had been filled with the finest wheat. There were vast unenclosed grounds, which the manorial lords would gladly grant as copyhold to the provident burgess who had been dealing in broad-cloth, and now wanted to become richer by raising the great material for its production. Rents were everywhere rising, which circumstance encouraged the diligent man who had saved money to invest it in land for profit. The commercial spirit had deeply penetrated into the whole system of rural affairs; and the old iron bond of feudal protection and dependence was changed for the lighter link of mutual interest. Let us endeavour to form some notion of the aspect of rural England at this epoch.

The French physician who came to look upon England, and abuse it, in the time of queen Mary, describes the country as enclosed with all sorts of trees, "so that you might think in passing along that you were in a perpetual wood." † The foot-people, he says, can get into the foot-paths in the grounds [sentiers] by climbing up ladders [escaliers], but horsemen must keep on the highway. A messenger of Cecil, travelling post to Stamford, in 1548, describes how he was caught in a storm; and by way of a shorter cut, made a hole to squeeze through my Lord Privy Seal's hedge at Thornhaws. ‡ But there were vast tracts of marsh-land in every county and not only in the fenny countries. These were abandoned to the crane and the bustard, the bittern, the heron, the shovelard, and the mallard. A statute of 1543-4, laments that there were formerly within the realm great plenty of wild-fowl, whereby the king's household, and those of noblemen and prelates, were furnished, and markets abundantly supplied; and it forbids the use of nets, and the taking of eggs at certain seasons. Ducks, mallards, widgeon, teal, and wild-geese, are herein

* "Civilisation in Europe," Leçon xiii.

† Perlin, p. 25.

‡ Tytler, "Letters," vol. i. p. 118.

enumerated, in addition to those birds above recited, now almost unknown. In the last century, the crane had forsaken the island. In the time of Henry VIII., the eggs of the larger and smaller wild-fowl were not only destroyed, and the birds taken in unlawful nets, but the breeding-places had been partially obliterated by the progress of cultivation. When the marshes were made profitable in the neighbourhood of towns, the floors of houses ceased to be strewed with rushes. Still, there were thousands of acres of marsh land, and thousands of acres of heath. The statutes indicate the advance of man in subjecting the land to his use. One act of parliament encourages roads to be made through the Weald of Kent.* Another provides for the inclosure of 4293 acres of Hounslow Heath, extending not only over the districts that in recent times comprised Hounslow Heath, but to the parishes of Brentford, Isleworth, Twickenham, and Teddington. The barrenness and infertility thereof are ascribed to the want of diligence and industry of men.† In the inclosure of Hounslow Heath, commissioners were appointed to view the ground, and to allot certain portions of the same to the inhabitants of the various parishes, to be held in severalty as copyholds, and to be converted into tillage and pasture. What the king could do with Hounslow Heath, was done by the lords of manors throughout the country. There was in many cases a similar division of the lands of the suppressed monasteries. "A Bill concerning the houses, tenements, and lands lying in Walsingham, to be letten by Copy, which late were belonging to the Priory," recites that the town, formerly "populous, wealthy, and beautifully builded, is at the present time, by great decay, and by the withdrawing of the trades of merchandise there, and by divers other sundry occasions of late happened, like to fall to utter ruin, and to be barren, desolate, and unpeopled." The act therefore provides that all the lands and granges shall be declared Copyhold, and granted by the stewards of the manors to any persons, who would pay the rents, heriots, and fines prescribed.‡ The town of Walsingham had fallen into decay, "by sundry occasions of late happened," when no pilgrims resorted thither; when the monks ceased to employ artisans about their house, labourers to dig, retailers to provide many comforts and luxuries, servants to wait upon them. The like process of inclosure of waste lands, and division of large feudal property, had been going on throughout the kingdom, from the time of Henry VII.; but the system proceeded much more rapidly and universally after the dissolution of the monasteries. So entire a revolution in the distribution of property never before occurred in England, and has never occurred since. That it was ultimately productive of incalculable benefit cannot be doubted; but it was also the cause of enormous misery, for a season, to the humblest classes of society. The attempts of the state to remedy or even control this inevitable evil were always futile; and it was aggravated by proceedings of the government, of which few saw the consequences, and which fewer dared to expose.

The complaint against the conversion of arable land into pasture for the breeding of sheep, forty years before this period, has been fully noticed in a previous chapter.§ As the process went on, more land was demanded.

* 14 & 15 Hen. VIII. c. 6.

† 37 Hen. VIII. c. 2.

‡ 35 Henry VIII. c. 13.

§ *Ante*, p. 248.

The capital of the country sought employment in an extension of cultivation ; and the extension came through the system of Inclosures. The general desire to invest capital in land and rural occupations, and the facilities now opened for its investment, also led to the quickest profitable employment of capital. The increasing population demanding increased clothing, and one of the greatest exports of native produce being wool, immense flocks of sheep were kept upon the newly inclosed lands, and upon many of the farms where the old cottier tenants had given place to a farmer or grazier who conducted his business upon a larger scale. The monastic houses had been invariably surrounded by small holders of church lands ; and their own wants had required that they should have a due proportion of grass land and corn land. At the dissolution of Fountains Abbey, an inventory of their effects showed that the monks possessed 2356 horned cattle, 1326 sheep, 86 horses, 79 swine, 391 quarters of wheat, oats, rye, barley and malt, and 392 loads of hay. To conduct their various farming operations a large number of labourers were necessarily required. When the tenure of these great properties was wholly changed ; when the monastic domains fell into the hands of those who only sought to obtain the best rents ; there was a disturbance of the labouring population, of which we have ample evidence in the undoubted increase of pauperism and vagabondage. The effect of the dissolution of the abbeys upon this increase of misery, clamouring for aid, has been usually limited to the supposed absence of the relief which those houses afforded to the local poor, by doles out of their abundance. Upon this it has been argued that the monasteries encouraged idle and improvident habits ; and that their suppression was a real benefit to the labourers. This was only true in part. There was many a small town and village that fell into decay, besides the town of Walsingham, when these large revenues were wholly diverted to other channels, and were applied, however in accordance with sound commercial principles, to the support of other modes of industry than those which had become habitual to many generations of herdsmen and earth-tillers. But in some cases the change was even more complete, and the results more grievous to the poor. Sir Arthur Darcy writes to Cromwell that he was present at the suppression of Jervaulx Abbey, and looked upon its fair meadows, and great demesne, and surrounding granges. Let the king, "he says, take possession, and send his studs of mares here, to occupy the large and high grounds in the summer, and the woods and low grounds in the winter. The breed of men was to give place to the brood-mares.* It was not with the lands of all monastic houses, deserted by the ancient employers and servants, that the same sensible system was pursued as with the rich fields and substantial granges of Walsingham. The grantees of the abbey lands did not in general divide them amongst small copyholders. The lordly mansion often grew up, very commonly near the spot where the chapel and the cloister were soon mouldering into shapeless ruin—a ruin not then made beautiful by time. The sober refectory, with carved roof and lancet windows, was transformed into the tapestried banqueting hall. The pastures and the plough land were thrown together, and became the vast deer-park. The monks wandered about the country, asking the alms which they formerly bestowed. Their servants and

* "Suppression," p. 158.

labourers swelled the number of the roving population. Thus the system which was raising the middle class into "landed men," and adding largely to the possessions of the higher proprietors, went inexorably forward to embarrass the man who had no possession but his power of labour. The course of industry was changed, with serious damage to the living generation. The effects became more alarming when the growing system of inclosures dispossessed the irregular labourer of his hovel and his patch of waste; and flocks of sheep fed, where his half-starved cow had browsed upon the heath, and his scanty crop of cabbages and parsnips had eked out his miserable existence.* But the squatter upon the commons elung to this life of penury and freedom. When the system of inclosures forcibly applied the land to more profitable uses he became a vagabond and a thief.

The miserable labourers who eked out a scanty subsistence upon a barren heath were not the only people who were necessarily hostile to inclosures. The ancient race of small farmers had a deep interest in the preservation of unallotted land. Latimer, who was perfectly acquainted with country affairs, tells us of the old time, in a well-known passage;—"My father was a yeoman, and had no lands of his own, only he had a farm of three or four pound by year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He had walk for a hundred sheep; and my mother milked thirty kine." † The kine and the sheep fed on the common pasture-land. In another passage he describes how a ploughman must have sheep to manure the ground. The turnip husbandry was then undreamt of. He must have hogs, and horses, and kine for milk and cheese. "These cattle must have pasture, which pasture if they lack the rest must needs fail them. And pasture they cannot have if the land be taken in, and inclosed from them." ‡ There is a proposal for a tax on sheep, in 1551, in which it is estimated that a million and a half are kept in the commons, and a million and a half in inclosed pastures. The extension of these inclosed pastures irritated the people. The protector Somerset appointed a commission in 1548, to inquire into the decay of tillage, and the excessive inclosure of land for pasturage; which system, it is alleged, has brought the land to a marvellous desolation. In the same year the government was issuing proclamations "against the assembling of lewd persons to pull down inclosures." § In 1549, the people of Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Dorset, Norfolk, and other counties were in rebellion for redress of this their grievance. But even then there was a sensible farmer who saw the evil of these common-lands, and the benefits of the improved cultivation which belonged to inclosures. Look at Essex and Suffolk, says Tusser, where inclosure is most. There, is most abundance; most work for the labourer; there, are the fewest beggars. The champion,—that is, the dweller on commons, he says, robbeth by night and prowleth and filcheth by day. He is indignant at the outcry against inclosures from those who will not "live by their work," and are banded together to do lawless acts without fear. He stands up boldly for the profit of "pastures in several;" of the superior comfort of the poor man who has even two acres of inclosed land, as compared with the "commoner." ||

* See Harrison, in Holinshed, p. 193.

† Last Sermon before Edward VI.

|| "Champion and Several."

‡ First Sermon before Edward VI.

§ Calendar of State Papers, p. 18.

Tusser was no doubt a better economist than Somerset or Latimer. But the statesman and the preacher had witnessed a terrible social convulsion, which manifested itself in a way which bewildered legislators, and which they attempted to control by one of the most savage laws that ever disgraced our statute book. The Statute of Vagabonds, of the first year of Edward VI., opens to our view a picture of society in England which was certainly an exceptional state, but was also a natural result of the momentous changes of that period of transition.

We have already pointed to the significant fact, that the laws against beggars and vagabonds had been written in letters of blood, after the fifteenth century. During the hundred and forty-seven years which had elapsed from the seventh year of Richard II. (1384), to the twenty-second year of Henry VIII. (1531), vagabonds were put in the stocks. Then the whip was added to the stocks. In 1536, the whip was a mild punishment; to which mutilation and death were supplemented.* But even the cart's tail, the butcher's knife, and the hangman's noose, inspired no adequate dread; and were regarded by the government as feeble remedies when Edward VI. came to the throne. The system of terror had wholly failed; and so it was to be carried as much farther as the cruelty of man could devise. In 1548, one who was going about amongst the rural population says, "The people confess themselves most bound to God that he hath sent them such a king, in whose so tender age so much good is intended towards them; and have a great hope that the Iron world is now at an end, and the Golden is returning again." † Certainly those who a few years later had acquired the name of "the thriftless poor"—those who ran "to and fro over all the realm, chiefly keeping the champain soils in summer to avoid the scorching heat, and the woodland grounds in winter to eschew the blustering winds." ‡—certainly this class could not think that the golden world was come for them. The king of "so tender age" was taught to consider these unhappy people as weeds to be rooted out. He speaks of them as the "filth" of the body politic. "The vagabonds ought clearly to be banished." § And so, in 1547, there is no hesitation in passing "An Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds," of which the following are the chief provisions:—

All the former Acts against vagabonds and sturdy beggars being repealed, it is provided that every man or woman, not being prevented from working by old age, lameness, or disease, who shall be found loitering or wandering, and not seeking work, during three days, or who shall leave work when engaged, may be lawfully apprehended, and brought before two justices of the peace; who, upon confession, or on the proof of two witnesses, "shall immediately cause the said loiterer to be marked, with a hot iron in the breast, the mark of V, and adjudge the said person, living so idly, to his presentor, to be his Slave." The presentor, as he is called, is to have and hold the Slave for two years; and, only giving him bread and water and refuse food, to "cause the said Slave to work, by beating, chaining, or otherwise, in such work and labour, how vile soever it be, as he shall put him unto." If the Slave, during the two years, shall run away, he is to be pursued; and any

* *Ante*, p. 342.

‡ Harrison, chap. x. p. 182.

† John Hales to Somerset, Tytler, vol. i. p. 114.

§ Burnet, "Records," vol. ii. p. 70.

person detaining him is to be liable to a penalty of ten pounds. Convicted of running away, the justices shall cause such Slave to be marked on the forehead or ball of the cheek with a hot iron, with the sign of S.; and then adjudged to his master as a Slave for ever. If he run away a second time, he is to suffer death as a felon. The person to whom the Slave is adjudged, may put a ring of iron about his neck or on his limbs. If there is no man found who will take the loiterer as his Slave, he is to be sent to the place where he was born, to be kept in slavery on the public roads; or he may be let or sold to any private person who will chain, starve, and beat, according to the tenour of this statute. There is an especial provision for committing Clerks convict—Clergymen convicted of offences—to limited periods of slavery. Infant beggars may be bound to the service of any person who will take them, to use their services till the males be twenty-four years of age, and the females twenty; and if they run away, they are to be brought back, and receive the discipline of slavery.

This Statute of Vagabonds, in which the very revival of a name that had wholly fallen into disuse in England is sufficient proof of a most extraordinary condition of society, was repealed in little more than two years after its enactment. The insurrections of 1549 probably forced the government into the acknowledgment that "the extremity" of the penalties had prevented their execution. The legislature then went back to the comparatively mild provisions of the act of 1532; passing over the heavier inflictions contemplated by that of 1536. Of all these statutes it has been most truly observed that "each gradation in the scale of punishment was tried, abandoned, re-established with added stringency, and again abandoned, with a lingering pertinacity which can only be accounted for by the struggle between experience and preconceived notions."* The parishes were called upon to relieve the sick and aged; and the justices to punish strong beggars, according to the regulations of the first statute of Henry VIII. The time was approaching when a compulsory provision for the poor would place this great and difficult question upon the basis of all subsequent legislation; but for years vagabondage was the great evil of English society. The constant cry was against the "covetous man," who daily made beggars by "wiping many out of their occupyings, to turn the same into his private gains." † The extraordinary provisions of the first statute of Edward VI., for making Slaves of unwilling labourers, offers a distinct proof that there was a demand for labour; but that the lowest of the rural population, who had been long accustomed to an unsettled and irregular industry, which had about it a sort of wild independence, would not work for the masters who pulled down their hovels, and made the waste lands profitable. It appears that "the wise and better-minded of these emigrated, and sought to live in other countries, as France, Germany, Barbary, India, Muscovy, and very Calicut; complaining of no room to be left for them at home." ‡ The extension of that commercial principle which drove these poor people to distant countries has provided profitable labour for five times the amount of the population that then derived a meagre subsistence from the land. It was the horrible fate of those who held to what they called their "liberty,"—to wander about; "under the

* Sir G. Nicholls, "History of the English Poor-law," vol. i. p. 201.

† Harrison, chap. x.

‡ *Ibid.*

terror of the whip," or "to continue stark thieves, till the gallows do eat them up." In 1545, we can trace in a very remarkable statute, how the disposition to destroy private possessions, like the rick-burnings of our own times, manifested the feeling of the labourers that they were suffering under injustice. The statute recites that malicious and envious persons "have of late invented and practised a new damnable kind of vice," which consisted in various offences against person and property.* "Cutting off the ears of the king's subjects" appears to have been a dire revenge for the legal severities of the statute against vagabonds of 1536. "The secret burning of frames of timber, prepared and made by the owners thereof, ready to be set up and edified for houses," was the malicious assertion of the imaginary rights of the squatters upon waste lands to hold to their own hovels of sticks and dirt. Such, also, was the war against civilisation of those who cut the heads of ponds and conduits; burnt carts laden with charcoal; set fire to heaps of felled wood; barked apple and pear trees; and cut out the tongues of cattle. It was the war of the savage against the settler—a war which always contains some rude principle of imaginary right, but which must be repressed with heavy penalties, unless a barrier is to be set up against human progress.

The generally accepted statement that during the reign of Henry VIII. there were seventy-two thousand thieves and vagabonds hanged, appears to have been founded upon the loose estimate that about two thousand were hanged in each year of that reign. During the latter years of this king the army of robbers and cheats seems to have acquired something of a professional organisation. In Thomas Harman's "Caveat for Cursetors," first printed in 1566, we are informed that "their language, which they term Pedlers' French, or Canting, began but within these thirty years, or little about." † This historian of Vagabonds, dignified with the name of Cursetors, shows the long continuance of the fraternity, by describing, upon the report of an aged man, a burial of a man of worship in Kent, in 1521, "where there was such a number of beggars, besides poor householders dwelling thereabouts, that scarcely they might lie or stand about the house;" and for these was prepared a great barn; a fat ox was served out, with drink; and a dole of two-pence was given to each. When these habits of feudal hospitality were fast passing away, the beggars lost what is called "their bousing and belly cheer," and took to helping themselves. The world was being re-modelled; and there was no place for the vast numbers that were shifting about on the outskirts of civilisation. Edward VI. writes, "For idle persons, there were never, I think, more than be now." And yet it was quite impossible that cultivation should have been improved, manufactures developed, and commerce extended, without producing a larger permanent demand for profitable labour. But, at the same time, there were no facilities for helping those who were obliged to seek a change of occupation, to turn from irregular employments,—to a certain extent predatory employments,—to become diligent and trustworthy servants. The exclusive system under which the artificers of the town had grown up in casts, under the most rigid conditions of apprenticeships and guilds, forbade the wanderer obtaining a living in trading communities. If he approached the porch of the farmer, who had his homestead amidst his plough-land and

* 37 Hen. VIII. c. 6.

† Reprint, 1814, p. 5.

his meadows, the door would be doubly barred and the ban-dog let loose. The farmer had his own hereditary in-door labourers, each in his appointed station—frugally but abundantly fed upon salted fish and salted beef; with veal and bacon, grass-beef and pease, roast meat on Sundays, and on Thursdays at night :

“ With sometimes fish, and sometimes fast,
That household store may longer last.” *

The farmer's year was one of unvarying routine: his people had many occupations that demanded more skill than usually belongs to the agricultural labourer under the modern division of employments. To plough, to fence, to sow, to reap, to thrash, to tend cattle and sheep, to gather up mast for the hogs: these were common services. But the farmer of the sixteenth century pursued many trades in his little homestead. He had eels in his stew, and bees in his garden. He grew his own hops and made his own malt. Many of his rough implements were of his own construction. He raised his own hemp, and twisted his own cart-ropes. His flax was cleaned and spun at home. Some of his wool he sold to the “webster,” and some kept the spindles moving on his kitchen floor. He sawed out his own timber. He made his own mud-walls round his cattle-yard. He was his own farrier. He killed his sheep or his calf without the aid of the butcher. He made his own candles, and burnt his own wood into charcoal. He cultivated herbs for physic, which his wife dried or distilled. His cheese was manufactured in his own press. His corn-crops were varied by the culture of saffron and mustard seed.† The scientific cultivator of our days may smile at these simple employments, whose success depended upon traditionary observation and unwearied thrift. The honest farmer laboured on contentedly, in the assured belief that his success depended upon the All-giver—

“ Man taketh pain, God giveth gain,
Man doth his best, God doth the rest.”

Having, thus, so many various resources for the maintenance of his family, it might be supposed that the agriculturist of this age would grow rich out of the produce of his arable land. Tusser divides his corn-harvest into ten parts,—one for rent, one for seed, one for tithe, two for implements, one for teams, one for wages, one for the food of his house, one for needful things for his wife, and one for himself. The tenfold produce which this passage indicates shows that husbandry was greatly improving. The complaint, so often repeated, that pasture was driving out tillage, does not seem to be sustained by the fact that the emperor Charles V., in August 1542, writes to Henry VIII. to request that he would permit corn from England to be exported to Spain, where the crop had failed through the dryness of the season.‡ The ancient regulations under which the tenant could only grind at the lord's mill were necessarily relaxed, as the produce of the country increased. A statute of 1543 gives permission to erect a windmill upon waste ground at Poole, and sets forth that the inhabitants, time out of mind,

* Tusser.

† These, and many other minute operations may be traced in “Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry.”

‡ State Papers, vol. ix. p. 125.

had been compelled to carry and re-carry their corn to mills four miles distant.* The produce generally, whether of corn or cattle, was, we may believe in spite of many complaints, comparatively abundant. Roger Ascham, writing from the Netherlands, in 1550, says,—“This know, there is no country here to be compared for all things with England. Beef is little, lean, tough, and dear. Mutton likewise.”† And yet, about the end of the first half of the sixteenth century, we are constantly led to reflect upon the perpetual occurrence, in letters and other sources of information, of the word Dearth.‡ We must, however, accept this word in its sense of dearness, rather than of scarcity, although the meaning is often confounded in these contemporary authorities. Latimer complains of Rents being more than doubled. “Of this, too much cometh [that] this monstrous and portentous dearth is made by man; notwithstanding God doth send us plentifully the fruits of the earth. . . . Poor men, which live of their labour, cannot with the sweat of their face have^h living, all kind of victuals is so dear; pigs, geese, capons, chickens, eggs.”‡ Bishop Hooper, in 1551, writes to Cecil, from Gloucester,—“For the love and tender mercy of God, persuade and cause some order to be taken upon the price of things, or else the ire of God will shortly punish. All things be here so dear, that the most part of people lacketh, and yet more will lack, necessary food.”§ The Council, at the end of 1549, commanded the justices to search all barns for corn; to compel a supply to be brought to market; and to apprehend all regrators and forestallers.|| In November, 1550, special commissioners were appointed in each county to enforce the same commands. We are told, that in these happy times the “laws of supply and demand, which we are now taught to regard as immutable ordinances of nature, were absorbed or superseded by a higher code.”¶ A higher code! There was a statesman of that day, who had learnt no system of political economy from books, but who derived his notions from the dictates of common sense. Sir John Mason, one of the most sagacious of diplomatists, wrote thus to Secretary Cecil, from France, on the 4th of December, 1550, as to the efforts of the Council, to “cause some order to be taken about the price of things:” “I have seen so many experiences of such ordinances; and ever the end is dearth, and lack of the thing that we seek to make good cheap. Nature will have her course, etiam si furcâ expellatur; ** and never shall you drive her to consent that a pennyworth of new [produce] shall be sold for a farthing. . . . For who will keep a cow that may not sell the milk for so much as the merchant and he can agree upon?” †† There were perhaps others in the Council, who saw the tendency of such proceedings to check the supply of commodities, and thus to raise the price, as clearly as Sir John Mason did; for on the 6th of December, 1550, the proclamation relative to grain, butter, and cheese, was revoked, and the matter left to the discretion of buyers and sellers.‡‡ Nature had been driven out; but she was stronger than the ignorance of lawgivers.

* 34 & 35 Hen. VIII. c. 25.

‡ First Sermon before Edward VI.

|| Calendar of State Papers, p. 26.

** “Naturam expelles furcâ, tamen usque recurret.” You may with a fork [with violence] expel Nature, but she will come back.—Horace.

†† Tytler, vol. i. p. 341.

† Tytler, vol. ii. p. 128.

§ Tytler, vol. i. p. 365.

¶ Froude, vol. i. p. 79.

‡‡ Calendar of State Papers, p. 31.

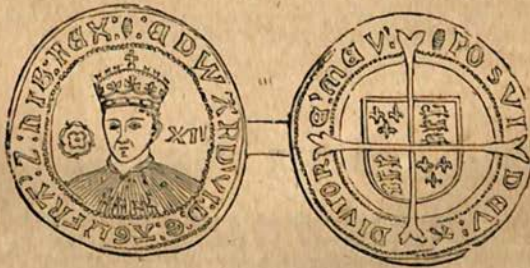
In addition to the natural causes that affected the market-value of the necessaries of life, there was a cause, not to be overcome by proclamation and threat of fine or imprisonment, that kept the corn in the barn of every man who was not pressed to sell by the direst necessity. The value of money was so debased at this especial period, that an excessive rise in the prices of all commodities was inevitable; and the great body of consumers, the labourers and artificers, not receiving a proportionate advance of wages, all the ordinary relations of supply and demand were disturbed to a fearful extent. This abominable process for the relief of the king's necessities had been going on for a long period; but Henry VIII. carried it to a disgraceful excess. He introduced copper into his gold and silver coin, not as a necessary alloy, but as a fraudulent diminution of its intrinsic value. He began, in 1543, with two ounces of alloy to ten ounces of silver; in 1545, he made his so-called silver pieces half of pure metal and half of alloy; and in 1546, had eight ounces of alloy to four ounces of silver. He not only perpetrated this deceit; but he coined the pound of mixed metal, first into 540 pennies, and then into 576 pennies, instead of 450 as had been the proportion from the time of Edward IV. But the first years of the reign of Edward VI. saw the alloy increased to the proportion of nine ounces of base metal to three ounces of silver; and this pound of mixed metal was coined into 864 pennies. The young king records these proceedings in his Journal, with the most perfect unconscientiousness of the evil that his counsellors were perpetrating. "It was appointed," he writes in April, 1550, "to make 20,000 pound weight, for necessity, somewhat baser, to get gains 16,000*l.* clear." In June it was found that they were going a little too fast: "Whereas before, commandment was given that 160,000*l.* should be coined of three ounces in the pound fine, for discharge of debts, and to get some treasure, to be able to alter all;—now was it stopped, saving only 80,000*l.* to discharge my debts." * Latimer, preaching before Edward in 1549, has a sentence of the bitterest sarcasm: "We have now a pretty little shilling indeed, a very pretty one. I have but one, I think, in my purse; and the last day I had put it away almost for an old groat; and so, I trust some will take them. The fineness of the silver I cannot see: but therein is printed a fine sentence, that is '*Timor Domini fons vitæ vel sapientiæ*'" (the fear of the Lord is the fountain of life or wisdom). The sturdy bishop fell into some trouble about his "merry word of the new shilling:" he was accused of speaking seditiously. The Council, however, tried to retrace their steps, by what was termed "calling down the money." The base shilling was issued for twelve pence, and the groat for four pence. They were, in 1551, called down to threepence and ninepence. But this was useless. The government could not remedy the artificial high prices of home produce, nor preserve a due rate of foreign exchange, till they became honest. Sir Thomas Chamberlayne, our ambassador, writes from Brussels to the Council, in June 1551, that where formerly the English pound was exchanged for thirty shillings of the money there, it would now only obtain fourteen shillings. He warns the government, that whilst the money was "called down" by little and little, large sums, forged and counterfeited in foreign parts, would be carried into the realm. He says, that the

* "Remains," in Burnet, vol. ii. p. 27.

true value of English goods could never be ascertained, "until such time as the money were called down to the very value in sterling silver which is in each piece thereof." * Such were the inconsistent proceedings of a government which was endeavouring to force sales at low prices, when its long-continued acts of fraud had been the main cause of the excessive rise of prices. We are required to believe "the penny, in terms of a labourer's necessities, to have been equal in the reign of Henry VIII. to the present shilling." But what was the labourer's position, when the three pennies a day which he was to receive under the Act for Wages of 1515, were so debased in real value, that they would only be equal to three halfpence in 1545, and to three farthings in 1550. The sufferings of the people from the consequent rise of prices were attributed to inclosures, to the increase of pasture, to higher rents;—few saw the inevitable effects of the debasement of the coin. The advance of all vendible things was unequal. The advance of wages, which could not depend upon the price of food or other necessaries, was necessarily disproportionate. The wretched workmen,—clothiers of the west and agriculturists of the east,—rushed into insurrections, and were slaughtered by thousands. It has been usual to attribute the rise of rents and of the price of commodities at this period, to the influx of silver from the American mines. But the effect of that increase of the metallic currency of Europe was undoubtedly much more gradual. The evil course of the governments of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. was remedied under that of Elizabeth, upon whose tomb was inscribed, as one of the glories of her reign, "*Moneta in justum valorem reducta.*" †

* Tytler, vol. i. p. 380.

† See Sir R. Peel's speech on Resumption of Cash Payments, Hansard, vol. xl. p. 694.



Shilling of Edward VI.



House formerly standing at the corner of Chancery Lane, in Fleet Street.
Temp. Edward VI. (From Smith's 'Topography of London.')

CHAPTER XXIX.

General notice of England—Decay of towns—Growth of villages—Ports—Coal trade—Building—Paving in London—Sewers—Highways—Conduits—Washing-grounds—Lighting of London—Watermen of London—Burying in towns—Wholesale traders—Foreign trade—Fairs and Markets—Inns—Insecurity of travelling—Frauds—Increase of luxury—Moral and intellectual progress—Various forms of Church Service—Dissensions and scuffings—Holidays—Popular Sports—Prohibited Books—Popular Reading—Mysteries and Miracle Plays—The drama—Education of the young—Schools—Universities—Physicians and Surgeons—Barber-Surgeons—Empirical remedies—Painting—Holbein.

WITH the unquestionable evidence that the industry of England had been rapidly advancing in productiveness from the beginning of the sixteenth century, there is nothing more startling than the systematic averment of the decay of towns. A statute of the 3rd of Henry VIII. (1512) providing for a difficulty which had arisen out of a statute of Edward II., that no victualler

should fix the assize during his term of office, says that "the most part of all the cities, boroughs, and towns corporate, within the realm of England, are fallen in ruin and decay, and are not inhabited by merchants and men of such substance as at the time of making that statute." Bakers, vintners, fishmongers, and other victuallers are the chief inhabitants, and there remain few others to bear the offices. This theory of the decay of towns assumes a more distinct shape, in acts of parliament of the later years of Henry VIII. In four statutes passed from 1540 to 1544, the preamble is uniformly in these words: "Forasmuch as there have been in times past divers and many beautiful houses of habitation within the walls and liberties of the cities, boroughs, and towns of [reciting names], and now are fallen down, decayed, and at this day remain unreedified, and do lie as desolate and vacant grounds." The difficulty of giving credit to this distinct complaint is not wholly solved by the statement of a quarter of a century later, that, in past times, "stately building was less in use. For albeit that there were then greater number of messuages and mansions almost in every place, yet were their frames so slight and slender, that one mean dwelling-house in our time is able to countervail very many of them."* The statutes of Henry VIII. only provide that if the owners of the decayed houses do not rebuild within three years, the lords of whom they are holden, or the mayors of the towns, may reconstruct them. If it had been profitable for the "men of substance" to have remained within the "cities, boroughs, and towns corporate," their "beautiful houses of habitation" would not have fallen into ruin. The corporate privileges had become as oppressive as the old feudal services. Those who had capital bought land when the ancient difficulties of purchase were removed. They fixed themselves in the country with their flocks. A home-manufacture grew up around the grazier's domain. Cottages were built by the side of the mansion, where the shuttle was thrown and the spinning-wheel went round. These in time became populous villages; and acts of parliament were passed, but passed in vain, to confine the clothing industries to their old seats, or to make the smaller places dependent upon those seats. Yarmouth and Lynn had adopted the worsted trade; but no one in Norfolk was to dye, shear, and calendar cloth but in Norwich.† The woollen-cloth manufacture had extended from Worcester to Evesham, Droitwich, Kidderminster, and Bromsgrove. The statute which attempts to control its further extension tells the whole history of this alleged decay of towns: "Divers persons inhabiting and dwelling in the hamlets, thorpes, and villages adjoining to the said city, boroughs, and towns within the said shire, for their private wealth, singular advantages, and commodities, &c., have not only engrossed and taken into their hands divers and sundry farms, and become farmers, graziers, and husbandmen, but also do exercise, use, and occupy the mysteries of cloth-making, weaving, fulling, and shearing within their said houses, . . . to the great decay, depopulation, and ruin of the said city, towns, and boroughs." The manufacture in the hamlets, thorpes, and villages, is therefore forbidden under penalties.‡ An act of 1542 declares that none shall make worsted coverlets except in the city of York; apprentices

* Harrison, p. 212.

† 25 Henry VIII. c. 18.

† 14 & 15 Henry VIII. c. 1.

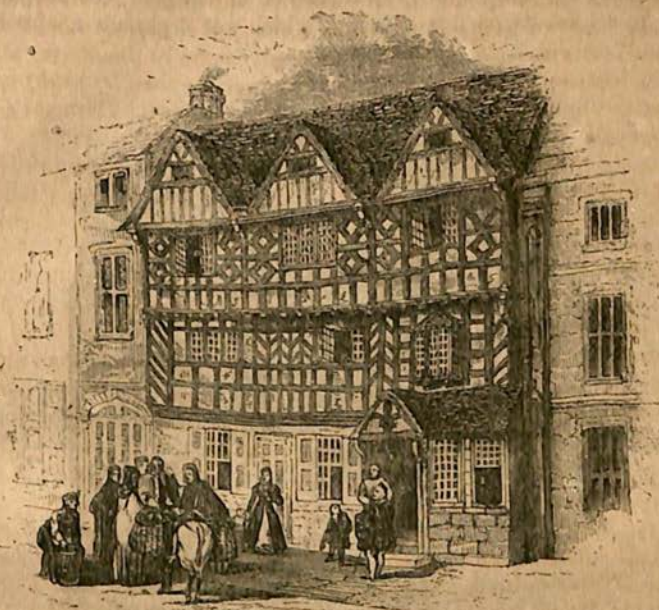
withdrawing themselves from the city, and other persons inhabiting in neighbouring villages and houses, having intermeddled with the same craft.* These statutes, and many others, were ineffectual attempts of the corporate towns to retain a monopoly of certain great branches of manufacture. At this period, Manchester, an unwalled town, had asserted the vigour of its commercial industry, as "a town well set a work in making of cloths, as well of linen as of woollen." A special statute was therefore passed to protect its manufactures from depredation, by the abolition of sanctuary there. "Cottons" are mentioned in this act; but they were woollen garments. The age of cotton, properly so called, was two centuries distant.

Amongst the ancient decayed places, the towns of the Cinque Ports are enumerated in the statute of 1541-2. Of the coast towns, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Poole, Lyme, Southampton, Yarmouth, are also mentioned. It seems clear that the decay of these ports had been produced by the neglect of the fisheries; and, in some degree, by the monopoly of foreign commerce by a great company of merchants in London. Thomas Barnabe, who writes to Cecil in 1552, complains of the small number of mariners on the English coast, compared with those on the coast of France: "I have seen come out at one tide in Dieppe five hundred and five boats, and in every boat ten or twelve men; the which was a marvellous matter to see, how they be maintained by fishing, and what riches they get by the sea, and how they maintain their towns and ports. And as for us, let us begin at Sandwich, and go to Dover, Hythe, and Hastings, and to Winchelsea, and see how they go down for lack of maintenance, and, in a manner, no mariners in them, which is for lack of good policy to set them a work." † He had a scheme for their employment. It was to fetch Newcastle coals to the coast of Kent, and there make a staple, for the king's benefit, to supply them to France, which "France can live no more without than a fish out of water," for the manufacture of everything "that passeth the fire." It appears from this that Norman and Breton ships carried on this trade; buying coals at two shillings and two pence a chaldron at Newcastle, and selling them at an enormous profit. For three centuries the exportation of coals to foreign countries was almost prohibited by excessive duties, lest the mines should be exhausted, and our own manufacturing superiority endangered. England, at this period, had very little employment for this great source of her wealth. There were no machines to raise the water out of the pits, or to lift the coal to the surface. Iron works were few, and chiefly confined to the wooded districts. Pottery there was none. The varieties of the woollen manufacture were of the simplest character, and performed with the rudest mechanical power. The linen fabrics were chiefly of domestic production. But there were skilled artificers in London and the principal towns; although factories were unknown. These were principally connected with the arts of building and of clothing. Elaborately carved fronts, in which each story of the timber houses overhung the lower for protection, still attest the ingenuity of the joiner. "Our workmen," says Harrison, "are grown generally to such an excellency of device in the frames now made, that they far pass the finest of the old." Throughout the country there was a more solid mode of building

* 33 & 34 Henry VIII. c. 10.

† Ellis, 2nd Series, vol. ii. p. 198.

than in previous periods, and oak had taken the place of the less durable woods. The ambitious citizens of London raised high towers of brick, at which Stow is indignant; for he holds that they were constructed that the owner might



Old House, formerly at Warwick.

overlook his neighbours. The plain brick work of this period may still be seen in the gateway of Lincoln's Inn. The progress of improvements in towns was necessarily most rapid in London—the chief city of commerce, the seat of government and of law—with a population estimated at a hundred and fifty thousand.* The paving acts for the metropolis in the time of Henry VIII. indicate something of the vigilant superintendance of the general government; but they also show the chief cause of local neglect. The common highway between Charing Cross and the Strand Cross is very foul and jeopardous, and the owners of lands are required to pave the same under a penalty of sixpence for every square yard not sufficiently paved by a certain day.† Holborn, which is described as the common passage from the west and north-west parts of the realm, is full of sloughs, from the same neglect.‡ The highways from Aldgate to Whitechapel; in Chancery Lane, Shoe Lane. Fetter Lane, and Grays-inn Lane, are in the same dangerous condition.§ At a later period, numerous streets in London and Westminster, recited in the statute, are perilous to all the king's subjects passing on horseback or on

* Micheli.

† 25 Henry VIII. c. 8.

‡ 24 Henry VIII. c. 11.

§ 32 Henry VIII. c. 17.

foot.* But to remedy these evils no system of co-operation is proposed. There is no general rating to accomplish at once, and effectually, what every owner of property could only slowly and imperfectly accomplish. The principle of equal assessment for public objects was not then understood. Until that principle was fully applied in the relief of the poor, the people of England were not familiarised to a system which was especially adapted to their



Lincoln's Inn Gateway.

parochial and municipal organisation; and which has enabled them to carry all the appliances of civilisation more effectually forward than, in any other country, has been accomplished by individual energy or state control. The first large attempt to organise labour for public improvements is to be found in the Statute of Sewers of 1427, under which commissioners were appointed, by whose authority all damages caused by breaches of the sea were to be repaired, and collections made to uphold the sewers and causeways in marsh lands. Out of such collections labourers were to be employed upon competent wages.† The first general Highway Act is that of 1555, under which two surveyors are annually appointed, to employ the occupiers in repairing the roads of a parish, upon the system still known as Statute-labour.

“The Bill concerning the Conduits in London” recognises the necessity that all cities and towns should be supplied “with sweet and wholesome running waters and fresh springs.” But it complains that the old springs and ancient conduit-heads are failing; and that the old abundance of water is diminished. The act therefore empowers the Corporation to lay new pipes, form new conduits, for the conveyance of water to the city from springs

* 34 & 35 Henry VIII. c. 12.

† 6 Henry VI. c. 5.

discovered at Hampstead Heath, and other places within five miles.* The great thoroughfares of London had their ornamented fountains, to which the water from the conduit-heads was conveyed by leaden pipes. It was the duty of the mayor and aldermen to visit these heads of the fresh springs; and to give a spirit to their country excursions, they hunted the hare and the fox on these occasions. Grafton records as a matter of historical interest in the reign of Henry VIII.—in this respect a wise chronicler—that “the manner of casting pipes of lead for the conveyance of water under the ground, without occupying of solder for the same, was invented by Robert Brock, clerk, one of the king’s chaplains,—an invention right necessary for the



Bayswater Conduit.

saving of expenses.” Public Washing-grounds, on the banks of rivers, were established in every town; where the linen cleansed in the stream, or in the buck, was spread upon the turf, or hung upon the hair-line. In writing to Cromwell from Reading, Dr. London recommends that the church of the Grey Friars should be given to the Corporation for public purposes: “Their town-hall is a very small house, and standeth upon the river, where is the common washing-place of the most part of the town; and in the session days and other court days there is such beating with battledores, as one man cannot hear another, nor the quest hear the charge given.”† The lighting of London and its suburbs was indifferently provided for. The steeple of Bow-church, erected in 1512, had lanterns, which “were meant to have been glazed,” says Stow, “and lights in them placed nightly in the winter, whereby travellers to the city might have the better sight thereof, and not to miss of their ways.” The mayor commanded, a century earlier, that lanterns and lights should be suspended in front of the houses, on winter evenings. “Hang out your lights,” was the cry of the ancient watchman. A statute of 1515, “concerning Watermen on the Thames,” shows us the usual course of the traffic on this “silent highway,” and the low fares, which the watermen

* 35 Henry VIII. c. 10.

† “Suppression of the Monasteries,” p. 223

were forbidden to exceed. There was a daily boat, to and from Gravesend, at two-pence each passenger, provided that there was a load of twenty-four persons; to Erith for a penny; to Greenwich and Woolwich for a farthing; to all places between Lambeth and St. Mary Overies, a farthing. But the watermen rebelled at these fares; and the act says that assaults and frays daily ensued, and oftentimes manslaughter.* The introduction of hackney-carriages was a century distant. In 1552 the Londoners were as indifferent to one of the great causes of sickness and mortality as they were previous to the passing of the Burial Acts of our immediate times. Latimer saw the



Public Washing Grounds.

evil: "I do much marvel that London, being so rich a city, hath not a burying-place without; for no doubt it is an unwholesome thing to bury within the city, specially at such a time when there be great sicknesses, so that many die together. I think verily that many a man taketh his death in Paul's churchyard." †

The wealth of individual traders in London was the amazement of foreigners. The Venetian ambassador says that many citizens possessed from fifty to sixty thousand pounds sterling. He is astonished at the riches of some of those who deal in salt-fish. All large fortunes are made by the supply of articles in universal demand; and it was so, especially at this period, when the consumers were rapidly increasing, and competition was slowly growing. Commerce was putting out its long arms in large wholesale dealings. The moralists were scandalised, and called the great traders regrators. It was imagined that these large dealings tended to raise the price of commodities, and to oppress the poor. In a letter of Edward VI. to the bishops, in 1551, on the alarm of the Sweating Sickness, he specially tells them that they and the clergy should exhort men "to refrain their

* 6 Henry VIII. c. 7.

† Sermon, 1552.

greedy appetites from that insatiable serpent of covetousness, wherewith most men are so infected that it seemeth the one would devour another without any charity, or any godly respect to the poor, to their neighbours, or to their commonwealth.* Latimer bitterly complains of a merchant who told him that if he were licensed so to do, "he would get a thousand pound a year, by only buying and selling grain here within this realm." The dealers in fuel come in for his anger: "As I hear say, aldermen now-a-days are become colliers. They be both woodmongers and makers of coals. I would wish he might eat nothing but coals for awhile, till he had amended it. There cannot a poor body buy a sack of coals, but it must come through their hands." † Such complaints were natural, however opposed to the sounder principles upon which the great merchant, who buys cheaply, and holds his purchase till a season of profit arrive, is to be held as a benefactor to the community. Those only were injurious to the public who made fortunes out of monopolies. Such were the privileges which had been granted by successive sovereigns to the Almayn merchants, or Germans of the Stillyard; whose "rights," as they called their exemption from duties imposed upon others, were effectually resisted by the commercial genius of Gresham, in 1552. The Merchants Adventurers then became their successful rivals. The great article of export was English cloth; and of this staple branch of commerce these foreigners had almost an exclusive command, till the trade was equalised by equal imposts.



Gresham.

Those energies of Englishmen, which have made them the great discoverers and colonisers of distant regions, were struggling into activity in the reign of Henry VIII., and of Edward VI. Sebastian Cabot had been pensioned by the government of Edward. In 1553, sir Hugh Willoughby had perished on the coast of Nova Zembla, in the attempt to discover a north-east passage to China. Richard Chancellor, who commanded one of the vessels in Willoughby's expedition, had made the harbour where Archangel was afterwards built, and had negotiated with the Russian czar, the ferocious Ivan, at Moscow. Anthony Jenkinson, at the same period, had obtained a licence from Sultan Selim to trade with the Ottomans. But the great expansion of English commerce belongs to the reign of Elizabeth. Still, the commercial principle was asserting itself. In the time of Henry VIII., one great impediment to the operation of accumulated capital, was removed in the practical repeal of the laws against usury, by limiting the rate of interest to 10 per cent. ‡ A law of bankruptcy was passed, which provided for the equal distribution of the

* Tytler, i. p. 405.

† Sermon before Edward VI. 1550.

‡ 37 Henry VIII. c. 9.

property of debtors.* The principle of the earlier Navigation Acts was held to by Henry VIII. ; but whilst goods were required to be shipped in English vessels, the cost of freight from the port of London to foreign ports was strictly regulated. The trade of London appears from this act, to have been principally with ports of Flanders, Denmark, the south of France, Portugal, and Spain. The trade with Calais was under other regulations.†

Much of the interchange of the country was transacted, as in earlier times, at fairs and markets. The farmer had no price-current to guide him as to the rise or fall of corn and cattle. He went to market for knowledge how to buy and sell :—

“This lesson is learned, by riding about,
The prices of victuals, the year throughout.” ‡

He went to fairs, to lay in his annual stores :—

“At Bartlemew tide, or at Sturbridge fair,
Buy that as is needful thy house to repair.” §



Wharf of the Almays Merchants of the Stillyard—Hollar.

At the corn-markets, the great complaint was of the inequality of measures. “Every market-town hath in manner a several bushel; and the lesser it be, the more sellers it draweth to resort unto the same.” || Laws there were, as we have seen, for one standard; but the laws were disregarded, and the principle of uniformity despised, even as in some places at the present day. The laws which limited the infamous system of purveyance were also held in contempt by the hosts of oppressors, who came into every market with the

* 34 & 35 Henry VIII. c. 4.
‡ Tusser.

§ *Ibid.*

† 32 Henry VIII. c. 14.
|| Harrison.

plea that they required provisions for the king's use. "The purveyor alloweth for a lamb worth two shillings but twelvecence; for a capon worth twelvecence sixpence, and so after that rate." * There was loss in the price, and the payment for the commodity was often delayed, and not recovered till "after long suit to the officers, and great costs suing for it." The great fairs were Sturbridge, Bristol, Bartholomew (in London), and Lynton. But there were fairs throughout the land. "There is almost no town in England but hath one or more such marts holden yearly in the same." † The constant resort to markets and fairs made the inns flourish, especially on the great high roads. They were under better regulation than those of the continent. The host was not a despot amongst his guests. Every man might have what he called for, and be lodged in a clean chamber, of which he kept the key. The rooms were abundantly furnished, especially with linen. If the traveller lost anything while in the inn, the landlord was responsible. But it was believed that although the host was honest, the tapsters and chamberlains had a private understanding with thieves. ‡ The robber on the highway was the terror of the solitary traveller; and he was glad to ride in company, however doubtful of the stranger who rode by his side. There is no more curious picture of the insecurity of the country and the town, than is presented in the narrative of Holinshed, of the circumstances which attended the murder of Arden, of Feversham, in 1551. § Alice, the wife of Arden, desired to take away the life of her husband. She first attempted to poison him; and then openly proposed to one Green, a serving-man, who had a cause of hatred against Arden, to procure his death. Green had business in London, where Arden was staying; and having to ride thither, with valuables about him, desired a neighbour of Feversham to accompany him to Gravesend; and so they rode on together. "And when they came to Rainham Down they chanced to see three or four serving men, who were coming from Leeds [a village with a castle, in Kent]; and therewith Bradshaw espied, coming up the hill from Rochester, one Black Will, a terrible cruel ruffian with a sword and a buckler, and another with a great staff on his neck." Bradshaw knew the ruffian, for he had served with him at Boulogne; and when he described his villainies to Green, the revengeful serving-man thought that he had now found one to his purpose. At an inn at Gravesend at night, the business was arranged over "sack and sugar," for a promise of ten pounds. They reached London; and there the victim was pointed out to the blood-seeker, walking in Paul's. He would have met his death in the churchyard there, but for the crowd of friends who surrounded him. Arden's servant conspired against his master; and agreed to let Black Will into the house where they slept. But his heart failed him; and the ruffian in vain tried the bolted door. Arden was then to have been murdered as he rode home by Rainham Down; but a third time he was saved by meeting with acquaintance, who rode with him; and he reached home safely. Black Will, who had followed Arden, was to have accomplished the murder the next morning, and was up betimes to way-lay him; but he missed him as he went forth, and again missed him at night, for he returned

* Tytler, vol. i. p. 369.

† Harrison.

‡ Harrison. The chapter on inns is very curious.

§ Chronicle, vol. iii. p. 1062.

not "by the broom close," for it was late. Arden is at last killed in his own house, by his wife and her paramour, assisted by the persevering ruffian. From the extreme minuteness with which the chronicler tells this story, we may conclude that such premeditated guilt was not common. The English were too prone to deeds of violence in moments of passion; but crimes like this were foreign to the character of the people. The murderess was burnt, and some of her accomplices were hanged. Green and Black Will fled; but they eventually met the doom of the shedders of blood.

As wealth extends, and the commercial relations of society are more complicated, fraudulent offences gradually become more common than the violent assaults upon property which belong to an earlier period. We can trace this principle in the statute-book of Henry VIII. The deceits of manufacturers are again and again attempted to be prevented by special enactments. The preacher descants on the wickedness of those who put a strike of good malt in the bottom of the sack, two strikes of bad malt in the middle, and a good strike in the sack's mouth.* He exposes the cloth-maker, who stretches his eighteen yards of cloth to twenty-seven, and then thickens it with "flock-powder" †—the "devil's dust" of modern times. But crimes of a new character were developing themselves. Those who stole property knew the penalty of death which awaited them. They devised a mode of obtaining goods which a law, made expressly to meet the offence, only punished with the pillory. Evil persons, says his statute, "not minding to get their living by truth," have of late deceitfully contrived "privy tokens and counterfeit letters in other men's names, unto divers persons their special friends and acquaintances, by colour whereof the said evil-disposed persons have gotten great substance of money, goods, cattle, and jewels into their hands." ‡ This was the offence of men who, from the very nature of the crime, must have had some intimacy with the wealthy—men who kept up false appearances, like the forgers and swindlers of modern times. Such men abound in every age when the middle classes of society are pressing upwards; and are imitating the luxurious habits of those who claim by birthright the privilege to waste their substance. The extravagant caprices in dress were ridiculed by the satirist, and caricatured by the engraver:

"I am an Englishman, and naked I stand here,
Musing in my mind what raiment I shall wear;
For now I will wear this, and now I will wear that,
And now I will wear—I cannot tell what." §

Few of the industrious classes had the sense to dress as the famous clothier, Jack of Newbury, who is represented to have gone before Henry VIII. "in a plain russet coat, a pair of white kersey slops [or breeches], without welt or guard [lace or border], and stockings of the same piece, sewed to his slops." || The people lived luxuriously in taverns. Artisans would stake a crown upon their games. The houses were gay with tapestry and painted cloth. At their banquets the guests pledged each other till they were drunken, and swore that the foreigner should drink with them, out of their

* Latimer, 5th Sermon on the Lord's Prayer.

† 33 Henry VIII. c. 1.

§ Andrew Borde.

† *Ibid.*, 3rd Sermon before Edward VI.

|| Planché, "Costume," p. 312.

silver cups. So writes the French physician, envious and spiteful.* One fact he mentions as characteristic of the nation that he abuses:—"The English are joyous one with another, and they greatly love music."

Having attempted a brief sketch of the condition of society in the relations of the government to the people, and exhibited some characteristics of the rural and of the urban population, we proceed to complete our account by



General Costume of the time of Edward VI.

a notice of those circumstances which influenced the moral and intellectual progress of the nation. And first of the Clergy, and of the state of religious instruction after the great revolution which destroyed the regular ecclesiastics—those who had absorbed so large a portion of the property of the community, and who, to a great extent, had outlived their utility. The religious teaching of the people was now in the hands of the secular clergy—bishops, vicars, and curates. The bishops had all outwardly conformed to the great change in the condition of the Church; but there were several, as will be traced in the course of our historical narrative, who were strongly opposed to the principles of the Reformation. Others were, as men in possession generally are, willing to live in quiet under the existing state of things. A few were zealous in the desire to carry forward the movement which had freed England from papal domination, into a very complete abolition of all those ceremonies and beliefs which distinguished "the old learning" from the new. The parsons, or holders of benefices, and their curates, were, in many respects, in a happier position than before this change. No lordly abbot—no full-fed monks—paraded their abundance as a contrast to the humble means of the working Clergy. Whether in town or country, the "poor parson"—he who was "rich of holy thought and work;" whose

* Perlin, pp. 22, 24.

parishioners "devoutly would he teach;" who visited rich and poor in sickness and misfortune, though "wide was his parish;" who "set not his benefice to hire;" who taught "Christ's lore" after "he followed it himself"—he, so beautifully described by Chaucer, was of the old English growth; and his noble character was unchanged amongst many when the Reformation came. One circumstance, connected with that change, more truly developed the most beautiful points of that character. He became a husband and a father. The act of 1548, "to take away all positive laws against marriage of priests," was a timid re-assertion of the rights of nature against the dogma of the church, which had produced, in old times, such perilous contentions. It were better, says this statute, that priests should live separate, and be "unburdened from the care and cost of finding wife and children;" but, nevertheless, "all canons, constitutions, and ordinances made by the authority of man only, which do prohibit or forbid marriage to any ecclesiastical or spiritual persons," should be void and of none effect.* And so to the humble parsonage, covered with the ivy of a hundred years, the priest might bring a helpmate; who would make him "less intricately and troubled with the



Ancient Parsonage at Lynton.

charge of household;" who would see that his dairy was kept sweet; his wool converted into useful raiment; his strawberry plants trimmed and watered; and his bees hived in due season. When the dissolution of the monastic houses was going forward, some of the secular clergy thought that the restrictions upon the marriage of priests would naturally be removed. There is a letter from one John Foster to Cromwell, in which he says, that he had accomplished marriage; but he learns that he has done amiss, and has

* 2 & 3 Edward VI. c. 21.

“sent the woman to her friends three score miles from me.” He states that “if the king’s grace could have found it lawful that priests might have been married, they would have been to the crown double and double faithful.” * This fidelity was assured in many cases by the statute of Edward; but it drew a broad line of separation between those who adhered to the old discipline of the church, and those who desired a greater freedom, not incompatible with a holy life.

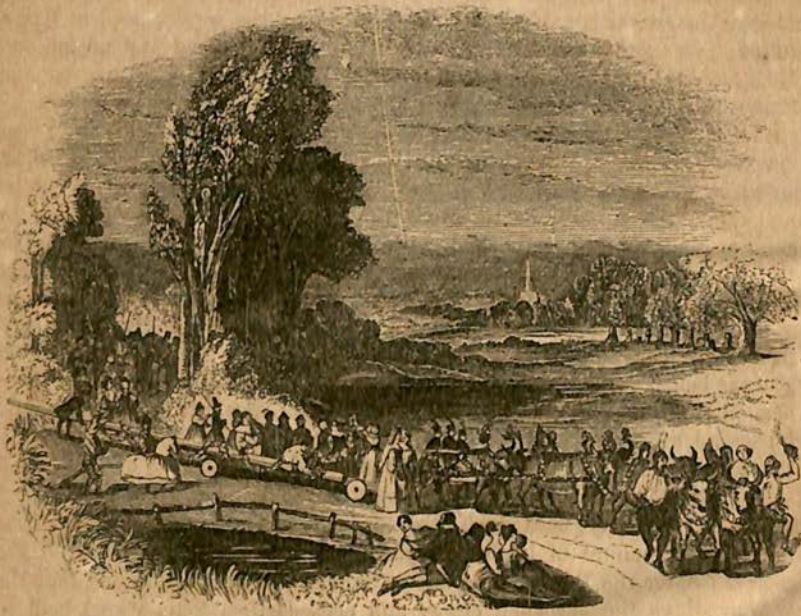
The “Act for the Uniformity of Service and Administration of the Sacrament throughout the realm,” † belongs not to the transition period of which we are treating. Before the Book of Common Prayer was prepared and issued under this statute of 1548, we learn, from its preamble, that for a long time various forms of service were used; “and, besides the same, now of late much more divers and sundry forms and fashions have been used in the cathedrals and parish churches.” In June, 1544, there was a King’s Letter to the archbishop of Canterbury, respecting the service used in “processions;” to which “the people, partly for lack of good instruction and calling on, partly for that they understood no piece of such prayers and suffrages as were used to be sung and said, have used to come very slackly.” To remedy this, the king writes, “we have set forth certain godly prayers and suffrages in our native English tongue.” The learned editor of the volume from which we quote, the Rev. Joseph Hunter, says, “The prayers which accompanied the King’s Letter were the first body of public prayers for general use in English published with authority. They may perhaps be regarded as the original of the Book of Common Prayer.” ‡ That there should have been the most violent dissensions amongst the clergy and their congregations, previous to the Act for the Uniformity of Service, was a necessary result of the very conditions of ecclesiastical tenure. The priests held their benefices under the ancient tenure of Frankalmoigne, or of Free Alms; by which they were bound “to make orisons, prayers, masses, and other divine services for the souls of their grantor or feoffor, and for the souls of their heirs which are dead.” This is the explanation of the tenure by Littleton. The clergy who went along with the principles of the Reformation would naturally hold such prayers as contrary to their doctrines; although their tenure of lands depended upon observing the wills of the grantors. After the Reformation was established, it was maintained that the tenure by which the parochial clergy and ecclesiastical foundations held in Frankalmoigne remained undisturbed; for, says Coke, “the changing of spiritual services into other spiritual services altereth neither the name nor the effect of the tenure;” which “is now reduced to a certainty contained in the Book of Common Prayer,” the change being made “by authority of Parliament.” In the state of transition from the Latin mass-book to the English Common Prayer, we may picture to ourselves the disquiet that must occasionally have afforded cause of exultation to those who were opposed to change, and of grief to those who desired to see the purified worship go peacefully forward. It was a season in which the licentious brought discredit upon religion itself, by indecent scoffings at the ancient ceremonies.

* Suppression of the Monasteries, p. 161.

‡ “Ecclesiastical Documents,” Camden Society, p. 91.

† 2 & 3 Ed. VI. c. 1.

Even the honest enthusiasts carried their hatred of superstition into unchristian irreverence. Coarse and profane songs against the mass were heard in streets and taverns. A preacher would ascend the pulpit, and declaim against making the host an object of idolatry, whilst the priest was performing the ancient ceremonies before the altar. Sometimes the magistrate would pull the preacher out of the pulpit. Sometimes the clergy would leave the church, and ancient members of the congregation would denounce him, and cry out "come from him, good people; he came from the devil." * A statute of 1551-2 shows the bitter and contentious spirit of the time: "Forasmuch as of late divers and many outrageous and barbarous behaviours and acts have been used and committed by divers ungodly and irreligious persons, by quarrelling, brawling, fraying, and fighting, openly in churches and churchyards." † Latimer complains of indecencies at burials: "In the time of popery, before



The Robin Hood Procession.

the gospel came amongst us, we went to burials with weeping and wailing, as though there were no God: but since the gospel came unto us, I have heard say that in some places they go with the corpses, grinning and flearing, as though they went to a bear-baiting." ‡ The people rushed from one extreme to the other, as is mostly the case in seasons of change. Some inveterately clung to the old holidays, which was a serious grief to the earnest reformers. They, like their puritan successors, did not make sufficient allowance for the force of long-continued customs; and shut their eyes to the positive benefit, physical and moral, derived from occasional relaxation and merriment. They relied too much upon their power of making men wiser and better by

* See the account of Thomas Hancock, in Strype's *Life of Cranmer*. † 5 & 6 Ed. VI. c. 4.
‡ Sermon in 1552.

instruction, and nothing but instruction. The good Latimer is not very hard upon those who slept at sermons; and he tells a story of a gentlewoman of London whose neighbour met her in the street, and said, "Mistress, whither go ye?" "Marry," said she, "I am going to St. Thomas of Acres to the sermon: I could not sleep all this last night, and I am going now thither: I never failed of a good nap there."* But he is not so placable with what he calls "no laughing matter." He had sent word that he would preach in a certain place, in his journey to London. It was a holiday. When he came there, the church-door was fast locked. "I tarried there half-an-hour and more. At last the key was found; and one of the parish comes to me and says, 'Sir, this is a busy day with us; we cannot hear you it is Robin Hood's day. The parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood.'" Robin Hood was the chief personage in the ancient celebration of May-day; and the gathering for Robin Hood is duly recorded in old parochial accounts.† When the May-pole was brought in, with morris-dancers and taborers, Robin Hood, and Little John, and Maid Marian, and the Hobby-horse, and the Dragon, were the joy of town and country.



The Bear at the Stake.

Gradually the first reformers saw the wisdom of not being severe upon these amusements of the people; and they ceased to be associated with the corruptions of the Romish church, except by those who looked with indignation upon all pastimes, however harmless. One of the sports, most popular amongst all ranks, was far more depraving than the boisterous mirth of the ancient

* Sixth Sermon before Edward VI.

† See Ellis's Brand, vol. i. p. 147.

holidays—the Whitsun-ales, and Hock-tides, and May-day gatherings. Bear-baiting was the passion of the multitude of this period; a cocking was of a later time; and prize-fighting in our own day. An admirer of bear-baiting thus describes the scene of a bear-garden: “It was a sport very pleasant of these beasts, to see the bear with his pink eyes leering after his enemy’s approach; the nimbleness and wait of the dog, too, to take his advantage; and the force and experience of the bear, again, to avoid the assault. If he were bitten in one place, how he would pinch in another to get free. If he were taken once, then what shift with beating, with clawing, with roaring, tossing and tumbling, he would work to wind himself from them. And when he was loose, to shake his ears twice or thrice with the blood and slaver about his visnomy, was a goodly relief.”* Burnet has diversified his annals of the Reformation, by a story of Cranmer’s danger, in consequence of a paper which he had written against the Six Articles falling into improper hands. He had sent it from Lambeth by his secretary, to be delivered to the king, who had commanded the archbishop to write down his opinions. The people who were with the messenger in a wherry would go to the Southwark side, to look on a bear-baiting near the river, at which the king was present. The bear broke loose and took to the river with the dogs after her. The passengers in the boat all leaped out except the secretary, and the bear climbed in. The boat was upset; the secretary half-drowned; and the archbishop’s book floating on the Thames. A priest got hold of it; and reading a few sentences said that whosoever owned it would be hanged for his pains. The power of Cromwell was called into action to recover the dangerous volume; and so, says Burnet, “Cranmer escaped this hazard.”

The “Act for the advancement of true religion,” which forbade the reading of the Bible and the New Testament to the “lower sort,” † also declares the expediency of suppressing, by laws dreadful and penal, “all such books, writings, sermons, disputations, ballads, plays, rhymes, songs, teachings, and instructions, as be pestiferous and noisome.” ‡ Every printer, book-binder, or bookseller, uttering such books, was to be fined and imprisoned for the first offence, and for the second to lose all his goods and to be perpetually imprisoned. Tyndale’s translation of the Scriptures was forbidden; and any commentary in other translations was to be blotted, or cut out. There was a special clause against persons not duly appointed reading the Bible aloud in any church. The man who sought to know the truth might muse over the chained volume; but he was not to read any portion of it to the less instructed by-standers. Noblemen and gentlemen might read the Bible aloud to their families. Ladies might only read it privately; and so, also, might merchants. The qualified permission to read the Scriptures, thus extended to all but artificers, prentices, journeymen, and serving-men, appears to indicate that the ability to read was very general. But we must not hastily assume this; for, in a statute of 1547, the benefit of clergy was allowed to a Lord or Peer of the realm, “though he cannot read.” § The opinion of Henry’s statute, that “the lower sort,” especially, are incapable of comprehending what is of universal application, is an old fallacy still cherished amongst us. There was a

* Letter from a London Mercer; quoted in Andrews’ Continuation of Henry, vol. ii. p. 357.

† See *ante*, p. 446.

‡ 34 & 35 Henry VIII. c. 1.

§ 1 Ed. VI. c. 12.

Cambridge friar, just before the suppression of the monasteries, who denounced the reading of the Bible by the vulgar; for the baker, he said, who found it written that a little leaven would corrupt the whole lump, would give us bad bread; and the ploughman would be afraid to labour, when he learnt that if he looked back from his plough he were unfit for the kingdom of heaven.* In the statute for the advancement of true religion, we have a glimpse of what was the popular reading which the government tolerated. "Chronicles, Canterbury Tales, Chaucer's books, Gower's books, and Stories of men's lives, shall not be comprehended in the prohibition of this Act." This was substantial and agreeable nourishment for a people of vigorous minds—history, biography, and the most captivating fictions told in nervous verse; added to the primers, or selections from the Scriptures, which they were permitted to read without restriction. With these materials of knowledge, such



Chained Bible.

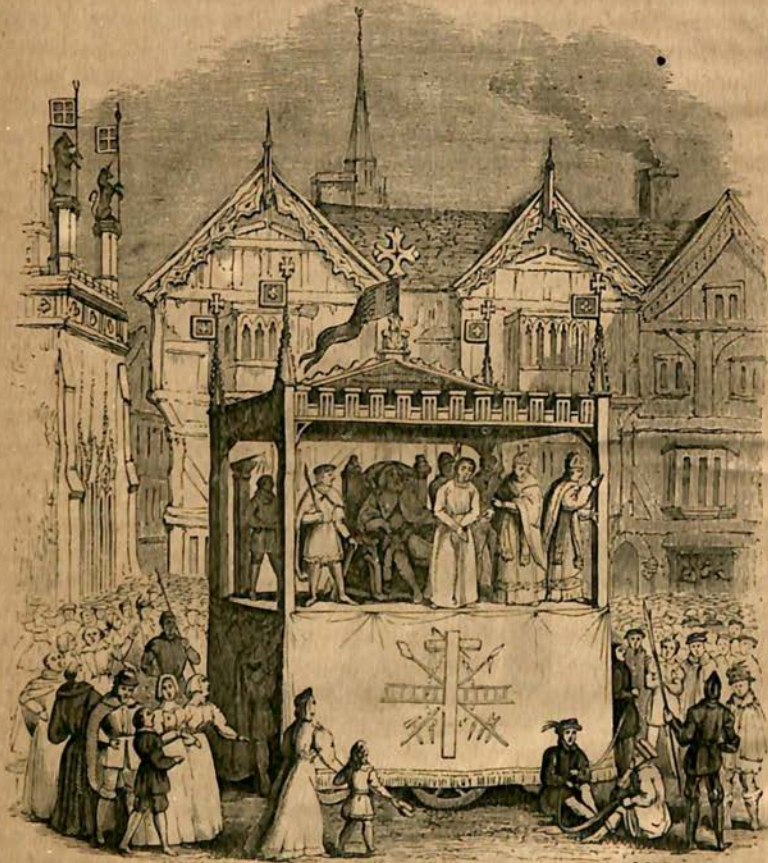
a people would be educating itself to become "a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit; acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse." † Some of the books which belonged to this early age of English printing are still read with pleasure and profit. Our Bible is founded with little change upon the translations of Cranmer's time. Those who appreciate the strength of the old homely idiom, prefer Lord Berners' Froissart to the more refined, but feebler, modern version. We still read the ballads of this period with genuine admiration. Sternhold's Psalms are not wholly banished from our churches by daintier rhymes; and many a country congregation still lifts up its voice in the noble verse which Dryden praised. ‡

* Gilpin's Life of Latimer.

† Milton, "Areopagitica."

‡ "On Cherubs and on Cherubims
Full royally He rode,
And on the wings of all the winds
Came flying all abroad."

The statute of 1542-3 recognises another, and perhaps the most important, branch of popular intellectual amusement: "It shall be lawful to all and every person and persons to set forth songs, plays, and interludes, to be used and exercised within this realm and other the king's dominions, for the rebuking and reproaching of vices, and the setting forth of virtue; so always



Coventry Mystery.

the said songs, plays, or interludes meddle not with interpretations of Scripture, contrary to the doctrine set forth by the king's majesty." It was lawful to represent upon moveable stages, and in inn-yards—upon the village green and the city market-place—Mysteries and Miracle Plays founded upon the leading events of Scripture-history. The Creation and the Fall; the Flood and the Israelites in Egypt; the Salutation and the Adoration of the Shepherds; Christ before Pilate, the Resurrection, and the Ascension; Doomsday,—such were the subjects that occur amongst the "Coventry Mysteries," and the "Chester Plays." We shrink from the apparent pro-

fanciness of exhibiting a personation of the Redeemer to the gaze of a vulgar crowd; but we forget that the same incongruity is overlooked when the sublime strains of Handel or Mendelssohn are poured forth by a Judas Maccabæus or an Elijah in a coat of the last fashion. The people of the fifteenth century beheld such exhibitions in the most simple and sincere spirit. They were originally performed in churches; and the great festival days were selected for their performance. The priests were in many cases the performers. Sir Robert Cooke, vicar of Hawgley, in 1537, bequeathes to his brother Robert, "all my play-books." * "Before the suppression of the monasteries," writes Dugdale, "this city [Coventry] was very famous for the pageants that were played therein upon Corpus-Christi day; which occasioning very great confluence of people thither from far and near, was of no small benefit thereto; which pageants being acted with mighty state and reverence by the friars of this house, had theatres for the several scenes, very large and high, placed upon wheels." There were interludes, of a less serious character, which afforded diversion in banqueting-hall or barn. The court plays were probably more dull than those of the people, if we may judge by one acted before Edward VI., and recorded in his journal. It was "a Talk between one that was called Riches and the other Youth, whether of them was better. After some pretty reasoning, there came in six champions of either side." The secular drama, with its "pretty reasoning," or coarse jokes, was still in the weakest condition of its rickety infancy. But, whether before or after the beginnings of the great ecclesiastical change, we may trace from the most authentic sources how completely the charm of impersonation was associated with the amusements of the people. When the dramatic principle had passed out of its religious character into its secular condition—when it became the most potent form of poetical expression—its universality produced a literature unequalled in any country. But we must not forget that there was little more than the interval of a quarter of a century between the "Gammer Gurton's Needle" of William Still, the bishop, and the "Love's Labour's Lost" of William Shakspeare, the actor—one a specimen of meaningless vulgarity; the other of high poetry and refined wit. However we may refer this marvellous progress to individual genius, we may be satisfied that it could not have been accomplished except amongst a people of high capacity and no contemptible acquirements,—a people that had kept their minds fresh under many adverse conditions; for the ancient spirit of liberty still survived, and its fruit was a healthy national intellect.

The education of the young was the business of the Church under the ancient ecclesiastical system of England. There were schools attached to many of the abbeys. "In the town of St. Edmund, the abbot purchased stone-houses, and assigned them for the use of the schools; so that thereby the poor clerks should be for ever free from house-rents; toward payment whereof all the scholars, whether able or unable, were compelled twice in the year to subscribe a penny or an halfpenny." † This good work of the abbot was done about the end of the twelfth century. Many grammar-schools were founded in the reign of Henry VIII. Pious men and women bequeathed small sums for the aid of schools and exhibitions. In 1504, Anne Barrett, by

* Bury Wills, p. 129.

† Chronicles of Jocelin of Brakelond, p. 13, of Tomliins' Translation.

her last will, provides that forty shillings by year "be given among poor scholars, to help them to their exhibition and learning, those that be good and honest." * After the monastic schools were swept away, we find a humble schoolmaster of the same town of Bury, who leaves very little money and few goods, making a contribution to the future service of the school in which he had taught: "I do give for implements, to remain unto the school, the hangings in my chamber, one table, one joined form, one sede, Pline de naturali historia, Virgilius cum commento, Oratius cum commento, Ovidius cum commento." † Bury may be taken as an example of the individual desire throughout the land to promote education. The Foundation schools of Edward VI.—the small contribution, out of a large spoil, to public uses—have to be noticed hereafter. One of the most famous endowments of that reign may however be mentioned here, to point out that the condition of the humblest in the social scale was not entirely disregarded. The original object of Christ's Hospital was, "to take the child out of the street, which was the seed and increase of beggary, by reason of idle bringing-up, and to nourish the same child in some good learning and exercise profitable to the common weale." But still, after the monastic institutions were broken up, the preacher evermore cried out, "Truly it is a pitiful thing to see schools so neglected, scholars not maintained. . . . Schools are not maintained, scholars have not exhibition." ‡ The course of a poor lad's education is told by Tusser in his quaint rhymes. He was forced from his home at Rivenhall, in Essex, to become a chorister at Wallingford. The schoolboy's life was a hard one;—"touzed ears"—"bobbed lips"—"robes how bare"—"bread how stale." He was dragged about from choir to choir; but was advanced to be a scholar at Paul's, and thence went to Eton; "to learn straightways the Latin phrase." At once he had "fifty-three stripes" for a small fault. At last he became a student of Trinity, at Cambridge—where he was in peace. Severe discipline of children was the characteristic of an age in which men, and boys, and even girls, were governed more by terror than by love. Peter Carewe, when he ran away from school, was led home in chains like a dog; and was coupled to a hound in a filthy outhouse. § Lady Jane Grey described to Ascham how, in the presence of her parents, she was compelled to deport herself in every action of life according to the strictest rules; "or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea presently, some times, with pinches, nips, and bobs, and other ways which I will not name for the honour I bear them, so without measure misordered that I think myself in hell." The poor lady, however, considered the severity as a blessing, for it taught her to value the exceptional kindness of her schoolmaster; "who teacheth me, so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing whiles I am with him." || The same learned education was bestowed upon young women of high rank, as upon the youths. The daughters of Henry VIII. were as excellent linguists, and as well-informed, as their precocious brother. But female education was carefully attended to, as we know from the Paston and other letters, a long time previous. In the middle of the sixteenth century the art

* Bury Wills, p. 96.

† *Ibid.*, p. 140.

‡ Latimer.

§ "Once upon a Time," vol. i. p. 102.

|| Ascham's "Schoolmaster," p. 11, ed. 1570.

of Printing had given an impulse to all education. Oxford and Cambridge had made great advances in philological studies. Greek was taught at Cambridge in the latter years of Henry VIII.; and in the statutes of the new cathedrals established in 1541, a grammar-school was to be attached to each, with a head-master, "learned in Latin and Greek."* The higher public schools, and the universities, were mostly filled by the sons of yeomen and traders—themselves very often of "gentle lineage." The means of most scholars were very scanty. Some did not scruple to solicit alms, after the fashion of the mendicant friars. The statute of 1531 classes amongst vagabonds, "scholars of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge that go about begging, not being authorised under the seal of the said universities." But, severe as was the discipline, and many the privations, of the lad of humble means who was dedicated to the pursuit of learning, the desire for academical instruction kept the schools and universities always full. Some desired knowledge for its own sake, as the accomplishment of the gentleman. But the Church required a constant supply of new men for its offices, and it readily found them, however scanty the endowments of the greater number of the clergy. The prizes of the clerical profession had become fewer, but there were still rich preferments for the ablest men. The ecclesiastics who were conversant with languages—the lawyers who had acquirements beyond the technicalities of their profession—became ambassadors and secretaries. Whatever were the faults of Henry's character, and however servile the ministers of his will, he was always surrounded with able men. The solid nature of the knowledge of the period, however narrow, may be collected from the correspondence of the confidential servants of Henry's long reign. There are few amongst them who fail to display an acute power of observation, a keen judgment of political complications, and a strong common sense, in their official correspondence. That their state-craft was too often a system of ignorant expedients, was a necessary consequence of the contending forces of despotism and popular rights. The tendencies of society were very difficult to understand; and those who saw more clearly than the rest did not always dare to speak their minds. The governing classes were far from a recognition of the principle that the good of the people is the end and object of all government.

During the reign of Henry VIII., the most beneficial application of Science to the welfare of man, the knowledge of Medicine and Surgery, made extraordinary advances. The College of Physicians was founded in 1518. By a statute of 1523 their charter of incorporation was confirmed; and to them was committed the power of examination, not only for London but for the whole realm, except for those who were graduates of the universities, so that the practice of the healing art should be limited to "those persons that be profound, sad, and discreet; groundly learned and deeply studied in physic."† The previous act of 1512, "concerning Physicians and Surgeons," indicates the necessity of some exercise of authority to secure the most skilful practitioners that the state of medical knowledge would allow. It says that a great multitude of ignorant persons—"common artificers, as smiths, weavers, and women"—some of whom "can [know] no letters on the book—

* Hallam, "Literature of Europe," chap. v

† 14 & 15 Henry VIII. c. 5.

daily exercise the science and cunning of physic and surgery." The remedy for this evil appears to have been very equivocal; for the practitioner was to be licensed by the bishop of London or the dean of St. Paul's. When an incorporated body of physicians, with Linacre, a man of real knowledge, at their head, gave licences in their own branch, a vast step was made towards lessening "the grievous hurt, damage, and destruction of many of the king's liege people."* The Surgeons at this time separated themselves from the Barber-Surgeons, who were a company incorporated by Edward IV. How the barber and the surgeon carried on their operations under the ancient system may be inferred from this extract from a barber's will of 1558: "Item. I give and bequeath to the said John, my son, six hanging basons of latten, ten shaving cloths, one hone, and my case with knives, whole. Item. I give and bequeath to the said John, my son, my brazen mortar and my leaden mortar, with the pestles; the bed whole complete that he lieth in; three barber's chairs, a drying bason as it standeth, my case with instruments pertaining to surgery, with all my glasses and boxes belonging to the same."† The Surgeons of London went on in their exclusively scientific pursuits without being incorporated. The Barber-Surgeons shaved, and drew teeth, and bled, and attempted cures, under their corporate privileges. In 1540 the two bodies were united by statute, as the Company of Barbers and Surgeons. But their vocations were to be separate. Surgeons were not to exercise "the feat or craft of barbery or shaving." Barbers who continued to have shaving-shops were forbidden to "occupy letting of blood, or any other thing belonging to surgery, drawing of teeth only except."‡ Under this act the value of dissection was first legally recognised; and surgeons were empowered to take annually four bodies of malefactors to anatomise. Vesalius, the great anatomist of that age, had run many risks in obtaining bodies for dissection; and the English government wisely permitted this indispensable privilege. The people, as might be expected, placed as much confidence in the wise women who administered decoctions and ointments as in the regular followers of Galen and Hippocrates. By a statute of 1543, the act of 1512 is repealed, as far as it sanctioned the interference of physicians and surgeons with uneducated pretenders; and "divers honest persons, as well men as women, whom God hath endued with the knowledge of the nature, kind, and operation of certain herbs, roots, and waters," are to be permitted to prescribe for outward sores and swellings, for "the web and pin" of the eye, for scalds and burns, for agues, and even for the most dangerous afflictions, such as the stone, without suit or vexation.§ The belief in empirical remedies was not confined to the humbler classes. Lord Audley, in 1553, sends to Cecil, who was seriously ill, recipes for two medicines which he had proved upon himself and his wife. One of these is founded upon the healing virtues of a sow-pig, nine days old, distilled with many herbs and spices. The other is more ample: "Item. Take a porpin, otherwise called in English hedgehog, and quarter him in pieces, and put the said beast in a still with these ingredients: item, a quart of red wine, a pint of rose water, a quart of sugar, cinnamon and great raisins, one date, twelve nepe [turnips].|| If

* 3 Henry VIII. c. 11.
 § 34 & 35 Henry VIII. c. 8.

† Bury Wills, p. 150.

‡ 32 Henry VIII. c. 42.
 || Tytler, vol. ii. p. 170.

Doctor Andrew Borde was a type of his class, even the learned physician did not disdain to make his knowledge popular by some of the arts of the mountebank. Dr. Borde held forth at markets and fairs, varying his orations with the most bombastic phrases and the commonest jokes. Hearne, the antiquary, ascribes to his facetious practice the origin of the term Merry Andrew. The physicians of the period, after the ecclesiastical revolution, availed themselves of one great relic of the old popular belief,—they became the guardians of the holy wells instead of the monks. Sir William Bassett, one of Cromwell's commissioners, in 1536, "locked up and sealed the baths and wells at Buxton;" and took away the image of Saint Anne, who presided over the healing waters. When Harrison wrote, Buxton was again in fashion; and, of baths and hot-wells generally, he tells us that "no man, especially such as be able to entertain them, doth enter into these baths before he consult with the physician."

The tastes of the general population of England were not carried forward, as in Italy, by a familiarity with the highest works in sculpture and painting. The grand cathedrals, with their massive columns, their elaborate carvings, and their painted windows, were in harmony with the traditional devotion of a reflective people; but a pleasurable sense of the beautiful had not been cultivated by any native excellence in the arts of design. Yet as Charles V. gave a lustre to his court in appreciating the genius of Titian, and Francis I. paid homage to the greatness of Leonardo da Vinci, Henry VIII. had his favourite painter in a foreigner of eminent merit, Holbein. But this master, in many essentials so admirable, produced few works which could have raised our national taste. His best paintings were portraits; and, as such, were seen only in palaces and mansions. At the present day, we know far more of Holbein's works than the people of his time. We see some of the most curious of them in the gallery of Hampton Court. The men and women of that period are there marshalled before us, with their quaint and picturesque costumes. We behold the king, in his ruddy childhood, and his bluff manhood. We look upon him in his domestic relations, with his last queen, and his son on one side, and his daughters on the other. The Court Fool, with an ape on his shoulders, completes the group—a stern and melancholy Fool. There is a portrait of Surrey—a personage with little poetry in his countenance—hard and repulsive. Elizabeth is there in another picture—not the Elizabeth of ruffs and jewels—superb and wrinkled—but a fresh girl, dressed in a plain crimson gown, with a book in her hand—meek and diffident. Here, too, may be seen the pictorial records of two leading events of Henry's reign—the Field of the Cloth of Gold and the Battle of Spurs. Francis I. is here too, with a coarse, sensual face—the very opposite to our notion of a chivalrous character. From these pictures we may gather images more durable than words can convey, of some of the leading persons of this period. We have endeavoured to speak of the principal figure of these works of art with impartiality. His character and his actions render it impossible for us to love or to reverence his memory. But he must ever fill a prominent position in English history—

"The majestic lord
That broke the bonds of Rome."



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