ILLINOIS

LIFE OF

HENRY THE EIGHTH,

WITH

Biographical Sketches

OF

EMINENT CONTEMPORARIES.

BY

P. FRASER TYTLER, Esq., F.R.S.

London:
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
AND EDINBURGH.

MDCCCLIV.

PREFACE.

The following Work is written upon the same plan, and aims at nearly the same object, as the Author's Life of Sir Walter Raleigh. It is a piece of historical biography, in which enough of history is given to render the great events of the period it embraces clear in their origin, progress, and consequences, and where, at the same time, there is introduced that minuteness of detail, which, when we have to describe the actions of illustrious men, constitutes the great charm of Biography, imparting individuality and distinctness of outline to the principal personages who occupy the picture. In the canvass, the monarch himself forms the prominent figure; but round him are grouped those eminent characters, who were the chief actors and thinkers of the times,—the ministers, the favourites, and the victims of their master.

The Author has attempted also to throw some light upon a subject which has escaped the attention of our popular writers,—the introduction of the learned languages and of classical literature into England, after

their eclipse in the Middle Ages. He has traced the effects of such studies in creating that freedom of thought, to which the human mind had long been a stranger, and which was intimately connected with the establishment of the Reformation,—minor links and secondary causes assuredly, yet not the less powerful in the hand of that Sovereign Architect, whose pleasure it was, in the history of this great moral revolution, to connect the light of reviving letters with the recovery of Revealed Truth.

It may be necessary to say a few words regarding the collections of papers and MSS., upon which, in addition to the more common authorities, much of the following Life is founded. Of these, the first and most important is a volume, put forth in 1830 by his Majesty's Commissioners for the Publication of State-papers, including the Original Correspondence of Henry the Eighth from 1518 to the time of his death,—a work edited with exemplary care and accuracy, and forming a valuable present to the critical reader of English history.* From this source, hitherto little known, much interesting information has been derived. Various original Manuscript-letters, relating to Scottish affairs, have also been consulted, which are preserved in that noble depository of our national muniments, the State-paper Office, to which the Author has at present daily access in collecting materials for his History of Scotland. Lastly, some particulars have been derived from a Manuscript-

* It is to be regretted that the price of this volume is so high as to throw it out of the reach of most literary men.

catalogue of the Hamilton Papers, containing occasional extracts from the valuable MSS. in the collection of his Grace the Duke, kindly communicated to the writer by his friend Mr James Chalmers.

It will be seen by those who have studied the history of this period, that the Author has differed in some important points from Dr Lingard; and, in the estimate of the character of Henry, has dissented still more widely from Mr Sharon Turner. But in so doing, he is desirous to acknowledge his obligations to the former learned and acute writer, as well as to the benevolent historian of the Anglo-Saxons, and to profess that high respect for their labours to which both are entitled.

The Portrait which accompanies the volume, and does honour to the well-known talent of Mr Horsburgh, is taken from the fine head of Henry engraved by Houbraken,—an artist whose exquisite line-engravings remain unrivalled even by the advanced art of the present day. Houbraken's print, it is scarcely necessary to add, is itself taken from an original picture by Holbein.

LONDON, *March* 15, 1836.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH, EDUCATION, AND COURT OF THE KING.

Birth of Henry the Eighth—His early Education—His Accession to the Crown—His Privy-Council—His Marriage—State of Europe—Henry's Favour for Classical Literature—Erasmus—Colet—Grocyn—Linacre,.....Page 9

CHAPTER II.

POLITICAL STATE OF EUROPE AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF HENRY'S REIGN.

War with France—State of Italy—State of Scotland—Siege of Terouenne—Battle of Spurs—Taking of Tournay—Battle of Flodden—Death of Louis the Twelfth,.....39

CHAPTER III.

HENRY'S FOREIGN POLICY—RISE OF THE REFORMATION—FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD—ASCENDENCY OF CHARLES THE FIFTH.

Accession of Francis the First—Renewal of the League with England—Cardinal Wolsey—Death of Ferdinand of Arragon—Reformation—Rise of Luther—Charles the Fifth—His vast Ambition—Death of the Emperor Maximilian—Charles' Election to the Empire—Interview between Francis and Henry—Field of the Cloth of Gold—Fall of the Duke of Buckingham,.....64

CHAPTER IV.

HENRY'S BOOK AGAINST LUTHER—VISIT OF CHARLES THE FIFTH TO ENGLAND—INVASION OF FRANCE—CAPTIVITY OF FRANCIS THE FIRST.

Henry's Animosity to Luther—His Work against him—He is named Defender of the Faith—He deserts Francis—Alliance with the Emperor—Death of Leo the Tenth—Charles the Fifth's Visit to England—House of Commons—Debate on Supplies—Invasion of France—Constable Bourbon—Battle of Pavia—Captivity of Francis the First,.....111

CHAPTER V.

HENRY RECONCILED WITH FRANCIS—ROME TAKEN—DEATH OF BOURBON—ANNE BOLEYN AND THE DIVORCE.

Vacillating Policy of Henry—Reconciliation with Francis—Encourages Learning—Wolsey's Colleges—Rome taken—Death of Constable Bourbon—Wolsey's Mission to France—King's Love for Anne Boleyn—His meditated Divorce—Campegio in England—The Pope revokes the Cause to be tried before himself,.....Page 158

CHAPTER VI.

FALL OF WOLSEY—CRANMER—PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION—ENGLAND SEPARATES FROM ROME—DEATH OF SIR THOMAS MORE.

Fall of Cardinal Wolsey—His Illness and Death—Promotion of Sir Thomas More—Rise of Cranmer—Difficulties as to the Divorce—Rise of Cromwell—King's Supremacy—Henry excommunicated—Cranmer made Archbishop of Canterbury—Marriage of the King to Anne Boleyn—Coronation of the Queen—Cause of the Divorce heard at Rome—Sentence against the King—Parliament assembled—Separation of the Church of England from Rome—Execution of Bishop Fisher—Execution of Sir Thomas More,.....226

CHAPTER VII.

HENRY EXCOMMUNICATED——SUPPRESSION OF MONASTERIES—FALL OF ANNE BOLEYN—WAR WITH FRANCE—TYRANNY, CAPRICE, AND DEATH OF THE KING.

Henry publicly excommunicated—Kingdom laid under an Interdict—Suppression of Monasteries—Appropriation of their Revenues—Death of Queen Catherine—Fall of Anne Boleyn—Marriage of the King to Jane Seymour—Articles of Religion—Death of the Queen—Henry's Tyranny—He marries Anne of Cleves—Fall of Cromwell—Henry marries Catherine Howard—Her Execution—War with France, and with Scotland—Murder of Beaton—Henry marries Catherine Parr—Ascendency of the Romish Party—Execution of the Earl of Surrey—Trial and Condemnation of the Duke of Norfolk—Death of Henry the Eighth—His Character—Reflections on his Reign,.....296

LIFE

OF

HENRY THE EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

Birth, Education, and Court of the King.

Birth of Henry the Eighth—His early Education—His Accession to the Crown—His Privy-Council—His Marriage—State of Europe—Henry's Favour for Classical Literature—Erasmus—Colet—Grocyn—Linacre.

HENRY THE EIGHTH was born on the 28th of June 1491. He was the son of Henry the Seventh, king of England, and Elizabeth, his queen, who was daughter of Edward the Fourth, and heiress of the House of York. He had thus the advantage of uniting in himself the blood of those two great and rival families, for whose conflicting claims England had suffered so many calamities. In the biography of distinguished persons it is always interesting to trace something of their early history; and it is especially so in this case, as there can be little doubt that the events which took place and the education which young Henry received, in the interval between his birth and accession to the throne, exerted considerable influence in the formation of his future character. He was, as is well known, a second son.

CHAP. I.

Birth of Henry VIII

CHAP. I.

Prince Arthur.

His elder brother Arthur, prince of Wales, was born in 1488, and at the age of fifteen married the Princess Catherine of Spain, being likely, as far as human foresight could penetrate, to inherit, and by his amiable qualities to adorn the throne. The two young princes were brought up by their father, under a system of wise and strict discipline; it being his principal aim to shield his children from the dangerous lustre and temptations of a court, and to encourage them in all useful studies.* Whilst the first-born drew to himself the hopes and affections of the country, as heir-apparent to the throne,

Destination of Henry.

Henry was destined, it is said, for the Church; and to this end he received the benefit of as learned an education as the age could bestow,—the king contemplating his accession to the primacy of England. In this scheme, as well as in the mode of conducting the tuition of his children, Henry the Seventh is supposed to have been influenced by the advice of his mother, the Countess of

Influence of the Countess of Richmond.

Richmond, to whose opinions he was accustomed to listen with deference, and whose amiable qualities were likely to make an impression on her grandchildren. She was in truth a remarkable woman; and her dutiful, affectionate biographer, Bishop Fisher, who was also her chaplain, has fortunately left us a fine portrait

Her character.

of her character. Her piety and humility were great, although slightly tinged with asceticism. She rose at five in the morning, and from that hour till dinner, which in those primitive days was at ten, spent her time in prayer and meditation. In her house she kept constantly twelve poor persons, whom she provided with food and clothing; and, although the mother of a king, such was her active benevolence, that she was often seen dressing the wounds of the lowest mendicants, and relieving them by her skill in medicine. She also evinced her respect for learning, both by her own works and her munificent endowments for its encourage-

* Bacon's History of King Henry the Seventh. Works, vol. v. p. 163. Edition 1819.

ment. "She was a mother to the students of both universities, and a patroness to all the learned men of England." Two public lectures in divinity were instituted by her, one at Oxford, another at Cambridge; but these generous efforts were surpassed by her last and noblest foundations,—the Colleges of Christ and of St John, in the latter university. It was right that such a benefactress to knowledge should be embalmed in an epitaph by Erasmus.* There can be little doubt that the advice and instructions of this exemplary woman must have had a considerable influence in directing the education of the royal progeny; and we may perhaps trace to the influence of her example that early love of letters which was shown by young Henry. This great scholar, who was then in England, has left us so pleasing a picture of the regal school-room at this time, that I need make no apology for introducing it. "Thomas More," says he, "who had paid me a visit when I was Montjoy's guest, took me, for the sake of recreating the mind, a walk to the next country-seat. It was there the king's children were educated, with the exception of Arthur, who had then attained majority. On entering the hall the whole of the family assembled; and we found ourselves surrounded, not only by the regal household, but by the servants of Montjoy also. In the middle of the circle stood Henry, at that time only nine years old, but bearing even then in his countenance an expression of royalty, a look of high birth, and at the same time full of openness and courtesy. On the right stood the Princess Margaret, a girl of eleven years, afterwards married to James the Fourth of Scotland. On the left was Mary, a child of four years of age, engaged in play; whilst Edmund, an infant in arms, completed the group. More, with Arnold our companion, after paying his compliments to little Henry, presented to him some piece of his own writing. I forget what it was. As

Patronage of learning.

Influence on Henry.

Account of Erasmus.

The royal family.

* Jortin's Life of Erasmus, vol. i. p. 34.

CHAP. I.

for me, I had not anticipated such a meeting, and having nothing of the kind with me, I could only promise that I would shortly show my respect for the prince by some similar present."* In some farther remarks which Erasmus makes on this sweet family-picture, we find that Henry, although still very young, solicited a correspondence with him,—a proof that, even at this age, he had shown that devotedness to learning which afterwards distinguished him. When Richard Pace, one of the most accomplished men of that age, met the same great scholar at Ferrara, the latter took from a little box which he carried about with him a Latin letter of Henry the Eighth, written to him when he was a boy. He exhibited it as a classical curiosity, and his friend adds, that it was composed in a style of the purest Latinity.† Making allowance for the flattery of the narrator, and the love of crowned heads which was a weakness in Erasmus, the anecdote is not unworthy of preservation; and we may trace in these indications the germ of that learned vanity which in later times animated the Defender of the Faith and the antagonist of Luther.

Henry's early taste for learning.

Weakness of Erasmus.

The period of which we now speak, the latter part of the reign of Henry the Seventh, was remarkable for the introduction of Greek and Roman literature into England, after a long night of ignorance and superstition. It was adorned by many men of strong natural genius, who were enthusiastically devoted to letters; and it is truly from this date that we see the flame, feeble at first, gradually but certainly increasing, borrowing strength from Italy, and at length spreading in wide effulgence, till it completely banished the darkness of the monastic ages. Erasmus was then in this country; his friends,

Remarkable character of the period.

* Erasmus, Joanni Botzhemo, Jortin, Appendix, p. 108.

† Jortin's Erasmus, vol. iii. Appendix, p. 54. Nihil non Latinissimum sapiebat. A letter from Henry to Erasmus, said to have been written when the prince was only nine years old, has been published by Heylin. History of the Reformation, p. 21; but it is evidently the composition of his master.

Linacre, Lupset, Grocyn, and Latimer, had drunk deeply of the classic fountains of Italy; they were masters of a pure Latin style, and were acquainted with Greek, at that time generally unknown in their own country. Dean Colet, the founder of St Paul's school, the first public seminary in which the latter tongue was taught in England, had studied on the Continent, and, at an advanced period of life, applied himself with all the ardour of youth to the acquisition of this noble language. The enthusiasm of Sir Thomas More for every branch of human learning is well known; and Henry, emulating the example of the best men of his age, applied himself vigorously to literature, and imbibed the spirit of the society by which he was surrounded.

Learned men.

Dean Colet.

In the year 1502, Prince Arthur, who held his court at Ludlow Castle, was seized with an illness which speedily carried him to the grave; and his brother, becoming heir to the throne, was instantly exposed to the flatteries of those minions and sycophants who are always found basking in the sunshine of a court. Yet, whilst his father lived, the danger was averted; he pursued his studies with unwearied diligence, and appears to have made a rapid progress in all the accomplishments of the age. "He was," says Lord Herbert, "an able Latinist, philosopher, and divine; and, what is more to be wondered at in a king, a curious musician, as two entire masses composed by him, and often sung in his chapel, did abundantly witness."* He spoke and wrote in French, German, and Spanish, with the facility and fluency of a native; and such was the ardour with which, in his early years, he studied the works of Erasmus, that this scholar informs us, it was not wonderful the Latin style of the sovereign should resemble his own. The picture of the youthful prince will be completed, when it is observed, that to these intellectual endowments he added the attraction of a handsome countenance, a figure at once graceful and athletic, and a presence and manner

Prince Arthur's death.

Acquisitions of Henry.

Personal appearance.

* Kennet, vol. ii. p. 1.

CHAP. I.

in which there was a happy combination of sweetness and majesty.

Death of Henry VII.

On the 22d of April 1509, Henry the Seventh died; and the accession of his son, then in his eighteenth year, to the throne of England, was hailed by the people with universal and unaffected joy. His father, although a wise, had never been a popular monarch. He had maintained during twenty-two years a cold and cautious distance towards his subjects, and more especially his nobles; there seems to have been little heart, and no enthusiasm in his character; and even those qualities which Lord Bacon, in his panegyric upon him, has termed his virtues, sprung so directly out of prudential considerations, that we hesitate to give them the name. His love of peace arose rather from the dread of internal disturbance in his kingdom than from any higher principle; his piety to the Church was probably more an effort of policy than of religion; selfish, suspicious, and giving his confidence to none; treating his queen with neglect; encouraging his councillors to declare their own opinions, and unbosom themselves of their most private judgments; yet shutting himself up from every eye, and imparting his secret reasons of state to none, it was impossible that such a character should command affection, or even secure esteem. When to these repulsive qualities he added, in his latter years, the vice of avarice, and scrupled not to grind his people with exactions which were heavy, if not illegal, we can scarcely wonder that his last illness was soothed by little sympathy,—that his death was hailed as a deliverance, rather than regretted as a calamity. No sooner, therefore, had the event become publicly known, than every eye was turned with delight to his successor; and the youthful monarch found himself overpowered with a flood of servile adulation, which was sufficient to spoil a more perfect temper. An ingenious modern historian has quoted some of the letters addressed to him on his accession, as proofs of the powers of his mind, and the excellence of his disposition. To a less indulgent judg-

His character.

His policy.

Avarice.

ment, they will perhaps appear little else than pieces of the grossest flattery,—incense fitted to inebriate with vanity and self-confidence. It is true that Henry was a polished and promising youth, that he had evinced an ardent love for the cultivation of letters, and hence the eulogium of Cardinal Pole upon the qualities which he exhibited in his early years, although written with the object of deepening the shadows of his later crimes, may be taken as some approximation to the truth. But when Montjoy pronounces him "divine,"—when the Venetian ambassador likens his countenance to Apollo, and his noble chest to the torso of Mars,—when Morison apostrophizes the august majesty of his whole body, and sees in his ample forehead the seat of "clemency,"—when Erasmus celebrates his acuteness in argument, the happiness of his invention, the soundness of his judgment, the gracefulness of his elocution, his rare perspicacity of mind, his benignity, his chastity, and his piety, we must pause before the truth of such a portrait is admitted. He who sat for the picture was a king, and the features, although not altogether unlike the original, are so softened in their faults, and exaggerated and idealized in their beauties, that we turn away from the canvass in wonder that the grossness of the flattery did not sooner achieve the work of ruin.

Extravagant praises of Henry.

Account of Erasmus.

Adulation like this, and the sudden possession of absolute power, were trying things to a young monarch; and it is honourable to his feelings that he commenced his career with moderation and wisdom. These were shown in the choice of his official advisers. His father, we are informed by Lloyd, bequeathed him in his will eighteen councillors; and out of this number, by the advice of his grandmother, the Countess of Richmond, he selected such as the old king most trusted.* Of these, the principal in civil matters were Warham, archbishop of Canterbury and lord-chancellor, and Fox, bishop of Winchester and secretary; in military policy,

Dangers of the young monarch.

Early moderation.

* Herbert, p. 2. Lloyd, p. 148.

CHAP. I.

Character of the Council-table.

Howard, earl of Surrey, to whom he gave the staff of the lord-treasurer; Sir Edward Poynings, to whom he intrusted the office of comptroller; Sir Charles Somerset, the lord-chamberlain; and Sir Henry Marney, afterwards created Lord Marney. Amongst these ministers there was such difference of disposition, that the council-table was any thing but peaceful; yet their intellectual and moral varieties were so well balanced, that the sovereign is thought to have gained in security what they lost in comfort.

Chancellor Warham.

Warham the chancellor, had perhaps the fewest faults, and was sincerely attached to the service of his majesty. Erasmus, to whom he was a kind patron, has left us a fine character of this primate. "He was a man," says he, "whose memory ought to be dear to every future age; a theologian, not in title but in truth; a doctor in the civil and canon laws; a skilful ambassador and diplomatist; and, for his profound judgment, justly dear to his master, Henry the Seventh. Having risen by these steps to the highest station in the Church, he was soon called to sustain an additional and more weighty burden, in being forced to accept the office of chancellor,—a situation of almost royal dignity,—the supreme judge of the British dominions, and so important in its duties, that he who holds it may be regarded as the eye, tongue, and right hand of the king. The multiform business of this place he transacted for many years with such success, that all would have pronounced him born to the law, and exclusively occupied in its cares. Yet the same remarkable man was so vigilant and attentive in every thing connected with religion and the welfare of the Church, that to have seen his labours in these, you would have imagined they constituted his sole concern. So economically did he distribute his time, that every religious and civil duty found its proper place; his constant prayers, his almost daily attendance at mass, his presence on the woolsack, his reception of ambassadors, his private consultations with the king in all matters of grave moment, his inspection of the

His rise in the Church.

Judicial ability.

Zeal for the Church.

churches, wherever any thing occurred demanding his interference, for all these the day was not too brief; and, in addition to such claims, his hospitable table was often laid for 200 guests. His leisure was devoted to reading; and as hunting, gaming, idle conversation, luxury, and pleasurable excesses of all kinds, were banished from his system of life, neither the time nor the mental energy of the good man were overtasked by his various employments. For recreation, a pleasant hour over a book, or a quiet conversation with a learned friend, was all he indulged in. Prelates, dukes, earls, were his frequent guests, yet never would he sit more than an hour at dinner. To him the splendid apparel which his high rank demanded, instead of bringing delight, was an encumbrance. He rarely tasted wine; and in his seventieth year drank chiefly a mild decoction of malt, which the English call beer (biria), and even this sparely. For him the grosser pleasures of high living had no attraction; he ate little, but the benevolence of his smile and the polished sprightliness of his conversation, threw a charm over the table." Such is Erasmus' character of Henry's chief minister; and in the original Latin* it is sketched by the pencil of a master; but it is not to be forgotten, that this great scholar was devotedly attached to Warham, and has omitted some shades in the picture.

CHAP. I

Hospitality.

Recreations.

Great moderation.

Only inferior to the chancellor in dignity, and perhaps superior to him in the council, was Fox, bishop of Winchester, whose uncommon qualifications as a diplomatist had procured him a greater share in the confidence of Henry the Seventh than any of his subjects. His repeated embassies in France, Scotland, Germany, and Spain, had given this statesman a thorough acquaintance with the political affairs of Europe; whilst his character as a lover of magnificence, an accomplished courtier, and skilful master in ceremonies and pageants, was strikingly contrasted with the simplicity of the archbishop. Yet

Bishop Fox.

His various embassies.

* It will be found in Jortin's Life of Erasmus, vol. i. p. 37.

CHAP. I. Points of contrast.

both were sincerely solicitous for the welfare and glory of the young king; both looked more to his prosperity than their own power; and, bred under the grave and austere reign of his father, were anxious, that by an early devotion to business he should imitate the parental virtues, and become his own minister.

Earl of Surrey.

Different from these statesmen in character, and, by his selfish ambition, their inferior in zeal for the public good, was the Earl of Surrey, who had been the rival of the bishop under the late king, and still retained his enmity. His education as a soldier in the French wars between Louis and the Duke of Burgundy,—his martial

Martial services.

services in the reign of Edward the Fourth,—his brave conduct on Bosworth Field, where he fought for Richard the Third,—and the charge of the borders towards Scotland, had given him a propensity to strife and a love of martial distinction, which were little agreeable to the pacific policy of the chancellor and the lord-privy-seal. His consistent loyalty from the commencement of his career till the battle just mentioned, had raised him in the estimation of Henry, who soon pardoned and employed him; but his disposition apparently underwent a change on the accession of that prince, and a desire to repair his shattered fortunes and restore the grandeur of his house became his ruling principle. To accomplish

Manage- f the young king

this, he carefully studied the character of the young monarch; nor did he scruple to flatter his vanity, to show a servile compliance with his will, and to feed his love of pleasure by pageants and court-revelries, that he might gain an ascendency over his mind, and wield it to his purposes of individual ambition. Of this privy-council it has been said, that it was formed on a principle of independent authority; "it was a body which never condescended for advice to any below themselves, or looked for the performance of its decrees to any besides themselves;"* it possessed the head to plan and the

* Lloyd's State Worthies, p. 148. See State-papers published by Government, p. 507, for Henry's own description of his first council.

hands to execute; the prudence of Warham in all affairs within the kingdom; the enlarged wisdom of Fox in European politics; the military experience of Surrey in the command of an army; the veteran skill of Poynings in the attack and defence of fortified towns; the crafty diplomacy of Marney, whose variable character and system of secret intelligence belonged to the after-school of Walsingham and Cecil; with the vigilance and activity of Somerset, who knew how to combine two qualities which rarely exist together,—popularity with all classes of the people, and affectionate loyalty to the throne.

Varied elements of the privy-council.

The first care of these councillors was the funeral of their late master, which they conducted with great solemnity and splendour. The concluding ceremony, as it is given in a contemporary narrative, was striking. The body had been lowered into the vault,—the bishops and abbots had pronounced their absolution,—the primate of England had thrown earth upon the coffin,—"and then," says the chronicle, "my lord treasurer and my lord steward broke their staves, and cast them into the vault, whilst the others threw in their staves all whole; which done, the vault was closed, and a goodly rich pall of cloth of gold was laid upon the hearse; the heralds then disrobed themselves of their coat-armours and hung them on the rails of the hearse, crying lamentably in French, The noble king, Henry the Seventh, is dead. And this done, every herald did put on his coat-armour again, and cried with a loud voice, Vive le noble Roy, Henry le Huitiesme; God send the noble king, Henry the Eighth, long life."*

Funeral of Henry VII.

Ceremonies at the grave.

From the funeral of the old king, there was an easy transition at the council-table to debate the marriage of their new sovereign; and, after a protracted and anxious deliberation, the majority of his council agreed to recommend a union with the Princess Catherine of Spain, the widow of Prince Arthur, Henry's elder brother. To the

Proposed marriage of the king.

* Leland's Collectanea, vol. iv. p. 309.

CHAP. I.

Objections to the proposed alliance.

Extraordinary circumstances attending it.

Reasons of state.

Consummation of the marriage.

Magnificent coronation pageant.

upright mind of Warham the marriage appeared, what it undoubtedly was, illegal and incestuous; and the circumstances under which it took place were extraordinary. Arthur, her first husband, died before he had completed his sixteenth year; and Henry the Seventh, divided between his policy and his conscience, first contracted her to his son Henry; and afterwards, when the latter reached his fourteenth year, becoming alarmed, insisted on his formally renouncing the engagement. Yet, strange as it may appear, this renunciation was not communicated to her father nor to the princess, for whose marriage with Henry a papal dispensation had been procured. The reasons of state which recommended the union were chiefly grounded on the inexpediency of any marriage with France,—a kingdom over which the English monarch had pretensions which were likely to come to the decision of the sword; and under such an occurrence the alliance and assistance of Spain were highly to be desired. In the midst of these deliberations Henry's heart became touched by the amiable qualities of Catherine, who showed no disinclination to the match; and on the 3d of June, about six weeks after his father's death, the marriage took place, which was afterwards the cause of such important changes. It was followed by the ceremony of the coronation, performed at an excessive cost and "with great magnificence." The age was one of feudal splendour; and the pageant, as it has been abridged by an amiable modern historian, presents us with a lively and curious picture of the times:—"On the day preceding the solemnity, the King and Queen went from the Tower to Westminster through the tapestried streets, lined with the City Companies in their best display. Beneath a robe of crimson-velvet furred with ermine, the king wore a coat of raised gold, with a tabard shining with rubies, emeralds, great pearls, and diamonds. Nine children of honour, on great coursers, and dressed in blue velvet, powdered, with fleurs-de-lis in gold, represented the nine kingdoms or provinces which he governed or claimed,—England,

France, Gascony, Guienne, Normandy, Anjou, Cornwall, Wales, and Ireland. Following her richly-dressed retinue, the queen was seen seated in a magnificent litter or chariot, borne by two milk-white palfreys. Her person was clothed in embroidered satin, with her hair hanging down her back of great length, beautiful and goodly to behold, and on her head a coronal set with many rich and orient stones." After the procession and coronation had terminated, the jousts and tournaments succeeded, which were peculiarly magnificent. "The king and queen were stationed on a rich edifice made within the palace at Westminster, where, from a fountain and its castle, at many places, red, white, and claret wine, poured out of the mouths of various animals. The trumpets sounded to the field, and the young gallants and noblemen, gorgeously apparelled, entered it, taking up their ground, checking their horses, and throwing them on their haunches. Then followed a turret wrought with cloth of gold, whereon sat a lady bearing a shield of crystal. It was Minerva, who, accompanied by her six destined champions, presented them to the king as her scholars, and desired permission to let them be her defenders against all comers. Another troop of horsemen was soon ushered in by drums and fifes, with coifs of gold and high plumes on their heads. Eight knights followed in superb armour, who were introduced to the queen, and besought her leave to prove themselves against Minerva's scholars, and to have the crystal shield as their prize, if they won the triumph. They then jousted with each other till night, and resumed the contest next day. As the eight knights came in, a great blowing of horns announced the entrance of the foresters and their pageant. It was a goodly one, and must have been got up with great labour. A park, with green pales, containing fallow-deer, and exhibiting artificial trees, with bushes and ferns, was laboriously brought in and set before the queen. The gates were opened,—the deer ran out into the palace,—greyhounds pursued, caught, and killed then, and the bleeding animals were

The queen's state.

Jousts and tournaments.

Allegorical representations.

Forester's pageant.

CHAP. I.

Presentation to the queen.

presented to Catherine and her ladies by the eight knights, who declared they were servants of the great Diana, and that news having been brought them that the scholars of Minerva had come for feats of arms into these parts, they had left their chase to fight them for the love of ladies, to the utterance. These last words implied a jousting with sharp spears; and something in the tone with which they were pronounced, exciting suspicion of their intentions, the queen sent to the king for his directions. Henry, on examination, detected some symptoms of quarrel between the contending parties, and, to avoid unpleasant consequences, ordered that they should only tourney together; give a few strokes, and then separate and depart. The sumptuous rejoicings were then closed."*

Jousting of knights.

Cares of state.

From these scenes of festivity and magnificence the new king turned to more serious cares, and perhaps we may pronounce his first act one rather of popularity than of strict justice. The resentment of the nation had risen to the highest pitch against Empson and Dudley, the chief instruments in those heavy exactions with which the late monarch had oppressed his subjects. But although the fines imposed by these ministers, whom Bacon calls Henry's horse-leeches, were frequently excessive, it might be questioned whether, as the laws then stood with regard to the royal prerogative, their conduct was illegal. It is probable that all they did was sanctioned and minutely superintended by the sovereign, and Empson's defence before the privy-council, as recorded by Lord Herbert, is not easily answered. "The king, my master," said he, "to whom I should appeal as my supreme judge and protector, abandons me to my enemies, without other cause than that I obeyed his father's commands, and upheld the regal authority. The people, on whose equal tryal I should put my life, seek my destruction only because I endeavoured to execute those

Empson and Dudley's unpopularity.

Empson's defence.

* Turner's Henry the Eighth, vol. i. pp. 23, 24. Thomson's Henry the Eighth, vol. i. pp. 59, 60.

CHAP I.

laws whereof themselves were authors. What would have happened to me if I had disobeyed my king or broke my country's laws? Surely, if I have any way transgressed, it is in procuring that those penal statutes might be observed which yourselves in open Parliament have decreed, and to which you then submitted both your persons, estates, and posterity. If this be a crime, why do you not first repeal your proper acts; or if, which is true, they stand still in full force and virtue, why do you not vindicate from all imputation both yourselves and me?" To this it was replied, that he was accused, not so much of having acted without law, as of having passed the bounds of his commission. How far the charges brought against these officers were substantiated by proof does not appear; but so violent were the feelings of the populace towards the agents or informers whose services they had used, that on being placed in the pillory, none of them survived the cruelty with which they were treated, whilst their employers were for the present sent to the Tower.*

Sanction of Parliament.

Accused of exceeding his commission.

Cruel treatment.

Having performed this act, so gratifying to the people, on the principle, we may suppose, laid down by one of his privy-councillors, "that reason of state was reason of law," Henry had time to look around him; and the prospects presented by his own kingdom at home, and the condition of the neighbouring states on the Continent, were equally happy and encouraging; all, for the time, gave the promise of peace, or, if some sparks of future commotion might be discovered by an acute observer, still they were such as a judicious policy might hope easily to extinguish. In Scotland reigned James the Fourth, his confederate by treaty, and his brother-in-law by the marriage with the Princess Margaret. In France the sceptre was held by Louis the Twelfth, an aged, yet still warlike prince, who was anxious to preserve inviolate his treaty with Henry the Seventh, that he might find uninterrupted leisure to incorporate Brit-

Principle followed.

Favourable prospects at the period.

Neighbouring states.

* Herbert, p. 3. Lloyd's State Worthies, p. 150.

CHAP. I.

Spain.

tany with France, and to mature his designs on Italy. In Spain the late marriage with Catherine of Arragon had conciliated the attachment of Ferdinand; whilst in the empire Maximilian was solicitous for continued amity,—on the same general principle which prompted the pacific policy of Louis,—that he might securely possess himself of the Low Countries, undisturbed by the interference of England. On the Papal throne was

Pope Julius II.

seen Julius the Second, a pontiff, restless indeed, and ambitious, who sunk his ecclesiastical functions in the character of a warrior and a politician; but at this moment he desired a league with the young king, that he might domineer without disturbance over the continental princes, and enlarge without distraction the territory of the Popedom. In the north the sanguinary contests still raging between Sweden and Denmark, left him nothing to dread from that quarter. It might

Remarks of Lord Bacon.

truly, therefore, be said, in the words of Lord Bacon, "that after the decease of that wise and fortunate king, Henry the Seventh, who died in the height of his prosperity, there followed, as useth to do when the sun setteth so exceeding clear, one of the fairest mornings of a kingdom that hath been known in this land, or any where else, for the people and state in general." He

Obedient disposition of the people.

continues, "They were in such lowness of obedience as subjects were like to yield who had lived almost four and twenty years under so politic a king as his father, being also one who came partly in by the sword, and had so high a courage in all points of regality, and was ever victorious in all rebellions and seditions of the people. The crown extremely rich and full of treasure, and the kingdom like to be so in a short time. There was no war, no dearth, no stop of trade or commerce; it was only the crown which had sucked too hard, and being now full, and on the head of a young king, was like to draw less.*"

* Bacon's History of the Reign of King Henry the Eighth, Works, vol. v. pp. 194, 195.

CHAP. I.

Royal love of pleasure.

The new monarch, therefore, whose propensity to pleasure and magnificence had early developed itself, found ample leisure for its indulgence, and the two first years of his reign were little else than one continued pageant. The nobles vied with each other in the splendour of their households and retinue; the immense mass of treasure gathered by the frugality of the late king was unsparingly expended by his successor; poets, painters, musicians, and men of letters, were called upon to render the entertainments more worthy of their royal guest; and, in the midst of these gorgeous exhibitions, Henry and his young queen sat in the balconies, or paraded in the gardens, like Amadis and Oriana, the magnets to which every eye was attracted,—the vivid personification, as they were told, of all that was perfect in chivalry and pre-eminent in beauty. The old romances, with their endless legends of enchanted castles, haunted and trackless wildernesses, cruel sorcerers, valiant knights, and devoted damsels, were the fashionable reading of the day; and it was not judged beneath the dignity of the gravest councillors and statesmen to exercise their fancy in the composition of masques and melodrames, which embodied the adventures described in these singular productions. The devices, concerts, and triumphs, brought forth on the marriage of Arthur, prince of Wales, and Catherine of Arragon, were, according to Bacon, the invention of Bishop Fox, who, as we have already noticed, is described by this historian as not only an able councillor for war or peace, but a good surveyor of works, and an excellent master of ceremonies. The same prelate, now one of Henry's ministers, was no doubt willing to contribute the same exertions for the entertainment of the son which he had already made for his royal father.

Splendid pageants.

Invention of devices.

The king was of a powerful and athletic make; whilst his education in all the martial exercises of the age had been carried as far as individual enthusiasm, directed by the skill of the most eminent masters, could proceed. It was his delight to be accounted the most puissant and

Personal acquisitions of the king.

CHAP. I.

Defence of such puerilities.

the most generous knight of his time, and his exhibitions of prowess and chivalrous profusion before the foreign ambassadors were intended to spread the fame of his exploits throughout Europe. All this, to our modern notions, appears puerile enough, but it was the taste of the period, and, in a prince who had not attained majority, may easily be excused. The character of the monarch and the manners of his contemporaries are freshly painted in this passage from a faithful annalist:—

Description of a royal pastime.

"On May-day, in the second year of his reign, his grace being young, and willing not to be idle, rose in the morning very early to fetch May, or green boughs, himself 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, and so went every man with his bow and arrows shooting to the wood; and repaired again to the court, every man with a green bough in his cap, and at his returning, many hearing of his going a-Maying were desirous to see him shoot, for at that time his grace shot as strong and as great a length as any of his guard."*

Graver studies of the king.

But it would be doing injustice to Henry should we imagine that he was exclusively occupied by these magnificent and idle shows. He found leisure for graver studies; and having early evinced a generous love of letters, now became their enthusiastic patron. When Prince of Wales, as we have seen, he had addressed a letter to Erasmus, the greatest scholar of

Erasmus invited to England.

that, or perhaps of any succeeding age, inviting him to England; and this eminent man, upon the accession of his royal correspondent to the throne, acceded to his wishes. He came to London, took up his abode with Sir Thomas More, and in an epistle to Servatius, described his affectionate welcome by the king. "Henry the Eighth," says he, "a little before his father's death, when I was in Italy, wrote me with his own hand a very friendly letter, and now he speaks of me in the

* Hall, p. 515.

most affectionate manner. Every time that I pay my respects to him, he embraces me obligingly, and looks kindly upon me, so that it plainly appears that he not only speaks, but thinks well of me. The queen also hath endeavoured to procure me for her preceptor; and every one knows, that if I would but live a few months at court, I might have as many benefices as I could desire; but I esteem all things less than the leisure which I enjoy, and the labour and studies in which I am occupied. Here are two universities, Oxford and Cambridge, and both would be glad to get me, for I have taught several months together Greek and divinity at Cambridge, but without receiving any salary; I am resolved always to do so."*

Reception of Erasmus by the king.

At this time, as has been already briefly noticed, in England there was a small circle of learned men, to whose exertions the revival of classical literature is mainly to be ascribed; among whom were Linacre, Grocyn, Lilly, Colet, and the great Sir Thomas More. The three first studied the Greek and Latin languages in Italy, which, it is well known, had long preceded the other countries of Europe in the career of literary illumination; and, returning home, they sedulously endeavoured to introduce into the universities a taste for the purer writings of the classic authors, in opposition to the dark and ignorant systems of scholastic instruction. Their generous attempts, however, were met by a fierce opposition. Henry the Seventh, under the latter portion of whose reign the warfare between the new system and the supporters of the monkish institutions began, was rather studious than learned, and it was reserved for his successor to throw the weight of his encouragement and example into the scale of reviving letters. Some anecdotes, of this bitter contest, and the part taken by the king, have been preserved by Erasmus, and are worthy of notice. When Henry was at Woodstock, a divine openly de-

Learned men in England.

Study of Greek and Latin.

Opposition to the advancement of learning.

* Jortin's Life of Erasmus, vol. i. pp. 30, 31.

CHAP. I.

Declamations against the Greek tongue.

claimed at St Mary's against the pernicious innovations of the Greek tongue, and raised such a ferment amongst the students, that the noise of the commotion reached the court. The king directed an investigation to be made; and having understood the cause of the disturbance, addressed his royal letters to the university, not only allowing, but eagerly commending the language of Homer, and directing it to be diligently cultivated by the young men.* On another occasion, one of the school-divines, in a sermon preached before his majesty, introduced a violent declamation against the same ancient tongue, which he considered a heretical novelty in the system of education. Richard Pace, an enthusiast in the new studies, was present, and turning his eyes on the king, observed him smiling with good-humoured pity at the ignorance of the man. After the sermon, however, Henry ordered him to be called, and appointed a disputation to be held before himself between the Scotist and Sir Thomas More, on the advantages and disadvantages of Greek. More, who was an eloquent speaker, performed his part admirably; but when it came to the divine's turn, he dropt down on his knees, and instead of arguments faltered out an apology for having given offence in the pulpit, alleging that what he had said against the Greek language was by the impulse of the Spirit. "It could not have been the spirit of Christ, but of infatuated folly," said the king. "And pray," added his majesty, "have you read any of Erasmus' works?" for it had been told the king, says this author, that he had dragged me into his abuse. "Alas, no," answered the suppliant Scotist. "And are you not an egregious blockhead," said Henry, "to pretend to cavil at what you have not even read?"—"Yet, now I remember me," said the divine, "I have perused something they call Moria" (alluding to Erasmus' little work on the Praise of Folly). "And may it please your highness," interrupted Pace, "was not the reader

Favourable interference of the king.

Scholastic disputation.

Singular defence of ignorance.

Royal retort.

* Erasmi, Epist. lib. vii. Ep. 12, and lib. vi. Ep. 2.

made for the book? Could he have chosen better?" The conference, thus broken off, ended by the Scotist declaring himself more reconciled to the Greek, because he believed it to be derived from the Hebrew; and his majesty, wondering at the depth of his ignorance, dismissed him with a charge never again to preach at court. It is difficult to impart to these anecdotes the liveliness and elegance with which they are told by Erasmus. For this the reader must peruse the ample volume of his letters,—a mine of valuable information, little worked in the present day, yet full of the richest ore.

Silencing of the declaimer.

The period of which we now speak is peculiarly interesting in the literary history of England; and the effects of the encouragement given to learning by Henry were so important in their connexion with the future progress of the Reformation, that they demand a moment's attention. In following the future life of the monarch, we shall soon be lost in the sea of European politics; but, in the first and most tranquil years of his administration, it is pleasing to regard him in the character of a patron of letters. Bernard André, a Frenchman, and, if we may believe Erasmus, an indifferent scholar, had been chosen tutor in the Greek tongue to Prince Arthur, his elder brother, and Linacre, a man infinitely superior to André, who had studied the purest models in Italy, was afterwards selected by Henry the Eighth as his own master; but the monarch, although an able Latinist, does not appear to have made much progress in the other language. He was zealous, however, for its introduction into the universities of his dominions; and soon after his accession, Dean Colet having returned from his studies in Italy, founded the school of St Paul's, the first public seminary, as has been already noticed, in which Greek was taught in England. It was this impulse of Christian charity, in the founding of schools where the learned languages might be taught, which formed one of the means employed by Providence for bringing about

Literary history of the period.

Royal patronage of letters.

Zeal for the introduction of Greek to the universities.

CHAP. I.

Founding of grammar schools.

the Reformation; and we learn from Dr Knight,* that in the thirty years immediately before this great revolution, there were more grammar-schools erected in the country than had been endowed during three hundred years preceding.

Dean Colet.

Colet, the founder of the just-named public institution, was himself one of the most remarkable men of those times. His father had made a large fortune by trade. His mother, of whose piety Erasmus has left a fine picture, lived to bury twenty children, and the dean became the sole inheritor of the "luctuosa hereditas" of his family. Educated at Oxford, he pursued his studies there for seven years, till, feeling his genius cramped by the semibarbarous tuition of the period, he resolved to travel, and visited France, where he became acquainted with Budæus. From that kingdom he proceeded into Italy, where he enjoyed the friendship and familiar conversation of Linacre, Grocyn, and Lilly, his countrymen, who were then ardently occupied with their classical studies, particularly with the acquisition of the Greek language. In 1497, when about thirty years of age, he returned to England, and an extraordinary change seems to have suddenly taken place in his character. His condition in life and prevailing tastes, as described by himself and his most intimate friends, were calculated rather to have made him a courtier than an ascetic or a divine. He was rich and handsome, of a high spirit, fond of splendid shows and pageants; not averse to wine, an epicure at the table, and devoted to the society of the fair sex. His wit was bright and poignant, and he was possessed of easy and graceful manners. Such were the temptations which he had to resist; yet so great was the power and sincerity of religious faith in this eminent man, that at the age of thirty he triumphed over them all. Scarcely had he suffered himself to look round him in his native country, when he retired to Oxford, and resolved to

His education.

His rank and tastes.

Influence of religion.

* Knight's Life of Erasmus, p. 100.

CHAP. I.

devote his whole efforts to the recommendation of sincere and active piety in opposition to the corrupt lives of the Romish clergy, and to the dissemination of true knowledge as distinguished from the false and imperfect learning of the schoolmen. It was about the same time that the warm friendship commenced between Colet and Erasmus, which only ceased with their lives. "I am entirely devoted to these studies of yours," says he, in a letter to that distinguished classic, who a little before had published his Translation of the New Testament from the original Greek text, "and deeply do I cherish this new edition. Yet I know not, sometimes, whether it has given me more sadness or joy. At one time I feel sorrowful, because I have never acquired Greek; for without it we are nothing. At another, I rejoice in the light that is shed around me by the sun of your genius."

Opposition to the corruptions of the Romish clergy.

Friendship between Colet and Erasmus.

The publication to which allusion is here made was an important event in the history of the ante-reformation. It was the first time the Scriptures of the New Testament, in the original Greek text, were printed in Europe, and to this was now added a Latin translation.* The work spread rapidly; the world were encouraged to study the Book of Life in its original purity; and, although at first it met with opposition, many learned and pious men, in different countries, welcomed the light with joy, and brought all their powers of mind to assist in its dissemination. Colet himself commenced a series of public lectures on the Epistles of St Paul, which were attended by the most eminent dignitaries of the Church. The young king warmly commended his labours; although, on one occasion, a rupture had nearly taken place. It happened that Archbishop Warham had appointed him to preach before Henry on Good-Friday, and in the course of his sermon, in treating of Christ's victory over death and the grave, he took occasion to exhort all Christians to fight manfully under

First publication of the Greek Testament.

Lectures of Colet on the Epistles of St. Paul

* Mattaire, Ann. Typ. vol. ii. p. 2.

CHAP. I.

Good Friday sermon.

the Captain of their salvation. He then incidentally alluded to the best methods of composing the differences which existed between Christian states and princes; and, although the king had now begun to entertain serious thoughts of a quarrel with France, did not scruple to show how hard it was to die like a Christian in a day of battle, and how inconsistent with true charity were the common wars then prevalent amongst princes, who seemed more solicitous to imitate the example of Cæsar or Alexander than that of their blessed Lord and Master. Henry, on hearing these sentiments, was somewhat disturbed, and, apprehensive that they might have an unfavourable effect upon his subjects, sent for the divine immediately after the sermon, requesting his attendance in the garden of the Franciscan Monastery, where the discourse had been delivered. When the divine came forward, he dismissed his attendants, and bidding him be covered, spoke in these friendly words:—"Mr Dean, I have sent for you at this time, not to interrupt your holy labours in preaching, which I had rather encourage, but that you might fear no harm; and also to disburthen my own conscience of some scruples which lie upon it, and by your ghostly advice to direct myself in the present posture of my affairs." The king then proceeded to disclose his intentions regarding a war with France. "And now, doctor," said he, "though in your sermon you have spoken admirably of Christian love and charity, and have almost reconciled me to the French, yet, since the contest is not one of choice, but of necessity, I must request you in some future sermon to expound to my people the lawfulness of defensive war, as it may be entered into for the honour and safety of my dominions." It would have required much ingenuity to show that the attack which Henry then meditated could be justified on defensive grounds; yet Colet deemed it prudent to accede to this request, and in another discourse took occasion to explain the circumstances under which Christian princes might lawfully engage in hostilities.

Displeasure of the king.

Conversation with the Dean.

Ungracious duty required of him.

Compliance of Dean Colet.

After the conclusion of this last sermon, the monarch publicly thanked him; saying to some of his nobility who stood near, "Well, let every man choose his own doctor, but this man shall be my doctor before all the world." He then called for a cup of wine, and having drank his health, dismissed him with an assurance that he was ready to grant him any favour at court which he might desire.*

Good favour of the king

Colet had many enemies, who virulently opposed his efforts in disseminating a taste for true learning and in expounding the Scriptures to the people. These men had anxiously looked to the issue of this meeting, anticipating his disgrace; they were now grievously disappointed, and the dean, fearless of their enmity, continued his exertions. At another time, Henry took occasion to exhort him privately to continue his preaching, making no scruple to tax the corrupt manners of the age. "He knew well," he said, "what incensed the bishops so highly against him, and how much good he had done by his divine life and holy doctrine in the English church and nation; but trust me," added his royal patron, with much vehemence, "I shall so curb their endeavours, that the world shall soon perceive whoever troubles you shall not go unpunished."

Enemies of Colet.

Encouraged by Henry.

Colet, indeed, could scarce expect that the bishops and Roman Catholic clergy, whose idle and sometimes dissolute lives he boldly exposed, would listen to his denunciations with any degree of patience; for although he died within the pale of the Romish communion, never was there a more zealous reformer, in one sense of the term. In a celebrated sermon upon conformation and reformation, he took occasion to expose the unhappy condition of the Church, as a flock deserted by its shepherds. He spoke of the greediness and appetite for honour and riches which was evinced by the higher dignitaries;

His zeal as a Reformer.

Sermon on Reformation.

* Translation of Erasmus' Life of Colet, pp. 25, 26; published in a collection of scarce tracts, entitled the "Phœnix," vol. ii. pp. 25, 26. London, 1707, 1708.

CHAP. I.

Denouncement of vice.

denouncing also their concupiscence,—a vice which, as he declared, had grown and extended its influence so widely, that the majority of priests minded nothing but what ministered to the senses, spending their lives in feasts and banqueting, in vain and foolish conversation, in hunting and hawking, drowned in the delights of the world, and diligent in nothing but pampering their lusts. He exposed their ambition and pursuit of secular employments; their becoming servants of men, not of God; their conversation being not in heaven, but in the court; their angelic dignity, which in brightness ought far to exceed that of kings and emperors, being sore shadowed and dishonoured by mixing with earth. Alluding to the rise of those new opinions which afterwards introduced the Reformation, he observed, that they were now-a-days much troubled with heretics, men infected with strange ideas; but that such heresies were not so pernicious to the Church and the people as the degraded lives of the priests, which, if they believed St Bernard, was of all heresy the chiefest and most perilous; and he lastly pointed out the remedy for these abuses.* "The way," said he, "by which the Church may be reformed into a better fashion, is not to make new laws; for there be already laws enough, if not too many. The evils that are now in the Church were before in times past, and there is no fault committed among us for which our forefathers have not provided excellent remedies. The reformation and restoring of our ecclesiastical estate must begin with you, O fathers, and so follow in us, your priests, and in all the clergy. You are the heads, you are the example of living to us; in you and in your lives we desire to read, as in lively books, how and after what manner we ought to live. The clergy and spiritual men being once reformed, we may then proceed to the reformation of the laity; which, truly, will be very easily done, if we be first reformed ourselves; our goodness will teach them far

Exposure of the clergy.

Allusions to heretics.

True means of Reformation.

* Colet's Sermon to the Convocation, in the Phœnix, vol. ii. p. 1.

more clearly and effectually to be good, than all other teachings and preachings whatsoever; our goodness will compel them into the right way more powerfully than all your suspensions, cursings, and excommunications."* These extracts are not unimportant in tracing the early history of that monarch, to whose later actions and opinions, overruled as they assuredly were by Divine Providence, we owe the commencement of the Reformation. They prove, that within the pale of the Romish Church,—for Colet was rigidly attached to the form, doctrine, and discipline of that body,—there was even now at work a spirit of amendment, from which some favourable consequences might have been anticipated; and that Henry the Eighth, even at this early period, encouraged its exertions, and defended its authors from the persecution of the more corrupted body of the clergy. But they show, at the same time, that it was a partial and imperfect reformation, essentially different in principle from the great and happy change afterwards achieved by Luther.

Value of these extracts.

Spirit of reform at work.

But this was not all: the example of the sovereign, his love of literature, his patronage of scholars, and his desire to promote the spreading of true knowledge throughout his dominions, encouraged Colet in his efforts to introduce a much more liberal system of education than that which had been hitherto pursued. The scheme of instruction followed during the monkish ages, and which had continued down to this reign, has been minutely and humorously described by Erasmus, in his treatise on the right pronunciation of the Greek and Latin languages. "This evil," says he, speaking of a vicious pronunciation, "seems to me to arise chiefly from the state of the public schools in England, to which they give the pompous appellation of universities, as if they were universally excellent in all modes of instruction; and secondly, from the condition of the monasteries, especially those of the Dominican, Franciscan, and Au-

Example and influence of the king.

Exposure of the monkish scheme of instruction.

* Colet's Sermon to the Convocation, Phœnix, vol. ii. p. 11.

CHAP. I.

Scholastic system.

gustine order, where the youth are educated for the ministry. In these the pupils, after devoting scarcely three months to their grammatical studies, are hurried away to sophistry, logic, suppositions, ampliations, restrictions, expositions, resolutions, and enigmatical quibbles; and, after being led through the labyrinth of these questions, they are ushered into the mystic recesses of theology. So educated, when at last our friends come to the study of those authors to whom we look up as the models of eloquence in both languages, oh, ye gods! how ridiculously do they grope about them and babble in their ignorance, and evince the newness of such inhabitants to the world into which they are ushered!"*

Judicious plans of Colet.

We may see, from this description of the state of education in the commencement of the reign of Henry the Eighth, how judiciously Colet reasoned when he came to the conclusion, that in order to introduce a taste for true learning into this country the sources of human knowledge must be purified from the barbarism of the schools; that to read and compose correctly in the

Necessity for a sound foundation

learned languages was the best foundation for accurate thinking; and, in order to give the then feeble race of man sufficient strength to escape the shackles under which they had groaned for so many centuries, it was necessary to treat them as children, to teach them to creep in grammar before they could walk in philosophy. He knew well that the human mind could not strangle the schoolmen as Hercules did the serpents in the cradle.

William Lilly.

He was happy, too, in the choice of a head-master for his new school of St Paul's. He selected William Lilly, who had studied Greek during a five years' residence at Rhodes, where he enjoyed the instruction of some of the illustrious refugees who had taken shelter there after the fall of Constantinople. This scholar had become acquainted with Colet in Italy, when devoting himself with enthusiasm to the cultivation of classical learning, and he was in every way qualified for his situation. His

* Dialogus De Pronuntiatione, Erasmi Opera, vol. i. p. 770.

only fault is said to have been an over-fondness for corporal punishment; which, in those austere days, was esteemed an important engine in the system of education. In Lilly this was the error of the period, not of the individual. The amiable Erasmus, whose mind was in every thing far before his age, was a strenuous advocate for a more merciful system of tuition, and has left us a picture of the manner in which Colet used to superintend the flagellations, and the good-will with which Lilly administered them, which is at once ludicrous and revolting.*

Severity of the age.

There remain still to be noticed those two eminent men already incidentally mentioned, who were not only early patronised by the youthful monarch, but whom he selected as his instructors. These were William Grocyn, the first Englishman who taught Greek in the University of Oxford, and Thomas Linacre, physician to the king. The former was an enthusiast in every department of knowledge, hypercritical almost to moroseness in his literary taste, a despiser of riches and promotion, generous and open hearted to excess, and ready to sacrifice his whole fortune, including even his household-plate, for the interests of literature and of his friends. This eccentric scholar, as was to be expected from such a character, reaped much fame and high consideration amongst men of letters, but died poor and neglected. Linacre, his contemporary, and his equal in literary enthusiasm, was more fortunate. After having spent many delightful years in Italy, the pupil of Politian and Chalcondyles, the favourite and friend of Lorenzo de Medici and Aldus Manutius, he returned to his native country, where he became successively physician to Arthur, prince of Wales, and to Henry the Eighth.

William Grocyn and Thomas Linacre.

Contrast in their fortunes.

Nothing could be more auspicious to such devoted scholars than the period in which it fell to their lot to visit the land of Virgil and Cicero: classical literature was then honoured by the patronage of princes; to be a.

Auspicious visit to Italy

* De Pueris Instituendis. Erasmi Opera, vol. i. p. 441.

CHAP. I.

High estimation of scholarship.

scholar was to be the favourite and equal of the titled and the affluent; the noble invention of printing, unlike other human discoveries, rude in their commencement and slow in their progress to perfection, had leapt from its cradle a full and perfect art; and the multiplied copies of the ancient authors facilitated study by superseding the necessity of procuring manuscripts at extravagant prices. The masters, too, under whom they were instructed, Chalcondyles and Politian, were at that time the most eminent classical scholars in Europe: and in their schools they devoted their whole attention to the acquisition of the Greek language, which they were afterwards the happy instruments of transplanting into England. The cultivated Italians, on observing their ardent love of study, their wide range of general learning, and their command of a polished Latinity, hailed with delight the prospect of being assisted in their labours for the revival of true knowledge, by scholars from the remote and barbarous country of Britain.* It was fortunate for Henry's dominions, that at the period when classical literature was about to be resuscitated, and assert its pre-eminence over the monkish systems which had so long enthralled the human mind, two such men had returned to their own country; and fortunate also, that the youthful monarch who now occupied the throne appreciated their talents and seconded their exertions. The expressions of Erasmus, when in London, in a letter addressed to the preceptor of the Archduke Ferdinand, are remarkable: "I wish often, like you, that our court would imitate Britain, which is full of men most learned in all kinds of studies. They stand round the royal table, where literary and philosophic subjects are discussed relative to the education of a prince, or to some question of good morals. In short, the company of the palace is such, that there is no academy you would not undervalue in comparison with it.†

Eminent masters.

Import influence on England.

High character of the English Court.

* Freind's History of Physic, vol. ii. p. 35.
† Turner's Henry the Eighth, vol. i. p. 43.

CHAPTER II.

Political State of Europe at the Commencement of Henry's Reign.

War with France—State of Italy—State of Scotland—Siege of Terouenne—Battle of Spurs—Taking of Tournay—Battle of Flodden—Death of Louis the Twelfth.

FROM these happy and rational enjoyments, relieved as they were by the occasional splendour of feudal pageants and the healthy pastime of the chase, Henry was now to be called to graver cares. Julius the Second had already succeeded in the objects which he proposed to himself in the league of Cambray. Having reduced the overgrown power of the Venetians, he became jealous of the conquests and preponderating influence of France; and with that restless ambition and passion for political intrigue which distinguished him, projected an alliance between Ferdinand of Spain, the Emperor Maximilian, and Henry the Eighth, which, he trusted, with the assistance of the republicans and the papal power, would at once drive the French out of Italy. To accomplish his views with regard to England, he sent the youthful monarch a gift, which, even in those days of increasing intelligence, was calculated to make an impression. The golden rose* which had been blessed by the Pope, perfumed with musk, and anointed with holy oil, was laid at his feet, with a letter which saluted him as head of

Change of Henry's occupations.

Ambition of Pope Julius II.

Gift of the golden rose.

* Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iii. p. 652.

CHAP. II. the Italian league. Henry, only a short time before this, had renewed his alliance with Louis the Twelfth, and could not instantly break with that sage ruler. But the representations of the Pontiff on the propriety of reducing the increasing power of France, and the elegant flattery with which they were accompanied, did not lose their effect on the king; for, after an interval of negotiation, in which the opinions of the privy-council were divided, he decided on war, and on a cordial co-operation with Ferdinand, the Pope, and the Venetians. He did not, however, immediately proceed to hostilities, but contented himself with urging forward his military preparations; whilst he despatched an auxiliary force of 1500 archers, under Sir Edward Poynings, to assist Margaret, regent of the Low Countries, against the Duke of Gueldres.

Influence of the Pope with Henry.

War decided on.

In the mean time matters began to assume a threatening appearance on the side of Scotland. The French king, against whom this formidable coalition had been organized, was the ally of James the Fourth. The Duke of Gueldres was also connected by a strict league with this monarch; and these causes of dissatisfaction with England were increased by an event which took place soon after, and which has been minutely recorded by one of the most graphic of our old chroniclers. This was the death of Andrew Barton, a Scottish naval officer of great skill and courage, in an action with the English. James, a prince of much energy and enthusiasm, had, amongst other objects of state-policy, devoted much attention to his navy. He had built, besides other vessels, one denominated the Great Michael, which was amongst the largest then in the world. He had encouraged his merchants to fit out armed ships, with which they not only traded to various countries, but sometimes attacked the rich carracks of the Portuguese. It appears, that on account of some great losses sustained in this way by the Bartons, a family of seamen, the king had renewed the letters of marque originally granted by his father; and under their protection the celebrated Andrew, with his

Danger from Scotland.

Death of Andrew Barton.

two brothers, commenced a privateering adventure, in which they not only made prizes of several Portuguese, but attacked the fleets of other nations, not excepting the English, under the pretence that they had Portuguese goods on board. Complaints were carried to Henry's privy-council, that the narrow seas were infested by these bold depredators; and the Earl of Surrey, who, though now an elderly man, preserved all the original vigour of his character, striking his hand upon the council-table, swore that such insults should not be borne whilst he had an estate to furnish a ship, or a son to command it. He accordingly fitted out two,* and intrusted the charge of them respectively to his sons, Sir Thomas and Sir Edward Howard. After being some days at sea, the brothers were separated in a gale, during the continuance of which the Scottish ships, the Lion and the Jenny Perwin,† also parted company. The former, commanded by Barton in person, was a large vessel completely armed, and manned by a veteran and experienced crew; her companion was only a pinnace, and the storm which had separated them, brought Sir Thomas Howard within sight of the Lion in the Downs. The English admiral, having got the weather-gage, instantly attacked the adventurer; who made a long and desperate defence, cheering his men with his whistle till he fell mortally wounded on the deck. The ship then struck, and the sailors, who had behaved with great bravery, were admitted to quarter. Whilst this action was going on, Sir Edward Howard had fought the pinnace with the like success; and, on the 2d August, the brothers triumphantly entered the Thames, bringing with them the Lion and her consort as trophies of their superior naval skill. The loss of Barton was deeply felt and highly resented by the Scottish sovereign; and he despatched the Earl of Argyle and Lord Drummond

Privateering adventure of the Bartons.

Zeal of the Earl of Surrey.

Capture of the Scottish ship the Lion.

Resentment of the Scottish sovereign.

* Hall, p. 215. Lloyd, p. 143. Hollinshed, vol. ii. p. 811.

† I suspect this unintelligible name, which appears in all the accounts of this action, is a corruption for the Jenny of Irvine. She was only an armed pinnace.

CHAP. II.

Complaint to Henry and reply.

to complain of the infraction of the treaty then subsisting between himself and his brother-in-law. Henry briefly replied, that the officer whom he bewailed was a pirate, and that his death could never be considered as any breach of an alliance between princes.* This fight, and the haughty brevity of the royal answer, are both worthy of notice, as leading to the subsequent contest between the two kingdoms, and the fatal defeat at Flodden.

Martial aspiration of the king.

In the mean time Henry's martial aspirations became every day more observable; the warlike shapes of Edward the Third and Henry the Fifth haunted his slumbers; and, without considering how soon their laurels had withered and how idle it was on his part to attempt a permanent conquest of France, he became solicitous to rival the glories of Poictiers and Agincourt.

Sympathy of members of his privy council.

In this wish he was supported by the military members of his privy-council,—Surrey, Lord Herbert, Sir Edward Poynings, and others,—and when the question was debated, some plausible arguments were urged in favour of their opinions. It was argued, that a fairer opportunity could not occur to recover his rights on the Continent, and at the same time to maintain the insulted authority of the Pope; that there was every probability of his being joined by the emperor; that the subjects of France were in many parts of the kingdom disaffected, and disposed towards a change; that no sovereign of England had ever possessed a treasury so well replenished, or could look so confidently to the assistance of his Parliament; whilst his adversary, Louis, was distracted by his wars in Italy, which diverted his attention from his own dominions, and divided his army.

Motives for peace.

On the other hand, some of the wiser heads in the council did not fail to place in a strong light the imprudence of any hostilities, and the slender hopes of success which must attend them. They entreated their young master not to be unreasonably influenced by the visions of military conquest, but to look how soon and how

* Hall. p. 525. Lloyd.s State Worthies, p. 143.

CHAP. II.

surely the former triumphs of the English arms in France had ended in disappointment abroad and poverty at home. "If," said they, "in former times, when Guienne, Anjou, Touraine, and Normandy, belonged to England, and when the House of Burgundy was her strict ally, it was found impossible to effect the conquest of such a kingdom, was it to be expected that he should be more successful now? Nay, it was asserted that even a full harvest of glory was a thing to be dreaded from the enormous expense which it entailed on the mother-country. When was there a more glorious era than that of Edward the Third? yet, when was there a time when the country at home was poorer, and more weary of wars?" Besides, they added with great plausibility, an important revolution had since these days taken place in the art of war, which rendered such successes as those of Edward and Henry the Fifth far more uncertain. The use of arms, they contended, was changed: instead of the long-bow, so peculiarly adapted for the able-bodied yeomen of England, there had been introduced the caliver,—a weapon more costly, requiring great practice, and as deadly in weak hands as in strong. The insular situation of his kingdom, it was argued, pointed out the impolicy of a war of territorial conquest,—the sea was her field,—her navy ought to be encouraged as the right arm of her strength. If she sought to enlarge her dominions, the late discoveries of the Portuguese and the Spaniards demonstrated clearly the track which she ought to pursue. Already, under the late reign, the enterprise and naval skill of the Cabots had been rewarded by the discovery of North America, and in the prosecution of such great schemes there was ample room for the acquisition both of profit and glory. These arguments, so well founded in reason and policy, were overruled, not confuted, for the king had determined on war. Julius, as has been stated, had already flattered his vanity by saluting him as Head of the Italian League; and, discovering Henry's weak side, intimated his resolution to withdraw the title of Christianissimus

Arguments against a French war.

Certainty of enormous expense.

Changed modes of warfare.

More profitable fields of enterprise.

Tact of Julius II.

CHAP. II. from Louis, and bestow it upon the English monarch, who considered such an honour as cheaply purchased by a declaration of hostilities.* Making every allowance for his inexperience, it may be asserted, that the mind which could be thus swayed must have been composed of very ordinary materials; and the result evinced how completely he was duped by the crafty and selfish policy of Spain.

Weakness of the English monarch.

Having formed the resolution to engage in war with France, his wisest course would have been to commence by a direct attack upon France; but Ferdinand had the address to persuade him, that to favour the junction between his army and his English allies, it would be better to land in one of his ports, and from thence invade Guienne. Accordingly, Thomas Grey, marquis of Dorset, accompanied by Lord Thomas Howard, and the Lords Brook, Willoughby, and Ferrers, sailed with an army of 10,000 men to Passage, where they expected to be joined by the Duke of Alva, the Spanish commander-in-chief, and to proceed to the conquest of the French dependency. Nothing, however, was farther from the intentions of Ferdinand. His object was to reduce Navarre, and to prevail upon the English auxiliaries to assist him in the enterprise. The Duke of Alva, accordingly, made himself master of Pampeluna; but Dorset refused to co-operate, pleading his instructions, which limited him to a war with France. This led to much negotiation and loss of time by the marquis, who, although he declined to give any active assistance, yet, by his presence in the country, undoubtedly facilitated the reduction of the province.

Unwise course adopted.

Duplicity of Ferdinand.

Winter was now fast approaching; the English began to be greatly in want of provisions; sickness and dysentery, owing to their drinking the hot wines of the country, had invaded the camp; 3000 men were already ill or dead; and so disgusted were the soldiers with the result of the enterprise, that they insisted on their offi-

Critical position of the English army.

* Herbert, p. 8.

cers taking immediate measures for their return home. In the midst of these preparations, an English herald arrived, with a command that the marquis should remain till he was reinforced; but the first whisper of such an order was received with a burst of indignation by th army. They felt that they had already been duped b Ferdinand, and, rising in a mutiny, embarked them selves, compelled the officers to follow, and arrived in their own country about the end of November.*

Indignation and mutiny of the army.

Henry felt deeply incensed at this inglorious return; but he was gratified by the activity and success of his admiral, Sir Edward Howard, who, commanding the fleet which carried the army to Spain, maintained the honour of his flag, chased the French ships into their harbours, and made a descent upon Brittany, for the time giving law to the seas. Louis, alarmed at these ravages, equipped a powerful armament, whilst the English king added to his squadron no fewer than twenty-five great ships of war.† In the Regent, 1000 tons burden, was Sir Thomas Knevet, Admiral, and Master of the Horse; in the Sovereign, Sir Charles Brandon, afterwards Duke of Suffolk, and under him Sir Henry Guilford, Sir John Carew, and some young courtiers, who volunteered their services. The whole fleet, which now mustered forty-five sail, was placed under the orders of Sir Edward Howard, for the purpose of watching the motions of the enemy on the coasts of Brittany. On arriving at Brest, a French fleet of thirty-nine ships, commanded by Admiral Primauget, came out to attack them, and, gaining the advantage of the wind, commenced a desperate action. The Cordelier, which he commanded, was a first-rate, carrying 1200 men. Surrounded by the English, who, though superior in numbers, had failed to get the weather-gage, he fought with much gallantry, till a large quantity of combustibles being thrown on board his ship, she burnt so fiercely, that all

Anger of the king.

Success of Sir Edward Howard.

Increase of the French and English armaments.

Fierce engagement.

* Herbert, p. 11.

† Ellis' Letters, Second Series, vol. i. pp. 202, 203; Dr Knight to Wolsey.

CHAP. II.

Destruction of both admiral's ships.

hope of extinguishing the fire was lost. In this desperate state, finding that he must perish, he determined it should not be alone, and grappling with the Regent, the English admiral's ship, both vessels were soon enveloped in a sheet of flame, and blew up together, with all who were on board. This dreadful catastrophe, by which 1900 men and two of the finest vessels then in the world were destroyed in a moment, appalled the fleets, which separated as far as possible to avoid the showers of burning beams and cordage. The French then regained their harbours, and the English returned home.*

Resolution of Henry to invade France in person.

Henry, who was little pleased with the progress of the war, now determined to invade the enemy's country in person, consoled with the idea that the full harvest of glory was reserved for himself. Having first by negotiation gained Maximilian to espouse his quarrel, he summoned a Parliament, which granted him a large subsidy, and assembled his army with a magnificence befitting more the preparations for a tournament than the business of a serious campaign. He equipped also a fleet of forty-two ships of war, which he placed under the command of Sir Edward Howard.† It was a favourite maxim of this brave man, that no naval officer was good for any thing unless his courage amounted to a degree of madness; and to this startling axiom he now fell a victim. His orders were first to scour the Channel, and then to sail for Brest; and after he accomplished this, he found the French fleet at anchor within the harbour, waiting for the admiral, Pierre Jean le Bidoulx, a Knight of Rhodes, with six galleys from the Mediterranean. Their position was strong. They had thrown up batteries on both sides of the entrance; twenty-four hulks were lashed together, and so placed as to defend the main body of the fleet from the enemy's cannon, whilst it was also intended to use them as fire-ships, to

New English fleet.

Strong position of the French fleet.

* Kent's Illustrious Seamen, vol. i. p. 615. Herbert, p. 11. Godwin's Annals, p. 10. Fiddes' Wolsey, Coll. 10. Letter of Wolsey describing the fight.

† Rymer, Fœdera, vol. xiii. p. 326-332, inclusive.

be turned adrift with the tide during the progress of the action. Having reconnoitred this position, Howard determined to carry it before they were joined by the admiral; and so confident did he feel of success, that he despatched a messenger to the king his master, requesting him to come in person and secure for himself the glory of the battle. The privy-council, however, rejected the proposal, and wrote sharply back, commanding him to do his duty; which the brave officer obeyed but too strictly. During the delay occasioned by these messages, the French admiral arrived, with six ships and four pinnaces, and stationed himself in the Bay of Conquet, near Brest, between two rocks surmounted with powerful batteries. Undismayed by the strength of this situation, Sir Edward resolved on first attacking him, and, choosing two galleys from the fleet, took the command of one, and gave the other to Lord Ferrers. These led the way, and were followed by some row-barges and crayers, or small vessels, under the orders of Sir Thomas Cheyney, Sir John Wallop, and Sir William Sidney.

Rash determination of Sir Edward Howard.

French reinforcements.

Bearing down straight on the admiral, Howard ran along side of him, lashing his own ship to the Frenchman, leapt on board, sword in hand, followed by seventeen of his crew. He imagined, probably, that he would be followed and supported by the row-barges, but something detained them, and at this moment the cable which fastened his galley to the enemy slipt from its hold, and Sir Edward was left alone, surrounded by a far superior force. He made, however, a desperate resistance, and, if seconded by Lord Ferrers and the armed barges, might have succeeded; but these were now separately engaged, and the English admiral, with the handful of men who had accompanied him, were borne overboard by the enemy's pikes into the sea. His last action was in unison with his whole life. When he saw his galley slide away, and nothing remained but to die, he took his chain of nobles and his gold whistle, the ensign of his office, which hung about his neck, and cast them into the ocean, declaring that such trophies should

Gallant conduct of Admiral Howard.

His last action.

CHAP. II.

never fall into the hands of the enemy.* Howard, who fell thus early in the war, was in all respects a remarkable man, and possessed of talents, not only as a naval officer, but in affairs of state, which made his death a severe public loss.

Severity of his loss.

Embarkation of Henry.

Undismayed by this unfortunate commencement, Henry now determined to make his grand effort in person; and having sent over part of his army to Calais in May, commanded by Lord Shrewsbury and Lord Herbert, both members of his privy-council, he himself embarked with the remainder in the end of June. It was soon evident, however, that his military education had been totally neglected; and his conduct was marked by a puerile vanity and a desire of personal display which are scarcely excusable. It was of consequence to the success of the expedition that the enemy should not be aware when the king had sailed, or where he meant to make his principal attack; yet, instead of steering straight for Calais, and joining the troops who had already landed, he insisted that they should direct their course towards Boulogne, apparently with no other object than that he should cause such a great peal of guns to be discharged as might be heard both at Calais and Dover.† Having thus proclaimed to France that the majesty of England was on the coast, he landed on the last day of June, amid a roar of artillery from ships, walls, and towers. The vanguard of the army, under Herbert and Shrewsbury, had now been encamped before Terouenne nine days, and it was of importance that the siege should proceed with all possible rapidity; yet the king, who was accompanied by his almoner, Wolsey, lately risen into great favour, suffered three precious weeks to be consumed in idle and unnecessary matters, and was at length roused into activity by the intelligence that the French had assembled an army and

Imprudent course pursued.

Loss of valuable time.

* Kent, vol. i. pp. 517, 519. Ellis, Second Series, vol. i. p. 213, for an interesting letter of Howard's, written not long before his death.

† Turner, vol. i. p. 115. Herbert, p. 15.

meant to relieve the place. The Duke de Longueville, assisted by the famous Chevalier Bayard, Bussy d'Amboise, and other able officers, was now in the field, and Henry hastened his departure. The English army, according to Herbert, consisted of about 9000 good fighting-men, besides those who belonged to the carriages, amounting to about 2000 or 3000 more. Sir Charles Brandon, a little before created Viscount Lisle, led the vanguard, whom the Earl of Essex, lieutenant-general of the spears, accompanied. In the centre the chief station was occupied by the king, having the Duke of Buckingham on the one hand, with 600 chosen warriors, and Sir Edward Poynings on the other, with as many more,—Sir Henry Guilford carrying the standard-royal. The rearward, which was composed chiefly of the retinue of Fox, bishop of Winchester, and Wolsey, was conducted by Sir William Compton; it mustered about eight hundred. In the spaces the great ordnance were placed; and the order of march was closed by Sir Anthony Oughtred and John Neville, at the head of 400 spears.* The weather was rainy, and scarcely had the troops passed the confines near Ardres, when 1200 French horse approached, under cover of a fog. An alarm arising that the enemy were near, Henry, with the ardour of a youthful knight, threw himself from his horse, and took his stand in the centre of his lansquenets. But, in spite of the remonstrances of the fiery Bayard, who urged an attack, De Piennes, the French officer, satisfied himself with reconnoitring the enemy. "I have been commanded," said he, "by the king my master, on my life to risk nothing, and only to guard the country." Here the wisdom of Louis and the error of his antagonist are equally conspicuous. Having determined on war, the English prince, who had a powerful army and most ample resources, ought undoubtedly to have attempted the conquest of Normandy.

Number of the English army.

Commanders.

English rear.

Unfavourable weather

Prudence of De Piennes.

* Herbert, pp. 15, 16.

CHAP. II.

Impolitic measures of Henry.

So certainly, indeed, did the French ruler anticipate such a design, that in the first instance he sent Tremoille to defend this province; but, finding that the attack was concentrated upon Terouenne, he at once discovered his advantage, and resolved to strain every effort to protract the siege. To detain the enemy before that city, to avoid a battle, and, by prolonging the campaign, to exhaust the patience of his impetuous adversary, was the policy of the more reflecting monarch, and the result showed that he had judged wisely.

Joins the camp at Terouenne.

Henry now advanced, and joined the camp before Terouenne, where, with that passion for magnificence which so early distinguished him, he caused a sumptuous pavilion to be raised. The siege then commenced in earnest. Baynam, the commander of the English pioneers, attempted a mine, but the French, by a countermine, defeated his operations; and the Count d'Angoulême, afterwards Francis the First, having arrived at head-quarters, annoyed the besiegers by his constant vigilance and activity. Torrents of rain fell, and not only discouraged the miners in their subterranean operations, but produced much discomfort to the troops; the king, leaving his rich tents of blue damask and gold, was constrained to inhabit a wooden house. The garrison deriving spirit from the distress of their assailants, discharged their artillery without intermission; while the foragers on all sides were perpetually intercepted and cut off by an active description of light cavalry, called Stradiotes, then much used by the French.

Mining and counter mining.

Arrival of the Emperor.

In the midst of these transactions, word was brought that the emperor had arrived, and was approaching to visit the king, who instantly hastened to meet him, exhibiting, in the interview, a striking contrast between English magnificence and imperial simplicity. Maximilian came forward in a plain doublet and cloak of black serge; Henry glittered all over with jewels; and his nobles, who formed his train, wore dresses of gold and silver tissue, whilst their horses proudly shook their

Contrast of appearance from Henry.

tassels and bells of gold.* Events now crowded thickly on each other. Scarcely had this ceremony been concluded,—hardly had the emperor intimated his intention of serving as a volunteer under his royal brother of England,—when a message arrived in the camp from James of Scotland, whose resentment had been roused to the highest pitch by the warlike politics of his brother-in-law. It was brought by Lyon-king-at-arms, and contained in writing a sharp expostulation, accompanied by a denunciation of war; to which Henry gave an angry answer, commanding the envoy to inform his master, that he had left an earl behind him in the north, who knew well how to defend the kingdom against the attempts of his master. The herald, however, pleading the privileges of his office, refused to bear a verbal message, and the monarch condescended to embody his reply in a letter which, owing to the death of the Scottish king at Flodden, never reached its destination.

War with Scotland.

Angry reply of Henry.

Six weeks had now been wasted in France, and an army, which was kept up at an enormous expense, had achieved nothing. Terouenne still maintained a vigorous defence; and so little progress had been made that, instead of a strait investment, a passage had been left open on the side towards the river, by which the French determined to throw in provisions. To prevent this succour, Henry constructed five bridges, and having been joined by the emperor, who wore the red cross of St George above his armour, the two sovereigns passed the stream at the head of the troops, whilst the enemy, to the number of 12,000 men, advanced from Blangy. Previous to the action, orders had been issued to all the captains of the French gens-d'armerie, instructing them that the object of the expedition was to revictual the town, but not to risk a battle.† The army accordingly advanced with spirit; but the moment the German horse, led by Maximilian, and the mounted English archers, com-

Waste of time and money.

Passage of the river.

* Hall, p. 544.

† Histoire de Bon Chevalier, vol. ii. p. 78.

CHAP. II.

Cautious policy of France.

menced an attack, the French cavalry, obedient to the injunctions they had received, began to fall back on their main body. This manœuvre, however, could not be executed with the coolness necessary to ensure its success. The assailants, shouting St George, pressed on the enemy; the deliberate retreat of the others soon

Panic of the cavalry.

quickened to a more rapid pace,—the ranks got disordered, and, notwithstanding the blows and remonstrances of their officers, the whole body of the gens-d'armerie, falling into irrecoverable confusion, struck their rowels into their horses' flanks, and fled at the top of their speed. The consequence, which might have been fatal to the main army, was averted by the

Bravery of Bayard.

bravery of Bayard, who, at the head of a small body of men, maintained a narrow defile, and gave time to the rest to regain their encampment. He then surrendered himself prisoner, and the same fate befel the Duke de Longueville, Bussy d'Amboise, Clermont, Lafayette, and

Battle of the Spurs.

other officers. Henry, delighted with the success of this skirmish, could not resist congratulating the French gentlemen on the extraordinary celerity of their retreat, and they, in allusion to their flight, with their characteristic sprightliness, denominated it the Battle of Spurs.*

Reception of the Chevalier Bayard.

On its being understood that so illustrious a knight as the Chevalier Bayard was amongst the prisoners, the Emperor Maximilian immediately sent for him, and some interesting details of their conversation have been preserved by Champier. "When the emperor," says he, "saw Bayard, he thus addressed him:—'Captain Bayard, what wind hath blown you hither at this time?'—'Sire,' said the chevalier, 'the imperial wind of your realm of Germany, and glad am I that it hath wafted me to a better place than I had dreamt of.'—'Certes, Bayard,' rejoined the emperor, 'you might well have said so had you come hither to see me, but I doubt your arrival is

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 10. Herbert, p. 16. Rymer, Fœdera, vol. xiii. p. 376.

somewhat against your will.'—'True,' rejoined Bayard; 'and yet, since I am a prisoner, I love better to be your prisoner than that of any prince in Christendom, and praise be to God that I am fallen into your hands.' The emperor then began to complain of the conduct of Louis the Twelfth, and Bayard warmly defended him. 'Let us have done talking of these vexatious matters,' at length said Maximilian; 'glad am I to see you, captain, and still more joyous would it have made me, had you come to me in my own country, a free and prosperous knight.'—'Sir,' said Bayard, 'if it pleases God, that shall be some day or other; for, after the king, my lord and master, there is not a prince in the world whom I would more willingly serve.' At this moment, as he was conversing with the emperor, Henry, the king of England, entered his tent. 'My brother,' said Maximilian, 'do you know this French gentleman?'—'No, by my faith,' replied Henry. 'And yet, assuredly,' said the emperor, 'you have often heard of him; he is the most renowned of Frenchmen,—the terror and hatred of every Spaniard.'—'Is it so?' replied Henry; 'then you can be speaking of none other than Bayard of France.'—'It is the very man, my brother,' exclaimed Maximilian; 'for this time, at least, you have guessed right.' Henry, when he heard it was Bayard, took him affectionately in his arms, and embraced him as if he had been a king; but the chevalier, extricating himself, bent his knee to the earth, and Henry, taking his hand, said, 'Captain, I rejoice to see you, and I could wish, for your honour and profit too, that it were in another state than that of a prisoner.'—'Sire,' said Bayard, I am a prisoner, it is true, but a voluntary prisoner. I was not taken prisoner, but of my free will surrendered myself, for it was my earnest wish to see his imperial majesty and your royal self also; this I now do; nor was it my purpose to fly like my brethren, for, in truth, I never was at a school where one was taught the use of one's heels.' At these words, Maximilian burst into a laugh, exclaiming, 'Certes, Captain Bayard, this is not

Courtesies of the Emperor and Bayard.

King Henry's first interview.

Reception of him.

CHAP. II.

Pleasantry of the Emperor.

your first attempt at a hoax or a banter, and you are quite right, since you have begun, to spare neither king, emperor, nor prince.'—'God forbid,' rejoined Bayard, 'that it should ever be said I wished to impose on so noble and beautiful a prince as the King of England. I have only spoken the truth, and told the story of my surrender.' The gravity of this reply overcame the emperor and the king, who again gave themselves up to a hearty fit of laughing. 'Well, sir emperor and sir king,' said Bayard, a little hurt, 'I here pronounce my protest that I am not to be treated as a prisoner taken by force of arms, for, had I so chosen, I needed not to have been a prisoner at all; but I praise God I never had a desire to fly like the rest; neither, so long as I may bear arms, shall I do so, by the help of the Creator of the world, but let me request that, as I have formerly been known to your imperial majesty, I may be treated according to my rank as a captain.'—'Assuredly,' replied Maximilian, 'thou shalt be treated, not only as an officer, but as a friend.'"*

Protest of Bayard.

Circumstances of his surrender.

The mirth of the two royal personages on this occasion arose from their ignorance of the circumstances under which Bayard had given himself up. Turner, in his interesting narrative of the battle, says, he "was about to surrender when he saw seated apart from his assailants, under a tree, a single knight who, to cool himself from the violent heat, and thinking no danger nigh, had taken off part of his armour. The chevalier rode up to him, and presenting his sword to his throat, exclaimed, 'Surrender to me or you die.' The knight had no alternative, and yielded himself his captive. This done, the other said, 'I am the Chevalier Bayard, and I now surrender myself a prisoner to you!' According to the laws of war, therefore, he was, as he described himself, a voluntary prisoner, and as such, he afterwards contended, that, as he had first made his captor captive, he was not obliged to pay any ransom. The matter was

Old laws of war.

* Histoire de Bon Chevalier vol. ii. p. 80.

referred to the decision of Maximilian and Henry, and they sustained his plea."*

Critical position of the French.

The defeat of the French gens-d'armerie in the battle of Spurs, had it been followed up with decision and rapidity by the conqueror, might have been attended with the most disastrous consequences to France; and for a moment Louis trembled for the probable fate of his kingdom. The Swiss, victorious in the fatal battle of Novara, had passed the Alps, penetrated into Burgundy, and were now besieging Dijon. It was this town alone which stood between their veteran legions and an immediate advance to Paris. On the other hand, the English had derived so much spirit from their late success, that, if they had pressed on to the attack of the French camp at Blangy, before the troops had recovered from their panic, there was every chance that the enemy, who in all amounted only to 14,000 men, would have been completely routed.† But it was fortunate for them that the military talents of the Fifth Henry were not destined to be revived in his successor; and those by whom his councils were directed were either blind to the career which they ought to have pursued, or chose to be so. Instead of following up their advantage and overwhelming Picardy, the English monarch spent another week in the siege of Terouenne. When the place was at length compelled to capitulate, he permitted the garrison to march out with the honours of war, and to gratify the wishes of his imperial ally, rased the fortifications, filled up the ditches, and destroyed the whole town, with the exception of the cathedral and the religious houses.‡

Excitement of the English.

Fatal loss of time.

Capture of Tournay.

Henry next directed his arms against Tournay, of which he became master on the 22d of September; and after a magnificent entry into this city, and some time spent in jousts and entertainments, it was thought advisable that, as winter approached, the campaign

* Turner, vol. i. p. 126. † Guicciardini, book xii.
‡ Carte, vol. iii. p. 10. Herbert, p. 16.

CHAP. II.

Return of Henry to England.

should close. He accordingly embarked for England, and returned to Richmond on the 24th of October.*

Cost and results of the expedition.

Thus concluded the expedition into France, which reflects little credit either on the wisdom of his councillors or on the talents of the sovereign. He had successively become the dupe of the crafty Ferdinand and the politic and accomplished Maximilian; whilst both princes appear to have overreached him in the same way, by offering incense to his vanity, and gratifying his excessive love of distinction. He had spent an enormous sum; and such were the difficulties in which Louis the Twelfth was involved after the defeat in the battle of Spurs, that all Europe believed the time was come when his country was once more to fall under the domination of England. "It was thought," says Guicciardini, "that if the English had followed their fortune, they had that very day opened a way to be masters of the whole realm of France;" but the sum of four hundred thousand crowns persuaded the Swiss commanders to repass the Alps,—the advice of Maximilian, who saw his own interest in the destruction of Tournay, concentrated Henry's efforts upon this point,—the personal ambition of Wolsey directed the attack, and afterwards spared the city, that he might enjoy its bishopric,—and the vanity of the king induced him to listen to the counsels of every interested person who knew how to conceal his purposes under the disguise of a little flattery.

Vanity and weakness of Henry.

Events in Scotland.

Whilst, in France, such mighty preparations had concluded in so trifling a result, events of greater consequence had occurred in Scotland, to which it will be necessary for a few moments to direct our attention. In that kingdom the French monarch had a faithful and affectionate ally in James the Fourth; and we have already described the arrival of the Scottish herald in the English camp before Terouenne, and the proud defiance he brought from his master. This denunciation

* Herbert, p. 17.

CHAP. II.

of war was followed by an immediate invasion of England,—the Scottish army being led by the king in person. James, a spirited and chivalrous prince, possessed high accomplishments as a knight, but failed in military experience; the Earl of Surrey, on the contrary, to whom the defence of the English borders had been intrusted, was an able leader, had grown gray in arms, and from his infancy had been nursed in a camp. As soon as he understood that the invader, after possessing himself of the castles of Wark and Ford, had taken up a position at Flodden, one of the Cheviot Hills, he pressed forward at the head of an army of 26,000 men, and by a successful manœuvre, induced James to desert his vantage-ground, on which he might have long defied an army thrice the number, and to descend towards the plain, where, after a desperately contested battle, the Scots were entirely defeated, their leader killed, and the flower of their nobility cut to pieces. The unhappy prince himself fought with the most determined courage, and his body was found next day surrounded by multitudes of the slain, and so mangled with wounds, that it was difficult to recognise it. His gauntlet and coat-armour were sent by the English queen to her royal husband, who was then in the camp before Tournay, with an assurance that this victory was more honour to him than if he had won all the crown of France.*

Scottish invasion of England.

Battle of Flodden.

Death of the Scottish king.

Surrey, however, from scarcity of provisions and the loss he had sustained in the action, did not find himself in a condition to pursue his advantage; and at the moment when Scotland seemed to lie prostrate at his feet, the earl disbanded his host, and gave the disconsolate kingdom leisure to summon her remaining resources, and prepare for a vigorous defence. So much was James beloved by his people, that it was long before they would believe in his death; and as some of his nobles had clothed themselves on the day of battle exactly like their prince, wearing the same armour and

Disbanding of the English host.

Popularity of James IV.

* Turner, p. 143.

CHAP. II.

Rumours of his escape.

surcoat, the confusion thus occasioned, and the circulation of many improbable and contradictory tales, disposed the credulous to conclude there might be some truth in the report of his escape. Many affirmed that he had gone, in obedience to a religious vow, on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; and Buchanan asserts in his history, that Telfer, an honest and veracious man, who had seen the battle, assured him that, when the day was irrecoverably lost, he himself saw the king cross the Tweed on horseback.*

Negotiations of Louis.

On his return to his dominions, Henry had ordered preparations for resuming the campaign in France as soon as the season should permit; but the skilful negotiations of Louis averted the war. That able monarch saw around him a complication of difficulties, from which it seemed almost impossible to extricate himself; yet he succeeded beyond expectation. He

Recovers the friendship of the new pope.

recovered the friendship of Leo the Tenth by a renunciation of the Pisan and an adherence to the Lateran Council; he conciliated Ferdinand by agreeing to his permanent possession of Navarre; he gained Maximilian by promising his daughter Renée as a bride for his grandson Charles, afterwards the renowned emperor; and he at last overcame the animosity of Henry, by artfully disclosing to him the treachery of his royal allies, and proposing a matrimonial union between the

Matrimonial union of France and England.

crowns of France and England. Louis was a widower in his fifty-third year; Henry's sister, the Princess Mary, was in her sixteenth, and her affections were already fixed on Charles Brandon, Viscount Lisle, one of the handsomest and most accomplished noblemen in her brother's court. Yet when Louis sought her hand,

Princess Mary.

love was compelled to fade before ambition, and a treaty was concluded between the two kingdoms, having for its basis the marriage of the French monarch to the Princess of England.

On the 9th of October she entered Abbeville with the

* Buchan. Rer. Scot. Hist. lib. xiii. chap. 41.

ladies of her train, amongst whom was Anne Boleyn, then a girl, and her marriage was soon after celebrated with extraordinary pomp, and amid the most magnificent pageants. First appearance of Anne Boleyn.

It has been incidentally mentioned, that Henry, in his French campaign, was accompanied by Wolsey, his almoner, whose counsels and character began now to exercise a conspicuous influence over the mind of the young monarch. This extraordinary man was of low origin; nor does there appear any reasonable ground for questioning the common story, sanctioned by the high authority of Lord Herbert, that his father exercised the trade of a butcher at Ipswich. The old man's will, which proves him to have been a citizen of considerable wealth, has been quoted against this opinion; but there is nothing inconsistent or improbable in a butcher being a wealthy burgess.* Educated for the Church, he distinguished himself by early attainments in such knowledge as Oxford could then communicate; his precocity of talent procured him the name of the Boy Bachelor; and for some time after this he taught the grammar-school adjoining to Magdalen College. But his talents for business, his quick discernment of the weak points of human character, and the unscrupulous readiness with which he accommodated himself to those he desired to please, soon pushed him into notice; and such was his boundless ambition, that his first preferments, which would have satisfied the desires of most men, served only as the steps to such an accumulation of power, dignity, and grandeur, as had never before this time been concentrated in any subject. Under Henry the Seventh, the execution of a difficult negotiation at the Imperial Court with unusual success and expedition, had recommended him to the royal notice; but, although he rewarded him with unwonted liberality, this cautious monarch was little worked upon by the address or flattery of others, and the full develop-

Wolsey.

His low origin.

Education for the church.

Boundless ambition.

Recommendation to royal notice.

* Lingard, vol. vi. p 45.

CHAP. II.

ment of Wolsey's powers was reserved for the reign of his son. It was then that Fox, the bishop of Winchester, who dreaded, it is said, the preponderating influence of Surrey in the council, introduced him, as a kind of balance against it, to the notice of the young monarch; and such was the happy use which he made of his opportunities, that, at the period of the king's campaign in France, we find him enjoying unbounded confidence, and possessing the highest political influence. From this period preferments flowed in upon him with extraordinary rapidity, and it appeared as if Henry had determined, that the man whom he honoured with special confidence should be the focus in which every ray of the royal favour should meet with intense brightness. He was made successively King's Almoner, Bishop of Tournay, Bishop of Lincoln, Cardinal, Legate, Archbishop of York, and Lord High Chancellor. If we except the endowment of his colleges, and his munificent exertions in the revival of learning, there is nothing peculiarly great in the character or career of Wolsey. Two principles regulated his life,—devotion to the Church of Rome, of which he hoped one day to become the head, and a constant desire to acquire the supreme power in the councils of his sovereign. In this last object he completely succeeded, and his success implies certainly no inconsiderable portion of ability, though we must hesitate to pronounce it of the highest order. He had carefully studied the character of the king; he flattered his weaknesses, released him from the irksome weight of government, and whilst he originated, conducted, and concluded all, he had the rare address to leave his royal master business enough to conciliate his vanity, and persuade him that he had guided, whilst he only followed the current of affairs. Deeply selfish, and looking to his own ends, whilst he pretended a zeal for the public good, he acted upon no great plan; squandering the wealth, and exhausting the military resources of the country, in vague projects, generally dictated by the policy of the Vatican, which

Motives for his introduction to the council.

Rapid preferment.

Successive offices.

Motives of action.

Management of the king.

brought neither glory nor profit, though they might terminate in some accession of dignity to himself. Haughty, imperious, and magnificent to an excess which had never before been seen in England, with a memory which seldom forgot an injury, and a spirit of revenge which slept only to exact a deeper interest; so sensual and luxurious, that he seems only to have escaped excessive profligacy by excessive business; insolent in prosperity, and abject in misfortune; it is difficult to account for the extraordinary partiality of Henry for one whose moral and intellectual qualities seem to challenge so little regard. It is probable that Wolsey's secret lay in persuading the king that his wealth, power, and splendour, were merely the emanations from the sun of the royal favour; that his glory was a reflection from his sovereign; and that a single blast of his displeasure might in a few moments wither the goodly boughs of that cedar, beneath which monarchs were content to take shelter. Such was indeed the truth, as the melancholy conclusion of his history very fully demonstrated; for none who had shot up to so grand and predominant a power in so brief a space of time, ever descended from his high honours by a more rapid course of calamity.

Base qualities of Wolsey.

Secrets of his success.

The marriage of the Princess Mary, one of the most beautiful women of her day, was a union in which youth and happiness were sacrificed on the cold altar of political expedience; and, however flattering to her vanity might be the name and station of a Queen of France, the contrast between her former lover, Viscount Lisle, as he glittered in the tournament given on the occasion, and carried off the prize from every competitor, and her aged husband, whose infirmities chained him to a litter, from which he overlooked the games, must have been mortifying to her heart. Nor did her trials end here; for, on the morning after her marriage, the Lady Guilford, her governess, to whom she was deeply attached, with her whole train of English attendants, was dismissed, and ordered to return home. It

Marriage of the Princess Mary.

Contrast between husband and lover.

CHAP. II.

Letter of the queen to her brother.

was on this sorrowful occasion that the unfortunate princess, deprived of her friends and left desolate amongst strangers, addressed the following letter to the king, her brother:—"My good Brother,—As heartily as I can I recommend me unto your grace. Marvelling much that I have never heard from you since our departing; so often as I have sent and written to you. And now am I left alone in effect; for on the morrow next after our marriage, my chamberlain, with all other men-servants, were discharged; and likewise my mother Guilford, with others of my women and maidens; except such as never had experience or knowledge how to advertise, or give me counsel in any time of need; which is to be feared may come more shortly than your grace thought at the time of my departing, as my mother Guilford can more plainly show your grace than I can write; to whom I beseech you to give credence. And if it may be by any mean possible, I humbly require you to cause my said mother Guilford to repair hither once again. For else, if any chance hap other than weal, I shall not know where, or of whom to ask any good counsel, to your pleasure nor yet to mine own profit. I marvel much that my Lord of Norfolk would so lightly grant every thing at their requests here. I am well assured that when you know the truth of every thing, as my mother Guilford can show you, you would full little have thought I should have been thus entreated. Would God my Lord of York had come with me in the room of Norfolk, for then am I sure I should have been left much more at my heartiness and contentment than I am now. And thus I bid your grace farewell, with as much loyalty as ever had prince; wishing you more heart's-ease than I have now."* The princess, when she wrote this melancholy epistle, was thinking of the gallant and noble Brandon, and sighing for the happy days which

Desolate state.

Ready compliance of Lord Norfolk

* Ellis' Letters, vol. i. pp. 116, 117. The spelling in the letter is modernized.

she had spent in England. Nor was she destined long to mourn her untoward lot. Not three months after her marriage, Louis, her husband, sunk under an attack of sickness which proved too much for a constitution already impaired. "The good king," says the amusing author of the Memoirs of Bayard, "had entirely altered his manner of living for the sake of his wife: before this, he used to dine at eight o'clock, and now he was obliged to dine at noon; six had been his accustomed hour of going to bed, and now he frequently sat up till midnight.* It was such irregularity of life, operating on a constitution already enfeebled, which hurried the uxorious prince to his grave. On being informed of this event, Henry despatched her former admirer, the Viscount Lisle, to bring the princess home; and the result may be easily anticipated. Mary, sick of her high estate, and faithful to the passion which the qualities of Brandon had inspired, declared that she would either follow her first-love or enter a convent; a marriage was secretly concluded at Paris, and the king, after a brief interval of resentment, was reconciled to the union. Brandon, who had been educated with the king, perfectly understood his disposition, and never presumed upon his connexion with royalty. The well-known motto embroidered on the pennon of his lance, as it is represented in an original picture of himself and the princess, is strongly indicative of his good taste and good sense:—

Death of Louis.

Cause of his death.

Secret marriage to Viscount Lisle.

Motto on his pennon.

"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."†

* Henault, by Nugent, vol. i. p. 352.

† Granger's Biog. Hist. vol. i. p. 82. Ellis' Letters, vol. i. pp. 122, 123.

CHAPTER III.

Henry's Foreign Policy—Rise of the Reformation—Field of the Cloth of Gold—Ascendency of Charles the Fifth.

Accession of Francis the First—Renewal of the League with England—Cardinal Wolsey—Death of Ferdinand of Arragon—Reformation—Rise of Luther—Charles the Fifth—His vast Ambition—Death of the Emperor Maximilian—Charles' Election to the Empire—Interview between Francis and Henry—Field of the Cloth of Gold—Fall of the Duke of Buckingham.

CHAP. III.

Accession of Francis I.

THE accession of Francis the First to the throne of France was followed by a renewal of the treaties between that country and Henry the Eighth;* yet it required little penetration to perceive, that the ambitious character of this young monarch, and the vast and warlike designs which he had formed, must soon embroil England in a continental quarrel. He had in view

Objects he aimed at.

two great objects, the re-establishment of the French power in Italy by the conquest of the Milanese, and the recovery of his dominions at home by the entire expulsion of the English. The first he determined to accomplish by force of arms, the second by negotiation, and in both he was successful. Having appointed his mother, the Duchess d'Angoulême, regent of the kingdom,

Battle of Marignano.

he crossed the Alps, and in a decisive engagement,—the dreadful battle of Marignano,—completely defeated the Swiss infantry, whose veteran battalions, long inured to

* Rymer, Fœdera, vol. xiii. pp. 476, 498.

victory, had been hitherto deemed invincible. The consequences of this triumph were, the cession of the duchy of Milan into the hands of the youthful monarch; the declaration of the Genoese in his favour; and a pacific interview with Leo the Tenth at Bologna, who not only confirmed his conquests in Italy, but flattered him with the hope of becoming master of the kingdom of Naples upon the death of Ferdinand of Arragon,—an event which it was imagined could not be very distant. Francis, at the same time, held a long consultation with the Pontiff on the political affairs of Europe; and the world beheld a sovereign, who had then scarcely attained his twenty-first year, dictating to the head of Christendom with an authority which belonged to the most matured experience.

Consequence of his success.

Interview with the pope.

His attempts, however, to recover the English provinces in his own country, as they led to an immediate collision with the ambitious Wolsey, were not destined to proceed with so little interruption. He earnestly desired to have Tournay restored to him, to the see of which this powerful minister had been appointed by Henry; and, in consequence of his intrigues and negotiations, procured a Papal Bull, by which a French ecclesiastic, who had been elected by the chapter, was reinstated in the bishopric. This proceeding roused to a high pitch the resentment, not only of the Archbishop of York, but of his royal master, who, about this time, had become infatuated in his predilection for his favourite; and Francis, finding no easier way of disarming their hostility, used his interest with the court of Rome to have the aspiring prelate elevated to the purple. This, which had long been the object of his ambition, was at length effected, and he was admitted into the sacred college by the title of Cardinal St Cecile beyond the Tiber. In the beginning of November 1515, his hat was brought by the envoy of the Pope to England. The messenger, it appears, was a person of inferior rank, and somewhat meanly habited; upon which Wolsey ordered him to be stopped till he should be better

Collision with Wolsey.

Bishopric of Tournay

Wolsey created cardinal.

CHAP. III.

Reception of the envoy.

Ceremonial with the hat.

Entertainment after the ceremony.

Resignation of Warham.

Appointed legate.

arrayed. At Blackheath he was met by the Archbishop of Canterbury with a train of prelates and nobles, who conducted him with great pomp to London, and afterwards through Cheapside to Westminster, the city-companies lining the streets, and the lord-mayor and aldermen attending in their stands. On reaching the Abbey, eight abbots received the hat, and conveying it to the high-altar, laid it thereon. There it remained till Sunday the 8th of November, on which day the new cardinal, accompanied by the principal nobility and gentry, repaired to the Abbey, and kneeling before the altar with his hood over his face, listened reverently whilst the benediction and prayers were read to him. At the conclusion, the primate placed the hat upon his head, and the sacred ceremony being ended, the new dignitary returned with his train to his palace at Charing-Cross, where he had provided a sumptuous entertainment. Amongst the guests were the King and Queen of England; the Queen-dowager of Scotland; and Henry's sister, the Queen-dowager of France.

Scarcely had this splendid ceremony concluded, when Warham, disgusted with the irksome task of opposing the arrogance of Wolsey, resigned the seals, which were immediately presented by Henry to the cardinal; and not long after the crowning-stone was placed upon his pinnacle of authority and grandeur, by his being appointed *legate a latere*. The powers of this commission were of the highest sort. He might summon the primate to his convocation; he had authority to superintend, and even to correct any thing which he esteemed irregular within the jurisdiction of any see in England; he could appoint all officers in the spiritual courts, and present to all ecclesiastical benefices, constitute masters of faculties and masters of ceremonies to advance his dignity, and exercise a visitorial power over all monasteries and colleges within the king's dominions.* His pride now became excessive, and the pomp and ceremony which he

* Fiddes' Life of Wolsey, pp. 106, 107.

CHAP. III

assumed were greater than had ever before been seen in England. His own habit was gorgeous, his upper vesture being generally scarlet, crimson-taffeta, or crimson-satin; and, not contented with his red hat, he wore red gloves, whilst his shoes were silver-gilt, inlaid with pearls and precious stones. His train consisted of 800 persons, amongst whom were nine or ten lords, fifteen knights, and forty squires; it was computed that his income, with the numerous presents and pensions which he received from abroad, equalled the annual revenue of the crown;* and such was the splendour of his domestics, that his cook was clothed in satin or velvet, and wore a gold chain. When he appeared in public, the state he assumed almost exceeded that of royalty. His cardinal's hat was borne before him by a person of rank; nor would he, in coming to the king's chapel, permit it to be deposited on any place except the altar. Two priests, the tallest and comeliest that could be found, carried before him two huge silver crosses,—one to mark his dignity as cardinal, the other as archbishop of York; two gentlemen preceded them, each bearing a pillar of silver, and before these marched his pursuivant-at-arms, having upon his shoulder a ponderous mace of silver-gilt. Most of his attendants were mounted, their horses being richly caparisoned; but he himself rode a mule, the trappings of which were of crimson-velvet, with a saddle of the same, and gilded stirrups. When he had heard mass in the morning, and retired for a while to his private chamber, he would then issue out to attend his levee, apparelled all in red. About his neck was a tippet of sables; and it was his custom to hold in his hand an orange stuffed with aromatic confections, to which he smelt as he passed amongst the press, or was pestered with many suitors.†

Excessive pride and pomp.

Immense income.

State in public.

Mounted attendants.

The conquests of Francis in Italy now awakened the

* Fiddes' Life of Wolsey, p. 107.

† Cavendish, by Singer, vol. i. pp. 42, 43. The reader may trust to the accuracy of the portrait, as it was drawn from the life by one of his own suite.

CHAP. III.

Henry's jealousy of Francis.

jealousy of Henry not less than of Wolsey, who, notwithstanding the court paid him by that monarch, had not forgotten the affair of the bishopric of Tournay, and was therefore disposed to encourage the resentment of his master, and even to co-operate with the emperor in expelling the French from Italy. But the greater part

Exhausted exchequer.

of the treasure left by the frugal Henry the Seventh was now squandered; and Maximilian, whose poverty had procured for him the title of Prince Pochi Denari, or Few Pence, abandoned all hopes of success, on discovering that the subsidies secretly promised him by England were not likely to be soon paid. At this moment died Ferdinand, king of Arragon, one of the ablest rulers in Europe, whose reign had been more politic and successful

Death of the king of Aragon.

than any of his contemporaries. By his will, he left his kingdom to his daughter Joanna, mother of the archduke, afterwards Charles the Fifth; but in consequence of the weakness of her intellect, the Cardinal Ximenes was, by the same deed, appointed regent, till the arrival of the prince in Castile. Not long after, Maximilian appears to have amused Henry with a proposal of re-

Manœuvres of the emperor.

signing the empire into his hands,—an absurd and impracticable project, the true intent of which was exposed by Tonstal, one of the English ambassadors, in a letter to his sovereign. "He explained to him, that by long usages, which had been sanctioned by the ordinances of Holy Church, the person elected must be a German, and a subject of the empire; that when elected, he must confess his realm to be under subjection to the empire, and that, before he could be chosen emperor, he must be King of the Romans,—a dignity," said the envoy, "which Maximilian, as I hear, intendeth to retain, so that I repute it impossible your grace should be chosen; and I am afraid the said offer, being so specious, was only made to get thereby a sum of money."*

Tonstal.

Tonstal was a peculiar favourite of the king, and one of the most accomplished scholars in Europe. His

* Ellis' Letters, vol. i. p. 134.

character demands a moment's attention, as his classical attainments, his writings, and his encouragement of learned men, contributed essentially to the introduction of polite literature into England. Who his parents were is not certain; but it has been gravely maintained, that his remote ancestor had the honour of shaving and cropping William the Conqueror; on which account, the family bore for their arms three combs argent, upon a ground sable. When he had reached the age of seventeen, he became a student in Baliol College, Oxford, at the auspicious epoch when Grocyn returned from the Continent, and began to deliver his Greek lectures in that seminary. From thence he removed to Cambridge, and soon after passed over into Italy, where he took up his residence in the University of Padua. After having enthusiastically devoted himself in that school to the study of the classical authors, he was advised to apply to the civil law; but his penetrating mind and his critical acquaintance with the learned languages speedily detected the miserable condition of this science. We are informed of this in one of his letters, written to Budæus when he was eagerly expecting the commentaries of that great scholar, which contributed essentially to the revival of the study of the civil law in Europe:—"How grateful to me is the prospect of receiving your commentaries, you may learn," says he, "from what I now tell you:—After I had acquired in my youth some little acquaintance with polite literature, my friends advised me to study the civil law, as the mode best adapted to secure success in the world. My masters were the most celebrated that Italy could then afford, very Scævolas and Papinians, as the world thought. To what a state of agitation would I sometimes reduce them, when some unhappy law, dragged neck and heels into their argument, was made to speak any opinion but its own; and they would glory that its true meaning was brought to light, when, in fact, it was buried more deeply than before. Upon these occasions I would sometimes resent this indignity, venture to point out

CHAP. III.

His character and attainments.

Study at Oxford.

Letter to Budæus.

Study of the civil law.

CHAP. III

Protest against the obscurities of law.

how grievously they had wandered from its true meaning, and recall them to that more just reading, which a consideration of the depraved passage had at the moment suggested; but all this was to no purpose. I only appeared as arrogant to them as they were contemptible to me. Accursius, by whose glosses they swore, was with them sacred, and to question his authority an inexpiable offence. Then it was that I would lament the miserable condition of these times, and pray that some asserter of the truth might one day arise to dispel the clouds which lay so thick upon the civil law, and restore its light to the world."*

Introduction to the king.

Tonstal probably remained in Italy till the beginning of the sixteenth century, and becoming acquainted, on his return to England, with Archbishop Warham, who appreciated his talents, was introduced by him to the young king. Ecclesiastical preferments now seem to have crowded upon him, and Henry employed him successfully in various diplomatic missions; one of which gave rise to the letter above quoted, relative to his election to the empire. He appears to have been

Class of men.

the last of those eminent men, who, from the general ignorance of classical literature which reigned in England, were driven to seek for new and better light abroad; and, after a residence of many years on the Continent, when he arrived in his own country, he brought with him a mind richly stored with various knowledge. He was an elegant Latinist; he had

Knowledge of languages.

ardently cultivated the Greek language, and was amongst the few who perfectly understood its beauties and had mastered its difficulties; he was an excellent Hebrew scholar; he is noted, both by Godwin and Wharton, as the most accomplished mathematician of his time; he was well read in the civil and canon law; and, as the Church was the service to which he had early devoted himself, he was a learned though perhaps not a very sound theologian. To these multifarious endowments

* Erasmi Epistolæ, b. ii. ep. 29.

he added a purity and sanctity of morals, and a pleasant courtesy of manners, which made him at once respected and beloved. His friends were the greatest scholars and the highest dignitaries of the age. Erasmus loved him, Budæus corresponded with him, Warham cherished him with especial affection, and the king not only employed him in the most confidential services, but so much admired his powers of conversation, that in his progresses he always kept him near his person.

Learned friends.

Such was the history and character of this remarkable man; and, returning to the subject which introduced him, the offer of the empire to Henry by Maximilian, it appears that the monarch embraced the same view which had presented itself to his ambassador. He justly suspected that the emperor, with an exchequer completely exhausted, was merely solicitous for a pecuniary supply, and accordingly waved the subject, by declaring it would be time to entertain so generous a proposal after the French were expelled from Italy. Soon after this, the English sovereign, whose feelings were seldom permanent upon any political subject, became more reconciled to the glory of Francis; who, never ceasing to pay his court to Wolsey, at last conciliated his favour the effects of which were soon apparent in the complete establishment of pacific relations between the two princes.

Henry and Maximilian.

Vascillating policy of Henry.

In 1497, during the reign of Henry the Seventh, the spirit of maritime adventure had been rewarded by the important discovery of North America, in a voyage conducted by a Venetian merchant, named John Cabot, assisted by his son Sebastian.* This last, who became afterwards one of the greatest navigators of his age, commanded a second expedition to the same shores in 1498; but not finding sufficient encouragement in England, he passed into Spain in the year 1512, and rose to distinction under the patronage of Ferdinand, who fully appreciated

Spirit of maritime adventure.

John Cabot.

* Historical View of the Progress of Discovery on the more Northern Coasts of America, Edinburgh Cabinet Library, p. 19-24, inclusive.

CHAP. III.

Sebastian Cabot.

his talents.* Upon the death of this monarch in 1516, Sebastian once more returned to England, the country of his nativity, and suggested to Henry that scheme for the discovery of a north-west passage, which had long occupied his own thoughts. The young sovereign received him gladly, and fitted out several vessels, which he intrusted to his guidance. The little squadron accordingly sailed in 1517; but it happened unfortunately, that there was conjoined in the command with Cabot, Sir Thomas Pert, at that time vice-admiral of the kingdom, by whose timidity and obstinacy the success of the expedition was entirely frustrated. Considerable obscurity hangs over the main incidents of the voyage; but it is certain, that before he was compelled to turn back, the spirited seaman had reached the latitude of 67½°, and even penetrated the straits and entered the bay, which was afterwards, at the distance of ninety years, to be distinguished by the name, and claimed as the discovery of Hudson.†

Sir Thomas Pert.

Moral revolution begun

It becomes necessary to attend, at this point of our biography, to the outbreaking of a great moral revolution, which, under the control and guidance of that all-wise and beneficent Creator, who at first separated the light from the darkness, has produced extraordinary changes in the destinies of the world. At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the immense and

* Memoir of Sebastian Cabot, by Mr Biddle of Pittsburg, pp. 100, 101,—an acute work, of which I need not say that I fully appreciate the original research which it displays, although in some important points I have differed from the conclusions of its author.

† Historical View of the Progress of Discovery on the more Northern Coasts of America, Edinburgh Cabinet Library, p. 39-41, inclusive. For a more critical and detailed account of this remarkable voyage, see Memoir of Cabot, p. 117-119. It is singular that so justly eminent a writer as Southey, in his late work, the Naval History of England, has omitted all mention of this voyage for the discovery of a north-west passage; whilst the account of the voyage of John and Sebastian Cabot in 1497, and the subsequent voyage of Sebastian in 1498, events which it is no exaggeration to designate as amongst the greatest in maritime importance during the fifteenth century, are passed over with a very slight notice.

venerable fabric of the Romish Church appeared to be firmly fixed on that foundation which had endured the shock of so many centuries; and yet it could scarcely have escaped the notice of an attentive observer, that some events had taken place, and some principles were then in the course of operation, which could not fail to introduce important modifications in its worship, tenets, and discipline. On the one hand, it was not to be denied, and it was accordingly admitted by many who never separated from her communion, that there was much in the Church requiring reformation and amendment. In the course of succeeding centuries, there had gradually grown up a mass of error, tradition, and strange unmeaning ceremonies, the greater part of which had originated in the imaginations of men, and could not by any ingenuity be traced either to Scripture or to the usage of the apostolic times. Whilst such was the case, and when no one could shut his eyes to the ignorance, idleness, and corruption which reigned throughout the great body of the Romish clergy, it was apparent, on the other hand, that every day the laity and the people were becoming more enlightened; that the powers of the human mind were gaining strength, and that a spirit of inquiry new to these times had begun to manifest itself, from which important results were to be anticipated. Some great events concurred at the same period to foster this spirit, and to discipline it for the contest in which it was so soon to be engaged. The invention of printing, the revival of literature, the study of the civil law, the introduction of a critical knowledge of Hebrew in some of the continental universities, and, most of all, the translation of the Scriptures in many of the European countries into the vulgar tongue, all contributed to enlighten, to purify, and to stimulate the intellectual faculties, and to set them free from that state of moral torpor and indolent prostration which rendered them the easy captives of credulity and superstition. Nor is the observation to be omitted, that within the Church itself a principle of inquiry and an

Elements of change in the Romish Church.

Admitted necessity of reformation.

Progress of the people

Causes of progress.

CHAP. III.

Principles of inquiry at work.

ardent desire of reformation was at work, which, although it left untouched the great articles relative to faith, worship, and discipline, was nevertheless prepared to proceed to a considerable length in the removal of the prevailing corruptions, and in imparting purer instruction to the people. It was at this time that Martin Luther arose, an extraordinary man, and destined by Divine Providence to be the principal mover in the discovery and dissemination of the truth.

Martin Luther.

He was born at Eisleben, in Saxony, in the year 1483. His father was a miner, and, as to fortune, in very moderate circumstances; yet, by his exertions, his son received an excellent education. The youth was at first destined for a legal profession; but, being possessed of warm feelings and an ardent imagination, an accident which befell a companion, who, when conversing with him, was struck dead by lightning, so deeply affected him, that he joined the order of Augustine Friars, where he soon rose to eminence; and, on occasion of some disputes in his convent, was sent to Rome. It has generally been supposed, that the sight of the corruptions in that luxurious capital, and the scandalous lives of the clergy, produced a deep effect on his mind; yet, on his return to Saxony, and down to the year 1512, we find him animated with the most lively zeal for the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, and so earnest in the defence of those points of doctrine which he afterwards attacked, that he was ready, he declared, to carry the first fagot for the martyrdom of Erasmus, who had dared to write against the sacrament of the mass and the invocation of the saints. Whilst in this temper, the perusal of the works of John Huss was attended by a remarkable revolution in his opinions. He became disgusted with the subtleties and barbarisms of the scholastic theology, and, animated by an honest love of the truth, applied himself with enthusiasm to the study of the Scriptures and the works of St Augustine.* In 1516, some of those

Joins the Augustine Friars.

Zeal for papal authority.

Works of John Huss.

* Gerdes' Histor. Evangelii Renov., vol. i. p. 89.

great questions which lie at the foundation of all sound theology, had formed the subject, not only of his private study, but of public disputation. As he became conscious of his powers his confidence increased; his efforts in the detection of error and the investigation of truth assumed a more decided form; and his mind became gradually more alienated from the corruptions of the Romish Church. CHAP. III. Workings of his mind.

At this critical moment, Leo the Tenth, desirous to realize his extravagant design for the completion of St Peter's, authorized a sale of indulgences in Germany, for the purpose of defraying the expense of this vast undertaking. These indulgences promised, on the authority of the Pope, an exemption from the pains of purgatory to all who should buy them; and soon after their promulgation, some persons who had confessed themselves to Luther, refused to perform penance, on the ground that they had purchased an immunity from so disagreeable a duty. It did not belong to the zealous and perfectly upright character of the reformer to suffer this abuse; and refusing them absolution, he determined to inquire more fully into the nature of the document upon which so extraordinary a demand was founded. This led to the publication of his famous theses against indulgences; and as some obscurity rests upon this first and most important act of the reformer, it may be interesting to give his account of it in his own words:—"It happened, about the year 1517, that John Tetzel, a Dominican monk and illustrious declaimer, began to preach indulgences and sell them for money, as he best could. He was a man whom Maximilian the Emperor had condemned to death, and who had been saved from this ignominious fate by Frederic the Elector. I was then a preacher and doctor in the University of Wittenberg; fresh and vigorous from my theological studies, in the flower of my years, zealous and well-read in the Scriptures. When the people, therefore, flocked in great crowds to Wittenberg, Juttenbock, and the neighbouring towns, I, being as ignorant of the real nature of

Sale of Indulgences.

Luther's penitents.

Refusal of absolution

John Tetzel

CHAP. III.

Questioning and doubts.

these indulgences as many others around me, began quietly to question and doubt whether we might not be better employed than in running so much after them. The same observations were made by me in a discourse which I delivered in the church of the citadel, for which I incurred the displeasure of Frederic the Elector, who had become a suitor for a special grant of indulgences to defray the expense of that church, which he had himself founded and warmly loved. Seeing this, I remained passive, and allowed things to take their course; when reports were brought me of the extravagant and boastful assertions of Tetzel regarding the efficacy of these indulgences."

Mode of deluding the people.

Luther then enumerates some of the ridiculous and idle stories with which this mercenary agent was in the habit of deluding the people. He declares he was fond of telling them, that at the first clink of their money the souls would spring out of purgatory; that his indulgences had saved more souls than the sermons of St Peter himself; and that pardon might be purchased, not only for past sins, but for such as should be committed in future. The reformer then proceeds as follows:—"I was at that time ignorant for what uses the money thus collected was destined, but soon after a treatise was published, under the authority of the Bishop of Magdeburg, in which the quæstors or farmers explained their right to this traffic in indulgences. It was then apparent to me that Tetzel, being the most successful collector, had been brought to Wittenberg by the Archbishop Albert, who, at that moment, was indebted in a great sum of money to the Roman See for the purchase of the bishopric of Mayence. Indeed, within a brief space of time three archbishops had deceased, and the price of the pall had been thrice paid, amounting, as was affirmed, to the sum of 26,000 or 30,000 florins. The money having been advanced by a banking-house at Augsburg, Albert had adopted this mode of repayment, extorting gold by the clamour of his agents, who had already collected a large sum,—half of which, however, he was

Use of the money raised.

Archbishop Albert.

obliged to send to Rome for the building of St Peter's. All these particulars I afterwards learnt, but I was then ignorant of them. I addressed, however, a letter to Albert, and sent him my theses, requesting that he would exert his authority to inhibit Tetzel from preaching, as it was to be feared some evil consequences might arise out of his continuance. I took the same step with my ordinary, the Bishop of Brandenburg, by whom I was much favoured. He replied that, as the matter appeared to him, the wisest course which I could adopt was to remain quiet; that I was about to question the authority of the Church, and might bring much trouble upon myself. Both the elector and the bishop concurred, as I suppose, in the idea, that to a dependent and miserable man like me the power of the Supreme Pontiff would be a subject of very grave consideration. Nevertheless, my propositions against Tetzel were thus made public, and in fifteen days they had flown through every part of Germany. All complained of the indulgences and of the articles of Tetzel, but the bishops and doctors were silent, being kept in awe by the Dominican inquisitors, who stalked about with their denunciations of fire and fagot; and Tetzel had already sharply admonished some of them who had ventured to murmur a little at his proceedings. For this reason I was highly lauded as an illustrious doctor, who, standing alone, had dared to attack the abuse. Yet this reputation pleased me little. My mind was in a state of doubt as to the nature of these indulgences, and I dreaded that I had undertaken a business above my strength."*

Address by Luther to the Archbishop.

Propositions against Tetzel.

Such, as it is given by Luther himself, is his ingenuous account of his first proceedings against indulgences; and it is evident, from the expressions he there uses, that his mind, in the first stages of the controversy, was simply in a state of doubt and inquiry; that his object

Early state of Luther's mind.

* Lutheri Apologia adversus Henricum Brunsvicinsem. Seckendorf. Hist. Lutheranismi, lib. i. p. 16.4. Gerdes' Hist. Evangelii Renovati, vol. i. pp. 91, 92, 93.

CHAP. III. was to ascertain the truth; and that nothing could be farther from his intentions at this moment then a rupture with the Holy See. The controversy, however, once begun, could not rest in this stage. Tetzel attempted a reply; renewed inquiry brought to the honest and vigorous mind of his antagonist an accession of light, and an increasing conviction that the grounds on which the indulgences were founded could not bear examination. The Dominican, provoked by what he deemed his heretical obstinacy, cast the theses of his opponent into the flames; and Luther's disciples, who by this time were daily increasing in number, imitated the violence of the Romish champion, by publicly burning his programmata. This was an open declaration of war. Within a short space of time many theologians were engaged in the discussion; and whilst the monk of Wittenberg acutely availed himself of every error which was committed by the ignorance and extravagance of his adversaries, he at the same time directed the most respectful letters to the Supreme Pontiff, as head of the Church, acknowledging his authority, and imploring him neither to prejudge his cause, nor to give credit to the misrepresentations of his enemies, but to reply to his arguments, and convince him on Scriptural grounds that he was in error.

Progress of the controversy.

Burning of Luther's theses.

Acuteness of Luther.

Whilst such was the spirit which animated him in this early stage of the controversy, it was apparent to every attentive observer that his cause was greatly strengthened by the condition of the Church in Germany, and the obstinate and unprincipled line of policy which the court of Rome had thought it necessary to pursue with regard to that country. Upon this subject I gladly borrow the description of a late able historian of the Church:—"If the oppression of Rome," says he, "was now generally felt and acknowledged throughout Europe, if the scandals of the court were now becoming every where notorious, and the vices of the monks and the clergy had inflamed the general hatred of Christendom, there was no country in which the tyranny or the

Condition of the church in Germany.

licentiousness of the Church was so shamelessly exhibited, or so deeply detested, as in Germany. Nor was there any region more pregnant with popular superstition, and with the fruits so diligently gathered from it by a worldly priesthood. The Germans had endeavoured to protect their Church against the pontifical depredators by the concordats of Constance and Aschaffenburg; and, however narrow the field of amendment which they comprehended, still, had they been strictly observed, some advantage would have been produced, and some irritation allayed. But so far were the Popes from any desire to correct usurpation by timely concession, or sincerely to conciliate those whom they had injured, that they made it their policy to elude the conditions which they had reluctantly accorded, and to resume in substance the spoils which they had in semblance restored. By this conduct, they not only nourished without any remission the prevalent animosity against them, but they inflamed it still farther, when they aggravated former impressions by recent perfidy. There was, indeed, no part of Christendom wherein the whole machinery of the apostolical chancery had worked with such pernicious efficacy as in Germany. The privileges of the jubilee, so fruitful to the see which granted, so expensive to the districts which enjoyed them, were dispensed during the schism principally to that country; the fathers of Constance and Basle published, though they failed to remove, its complaints; and the 'hundred grievances,' which were afterwards (1523) presented to the Diet of Nuremberg, formed a catalogue of hereditary wrongs, the subjects of perpetual remonstrance, and of remonstrance which was perpetually despised. The Papal usurpations enumerated in that celebrated document are severally placed under three heads:—Such as tended to enthral the people; such as impoverished and despoiled them; such as withdrew them from the secular jurisdiction. Thus the interests of the people were become the foundation of the remonstrances of their rulers, and thus, too, was

Tyranny and licentiousness.

Policy of the Popes.

Privileges of the jubilee.

The hundred grievances.

CHAP. III.

it in their affections that the reformer had fixed his surest asylum. Early in the controversy we find Luther writing to Spalatinus that he dreaded neither censures nor violence; that he had a safe asylum in the hearts of the Germans; and that his enemies should beware lest, in destroying one adversary, they should give birth to many."* This was written in August 1520. In the preceding month of April, in the same year, Frederic, the elector of Saxony, addressed to his envoy at the ecclesiastical capital the following remarkable expressions:—"Germany is no longer such as it has been; it is full of accomplished men in all the sciences. The people exhibit an extraordinary passion for reading the Scriptures; and if the court of Rome shall obstinately persist in rejecting the offers of Luther, and in treating the affair with haughtiness, instead of replying to his arguments, she must prepare herself for troubles which will hardly be appeased, and for revolutions which will be no less fatal to herself than to others."† To this wise admonition Leo the Tenth addressed a reply, in which he designated Luther as the "most wicked and detestable of all heretics,—a man who had no other mission than that which he had received from the devil." The condition of Germany being such as the elector represented it, and the disposition of the Vatican such as is betrayed in the answer of the Pope, it is not difficult to comprehend the nature or the result of the conflict which followed. On the one side, we are led to expect a succession of just demands, commencing in moderation, and rising in proportion to the contempt with which they were rejected; on the other, a fierce and selfish determination to maintain the established system in its full strength, without distinction of good or evil, of use or abuse, of truth or falsehood, of Divine or human authority; and the conclusion was such as must certainly follow, sooner or later, from such prin-

Luther's letter to Spalatinus.

The elector of Saxony's message.

Reply of Leo X.

Expected Results.

* Beausobre, Histoire de la Réformation, livre ii.
† Waddington's History of the Church, p. 719.

ciples. When the train is thus prepared, the moment of explosion will commonly depend on what men call accident, and thus will frequently arrive when it is least expected. Thus was it in the beginning of the Reformation. Never was the court of Rome more confident in the sense of security than at that instant. The various heresies which had so long disturbed the Church were, for the most part, dismayed or silenced; the complaints and petitions of the faithful had long been rejected with insolent impunity; the Council which had last been held had effaced by its subserviency the memory of Basle and Constance; and the warnings of Julian Cesarini were despised or forgotten. The temporal monarchy of Rome was more firmly established than at any former period; her power and influence were still considerable in every part of Europe; and her ecclesiastical agents had at no time been more numerous or more zealous in her service. The pillars of her strength were visible and palpable, and she surveyed them with exultation from her golden palaces; but she did not so readily discern the moral causes which were combining for her dissolution, and slowly and secretly sapping the foundations of her pride. The qualities of Leo the Tenth, though not despicable, were little calculated for that crisis. Fond of letters, devoted to pleasure, contemptuous of morality, ignorant of the science of theology, careless of the duties, neglectful even of the decencies of religion, vain, extravagant, necessitous, and venal, he had not the character which could prevent the rebellion or crush the rebel. Tempered in the schools of courtly negotiation, the weapons of the Vatican were of no service against a popular enemy; and the Pope himself at length condescended to complain, that the present disease was not in the princes and great prelates, with whom familiarity and interest prevailed, but in the people, with whom it was necessary to use reality, and make a true reformation. In that people, so long the object of pontifical contempt and spoliation, new energies had insensibly replaced the

Security of the court of Rome.

Establishment of the temporal monarchy of Rome.

Qualities of Leo X.

His complaints.

CHAP. III.

An occasion furnished.

The time for a reformer.

Luther.

His first ideas.

Expression of his plans to Spalatinus.

incurious and servile ignorance of former days; an occasion, and an instrument, were alone required to bring them into action. The former was furnished by the vices and blindness of the Church, the latter was raised up by Providence in the person of Luther. Yet this divine, endowed as he was with great and ardent qualities, was but the voice that called the labourers to their office. The abuses were so ripe and pregnant, and the perception of them so deep and so general, that, even had he never been born, the harvest could not long have wanted bold and holy ministers to gather it. "I do not doubt," says the reformer, addressing himself to Melancthon, "that if we are unworthy to bring this work to its conclusion, God will raise up others worthier than we are, who will accomplish it."*

Luther, however, was destined to see the mighty revolution completed, not, indeed, without the co-operation of many other great and active spirits, but principally, under God, by his own courage and perseverance. We have shown, that in 1517 he commenced his attack on indulgences, having at that moment no other idea than the one which had been in former days entertained by many Romish reformers,—that the practices of the clergy might be corrupt, whilst the system itself was sound,—the Divine authority and the infallibility of the Church of Rome unquestionable,—and the obligation to obey all that its authority enjoined admitted in its fullest extent. Even two years later than this, we find the reformer acquainting his friend Spalatinus that he had no intention of separating from the apostolic see. But further opposition, and a refusal to enter calmly into the consideration of the subject, excited a suspicion that the system, which so much dreaded the effects of inquiry and opposed all attempts to arrive at the truth, could not be founded on Scripture. Driven to an examination of the Papal decretals, and to a comparison of them with the doctrines of the Word of God, we find

* Waddington's History of the Church, p. 720.

the reformer imparting to the same confidential friend a suspicion, for it then amounted to no more, that the Pope might be antichrist: his conviction, as he proceeded, gathered strength; he pursued his investigations, and in a subsequent letter acquainted him that he had now little doubt of the fact.

Suspicions as to the true antichrist.

Still, however, the sword was not publicly drawn; and, had Luther been less honest and Leo more acute or more conciliating, the breach might possibly have been prevented or delayed; but such was not the will of Divine Providence,—the court of the Vatican would relax nothing in its haughtiness and obstinacy,—the mind of its antagonist, once convinced that he had discovered the truth, was of that noble and fearless nature which impelled him to communicate it to the world; and, in 1520, he published his famous Treatise against the Popedom. After some interval, he brought out his work on the Babylonish Captivity; and, in both of these productions, the important step was made, which constituted the difference between Luther and all preceding reformers, except Wickliffe. The blow was struck, not at the corruptions which grew on the surface of the Romish Church, but at the foundation of the mighty fabric itself; which, he contended, was laid in fallacy and sin. The breach was now irreparable; it was vain to expect that any reconciliation could take place; and, accordingly, on the 15th June 1520, the Supreme Pontiff fulminated against the reformer his damnatory bull; in which he delivered him over to Satan, commanded all secular princes to unite their efforts for his apprehension, and condemned his works to the flames. The spirit and character of this remarkable man were exhibited in his mode of reply. An enormous pile of wood was raised without the walls of Wittenberg, fire was then applied, and, as it blazed and crackled, the whole apparatus of pontifical wrath, bull, canon-law, and decretals, was cast into the flames and consumed, amidst the shouts of an immense concourse

Possibility of prevention or delay.

Treatise against the Popedom.

Irreparable breach.

Burning of the papal bull

CHAP. III.

Commencement of the Reformation.

of spectators.* From this memorable event we may date the true commencement of the Reformation. The wonderful steps of its progress we shall not, at this moment, pursue, but return to the state of England in 1518.

Power of Wolsey.

The extraordinary power of the cardinal in the councils of the kingdom still continued; and the ascendency which he possessed over the mind of his royal master was strikingly manifested in the strengthening of his pacific relations with France. To gain the interest of Wolsey, Francis spared no pains, and his success was complete. A league was concluded, on the 2d October 1518, between the two sovereigns, which Lord Herbert, for the excellence of its conditions, proposes as a precedent to princes, and which continued for many years after to be the rule by which Henry framed his political conduct. It provided, that in all time coming, perfect friendship and amity should be maintained between the kings of France and England by land and sea; that their several friends and enemies should, on both sides, be considered and treated as such; so that, if on any occasion the dominions of those included in the league should be invaded, the aggressor, after due warning, having failed to retire, his troops should be attacked by the rest, and compelled to abandon all hostilities; for which purpose a free passage should be allowed through each other's dominions. In the event of civil wars arising in any of the kingdoms belonging to the confederates, it was agreed that no interference should be suffered, unless these dissensions were kindled and maintained by some foreign prince. None of the covenanting powers was to be permitted, either by its own subjects or by mercenary troops, to levy war against any other, under the penalty of being accounted a violater of the league; and none was to be allowed to take the

League between Francis and Henry.

Defensive league

* Blunt. Sketch of the Reformation in England, pp. 99, 100. Milner, vol. iv. p. 474.

vassal or subject of any other into his protection without consent of the prince to whom his obedience was due. The articles of this agreement were to be submitted to the Pope, who was to be admitted as a principal contracting party, with the power of naming his allies, provided he intimated his consent within four months. All princes whose names were specified in the deed, and who should follow his example during the same period, were to be considered as principal contractors; and it was solemnly agreed, that whatever should be the conduct of other princes or potentates, a firm and inviolable friendship should continue between the crowns of France and England, their subjects, and successors.*

Union with the Pope.

Upon this great league was founded a more particular treaty, the two principal parts of which embraced the marriage between the French dauphin and Mary, the infant daughter of Henry, and the restoration of Tournay to France. The war in which the English monarch had gained that town was idle and impolitic; but, considering the expense at which it was maintained, and its distance from Calais, it would have been, perhaps, still more impolitic to have retained it. Francis, to whom its acquisition was of great importance, agreed to pay 600,000 crowns as the price of its delivery, and to settle upon Wolsey an annual pension of 12,000 livres, as an indemnification for the loss of his bishopric. The venality of this minister, and the certainty of the fact, that, in the whole of this transaction, he was the bribed instrument of Francis, is strikingly proved by a passage regarding the surrender of the place just named, taken from the diary of his confidential agent attached to the embassy: —"They," the French commissioners, "severally apart, answered, that the king and the council were determined to send your grace a marvellous great present, but what it should be, or what time it should be sent, I could in no wise get of them. Notwithstanding, the admiral said to me at another time, that before that time the king

Particular treaty.

Purchase of Tournay

Evidence of Wolsey's venality.

* Herbert, p. 31. Fiddes, p. 220.

CHAP. III.

would send your grace some other pleasure, and he desired me to let him know what would best content you; I answered, that I could not tell, but I supposed it was most convenient to send you goodly plate, or other rich jewels."*

Result of the amity between France and England.

The strict amity which had thus been concluded between France and England produced important effects in the condition and politics of some of the European powers. It withdrew the former from that intimate alliance with Scotland which had long subsisted between these kingdoms, and permitted Henry to carry on, without fear of interruption, his designs for its conquest and subjection. It roused the jealousy of the King of

Jealousy of the king of Castile.

Castile, afterwards the Emperor Charles the Fifth,—a prince who, although he had not yet reached his majority, already manifested those great qualities, and that vast ambition, which were destined, for so many years, to distract the affairs of the Continent with almost continual war. This young monarch, unsatisfied with the sovereignty of Spain and the Netherlands, already looked with eagerness to that splendid prize which he was afterwards to attain,—the possession of the empire.

His character.

Even from his earliest years, he had manifested a calm and calculating temper. Never drawn away from his purposes by pleasure, and almost despising the pomp of sovereignty, he possessed the rare faculty of concentrating his mind for a long time upon one great object; he weighed it under all its aspects, anticipated consequences, provided against disappointments, and was seldom disturbed by any sudden ebullitions of passion or enthu-

Superiority to his rivals

siasm. It was soon seen, that a prince thus endowed was likely to prove an overmatch for his contemporaries, Francis and Henry,—the one distinguished, undoubtedly, by a bold and intuitive genius for political affairs, but who, in the ardour of enterprise, often neglected the adaptation of means;—the other so capricious, passionate, and irregular in his projects, that it was absurd to expect

* Taylor's MS. Diary, quoted by Turner, vol. i. p. 240.

a prosperous result where there was neither consistency nor continuity of purpose.

Power of discriminating character.

Charles, on the contrary, to all these great qualities, added that power of discriminating character and detecting talent, which is one of the most undoubted proofs of a capacity for government, and an almost certain prelude of success in great undertakings. As it was his habit never to form his plans in haste, or on the spur of the occasion, but temperately to weigh matters, so, having once resolved, he was seldom diverted from his purpose; and having once chosen and given his confidence to any commander or minister, he would not permit even a failure or occasional error upon their part to change his judgment. Contrasted with the love of magnificence and display, which characterized his two rivals, the habits of Charles were singularly plain and simple. An old, but amusing and authentic writer, gives us a minute description of his person, character, and manner of life, which brings this great man vividly before us. "The constitution of his body," says he, "was neither fat nor grosse, but of a gallant proportion, and strongly sinewed. His hands were great and strong, fit to wield weapons and to manage arms. His legs were straight, and of due proportion, which chiefly appeared when he was on horseback; for he rode with such majesty when he was armed, and managed his horse so gallantly, that it seemed no gallanter knight could be found, or more fit to bear arms than himself. He was of a fair complexion, with clear azure eyes, which, although he were angry, were not terrible, but accompanied with a grave bashfulness and manly modesty. He was somewhat hook-nosed, after the manner of the ancient kings of Persia, which was a sign of the greatness of his mind. He had a long chin, a yellow beard, and his hair was of the colour of gold. Being come to years of discretion, although but a youth, for his father at his death left him only sixteen years old, he was sent to Mechlin, a city in Brabant, to school; his master's name was Adrian of Florence, than whom none in all that province was more

Plain and simple manners.

His personal attractions.

CHAP. III. famous for many great qualities,—as the issue of his life made manifest, for he became cardinal, and afterwards, being made pope on the death of Leo the Tenth, was called Adrian the Sixth. In his exercise of arms, he was instructed by Charles de Chevres, a valiant man-at-arms in that age. It seemeth that he profited little in learning, although he attained to the Spanish, Dutch, and French tongues; the Latin he understood somewhat imperfectly. Three books only he loved to read, which he caused to be translated into his own vulgar tongue, —the one regarded the institution of a civil life, which was the Courtier of the Count Balthasar Castelione; the other was of matters of state, the Prince, a discourse by Machiavel; the third was of war and knighthood, being the History of Polybius. He was very courteous in discourse, yet double, so as his speeches might have divers constructions; and so he ever saved himself by the interpretation, fitting it to his purpose, and alleging that his meaning was to be understood in this or that manner. He was never thoroughly angry, and never over-hasty in his answers, for he first consulted, and then concluded; but the conclusion must depend on him alone. As for those friends which were made great by him, he constantly maintained them, and would not endure to hear them ill spoken of, giving more credit to his own judgment than to other men's reports, reputing them to speak of envy or malice. He was an earnest defender of his ambassadors, notwithstanding they did aught that were not tolerable; for he loved to have good intelligence, and knew all that passed in every part of the world. He knew the natural inclination of those princes with whom he had to deal, and spent much money to have full notice of them; by reason whereof he negotiated with them, with lively reasons and sound arguments, and not with generalities, having his designs in all parts in readiness, attending opportunity and fit occasion to put them into execution. He was bountiful to such captains as served him in the wars, but it came but slowly; touching liberality, being rather niggardly

Adrian Florence.

Extent of his reading.

Command of his temper.

Good faith with his ambassadors.

and sparing than profuse or open-handed; and it seemed that in giving, he more favoured the Flemings than the Spaniards or Italians. He made a show to love peace, and not to desire wars but when he was provoked. Effecting great matters by negotiation, wherein he was more conversant than in arms, notwithstanding that in arms he was invincible and peerless. He was skilful in the managing of artillery, expert in the marshalling of an army; he could choose the ground and lodge his troops ably; and knew all the means and devices how to batter and assault a city,—so that all his attempts in war, or the greatest parts which he undertook, might well have good success. He rose late in the morning, and after he was ready, clad in no better than in silk or cloth, close made, more like a private gentleman than a great lord, but yet very neatly, he heard a private mass; then gave audience and despatched much business; then he heard another mass openly in chapel. After which he went to dinner, wherein he was a great feeder, eating grossly, so as to occasion frequent sickness. When ill he would affirm he could not live long; but getting well, he would make small reckoning of physicians, as though he should never be sick again; but he eat little at night, thinking to make amends for disordering himself at noon. After dinner he gave audience, and sometimes retiring himself into some secret place, he passed the time in drawing the plot of some fortress or other edifice; but most commonly he used to jest with a Polonian dwarf, which he had; or with one Adrian, the groom of his chamber; and often with the Baron of Monfalcon, steward of his house, in whose company he took great delight, for his ready and quick wit. He sometimes rode a-hunting, not with above eight or ten horse at the most; and returned ofttimes with a brace of wild staggs or boars. And sometimes he used to shoot at pigeons, choughs, or such like birds; and in all these disports he spent not above 100 crowns in the year, so much did he apply himself to matters of importance. He used the like sparing in clothing his court, in his table, in the

Professions of moderation.

Attention to religion and business.

Amusement.

Love of the chase

CHAP. III.

Plainness of his furnishing.

furniture of his house, and such other ornaments; insomuch that, if in trussing himself a point brake, he would tie it together and keep it, not to lose so much time as till another was fetcht. His sparing was such upon himself, that there was no man that spent ten crowns by the year, but spent more than he; but for other expenses passing through other men's hands, he did as other princes do, referring the same to other men's trust, yet he used all possible diligence to understand every particular, and would know even to a crown how his money was issued."*

Royal lineage.

By the father, Charles was of the imperial house of Austria; by his mother, he was descended from the ancient kings of Spain, whose crown he wore; whilst his grandmother, by the father's side, connected him with the royal family of France. There was thus in his person a confluence of ancient and regal blood; but he prided himself little on all this; it was not the antiquity or the splendour of power, but its reality, that he coveted. Had he been open to flattery, like Henry, he might have been persuaded, by the voice of his minions and courtiers, that he was born rather to receive greatness, from a happy concurrence in the affairs of the world and of events, than to achieve it by his own efforts; but he early perceived that such a belief would be the certain road to defeat and contempt; and whilst he did not disdain, in the accomplishment of his purposes, to offer flattery to others, he was himself inaccessible to all adulation.

Inaccessibility to adulation.

Death of the emperor.

Having succeeded to the crown of Spain, he had scarcely time to settle his new dominions, which he found in a state of great confusion, when he received accounts of the death of the emperor, on the 12th of January 1519. It had long been foreseen that the consequences of this event must be very important. Some time previous to his decease, Maximilian had repeated his offer of the empire to Henry; it was well known

* Pedro Mexia's History, translated by Grimeston, pp. 635, 636.

Claimants of the imperial crown.

that Francis looked to the splendid prize with that ardent and unscrupulous ambition, which manifested itself in all his political projects; and all who knew any thing of Charles the Fifth were aware that, with his usual penetrating and far-sighted policy, he had for some time been studying the most likely method of securing his election.

Vascillation of Henry.

The letter of the sagacious Tonstal, which has been already quoted, had for the moment determined Henry to refuse the offer made by the emperor; but scarcely had the news of his decease arrived in England, when a sudden revolution appears to have taken place in the mind of the monarch and of his minister Wolsey. The king now declared his ardent desire to possess the imperial crown, and it appeared that his former refusal had proceeded from a distrust of Maximilian, rather than from any disinclination to that high dignity. Pace, one of his ablest diplomatists, was despatched to Germany, with a commission to secure, if possible, the votes of the electors. The cardinal, in the elevation of his master, believed that he saw the surest pledge of his ultimate success in securing the Popedom for himself; and his conduct throughout the whole transaction appears to have been marked by his usual selfishness, duplicity, and love of power. Sir Thomas Boleyn, at that time the English ambassador in Paris, conveyed to Francis the most solemn assurances of support; to Charles, at the same moment, the monarch did not scruple to communicate his anxious hopes that he would be the successful competitor; whilst, in the instructions to the envoy, he insisted on his own pretensions, with an earnestness which it is impossible to transfer from the king to the minister. There can be no doubt, indeed, that here, as on other occasions, the art and influence of Wolsey predominated over the mind of his royal master; but no ingenuity of construction can lead us to believe that he could be ignorant of Pace having nominated him as a competitor for the empire.

Desire for the imperial crown.

Motives of Wolsey.

Duplicity of the English King.

Into the complicated intrigues which preceded the

CHAP. III.

award of the imperial crown, it would be idle to enter; but, from the first, a very slight degree of penetration might have convinced Henry that all prospect of success was hopeless. Between the other competitors, the great struggle seems to have been who should bribe the highest. "My lady," says Sir Thomas Boleyn, speaking of Louise of France, "telleth me she knoweth for a truth one of the electors had of him, meaning Charles, 200,000 crowns, naming him of Cologne. She saith also, that the electors among them all had not received from the king, her son, more than 100,000 crowns."* On this point, however, the royal dame was probably misinformed. Out of seven electors, Francis imagined that he had secured five, and he declared himself ready to expend 3,000,000 crowns of gold, rather than renounce his hopes of a successful result. He endeavoured also to secure in his favour the influence of the Holy See, by an assurance that his first efforts as emperor should be directed against the Turks, who, under Selim, one of the ablest and most victorious of their sultans, after completing the conquest of the East, had begun to threaten an irruption into Europe. Charles, however, although penurious in his personal expenses, could be lavish in his expenditure to accomplish any object of political ambition; and he took care to have an army in the field about the time the decision was expected, which, advancing towards Frankfort, under the pretence of overawing all such as might attempt to force a choice upon the electors, produced in his favour the very effect which they professed an anxiety to prevent. The consequences of these proceedings were such as might have been easily anticipated. The sentiments of the electors in favour of the King of Spain assumed daily a more decided form, as they counted his ducats and discerned the approach of his troops; while the Elector Frederic of Saxony, one of the best and wisest princes of his age, having declined the offer of the imperial crown, threw his influence into

Hopelessness of Henry's cause.

Enormous bribery.

Anticipations of Francis.

Charles's policy.

Feeling of the electors.

* Ellis' Letters, vol. i. p. 155.

the same scale. Henry abandoning his own pretensions, and forgetting his promises to Francis, enforced the recommendation of Frederic; and Charles, accordingly, on the 28th day of June 1519, was elected emperor.

Henry's desertion of his claims.

It is impossible to defend the conduct of the King of England in almost any part of this complicated intrigue. It was selfish, dishonourable, and insincere. He had promised, with an apparent generosity which gained implicit credit, his whole influence to Francis, and he himself started as a competitor against him; when he found success impracticable, he a second time falsified his engagements by giving his interest to Charles; and, to wind up the drama of political duplicity, his envoy so artfully represented his proceedings to the Spanish grandees, that they imagined the wishes of the English monarch and the presence of his ambassador had produced a favourable effect in securing the imperial prize to their master.

His dishonourable conduct.

On his return home, early in the month of August, Pace, who was at this time a favourite with the king, found that Henry was at Penshurst, enjoying the magnificent hospitality of the Duke of Buckingham. On posting thither, he was warmly welcomed by his royal master, whose sentiments as to the success of Charles the Fifth are strikingly described in a letter to Wolsey, written from the nobleman's seat now mentioned. "The king's highness," says he, "at mine arrival hither yesterday, was playing with the hostages. As soon as he had ended his play, his grace admitted me to audience, and accepted me lovingly, and heard me at large declaring unto him all the business of the late election of the King of the Romans; which declaration I ordered precisely according to such communication as was held betwixt your grace and me at my departure from you. And when the king's highness had well perceived and pondered the great charges and profusion of money exspent by the said King of the Romans for the obtaining of that dignity, his grace did highly wonder thereat, and said that he was right glad that he obtained not

Henry at Penshurst.

His reception of Pace.

CHAP. III.

Reception of the English ambassador.

the same, and called unto him the Duke of Suffolk, and showed the same unto him. His grace was singularly well contented to hear how honourably I was received in Almayne, and called the Duke of Buckingham to hear that. As touching the Pope's holiness, I showed unto his grace that three of his orators, two undoubtedly, were corrupted by the French king, expressing the reasons and evident causes why. Whereunto his grace said these words, formerly *interrogativé*, —'By the masse,' giving firm credence unto the same; so that I trust verily all that matter shall be laid unto the said orators, and not to the Pope. After this communication, his grace sported with me merrily of my journey, in most loving and familiar manner, and that done, went to supper, and spoke of me many better words than I can deserve. Other things have I none to advertise your grace of, but that the Duke of Buckingham maketh unto the king here excellent cheer."*

Talents of Richard Pace.

Richard Pace, who acted so principal a part in the management of Henry's claim to the empire, was a man of distinguished talents, the intimate friend of Erasmus, and warmly interested in the restoration of polite literature in England. Like many other eminent persons of that age, he owed his rise to ecclesiastical patronage,

Patronised by Bishop Langton.

having been noticed when a boy by Bishop Langton, in whose house he was educated, and who was charmed with his fine genius for music. By the generosity of this prelate he was sent to Italy, where he studied at Bologna under Bombasius, the friend of Clement the Seventh. Proceeding afterwards to Padua, he joined his countrymen, Tonstal and Latimer, by whose profound knowledge of the Greek language, his enthusiasm for the classics was increased, and his studies facilitated. Returning to England, he was patronised by Cardinal Bainbridge, with whom he again travelled to Italy, when this dignitary repaired to Rome to have his election as Archbishop of York confirmed by the Pope.

* Letters from the State-paper Office, published by Government, vol. i. pp. 8, 9.

Pace's acquirements, already great, were thus increased by a renewal of his intercourse with the country which was then the centre of learning in Europe; and his familiarity with the modern languages, united to that graceful courtesy of manners which his travels had produced, recommended him so strongly to Henry, that he chose him to be one of his secretaries of state, and employed him, as we have just seen, in matters of high concern in the government.* On the death of Colet, in September 1519, he became Dean of St Paul's; and after a residence at home of two years, which were chiefly passed at court, he was again sent to Rome by Wolsey, when the death of Leo the Tenth opened to that ambitious prelate some prospect of succeeding to the Papacy.

Accompanies Cardinal Bainbridge to Italy.

Made Dean of St. Paul's.

These frequent visits to the Continent, the facility which they afforded him of procuring Greek books and manuscripts, then rare in England, and his intercourse with the most eminent foreign scholars, acting upon a mind naturally devoted to literature, rendered Pace not only a great patron of that more liberal instruction, which, as we have seen, began at this time to be encouraged in his native country, but induced him to become himself an author. When ambassador at Constance, he composed a treatise upon classical learning, entitled, "De Fructu qui ex Doctrina Percipitur;" the object of which was, to convince young men that the exclusive devotion to the exercises of war and the amusements of the chase, which was still very prevalent, must render them useless and unprofitable members of the Commonwealth. These ideas, and the circumstances out of which the work arose, are explained with much liveliness in the following passage from its introduction:—"Let me now tell you how I came to write and publish this little treatise. Some two years hence, when I had just returned from Rome to England, I happened to

Influence of the facility he enjoyed.

His writings.

* Henry's value for Pace is strongly marked in a letter from Clerk to Wolsey, in the valuable volume of State-papers published by Government, p. 2.

CHAP. III.

Introduction to his first work.

make one of a party, to most of whom I was not personally known, and where, after we had taken a good deal of wine, a gentleman in the company began to talk about the proper education of his children, mentioning it as a first requisite, that he must look out for a good master, and have them punctual in their attendance at school. It happened that one of those persons was present who are never seen without a bugle for the chase dangling at their belt, and who may be said to hunt during the whole time of dinner. The moment he heard praise bestowed upon learning, this gentleman evinced the most angry impatience; and his rage at length getting the better of him, 'What nonsense are you talking, my good friend,' said he; 'for my part, I fairly wish all this learning at the devil. Are not all men of letters beggars? Even Erasmus, the most learned of them all, is, as I hear, a pauper; and in one of his epistles tells us he is married to a lady with a strange name, called *την καταῤῥατον πενιαν*, which, as I have had it explained to me, is, in honest English, the vile hag Poverty. . . . By'r lady, I had rather my son were hanged than that he should become a man of letters. Take my word for it, gentlemen, we ought to teach our sons better things. To wind a good note on the horn; to ride up to the nounds; to fly a hawk; to train an eyeass. But let us leave letters to the sons of our hinds and servants.' On hearing such an attack, I acknowledge I could not restrain myself from venturing a few words in defence of literature. 'You seem to me, sir,' said I, turning to this Nimrod, 'to judge somewhat erroneously upon this subject. For, let me suppose that any foreigner and stranger to our language (and you must allow that most envoys from foreign princes are such) should come on a mission to our king, and it were necessary to find some one to give a reply to his credence, your son, educated according to his father's plan, might blow the horn admirably, but would never be chosen; while the learned children of your ploughmen would be selected for this honourable office, and exalted far above

Learning reviled.

Humorous description of learning.

your hunters and hawkers.' This reply caused the gentleman to look about him in some confusion. 'Who have we got here?' said he: 'I never met him before;' and on my name having been whispered to him, he suddenly grew wonderfully quiet; began to talk in a low tone to himself, and, finding such an auditor somewhat of the dullest, had recourse to a very general expedient, —another glass of wine. At length, having nothing to reply, he changed the subject. So I was thus saved from further dispute with this mad blockhead, not by Apollo, who freed Horace from his garrulous companion, but by Bacchus. . . . I now, therefore, present to you the best methods by which I conceive our youth may be exhorted to the love and practice of liberal studies."*

Confusion of the contemner of learning.

It was an infirmity in Erasmus, that, although he often boasted of his own poverty and contempt of riches, he would not suffer others to take the same liberty; and this introduction of Pace's gave him so much offence, that, in a letter to More, he severely criticises the work; describing it as useless in the light of a serious treatise upon education, and little better as a piece of playful ridicule; too grave to be witty, and two witty to be grave; a species of mongrel begot between jest and earnest; and deformed by perpetual efforts at humour, which disappoint and fatigue the reader. Perhaps this great scholar, irritated by the allusion to his scanty means, was disposed to be too severe; yet it is not to be denied that the introduction, as well as some other passages in the work, were written in a flippant and ambitious style, and contain, even in their praise, a sort of concealed sneer against the poverty and vanity of men of letters, which was ill calculated to make it popular in the learned world, and rendered it dangerous to those youths for whose instruction it was professedly written.

Weakness of Erasmus.

Objections to Pace's work.

Grounds for his complaints.

Leaving Pace and the literary prospects of England

* See the original Latin dedication in the Appendix to Knight's Life of Colet, p. 454.

CHAP. III. for the present, it is time to say something of the course of public events, and their effects in that country. The election of Charles to the imperial dignity was received by his great rival, Francis, with dissembled calmness; but its probable consequences on his ambitious projects were too serious not to excite alarm. The conquest of Naples could no longer be so easy to the arms of France, —the possession of Milan, which had been a fief of the empire, was precarious,—the restitution of Navarre seemed hopeless; and it was not unlikely that the emperor might advance a claim to the Duchy of Burgundy, which had been wrested from his grandmother. All this was matter of deep mortification; and although the king suffered no symptoms of impatience or enmity to escape him, he only dissembled to gain the necessary interval for hostile preparations.

Assumed carriage of Francis on the election of the emperor.

Grounds of alarm.

Charles, on the other hand, was too acute not to be aware of such feelings, and, contemplating the probability of war, both monarchs endeavoured to secure the countenance of Henry. Francis, on his side, earnestly requested him to fulfil his long-intended purpose of having a personal interview on the marches between Guisnes and Ardres; and having flattered the pride of Wolsey by issuing a commission to that prelate, which intrusted to him the arrangement of the whole ceremonial, it was finally determined that the meeting between the two monarchs should take place in the summer of 1520.

Court paid to Henry.

The intelligence of this intended conference roused the jealousy of the Spanish ruler, whose information of all that passed in the English court was minute and accurate. He remonstrated by his ambassadors, and earnestly endeavoured to prevent it. The honour of Henry, however, was pledged, and no Castilian diplomacy could dissolve the agreement; upon which, the emperor determined to anticipate what he could not prevent. Being about to sail to Flanders, he intimated his wish to visit England before the king should pass the sea to meet his rival. This was called a visit, not an interview; and

Proposed conference between Francis and Henry.

Resolution of Charles.

although Francis, in his turn, expressed his dissatisfaction, it was too much to expect, that, to gratify his apprehensions, the uncle should refuse to receive his nephew when he landed in his dominions.

Approach of the emperor.

Towards the end of May, the preparations for the interview with the French monarch having been completed, Henry, with his queen and court, removed from Greenwich to Canterbury, and soon after intelligence arrived that the emperor was in sight of the English shore.* Upon this Wolsey, with a splendid train, proceeded to Dover, nor had he waited long when the navy of Spain anchored in the port of Hythe, on the Kentish coast. Next day it was a dead calm, and Charles, who had little time to lose, took to his barge, and was soon met on the water by the cardinal, who welcomed him with deep reverence: a canopy of cloth of gold was erected on the beach, on which the black eagle was embroidered, and under this the emperor landed with his suite, composed of the noblest grandees and the fairest women of his court. The illustrious stranger was lodged in Dover Castle, and Henry, the moment he heard of his having landed, taking horse, in little more than an hour entered the place, where the princes lovingly embraced, expressing the utmost joy at their meeting, and passing the greatest part of the night together. On the morrow they rode in state to Canterbury, the Earl of Derby, who belonged to the cardinal's retinue, bearing the sword before them. On arriving at the cathedral, where they were received by his eminence at the head of the clergy, the two monarchs paid their devotions, and presented their offerings at the shrine of St Thomas à Becket. They then heard high-mass, and having repaired to the archiepiscopal palace, Charles was affectionately welcomed by his aunt, the Queen of England. Here, too, the emperor, for the first time, was introduced to the late Queen-Dowager of France, now Duchess of Suffolk, at that time reputed the most

Meeting of Wolsey and the emperor.

Meeting of Charles and Henry.

* Rymer, Fœdera, vol. xiii. p. 767; Archæologia, vol. vi. p. 180.

CHAP. III.

Admiration of the Duchess of Suffolk.

beautiful woman in her brother's dominions. Remembering she had been intended for his wife, and gazing with undissembled admiration on her unrivalled loveliness, he is said to have experienced so much vexation, that he took little delight in the splendid festivities prepared for him. This, however, did not prevent him from paying his court to Wolsey. He promised him his interest in raising him to the Papacy,—he presented the most splendid gifts, which Lord Herbert affirms were taken out of the spoils of Mexico, and he treated him with the utmost reverence, submitting his own judgment to his superior wisdom. All this proved too strong a bribe for the integrity of the venal cardinal, and there can be little doubt, that from this moment he deserted Francis, and attached himself to his opponent. Having remained four days in England, the emperor re-embarked for Flanders; and the same day King Henry, accompanied by his queen, the cardinal, and the nobles of his court, took shipping at Dover, and passed over to Calais.*

Promises to Wolsey.

Venality of Wolsey.

Henry passes over to Calais.

Royal pavilion.

On the 4th of June he removed from this city into a beautiful pavilion which had been prepared for him; its construction had occupied much time and innumerable artificers. "This palace," says an eyewitness, "was set on stages by great cunning and sumptuous work. Before it was built a fountain of gilt-work, over which was seen the old god of wine, called Bacchus, birling the wine, which, through conduits, ran to all people plenteously; and over his head was written in letters of gold, 'Faicte bonne chère quy voudra.'" On the other side of the entrance was a gorgeous pillar, surmounted by an image of the blind god Cupid, with his bow and arrows. The building was a quadrangle, each side being 128 feet long, and having in front a savage, with a bow and arrows, and underneath an inscription emblematic of Henry's political power—"Cui adhæreo præest:" he whom I support prevails. The furniture and decorations

Emblematic devices.

* This embarkation is represented in a curious ancient painting at Windsor; Archæologia, vol. vi. p. 179.

of the interior were still finer than its outward show. It was an age of splendour and barbaric pomp; and neither of the monarchs was superior to the taste of the times; they rather vied with each other in the profusion and magnificence of their preparations. Francis had at first intended to lodge in a pavilion of cloth of gold, supported on an immense mast, and representing in its interior the golden orbs of heaven upon an azure ground. This immense tent, however, was blown down; for which reason he took up his abode in a castle near the town of Ardres.

Royal profusion and magnificence

On the 7th of June the meeting took place between the two princes. The King of England rode a courser caparisoned "in a marvellous vesture, the trapper being of fine gold in bullion, curiously wrought:"—"His grace himself," continues Hall, with the enthusiastic minuteness which proves how much dress was regarded in those days, "was apparelled in a garment of cloth of silver of damask, ribbed with cloth of gold." Francis, on his side, accompanied by a train of nobles which exceeded in numbers that of his royal brother, proceeded on horseback towards the valley of Andren, where a tent had been pitched for the interview. As the cavalcades mutually approached, some little suspicion of treachery arose in the suite of Henry, on its being observed that they were outnumbered by the French; but confidence was soon restored, and the royal chiefs met and embraced without dismounting. Francis first spoke:—"My dear brother and cousin," said he, "thus far to my pain have I travelled to see you personally. I think verily that you esteem me as I am, and that I am not unworthy to be your aid. The realms and seigniories in my possession demonstrate the extent of my power."—"Sir," said his august visiter, "neither your realms and other the places of your power, form so much the matter of my regard as the steadfastness and loyal keeping of the promise comprised in charters between you and me. I never saw prince with my eyes that ought to be more beloved; and for your love

Personal adornment.

Noble train.

Meeting of Francis and Henry.

CHAP. III.

Royal banquet.

have I passed the seas into the farthest frontier of my kingdoms to see you."* The two monarchs then alighted from their horses, and, entering the pavilion which had been prepared for them, partook of a banquet. On rising from table, and coming out of the tent, Hall, who was on the spot, had a near view of the French king, and has minutely described his person. "The said Francis," says he, "was a goodly prince, stately of countenance and merry of cheer; brown-coloured, great eyes, high-nosed, big-lipped, fair breasted and shouldered, with small legs and long feet."*

Jousting and tourney.

Proclamations regarding this meeting had been dispersed throughout Europe for many months before it took place; and it was also announced, that the two sovereigns of France and England would, as brothers in arms, hold a solemn jousting and tourney for many successive days, and defend the field against all challengers.

The camp.

For these feats of arms an enclosure called the camp had been prepared, and in the middle were planted two trees, artificially constructed to imitate the hawthorn and the raspberry, the former for Henry and the latter for Francis. It may give the reader some idea of the laborious trifling of those times, to peruse the description of these gigantic toys, as it is given by an eye-witness:

Emblematic trees.

"These two trees were mixed, the one with the other, on a high mountain covered with green damask. The said trees were artificially wrought, resembling the nature of the same as near as could be; the leaves were green damask; the branches, boughs, and withered leaves of cloth of gold, and all the buds and arms of the same cloth of gold, laid on timber. They were in height, from the foot to the top, 24 feet; in circumference 129 feet; and from bough to bough 43 feet. On these trees were flowers and fruits wrought in silver and Venice gold; their beauty showed afar, and on the mountain was a place where the heralds were." The same day the two noble kings came to the

* Hall, p. 610. † Ibid.

trees of honour with great triumph, accompanied with divers nobles and young gallants; their shields were carried before them, and, after having been borne about the lists, hung up on a conspicuous place, where they could be discerned by the whole field. On the one shield were seen the arms of the King of England, within the garter; on the other those of Francis, within a collar of his own order of St Michael. The camp where the feats of arms were to be performed was in length 900 feet and in breadth 320; it was defended with broad and deep ditches, and scaffolds were erected all round for the ease of the nobles, the Queens of France and England occupying the right side of the field. In one end were built two pavilions, or lodgings, for the two kings, where they armed themselves and reposed after their warlike exercises; and beside them were two great cellars full of wine, which was as free to all as water of the fountain. The aids, or brother-champions of Henry on this chivalrous occasion, were the Duke of Suffolk, the Marquis Dorset, Sir William Kingston, Sir Richard Jerningham, Sir Giles Capell, Mr Nicholas Carew, and Mr Anthony Knevitt. Those of Francis, the Duke of Vendosme, with the Lords of St Pol, Montmorency, Byron, and other noble gentlemen. To encounter these there had arrived many illustrious foreign knights; and on Monday, the 11th of June, the jousts were opened, the two queens, with the ladies of the court, having first taken their places in a stage or balcony, which had been prepared for them; nor did it escape attention, that the carpet or foot-cloth of the Queen of England was powdered with pearls.*

Triumphant approach of both sovereigns.

Royal pavilions.

Champions of Francis and Henry.

It happened, however, whether from national rivalry or political suspicion is not easily ascertained, that no great familiarity could be established between the courts of the two sovereigns; and Francis, a generous prince, determined to give a proof that, in his bosom at least, there lurked no fear of treachery. Rising early, and

Symptoms of jealousy.

* Hall, p. 611.

CHAP. III.

Generous frankness of Francis.

without informing the gentlemen of his household, he threw himself on horseback, and, accompanied only by a page and two gentlemen, rode to Henry's quarters in the Castle of Guisnes. He was immediately recognised on the drawbridge, and, surrendering himself prisoner to the archers of the royal-guard, he requested to be led to the apartments of their master. Henry was yet asleep, but Francis passed on, knocked at the door, entered, and awoke him. It was impossible that the English monarch should not feel this mark of confidence. He sprung out of bed, warmly thanked his royal visiter, declared himself his captive, and cast over his neck a splendid collar. Francis, in his turn, clasped on Henry's arm a precious bracelet. All this while the majesty of England was in his night-clothes; but the French king would not suffer him to call for his valet, declaring that he himself would dress him. He then warmed his shirt, spread out his hose, trussed his points, and, taking his leave, returned to his own quarters at Ardres. On approaching the town, he was met by some of his court, and amongst them his gallant and faithful friend, Fleuranges, who broke out into congratulations, mingled with reproaches. "Sir," said he, "right glad am I to see you back again. But let me tell you, my master, that you were a fool to do what you have done; and ill luck light on them who advised you."—"And that was nobody," said Francis; "the idea was my own, and well I know could have come from no other."*

Cordiality of Henry.

Royal courtesies.

Return of the royal visit.

This visit of Francis was soon after returned, in an equally fearless and unostentatious manner, by his royal ally, and feudal sports and festivities, in which both sovereigns delighted to a puerile excess, succeeded each other with an extravagance of splendour, which exhausted their exchequer, and for many succeeding years impoverished their nobility. The vanity of the English king could not be contented unless he established, in the face of the assembled chivalry of Europe, a superiority

* Mémoires de Fleuranges, pp. 350, 351.

to every competitor in all feats of arms; whilst Wolsey, in the mean time, though he mingled in the universal gayeties, and omitted no opportunity of exhibiting his power and magnificence, was not idle in graver matters. He had determined, indeed, to espouse the interests of the emperor; but he had no wish to precipitate a rupture with Francis; and therefore the articles of the former alliance between England and that monarch were revised and renewed.

Articles of alliance renewed.

Henry was flattered with the idea that he held the balance of political power between these rivals, the two greatest princes in Christendom; and such was really the advantage of his position at this moment, that, had his politics been guided by common prudence, he might have secured his individual prosperity and the general happiness of Europe. But he acted on no great or comprehensive plan; he was capricious and selfish in his projects; and, whilst his vanity induced him to believe that he regulated every thing, the cardinal possessed, in truth, a complete command over his character and actions. Francis had anticipated important effects from this splendid conference, but he was soon disappointed. In returning from the Field of the Cloth of Gold, the English monarch paid a visit to the emperor and Margaret of Savoy, at Gravelines. Charles accompanied him to Calais; and this politic, though youthful prince, without putting himself to the expense of the display or ceremonial which had impoverished his rival, succeeded in obtaining an extraordinary influence over the minds both of master and minister. To the potent churchman he paid the most assiduous attention; he renewed his promises of support, in the event of a vacancy in the Papal chair; he gratified his avarice, by presenting to him the rich sees of Badajos and Placentia; he flattered his vanity, by deferring on all occasions to his superior wisdom and experience; whilst he ministered to the same passion in his royal master, by offering to accept him as arbiter in the disputes between himself and the French monarch.

Vanity of Henry.

Caprice and selfishness.

Policy of the emperor.

Attention to Wolsey.

CHAP. III.

Return of Henry to England.

Henry's arrival in England was signalized by an event which is involved in some obscurity,—the trial and execution of the Duke of Buckingham. This powerful noble was royal in his descent, being sprung from Anne Plantagenet, daughter of Thomas of Woodstock, a son of Edward the Third. Besides his high lineage, he was

Duke of Buckingham.

one of the richest subjects in England; and, had he been content to study the character of the king, and to conciliate the cardinal, he might have early risen into power. But, whilst all loved him for his generous and noble qualities, it was easily seen that he was not pliant enough for the medium in which he moved. Blunt, open, incapable of deceit, and fearless in the expression of his opinions, it was his misfortune that he was fitted rather to adorn than to serve a court. Keeping up a magnificent establishment in his castles, and fond of the ancient feudal state, which had lately fallen into some disuse, he moved like a prince amongst his vassals and

Splendid retinue.

tenantry. When he attended the king, the splendour and numbers of his retinue almost equalled that of Wolsey; and in his taste for gallant amusements, and exhibitions of personal prowess, he had the imprudence to compete with the monarch himself. It was the merit or the misfortune of Buckingham to have given early offence to the aspiring churchman, whose pride and arrogance he could by no means bear. "There goes a

Offence given to Wolsey.

tale," says the Bishop of Hereford, in his life of Henry the Eighth, "that the duke, once holding the basin to the king, the cardinal, when the king had done, presently dipped his hands in the same water; whereupon the duke, disdaining to debase himself to the service of a priest, shed the water in his shoes. The cardinal, being therewith incensed, threatened him that he would sit upon his skirts; upon which the duke, to show that he slighted his threats, and withal that the king might take notice of the cardinal's malice, appeared next day at court richly apparelled, as was his wont, but without skirts to his doublet. The king, and many others, demanding what he meant by that strange fashion, he

answered jestingly, that it was done by way of precaution, that the cardinal should not now sit upon his skirts. He thought to put a jest upon Wolsey, to whose informations, as proceeding from envy and spleen, he hoped the king would hereafter give the less credit; but he missed his mark, for most men were of opinion that the cardinal's malice crushed him, rather than the weight of his own offences."* Two years previous to this, Sir William Bulmer, a knight belonging to the royal establishment, had been brought before the Star-chamber, on a charge of deserting the king's service and attaching himself to the duke; on which occasion Henry expressed himself in a dubious and threatening manner against this nobleman. All, however, seemed to be hushed up or forgotten; and Buckingham, who held the office of High Constable, continued apparently to enjoy the favour of his prince, whilst he expressed himself with imprudent boldness against the pride of Wolsey, and the extravagant sums which had been expended in the conference with Francis. Of this measure he affected to consider the cardinal as the chief author;† and all who saw the increasing influence of this ambitious minister, and the unbending pride and independence of the constable, might have easily predicted that a collision would take place.

Jest against the cardinal.

Imprudence of Buckingham.

It occurred, accordingly, soon after the king's return from France, when the duke, who was then residing on his estate of Thornbury, in Gloucestershire, received a summons to repair to court, and, on obeying it, was committed to the Tower. This took place on the 16th of April; and, about a month after, he was brought to trial in Westminster Hall, on a charge of high treason,—the tribunal before which he was arraigned being composed of seventeen peers, with the Duke of Norfolk as president. His chief accuser was Charles Knevitt, a gentleman who had formerly been his steward, but had lost his situation from ill conduct; and it was alleged

Committed to the Tower.

Charged with high treason.

* Godwin, p. 47. † Hall, p. 599. Carte, vol. iii. p. 39.

CHAP. III.

Crimes charged against him.

against him, upon the evidence of this person, corroborated by other witnesses, that Buckingham entertained ambitious views of succeeding to the crown. It was affirmed that he had consulted Hopkins, a Carthusian monk, who pretended to divination, upon the probability of Henry's dying without issue; that he had done many things with a view to popularity; questioning the title of Henry the Seventh, whom he had represented as a usurper; and declaring, on the occasion of Sir William Bulmer's being tried in the Star-chamber, that, had he then been committed to the Tower, he would have avenged himself by assassinating the king with his own hand.*

Defence of the duke.

The duke defended himself with great spirit and eloquence. The charge of treason he indignantly repelled; the indictment, he said, was false, conspired and forged for the purpose of bringing him to his death; but he confessed he was to blame in having superstitiously consulted Hopkins on the probable success of Henry's expedition to France, and the invasion of England by the Scottish monarch. The wizard, he also allowed, had predicted to him that some of his blood or name should prove great men. But this was the substance of his confession, and it does not appear that any thing approaching to an overt act of treason was proved against him. The front of his offending was, in all probability, his royal descent (a circumstance of which Henry evinced a weak and early jealousy) and his haughtiness to Wolsey. The extent of his criminality, if it is right to use so strong a term, was an imprudent prying into futurity, with an unguarded conversation regarding the life of his sovereign, and the possibility of a disputed succession,—questions in those days of difficult handling and dangerous import.

Consultation with a wizard.

Found Guilty.

On being found guilty, Norfolk pronounced the sentence of death, but not without tears; to which Buckingham thus replied, with a firm voice, and unchanged demeanour:—"My Lord of Norfolk, you have spoken

* Herbert, p. 41.

to me as a traitor should be addressed; but I was never one. Yet, my lords, I in nothing malign you for what you have done unto me; but 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 desire; and so I beseech you, my lords, and all my fellows, to pray for me."* The edge of the axe was then turned to him; and, on going into his barge, Sir Thomas Lovell, treating him with the courtesy belonging to his high rank, requested him to sit down on the cushions and the carpet prepared for him. This he refused, observing, that "yesterday he was Duke of Buckingham, but to-day only Edward Stafford, the poorest caitiff in the world." On the scaffold he retained his firmness, amid the tears and lamentations of the people; he declared he had offended the king through negligence and lack of grace, and, requesting the prayers of those around him, suffered with equal meekness and courage. Carte, and, more recently, Dr Lingard, have laboured to acquit Wolsey of having any hand in his death; but it is certain that the cardinal was the enemy of Buckingham; and there appears no good ground to question the assertion of Lord Herbert, who had carefully examined the records of his trial, that this proud and unforgiving minister was the principal engine which accomplished his ruin. Such, at least, was the opinion of the people, by whom the duke was much beloved; and their judgment was confirmed by the best informed, and perhaps, at that time, the most sagacious prince in Europe. On hearing of his sentence, Charles the Fifth observed, that the butcher's dog, meaning Wolsey, had killed the fairest hart in England.† This nobleman was the fifth in his family who had died a violent death; and it has been well observed, that his pedigree, which is written in blood, is sufficient to characterize an age. His father was beheaded by Richard the Third, his grandfather fell in the

Reply of Buckingham

Firmness and courage.

Wolsey's share in his death.

Observation of the emperor.

* Herbert, p. 41. Hall, p. 624. † Godwin, p. 47.

CHAP. III.

Fate of his ancestry.

battle of St Albans, his great-grandfather was slain in the fight at Northampton, and the father of this last met his fate on the field of Shrewsbury. He himself left a son, who, in the year succeeding his father's execution, was by act of Parliament restored in blood, and not long after to part of his paternal estates and honours,—a measure which may perhaps be regarded as indicating Henry's private opinion as to the innocence of the father.

Impression produced by Buckingham's death.

Buckingham's loss made a great impression, as giving men their first experience of that miserable temper in the king, which, when once incited to suspicion, created causes of offence, and pursued them without pity or remorse. His fall, which, whether truly or not, was universally ascribed to Wolsey, made the courtiers more wary in the display of their magnificence, and the great proprietors less anxious to be surrounded by their tenantry and retainers. In this way it eclipsed the splendour of the court, banished hospitality from the castle, and convinced men, that to disoblige the monarch was sometimes a more pardonable offence than to incur the hatred of his minion.*

* Godwin, p. 43.

CHAPTER IV.

Henry's Book against Luther—Visit of Charles the Fifth to England—Invasion of France—Captivity of Francis the First.

Henry's Animosity to Luther—His Work against him—He is named Defender of the Faith—He deserts Francis—Alliance with the Emperor—Death of Leo the Tenth—Charles the Fifth's Visit to England—House of Commons—Debate on Supplies—Invasion of France—Constable Bourbon—Battle of Pavia—Captivity of Francis the First.

CHAP. IV.

Acquirements of Henry.

HENRY VIII., we have seen, had received a learned education. Having been destined for the Church, he had studied the writings of Aquinas, and cultivated a taste for controversial divinity, which sharpened his intellect without adding materially to his devotional sentiments. The title of Christianissimus, which the Pope had intimated an intention of withdrawing from the French monarch and conferring on him, early enlisted his vanity on the side of Rome; and, not long after he received the first intelligence of the Lutheran controversy, he expressed himself in strong terms against the reformer, in a letter to Lewis of Bavaria. "That this fire," said he, "which has been kindled by Luther, and fanned by the arts of the devil, should have raged for so long a time, and be still gathering strength, has been the subject to me of greater grief than tongue or pen can express; and this not only, my dear friend, on your account, but from my regard for the welfare of

Letter to Lewis of Bavaria.

CHAP. IV.

Warning against heresy.

Christendom. For, whether we look to the traditions of your ancestors, or consult your historical records, can there be found a single instance where that most indomitable country of yours, which has ever been the firmest citadel of the Church in its affliction, has either knowingly admitted any seeds of heresy into its bosom, or, at least, has not instantly eradicated them, if, by any oversight, they silently insinuated themselves? For, what could have happened more calamitous to Germany, than that she should have given birth to any man who (moved rather by the sinful license of his own judgment, than acting in the sincerity of Christian erudition) has dared to interpret the Divine law, the statutes of the fathers, and those decrees which have received the consent of so many ages, in a manner totally at variance with the opinion of the learned fathers of the Church,—of men whose decision has been ever regarded as conclusive of the truth, proceeding, as it did, from a knowledge of Scripture altogether divine, and sanctioned by a blameless sanctity of life. His offence would have been less intolerable, had he abstained from an attack upon sacred letters,—had he not concealed the hated shapes of heresy and schism under the cloak of religion,—had he not, to gratify the pride and iniquity of his mind, consented to bring into peril the Catholic faith, and taught the flock of Christ to desert their master. Since, however, such is the premeditated falsehood of this wicked man, since these wiles of his have, by the permission of God, become so known to the whole world, that all further confutation of them is superfluous, we most earnestly implore and exhort you, by the hereditary and innate affection which we bear to your person, and by the common cause of our salvation in Christ, that you bear a willing and hearty hand in averting this destruction which overhangs us; that you delay not a moment to seize and exterminate this Luther, who is a rebel against Christ; and, unless he repents, deliver himself and his audacious treatises to the flames. Thus only will you preserve and increase your illustrious rank

Infallibility of the church.

Exhortation to seize and exterminate Luther.

CHAP IV.

and your Christian name. Nor will it be alleged against you, that you permitted sacred and divine things to be disturbed or overturned by the fraud and cunning of a single heretic, or the pride and resentment of a few persons whose enmity you wished not to encounter. To the accomplishment of this work, at once so sacred and so acceptable to God, we most readily, and from the heart, offer you of our royal favour, patronage, assistance, and even, if necessary, our blood. And so we bid you happily farewell."*

Incitement to action.

We may, from the tone of this letter, form some idea of the violence with which, at this period (20th May 1521), its author was transported against Luther. He was not, however, contented with a simple enunciation of his opinions. He had been much irritated by the contempt with which the reformer had dared to treat his favourite Aquinas; and, impetuously unsheathing the sword of controversy, he attacked him in a work entitled, A Defence of the Seven Sacraments, written against the Treatise on the Babylonian Captivity. Henry's book was presented to the Pope, in full consistory, by Clark, the English ambassador at Rome; upon which occasion his holiness expressed high gratification, and declared he would do as much, to testify to all Christian princes his approbation of its excellent learning, as had ever been done for the works of St Jerome or St Augustine. Having, accordingly, given himself leisure to peruse the treatise, he declared that he found it sprinkled with the dew of ecclesiastical grace, and gave thanks to God, who had inspired the mind of the king to write such things for the defence of the holy faith. In the same Bull, from which this extract is given, he conferred on the royal author the title of Defender of the Faith, as a Christian addition to his other styles,† whilst he published an indulgence to all who should peruse the king's book.‡

Tone of the letter.

Defence of the Seven Sacraments.

Presentation of it to the pope.

Opinion expressed on it

* Gerdes' Hist Reform. Religionis, vol. iv.; Append. No. xxii.
† Strype, Ecclesiast. Memor. vol. i. p. 52. Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iii. p. 693.
‡ Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iii. p. 695.

CHAP. IV.

Disputed authorship.

It has sometimes been questioned, whether Henry really wrote this celebrated volume, Luther has ascribed it to Lee, the antagonist of Erasmus, and afterwards Archbishop of York; whilst others have imagined that they can detect in it the style of Bishop Fisher.* There seems, however, little reason to doubt the solemn assertion made by the monarch himself, that the Treatise on the Seven Sacraments was his own composition. Of the subjects which it embraces, the greater part relate to matters which fell within the range of Henry's studies, rather than to any important questions of Christian doctrine; and it was of this that the monk of Wittenberg complained. "The controversy has arisen," says he, "not about those matters of Christian doctrine with which every believer must acquaint himself, and which are essential to salvation, but cavils have been raised concerning things which the Church may not only safely be without, but which, in truth, unless it be without them, or, at least, be permitted to exercise its free judgment regarding them, it cannot possibly stand. Thus we are not called upon to consider faith, hope, charity, baptism, or the Supper of our Lord; we find nothing upon the law, sin, death, free-will, grace; nothing said of Christ, of God, of the last judgment, of heaven, of hell, of the Church, or similar subjects; but much concerning the Papacy, the decrees of councils, chapters upon doctors, indulgences, purgatory, the mass, academies, monastic vows, bishops, traditions, the worship of saints, and newly introduced sacraments."†—"These," says Gerdes, "were the subjects which Henry defended; in which he then placed unlimited faith; for the maintenance of which this high-sounding title and the gift of the 'golden rose' were bestowed upon him; presents which he afterwards employed in such a manner, that the Pontiffs repented they had ever sent them."

Probability of Henry's claims.

Complaint of Luther.

Omissions.

Redundancies.

* Fiddes' Life of Wolsey, pp. 250, 251. Gerdes' Hist. Reform. Religionis, vol. iv. p. 177.

† Seckendorf, Hist. Luther. sec. cxvi. f. 189, *apud* Gerdes, vol. iv. p. 179.

Useless inquiry.

It would be tedious and uninstructive to enter into any laboured criticism of the royal treatise against Luther; but there is a passage in the oration delivered by Clark, the English ambassador, when he laid it at the Pope's feet, which is worthy of notice. "Let others," said he, "talk of other lands; assuredly, my native country of Britain, by modern cosmographers denominated England, situated in the remotest part of the world, and separated from the Continent by the ocean, as it has not been inferior to Spain, France, Italy, or Germany, in the expressions of a holy zeal for the worship of God, the true Christian faith, and due obedience to the Church of Rome, so there is no nation that doth more impugn this monster (meaning Luther) and the heresies revived by him. With us the Church of God is in profound tranquillity: no differences, no disputes, no ambiguous words, murmuring, or complaints, are heard among the people: all troubles of mind, all apprehensions of strange revolutions in the world, and of the reign of Antichrist, are now vanished."* I have given this encomiastic passage from the oration of the ambassador, to show how much he misled the Pope, and misrepresented the real condition of England. So far from that complete tranquillity, that freedom from all doubt, and universal affection to the Holy See which is here described, it is certain that the doctrines of Luther had already begun to make a serious impression,—that they had infected the universities, and in many places unsettled the minds of the people.

Oration of the English ambassador.

False impressions produced.

Proceedings of Wolsey against heresy.

Of this, the proof is to be found in the proceedings of Wolsey himself, who, in virtue of his legatine power, issued, on the 14th May 1521, a commission to all the bishops in England, commanding them to cause any books of Martin Luther's errors and heresies which they could find within their dioceses to be seized and sent up to him, and ordering a notice to be given in every church where the people were assembled at mass, by which all

* Fiddes' Life of Wolsey, p. 249.

CHAP. IV.

Luther's books denounced.

persons who had such books in their possession were to deliver them within fifteen days, under pain of excommunication. He enjoined them, at the same time, to affix on the folding-doors of their cathedrals and parish-churches a list containing some of the same reformer's chief errors, that all persons might have an opportunity of reading and avoiding them. "Which errors," says he, in the conclusion of his commission, "how infectious they are, how scandalous, how seductive to pious and simple minds, how much against all charity, against the reverence due to the Holy Roman Mother Church, and that obedience which is the nerve of ecclesiastical discipline, the fountain and source of all virtues, and without which every man is in a state of infidelity, there is none possessed of a sound mind who can be ignorant."

Continental commotion.

While such was the employment of the king and the current of events in England, the jealousies which had already divided the emperor and Francis the First once more began to embroil the Continent. Between two such princes, both of them able, warlike, and ambitious, it was scarcely possible that a cordial amity could for any length of time be preserved. Charles complained because his neighbour kept possession of the duchy of Burgundy; the other retaliated, accusing the emperor of a design to reinstate Sforza in the duchy of Milan, of which his royal predecessor, Louis the Twelfth, had received the investiture. Nor had this monarch forgotten his disappointment in competing for the empire; and, under the influence of these feelings of rivalry and mortification, he called upon Charles to perform homage for Artois and Flanders, counties held of the crown of France. Imagining, at the same time, that the disturbances which had arisen in Castile would completely occupy his rival, he made an attempt for the recovery of Navarre, whilst he entered into a private negotiation with the Pope, which had for its object the reconquest of Naples, and the division of this kingdom between himself and the Holy See.*

Mutual complaints.

Proceedings of Francis.

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 43. Herbert, pp. 42, 43.

It was the misfortune of this prince that his ambition was too vast, whilst his weighing of difficulties and his calculations of sacrifice and expense were often hurried, superficial, and imperfect. The mind of Charles, on the contrary, equally extended in its grasp, was more patient in the estimate of the details of execution. Francis, fond of admiration and a slave to popularity, delighted to dazzle and astonish the world by his military glory and personal magnificence; the other loved power for its own sake, despising all its trappings, and courted men, not to listen to their adulation, but to make them active agents in the accomplishment of his designs. The consequences of this difference of character were such as might have been anticipated. The king failed in most of the great objects upon which he had so deeply set his heart, but which were too various and incompatible to be pursued at the same moment; whilst the emperor, cautiously pursuing and vigorously retaining his advantages, and equally inaccessible to the dangerous presumption so often bred by success and to the despair which sometimes follows defeat, was commonly fortunate in his political designs.

Impetuosity of his character.

Superior tact of Charles.

On the present occasion this was remarkably the case. Francis was disappointed in his endeavours to excite the Castilians in his favour, and soon discovered that, although discontented with their government, they were true to the independence of their country; he was unable from want of money to engage the Swiss mercenaries to co-operate with the Papal troops in the conquest of Milan; and although at first eminently successful in Navarre, a month had scarcely elapsed before the Spaniards recovered the ground which they had lost, and at last succeeded in expelling the invaders from that kingdom.

Failure of the projects of Francis.

Emboldened by such victories, Charles prepared to turn his arms against France. He was supported by the Pope, who, disgusted with Francis' refusal to restore Parma and Placentia, had entered into a coalition with the emperor; and the combined forces were already

Coalition between the Pope and the Emperor.

CHAP. IV.

Requested mediation of England.

joined at Bologna, when the French monarch, unprepared for war, and anxious to gain a little time in order to concentrate his strength, requested the mediation of England. To this the Spanish ruler made no opposition; for, having already secured the interest of Wolsey, he felt confident that the result of any opinion pronounced by Henry would be favourable to his pretensions. The English king accordingly appointed the cardinal to act as arbitrator between the rival monarchs. It has been doubted by Fiddes, whether Rapin's accusation of Wolsey was well founded, when he charges him with being partial to the interests of Charles; and the latest and not the least able of our historians* does not seem to have been fully aware of the preconcerted designs of England against France. The following interesting letter from Secretary Pace to this minister seems to establish the point that, before he embarked for Calais, Henry had determined to concur with the emperor in a treaty against Louis XII.:—"Please it your grace, the king hath concluded, according to your advice and counsel, to put in a readiness 5000 or 6000 archers, the same to be ready to do service, as shall appertain, at such time as your grace shall have concluded his affairs with the emperor, according to such communications, devices, and debates, as hath been had betwixt you both in that behalf; and his grace (the king) trusteth that every thing betwixt the said emperor and him shall succeed well, and be brought to the desired effect and conclusion by your grace's wisdom. Considering the great towardness of the said emperor thereunto, which his majesty perceiveth by such writings as he last received from him, and in consideration hereof, his grace is the more stirred to prepare the said archers, and will devise upon a great captain to conduct the army, as also upon other sad and discreet knights to attend upon him as councillors, and such also as be meet to make men. . . . . The king (continues Pace), over and above this, signifieth

Cardinal Wolsey appointed arbitrator.

Resolution adopted by Henry.

* Lingard, vol. vi. p. 1

unto your grace one of his own secret devices, and desireth to hear your grace's opinion therein with diligence. His highness thinketh that, at such time as all things shall be concluded between the emperor and him, according to his mind, and a resolution taken to invade France, then it shall be necessary for them both to provide for the destruction of the French king's navy, and his grace wishes that, at time convenient, this matter might secretly be broken to the said emperor, and treated in such wise that this enterprise might suddenly be made against the French king. And the king taketh this for a high and great enterprise, if it may thus, by wisdom and good policy, be brought to pass."*

CHAP. IV.

Plan against the French navy.

Such being the views of Charles the Fifth and Henry, it was not to be expected that the cardinal-arbitrator should make much progress in his efforts at reconciliation. He soon found, or pretended to find, that the demands of both parties were so unreasonable, that little success was to be anticipated; and with the alleged design of disposing the emperor to pacific measures, but with the real intention of completing the hostile league against France, he repaired with a magnificent train to Bruges, where he was received by Charles with marked distinction. Here he remained some time in close consultation; and on his return to Calais, having renewed the conferences, drew up a plan of accommodation which was transmitted to the belligerent powers for their approval. For a moment it was believed that the two monarchs could not withhold their consent; but this opinion was only entertained by those who were unacquainted with the previous resolution of Henry. In the mean time advices arrived, that Bonnivet had made himself master of Fontarabia: the imperialists insisted on its restoration; the French as proudly refused; and Wolsey, availing himself of the circumstance, made known his final award, declaring Francis to have been the aggressor, and pronouncing judgment that the King

Proceeding of Wolsey.

Reception by Charles at Bruges.

Premature proceedings of the French.

* State-papers published by Government, p. 23.

CHAP IV.

Final judgment of Wolsey.

of England was bound to assist his imperial ally. A passage from a letter of the cardinal to the king, written at Bruges on the 19th August (1521), completely establishes the point, that an alliance with the emperor and a war against France had been finally resolved upon before the resumption of the conferences at Calais. It alludes to the negotiations regarding a marriage between the Princess Mary and the emperor, and to a visit which Charles had determined to pay to Henry in his own dominions.

League between Henry and the Pope and Emperor.

The negotiations mentioned in this epistle concluded in a league between the Pope, the Emperor, and the English sovereign, against France. It was determined that the Pontiff should begin the attack in Italy,—that Henry should lead a powerful army against Picardy,—Charles agreed to advance from the borders of Spain,—and the Low Countries were to declare war at the same moment; so that it was confidently expected the pride and ambition of the French monarch would be effectually humbled. The correspondence between Wolsey and his royal master, whilst the former was employed in these negotiations, has been lately given to the public by government; and, whilst it throws many new and important lights on the secret politics of Europe, it convinces us that, although at times sufficiently pliant, Henry was not altogether an indolent and passive instrument in the hands of an ambitious minister. Pace, with whose talents as a scholar and a statesman we have already become acquainted, was at this time one of his majesty's secretaries, and in the intimate confidence of the cardinal. On one occasion he had incurred the displeasure of this powerful minister, and it is remarkable that he defends himself on the grounds, that the king carefully perused the despatches written by his excellency, and himself dictated the replies. "The king," says he, "readeth all your letters with great diligence, and mine answers are made to the same, not by my device but by his instructions; and as for one of my letters, which was to your grace very displeasant,

Correspondence between Wolsey and Henry.

Attention of Henry to business.

Defence of Pace.

as it appeared by your answer to the same, I had at that time devised a letter in the same manner, far different from that ye received; but the king would not approve the same, and said that he would himself devise an answer to your grace's letters sent to him at that time, and commanded me to bring your said letters into his privy-chamber, with pen and ink, and there he would declare unto me what I should write. And when his grace had your said letters, he read the same three times, and marked such places as it pleased him to make answer unto, and commanded me to write, and to rehearse as liked him, and not further to meddle with that answer. So (continues Pace) I herein did nothing but obeyed the king's commandment as to my duty appertaineth, and especially at such time as he would upon good grounds be obeyed, whosoever spake to the contrary."*

Satisfaction of the king with Wolsey's management.

The king was much pleased with Wolsey's management of these foreign affairs, and some time previous to his return wrote to him with his own hand in these flattering terms:—"Mine own good Cardinal,—I recommend me unto you with all my heart, and thank you for the great pain and labour that you do daily take in my business and matters, desiring you, when you have well established them, to take some pastime and comfort, to the intent you may the longer endure to serve us, for always pain cannot be endured. Surely you have so substantially ordered our matters, both of this side the sea and beyond, that in mine opinion little or nothing can be added. Nevertheless, according to your desire, I do send you mine opinion by this bearer. . . . The queen, my wife, hath desired me to make her most hearty recommendations unto you, as to him that she loveth very well, and both she and I would fain know when you would repair unto us. No more to you at this time, but that I trust with God's help we shall disappoint our enemies of their intended

Message of the queen.

* State-papers published by Government, p. 79; Pace to Wolsey, 29th October 1521.

CHAP. IV. purpose. Written with the hand of your loving master, —HENRY R."*

Character of the negotiations.

Upon these negotiations, and the coalition against France to which they led, there can be but one opinion. They were short-sighted and improvident, dictated by the caprice and selfishness of the cardinal, who was completely devoted to the emperor, and marked by an insensibility to the best interests of England.

Change on Henry.

Henry's moral and intellectual powers underwent a gradual deterioration from the moment of his ascending the throne; so dangerous is the effect of an early accession to absolute power, even upon a promising disposition. From his first interference with the affairs of the Continent, and the trifling results which followed an immense expenditure, he might have learnt the extreme impolicy of a war with France; yet we now find him rushing heedlessly into hostilities with that country, blind to the lessons of experience, duped by the flattery of the emperor, and priding himself in the idea that he was holding the balance of Europe, whilst he was the unconscious instrument of imperial ambition. Even a moderate share of political sagacity, had it been found either in the cardinal or his master, would have taught him that he risked much and could gain nothing by his present line of policy. Ireland was insecure; he was threatened with the dread of invasion on the side of Scotland, where the Duke of Albany, the subject of Francis and attached to his interests, held the regency during the minority of James the Fifth; his kingdom had already suffered severely from the expenditure incident to the late war, and the recent splendid extravagance of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Every thing, in short, seemed to counsel peace as imperiously required in the actual circumstances of the country; yet both the monarch and the minister were either blind to the fact, or refused to be influenced by it.

Weakness and folly.

Dangers at home.

* State-papers published by Government, p. 93; Henry to Wolsey.

In the mean time, the combined armies carried every thing before them in Italy; the French were expelled from the duchy of Milan, and the extravagant joy felt upon that occasion by Leo the Tenth threw him into a fever, which, after a few days, ended in death. The Papal throne was thus brought within the reach of Wolsey. On some former occasions, he had been urged by Henry and the emperor to aspire to that dignity; and although he then expressed various scruples of affected humility, and intimated a desire to live and die in the service of his master, his feelings underwent a sudden revolution as soon as it was certain that Leo had expired. His pretensions were warmly espoused by his sovereign; he himself addressed a letter to Charles the Fifth, reminding him of his promise; and Pace, the royal secretary, was instantly despatched to Rome, with ample instructions to promote the election by every means in his power. But all was in vain; and before the arrival of his envoy, Adrian, bishop of Tortosa, who had been tutor to the emperor, and at that moment held the viceroyalty of Spain, was placed in the vacant chair by the unanimous voice of the Conclave. However mortified by this result, Wolsey does not appear to have suspected any secret practices against him; and the election of the new Pope has been ascribed by the Italian historians to a rival candidate, Julio de Medici, who, having secured as many suffrages in his own favour as would have excluded a competitor without securing his success, suddenly proposed the Bishop of Tortosa, whose integrity and near connexion with the emperor united every voice in his favour.*

Temporary success of the combined armies.

Death of Leo. X.

Efforts of Wolsey to secure the popedom.

Election of Adrian.

Causes of his choice.

Aware of the coalition which had been raised against him, the French monarch earnestly laboured, first by flattery and afterwards by intimidation, to detach Henry from his engagements; he entreated his friendship and deprecated his hostility; he withdrew his pension and claimed the assistance which had been solemnly promised

Efforts of Francis to break the coalition.

* Lingard; vol. v. pp. 83, 84.

CHAP. IV.

Arrest of English merchants and ships.

him by treaty; and when both these methods failed, he suddenly laid an embargo on all English vessels in his ports, and arrested the merchants of that country. The proceeding was warmly resented: the French ambassador was commanded to remain a prisoner in his own house; the persons and goods of all French subjects were arrested; whilst Clarencieux Herald received orders to carry a defiance to Francis himself. But in the midst of this bravado, intelligence was brought that the emperor had, in fulfilment of the late treaties, taken his departure from Calais, and would soon disembark in England. Charles, accordingly, landed at Dover on the 26th of May,* and was received with much splendour and solemnity. He was accompanied in his barge by the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Dalmatia, the Count Nassau, the Lord Egmont, and the Marquis of Brandenburg. Wolsey met him on the sands, embraced him, and, taking his arm, conducted him to Dover Castle. Here he was soon after visited by the king in person, who welcomed him with the utmost gladness; and whilst preparations were made for the entertainment and accommodations of his suite, led him aboard his new ship, the Henri Grace à Dieu, a vessel of immense bulk for those times, which then lay in the road.† Charles declared himself much pleased, and in company of his royal guide visited the whole fleet. Next day the emperor proceeded to the palace at Greenwich, where he met his aunt, the queen, with the princesses and the ladies of the court, and reverently asked her blessing. He remained in England upwards of a month, the time being chiefly spent in tourneys, jousting, and the exhibition of those complicated pageants which delighted our ancestors, and are so minutely recorded by our ancient chroniclers.

Visit of the emperor to England.

Inspection of the English fleet.

The entry of the emperor and the king into the city

* State-papers published by Government, pp. 56, 57; Sir Richard Wyngfield to Wolsey, and Wolsey to Henry, 9th August 1522.
† Charnock, vol. i. p. 42. Southey's Naval History, vol. ii. p. 188.

of London was conducted with great magnificence. About a mile from St George's Bar was erected a tent of cloth of gold, where the royal personages reposed themselves, whilst the heralds marshalled the procession; and then every man set forward, richly apparelled, according to his degree: "there lacked no massy chains nor curious collars:" an Englishman and a stranger rode side by side, and before the emperor and the king were carried two naked swords. Next came the two princes; after them the king's and the emperor's henchmen, in purple and crimson velvet, and these were followed by the royal and imperial guards. In the way they were met by the lord-mayor and his brethren, in scarlet, and well horsed. An oration was here delivered by Sir Thomas More, who eloquently congratulated the two princes upon the love and amity which was then between them; after which they proceeded through Southwark to the Marshalsea and the King's Bench, where the emperor entreated pardon for the prisoners, which was immediately granted by the king. On arriving at the drawbridge, a gorgeous exhibition was presented. In the middle of the bridge, and fronting the procession, were placed targets, on which the arms of the emperor were richly illuminated. On one side of the shield stood a great giant, representing Hercules, with a mighty club in his hand; and on the other side another giant, representing Samson; their occupation being to support a table, on which the emperor's styles were written in letters of gold. In the middle of the bridge there was raised a castle, with its embattled towers and iron gates shining like white marble, and over its entrance stood Jason, in complete steel, with his golden fleece,—a fiery dragon and two bulls were beside him, switching their tails with the utmost activity, and belching out fire at proper intervals; whilst in a tower hard by stood a fair maid, representing the Lady Medea, fantastically and richly apparelled. The cavalcade proceeded to Gracious Street, where they were saluted by Charlemagne, having a figure seated

Entry to London.

Procession.

Allegorical devices.

CHAP. IV. Various pageants.

before him representing the Pope. To the emperor, Charlemagne presented the sword of justice; to the king, the sword of triumphant victory; to the Pontiff, the crown of thorns. From this station they advanced to Leadenhall Street, where a magnificent pageant was exhibited, which must have cost extraordinary labour, and evinces a remarkable degree of mechanical knowledge. It was 28 feet in breadth and 80 feet in length. At the foot of the pageant was placed John, duke of Lancaster, called John of Gaunt, son to King Edward the Third. This great personage sat in a rote or wheel, and out of the wheel sprang many branches curiously wrought with leaves, which were so contrived as to drop sweet water. On every branch was a king or a queen, or some other noble personage, descended from the said duke, to the number of fifty-five images; and on the top stood the emperor, the king of England, and the queen, as three in the sixth degree from the same noble prince. It is worthy of note, that this pageant was made at the cost of the Italian merchants, and was in all probability the work of Italian artificers.* It would fatigue rather than amuse, were we to follow the enthusiastic annalist, who has enumerated these various exhibitions, into his additional and minute details. Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table; Alphonso, king of Spain, out of whose breast sprang a branch bearing many kings and queens; the planetary system moving with the elements and stars above a beautiful arbour of roses; and some of those religious personations, which it is impossible to read of without pain, were all successively brought before the sovereigns. "Nor must you forget, for all the pageants," says Hall, "how the citizens, well apparelled, stood within rails on the left side of the streets, and the clergy on the right, in rich copes, swinging their censers beside the princes as they passed; nor how all the streets were richly hung with cloth of gold, silver, velvet, and arras;

Provided at the cost of the Italian merchants.

Religious personations.

* Hall, pp. 638, 639.

nor how in every house almost was minstrelsy, and over every street these two verses in letters of gold,—

Verses in letters of gold.

'CAROLUS, HENRICUS, VIVANT DEFENSOR UTERQUE,
HENRICUS FIDEI, CAROLUS, ECCLESIÆ.'"

Having been entertained in this royal manner, the emperor was with much solemn pomp installed as a Knight of the Garter, and the two sovereigns swore at the altar to observe the league into which they had entered. It was determined in this treaty, that as soon as the Princess Mary was twelve years old, she should be married to Charles. Her portion was to be 400,000 crowns; if she brought a son, 600,000 crowns was to be added to it; and her jointure was stipulated at 50,000 crowns a-year. The emperor agreed to indemnify Henry for any pensions which, in consequence of his breach with Francis, might be retained by that monarch; but, whilst this went no farther than a promise, he procured from his easy and extravagant ally the advance of a large sum, which drained the exchequer of England. By this time the Spanish fleet of 180 sail had anchored off Southampton, where the imperial visiter, having taken leave of his host, embarked on the 6th of July, and in ten days landed in his own dominions.*

The emperor made Knight of the Garter

Princess Mary affianced.

Extravagant subsidy.

Whilst Charles remained in England, we have seen Henry exhibiting his fleet to this potentate with some pride and importance. With the determination of making a descent on the French coast, he had recalled the Earl of Surrey from his viceroyalty in Ireland, and intrusted the armament to his orders as lord-high-admiral. Surrey was undoubtedly a commander of courage and ability. His government in the sister island had been attended with unusual success and tranquillity, and whilst he awed and put down the disaffected chiefs, he possessed the rare art of making himself popular with the great body of the people. In those days, and for a long time after, the military and

Equipment of the fleet.

* Hall, p. 642.

CHAP. IV.

Imperfect knowledge of naval tactics.

naval professions were united in the same officers; and so imperfect was their knowledge of navigation, and so unmanageable the rude vessels, that a fleet at sea was conducted and marshalled much after the same fashion as an army on land. Nothing is more striking, in perusing the annals of the times, than the trifling results which followed the hostile meeting of immense naval armaments, arising evidently from the ignorance of the leaders and the unmanageable nature of the force which they wielded. Even in the succeeding reign of Elizabeth, when the genius of such navigators as Drake, Raleigh, Frobisher, and Cavendish, had introduced essential improvements into the sea-service, the same remark will be found to apply with no little force; and, in the present instance, the operations of Surrey were limited to a partial and rapid descent upon the coast of Normandy, in which he ravaged the country, and afterwards burnt the town of Morlaix in Bretagne.*

Trifling results of great ornaments.

Designed invasion of France.

Henry had engaged to invade France with an army of 40,000 men, whilst the emperor promised to bring the same number into the field; but, after the utmost efforts, the English force which mustered at Calais scarcely amounted to 16,000, of whom 4000 were volunteers. To find money was now the great difficulty, and we may form some idea of the despotic nature of the government from the methods to which Wolsey resorted. A loan of £20,000 was in the first instance extorted from the city of London; after which, the cardinal despatched commissioners into the counties to examine every man upon oath as to the value of his property in moveables. The inquisitorial manner in which this measure was carried through, and the fruit-

Modes of raising money.

* Hall, pp. 642, 643, 644. State-papers published by Government, p. 109; Wolsey to Henry the Eighth, September 1522, where the cardinal encloses the letters he had received from Surrey concerning his exploits done by him and the army in destroying the French king's country, burning his towns, pulling down right fair castles, goodly houses, and proper piles. The curious reader may find Surrey's letter to Wolsey, dated Blangy, 16th September 1522, in the MSS. British Museum, Caligula, d. viii. fol. 221.

less remonstrances of the London merchants, are thus graphically described by a contemporary annalist:—

Wolsey's meeting with the mayor and aldermen.

"The 20th day of August the cardinal sent for the mayor, aldermen, and the most substantial commoners of the city of London, where he declared to them that the king had appointed commissioners through the whole realm of England, to swear every man of what value he was in moveables, the more to be in readiness for the defence of this realm. . . . 'Wherefore, in convenient time,' continued Wolsey, 'certify to me the number of all such as be worth £100 and upwards, to the intent I may swear them of their values: for, first, the king asketh of you your loving hearts and due obedience, and when the value is taken he desireth only the tenth part of goods and lands, which is the least reasonable thing that you can aid your prince with. I think every one of you will offer no less. As for the spirituality, every man is in the shires sworn, and shall gladly pay the fourth part to the king, and live on the three parts. Now, to your part, I am sure you will not grudge; therefore, name me the men of substance, and for the meaner sort, meaner commissioners shall be appointed.'—'Sir,' said a merchant, 'if it please you, how shall this tenth part to the king be delivered?'—'In money, plate, or jewels,' said the cardinal, 'at a value.'

Tithe of goods and lands required.

—'Oh, my lord,' said the aldermen, 'it is not two months since the king had of the city £20,000 in ready money, in loan, whereby the city is very bare of money; for God's sake remember this, that merchants rich in ware may be bare in money.'—'Well,' said the cardinal, 'the thing must be done, and therefore go about it.'

Impoverishment of the city.

So the aldermen resorted to their wards, and named such as they judged to be of that value, which came before the cardinal, and most humbly besought him that they might not be sworn for the true value of their substance, because the true valuation to them was unknown; as many honest man's credit was better than his substance, and therefore they dreaded the peril of perjury. 'Well,' said the cardinal, 'since you dread

Pleas against being sworn

CHAP. IV.

Pretended concessions of Wolsey.

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, according to what you esteem your credit, and then more business needeth not; for you see what two costly armies the king hath ready both against 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 of gold.'—'Then,' said the citizens, 'we would to God that it were so, and the city is sore afflicted by the great occupying of strangers.' —'Well,' said the cardinal, 'it shall be redressed, if I live. But, on Saturday next, I shall appoint one to receive your bills, and he that is of credit more than substance, let him come to me, and I will be secret and good to him.' Thus," concludes the chronicler, "the citizens departed in great agony; saying, that at the last loan some lent the fifth part, and now to have the tenth part taken was too much. Great was the mourning of the common people, as it is ever in such cases of payments. But in the end, one Dr Tonnys, a secretary to the cardinal, came to the Chapter-house of St Paul's, and to him the citizens brought in their bills, and on their honesty they were received, which values afterwards turned them to displeasure. The spirituality made suit to my lord cardinal, that no temporal man should sit to examine them, or be privy to their possessions and goods. Wherefore, bishops and abbots were appointed to take the value of their substance."* It is impossible, in reading this quotation, not to enter into the feelings of the unhappy merchants, thus alternately flattered, flouted, and pillaged by the cardinal and his royal master; and when we consider the folly of the war, undertaken not for the defence of the realm, as was here pretended, but for the gratification of a silly ambition, it is difficult to find terms sufficiently severe for such wasteful exactions in the government. Nor

Great grief of the citizens.

Valuation of the clergy's estate.

Just cause of complaint.

* Hall, pp. 645, 646.

will the reader fail to observe the care taken by the spirituality to conceal from the eyes of the temporal estate the wealth and possessions of the Church.

Inadequacy of the sums raised.

The sums of money which were collected in this manner proved inadequate to the wants of the king. Francis had withdrawn his pension,—immense wealth had been lavishly wasted in the extravagant pageants lately exhibited,—in presents to foreign potentates, and in the general profuseness of the royal household. For eight years Henry had governed without a Parliament; but, although his father had set him the example, that prudent and penurious prince had been enabled to follow so despotic a course, because he possessed a rich exchequer upon which he could draw at pleasure. His son, however, was in different circumstances. He had long since wasted the wealth bequeathed to him,—he was now deeply in debt; the sums which he had extorted from his "agonized" merchants, and his "mourning" commons, were swallowed up in the equipment of his fleet and army, and he found himself at last reduced to the necessity of calling a Parliament (15th of April), the proceedings of which were interesting and important.

Contrast between Henry VII. and VIII.

Parliament summoned.

It was opened with the usual state, the monarch being seated on the throne. At his feet, on the right side, sat the Cardinal of York and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and at the rail behind stood Dr Tonstal, bishop of London, who made an oration to the members of the two Houses on the office of a king. The address contained the usual commonplaces of adulation with which Henry was wont to be accosted by all his subjects, and the Commons, having retired to choose their speaker, elected Sir Thomas More, who, according to an ancient practice, having first pleaded his own insufficiency, was complimented by the cardinal upon his wit, learning, and discretion, and placed in the chair. The name of More has been already incidentally mentioned in connexion with the introduction of classical literature into England, but it is now necessary to regard this remarkable man somewhat more minutely.

Sir Thomas More elected speaker.

CHAP. IV

Early distinction of Sir Thomas More.

He had distinguished himself in the House of Commons at an early period of life, by his resistance to an exorbitant subsidy which was demanded by Henry the Seventh ;* and, in consequence of this spirited conduct, had fallen under the displeasure of that sovereign. His eminent abilities, and extensive practice as a lawyer, rendered him, however, independent of royal patronage. His natural parts were of a high order, and his genius, far before his age, led him to the discovery of many leading principles upon the subjects of reform and toleration, which then began to agitate the minds of men in various parts of Europe ; but, although an original thinker, he shrunk from the practical enforcement of his opinions.

Great acquirements.

A finished classical scholar,—an enthusiastic student in the languages of ancient Greece and Rome, in which he wrote with admirable purity and ease,—More, like Erasmus, of whom he was the familiar companion, esteemed above all things that tranquillity which is the soul of literary enjoyment. It was on this account that he long opposed every attempt to bring him into public life, preferring his professional celebrity and the enjoyment of domestic ease to the uncertain and irksome splendour of a court.

Preference for private life.

The friend of all the most distinguished scholars in his own country, and known by his various and amusing writings to the men of highest genius abroad, he fully appreciated the comforts of his lot, and dreaded any summons which threatened to break the seclusion of so sweet and independent an existence. In addition to all this, and to crown a character which, till irritated into intolerance by the progress of what he esteemed heretical opinions, was uniformly amiable and gentle, he was a man of profound piety and exemplary virtue.

Devotional habits.

Educated in the rigid school of Colet, whom he had chosen as his spiritual guide, his devotional habits were tinctured with the severe asceticism which belonged to a Catholic age. But his austerities and inflictions centred in himself,—to others he was indulgent and

* Roper's Life, ed. by Singer, p. 7.

humane, whilst the sweetness of his temper, his ready forgiveness of injuries, his wide and unostentatious charities, and the courage with which he was ever ready to peril his life for his faith, evinced that his was the genuine fasting and holy penance of the heart. After having long resisted every entreaty, this eminent man was, at last, not introduced, but compelled into public life. In 1519, a ship belonging to the Pope had been seized and forfeited in the port of Southampton, and a claim of restitution having been made by the legate then resident in England, the cause was argued in the Star-chamber. More appeared as counsel for the Supreme Pontiff, and on this occasion distinguished himself so highly, that the king would take no denial, but insisted on engaging him in his service. He was accordingly made Master of Requests, soon after became a privy-councillor, and in the following year was appointed Treasurer of the Exchequer. His feelings on this occasion appear from a letter which he addressed to Bishop Fisher:—"I am come to the court extremely against my will, as every body knows, and the king himself often twitteth me in sport for it, and hereto do I hang on as awkwardly as one who never rode sitteth in a saddle. But our prince, although I am far from enjoying his peculiar favour, is so generally kind and accessible, that there are none, even the most diffident, who will not find some reason for imagining he loveth him,—just as our simple London matrons persuade themselves that our Lady's image smiles upon them as they pray before it. For myself, I am neither so fortunate as in reality to perceive such favourable tokens, nor so sanguine as to flatter myself that I do so; yet, such are his majesty's learning and virtue, and such his daily increasing industry, that seeing him progressively advance in good and truly royal accomplishments, I gradually feel this court-life hang less heavily upon me."*

Amiability and benevolence.

Appearance as council for the pope.

Letter to Bishop Fisher.

So delightful did Henry, on more intimate acquaint-

* Cayley's Life of More, vol. i. p. 73.

CHAP. IV.

Fondness of the king for the company of More.

ance, find the varied conversation of More, that the time of the new treasurer was likely to be much wasted. The king, we are informed by Roper, would very frequently send for him into his closet, and there converse with him about astronomy, geometry, divinity, and other branches of learning, as well as affairs of state; and he would sometimes carry him in the night upon the leads at the top of his palace, in order to be instructed in the variety, course, and motion of the heavenly bodies. Naturally fond of the company of men of letters, Henry was particularly pleased with that union of profound learning and genuine wit and humour which he found in More. He would often send for him to make himself and the queen merry; and so many calls were thus made on his few leisure hours, that he could scarcely once in a month get leave to spend an evening with his wife and children. "This was irksome to a man who loved domestic pleasures and philosophic retirement, and the mode which he adopted to procure a release from these frequent calls was somewhat original: he began to abstain by little and little from his accustomed mirth and facetiousness; he dissembled his natural pleasantry, and acted dulness so true to the life, that the king, who was not in the secret, abstained from any further invitations."*

Great encroachments on his time.

Mode of release.

Expectations of the court.

These few touches and anecdotes may give us some idea of the eminent man who was now elected speaker, and from whom, in the midst of their pecuniary embarrassments, the monarch and his minister expected support. In this, however, they were disappointed. The Commons had been irritated by the long cessation of Parliaments, and justly suspected the king of a design to rule as long as he could without them. The merchants and citizens were dissatisfied with the late illegal exactions, and resented the inquisition into the extent of their property; whilst the cardinal, in a fit of spleen and impatience, had been heard to complain, that no

* Roper's Life of More, p. 12.

sooner was any thing said or done in the House of Commons, than it was blown abroad in every alehouse. In these circumstances, Wolsey, who believed that his presence would overawe the members, and silence all opposition, intimated his intention of coming to the House in person; after some debate it was agreed to permit this, although evidently a breach of privilege, but it was still doubted in what form he was to be received. More, who secretly ridiculed the state kept up by the prime-minister, indulged upon this occasion in a little quiet satire, which he concealed under the cover of a profound respect:—"My masters," said he, addressing the members, "for as much as my lord cardinal lately, as ye wot well, laid to our charge the lightness of our tongues for things uttered out of this House, it would not, in my mind, be amiss to receive him with all his pomp,—with his maces, his pillars, his pole-axes, his cross, his hat, and the great seal too, to the intent that, if he find the like fault with us then, we may lay the blame on those whom his grace bringeth with him." This being agreed to, the cardinal and his splendid cavalcade were admitted into the House, where he made a long oration upon the crisis in which the kingdom was placed. He accused Francis the First of having broken the league which was meant to secure the tranquillity of Christendom, and contended that no alternative was left to the king his master but to unite with the emperor in hostilities against him. The charge of the war, he observed, had been estimated, and amounted to £800,000. He required, therefore, that this sum should be forthwith raised out of the fifth part of every man's goods, that is to say, four shillings in every pound.

Wolsey's attempt to overawe the commons.

Satire of More.

Reception of the cardinal.

This extravagant demand was followed by a profound silence, as it had been already agreed amongst the members that, although Wolsey should be admitted, they should not so far compromise their privileges as to enter into any debate in his presence. Surprised at such a reception, the minister waited for some mo-

Silence of the commons.

CHAP. IV.

Unavailing attempts to obtain a reply.

ments expecting a reply, but all was still; he then addressed himself to a particular member, who rose from his seat and without a word resumed it; he turned impatiently to another, and the same dumb-show was repeated. Incensed at such contemptuous treatment, he lost his temper and broke out into reproaches:—

Anger of Wolsey.

"Gentlemen," said he, "as I am sent here immediately from the king, it is not unreasonable to expect an answer; yet here is without doubt a surprising and most obstinate silence, unless, indeed, it may be the manner of your House to express your mind by your speaker only." Saying this, Wolsey turned to More and required an explanation,—"Who first," says Roper,

Reply of the speaker.

"reverently falling on his knees, excused the silence of the members. They were abashed, he insinuated, at the sight of so noble a personage, his presence being sufficient to overwhelm the wisest and most learned men in the realm; but his coming thither, he observed, was far from expedient, and contrary to the ancient liberties of the House; and as to requiring a reply from him, individually, the thing was simply impossible. The members had indeed trusted him with their voices, but unless each could infuse the essence of their several wits into his head, he alone, in so weighty a matter, was unable to make his grace an answer."* The cardinal probably detected the satire, and certainly understood the equivocation of this reply; and, rising up in a rage, suddenly left the House.

Symptoms of temporising.

We can scarcely doubt the accuracy of this account, which comes from Roper, the grandson of More, and yet there is some reason to suspect him of partiality in the statement; for, in the debate which followed, Sir Thomas, according to Herbert, temporized with the court, and endeavoured to prove, according to the cardinal's arguments, that four shillings in the pound was not an extravagant demand. The discussion which followed is interesting, as throwing light on the wealth of England at this period. It is one of the earliest

* Roper's Life of More, by Singer, p. 17-20.

debates on the great question of subsidies, and as such well worthy of attention. To the argument, that one-fifth, or four shillings in the pound, was not an exorbitant demand, it was answered,—"That though some men were very well monied, yet, in general, it was known that the fifth part of men's goods was not in plate or money, but in stock and cattle; and that, to pay away all their coin would alter the whole frame and intercourse of things; for if tenants came to pay their landlords in corn and cattle only, and the landlords, again, could not put them off from paying those things they had no need of, there would be a stop in all traffic and merchandise; and, consequently, the shipping of the nation must decay, and the nation itself, for want of money, grow barbarous and ignoble. They were, moreover, entreated to consider, that already the king had got from them a loan of two shillings in the pound, which amounted to £400,000, and now to have four shillings would come on the whole to £1,200,000, which altogether is full six shillings in the pound, and almost a third part of every man's goods, and cannot be had in coin in the whole kingdom. For proof of this, it was alleged, that supposing 15,000 parishes in England, of which each parish should pay 100 marks, this would only amount to 1,500,000 marks, which is but £1,000,000: and how many parishes, it was asked, are there in England, out of cities and towns, one with another, able to spare 100 marks? It had been said, indeed, that there were no less than 40,000 parish-churches in England, whereas it might be proved there were not 13,000 parishes; upon which data it was evident the whole sum could not amount to above £1,000,000. Now, the king at this moment demanded £800,000, and he had already, after the valuation, received £400,000; therefore it was judged impossible to levy the sum now demanded; for if all the coin should come into the king's hands, how, it might be asked, were men to live?"*

Great interest of the debate.

Argument against the exaction

Impossibility of meeting the demand.

* Parliamentary History of England, vol. iii. p. 28-31.

CHAP. IV.

Reply of the courtiers.

To these arguments it was replied by the courtiers, "That the money demanded ought not to be accounted as lost or taken away, but only transferred into others' hands of their kindred or nation; herein, therefore, that no more was done than we see ordinarily in markets, where, though the money change masters, yet every one is accommodated." The serious trifling of such a statement must, we think, have been apparent; but it is still more interesting to listen to what follows:

Obligations to support the army.

—"No man," it was urged, "ought to refuse support unto him that fighteth for the honour and safety of his country, since he denies it not even to his labourer. Besides, it ought to be considered, that those who were employed in the army must have been fed when they staid idle at home; and yet they asked no more now, to give the uttermost proof of well-deserving patriots. If it is argued, that this will exhaust the coin from the poorer; to meet this objection, we have only to beg the rich to go themselves. Let them show, by defending

Alternative proposed.

their country, that they are not unworthy of the high rank they hold in it. Our king will never deny them this honour. On the other hand, if they desire to be exempt, and to lay the burden and hazard upon others, let them not grudge giving so poor a stipend as some of their servants at home would scarcely take to stand bareheaded to them. Neither ought they to value themselves more than others because they have larger possessions, seeing that in ancient times, and even by sound reasons of state, those who tilled and manured a country deserved not so much as they who defended it.

Replies to objections.

Neither is it well said, when you object that this will carry the money out of England, and leave it in France; for doth it not carry the men too, and so, in effect, prove but the same expense? Notwithstanding, if you be so obstinate as to believe that the making war in a country brings money to it, do but conceive a while that the French had invaded us, would the money they brought over, think you, enrich our country? should any of us be the better for it? Let us therefore lay aside these

poor scruples, and do what may be worthy the dignity and honour of our nation. When you conceive the worst that can fall out, you should yet eat your beef and mutton here, and wear your country-cloth, whilst others, upon a short allowance, fought only that you might enjoy your families and liberty. But I say confidently, you need not fear this penury or scarceness of money, the intercourse of things being so established throughout the world, that there is a perpetual derivation of all that can be necessary for mankind. Thus your commodities will ever find out money; while, not to go far, I shall produce our own merchants only, who, let me assure you, will always be as glad of your corn and cattle as you can be of any thing they bring you. Let us therefore, by all means, do what becomes us; and, for the rest, entertain so good an opinion of our soldiers, as to believe that, instead of leaving our country bare, they will add new provinces to it, or at least bring rich spoils and triumphs home."*

CHAP. IV

False apprehensions of danger.

To whom we are to ascribe this speech does not clearly appear, although, from the manner in which it is introduced by Lord Herbert, it seems not improbable that the author was More himself. It is remarkable for containing much sophistry, with occasional glimpses of those general principles in political economy which were far in advance of the age. The true sources of national wealth are occasionally hinted at, but lost sight of again in the course of the argument. As might have been expected, its ingenuity was little convincing to the House. The plain country-gentlemen could not be persuaded, that to give money for the support of an English army in France was as lucrative to them and the country as to buy and sell in their own markets; still less would they be persuaded that, though the money changed masters, every one was accommodated. The consequence was a stormy and protracted debate. In a contemporary letter from a member of the House,

Character and supposed author of the speech.

Impossibility of persuading to compliance.

* Herbert, p. 55.

CHAP. IV.

Firmness of the commons.

which has been preserved, the obstinacy of the stand made by the Commons is strongly painted: "Since the beginning of this Parliament, there hath been the greatest and sorest hold in the Lower House for the payment of two shillings in 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 being alleged, on the king's behalf, to us that ever was heard of; the highest poverty confessed, as well by knights, squires, and gentlemen of every quarter, as by commoners, citizens, and burgesses. There hath been such hold, that the House was like to have been dissevered."* In the midst of this protracted struggle the cardinal again entered the assembly, and desired peremptorily to hear their reasons for refusing the sum demanded; but, being informed that it was not their practice to reason before strangers, he indignantly retired.

Second visit of Wolsey.

Summary process of the king.

The king, much incensed at this delay in granting the supplies, adopted a still more characteristic mode of enforcing them. He sent for Edward Montagu, afterwards Chief Justice, and at that time an influential member in the House. The gentleman attended, and falling on his knees, as was then the custom, Henry clapped his hand upon his head, and shaking it, thus addressed him:—"Ho, man, will they not suffer my bill to pass? Get my bill passed by to-morrow, or else to-morrow this head of yours shall be off."† The king's bill accordingly did pass; but whether through the influence thus secured does not appear. It was agreed that every estate of twenty pounds annual income and upwards should pay two shillings in the pound; that all from twenty pounds, downwards to forty shillings, should contribute one shilling in the pound; and that, in estates under forty shillings, every head above sixteen years of age should pay fourpence in two years. "I have

Passing of the bill.

* Ellis' Letters, vol. i. p. 220.
† Grove's Life of Wolsey, vol. iii. p. 250.

heard no man in my life," says the correspondent whom we have above quoted, "that can remember that there was ever given to any one of the king's ancestors half so much at one grant; nor do I think there was ever such a precedent seen before this time. I beseech 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 wills 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 pains to levy this money among the king's subjects shall, I think, have no little business about the the same."* The gentlemen, accordingly, did find no little difficulty in the task committed to them. During the continuance of the debate, the members of the House had been insulted and taunted in the streets. The people, as they passed, would pluck them by the sleeve, and cry out,—"Sirs, will ye grant four shillings in the pound? Do it, and take our threats and curses home with you to your households." Without profiting by such indications, Wolsey had imprudently insisted that the whole subsidy, which had been made payable in four years, should be collected in one,—a proceeding which gave great disgust to the Commons, and created such infinite distress amongst the poorer classes of the community, that they utterly denied payment to the collectors, with "weeping, cursings, and great exclamations."—"The county of Kent," says Speed, "refused it to Lord Cobham; Essex would not so much as talk with the commissioners about it; Huntingdon did the same; London would be taxed by none but their aldermen; and Suffolk rose up in arms, making Poverty their captain. The blame of all fell upon the cardinal; but he, being now by his church-dignities rendered almost an English pope, looked down upon their threats with contempt, and despised their menaces. However, a little time after, they gave this haughty prelate some terrible reasons to alter his opinion."†

Unparalleled amount of the demand.

Difficulty of raising it.

Imprudence of Wolsey.

Opposition of the courtiers.

Indifference of the cardinal.

* Ellis' Letters, vol. i. p. 221. † Speed's Chronicle, p. 751.

CHAP. IV.

Fruitless and costly war.

The country was now plunged into an unprofitable and expensive war, both with Scotland and France. Since the disastrous battle of Flodden ten years had elapsed, and Henry, chiefly by means of Lord Dacre, a statesman of considerable ability, had succeeded in bringing over to his interest a large proportion of the nobility of that country. It is, without doubt, to the policy of this minister that we may trace the introduction of that crafty system which was perfected by Burleigh under Elizabeth. Its object was to secure for the views of England a majority of the Scottish nobles, and thus obtain a command over the councils of the country. To effect this, the means employed were pensions, bribes, and the extension of ecclesiastical patronage to the sons or relatives of the northern aristocracy. In addition to such engines of corruption, Dacre had organized with great care a large body of spies, who pervaded the nation, and were found even in the king's palace. Many individuals of high influence secretly corresponded with him. When any of the more powerful barons found or imagined they were treated with neglect, it was their practice to throw themselves into the arms of the English prince; and, from these causes, it became almost impossible for the Duke of Albany, to whom, in the minority of James the Fifth, the regency had been intrusted, to carry on the government. His attempts to promote the independence and security of the country were perpetually thwarted, not only by the native lords who were gained to Henry, but by the intrigues and selfish ambition of the queen-mother, his sister, a woman of no mean talents, but proud, versatile, and the slave of her passions. In the war with that monarch Albany was unsuccessful, not because he was deficient in military ability or personal enterprise, which has been erroneously asserted by some Scottish historians, but because those powerful partisans who favoured the designs of the southern court either openly refused to obey his commands, or if they joined the army with their vassals, carried dissension and treachery into its

System of Scottish policy.

Faithless nobles.

Causes of failure of the Scottish regent.

councils. The Earl of Surrey, accordingly, to whom the prosecution of hostilities was intrusted, repeatedly found himself successful, without having to pay for victory either in the lives of his soldiers or by any extraordinary exertions on his own part.

Success of Surrey.

It was, of course, the policy of the French monarch to support the regency of Albany by every means in his power, and to harass and divide the efforts of Henry upon the Continent, by urging the Scottish governor to make frequent inroads into England. Nor did Francis neglect the opportunity of distressing his enemy which was afforded by the unsettled state of Ireland. He determined to invade that island, and with this view he entered into a treaty with the Earl of Desmond, whose allegiance to the English crown had long been of a very precarious description; and who, promising to break into open war the moment an army was landed, solemnly stipulated never to sheath the sword till he had achieved its conquest. These mighty plans, however, were destined to come to nothing. It is probable, indeed, that the main object of the king was to alarm, and having attained his purpose, he reserved his army for more necessary operations on the Continent. In Scotland the struggle against English influence was maintained for some time with doubtful success; but the regent at last retired in disgust to France, leaving the government and the young monarch in the hands of the house of Douglas, whose leader, the Earl of Angus, was completely devoted to his royal brother-in-law.

Policy of France.

Proposed invasion of Ireland.

So far the measures of Wolsey were crowned with a temporary success, and his master now directed his attention to the progress of events upon the Continent. At this crisis, it is impossible to withhold our sympathy from the King of France, against whom an unprincipled coalition had been organized, and whose conduct, whatever may have been his former faults, formed a striking contrast to the intrigues, the selfishness, and the dissi-

Temporary success of Wolsey.

CHAP. IV.

Position of the French king.

mulation of Henry and the emperor. To this prince nothing now remained of his conquests in Italy, except the citadels of Cremona and Milan; against him were arrayed the emperor, the sovereigns of England and Hungary, the Archduke of Austria, the Pope, the reigning Duke of Milan, and the republics of Florence, Venice, and Genoa. Even this was not all; a still more heavy calamity awaited him in the desertion of the Constable

Desertion of the Constable Bourbon.

Bourbon, one of the ablest generals of his age, and perhaps the most popular subject in his dominions. This nobleman had distinguished himself highly in the battle of Marignano and the conquest of the Milanese; he had shown on every occasion the most devoted attachment to the king; and Francis was disposed to treat him with the consideration due to his rank and talents, when suspicions of his fidelity were artfully insinuated by his enemies. Louise of Savoy, the king's mother, had fallen

Passion of Louise of Savoy.

in love with the constable, then reckoned the handsomest man in France, and although she had reached the matronly age of forty-two, did not hesitate to make proposals of marriage, which the duke, who was scarce thirty, thought proper to decline. Louise, previous to this repulse, had evinced the utmost hatred to the princes of his house, and nothing but the ardour of passion overcame her antipathy in the present instance. But the affront once received, her love was changed into that

Aversion and revenge.

deep aversion and desire of revenge which belongs to a proud and disappointed woman; and such was the unhappy influence which she exerted over the mind of her son, that with much weakness he lent himself to the accomplishment of her designs. Day after day was the noble Bourbon, the pride of the French aristocracy and the darling of the people, treated with insolence and injustice. The king refused to repay the large sums of money which the other had advanced for the public service when he held the government of Milan. Not satisfied with this mortification, which created great embarrassment, he soon afterwards stopped his pensions;

and to crown these indignities, he deposed him from the high office of constable, and delivered the baton, which he had wielded with so much glory, to the Duke d'Alençon. All this he bore with unshaken loyalty and exemplary patience; but when Louise brought forward a claim upon his property, which was founded in the grossest injustice, and when, by a vile prostitution of the law, the Parliament of Paris pronounced a sentence which virtually sequestrated him from the enjoyment of his estates, not only France, but Europe exclaimed against the vindictive persecution, and the duke became convinced that nothing short of absolute ruin would satisfy his enemies. In this frame of mind, and when weighed down by injuries which were almost intolerable for human nature, he listened to the secret overtures of Henry and the emperor, fled in disguise, and sacrificed his fealty to his king and his attachment to his native land, not so much to the love of revenge as to the feeling of personal security. That Bourbon would have been an infinitely greater man, had he sunk from the most splendid station in France into want and obscurity from regard to his allegiance, is unquestionable, and every generous mind must feel a touch of sorrow that he acted otherwise. But, on the other hand, nothing can be said to justify the conduct of Francis and Louise; and all must admit, that the cruel circumstances in which he was placed, though they do not excuse, ought to dictate a lenient sentence against him. On his defection, the emperor placed him at the head of his armies, and promised him his sister, the Dowager Queen of Portugal, in marriage; but the Spaniards, amongst whom the feelings of loyalty and knightly faith were still more strongly felt than in France, did not conceal their sentiments. "I can refuse your majesty nothing," said the Marquis de Villane to Charles the Fifth, who had requested this nobleman to lend his palace to the refugee; "but I declare, that if the Duke of Bourbon comes to lodge in my house, I shall set fire to it when he is gone, as a place infected by treason,

Indignities put on Bourbon.

Shameful persecution.

Desertion of his country.

Excuse for his defection.

Spanish pride.

CHAP. IV.

and unfit for men of honour." Guicciardini recounts the story, and highly commends the sentiment.*

Severe loss to Francis.

The revolt of Bourbon was a severe misfortune to Francis. He had determined to command in person the army destined for the reconquest of Milan, which amounted to upwards of 28,000 men, including 15,000 Swiss and a body of 1500 men-at-arms; but dreading at such a crisis to be absent from his kingdom, he intrusted it to the Admiral de Bonnivet, who was little able to cope with the military experience of the constable. Henry, in the mean time, had despatched the Duke of Suffolk to invade Picardy. His army consisted of 5000 archers, of whom 2000 were mounted, 5000 billmen, 600 demi-lances, and 2600 pioneers; and these being soon after joined by the imperial forces under the Count de Bure, it was resolved to advance along the Somme, and attempt to bring the enemy to a battle.

New commander chosen.

Sound policy of Francis.

In this campaign the policy of the French king was excellent: he knew the winter was approaching, and relying on the strength of his frontier-garrisons, which Suffolk did not deem it prudent to attack, avoided a general engagement; contenting himself with distressing his enemy by flying corps, which cut off their supplies, and drew them farther into the country. The English general at first was every where successful. He carried Bray by assault, took Montdidier, burnt Roye, and advancing within eleven leagues of Paris, threw the capital into the highest consternation. But the approach of the Duke of Vendosme, at the head of a considerable force, awoke him to the danger of his situation. He knew that the Marquis de Tremouille, by uniting his camps and drawing troops from the garrisons of Picardy, might speedily assemble an army; and he dreaded the possibility of not only being cut off from his supplies, but of being enclosed between these two divisions. The places which he had taken were insignificant; he was master of no strong or large towns where he could maintain

Temporary success of the English.

* Henault, History of France, by Nugent, vol. i. p. 364.

himself during the winter; and the season setting in with extreme rigour, he had no other course to follow but to retreat. He accordingly retired upon Calais, and the towns which he had reduced were soon recovered by the French.* CHAP. IV. Retreat to Calais.

Whilst such was the course of events in Picardy, Bonnivet, after some partial successes, had been completely defeated by the constable at Rebec. In this battle, the admiral, who was early wounded, had intrusted the army to St Pol and Bayard; and the conflict was afterwards remembered chiefly from the death of the latter. This illustrious captain had been long celebrated throughout Europe as the model of all those graces which were considered essential to the character of a perfect knight, and his fate was attended with some interesting circumstances. After having repeatedly repulsed the enemy, he received a shot in the lower part of the body, which penetrating to the spine, rendered it impossible for him to sit on his horse. He at once felt the wound to be mortal, and commanded his soldiers to place him against a tree, with his face towards the enemy, observing, that he had never turned his back whilst he lived, and would not begin to do so now that he was dying. He then addressed himself to an officer who stood near:—"Tell my liege lord the king," said he, "that I die happy, because I die in his service, and that my single regret is, that I can assist him no longer." Having said this, he held the cross-hilt of his sword before him, using it as a crucifix, and fixing his eyes intently upon it, addressed his supplications to Heaven for the pardon of his sins. The battle meanwhile rolled gradually away from the spot, and the prayers of the dying man were undisturbed, except by the distant roar of artillery. After St Pol had secured his retreat, and the fate of Bayard became known, both armies testified the most lively grief; for his great qualities

Defeat of Bonnivet.

Bayard.

Dying message.

* Carte, vol. iii. pp. 55, 56. State-papers published by Government, vol. i. pp. 130, 131; More to Wolsey, 5th September 1523.

CHAP. IV.

Attentions paid to him.

were appreciated by the enemy almost as much as by his own countrymen. The Marquis of Pescara ran to the spot, and addressing him with affection, soon perceived that to remove him from where he lay would be immediate death. He accordingly had a tent pitched on the ground, sent for surgeons to dress his wound, and, at his request, called a priest, to whom he might confess, and from whom he received absolution. Immediately after this ceremony the constable entered the tent, and expressed, in kind and earnest terms, the concern he felt to behold him in that condition; to whom he made this noble reply:—"My Lord of Bourbon, it is not I that am deserving of compassion, since I die an honest man; but for mine own part I am constrained to pity you, when I see you serving in arms against your prince, your country, and your oath; for remember, my lord, that the death of all who have borne arms against their country has been tragical, and their memory opprobrious." He expired soon after, amid the tears of the officers who surrounded him; and his death was generally lamented throughout Europe. For a considerable period the sun of chivalry had been hastening to its setting, and its last and sweetest rays may be said to linger on the grave of Bayard.

Parting words to Bourbon.

Miscalculations of Henry.

Henry, with his usual sanguine temper and infelicity in the calculation of political events, had become persuaded that he would soon be master of a great part of France.* He was therefore highly incensed at the retreat of Suffolk, and sent peremptory orders that the army should not be disbanded; but Sir Robert Jerningham, to whom the commission was intrusted, arrived too late to prevent it. The troops were already dispersed, the greater part of the soldiers had taken their journey homeward through Flanders, and his grace found it impossible to keep the remainder together. "When the duke and the other captains," says Hall, "heard of

* Letter of Sir Thomas More to Wolsey, 20th September 1523. State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 135.

the king's displeasure, they were sore abashed, and wrote to their friends, that they had perfect knowledge that the Duke of Bourbon had broken up his camp for the extremity of the winter; and also showed that their soldiers died, and victual failed, which caused them to break the army, for, in truth, the soldiers would not abide; with which reasons the king was somewhat appeased, and so, with good hope, the duke came to Calice on the 12th of December, and there they abode long, till their friends had sued to the king for their return; and when it was granted, and they were returned, the duke and the captains came not to the king's presence in a long season, to their great heaviness and displeasure. But at last all things were taken in good part, and they well received, in great love, favour, and familiarity with the king."*

Defence of his commanders.

An event had occurred some little time before this, which produced important results on the policy of England. The popedom became again vacant by the death of Adrian (September 14, 1523), and Wolsey, with increased hope, once more aspired to this dignity; although, in an artful letter addressed to the king, he affected a desire to spend his life in his royal master's service, rather than assume so mighty and responsible an office.† He deemed himself secure of the support of the emperor. The Lady Margaret, he informs us, had, in a long discourse, exhorted him to stand for that dignity, offering, as well on the emperor's behalf as on her own, to further his election by every means in their power.‡ He received also most loving letters from the Cardinals de Medici, Campeius, and others, who declared their "good and fast minds to him;" and he was convinced that his majesty would exert himself to the very utmost of his power. Yet he knew enough of the in-

Death of Pope Adrian.

Renewed efforts of Wolsey.

* Hall, p. 672.

† Fiddes, Collect. to Life of Wolsey, pp. 80, 81; Wolsey to Henry the Eighth.

‡ Fiddes, Collect. to Life of Wolsey, p. 83; and Grove's Life of Wolsey, vol. iii. p. 288.

CHAP. IV.

Intrigues of the papal court.

trigues and venality of the Papal court to be assured, that without money, profusely and judiciously distributed, little success could be expected; and, for this purpose, he addressed himself to Dr Clark, the bishop of Bath, then resident as the English ambassador at Rome. In his letter, he informs him that he writes by the king's desire, who had a marvellous opinion of him, and trusted that by his endeavours the matter, meaning his own election, would come to a successful termination. He directs him not to spare any reasonable offers,—a thing which, amongst so many needy persons, is more regarded than perhaps the qualities of the person. And he thus concludes,—"Ye be wise, and ye wot what I mean: trust yourself best, and be not seduced by fair words, and specially of those which (say what they will) desire more their own preferment than mine. Howbeit, great dexterity is to be used; and the king thinketh that all the imperials shall be clearly with you, if faith be in the emperor. The young men for the most part being needy, will give good ears to fair offers, which shall be undoubtedly performed. The king willeth you to spare neither his authority nor his good money or substance. You may be assured whatever you promise shall be performed, and the Lord send you good speed."*

Wolsey's letter to the English ambassador.

Fruitless waste of English money.

It is probable that the Bishop of Bath fully obeyed these instructions, and that the younger as well as the older cardinals profited by the extravagance of Henry. But the money was thrown away: nothing was farther from Charles' intentions than that the Englishman should succeed to the Papal crown; and, instead of assisting, he directed his whole interest the other way. The imperials, therefore, unanimously voted against him; the French dignitaries, who regarded him as the chief author of the calamities of their country, followed their example; and the supporters of Pompeio Colonna, casting their suffrages into the scale of his rival, Julio de Medici, this last was elected on the 19th November

* Fiddes, Collect. to Life of Wolsey, p. 88.

by the unanimous voices of the Conclave. Wolsey, on this occurrence, dissembled his mortification, and, in a letter addressed to the king, affected to consider the success of his opponent as not only fortunate for England, but entirely agreeable to his own wishes.

Election of Julio de Medici.

A biographer of the cardinal has pronounced this an honest letter, and attempted to support his conclusion. But such an opinion will scarcely stand a serious examination; for, although it is not denied that, in his instructions to his agents at Rome, they were commanded to give their interest to Julio de Medici in preference to any foreign claimant, this course was only to be followed on the discovery that a majority could not possibly be secured for himself; whilst his own letters to the king, the activity which he manifested to corrupt and secure the Conclave, and his subsequent estrangement from the emperor, sufficiently demonstrate the eagerness of his hopes and the extent of his disappointment. Dissimulation, however, was one of the qualities which this politic minister possessed in an eminent degree; and, as he had already assured Henry that, so far as he consulted his own taste, he would have preferred remaining where he was, there seemed the less extravagance in his declaration of entire satisfaction. At the same time, Pace, who was now at Rome, was instructed to offer his majesty's congratulations to Clement the Seventh, to bespeak his most active exertions for the expulsion of the French from Italy, and to procure for his favourite an extension of his legatine powers. The latter request the Pope, who was pleased with the politic devotedness of the cardinal, immediately granted, appointing him legate for life. He also so far enlarged his commission as to empower him to visit and reform religious houses,* and, in truth, invested him with an almost unlimited authority. This may, accordingly, be regarded as the moment when Wolsey's grandeur attained its perihelion. He had reached the highest pinnacle of power and glory

Hollow pretensions of Wolsey.

His dissimulation.

Congratulations to the new pope.

* Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iii. p. 703.

CHAP. IV.

Height of Wolsey's power.

to which a subject could aspire, and infinitely beyond that which had ever been possessed by any subject in England. He was Archbishop of York, Bishop of Durham, Abbot of St Alban's, Cardinal, *Legate à latere* for life, Lord Chancellor of England, Prime-minister, and favourite; caressed by the emperor, highly honoured by the Pope, feared by all the princes of Europe, and entirely beloved and trusted by his own sovereign.

Pope Clements inclinations.

Although the new Pontiff was not disposed at once to adopt the hostile course against France which Henry had advised, he evinced an anxious desire to secure the faith and affection of this monarch. On the 1st of September, Dr Hannibal, master of the rolls, entered London as

Ambassador from Rome.

ambassador from Rome, bringing with him the consecrated rose as a token for the king; and on the day of the nativity of the Virgin, after a solemn mass sung by the cardinal, the gift was delivered. It is described by

Papal gift of the golden rose.

Hollinshed as a tree of fair gold, wrought with branches, leaves, and flowers, in imitation of roses. It grew in a pot of gold, having gold-dust instead of earth, and supported on antique feet, like a tripod. In the top rose was a sparkling sapphire loop, and the tree itself was about half a yard in height and a foot in breadth. The present gave great satisfaction to Henry,—a feeling which was increased about the same time by the Pope

Title of Defender of the Faith.

granting him a confirmation of his title of Defender of the Faith; whilst to Wolsey he sent, by the hands of Secretary Pace, a ring which he took from his own hand, regretting that he could not himself have the satisfaction of placing it on the finger of his Eminence. When we consider these demonstrations of extreme cordiality and affection, and advert also to the jealousy with which the cardinal and his master regarded the progress of Luther's opinions, which about this time had begun to infect the universities and to make an impression upon the people, nothing could appear more improbable, as far as human calculation is concerned, than that sudden and extraordinary revolution which was soon to take place in England.

Revengeful feelings of Wolsey.

There seems reason to believe, that from the moment Wolsey was disappointed of the Papacy by the desertion of the emperor, the desire of revenge against this prince inspired him with a wish to change his political conduct; to abandon those principles which had led to the coalition against France; and to contemplate, although as yet only in the distance, an equally formidable combination against Spain.* But he was too wary to disclose his intentions by any sudden animosity,—he merely established a secret correspondence with the French court; and whilst he privately ascertained the grounds on which a new league might be formed, the public resolutions of the government were, for a while, as decidedly as ever in favour of Charles.

Success of the emperor.

The constable had now driven the troops of Francis out of Italy; and Henry, by whom the vacillation of Wolsey was unsuspected, entered eagerly into a scheme for a second invasion of his dominions. Bourbon was to swear homage to his new ally, and to lead his forces across the Alps; while the other, at the same moment, in conjunction with an army from Flanders, was to invade Picardy. It was anticipated that this simultaneous irruption would complete the conquest of the country; and the crown, which had been worn in former ages of glory by Edward the Third and Henry the Fifth, was destined, as the ambitious Tudor believed, once more to grace the brow of an English monarch. That Bourbon was sincere, cannot be doubted: his love of glory, his desire of revenge, and his existence as an independent prince, all depended upon the result; and such was the terror of his name, and his great military talent, that, if his allies had supported him, the affairs of Francis must have been in a desperate condition. But nothing was farther from the intention of

Expectations of Henry.

* Hall's Chronicle, p. 691-693. See Lingard's Note, vol. vi. p. 106, and compare it with Turner, vol. i. pp. 358, 359. Dr Lingard appears to have fallen into an error; Clement was elected November 19, 1523, and Wolsey's disaffection and change is apparent in the month of August 1524, and even before it.

CHAP. IV.

Manifestation of Wolsey's policy.

the cardinal than a hearty co-operation with the emperor. The crisis had arrived when he could make Charles feel the extent of his power; and this he accomplished, not only by withholding the promised supplies in money, but by persuading his royal master that it would be inexpedient to engage in hostilities until such a decided advantage had been obtained by the constable as would render the success of the English arms entirely secure.

Bourbon enters France.

Bourbon entered France on the 1st of July with an army of 22,000 men, but his confederates disappointed him; the viceroy delayed to forward the heavy cavalry; the troops became discontented with a protracted struggle to make themselves masters of Marseilles; neither men nor money appeared from England; and the duke, finding himself on every side deserted or betrayed, was at last compelled to retreat. It was fortunate that the measures which at this moment were dictated by Wolsey's private animosity to Charles were the best calculated for the preservation of that balance of power amongst the continental nations which was most likely to secure the tranquillity of the whole; and, had the subsequent conduct of this minister in any way justified the idea, we might have imputed his relinquishment of the imperial cause to a higher motive than his personal hostility. Succeeding events, however, demonstrated that his policy was fluctuating, selfish, and inconsistent.

Fortunate change of English policy.

Invasion of Italy by the French.

The retreat of the allied armies was followed by the invasion of Italy by the French monarch; and the memorable campaign which followed ended, as is well known, in his defeat and capture by the Constable de Bourbon, in the decisive battle of Pavia. On finding that the day was irretrievably lost, Francis made an effort to save himself by the bridge of Ticino, but found it broken down, and arrived on its banks only to see his brave soldiers perish in a vain effort to ford the river. The monarch then became desperate, and, attempting to cut his way through the masses of his pursuers, fought with a furious and careless courage, which seemed

Battle of Pavia.

almost to covet death. Seven men are said to have been slain by his single hand. Such, indeed, was his strength and activity, that he extricated himself from the press; but his horse was scarce able to proceed, and some Spanish harquebussiers, who were attracted by his rich attire, pursued him, and called on him to surrender. "He gave no answer, but attempted to pass outside of one who had discharged his musket; upon which the man felled his horse by a blow with the butt-end of his weapon, and the king sunk down with the dying animal. As he fell, an officer, with some of Pescara's light cavalry, reached the spot, and marked his fine appearance." Not yet guessing the prize, but anticipating the ransom, he told the Spaniards they should share in the booty if they would not kill him. Francis spoke not, nor was known. He was now lying insensible, oppressed by his horse. At this juncture, Pomperand, the friend of Bourbon, recognised his former sovereign, but, concealing his knowledge, ordered the soldiers to pass on and pursue the victory, as their captive was already dead. The men then insisted on stripping him, when this officer, seeing the viceroy coming near, rode suddenly up and revealed to him the important fact. Lannoy hurried to the spot to protect him, removed the dead bodies of those who had last perished, raised him up from under his steed, recalled him to sensibility, and asking him if he was the king, desired him to surrender. Francis, whose face appeared to be bleeding, faintly inquired the rank of the individual by whom he was addressed, and, finding him to be the viceroy, said that he yielded himself to the emperor; upon which his excellency kissed his hand with great reverence, and received him into his protection. James d'Avila then took off his helmet, and many other soldiers crowding about him, some snatched the plumes out of his crest, others cut off pieces of his coat, to carry away as a memorial of their having been engaged in the overthrow of so renowned a monarch; so that at last

CHAP. IV

Personal courage of Francis.

His capture.

Yields to Lannoy.

CHAP. IV.

Singular testification of admiration.

his majesty found himself reduced to his jacket and hose. He perceived, however, that this was done rather in a spirit of admiration than with any animosity to his person, and, smiling, seemed pleased at the conduct of the men. His body was then carefully examined, and it was found that the excellent temper of his cuirass, which had been struck by many balls, had saved his life, a slight wound on the face and in the hand being all that appeared,—a remarkable circumstance, for he had exposed his person with reckless and daring bravery. Whilst yet on the spot where he surrendered, the Marquis Pescara came up, and after him Guasto and others of the principal commanders. At length the constable, in complete armour, his beaver down and carrying his drawn sword covered with blood, suddenly joined the party, and approached the king, who demanded his name. On being told, Francis cast a momentary glance at the ensanguined weapon and stept a little behind Pescara, who perceiving his agitation, went to Bourbon and demanded his sword. The duke instantly gave it, and, as if stung by the implied reproach, threw himself on his knees before his sovereign, raised his beaver, and humbly entreated to be allowed to kiss his hand; but the king refused, and the other, bursting into tears, exclaimed,—"Ah, sire, had you followed my counsel in some things, you had not now been in this condition, nor would the plains of Italy have been stained with so much blood of the brave nobility of France." His majesty, who was much moved, made no direct reply, but, casting up his eyes to heaven, said merely,—"Patience, since fortune has failed me." Pescara then requested him to mount his horse, and they proceeded towards Pavia. As they approached the gates of that city he stopt, and desired the generals who escorted him, that they would spare him so great an affront as to carry him prisoner into a place which he had so long besieged in vain. Upon this they conducted him to a monastery near the town.

Meeting with Bourbon.

Courtesy of the captors

Attention of Bourbon.

He was there served respectfully while he partook of refreshment, both by the viceroy and Bourbon, the latter standing alone a long time reasoning with him, and calmly replying to his reproaches.*

* Turner, vol. i. p. 416-418. Grove's Life of Wolsey, vol. iii. pp. 371, 372.

CHAPTER V.

Henry reconciled with Francis—Rome taken—Death of Bourbon—Anne Boleyn and the Divorce.

Vacillating Policy of Henry—Reconciliation with Francis—Encourages Learning—Wolsey's Colleges—Rome taken—Death of Constable Bourbon—Wolsey's Mission to France—King's Love for Anne Boleyn—His meditated Divorce—Campegio in England—The Pope revokes the Cause to be tried before himself.

CHAP. V.

Effect of the victory of Pavia.

THE accounts of this great overthrow created a strong sensation in Europe, and it is not a little interesting to trace its effects upon the politics of the different powers. It did not belong to the disposition of the emperor to be over-elated with sudden success, and even had he experienced any of the intoxicating feelings of pride and exultation which attend upon victory, prudence required that he should conceal them at the moment.

Moderation of the emperor.

He exhibited accordingly an extreme moderation after the triumphant result of the late conflict, forbade all popular rejoicing, and permitted only those religious processions and thanksgivings, which acknowledged the goodness and power of the Almighty in discomfiting his enemies. He personally visited his royal captive, treated him with courtesy, and seemed anxious to indulge him in as great a degree of liberty as was consistent with security. But, notwithstanding all this apparent self-denial, Charles had determined to profit to the utmost by the calamitous reverses which had befallen his great

rival; the demands which he made, as preliminary to his liberation, fell little short of a total dismemberment of his kingdom; and the only consideration which checked the emperor in these exactions was the dread of giving too much to England. He had not forgotten the cautious and lukewarm policy of Henry; he had detected the practices of Wolsey in tampering with his enemies; and when he found that this minister and his royal master were now once more intent upon a general invasion of France, he felt contempt for their selfish and vacillating principles, and determined that they who had shared so little in the dangers of the war, should, if possible, be prevented from profiting by the triumph. It is easy to see how much this jealousy between England and the emperor must have operated in favour of the French monarch.

Exacting demands.

Contemptuous estimate of Wolsey and his master.

But this was not all. The effects of the battle of Pavia upon Italy were favourable to the captive prince. Charles' power began to be too formidable; hostile combinations were formed against him; the Venetians and the Florentines rose in arms; a league was projected for the expulsion of the imperialists; the Pope became alarmed for the safety of his dominions; and although the assurances of the constable, and the remonstrances of the English ambassador, secured for the moment the alliance of the Holy See, it was evident that the jealousy of the emperor's intentions would prevent any cordial co-operation.

Reaction in Italy.

Whilst such were the feelings beyond the Alps, France itself was neither defenceless nor in despair. The country had indeed lost a noble army,—its bravest generals and the flower of the nobility had fallen, and the sovereign was a captive,—but the great body of the nation were unsubdued. Wise and experienced statesmen still conducted its government, and it was evident to all who knew the condition and sentiments of the people, that there was no danger, except in an immediate invasion. If time were given to organize a new army, to arrange the scheme of resistance, to garri-

High spirit of France.

CHAP. V.

Time alone needed for its safety.

son the fortresses, and to discipline the raw levies, the kingdom would be safe, and the victory at Pavia could no longer draw after it such disastrous consequences as had been at first anticipated. Much evidently depended on the conduct of England at this crisis, and had Henry been truly actuated by a desire to hold the balance between the various European powers, so as to promote peace and confidence, he had an opportunity afforded him of securing the gratitude of Christendom, by withdrawing from his alliance with the emperor, and opposing the unhallowed designs of Bourbon for the conquest and dismemberment of his native country. Nor would it have been difficult for him to have adopted this generous and magnanimous policy. Wolsey's politics, as we have seen, had begun to fluctuate, and a new league between England, France, and the Pope, was already secretly contemplated, when the unexpected and overwhelming disaster in Italy disconcerted his measures.

Inconsistency and meanness of English policy.

We in vain look, however, for consistency of principle or magnanimity of conduct in the course pursued by the cardinal-minister or his royal master. They acted upon sudden impulses,—the news of the victory was received by them with great exultation; and the king commanded a public thanksgiving in St Paul's, at which he was personally present, along with the ambassadors of the allies. He warmly congratulated the constable on his success; and this extraordinary man, unsatisfied with the humiliation which he had already heaped on the head of his sovereign, reiterated to the English ambassador his proposal for the conquest of France, and as the price of Henry's co-operation in this design,

Bourbon's spirit of retaliation.

offered to place the crown upon his head. "I find him," says Sir John Russel, "firmly fixed to follow his enterprises against the French king, and never better willing; saying, that if your highness will, he will set the crown of France upon your head, and that shortly; and that there may be more done now with 100,000 crowns for the obtaining of that, than before might have been done with 500,000 crowns; wherefore his desire

is, that it will please your highness to furnish payment for 12,000 foot, and 500 men-at-arms for two months, which amounteth to 200,000 crowns."* Henry, once more dazzled with this brilliant but impracticable project, despatched ambassadors to Spain to concert a general invasion of the neighbouring kingdom, and an attempt was made by the cardinal to levy large sums of money by illegal commissions, which excited the utmost discontent and indignation throughout the country. "How the great men took it," says Hall, "was marvel; the poor cursed; the rich repugned; the lighter sort railed; and, in conclusion, all people execrated the cardinal as subverter of the laws and liberty of England. For," they said, "if men should give their goods by a commission, then were it worse than the taxes of France; and so England would be bond and not free."† A remarkable letter of Archbishop Warham, addressed to Wolsey, expresses in strong language the feelings of the body of the nation at this period. "I have heard," says he, "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 shown 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 France, once in his own 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

Proposal for a new war.

Letter of Archbishop Warham.

Wishes of the people.

* Turner, vol. i. p. 425. Ellis' Letters, vol. i. Second Series, pp. 326, 327.

† Hall's Chronicle, p. 696.

CHAP. V.

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."*

Unwise perseverance of Wolsey.

Neither Wolsey, however, nor his master were wise enough to profit by these incipient demonstrations of discontent. The cardinal, having called the mayor and common-council before him, explained the great change which had taken place in consequence of the victory at Pavia, the determination of the king to invade France, and the necessity of an immediate supply of money.

Fresh demands of money.

He demanded, therefore, a sixth part from the laity, informing them, at the same time, that a fourth part was to be exacted from the clergy; but he was met by remonstrances and difficulties. "Sirs," said he, "speak not to break the thing that is concluded; the king must be able to go like a prince, which cannot be without your aid. Forsooth, I think that half your substance were too little; it were better that some should suffer indigence, than that the king at this time should lack,—therefore, beware,—resist not, nor ruffle in this case, for it may fortune to cost some their heads."† Notwithstanding this high tone assumed by the minister, there was a spirit of resistance in the country upon which he had not calculated. The clergy resolutely refused to pay an atom more than had been granted in convocation, and the people, pronouncing the commissions illegal and intolerable, rose in various counties into open insurrections.

Spirit of resistance aroused.

Insurrections.

Handbills were circulated in the capital and other places, containing bitter and injurious reflections against the king: according to the strong expression of a contemporary, "there was muttering through all the realm, with cursing and weeping, that it was pity to behold it."‡ Henry now took the alarm, and, recalling the commissions, declared publicly that he would have nothing from his people but by way of a

* Letter quoted by Hallam, Constitut. Hist., vol. i. p. 27.
† Hall, p. 696. ‡ Ibid. p. 697.

benevolence. The judges having been consulted, had approved of this mode; it was sanctioned by the privy-council; and, relying upon these opinions, great sums were now demanded, as well in London as throughout the country. But conciliation came too late; and it was soon perceived that the tyranny of the commissions was not changed, although the name had been altered. In the capital an attempt was made by Wolsey to induce the mayor and aldermen to subscribe some certain sum, but they refused till they had consulted the common-council; the common-council referred them to their several wards; and the wards, without hesitation, declared they would give nothing. An endeavour was next made to induce them to subscribe privately, but this they declared they dared not for fear of the populace. Whilst such was the state of the city, matters had proceeded to greater extremities in the country. In Kent, the commissioners were attacked and maltreated; in Essex, the people refused to meet them; and in Suffolk, the rebellion assumed a still more alarming form.* The account of this popular insurrection, as it is given by Hall, who was a contemporary, is striking and graphic:—"The Duke of Suffolk sat in Suffolk this season on the like commission, and, by gentle handling, he caused the rich clothiers to assent and give the sixth part; and when they came home to their houses, they called to them their spinners, carders, fullers, wevers, and other artificers, which were wont to be set a-work, and to have their livings by cloth-making, and said, 'Sirs, we be not able to set you at work; our goods be taken from us, wherefore trust to yourselves and not to us, for otherwise it will not be.' Then began women to weep, and young folks to cry; and men that had no work began to rage and assemble themselves in companys. The Duke of Suffolk hearing of this, commanded the constables that every man's harness should be taken from them; but when that

Proposed raising by way of benevolence.

Opposition of the corporation of London.

Rebellion in the counties.

Proceedings in Suffolk.

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 63.

CHAP. V.

General arming.

was known, then the rumour waxed more great, and the people railed openly on the Duke of Suffolk and Sir Robert Drury, and threatened them with death; and so the men of Lanam, Sudberry, Hadley, and other towns about, rebelled there, making four thousand men, and put themselves in harness and rang the belles' alarme, and began to gather still more. Then the Duke of Suffolk perceiving this, began to raise men, but he could get but a small number, and they that came to him said they would defend him from all peril, if he hurt not their neighbours, but against their neighbours they would not fight. Yet the gentlemen that were with him did so much, that all the bridges were broken down, so that their assembly was somewhat letted. 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 be obedient. When he understood that, he came to them, and then they all spake at once, so that he wist not what they meant. He asked who was their captain, and bade that he should speak; when a well-aged man of fifty years and above, asked license of his grace to speak, which he granted with good will. 'My lord,' said this man, whose name was John Green, 'since you ask who is our captain, forsooth, his name is Poverty; for he and his cousin Necessity have brought us to this doing; for all these persons, and many more which I would were not here, live not of ourselves, but we all live by the substancial 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 penurie we pass the time, we, our wives, and children; and if they by whom we live be brought into 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

Bridges broken down.

Proceedings in Norfolk.

John Green.

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.' Norfolk 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 forth 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. At the duke's requests, commissioners of great authority were sent to them; upon which the Duke of Norfolk and the Duke of Suffolk came to Berry, and thither came many people of the country in their shirts, with halters about their necks, meekly desiring pardon for their offences; upon which the dukes so wisely handled themselves, that the commons were appeased. In especial, one Mr Jermyn took much pain in riding and going between the lords and commons. Then the demand for money ceased in all the realm, for well it was perceived that the commons would pay none."* Henry at last became convinced that he had attempted too much, and dreading the consequences in the total loss of his popularity, gave up his requisition of a benevolence, and published a general pardon to all who had refused it. The chief odium of the measure was laid, and not unjustly, upon Wolsey, who laboured, but without success, to persuade the people that he had never consented to the first demand, and that by his advice the king had remitted the benevolence. His dissimulation, however, was detected by all. "The people took all this for a mock, and said, God save the king,—for the cardinal is known well enough."†

General disbanding of servents.

Commissioners appointed.

Concessions of Henry.

* Hall, pp. 699, 700. † Ibid. p. 701.

CHAP. V.

Good consequences of this resistance.

'The consequences of this spirited resistance were highly beneficial, and seem to have operated as a principal motive in averting a war, which could have brought nothing but ruin to the country. Henry at last perceived that he must renounce all idea of obtaining from the people supplies equivalent to the expenses of such a contest.

Change of the emperor position.

His ambassadors to the court of Spain had been received with coolness by the emperor, who no longer found it necessary to pay that obsequious court to his uncle, which had flattered his vanity and secured his assistance. Charles was conscious of the pre-eminence over the other European princes which had been acquired by the victory at Pavia; Wolsey, whom he had formerly caressed, was now neglected; while Louise and her son, profiting by such feelings of estrangement, entered into a negotiation, which concluded in Henry's again embracing the interests of France, and completely deserting the emperor.

New line of English policy.

When we consider the articles of the treaty between that country and England, the motives for a change of policy on the part of the latter are abundantly evident. It was not, as represented in a celebrated work, any generous pity for the captive king, or any enlightened desire to preserve the balance of power in Europe, which prompted this conduct, but the urgent necessity of replenishing an exhausted exchequer. The king had

The king's dislike to a parliament.

experienced the impracticability of obtaining supplies from his Parliament, and evinced an insuperable dislike at any proposal for its being reassembled. He had been thwarted in his project of raising money by a commission; and his last endeavours to extort a benevolence had brought the country to the brink of a rebellion. In such a dilemma, the only hope of procuring funds was directed towards France; and it must be allowed, that

French supplies.

neither the cardinal nor his master neglected the opportunity. The French cabinet agreed to purchase the friendship of England by paying the sum of two millions of crowns, in half-yearly instalments, after which an annuity of 100,000 crowns was to be settled upon Henry for life. To his eminence they consented to give 30,000

crowns, in compensation for his having resigned the bishopric of Tournay, with 100,000 more as a reward for his services to their royal family. Mary, the queen-dowager, Henry's sister, was to be permitted the full enjoyment of her annuity, and the arrears, which had accumulated to a large amount, were to be paid up; whilst it was agreed that the Duke of Albany, who had formerly filled the office of regent in Scotland, should never be permitted to return to that kingdom during the minority of James the Fifth. To the fulfilment of these articles the French government engaged themselves in the most sacred manner; they were ratified by the king, and by the principal members of the nobility; they were confirmed by the oath of the queen-regent; the cities of Toulouse, Lyons, Amiens, Rheims, Paris, Bordeaux, Tours, and Rouen, obliged themselves, under the penalty of forfeiting their whole property, to observe them faithfully, and compel their sovereign to their performance. Every precaution which ingenuity or suspicion could devise seems to have been employed; but all proved in vain. At the moment when these solemn obligations were sworn to, the attorney and solicitor general of the Parliament at Paris entered on the private register a protest against the whole transaction; and Francis secured the assistance of his neighbour, whilst he reserved to himself the power of founding upon that protest a refusal to fulfil his engagements.*

Bribes to the cardinal

Sacred guarantees for the fulfilment of promises.

Perfidy of Francis.

This dishonourable conduct was, if possible, exceeded by the duplicity of the French monarch towards the emperor. After a vain endeavour to induce him to relax in the rigour of his demands, he consented to renounce all pretensions to Milan, Naples, and Flanders; to restore the constable to his hereditary estates and honours; to marry Eleonora, the sister of Charles; and to transfer to that prince the possession of Burgundy within six weeks after his delivery from captivity. On the morning of the day on which he confirmed these

His great duplicity.

* Lingard, vol. vi. p. 115.

CHAP. V.

Premeditated baseness.

conditions by his signature and his oath, he sent for a few confidential advisers, read to them a protest against the validity of the act he was about to perform, and, by this premeditated baseness, provided for the subsequent violation of his agreement. To complete this unfavourable picture of the manners of an age which has arrogated to itself the praise of honour and chivalry, it is only to be added, that Henry, on receiving intelligence of the treaty of Madrid, by which the French king was restored to his freedom, despatched Sir Thomas Cheney and Dr Taylor to offer his congratulations, and these ambassadors received private instructions to solicit him to violate his treaty with the emperor.*

Position of Wolsey.

It is by no means improbable that the late disturbances in England, and the murmurs against the government, had caused the king to express some dissatisfaction with the cardinal. Rapin has asserted that he was nearly disgraced; but Wolsey, though haughty and proud to the nobility and the people, understood the disposition of the monarch, and so ably accommodated himself to his ruling passion for pleasure and magnificence, that he forgot his resentment in the luxuries with which he was surrounded. The expensive and costly nature of these entertainments, and the almost puerile delight they administered to Henry, are strongly described in the following passage from Cavendish; and which, as it may be regarded as one of the last gleams in the setting splendours of Wolsey, is worthy of notice:—"When it pleased, the king's majesty, for his recreation, would repair unto the cardinal's house, as he did

Costly entertainment of the king.

* In Ellis' Letters, Second Series, vol. i. p. 339, is a characteristic letter from this Dr Taylor, addressed to Wolsey, dated Angoulesme, June 12. It contains the following ridiculous piece of flattery, meant, no doubt, for Henry's ears:—"I assure your grace there hath been with me Sicilians, Neapolitans, Almaynes, and Italians, all praying to God that the King of England might be their lord and king. And, doubtless, if there were as [well-filled] coffers as hath been, the king's highness might faey [on it so as to] be lorde of all the world." The words within brackets are supplied.

divers times in the year; at which time there wanted no preparations or goodly furniture, with viands of the finest sort, that might be provided for money or friendship. Such pleasures were then devised for the king's comfort and consolation as might be invented, or by man's wit imagined. The banquets were set forth with masks and mummeries, in so gorgeous a sort and costly a manner, that it was a heaven to behold. There wanted no dames or damsels meet or apt to dance with the maskers, or to garnish the place for the time, with other goodly disports. Then was there all kind of music and harmony set forth, with excellent voices, both of men and children. I have seen the king suddenly come thither in a mask, with a dozen of other maskers, all in garments like shepherds, made of fine cloth of gold and fine crimson satin, and caps of the same, with visors of good proportion of visnomy, their hair and beards either of fine gold wire, or of silver, and some being of black silk; having sixteen torch-bearers, besides their drums, and other persons attending on them with visors, and clothed all in satin of the same colours. And at his coming, and before he came into the hall, ye shall understand that he came by water to the water-gate, without any noise, where against his coming were laid charged many chambers; and at his landing they were all shot off, which made such a rumble in the air, that it was like thunder. It made all the noblemen, ladies, and gentlewomen, to muse what it should mean coming so suddenly, they sitting quietly at a solemn banquet. .... Then, immediately after this great shot of guns, the cardinal desired the lord-chamberlain and comptroller to look what this sudden shot should mean, as though he knew nothing of the matter. They thereupon, looking out of the windows unto Thames, returned again and showed him that there should be some noblemen and strangers arrived at his bridge as ambassadors from some foreign prince. 'With that,' quoth the cardinal, 'I shall desire you, because you can speak French, to take the pains to go down into the hall to encounter and to re-

Pleasures and pastimes.

Royal maskings.

Puerile conceits.

CHAP. V.

Formal pleasantries.

ceive them, according to their estates, and to conduct them into this chamber, where they shall see us and all these noble personages sitting merrily at our banquet, desiring them to sit down with us, and to take part of our fare and pastime.' Then they went incontinent down to the hall, where they received them with twenty new torches, and conveyed them up into the chamber with such a number of drums and fifes as I have seldom seen together at one time in any mask. At their arrival into the chamber, two and two together, they went directly before the cardinal where he sat, saluting him very reverently; to whom the lord-chamberlain, for

Introduction of maskers to the cardinal.

them, said,—'Sir, for as much as they be strangers and can speak no English, they have desired me to declare unto your grace thus:—They having understanding of this your triumphant banquet, where was assembled such a number of excellent fair dames, could do no less, under the supportation of your good grace, than repair thither to view as well their incomparable beauty as for to accompany them at mumchance, and then after to dance with them, and so to make their acquaintance; and, sir, they furthermore require of your grace license to accomplish the cause of their repair.' To whom the cardinal answered, That he was very well contented they should do so. Then the maskers went first and saluted all the dames as they sat, and then returned to the most worthiest and there opened a cup full of gold, with crowns and other pieces of coin; to whom they

Largess.

set divers pieces to cast at. Thus, in this manner, perusing all the ladies and gentlewomen, to some they lost, and from some they won. And this done, they returned unto the cardinal with great reverence, pouring down all the crowns in the cup, which was about two hundred crowns. 'At all,' quoth the cardinal, and so cast the dice, and won them all at a cast; whereat was great joy made. 'Then,' quoth the cardinal to my lord-chamberlain, 'I pray you,' quoth he, 'show them that it seemeth me that there should be among them some noble person, whom I suppose to be much more worthy

of honour to sit and occupy this room and place than I, to whom I would most gladly, if I knew him, surrender my place, according to my duty.' Then spake my lord-chamberlain unto them in French, declaring my lord-cardinal's mind; and they, rounding him again in the ear, my lord-chamberlain said to my lord-cardinal,—'Sir, they confess that among them there is such a noble personage, whom, if your grace can distinguish him from the other, he is contented to disclose himself, and to accept your place most worthily.' With that the cardinal, taking a good advisement among them, at the last, quoth he, 'Me seemeth the gentleman with the black beard should be even he.' And with that he arose out of his chair, and offered the same to the gentleman with the black beard, with his cap in his hand. The person to whom he thus offered his chair was Sir Edward Neville, a comely knight of a goodly presence, that much more resembled the king's person in that mask than any other. The king, hearing and perceiving the cardinal so deceived in his choice, could not forbear laughing, but plucked down his visor and Master Neville's also, and dashed out with such a pleasant countenance and cheer, that all noble estates there assembled, seeing the king to be there amongst them, rejoiced very much. The cardinal immediately desired his highness to take the place of estate, to whom the king answered that he would go first and shift his apparel; and so he departed, and went straight into my lord's bed-chamber, where there was a great fire prepared for him, and there he new apparelled himself with rich and princely garments. And in the time of the king's absence, the dishes of the banquet were clean taken up, and the tables spread again with new and sweet-perfumed cloths, every man sitting still until the king and his maskers came in among them again, each being newly apparelled. Then the king took his seat under the cloth of estate, commanding no man to remove, but sit still as they did before. Then came in a new banquet before the king's majesty, and to all the rest seated at the tables, wherein,

Flattery of the king.

Mistaken choice of the cardinal.

Pleasure of Henry.

CHAP. V.

Splendid royal banquet.

I suppose, were served two hundred dishes, or above, of wondrous costly meats, and devices subtilely contrived. Thus passed they forth the whole night with banqueting, dancing, and other triumphant devices, to the great comfort of the king, and pleasant regard of the nobility there assembled."* Such were the singular manners of the times; and it is difficult to repress a smile, when we observe the gravity with which the lord-cardinal enacts his part, and the happiness which the premeditated surprise seems to have communicated to his joyous and light-hearted sovereign.

Encouragement of learning.

It is pleasing to turn from these follies to consider the efforts made about this time by the legate for the encouragement of learning. On all occasions he proved himself a steady friend to the advancement of education; and he had, prior to this date, merited the gratitude of the more enlightened part of the nation, by his foundation of six public lectures at Oxford. Those on theology, civil law, medicine, philosophy, mathematics, and the Greek language, were all instituted by Wolsey at the same time;† and soon after he added to them a chair of rhetoric and humanity. We have already made some remarks on the enthusiastic efforts of some eminent scholars for the introduction of classical literature into England, and the reader is acquainted with the partial success which attended their labours. To the professorships founded by the cardinal the cause of reviving knowledge was deeply indebted; and the labours and example of Grocyn, Linacre, Lilly, and Sir Thomas More, were succeeded and emulated by other illustrious individuals, who had drunk at the same fountains, and were selected by Wolsey as his readers in the university.

Foundation of lectureships.

Good results.

John Clement.

One of the most remarkable of these was John Clement. He had been early marked as a boy of much promise by Sir Thomas More, who took him from St

* Cavendish's Life of Wolsey, by Singer, vol. i. p. 49-55, inclusive.

† Fiddes' Life of Wolsey, p. 209-219, inclusive.

CHAP. V

Paul's seminary, where he had been educated by Lilly, and brought him up in his own family,—the school, as it was deservedly called, of all noble and liberal knowledge. He afterwards became tutor to More's celebrated daughter, Margaret Roper, and successively reader in the chair of rhetoric and Greek at Oxford, where his instructions were attended with the most essential benefit in dispelling the ignorance of the age and disseminating a more general taste for useful and elegant learning.

His patronage by More.

When Clement retired from the Greek lectureship, Wolsey selected as his successor a man of still higher endowments, and to whose exertions for the revival of classical literature England was deeply indebted. This was Thomas Lupset, another of those scholars, whose genius, after a course of initiatory instruction under Lilly in their own country, ripened in Italy, and on their return brought forth fruit in their native soil. He was early patronised by Dean Colet, and being sent to Cambridge whilst still a young man, he became the friend of Erasmus, and the assistant of that great writer in his collation of the New Testament, and in his publication of the works of St Jerome. From thence he proceeded, in 1515, to the University of Paris, enjoying still the friendship of Erasmus, who warmly interested himself in the direction of his studies. By his advice he bade adieu to the useless prelections of scholastic theology, sold the volumes of the schoolmen, bought Greek authors, and, devoting himself with the utmost enthusiasm to the perusal of them, became one of the most accomplished scholars of his age. Returning to England in 1521, he was chosen by Wolsey to fill the vacant lectureship at Oxford; and not long after, we find this university, in a letter to their friend and benefactor, the cardinal, returning thanks in a pompous strain of gratitude, for the immortal benefit he had thereby bestowed upon them.

Thomas Lupset.

Proceeds to Paris.

When speaking of the efforts which were made under the liberal and enlightened patronage of Wolsey, to overturn the dominion of monkish frivolity at Oxford,

Cambridge.

CHAP. V.

Richard Croke.

Miserable condition of the schools.

Foolish disputes.

it is worthy of remark, that a still greater necessity for a similar reformation existed at Cambridge. To this university, Richard Croke, one of Grocyn's pupils, who had already been the principal instrument of introducing a knowledge of the Greek language in Germany, returned about the year 1518. He was a man of extreme simplicity and modesty, but of profound learning. He had profited, when on the Continent, by the instructions of Aleander and Budæus, and became afterwards the master of Camerarius, who was himself the preceptor of Melancthon. At the period when he commenced his prelections at Leipsic, the surrounding country was involved in deep intellectual darkness. Its miserable condition is strikingly depicted by one of the biographers of Reuchlin; and as the passage is almost equally applicable to England at the same era, it is worth transcription:—"Barbarism," says this author, "had here reached its height in the fifteenth century. There reigned throughout every quarter an incredible contempt of the learned languages; and this contempt was accompanied by a rooted ignorance. The schools were occupied with nothing but discussions on aptitudinabilitates, componibilitates, passionabilitates, susceptibilitates; they carried on disputes de dabilibus, versicabilibus, meliorabilibus, singularizationibus, attingibilitatibus, dogmatibilitatibus. You are astonished, my friends, at such jargon, and no wonder; my tongue is no less so, and cleaves to the roof of my mouth. But this is not all; what do you think were the questions discussed in these times? They employed their faculties in determining the size of Diogenes' tub, the bulk of Hercules' club; they disputed whether Æneas placed his right or his left foot first upon Italy. To understand any thing of Greek in these times, was to be marked for a suspected person; to have even a slight acquaintance with Hebrew was almost to be a heretic."*

* Fechtius, Dissertatio Præmiss.: Vitæ Joann.: Reuchline a Maio. Conscript. quoted in Bœhmius de Litteratura Lipsenci, p. 40.

CHAP. V.

The lectures delivered by Croke at Leipsic were soon attended with happy effects; crowds of aged scholars thronged the auditory of their yet youthful preceptor. "At length," says Bœhmius, in his account of this literary revolution, "arose the bright star of our Leipsic academy, in the person of Richard Croke, an Englishman, who came to us in the year 1515. To this great man it was reserved to shed over Leipsic a new and unknown splendour, and to be the first whose example and instructions should conduct us to the study of the Greek language."* After a residence of some years in Germany, he returned to England with a high reputation, which immediately recommended him to the attention of his sovereign, and to the few amongst the nobility and clergy who had become the patrons of literature. He was chosen by Henry himself his preceptor in Greek;† and, at the entreaty of Fisher, bishop of Rochester, became in 1518 professor in the University of Cambridge. Some slight acquaintance with that ancient language had been already introduced there by Erasmus; but, finding little encouragement, this great scholar, who was then poor, left England, and in 1518 was succeeded in the chair by Croke, who, in one of his works, adverts with much modesty to this circumstance: —"Succedo in Erasmi locum! Bone Deus! quam infra illum et doctrina et fama."‡

Croke's lectures at Leipsic.

His return to England.

Made a professor of Cambridge.

To the advancement of classical learning, and the reformation of letters and philosophy from that degraded condition to which they were then reduced in England, Croke devoted himself with enthusiastic and unremitting diligence. His ardour in the task exhausted his constitution, and materially injured his health; and he complained that, in his struggles with the ignorance and barbarism of the times, he had brought age prematurely

Devotion to the reformation of letters and philosophy.

* Bœhmius, p. 173.

† Crokus qui et Lipsiæ Græcas literas primus docuit et ipsi Regi Henrico Elementa Græca tradidit. Stapleton de Tribus Thomis, cap. v.

‡ Oration on the Excellency of Greek Learning, Knight, p. 87.

CHAP. V.

Appointed first public orator.

upon him. To reward him for these sacrifices, he was appointed in 1522 the first public orator,* and so well pleased was he with his situation, that although tempted by the offer of a high salary to reside at Oxford, and earnestly exhorted by Wolsey and More to accept it, he preferred remaining at Cambridge. The patronage of Fisher, however, and the successive efforts of Erasmus and Croke, were insufficient to expel the monkish darkness which still covered the university; and at a time when classical learning, under the munificent patronage of the cardinal and the fostering care of Grocyn, Linacre, and Latimer, had risen into a happy dawning at Oxford, the sister seminary was obstinate in her adherence to the follies and corruptions of the schools. "The scholars that came from Cambridge," says Anthony Wood, in his Annals under the year 1524, "were for the most part bachelors and under-graduates, such as had been trained up in that poor and low kind of learning there used; for although, as I have said, John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, with Erasmus, and Croke their orator, had laboured all the ways imaginable to draw and entice them like children out of their ignorance, yet at this period, and for some time after, the knowledge of good letters was scarce entered the university, all things being full of rudeness and barbarism. Indeed, had not Robert Barnes, prior of the Augustines there, who had been chiefly educated at Louvain, effected, with the help of his scholar, Tom Purcell, an entrance into learning, and read Terence, Plautus, Cicero, and Copia Verborum, that university must have been reduced to a very miserable estate."†

Inferiority of Cambridge at this period.

These brief sketches of the labours of Clement, Lup-

* The public orator was anciently, and till the election of Croke, called Magister Glomeriæ, a barbarous word formed from *glomerare*, to collect together; I suppose from collecting together the members of the University. Dominus Crokus, qui primo advexit Græcas literas erat primus orator, et habuit sicut Magister Glomeriæ stipendium, 40 S. Ex libro, D. Mathæi Cant.—Genealogical History of the Croke Family, vol. ii. p. 441.

† Hist. and Antiquities of Oxford, vol. ii. p. 25.

set, and Croke, and of the patronage extended to them by Wolsey, More, Fisher, and other eminent scholars, may give us some idea of the state of classical literature at that period in England. But the cardinal, not satisfied with what he had already accomplished, resolved at this time to promote the cause of letters by the foundation of two colleges,—one at Ipswich, the place of his birth, and another at Oxford. With regard to the latter of these, which was to be denominated Cardinal College, the University addressed themselves to its munificent founder in a strain of eloquent gratitude, which evinces the highest expectation of its beneficial effect in promoting the general advancement of learning.*

Further efforts of the cardinal in the cause of letters.

Money, however, was required by Wolsey in the erection and support of these magnificent establishments; and for this end he procured the dissolution of the monastery of St Fridewide, which, having been surrendered to the crown, was immediately bestowed by Henry on his favourite. It was necessary, however, as this was ecclesiastical property, to procure a Papal Bull to sanction the transfer; and having been successful in this, the cardinal, with the same object of applying their funds for the general purposes of education,† proposed the dissolution of several smaller monasteries; which, being represented as an illegal attack upon the Church, excited a great clamour against him. His proceedings were censured with much freedom and bitterness. It was affirmed, that his pride and love of power had mounted to such a height, that nothing, civil or sacred, was safe from his attack; he had already, by the late odious commission and benevolence, endeavoured to rob the laity of the best portion of their property; and he was now preparing to pull down the Church, to seize its lands, and divert its revenues to secular and unhallowed purposes. These complaints were unjust and ridiculous, for the Papal Bull sanctioned the dissolution

Mode of raising money.

Proposed dissolution of monasteries.

* Wood's History of the University of Oxford, vol. ii. pp. 27, 28.
† Rymer's Fœdera, vol. xiv. pp. 240, 243, 251, inclusive.

CHAP. V.

Strong opposition to his projects.

of the monasteries, and authorized the destination of their funds; but the arguments were plausible; the enormous wealth of Wolsey, who, it was believed, could well afford to endow his colleges without adventitious aid, gave them additional weight; and Henry, at this moment warmly attached to the Popedom, and zealous for the interests of the Romish Church, addressed an admonitory letter to him with his own hand:—"Because," said the king, "I dare be bolder with you than a great many that mumble it abroad; and to the intent that the foundation by you meant and begun should take prosperous success, I think it very fit you should know these things. Surely it is reckoned that much of the gold that buildeth the same should not be the best acquired and gotten, reckoning it to come from many a religious house unlawfully; bearing the cloak of kindness towards the edifying of your college, which kindness cannot sink in any man's heart to be in them; since those same religious houses would not grant to their sovereign in his necessity so much by a great deal as they have to you for the building of your college. These things bear shrewd appearance."

Royal admonition.

Opportunity afforded to Wolsey's enemies.

It was probably this last circumstance which drew down the reproof, more than the injustice which had been committed; and it is easy to conceive the handle which it afforded to Wolsey's enemies, who were busy to seize every opportunity of poisoning the royal mind. They suggested, that whilst the cardinal by his utmost efforts had been unable to procure a supply for the necessities of the monarch, he had experienced no such difficulties when he required money for his own projects, —a mode of argument by no means unlikely to make a considerable impression.* If, indeed, we may believe an historian who was a contemporary, the manner in which the legate conducted the dissolution of the religious houses was tyrannical enough. "He entered

* Fiddes' Life of Wolsey, p. 372. See also Herbert, p. 67. Wood, Colleges of Oxford, p. 417.

suddenly," says he, "by his commissioners, into the said houses, put out the religious, and took all their goods, and scarcely gave to the poor wretches any thing, except it were to the heads of the house; and then he caused the escheator to sit, and to find the houses void as relinquished, and found the king founder, where other men were the founders; and with these lands he endowed his colleges, which he began so sumptuous, and the scholars were so proud, that every person judged the end would not be good. As for the monastery of Beggam, in Sussex, which was very commodious to the country, it so befell, that a riotous company, disguised and unknown, with painted faces and visors, came to the same, and brought with them the extruded canons, and put them in their place again, and promised them that whensoever they rung the bell, they would come with a great power and defend them. This doing came to the ears of the king's council, which caused the canons to be taken, and they discovered the captains, who were imprisoned and sore punished."*

Tyrannical proceedings of Wolsey.

Proceedings at the monastery of Beggam.

Henry, as we have seen, had written against Luther; and this able reformer, giving way to a violence of temper that none bewailed more deeply than himself, replied in a strain of virulence and abuse, which raised the indignation of the crowned heads in Europe, and occasioned the regret of Melancthon and some other of his warmest adherents. By their advice, he now addressed an apologetic letter to the monarch. "He doubted not," he said, "but he had much offended his majesty by his reply, but he did so, rather enforced by others than of his own accord. He was now induced to write, presuming upon his well-known humanity, and especially as he understood that Henry himself was not the author of the book against him, but some other person who had usurped his name." It is not improbable, that the extreme unpopularity of Wolsey at this moment, and some exaggerated reports of the king's

Reply of Luther to Henry.

Apology of Luther.

* Herbert, p. 67.

CHAP. V.

False impressions of the king's views.

severity towards him, had induced Luther to believe that the sovereign was becoming more alienated from the cardinal, and less zealous for the Church, than was really the case; upon which ground, he felt the less scruple in attacking him in the most indignant terms. He brands him as a monster, a public offence to God and man, a pest of the kingdom, and caterpillar of England. He understood (he observed) that his majesty had now begun to loath that wicked sort of men, and in his mind to favour the truth. Whereupon he craved pardon, beseeching him to remember, that being mortal ourselves, we ought not to make our enmities immortal.

Concessions of Luther.

He added, that should Henry be pleased to impose it, he would openly acknowledge his fault, and blazon his royal virtues in another book. Only, he entreated his highness to stop his ears against those who, with slanderous tongues, had branded him with heresy; and to listen to the sum of the doctrine which he taught. "I have maintained," said he, "that we must be saved through faith in Christ, who bore the punishment of our sins in every part, and throughout his whole body; who, dying for us and rising again, reigneth with the Father for ever. I have taught this to be the doctrine

Defence of his opinions

of the prophets and apostles, and have out of this doctrine deduced what Christ was; how we ought to comport ourselves one towards another, the obedience we owe to magistrates, and the duty incumbent upon us to spend our whole lives in the profession of the Gospel. If this doctrine contain any impiety or error, why do not my adversaries demonstrate it? Why am I condemned without lawful hearing or confutation?" With

Invectives against the pope.

regard to his invectives against the Pope and his adherents, he maintained that he had good reason to pronounce them; seeing they taught things contrary to the doctrine and practice of Christ and the apostles; that they might domineer over the flock and maintain themselves in gluttony and idleness. This, he insisted, was the mark at which their thoughts and deeds aimed; and so notorious was it, that they themselves could not deny

it; whereas, if they would consent to change their idle and voluptuous course of life, which was maintained by the loss and wrong of others, the differences might be easily composed. His tenets, he asserted, were approved by many princes and estates of Germany, who did reverently acknowledge this reformation as a great blessing from God, and amongst whom he most earnestly desired that he might include his majesty of England. The emperor, indeed, and some others, he allowed, opposed his proceedings; but why should we wonder at this, since, many ages ago, the prophet David had foretold, that kings and nations should conspire against the Lord and against his Christ, and cast away his yoke from them. When he considered this, it was, he maintained, rather a matter of wonder that any prince should favour the doctrine of the Gospel."*

Extensive approval of his tenets.

The effect of this letter was altogether different from what its author had expected. The king returned a sharp and poignant reply; from which he seems to have been especially indignant at the imputation cast upon him by his antagonist, that he had permitted his name to be affixed to a work of which he was not the author. He declared that it was his own composition, and rejoiced that it was held in great esteem by many religious and learned men. With regard, he said, to that reverend father, the cardinal, his slander and animosity against him was not more than could be expected in one from whose impiety neither God nor man was exempted. He observed, that both himself and his whole realm had found the profitable effects of Wolsey's wise counsels and faithful endeavours; and his minister, he declared, should at least reap this fruit of Luther's railing, that whereas he loved him very well before, he would now favour him more than ever; nor would he ever cease to reckon it amongst one of his good deeds, that none who were infected with the German leprosy, contagion, and heresies, should cleave

Unexpected effect of the letter.

Defence of the cardinal.

* Godwin, pp. 68, 70.

CHAP. V.

Upbraidings of Luther.

to his kingdom of England, or take root therein. Henry concluded his letter by upbraiding his correspondent with his incestuous conduct in marrying a nun. It was a crime, he affirmed, which must have been committed under the direct instigation of the Father of all evil,—a heinous and most sacrilegious union, for which, had he lived under the ancient Roman government, the vestal whom he had married must have been buried alive, and he himself cut to pieces with stripes.* The king caused this answer to be printed; and Luther, who had been induced to believe that the effects of his apology upon the mind of his regal adversary would be highly beneficial, and that there was even some hope of gaining him to the cause of reformed truth, was deeply disappointed at the result, and blamed his friends who had advised his concessions. He had shown himself a fool, he said, in hoping to find piety and zeal in the courts of princes,—in seeking Christ in the kingdom of Satan,—in looking for John the Baptist amongst those clothed in purple. Henceforth, he concluded, let his enemies tremble; to allure them with mildness was a vain attempt; the lash must be laid upon their backs.†

Great disappointment at the results.

Revived ideas of maritime discovery.

About this time, the king appears to have resumed the design for the discovery of a north-west passage, already attempted, though without success, by Sebastian Cabot in 1517. On the 20th of May, according to the account of a contemporary, "two fair shippes, well manned and victualled, and having on board divers cunning men, set forth out of the Thames to seek strange regions."‡ It is unfortunate, that considerable obscurity rests upon a voyage of which the object was so deeply interesting. The recent research of an acute writer has, however, thrown some light upon its details. The names of the vessels were the Mary of Guilford and the Sampson. The enterprise appears to have been warmly patronised by Wolsey and his royal master;

* Godwin, p. 71. † Ibid. ‡ Hall, p. 724.

Voyage of discovery.

and, strange as it may be thought, Albert de Prato, a canon of St Paul's and a profound mathematician, was appointed master of the Sampson, whilst a captain named Rut commanded the Mary. We learn, from a letter of this last to Henry, that they ran in their course northward till they came into latitude 53°, where they found many great islands of ice and deep water; whereupon they put about, and soon after encountered a severe gale, during which the ships parted company. Sailing past a huge island of ice, the Mary doubled Cape le Bas, and anchored in an excellent harbour, "a great fresh river going up far into the mainland," which was all wilderness, mountains, and woods, and, as far as they could judge, uninhabited. After waiting some time for her fellow, Rut directed his course to the southward, and early in August made the haven of St John, where they found a considerable fleet of Norman and Portuguese barks engaged in fishing. At the date of his letter to Wolsey, 3d August 1527, he informed the cardinal, that, having first finished his fishing, it was his intention to depart towards Cape Breton, and so on along the coast till he should meet his consort; after which, they meant to proceed to the islands specified in the instructions received by them at their departure. The Sampson, however, was not again heard of; and the next intelligence of the Mary of Guilford came from Navarro, the captain of a Spanish caravel, who met her at Porto Rico. On going on board the English ship, he was informed by the crew, that she and the one under Prato had been equipped for the purpose of seeking the land of the Great Cham; in other words, that she was engaged in the old project which had so long engrossed the attention of Cabot and other navigators, a north-west passage to Cathay. They added, that having parted company with their fellow in a tempest they had been beset by ice, and constrained to change their course, and had come into a sea so warm that they

Course pursued by Rut.

Loss of the Sampson.

* Hall, p. 724.

CHAP. V.

began to be afraid lest it should open the seams of their vessel; to avoid which catastrophe, they steered for the Baccalaos, where they found fifty sail of French, Portuguese, and Spanish ships, engaged in the fishing. From thence they stated their course to have been along the coast till they reached the river Chicora, after which they crossed over to the island of St John. On being further interrogated by Navarro, they affirmed that their object in coming to these islands was to explore, and make a report to the King of England, as well as to procure a load of Brazilian wood.* Of this remarkable voyage we have no further account except what is given by the celebrated Frobisher to Hakluyt, who asserted that, after shaping their course towards Cape Breton and Arambec, they returned to England about the beginning of October 1527.†

Steer for the Baccalaos.

Assigned object of the voyage.

* Biddle's Memoir of Sebastian Cabot, pp. 273, 274, 278.

† Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 129. See, as to the river Chicora and the region termed Arambec, the remarks of Mr Biddle. Memoir of Cabot, p. 279. Mr Bancroft, in the 1st volume of a History of the United States, lately published (Boston, 1834), has adopted the greater portion of the views regarding the discovery of America by John Cabot, which have been given in a work, entitled Historical View of the Progress of Discovery on the more northern Coasts of America, and has availed himself of the authorities quoted in their support. But, having departed from the hypothesis of Mr Biddle and embraced the views of another work, it was surely incumbent on him to have quoted that work; yet this he has avoided. Let me mention another circumstance: In page 52 of the Historical View, I took occasion to show that the theory of Mr Biddle, that VERRAZZANO was the same person as the Piedmontese pilot, slain on the coast of America in 1527, could not be true, as Verazzano was alive in 1537. This fact,—a material one in the life of the Florentine navigator,—I established by referring to a letter of Annibal Caro, vol. i. p. 11, which I found quoted by Tiraboschi in his great work, Storia della Letteratura Italiana, vol. vii. part i. pp. 261, 262. I referred also to Cardenas, Ensajo Cronologico para la Historia de la Florida, p. 8, to show that he had fallen into an error somewhat similar to that of Mr Biddle; and I pointed out the fact, mentioned by Tiraboschi, that there was a MS. of Verazzano's preserved in the Strozzi Library, which was said to describe minutely all the countries he had visited; concluding the note by expressing a wish that some Italian scholar would favour the world with the publication of it. In Mr Bancroft's History, pp. 20, 21, he has rejected the conjecture of Mr Biddle, and has repeated the

CHAP. V.

Whilst in England such pursuits occupied the mind of the monarch, events of the most important nature and magnitude were in the course of evolving themselves on the Continent. Francis, as might be anticipated from what we already know, had scarcely returned to his dominions when he violated every engagement into which he had entered with the emperor; and Clement the Seventh, alarmed at the success of the imperialists, and dreading a simultaneous invasion on the side of Naples and Lombardy, exerted his utmost efforts to form a confederation which might defend him from such a calamity. Nor was he unsuccessful in this attempt. France, the Milanese, and the republics of Venice and Florence, combined against the emperor, and Henry was earnestly invited to become the protector of an alliance which they termed the Holy League; but the English monarch declined a direct accession,* and merely entered into a secret treaty with the French king. Disaster, however, pursued the efforts of the confederates. Francis performed no part of his promises; Clement found it impossible to save the Milanese; and, after soliciting and obtaining peace, was, by the perfidy of Moncada, the Neapolitan general, attacked in his palace of the Vatican, and compelled to fly for refuge to the castle of St Angelo. This reverse gave a perceptible shock to the sanctity and security of the Papal power, and it was followed soon after by a more appalling event, which riveted the attention of Christendom.

Important events on the continent.

New confederation.

Failure of the Holy alliance.

A body of 14,000 Germans had been levied to strengthen the bands of the imperialists, and these were joined at Fiorenzuola by the formidable remains

facts stated in the Historical View, p. 52. In a long note, he quotes the passage from Tiraboschi, the letter of Annibal Caro, the Ensajo Cronologico, and he refers to the MS. of Verazzano, preserved in the Strozzi Library.—with a wish that it should be published by some *American* antiquary, yet he has not once alluded to the work from which his information appears to have been derived.

* State-papers published by Government, p. 173; Wolsey to More, September 1526; see also pp. 167, 168, Wolsey to King Henry the Eighth, 19th July 1526.

CHAP. V.

Bourbon's siege of Rome.

of Bourbon's army, amounting to 10,000 Swiss and Italian mercenaries, commanded by the constable in person. This daring and extraordinary man now led his united forces against Rome; and, although he was himself slain in the assault, the city was taken by his exasperated followers, and the Pope driven to his wonted stronghold, where he was besieged, and soon reduced to the last extremity. In the streets the scene was dreadful. Nothing was heard on every side but the cries of "Blood! blood!" "Bourbon! Bourbon!" and that proud, luxurious capital, the boasted bulwark and metropolis of the ecclesiastical world, was delivered up to the indiscriminate pillage, slaughter, and violation of an infuriated host. "The soldiers being within the city,"

Spoiling of the city.

says Guicciardini, "which they knew wanted nothing to make them right glorious, lost no time in rushing upon their prey. They respected neither friends nor favourers; they derided the authority of cardinals and prelates, the dignity of temples or monasteries; the holiest relics, brought thither from all parts of the world, and even things most specially dedicated to sacred uses, were all indiscriminately profaned. Hard would it be to particularize the greatness of the booty, whether we look to the general wealth and riches which the greedy hands of the soldiers had laid up in heaps, or to other things more rare and precious, drawn out of the storehouses of merchants and courtiers. But the matter which made the spoil infinite in value was the quality

Number of prisoners.

and number of the prisoners, redeemed with rich and huge ransoms. And, to make up a full tragedy of misery and infamy, the lance-knights, being insolent and cruel in proportion to their extreme hatred to the Church of Rome, took prisoners certain prelates, whom,

Indignities suffered by churchmen.

with great contempt and indignity, they set upon asses and lean mules, and, with their faces turned to the croupe of the beasts, they led them through Rome, apparelled with the habits and marks of their dignity;—yea, they subjected many of them to cruel torments, who either died in the fury of the action, or at least with

CHAP. V

the painfulness thereof they lived not long after; first yielding a ransom, and afterwards rendering up their lives. The general slaughter, as well at the assault as at the sacking, was about four thousand persons. . . . . The Cardinal of Sienna, distinguished by an hereditary devotedness to the emperor, after he had agreed with the Spaniards for the safety both of his person and palace, was afterwards made prisoner by the lance-knights, who not only pillaged his palace, but, stripping him naked, led him, with buffets and bastinado, into the borough, where he was compelled once more to redeem his life with a promise of 5000 ducats. The cardinals Minerva and Ponzetta suffered a like grievous calamity, being made prisoners, rated at an enormous ransom, which they paid, and afterwards carried in procession as a vile spectacle through the streets of Rome. The fury of the soldiers, excited as it was by the extraordinary riches of the place, would admit of no plea of dispensation and no consideration of friendship to restrain them in their pillage. The Spanish and German prelates, who expected that the soldiers of their own nation would spare them from oppression, were seized, and subjected to the same indignities as others. Most piteous were the shrieks and lamentations of the women of Rome, and no less worthy of compassion the deplorable condition of nuns and novices, whom the soldiers drove along by troops out of their convents, that they might satiate their brutal lust; and in their fate it might well be seen, that the judgments of God are wrapt in mystery, when the famous chastity of the Roman women should be violated amid such circumstances of brutality and misery. Amid this female wail was mingled the hoarser clamours and groans of unhappy men, whom the soldiers subjected to torture, partly to wrest from them unreasonable ransom, and partly to compel the disclosure of the goods which they had concealed. All holiest things,—the host, the relics of the saints, which abounded in the churches, were pulled down and scattered upon the ground, suffering no small profanation by the vile hands

Number slain.

Cardinal of Sienna.

Cardinals Minerva and Ponzetta.

Sufferings of the other cardinals.

Violation of nuns and novices.

CHAP. V.

General plundering

of the soldiery; and what remained after the spoil, being things esteemed of too little value to be taken, were raked together, and carried away by the peasantry and tenants of the Colonna family, whose insolency brought them into Rome during the general plunder. The Cardinal Colonna, however, arriving the day after, preserved, in his compassion, the honour of many women who had fled for rescue into his palace. It was reported that the booty, in gold, silver, and jewels, taken at this sack of Rome, might be estimated at a million of ducats; but the ransoms of the prisoners amounted to a far larger sum."

Feelings in England regarding the sack of Rome.

The first account of this extraordinary event arrived in England on the 2d of June, and appears to have been received rather with feelings of gratulation than regret. The common people made little mourning, observing that the Pope was a ruffian, not meet for the place he held; that he had begun the mischief, and was well served. Wolsey, however, who, amid all his temporal cares and ambition, showed himself a devoted son of the Church,* was deeply affected by the calamity; and, after having consulted with the prelates and the clergy, addressed himself to the king. "Sir," said he, "by the calling of God you have been made Defender of the Christian Faith. Now, I beseech you, consider in what state the Church of Christ standeth. Behold, the head of the Church of Rome is in captivity. See how the holy fathers have been brought into thraldom, and be without comfort. Now show yourself an aid, a defender of the Church, and God will reward you." Henry's reply to this exhortation was brief, and probably less indignant and warlike than the cardinal had hoped for. "My lord," said he, "I lament this cruel chance more 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

Interference of Wolsey.

Henry's reply.

* See State-papers published by Government, p. 189; Wolsey to Henry the Eighth, 2d June 1527, and p. 190.

temporal possessions and dominion; and now since Bishop Clement is taken by men of war, what should I do? Neither my person nor my people can rescue him; but if my treasure may help him, take that which to you seemeth most convenient." For this offer Wolsey humbly thanked the king; nor did he scruple afterwards to avail himself of it; but, in the mean time, commissions were despatched to all bishops, commanding prayers and fasting to be made throughout the country for the delivery of the Pope out of the hands of his enemies. The result of this injunction is quaintly described by a contemporary. "The people were moved to fast three days in the week, but few men fasted; for the priests said, that their commandment was to exhort the lay people to fast, and not to fast themselves; and the lay people said, that the priests should first fast, because the very cause of the fasting was for a priest; but almost none of both fasted."*

Proceedings on behalf of the pope.

Ineffectual injunction to fasting.

The animosity of Wolsey to the emperor had been sufficiently apparent previous to the captivity of the Pope and the sack of his capital; but these events increased it to the utmost pitch, and impelled him to leave no effort unattempted by which his royal master might be induced to unite cordially with the French monarch for the delivery of the head of the Church, and the reduction of the overgrown power of his opponent. To understand fully the occurrences which followed, it is necessary to examine for a few moments the situation and sentiments of the leading European powers. Charles had effectually humbled the Supreme Pontiff, but it was far from his intention to disavow his spiritual subjection to the Roman See. The feelings by which he was animated may be clearly understood from the two memorable epistles which, previous to the siege of Rome, he addressed severally to his Holiness and to the College of Cardinals. The former had gone so far as to absolve Francis from his oath for the observance of the treaty of

Animosity of Wolsey to the emperor.

Situation of the European powers.

* Hall, p. 728.

CHAP. V.

Independence of the Spanish church.

Madrid; and the emperor replied by abolishing the Papal authority throughout his Spanish dominions,—an important step, as it furnished a precedent to Europe for preserving the ecclesiastical discipline, independently of all foreign jurisdiction.* In his letter, Charles put him in mind that the Pope received more money from the subjects of the empire than from all the other nations of Christendom. An estimate of the great exent of these annual receipts might, he said, be formed from

The hundred grievances.

a perusal of that memorial entitled the "Hundred Grievances" (*Centum Gravamina*), which had been presented to him by the Germanic body. Hitherto, he observed, he had forborn to listen to the complaints of his German subjects; but he warned him, that if, for good reasons, he should be compelled to withdraw these revenues, his holiness would no longer hold in his hand the golden keys which open and shut the gates of war; that he would no longer be able to carry on a contest against the emperor with the money of his own people; and that these resources would be applied far more justly by him, who had a better right to command them in his own defence. In the conclusion of the same

Threat of appeal to a general council.

epistle, Charles boldly declared, that if the Pope were still resolved to continue the war, and if he obstinately shut his ears to the arguments which had been employed, he was determined to consider him no longer as a father, but as the head of a faction,—not as a holy pastor, but an invader of the just rights of sovereigns; and such being the case, his ultimate resolution was taken, and he would certainly appeal to a general council of the whole Christian world.†

Consequences of success.

Such were the sentiments of the emperor previous to the devastation occasioned by his arms in Italy; but his extraordinary success in that country, the jealousy which it occasioned, and the consciousness that the dreadful

* De Thou, book i. c. xi.

† Goldast, vol. i. p. 81, and vol. iii. p. 492; and Milner, vol. v. p. 549.

scenes of outrage which had been witnessed in the ecclesiastical capital, were by many ascribed to his encouragement, all united to convince him that the elevation to which he had been raised must be used with cautiousness and judgment. He assumed, therefore, a tone of greater moderation, avoiding every appearance of exulting over the calamity of the holy father. He even carried his dissimulation so far, as to assert that these things had been done, not only without any commission given by him, but against his will, and to his great displeasure; pretending that the death of the Duke of Bourbon was to him a less misfortune than the insult which had been offered to his holiness, and the injuries committed upon the sacred persons of the cardinals. The policy of Charles, under all these affected expressions of sorrow, may be easily detected. He had sufficiently humbled the Pope; he considered that enough had been done to keep the triple crown in due subjection to his own imperial dignity; and he desired to neutralize the incipient hostility of Henry, and the bitter and determined opposition of Francis.*

Moderation of the emperor.

Policy of his proceedings

In England, before the military occupation of Rome, the sentiments of indignation against the emperor, and the desire of forming a league to humble his exorbitant power, were chiefly confined to Wolsey. And even after that appalling event, the king's own feelings, those of a majority of his council, and, undoubtedly, of the whole body of his subjects, were in favour of peace. But it was the weakness of this prince, that no person could predicate from his sentiments at one moment what might be his conduct after even the briefest interval,—pride, caprice, passion, vanity, and the utmost selfishness, domineered by turns over his mind, and his actions varied as each assumed the ascendant. The cardinal, who had studied the character of his sovereign with extraordinary care and anxiety, was the only

English inclination for peace.

Vascillation of the king.

* Turner, vol. ii. p. 118-120.

CHAP. V.

Influence of the cardinal.

individual who possessed authority over him, and understood the art of giving something like permanency and consistency to his scheme of government. But this minister himself was also the creature of ambition and impulse; he acted upon no great or steady principles of justice or moral rectitude; and the people of England, subjected to the domination of two such changeful yet tyrannical minds, looked in vain for the security and happiness which are only to be found under an orderly, just, and well-established rule.

His impolitic measures.

On the present occasion, the legate, blind to the true interest of the country, which was evidently to remain at peace, exerted his utmost efforts to excite the martial propensities of his sovereign, and to engage him in a coalition with Francis and the Venetians against the preponderating influence of the emperor. For this purpose he procured for himself a mission to the French court;* but, although such was its primary and avowed object, it embraced other more mysterious negotiations, which are not so easily discovered, and which were probably not fully communicated by the cardinal even to his royal master. Wolsey had, as usual, been plotting for his own aggrandizement; and it is curious to observe the various efforts made by the several potentates to allure and purchase his assistance. Francis, who speculated on the establishment of a new papacy which was to be limited to France, had directed his minister to secure the English envoy, with the proposal of his becoming the patriarch of this revolutionary see.† Charles, aware of this extraordinary project, enjoined his ambassador to tempt the cardinal with an offer of the extension of his legatine power over the whole of Lower Germany. And Clement himself had entered into a correspondence with him, during which he entertained if he did not further a proposal of this restless

Selfish objects aimed at.

* State-papers published by Government, p. 191.
† Turner, vol. ii. p. 121.

and ambitious prelate, that he should be appointed universal vicar throughout France, England, and Germany.*

Embassy to France.

On the 3d of July he departed on his embassy, passing through the city with a cavalcade more than usually splendid. He was accompanied by upwards of 2000 lords and gentlemen on horseback, apparelled in black velvet, and followed by his yeomen, with the cardinal's hat embroidered on their splendid liveries. These were succeeded by his sumpter-mules, carts, and carriages, which were guarded by bows and spears. He himself rode next, on a mule trapped with crimson-velvet, and having his stirrups gilt. Before him were carried his two great crosses and pillars of silver, and a gentleman followed bearing his hat. Another bore his valaunce, of scarlet cloth embroidered with gold; and harbingers were despatched in advance to announce his coming, and make suitable provision for his attendants.

Reception at Canterbury.

On arriving at Canterbury, he took up his lodging in the Abbey of Christ-Church; on which occasion, as we are told by Cavendish, there was made a solemn procession, in which the cardinal walked in his legatine costume. On coming to the door of the choir he knelt down on a cushion, whilst the litany was chanted after this sort:—"Sancta Maria, ora pro Papa nostro Clemente;"—"at which time," says this minute biographer, "I saw the lord-cardinal weep very tenderly, which was, as we supposed, for heaviness that the Pope was at that present time in such calamity and great danger of the lance-knights."†

Interview with Francis at Amiens.

Wolsey then passed over to the Continent, and, in an interview with the French monarch at Amiens, concluded a treaty, which had for its object the deliverance of the Pope from captivity, and his restoration to the possessions of the Church. It was agreed, that as long as Clement continued a prisoner, neither Francis nor Henry should permit the assembling of a general council,

* Turner, vol. ii. p. 121.
† Cavendish, vol. i. p. 86-88.

CHAP. V.

Mutual agreements.

nor admit any Bull which might be promulgated to the prejudice of either of their realms. The government of England, in spiritual matters, was to be intrusted to the Cardinal of York, with the concurrence of a convocation; and in France, to be regulated by the king and an assembly of the clergy. The marriage between the Princess Mary, Henry's daughter, and the Duke of Orleans, which had been already made the subject of negotiation, was now more definitely settled; and it was also determined that this young prince should be educated at the English court. Henry agreed to renounce all right to the territories in France which had been formerly claimed by the kings of England; and, in return, Francis consented to pay to him and his successors every year 50,000 crowns, in addition to all other sums due before that time. It was lastly agreed, that both kings should instantly declare war against the emperor, if he refused to set the Pontiff at liberty, and restore something like a balance of power to Europe.

Concessions.

Influence and popularity of Wolsey.

The account of this embassy has been minutely and graphically given by Cavendish, who accompanied him; and the influence and popularity which Wolsey had acquired on the Continent were strikingly manifested in the respect which was paid by the French nobles as his cavalcade passed through the country, not only to the prelate personally, but to every gentleman attached to his suite. Of this his biographer gives a striking instance which happened to himself; and as the passage contains a pleasing picture of the domestic life of the French nobility at that period, and brings before us such a "family-portrait" of these remote ages, as we do not often meet in the vague generalities of more stately historians, it will not be displeasing to give it in its own antique style. It may be premised, that he had been sent forward to Compeigne to prepare the cardinal's lodging. "And as I rode on my journey," says he, "being on a Friday, my horse chanced to cast a shoe in a little village where was a fair castle. And as it chanced, there dwelt a smith, to whom I commanded my servant

Attention to his suite.

Cavendish's entertainment by M. Crequi.

to carry my horse to shoe, and standing by him while my horse was a-shoeing, there came to me one of the servants of the castle, perceiving me to be the cardinal's servant and an Englishman, who required me to go with him into the castle to my lord, his master, whom he thought would be very glad of my coming and company. Whose request I granted, because I was always desirous to see and be acquainted with strangers, in especial with men in honour and authority. So I went with him, who conducted me into the castle; and being entered into the first ward, the watchmen of that ward, being very honest tall men, came and saluted me most reverently, and knowing the cause of my coming, desired me to stay a little while, till they advertised my lord, their master, of my being there. And so I did. And, incontinent, the lord of the castle came out to me; who was called Monsieur Crequi, a nobleman born, and very nigh of blood to King Louis, the last king that reigned before this King Francis. And at his first coming, he embraced me, saying, that I was right heartily welcome, and thanked me that I so gently would visit him and his castle; saying furthermore, that he was preparing to encounter the king and my lord, to desire them most humbly the next day to take his castle in their way, if he could so entreat them. And true it is, that he was ready to ride in a coat of velvet, with a pair of velvet arming-shoes on his feet, and gilt spurs on his heels. Then he took me by the hand, and most gently led me into his castle through another ward; and being once entered into the base court of the castle, I saw all his family and household servants standing in goodly order, in black coats and gowns like mourners, who led me into the hall, which was hanged with hand-guns as thick as one could hang by another upon the walls; and in the hall stood a hawk's perch, whereon sat three or four fair goshawks. Then went we into the parlour, which was hanged with fine old arras; and being there but a while communing together of my Lord of Suffolk, how he was there to have besieged the same, his servants

Reception by his host.

CHAP. V.

brought to him bread and wine of divers sorts, whereof he caused me to drink. 'And after, I will,' quoth he, 'show you the strength of my house, how hard it would have been for my Lord of Suffolk to have won it. Then led he me upon the walls, which were very strong, more than fifteen feet thick, and well garnished with great battery-pieces of ordnance, ready charged, to be shot off against the king and my lord's coming. When he had showed me the walls and the bulwarks about the castle, he descended from the walls and came down into a fair inner court, where his genet stood for to mount upon, with twelve other genets, the fairest and best that ever I saw, and in especial his own, which was a mare-genet; he showed me that he might have had for her 400 crowns. But upon the twelve other genets were mounted twelve goodly young gentlemen, called pages of honour; all bare-headed, in coats of cloth of gold and black velvet cloaks, and on their legs boots of red Spanish leather, and spurs parcel gilt. Then he took his leave of me, commanding his steward and other gentlemen to attend upon me, and conduct me to my lady, his wife, to dinner; and that done, he mounted his genet, and took his journey forth out of his castle. Then the steward, with the rest of the gentlemen, led me up into a tower in the gatehouse, where, at that time, my lady, their mistress, lay, for the time that the king and my lord should tarry there; I being in a fair great dining-chamber, where the table was covered for dinner, and there I attended my lady's coming; and after she came thither out of her own chamber, she received me most gently, like one of noble estate, having a train of twelve gentlewomen. And when she, with her train, came all out, she said to me, 'Forasmuch,' quoth she, 'as ye be an Englishman, whose custom is in your country to kiss all ladies and gentlewomen without offence, although it be not so here in this realm, yet will I be so bold as to kiss you, and so shall all my maidens.' By means whereof, I kissed my lady and all her women. Then went she to her dinner, being as nobly served as I have seen any

Exhibition of the strength of the castle.

Pages and their horses.

Entertainment by the lady of the castle.

of her estate here in England, having all the dinner-time with me pleasant communication, talking of the usage and behaviour of our gentlewomen and gentlemen of England, and commending much the behaviour of them right excellently; for she was with the king at Ardres, when the great encounter and meeting was between the French king and the king our sovereign lord; at which time she was, both for her person and goodly haviour, appointed to company with the ladies of England. To be short, after dinner, pausing a little, I took my leave of her, and so departed and rode on my journey."*

Pleasant conversation.

For the confirmation of their league, and to carry over to Henry the order of St Michael, Francis despatched an embassy to his court. Wolsey about this time had finished his new palace at Hampton, of which he afterwards made a present to the king; and here the French ambassador, with his attendants, was entertained for some days. Amongst these was Du Bellay, the historian, whose astonishment seems to have been raised to a high pitch by the splendour of the cardinal's palace. "The chambers," says he, "had hangings of wonderful value, and every place glittered with innumerable vessels of silver and gold. There were two hundred and fourscore beds, the furniture to most of them being silk, and all for the entertainment of strangers. Returning to London, we were, on St Martin's Day, invited by the king to a banquet, the most sumptuous I ever beheld, whether you considered the dishes or the masks and playes, wherein the Lady Mary, the king's daughter, acted a part." It is of this regal banquet that Cavendish, also an eyewitness, declares he has neither wit in his gross old head, nor cunning in his bowels to describe the dishes, subtleties, and many strange devices.† "Yet this, ye shall understand, that although it was at Hampton-Court marvellous sumptuous, yet did this banquet far exceed the other as fine gold doth silver in weight

Embassy to the English court.

Du Bellay's description of Wolsey's palace.

Regal banquet.

* Cavendish, vol. i. p. 105-109, inclusive. † Ibid. p. 136.

CHAP. V.

Extravagant description of the feast.

and value; and, for my part, I must needs confess (which saw them both) that I never beheld the like, or read in any story or chronicle of any such feast. In the midst of this banquet there was turneying at the barriers, even in the chamber, with lusty gentlemen in gorgeous complete harness on foot,—then there was the like on horseback; and this done, there came in a number of the fair ladies and gentlewomen that bare any bruit or fame of beauty in all this realm. They were clothed in the most rich apparel, devised in the most various and goodly fashions which the cunningest tailors could shape or cut, to set forth their beauty, gesture, and the lovely proportion of their bodies. These seemed to all men more angelic than earthly creatures made of flesh and bone. Surely to me, simple soul, it seemed inestimable to be described, and so I think it was to others of a more high judgment."*

Dramatic interlude.

Upon this occasion a dramatic interlude was introduced, acted by children, who spoke in the Latin tongue. The subject was the captivity of the Pope, and the unfortunate state of the sons of the French king, who had been left as hostages in the hands of the emperor; and the concluding act represented the deliverance of the Holy Father, the return of the French princes to their native country, and the establishment of peace in Christendom by the exertions of Wolsey.

Maskers dance.

On the conclusion of the play four companies of maskers danced, after which Henry himself appeared, apparelled in cloth of gold. He was accompanied by the Duke of Suffolk, the Grand Master of France, the Marquis of Exeter, and Sir Edward Neville; and this company, advancing to the marble fountain which stood at the end of the chamber of disguisings, selected the fairest ladies that sat around it, and danced with them. They then pulled off their visors and made themselves known, which concluded the sports of the evening.†

The king was now in his thirty-sixth year. He had

* Cavendish, vol. i. p. 137. † Ibid. p. 136-138.

continued in wedlock since 1509, and had been deeply disappointed, that of the children which his queen had brought him, none survived but a single daughter. Naturally inclined to pleasure, and a devoted admirer of female beauty, Henry made little effort to shut his eyes to the fact that Catherine, now past forty, had entirely lost her personal attractions; and it was not to be expected that a monarch who was the slave of passion, and whose religion was a matter of the head, not of the heart, should maintain a rigid observance of his marriage-vows. In 1527, Mistress Anne Boleyn, the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, returned from France, where she had been educated under circumstances which were favourable, not only to the acquisition of all elegant accomplishments, but to the strengthening of her understanding and the improvement of her mind. As early as 1515, she had been sent over to that kingdom to be attendant on the Princess Mary, the wife of Louis the Twelfth. On the death of this monarch, and the return of his widow to England, Anne entered the household of Queen Claude, in whose palace she remained till she was seventeen. At this time, Margaret, duchess of Alençon, the sister of Francis, became deeply attached to her, and on the demise of the queen she was taken into her family. Here she probably remained till the marriage of that princess with the King of Navarre in 1527,—an event which, as it took her protectress from Paris, seems to have occasioned her recall to England, where she immediately became one of the maids of honour to Catherine. It has been the fashion of many writers of the Romish Church, to represent Anne Boleyn as having led a singularly profligate life in her early youth; but there appears no ground for so slanderous an attack. That the education of a youthful and beautiful female in one of the most corrupted courts of Europe should produce austere or reserved manners, was not to be expected; but no evidence deserving of a moment's credit has been adduced to prove the slightest impurity of life; the tales against her being evidently

Disappointment of the king with the fruit of his marriage.

Anne Boleyn.

Taken into the service of Margaret of Alençon.

Misrepresentations of Romish writers.

CHAP. V.

the after-coinage of those misguided zealots who, by destroying her reputation, weakly imagined they were performing a service to religion.

First appearance at court.

When she first appeared at court, she was a lovely young woman in her twentieth year. She is described as possessing a rare and admirable beauty, clear and fresh, with a noble presence and most perfect shape. Her personal graces were enhanced by a cheerfulness and sweetness of temper which never forsook her, and her education had secured to her all those feminine accomplishments which were fitted to dazzle and delight a court. She danced with uncommon grace, sung sweetly, and, by the remarkable vivacity and wit of her conversation, retained the admiration of those who had at first been only attracted by her beauty.*

Important crisis in the life of Henry.

Wolsey's scheme.

Two events rendered the time when she first appeared in the train of Catherine an important crisis in the life of Henry. The Bishop of Tarbes, one of the French plenipotentiaries for the marriage of the Princess Mary, the king's daughter, to the Duke of Orleans, had thrown out some casual doubts and queries as to her legitimacy, which revived, in the mind of the monarch, his ancient scruples regarding the legality of his marrying his brother's widow. In the next place, Wolsey's favourite scheme at this moment was to encourage this feeling, that it might lead to a divorce, and enable him to bring about a matrimonial union between Henry and the sister of Francis.† On her first arrival at court, Anne

* Wyatt's Memoir of Anne Boleyn, in Cavendish's Life of Wolsey, vol. ii. p. 182: "There was at this time presented to the eye of the court, the rare and admirable beauty of the fresh and young lady, Anne Boleyn, to be attending upon the queen. In this noble imp, the graces of nature, graced by gracious education, seemed even at the first to have promised bliss unto her aftertimes. She was taken at that time to have a beauty not so whitely, as clear and fresh above all we may esteem, which appeared much more excellent by her favour, passing sweet and cheerful, and these also increased by her noble presence of shape and fashion, representing both mildness and majesty more than can be expressed."

† It appears by a letter from Wolsey to Henry, dated 5th July 1527, after he had left London on his journey to France, that he and the Archbishop of Canterbury had a communication on the

was welcomed with the homage and adulation which her youth, her loveliness, and her accomplishments inspired; and there seems some ground for believing that Henry became enamoured of her almost immediately. But he concealed, it is even said he struggled with, his incipient passion; and Wolsey, whose penetration it was no easy matter to defeat, did not for some time become aware of the sentiments of his sovereign. Meanwhile, Lord Percy, the eldest son of the Earl of Northumberland, professed an honourable attachment to the fair Boleyn, and was looked on with no unfavourable eye; but, as soon as the king was informed of the circumstance, both parties received orders to absent themselves from court, and it was intimated to the earl that he must seek another alliance for his son. These communications were made, it is said, by the cardinal, who suspected nothing of the true cause, although he incurred the resentment of the lady, as the instrument of breaking off her engagement with Percy. Wolsey soon after departed on his embassy to France, and Henry having recalled Anne, reinstated her in her place as a maid of honour to the queen, and seemed to be so much captivated with her engaging demeanour, that his admiration could no longer be concealed. It is asserted that, on one occasion, when her royal mistress and she were playing at cards, the former significantly rallied her, exclaiming,—"My Lady Anne, you have good hap to stop ever at a king; but you are like others, you will have all or none."*—"Indeed," says Cavendish, "all this time there is no doubt but good Queen Catherine both heard by report, and perceived with her eyes, how the matter was framed against her (good lady!) although

Welcome of Anne Boleyn at court.

Dismissal of Lord Percy from court.

Raillery of Queen Catherine.

king's "secret matter" at Feversham, and that, at that time, the knowledge of it had come to the queen's grace, who took it displeasantly.—State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 197. See also a remarkable letter, on the subject of the divorce, from Wolsey to Henry, dated 1st July 1527.—State-papers published by Government, p. 94.

* Cavendish, vol. i. p 68.

CHAP. V.

Prudence of the queen.

she showed neither to Mistress Anne nor to the king any spark or kind of grudge or displeasure, but took and accepted all things in good part, and with wisdom and great patience dissembled the same."*

Unrestrained passions of Henry.

Dissimulation, however, with his majesty was now at an end. Henry had never been taught to restrain his passions; his past life, although outwardly decent, had not been remarkable for continency; his love of pleasure, and the frequent opportunities of meeting the beautiful Anne at court, exposed him to perpetual temptation; and he at length declared himself, with the confidence of a monarch who felt that he had only to make known his predilection to be accepted as a lover. But in this he was mistaken; for, though compelled to listen to his solicitation, the lady fell upon her knees, and made the following answer:—"I deem, most noble king, that your majesty speaks these words in mirth, to prove me; if not, I beseech your highness earnestly to take this answer in good part, and I speak it from the bottom of my soul: Believe me I would rather lose my life than give encouragement to your addresses." Henry, however, in the common jargon of the libertine, declared that he would live in hope; when his perseverance in insult drew forth this spirited reply:—"I understand not, mighty king, how you should entertain any such hope. Your wife I cannot be, both in respect of mine own unworthiness, and also because you have a queen already. Your mistress, be assured, I will never be."†

Reply of Anne to his avowal of love.

Selfish character of the king.

It was not in the nature of the king to renounce, from moral restraints, any object upon which he had set his affection,—opposition only rendered his desires more uncontrollable, and difficulties aroused that selfish tyranny of character, which overlooked the rights of others, and induced the persuasion that all ought to be subservient to his wishes. From the moment he was convinced that he must either renounce his love or make Anne Boleyn his queen, the project of a divorce

* Cavendish, vol. i. p. 68.

+ Sloane MSS. 2495, quoted by Turner, vol. ii. p. 197.

from Catherine became the earnest subject of his contemplation. His scruples regarding the legitimacy of his union with her, which had lain dormant four-and-twenty years, suddenly assumed, in his mind, an importance and a magnitude which, it is probable, they never would have attained, unless seen through the deceitful and distorting medium of his love. Henry must not be judged uncharitably, but fairly; and no one who investigates the facts, with a mind free from preconceived opinions, can come to any other conclusion than that which pronounces his conduct at this moment to have been marked by hypocrisy, selfishness, and a fixed determination to gratify his passions. That the crimes of such an instrument should be overruled by Him who is wonderful in working, to accomplish the destined deliverance of the human mind from error, and to re-establish the dominion of truth, is one of those mysterious but consolatory facts in the history of the world, which teach us to repose with confidence on the perfect wisdom and benevolence which mark its moral government.

Projected divorce.

True estimate of Henry's conduct.

Whilst, however, on the one hand, we recognise the passion of the king for his new favourite, and his determination to pursue a divorce, as amongst the secondary causes of the Reformation, it is not to be forgotten that many other events had concurred at this period to produce that restless, inquiring, and dissatisfied state of the public mind throughout Europe, which was evidently conducting to some great revolution. The temporal power and spiritual infallibility of the Pope had already received a visible shock; and in the college which Wolsey had erected as a defence of the Romish Church, the opinions of Luther were entertained and eloquently defended. In almost every European state, the papal power had ceased to be regarded with that respect which had hitherto been paid to it. In Italy, and especially at Rome, the secret abuses of its government were detected, and it was well known the orthodoxy of that country had rested for many years on expediency and profit

Concurring causes of the Reformation.

Extension of Luther's opinions.

CHAP. V.

Increase of Protestantism in France.

rather than on conviction. In France, the Protestants had increased under the favour of the Queen of Navarre. In Spain, the Pope had been treated as a fallible minister; an appeal was entered from his judgment to a general council; and the authority of the Roman See directly abolished by an imperial proclamation throughout the kingdom; whilst in Germany, Switzerland, and the Low Countries, the new doctrines were universally taught and enthusiastically defended. All these circumstances had evidently prepared the way for some great change.

Impetuosity of Henry's mind.

Impatience under opposition, and an impetuous desire to hurry forward to the accomplishment of his wishes, were prominent features in Henry's mind. That he had entertained scruples regarding his marriage with his brother's widow, when it was first talked of, is certain, and that his father had given some countenance to them is equally true; but the assurances of the princess herself, the circumstance that there was no hope of an heir to the crown, and, most of all, the Papal dispensation which had been obtained, so entirely quieted his conscience, that the revival of such difficulties, after the lapse of so long a period, must excite surprise, did we not possess the secret key to all his actions in his passion for the young maid of honour.

Consultation of scholars and canonists.

During Wolsey's absence on the Continent, the monarch had consulted the opinions of some learned scholars and canonists, and, being himself no mean adept in scholastic theology, had returned to the study of Aquinas, his favourite writer, collecting notes as he proceeded in his studies, and throwing them into the form of a separate treatise. Vanity had at first made him an author, and a correspondence in letters which, during the continuance of his work, he carried on with Anne Boleyn, clearly proves that he resumed his pen under the operation of lower and more selfish motives. One of these epistles, in which he alludes to his book, will sufficiently establish this assertion:—"Mine own Sweetheart,—This shall be to advertise you of the great

ailingness that I find here since your departing, for I ensure you methinketh the time longer since your departing now last, than I was wont to do for a whole fortnight. I think your kindness and my fervency of love caused it; for, otherwise, I would not have thought it possible that, for so little a while, it should have grieved me. But now that I am coming towards you, methinketh my pain half relieved; and also I am right well comforted, insomuch that my book 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." His majesty, whose controversial labours and fervency of love had given him a headach, now proceeds to express himself in terms too indelicate for transcription; after which, he concludes with a declaration that he was, and is, and shall be Anne Boleyn's, by his will.* Another of these letters is important, as it informs us of the fact, that the beautiful object of his love, however virtuous in her resolution not to become the king's mistress, was disposed to encourage his affection with the hope of sharing his throne. She had sent Henry the gift of a jewel, for which he thus expressed his thanks:—"For a present so valuable that nothing could be more (considering the whole of it), I return you my most hearty thanks, not only on account of the costly diamond and the ship in which the solitary damsel is tossed about, but chiefly for the fine interpretation, and too humble submission which your goodness has made to me; for I think it would be very difficult for me to find an occasion to deserve it, if I was not assisted by your great humanity and favour, which I have sought, do seek, and will always seek to preserve by all the services in my power, and this is my firm intention and hope, according to the motto, 'Aut illuc aut nullibi.' The demonstrations of

Letter to Anne Boleyn.

Encouragement given to his suit.

* Grove's Life of Wolsey, vol. iv. p. 6, in the Memoirs of Henry the Eighth, from Wolsey's death to the end of his reign.

CHAP. V.

Protestations of love and service.

your affections are such, the fine thoughts of your letter so cordially expressed, that they oblige me for ever to love, honour, and serve you sincerely, beseeching you to continue in the same firm and constant purpose, and assuring you, that, on my part, I will not only make you a suitable return, but outdo you in loyalty of heart, if it be possible. I desire you, also, if at any time before this I have in any sort offended you, you will give me the absolution which you ask, assuring you that hereafter my heart shall be dedicated to you alone, —I wish my body were so too,—God can do it, if he pleases, to whom I pray once a-day for that end, hoping that at length my prayers will be heard. I wish the time may be short, but I shall think it long till we see one another. Written by the hand of the secretary who, in heart, body, and will, is your loyal and most assured servant, H. No other heart. A. B. seeks Rex."*

Henry advises with Wolsey.

On Wolsey's return to England from his French embassy, Henry advised farther with him on his "secret matter,"—the name given by those confidential persons whom he had consulted to the project of a divorce from his queen and a marriage with Anne Boleyn. The cardinal was already acquainted with the king's scruples as to the legality of his marriage, and a desire that his master should espouse a French princess had rendered him by no means indisposed to further the project of a final separation; but his intentions to marry a subject,

Vain attempt to dissuade the king from his purpose.

—a woman so far beneath his royal rank, recommended solely by her beauty and accomplishments,—came with stunning and appalling suddenness upon the minister. He fell upon his knees before his sovereign, and anxiously laboured to dissuade him from a resolution which he foresaw would be attended with calamitous consequences. Henry, however, was inexorable; and the other, acquainted by long experience with the disposition of his master, dissembled his mortification, and

* Grove's Life of Wolsey, vol. iv. at end, pp. 5, 6.

appeared to enter cordially into his views. The king's treatise, explaining his scruples, was now laid before Sir Thomas More, who excused himself from giving an opinion because he had not professed divinity. His majesty, however, urged him to confer with the Bishops of Durham and Bath, and allowed him sufficient time to form a judgment. More foresaw the difficulty of obtaining from any of the prelates or members of the privy-council a perfectly unbiassed report, and, at his next interview, he besought the king to consult such as neither in respect of their own worldly commodity, nor for fear of his princely authority, would be inclined to deceive him. Henry inquired whom he meant, and was somewhat displeased when, instead of any living authorities, he was referred to Jerome, Augustine, and the fathers. The learned knight, however, had spoken with so much wisdom, that his evasion was taken in good part, and for the present he was left to himself. It is probably to this time that we may refer the following characteristic anecdote recorded by his relation:—"Now, would to our Lord, son Roper, exclaimed Sir Thomas one day at Chelsea water-side, that I were put into a sack and cast into the Thames, upon condition that three things were well established in Christendom." Mr Roper was naturally curious to know what these three things were, and the other continued,—"In faith, son, they be these:—The first is, that whereas the most part of Christian princes be at mortal wars,—they were all at universal peace. The second, that whereas the Church of Christ is at this present sore afflicted with many errors and heresies,—it were settled in perfect uniformity of religion. The third, that whereas the matter of the king's marriage is now come in question,—it were, to the glory of God and the quietness of all parties, brought to a good conclusion."*

Application to Sir Thomas More.

Ingenious evasion.

Anecdote of More.

On the 10th December 1527, Clement the Seventh, who till that time had been shut up by the imperial

* Roper's Life of Sir Thomas More, by Singer, p. 24.

CHAP. V.

Recovery of the pope's liberty.

armies in the Castle of St Angelo, recovered his liberty, in consequence of a treaty with the emperor, by which he agreed to abstain from interference with his designs upon Milan and Naples; to pay 95,000 ducats on the instant; thrice as much afterwards; and to grant him the tenth part of all ecclesiastical revenues within his dominions.* Scarcely had the Pope begun to breathe, after his captivity, in his retreat at Orvieto, than he was visited by the English envoys, who, after presenting their congratulations on his recovery of liberty, opened to him the matter of the divorce, which formed the main purport of their mission. Nothing could be more inopportune or perplexing; for, whilst confined in the Castle of St Angelo, Charles had obtained his promise that he would enter into no transaction which might be prejudicial to the rights of the Queen of England, without first communicating with him; and Clement, although restored to personal freedom, still saw the imperial armies in possession of his capital, and quartered in the Papal states. The commissioners presented to him two documents, which, in the name of Henry, they urgently requested him to sign,—the one a commission, by which he commanded Wolsey to hear and pronounce sentence in the cause of the divorce; the other a dispensation, by which the king was empowered to enter into a new marriage. His holiness was earnestly desirous to oblige Henry, who had hitherto comported himself as a faithful son of the Church; but he hesitated when he considered the almost inevitable displeasure on the part of Charles to which his compliance must expose him. Overcoming his scruples, however, he at last consented and signed the papers required. On this occasion, Gardiner and Fox presented the royal treatise upon the projected divorce to the Supreme Pontiff. "The next day, at afternoon," say the English ambassadors, "we went, as was appointed, to the Pope, and exhibited unto him the king's book, which he incontinently began to read,

Awkward predicament of Clement.

Desire to oblige Henry

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 76.

CHAP. V.

standing awhile; and after sitting down upon a form covered with a piece of an old coverlet not worth 20d., holding the book, read over the epistle before, and the latter part of the book touching the law, without suffering any of us to help him therein; noting evermore the reasons, as one succeeded another, and objecting that which he saw afterwards answered; which done, his holiness greatly commended the book . . .; and so, seeming to be right well content, his holiness demanded whether the king's highness had, at any time, broken this matter to the queen or not. We said Yes, and that she showed herself content to stand to the judgment of the Church."*

Perusal of the royal treatise.

Scarcely had he signed these necessary documents, when the further request was made, that a legate from Rome should be sent to England, and joined in the commission with Wolsey. Of this second demand the object is not apparent. It has been conjectured that the English dignitary, who hitherto had strongly urged forward the divorce, in the hope of yet diverting the king from his passion for Anne Boleyn, and of procuring his marriage with a French princess, when he discovered that his sovereign was irrevocably bent upon the union which he so much dreaded, became more lukewarm in the cause, and felt anxious that the decision should rest rather upon the responsibility of a Roman cardinal than upon himself. But whatever be the motive we must assign for the change, the idea of naming an additional legate appeared to Clement unnecessary. He represented to the ambassadors, that the surest, and undoubtedly the shortest method for the king to accomplish his purpose was, to commence his suit before Wolsey, acting in virtue of the commission already despatched under his ordinary legatine authority. He observed, that after proceedings were commenced, if the monarch felt persuaded in his own conscience (which could resolve his doubts better than all the doctors in the world), he

Legate required to be sent to England.

Supposed motives for the demand.

* Strype, Ecclesiast. Memor., vol. ii. p. 72.

CHAP. V.

ought to have no scruple in marrying another wife; after which he might prosecute his action, and send for a legate to determine the cause consistorially.* This suggestion, however, did not please the king, and Clement was at length prevailed upon to appoint Cardinal Campegio to proceed as his legate to England, for the determination of the great question. He at the same time granted a decretal Bull, which prevented any appeal to Rome from the decision of his two representatives, and rendered final whatever judgment they should pronounce.† This last, however, was given under the express injunction, that it was to be shown to the king and Wolsey alone,—a condition which, notwithstanding an earnest entreaty that it might be perused by the privy-council, was scrupulously observed.

Cardinal Campegio sent to England.

Although Campegio had been appointed in March, he did not arrive till October,—a delay which exceedingly irritated his majesty, and disposed him to suspect that Wolsey had not employed sufficient diligence in expediting the divorce. On coming to court the legate was received with much distinction. At his own request he had been spared the ceremony of a public entry into the capital, being rendered completely lame by the gout; but after a few days' rest he was conducted to the royal presence, and placed on the right hand of the throne. His secretary then rose, and in a florid Latin oration enumerated the great services which had been lately rendered to the Pope by the King of England; describing the miseries which had been inflicted upon Italy, and especially the dominions of the Church, by the barbarians; and addressing Henry as the "deliverer of the Supreme Pontiff, and the preserver of his capital." To this Fox, the provost of Cambridge, made a suitable reply; and the king, having retired to hold a private conference with the two legates, was struck with astonishment and indignation when Campegio, instead of proposing, as he had expected, an immediate decision

Arrival of the legate.

Reception at court.

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 89. † Ibid. p. 90.

of the cause, began to dissuade its further prosecution in the most earnest terms. To this, however, his royal auditor would not listen for a moment. He replied in an angry and determined tone, that he had been deceived by the Pope; and it was with difficulty that the legate appeased his wrath by exhibiting the decretal Bull, taking the precaution, however, to hold it all the time firmly in his own hands, and refusing to intrust it for a moment either to the monarch or the other cardinal.

The king's indignation at his proceedings.

During these transactions, the people, by whom the queen was much beloved, began openly to murmur against them; the merchants in the city refused to frequent the marts which had been opened in France as substitutes for those in the Netherlands; and the war which had been lately denounced against the emperor was unpopular, not only with the nation, but with the great majority of the privy-council, who were now anxiously watching for an opportunity to compass Wolsey's ruin. The dissatisfaction of his subjects, including councillors and nobles, was not unknown to the king; and having summoned to his palace at Bridewell the judges, with the lord-mayor, the members of the common-council, and other persons of inferior note, he addressed to them a laboured speech, in which he attempted to justify his conduct and the reasonableness of his proceedings. The tenor of this address, as it is given by one who heard it, is characteristic, and worthy of notice. After alluding to the happiness and glory of his government for the last twenty years, he proceeded to point out the misery which might ensue should he be cut off by death without leaving lawful issue. "For though," said he, "we have had the Lady Mary, singular both in beauty and shape, by the most noble Lady Catherine, yet we have been lately informed by pious and learned divines, that having married her who was formerly the wife of Prince Arthur, our brother, our union is prohibited by the Divine Writ, and the issue of such a marriage cannot be legitimate; and that which gives us much greater pain and torment is, that having

Popular sympathy with the queen

The king's efforts to overturn this.

Professed scruples of conscience.

CHAP. V.

French objections to the Princess Mary.

sent ambassadors last year to negotiate a marriage between the Duke of Orleans and our daughter Mary, with Francis, king of France, it was observed by one of his councillors, 'that before treating of such an affair, it must first be inquired into whether Mary was a legitimate child; it being evident,' added he, 'that she was begotten of the Lady Catherine, his brother's relict, and that such a marriage, by Divine right, is prohibited.'"

Professed tenderness of the king's conscience.

The king proceeded to observe, "that none could understand with what fear and horror this speech had filled his mind. The matter," he declared, "imported no less than the hazard of eternal salvation, both in body and soul." He then continued in the following manner:—"For this only cause, I protest before God and on the word of a prince, I have asked counsel of the greatest clerks in Christendom, and for this cause I have sent for this legate, as a man indifferent, only to know the truth, and to settle my conscience, and for none other cause, as God can judge. And, as touching the queen, if it be adjudged by law of God that she is my lawful wife, there was never thing more pleasant nor more acceptable to me in my life, both for the discharge and clearing of my conscience, and also for the good qualities and conditions which I know to be in her; for I assure you all, that besides her noble parentage of which she is descended, as you all know, she is a woman incomparable in gentleness, in humility, and buxomness; yea, and in all good qualities appertaining to nobilitie, as I these twenty years almost have had the true experiment of; so that if I were to marry again, if the marriage might be good, I would surely chuse her above all other women. But if it be determined by judgment that our marriage was against God's law, and clearly void, then I shall not only sorrow in departing from so good a lady and loving companion, but much more lament and bewail my unfortunate chance, that I have so long lived in adultery, to God's great displeasure, and have no true heir of my body to inherit this realm. These be the sores that vex my mind,—these be the pangs that trouble my conscience,

Pretended favour for the queen.

—and for these griefs I seek a remedy. Therefore I require of you all, as our trust and confidence is in you, to declare to our subjects our mind and intent, according to our true meaning and desire; then to pray with us that the very truth may be known, for the discharging of our conscience and the saving of our soul; and for the declaration hereof I have assembled you together, and now you may depart."*

Appeal to his auditors.

The religious hypocrisy and disregard of truth in this speech of the king are truly lamentable. At the time when he pronounced it he was violently in love with Anne Boleyn; he had determined to make her his queen; and he had commanded it to be privately intimated to the Pope, that he was unalterably resolved never more to share the bed of Catherine, as well on account of some incurable distempers of an unpleasant nature by which she was afflicted, as from the scruples which troubled his conscience.† This, however, was the acceptable and most pleasant companion, whom, were he to marry again, he would choose above all others!

Remarks on the royal speech.

In these extraordinary transactions, no one is entitled to more cordial sympathy, or appears to have acted with greater prudence and meekness, than the unfortunate princess against whom all the proceedings were instituted. She had become early aware of Henry's intentions relative to the divorce; and by a secret messenger whom he and Wolsey in vain attempted to intercept,‡

Painful position of Queen Catherine.

---

* Hall, pp. 754, 755. Sunday, 8th November 1528.

† Carte, vol. iii. p. 90. Herbert, p. 100. "There are (says Wolsey in a letter to John Casalis, dated January 1528,—Henry's speech was made 8th November 1528) some particular reasons to be laid before his holiness in private, but not proper to commit to writing, upon which account, as well as by reason of some distempers which the queen lies under, without hope of remedy; as likewise through some scruples which disturb the king's conscience, insomuch that his majesty neither can nor will, for the future, look upon her, or live with her as his wife, be the consequence what it will."

‡ As early as 11th August 1527, the king's "secret matter," or his intention of divorcing Queen Catherine, was known in Flanders (State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 254; Wolsey to

CHAP. V.

Communication to the Emperor.

made her nephew, the emperor, aware of the injury meditated against her. It would appear also, that she had at first professed a resolution to be entirely passive in the whole matter, and to submit to the judgment of the Church. But Charles was resolved that no indignity or injustice should be offered to one of whom he considered himself the natural protector; and his answer to Clarencieux, when he denounced war upon the part of England, evinced that he deeply felt the injury which was meditated, and detected the quarter from which it proceeded. "God grant," said he, "that I may not have better reason to defy Henry than he has to defy me. Can I pass over the indignity with which he threatens my aunt, by his application for a divorce, or the insult which he has offered to me, by soliciting me to marry a daughter whom he now pronounces a bastard? But I am perfectly aware from whom these suggestions proceed. I would not satisfy the rapacity of the Cardinal of York; nor employ my forces to seat him in the chair of St Peter; and he, in return, has sworn to be revenged, and now seeks to fulfil his purpose. But, if war ensue, let the blood that must be shed rest on the head of him who is the original instigator of it."*

His reply to the denouncement of war.

Change in the queen's resolution.

The conduct of Charles produced some alteration in the mind of the queen. She determined to be guided by the advice of the most able counsellors; and, being aware of the artifices which had already been employed against her, resolved to assert her rights more strongly, and maintain, to the last, the legitimacy of her daughter.

Henry the Eighth); and, on 5th September 1527, Wolsey informed Henry, in a despatch written from Compeigne (State-papers vol. i. p. 275), that the emperor was aware of the King of England being minded to be separated from his queen. There is a curious letter published by Ellis (vol. i. p. 281), from Knight to Cardinal Wolsey, regarding Francis Philip, the queen's sewer, who seems to have been the private messenger sent by Catherine to the emperor. There is much low cunning and duplicity in Henry's conduct in this matter. See also State-papers by Government, vol. i. p. 275, as to Francis Philip's communication with the emperor.

* Lingard, vol. vi. p. 175. Le Grand, vol. iii. pp. 27, 46.

CHAP. V.

Visited by Campegio and Wolsey.

When visited, for the first time, by the legate Campegio, in company with Wolsey, and informed of the object of his mission, she was much overcome for a few moments, but soon recovered, and thus addressed them:—"Alas, my lords, is it now a question whether I be the king's lawful wife or no! when I have been married to him almost twenty years, and, in the mean season, never question was made before. Divers prelates yet being alive, and lords also, and privy-councillors with the king at that time, then adjudged our marriage lawful and honest; and now, to say it is detestable and abominable, I think it great marvel; and especially when I consider what a wise prince the king's father was, and also the natural love and affection that King Ferdinand, my father, bare unto me. I think in myself, that neither of our fathers were so uncircumspect, so unwise, and of so small a judgment, but they foresaw what might follow our marriage; and in especial, the king, my father, sent to the court of Rome, and there, after long suit, with great cost and charge, obtained a license and dispensation, that I, being the one brother's wife, might without scruple of conscience marry with the other brother lawfully; which license, under lead, I have yet to show; which things make me to say, and surely believe, that our marriage was lawful, good, and godly. But of this trouble," said she, turning to Wolsey, "I only may thank you, my lord cardinal of York. Because I wondered at your high pride and vainglory, and abhorred your voluptuous life, and little regarded your presumptuous power and tyranny, therefore of malice you have kindled this fire, and set this matter abroad; and especially for the great malice you bear to my nephew the emperor, whom I perfectly know you hate worse than a scorpion, because he would not satisfy your ambition, and make you Pope by force; and therefore you have said more than once, that you would trouble him and his friends,—and you have kept him true promise; for, of all his wars and vexations, he only may thank you; and, as for me, his poor aunt and

Defence of her marriage.

Accusation of Wolsey.

CHAP. V.

Reply of Wolsey.

kinswoman, what trouble you put me to by this new-found doubt, God knoweth; to whom I commit my cause, according to truth."* In reply to this spirited address, Wolsey assured the queen that she did him injustice; affirming that, so far from his being the first mover of the doubt, it was much against his wishes that the validity of the marriage had been brought into question; but Catherine gave no credit to his assertions, and the preparations proceeded.

Christmas diversions at court.

Meanwhile the monarch, whose mind and conscience, according to his own account, were in so grievous a state of disquietude, kept his Christmas at his palace of Greenwich, and indulged in every kind of diversion. Jousts, tourneys, banquets, masques, and disguisings, filled up the day and much of the night, and the two legates were received at court with great magnificence.

Anne Boleyn.

Anne Boleyn, whom it was now evident that Henry at all risks had resolved to raise to the throne, shone in the midst of these gorgeous scenes, and began to evince the powers and favouritism which belonged to so high a destiny. A party was formed around her, and, whether influenced by herself or merely using her as an instrument for their own purposes, it was soon apparent that their leaders, chiefly her own relatives, were animated by unfavourable feelings towards the cardinal. During the repeated delays in the process which followed the arrival of Campegio in England,—amid the vacillations in the Papal court,—the disquietudes of Wolsey,—and the negotiations of the English ambassadors at Rome,—

Increase of the king's passion.

the king's passion increased. Some hopes had been formed, that the terror of the royal mind during the continuance of a fatal and infectious disorder, which about this time visited his dominions, would have produced a change in favour of the queen. During the prevalence of the plague, which had reached the court and attacked some of the gentlemen of the privy-chamber,†

* Hall, p. 755.

† There is an amusing letter (Ellis, vol. i. p. 286) from Tuke to Wolsey, dated 23d June 1528, which shows the extreme precau-

Henry had sent Anne Boleyn to the seat of her father in Kent, and, shutting himself up from the world, had, with much apparent earnestness, joined his consort in her devotional exercises. Surrounded on all sides by images of mortality, a solemn impression seems to have been made upon his mind; he confessed regularly, and on every Sunday and festival communicated at the altar. But, as the danger passed away, these feelings disappeared; it became evident that such compunctious visitings were the offspring of terror, not of true religion; that the king was a coward, not a penitent; and as soon as the immediate fear of death was removed, his passion resumed its ascendency. The beautiful favourite was recalled to court; his queen was enjoined to absent herself, and to occupy the palace at Greenwich; a splendid establishment was appointed for Anne in apartments contiguous to those of the sovereign, and Henry commanded his courtiers to attend her levees with the same ceremony in which they presented themselves at those of her majesty.

Temporary influence of fear

Its brief endurance.

War in Italy.

During these events at home, the arms of the emperor were once more crowned with success in Italy. The forces of Lautrec, the French commander, who had looked forward to the certain fall of Naples, became dispirited and inactive, owing to the want of supplies and the attacks of a contagious disorder; whilst Charles the Fifth, who was anxious at this moment to show his devotion to the Supreme Pontiff, restored, without insisting on any conditions, all the fortresses which he had

---

tions used by Henry to remove himself from infection, the care with which he studied the best medical remedies, and the anxiety which he felt for Wolsey's safety. It appears by the same letter that both Anne Boleyn and her father, Lord Rocliford, had caught the infection, but had recovered. "The reader," says Sir H. Ellis, in an amusing note introductory to this letter, "will probably smile to learn that a volume of Henry the Eighth's own time is still preserved (MSS. Sloane, Brit. Mus. 1047), containing a large collection of recipes for plaisters, spasmadraps, or dipped-plasters, ointments, waters, lotions, decoctions, and poultices, made by the king himself and his physicians. It begins with the 'king's majesty's own plastre.'"

CHAP. V.

Vascillations of the Pope.

lost. These events brought with them important consequences. From the first, Clement had felt the difficulties of his situation with regard to the divorce, and had adopted the policy of extreme caution and delay. Relying on the opinion of his best canonists, he knew that, whatever previous steps might be taken, the final decision would rest with himself; and he was instructed by the same advisers, that his ultimate judgment must be unfavourable to the English monarch. On the one hand, Henry unequivocally warned him, that such a determination would be followed by his throwing off all allegiance to the Roman See; on the other, Charles, although his characteristic calmness did not hurry him into such a threat, had never ceased to oppose every proposal which came from the English ambassadors at Rome; and the Spanish envoy, Guiguinez, did not hesitate to declare, that any conclusion against Catherine would be visited by no measured portion of his resentment. Delay, therefore, afforded a hope that some event might occur to render it unnecessary for the Pope to expose himself to the wrath of either the one or the other of these powerful princes.* To gain time, Campegio, on his leaving Italy, had been instructed to travel slowly,—on his arrival in England, to protract his proceedings by every possible means,—to endeavour to reconcile the parties, if he failed to prevail on the queen to enter a monastery,—and, above all, not to pronounce a final sentence without first communicating with Rome. These injunctions the legate punctually fulfilled. To compose the differences, or to induce the queen to take the vows, was, indeed, impossible; but so successful was he in drawing out the preliminary steps, that the proceedings for the trial of the marriage were not opened till nearly eight months after he presented himself in the English capital.†

Threat of Henry to renounce his allegiance.

Purposed dilatory proceedings of the legate.

Success of his plans.

All things were conducted with much solemnity. The court was held in the Great Hall of the Black

* Turner, vol. ii. p. 251-253. † Ibid. p. 272.

Friars, where Wolsey and Campegio took their places. Before the legates sat the secretaries and notaries; on the right hung a cloth of estate, with a throne for the king; and on the left was a chair for the queen. All things being prepared, the two royal parties were summoned. Henry accordingly made appearance by his proxies; but her majesty, who attended in person, protested against the legates as incompetent judges, appealed to the Pope, and demanded time to prove her allegation. Three days were accordingly allowed, and after this interval the court again assembled. The legates entered the hall with crosses, pillars, axes, and all the ceremony belonging to their degree. The foreigner opened the proceedings in a prepared oration, the main subject of which was to declare the cause of his coming, and to promise the most impartial hearing. Henry, king of England, was then called into court, and, in an audible voice, answered, Here. Catherine, the queen, was next cited; but although she was present, attended by the four bishops whom she had chosen as her counsel, and surrounded by the ladies of her household, she returned no answer. On her name being repeated she rose from her chair, crossed herself with much fervour, came forward to the king; and, throwing herself on her knees at his feet, thus addressed him, 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; 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, much less impartial counsel, and I flee to you as to the head of justice within this realm. Alas sir! wherein have I offended you, or what occasion given you of displeasure; have I ever designed against your will and pleasure, that you should 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. Never have I said or done aught contrary thereto, being

Court for the trial of the marriage.

Appeal of the queen to the pope.

Appearance of the king in court.

Touching appeal of the queen.

CHAP. V.

Her love and fidelity.

always well pleased and contented with all things wherein you had delight or dalliance, whether it were in little or much; neither did I ever grudge in word or countenance, or show a visage or spark of discontent. I loved all those whom you loved, only for your sake, whether I had cause or no, whether they were my friends or mine enemies. This twenty years I have been your true wife, and by me ye have had divers children, although it hath pleased God to call them out of this world, which yet hath been no default in me; and when ye married me at the first, I take God to be my judge I was a true maid; and, whether it be true or no, I put it to your conscience. If there be any just cause by the law that ye can allege against me, either of dishonesty or any other impediment, to banish and put me from you, I am contented to depart, albeit to my great shame and dishonour; and if there be none, then here I must lowlily beseech you let me remain in my former estate, and receive justice at your hands. The king, your father, was, in the time of his reign, of such estimation through the world for his excellent wisdom, that he was accounted and called of all men the second Solomon; and my father, Ferdinand, king of Spain, was esteemed one of the wisest princes that, for many years before, had reigned in Spain; both, indeed, were excellent kings, full of wisdom and princely behaviour. It is not, therefore, to be doubted, but that they elected and gathered as wise councillors about them as to their high discretion was thought meet. Also, as me seemeth, there was in those days as wise, as learned, and as judicious men, as be at this present in both realms, who thought then the marriage between you and me good and lawful; therefore, it is a wonder to hear what new inventions are brought up against me, who never intended aught but honesty. Ye cause me to stand to the order and judgment of this new court, wherein ye may do me much wrong if ye intend any cruelty; for ye may condemn me for lack of sufficient answer, having no impartial advisers but such as be

Willingness to abide by the law.

Wisdom of those by whom they were contracted.

CHAP V.

assigned me, with whose wisdom and learning I am not acquainted. Ye must consider that they who be your subjects cannot be impartial counsellors for my part; they have been chosen out of your own council; they have been made privy to your deliberations; and they dare not, for fear of you, disobey your will, or frustrate your intentions. Therefore, most humbly do I require you, in the way of charity, and for the love of God, who is the just Judge, to spare me the extremity of this new court until I be advertised what way and order my friends in Spain may advise me to take; and if ye will not extend to me so much impartial favour, your pleasure then be fulfilled, and to God I commit my cause."* Having spoken thus, the queen rose up in tears; and, instead of returning to her former place, walked out of court, having first made a low obeisance to the king. An officer was commanded to recall her, and he again summoned her loudly. "Madam," said her receiver-general, on whose arm she leant, "ye are again called."—"Go on," said she; "I hear it very well; but this is no court wherein I can have justice,—proceed therefore." She then left the hall, and never again would be persuaded to make her appearance, either personally or by proxy.†

Partiality of the counsellors.

Departure of the queen from court.

This pathetic address, delivered with humility, and yet with the spirit becoming an innocent woman, made a deep impression; and Henry, perceiving it, took occasion to extol the queen in high terms, declaring that she had ever been a devoted and dutiful wife, full of all virtue, gentleness, and obedience. He also acquitted the cardinal of any blame in bringing forward the cause, alleging that his minister's opinion had been from the first against it; and that his own scruples, and the fear of God's indignation, were the sole motives which had induced him to institute an inquiry into the legality of his marriage. In this commendation of his consort, the monarch seems totally to have forgotten, that only a short time before, in a complaint made to

Deep impression produced by her address.

* Cavendish, vol. i. pp. 149, 152, inclusive. † Ibid. p. 153.

CHAP. V.

Inconsistency of the king's statements.

the privy-council, he had declared, that from the manner in which she had lately conducted herself, he believed she hated him,—that his councillors thought his life was in such danger that he ought to withdraw himself entirely from her company.* So hypocritical, crafty, and inconsistent was his conduct upon this occasion.

The queen pronounced contumacious.

When it was found that no persuasions could induce Catherine to appear again in court, she was pronounced contumacious, and the cause proceeded. On the part of the king, his counsel exerted themselves to make out three points:—*First*, That the marriage between Prince Arthur and Catherine had been consummated; from which it would follow, that her subsequent marriage with Henry was contrary to the Divine Law, as laid down in Leviticus. *Secondly*, That even granting that the case admitted of a dispensation, still the Bull of Julius the Second was null, having been obtained upon false allegations; and, *Thirdly*, They contended that the breve of dispensation, which was now exhibited by Catherine as remedying the defects of the Bull, was an evident forgery. It would be tedious and little instructive to enter at any length into these questions, although it may be remarked generally, that on the first head the evidence, which was all led on one side, even with this advantage, appeared contradictory; on the second the king's counsel failed to make out their assertions; and as to the last, although the circumstances which were adduced inferred suspicion, they certainly fell short of proof.

Ground taken for a divorce.

Communications of the queen with her nephews.

During the continuance of the proceedings, the queen transmitted to Charles and his brother Ferdinand a detailed account of all that passed. These powerful princes left no method untried to assist the cause of their aunt; their ambassadors at the Roman court ceased not for a moment to importune, to flatter, and even to threaten the Sovereign Pontiff; a treaty of alliance between his holiness and the emperor was in the course of negotiation, which promised the former a

* Burnet, vol. i. p. 113.

complete re-establishment of his power in Italy; and, under these circumstances, it was in vain for Wolsey to urge Campegio to a final decision. So far from obeying him, the crafty Italian, adhering to his instructions, solicited the Pope to call the cause before himself. This, there is every reason to believe, had been Clement's intention from the first, and he only awaited the moment when it could be done with most advantage to his own interests.

Delicate position of the pope.

That time was now arrived. The queen's appeal, with the reasons upon which it was founded, had been received; the treaty between the Roman See and the emperor was concluded at Barcelona on June 29; and no sooner did the Pope receive certain intelligence of this event, than he revoked the commission of the legates, prohibited all further proceedings in England, and reserved the cause to be tried in his own court. Henry had been in some measure prepared for this determination by the despatches of his ambassadors at Rome, yet he had never ceased to urge Campegio to hasten forward the trial; whilst the legate, on the other hand, had artfully prolonged the proceedings by repeated adjournments, and managed matters with much adroitness.

Revocation of the legative commission.

On the 23d of July the court met for the last time, and as it was generally expected by those ignorant of the intrigues at Rome, that a decision would be pronounced for the king, the hall was crowded. Henry himself was present, but concealed behind the hangings, where he could hear all that passed. When the cardinals had taken their seats, his majesty's counsel demanded judgment; upon which Campegio replied, that the case was too high and notable to be determined before he should have made the Pope acquainted with all the proceedings. "I have not," said he, "come so far to please any man for fear, meed, or favour, be he king or any other potentate. I am an old man, sick, decayed, and looking daily for death. What should it then avail me to put my soul in the danger of God's

Last meeting of the court.

CHAP. V.

displeasure, to my utter damnation, for the favour of any prince or high estate in this world. Forasmuch, then, that I understand the truth in this case is very difficult to be known, and that the defendant will make no answer thereunto, but hath appealed from our judgment; therefore, to avoid all injustice and obscure doubts, I intend to proceed no farther in this matter until I have the opinion of the Pope, and such others of his council as have more experience and learning. For this purpose," he concluded, rising from his chair, "I adjourn the cause till the commencement of the next term, in the beginning of October."

Adjournment of the cause by Campegio.

The enunciation of this unlooked-for resolution produced a great sensation in the court, and the Duke of Suffolk allowed himself to be so far overcome with passion as to start from his seat; and striking his hand upon the table, loudly exclaimed, "that they had never been merry in England since a cardinal came amongst them." Wolsey, although he had been aware for some time of his waning favour with the king, would not suffer this personal insult to pass without notice; and, rising with dignity, he uttered this spirited rebuke:—"Sir, of all men within this realm, ye have the least cause to dispraise, or be offended with cardinals; for, but for me, simple cardinal as I am, you at this moment would have had no head upon your shoulders, and no tongue therein to make so rude a report against us, who intend you no manner of displeasure. Know you then, proud lord, that I and my brother here will give place neither to you nor to any other in honourable intentions to the king, and a desire to accomplish his lawful wishes. But, bethink ye, my lord, were ye the king's commissioner in a foreign country, having a weighty matter to treat upon, would ye not advertise his majesty or ever ye went through the same? Doubtless that ye would, right carefully; and, therefore, I advise you to banish all hasty malice, and consider that we here be nothing but commissioners for a time; and dare not proceed to judgment without the knowledge of our

Great sensation in court.

Suffolk and Wolsey.

Wolsey's defence of the proceedings.

Reception of the rebuke by Suffolk.

supreme head. It is for this cause we do not more or less than our commission alloweth. Therefore, my lord, take my counsel; hold your peace, pacify yourself, and frame your words like a man of honour and of wisdom. Ye know best what friendship ye have received at my hands, and which I never before this time revealed to any one alive, either to my own glory or to your dishonour."* Suffolk by his silence, appeared to acknowledge the truth of those secret circumstances to which the cardinal alluded; the court broke up, and after a short interval, certain intelligence arrived in England of the revocation of the legatine commission, and the removal of the cause to the tribunal of the Pope.

* Cavendish, vol. i. p. 168-170. Hall, p. 758.

CHAPTER VI.

Fall of Wolsey—Cranmer—Progress of the Reformation —England separates from Rome—Death of Sir Thomas More.

Fall of Cardinal Wolsey—His Illness and Death—Promotion of Sir Thomas More—Rise of Cranmer—Difficulties as to the Divorce—Rise of Cromwell—King's Supremacy—Henry excommunicated—Cranmer made Archbishop of Canterbury—Marriage of the King to Anne Boleyn—Coronation of the Queen—Cause of the Divorce heard at Rome—Sentence against the King—Parliament assembled—Separation of the Church of England from Rome—Execution of Bishop Fisher—Execution of Sir Thomas More.

CHAP. VI.

Position of Wolsey.

As soon as the proceeding became public, by which it seemed certain that Henry must renounce all hopes of having his great cause tried in England, every eye was turned to Wolsey. All who understood the character of his royal master were aware that the disappointment he had experienced would be ascribed to the misconduct of this great minister, and it was known that a strong faction had been already formed against him. Immediately after the breaking up of the trial, Henry had sent his queen from court, and rode in his progress through the country with Anne Boleyn, who, although at the beginning of her splendid fortunes she had expressed herself under high obligations to the cardinal, was now entirely alienated from him. Of all this he was himself acutely sensible. He had, at an early period of the proceedings, discerned the dangerous situa-

Henry's open attentions to Anne Boleyn.

CHAP. VI.

tion into which he had brought himself by his intrigues to promote a marriage with France; and he foresaw that, whatever way the decision went, his influence with the king must suffer. Without a divorce, he had reason to dread Henry's resentment, which had been already denounced in "terrible terms;"* with a divorce, he anticipated consequences equally fatal; for the new queen was his enemy, and her relatives were his most powerful rivals. Under these impressions, he began to talk of retiring from public life; seemed eager to complete his colleges; and discoursed upon the delight of devoting the evening of his days to his ecclesiastical labours. Those, however, who best understood his character, predicted that he would be in no haste to realize these dreams of seclusion; and now, when the clouds were gathering around him, and men began to prophesy his fall, his conduct seemed to justify their opinion.

Dangerous predicament of Wolsey.

Proposed retirement from public life.

The time having arrived for Campegio's departure from England, he accompanied him to Grafton, in Northamptonshire, which the king had already reached in his progress. "Their coming," says an eyewitness, "raised divers opinions that the king would not speak with my lord cardinal, and thereupon were laid many great wagers. On arriving, Campegio was courteously conducted by the officers in waiting to a chamber which had been prepared for him; but the other, on requiring to be shown his apartment, was unceremoniously informed that there was no lodging appointed for him in the court. Sir Henry Norris entreated him, however, to make use of his room, where, as he shifted his riding-apparel, he was visited by some of his friends, who informed him of the particulars of the king's displeasure, and thus afforded him some time to prepare his answers. He was soon after called into the presence-chamber,

Departure of Campegio.

Unceremonious treatment of Wolsey

* Lingard, vol. vi. p 181. Le Grand, vol. iii. p. 164: "Le Roy lui (Wolsey) usa de terribles termes à cause qu'il sembloit l'en vouloir refroidir."

CHAP. VI.

Meeting of Wolsey and the king.

Henry being disposed to talk with him and Campegio." The meeting is thus admirably described by his biographer:—"My lord and Campegio went together into the chamber of presence, where the lords of the council stood in a row in order, my lord pulling off his cap to every one of them most gently, and so did they no less to him; at which time the chamber was furnished with noblemen that were only intent on observing the countenance of the king and him, and what entertainment the king made him. Then immediately after came the king into the chamber, and standing there under the cloth of estate, my lord kneeled down before him, who took my lord by the hand, and so did he the other cardinal.

The king's attentions.

Then he took my lord up by both arms, and caused him to stand with as amiable a cheer as ever he did. He then called him aside, and led him by the hand to a great window, where he talked with him, and caused him to be covered. Then," continues this minute historian, "could you have beheld the countenances of those who had made their wagers to the contrary, it would have made you to smile; and thus were they all deceived, as well worthy for their presumption."* Yet,

Dismay of the courtiers.

although the courtiers lost their bets, the gleam of favour lasted but for a short time; and Wolsey, discovered, in his private interview with the king, that the star of his high fortunes was set for ever. It was observed that Henry used angry words; and plucking

Supposed cause of the king's wrath.

a letter from his bosom, probably some of the cardinal's intercepted epistles to Rome, he held it up to his face, as if demanding whether he could deny his own hand. The accused minister seemed to pacify him for the moment, and the conference ended with apparent courtesy on the part of the monarch. On taking leave, he requested him to return next morning; but the king dined with Anne Boleyn that same day in her chamber, and her influence, which was then irresistible, was strongly used against him. She declared herself much

* Cavendish, vol. i. p. 174.

offended with the cordial reception he had obtained; represented his pride, his enormous wealth extorted from the poorer classes, and the hatred which he had occasioned to the royal person and government; and, finally, dwelt with peculiar bitterness upon the delays which he had occasioned in the process of the divorce. It was artfully insinuated, that he had never been in earnest upon this subject; that the whole interruption had proceeded from his intrigues; and the king was not suffered to forget, that the first proposal regarding the sending for a legate came from Wolsey. Henry was aware, that although some part of these allegations were true, they were much exaggerated; he knew also, that much of what was now urged was false; but he was at this time infatuated by love for his mistress, and, before he rose from table, Anne had extorted a promise from him, that he would never more admit the cardinal to an interview.* Accordingly, when Wolsey, next morning, at an early hour, rode to court, he found that the king was already mounted; and, after receiving a brief command to wait upon the council, the fallen minister had the mortification to see the royal cavalcade depart without his master having vouchsafed him the interview he had promised. He now returned to his house at Westminster, and, when the Michaelmas term commenced, proceeded to the Court of Chancery with his usual pomp; but it was observed, that none of his majesty's servants would walk before him, and it proved his last appearance as chancellor.

Enmity of Anne Boleyn to Wolsey.

Fall of Wolsey.

On that same day, the attorney-general, Hales, filed against him two bills in the King's Bench, by which he was charged with having exercised his legatine authority in England contrary to the law of the land.† Nothing could be more unjust than this accusation. It was

Bills filled against him in the King's Bench.

* Lingard, vol. vi. p. 208. Le pis de son mal est que Mademoiselle de Boulen a fait promettre à son amy qu'il ne l'escoutera jamais parler, car elle pense bien qu'il ne le pourroit garder d'en avoir pitié."—Le Grand, vol. iii. p. 375.

† The statute of Richard the Second against provisors.

CHAP. VI.

Injustice of their accusations.

doubtful whether the legatine court could be legally brought within the operation of the statute; it was certain that the cardinal could produce the royal license under the great-seal, the sanction of Parliament, and the immemorial usage of the kingdom,—all authorizing him to sit as legate. Nay, so generally was the statute understood to have fallen into desuetude, that the same law which was revived against Wolsey would have condemned most prelates in the kingdom. It is mortifying to find a man who had certainly some great points about him, at once submitting to this iniquitous proceeding; and, although conscious of innocence, directing his counsel to plead guilty to both charges. He well knew the temper of his master, and was not ignorant of the pliability with which, in these times, reasons of law were made to give way to reasons of state. His only hope was to conciliate the royal mercy by an unlimited prostration, and, on the single condition of retaining his ecclesiastical preferments, he transferred his whole personal estate to the sovereign.

Mean compliance of Wolsey.

Demanded restitution of the great seal.

Soon afterwards the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk brought a message from the king, requiring him to resign the great-seal, and confine himself to his house at Esher. "My lords," said he, with something of his former spirit, "the great-seal of England was delivered to me by the hands of my sovereign. I hold it by his majesty's letters-patent, which, along with it, have conferred on me the office of chancellor, to be enjoyed during my life; and I may not deliver it at the simple word of any lord, unless you can show me your commission." The two noblemen, who were his chief enemies, had the meanness to resent this; and, leaving him without accomplishing their purpose, they returned next day with a written order, under the royal sign-manual. The cardinal perused it, and immediately delivered up the great-seal, declaring, at the same time, his resolution to obey the order, and depart for his residence at Esher. He then called before him the officers of his household, and having informed them of his

Royal mandate sent.

intention to resign his whole possessions into the hands of the king, commanded them to draw out an inventory of the jewels, plate, and other commodities of value which were under their charge. This was accordingly done; and it is said the furniture and effects of his palace were found to be of an immense value. The walls of the great gallery were entirely hung with cloth of gold. On various tables of the finest workmanship were heaped embroidered Eastern silks, satins, velvets, tapestry adorned with Scriptural subjects and stories from the old romances; while furred robes, gorgeous copes, and webs of a valuable stuff named baudykin, wrought in the looms of Damascus, were thrown together in wonderful profusion. In another room, called the Gilt Chamber, the tables were covered with gold plate, some articles being of massy fabric, and set with precious stones; in a second apartment was arranged the silver and parcel-gilt; and so common were these articles of luxury, that under the tables were stowed away baskets full of old plate, both gold and silver, which had fallen out of fashion and was deemed useless. The order of his household was much noted for its regularity; books containing the weight and value of every package, whether it were plate or other precious stuffs, lay beside them, ready to be examined; and it was found that, in the arrangement of his establishment, every officer was charged by indenture with all such goods as belonged to his office.*

Resignation of his whole possessions to the king.

Immense value of his property.

Regularity of his household.

This inventory having been taken, the cardinal commanded his treasurer, Sir William Gascoigne, to see the whole delivered to his majesty. "Sir," said he, "I am heartily sorry for your grace, as I understand you shall

Conduct of his treasurer

* Cavendish, vol. i. pp. 183, 184. See also Ellis' Letters vol ii. p. 15, for a curious account of one of these "Inventories," of Wolsey's furniture, which is preserved amongst the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum. "The only fragments of Wolsey's tapestry now remaining," says Ellis, "are those which decorate a large room, known by the name of the Board of Green Cloth Room, at the east end of the great hall at Hampton Court. The subjects are chiefly allegorical."

CHAP. VI. go to the Tower."—"It is a false and a blasphemous statement!" cried Wolsey, "have you no better counsel and comfort than this for your master in his adversity? But thou wert ever a credulous tale-bearer and light of credit. All my riches came from the king, and glad am I to surrender the same to him again; but I thank God that I have never done aught to bring me under an arrest, although it hath pleased the king to appropriate to himself my house ready-furnished at this time." He now took his barge for Putney, and as the report of his disgrace had by this time spread amongst the people, with whom he was generally unpopular, the Thames was covered with innumerable boats full of men and women, who rudely rejoiced over his fall, and cried out that they would accompany him to the Tower. This ungenerous triumph draws from his biographer, who was then with him, a singular reflection:—"To grudge or wonder at this were but folly; for the inclination and natural disposition of Englishmen is, and hath always been, to desire alteration of officers which have been fed, by long continuance in their places, with sufficient riches and possessions; and they being put out, then cometh another hungry and a lean officer in his place, that biteth nearer the bone than the old."*

Retort of Wolsey

Popular joy at his fall.

Reflection of his biographer.

It was probably about this time (October 1529) that Wolsey addressed this piteous letter to the king:†—"Most gracious and merciful Sovereign Lord,—Though I, your poor, heavy, and wretched priest, do daily pursue, cry, and call upon your royal majesty for grace, mercy, remission, and pardon, yet, in most humble wise I beseech your highness, not to think that it proceedeth of any mistrust that I have in your merciful goodness, nor that I would encumber or molest your majesty by any indiscreet or importunate suit, but the same only cometh of an inward and ardent desire that I have continually to declare unto your highness how that, next

Piteous letter to the king.

* Cavendish, vol. i. p. 186.

† State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 347

unto God, I desire nor covet any thing in this world but the attaining of your gracious favour and forgiveness of my trespass. And for this cause I cannot desist nor forbear but to be a continual and most lowly suppliant to your benign grace; for surely, most gracious king, the remembrance of my folly, with the sharp sword of your highness' displeasure, hath so penetrated my heart that I cannot but lamentably cry, and most reverently pray, and say,—'Sufficit; nunc contine piissime rex, manum tuam ob amorem illius stellæ, cujus ubera preciosa, contra venenum delictorum nostrorum, quam dulciter suxit Christus Jesus,' who inviteth your highness to mercy and forgiveness, saying,—'Dimittite et demittetur vobis, et beati misericordes, quam ipsi misericordiam consequentur,' which that I may shortly attain at your grace's hand, and your highness the like at God's; with the increase of your most royal estate in this world, and eternal joy and glory in another, I shall continually pray to Almighty God as your grace's most prostrate poor chaplain, creature, and bedesman."

Humble supplication.

The conduct of Henry towards his fallen favourite, from this time till the death of Wolsey, which happened about a year after, can only be explained upon the supposition that the king retained an affection for him, which it required a considerable effort upon the part of his enemies to stifle, and which, if left undisturbed by fresh attacks and insinuations, would possibly have restored him to his former greatness. It was this feeling in the mind of the unfortunate man himself that preyed upon his health, alternately raising him into the happy region of hope, and letting him fall the next moment into the depths of disappointment. Thus, as he rode in deep dejection to Esher, a horseman was seen galloping after his party, who proved to be Sir John Norris, one of the king's chamberlains. On coming up, the knight presented him with a ring, which he declared the king had taken from his own finger, bidding him deliver it to his grace as a token that he should be of good cheer, for he was even now as much as ever in his

Singular conduct of the king.

Present to Wolsey.

CHAP. VI.

Extravagant joy of the cardinal.

majesty's favour. "Therefore, sir," said Norris, "take patience; for I trust to see you yet in better estate than ever." This sudden news entirely overcame him, and leaping from his mule, with almost youthful speed, he fell upon his knees, pulled off his cap, and returned thanks to God for such comfortable and joyful intelligence. When Sir John was about to take leave, he again thanked him, declaring, that if he were lord of a kingdom, the half of it would scarce be reward enough for his happy tidings. "But, good Master Norris," added he, "consider that I have nothing left except the clothes on my back; therefore I entreat thee accept this small reward at my hands," presenting him with a chain of gold, at which hung a cross of the same metal, containing a relic of the Holy Cross. "As for my sovereign," he continued, "I love him better than myself, and have faithfully served him according to the best of my poor wits; and now sorry am I that I have no worthy token to send him; but stay, here is my fool that rides beside me, I beseech thee take him to court and give him to his majesty,—I assure you, for any nobleman's pleasure, he's worth a thousand pound." The fool, however, of whom this was spoken, was seized with a paroxysm of affection on being ordered to leave his old master, and loudly declared that he would not stir from the spot; but he was carried off by six stout yeomen, and delivered to the king, who received him gladly.*

Gift to the messenger.

Singular return to the king.

Illness of Wolsey.

In his retirement at Esher, the cardinal was seized with a dangerous fit of sickness,—a low fever, occasioned by intense anxiety of mind, began to prey upon him. No medicines appeared to give him relief, and it was reported at court, that his recovery was not to be looked for. On this occasion, Henry again evinced a strong interest; he despatched three physicians to attend upon him; declared that he would not lose him for £20,000; and not only sent him tokens of his own remembrance,

* Cavendish, vol. i. p. 191.

but addressing Mistress Anne, between affection and reproach, extorted from her a present also. "She took," says Cavendish, "her tablet of gold which was hanging at her girdle, and delivered it to the messenger, with very gentle and comfortable words." On his restoration to health, he was permitted to remove to Richmond; but his enemies in the privy-council, becoming alarmed at his near approach to the court, prevailed on the king to send him, after a short interval, to reside within his archbishopric at York. Thither the disconsolate prelate proceeded with reluctance. His hopes rose or fell in proportion as he perceived the possibility of having an interview with the king; and a banishment to such a distance was accordingly regarded by him as a deep misfortune. Yet even here, his royal master evinced that he was not wholly cast off, for the northern barons were directed to receive him with honour; and the cardinal, now entirely disembarrassed from affairs of state, devoted himself with exemplary assiduity to the discharge of his ecclesiastical duties. These seemed entirely to engross his mind; and his conduct soon won the hearts, not only of the nobility and gentry of the country, but of the lower classes of the people. To distribute alms to the poor,—to visit the numerous parish-churches within his diocese,—to reconcile differences, and act as a peacemaker,—to cause his clergy to preach regularly to their congregations, and to recommend himself by the affability and kindness of his manners,—such were the praiseworthy objects with which he seemed now to be entirely engrossed, and he soon began to be as much beloved and praised for the usefulness and benevolence of his life, as he had been formerly blamed for his extraordinary selfishness and pride. The evidence of a contemporary is on this point decisive, and it comes from a source which cannot be suspected of partiality:—"Who was less beloved in the north than my lord cardinal, God have his soul! before he was among them! Who better beloved after he had been there awhile! We hate ofttimes whom

Presents from the king and his mistress.

Dismissed to York.

Devotion to ecclesiastical duties.

Return of popular favour.

CHAP. VI.

Remarkable change.

we have cause to love. It is a wonder to see how they were turned; how of utter enemies they became his dear friends. He gave bishops a right good example how they might win men's hearts. There were few holidays but he would ride five or six miles from his house, now to this parish-church, now to that, and there cause one or other of his doctors to make a sermon unto the people. He sat among them, and said mass before all the parish. He saw why churches were made, and began to restore them to their right and proper use. He brought his dinner with him, and bade divers of the parish to it. He inquired whether there was any debate or grudge between any of them, and if there were, after dinner he sent for the parties to the church and made them all one."*

Its probable motives.

It is not easy to discover whether such an entire change in the life and deportment of this extraordinary man was sincere. The motives by which he was actuated were probably of a mixed description; and without affirming, that the love of the lower ranks, and his increasing popularity with the northern nobility, were sought and regarded by him solely as an instrument for recovering his former power, it is by no means unlikely that his measures were considerably influenced by a strong desire to reinstate himself in his former lofty station. It is certain that, for this purpose, he entered into a secret correspondence with Rome; that he had urged the Pope to avenge his quarrel, and procure his restoration; and if we may believe the accounts of the English ambassador at the court of France, and of the French envoy in England, his own servants accused him of designs against the government, which were carried on both within and without the realm. In the mean time, he unwisely awakened the suspicion of his enemies by commencing preparations for his being enthroned at York,—a magnificent ceremony, which did not fail to recall the memory of his former pride,

Secret correspondence with Rome.

Enthronement at York.

* Cavendish, by Singer, p. 252. See also pp. 261, 262.

and enforce upon many the belief, that in ambition and the love of power he was still the same. Yet it is only justice to give the sentiments which he himself expressed to one of his own clergy upon this subject. Sitting at dinner, they fell into communication as to the order of his installation. It was observed, that my lord ought to go upon cloth from St James' Chapel to the minster, which might afterwards be distributed among the poor. My lord hearing this, made answer after this wise,—"Although our predecessors went upon cloth right sumptuously, we do intend, God willing, to go afoot from thence without any such glory, in the vamps of our hosen. For I take God to be my very judge, that I presume not to go thither for any triumph or vain-glory, but only to fulfil the observance and rules of the Church; to the which, as ye say, I am bound. And therefore I shall desire you all to hold you contented with my simplicity, and also I command all my servants to go as humbly, without any other sumptuous apparel than they commonly use, and which is comely and decent to wear."*

Profession of humility.

As the time of his enthronization approached, the nobles and gentlemen of the country sent in great store of venison, wine, and other presents for the feast. But his enemies meanwhile had planted their spies in his household,† whilst they omitted no method of poisoning the royal mind against him; and having at length procured evidence of his intrigues against the government, they persuaded the king that he ought no longer to permit so dangerous a subject to be at large. The Earl of Northumberland and Sir Walter Walsh were accordingly despatched to Cawood, where Wolsey then resided, with orders to arrest him on a charge of high-treason. It was at this period, as we learn from his minute and affectionate biographer, that a little circumstance occurred, which shows that the cardinal, with that tendency to fatalism which we find clinging to many great

Presents from the nobles.

Arrest on charge of high treason

* Cavendish, p. 269. † Ibid. p. 271.

CHAP. VI.

Superstition of the cardinal.

minds, was accustomed to watch for good and bad omens. As he sat one day at dinner, his great silver cross was placed as usual at the end of the table; and when the meal was finished, Dr Augustine, his Venetian physician, who wore a large loose gown, happened in rising to catch the cross by one of his sleeves, and threw it down on Dr Bonner, who was then at the board. Wolsey, perceiving the accident, eagerly inquired if it had drawn blood; and being answered in the affirmative, he shook his head, and said "it was *malum omen.*" He afterwards explained to Cavendish, who was present, and has preserved the anecdote, "that by the cross he understood himself; by Augustine, who threw it down, the person who should accuse him; and that Mr Bonner, whose head was broken, to the effusion of blood, prefigured his death, which shortly came to pass."*

Interpretation of omens.

Arrival of the commissionery at Cawood.

Soon after this occurrence, the earl and Sir Walter arrived at Cawood, and as they had received orders from the king to execute their commission with quietness, lest there should be any interruption by the people, they alighted in the court of the castle without giving disturbance to the household or to Wolsey himself, who had nearly finished dinner. On being informed that Northumberland was in the hall, he expressed to his guests some concern that he should not have arrived in time to sit down with them; and, with the idea that he brought some favourable message from his sovereign, rose from table to welcome him. This notion was the more readily embraced, because the earl when a boy had been educated in the cardinal's family, and, it is probable, had only undertaken the painful errand at the express command of the king. He therefore met him with affectionate courtesy, reproached him for coming so late, and, noticing the numerous troop of gentlemen who stood around him, pathetically exclaimed, "Ah, my lord! I perceive well that you have observed my precepts and instructions which I gave

Expectations of Wolsey.

* Cavendish, pp. 273, 274, 275.

you when you were abiding with me in your youth,— to cherish your father's old servants. These be they that will not only serve and love you, but live and die with you." In saying this he took him by the hand and led him into a bedchamber. These moving words overcame the resolution of the nobleman; he felt he must execute his commission, but the struggle between duty and affection was perceptible to Cavendish, the chamberlain, the only other person who was in the apartment. At length he laid a trembling hand on his old friend's arm, and said, in a faint soft voice, "My lord, I arrest you of high-treason!" All was now apparent, but the blow fell with stunning and unexpected weight; the unfortunate man stood for a short season rooted to the ground, without pronouncing a syllable; but, being satisfied as to their commission, he resigned himself, without further question, into their hands. He strongly asserted his innocence, and declared, that could he only be confronted with his adversaries, he had no dread of the result; but he added, that this very conviction would deprive him of an impartial hearing, and induce those who so earnestly looked for his downfal to use the darkest means for his destruction. These considerations so entirely overcame his firmness, that he repeatedly broke into unmanly tears and lamentations. The soul of Wolsey was, in truth, still as restless and ambitious as it had been in his days of pride and power; he had fondly encouraged the expectation that he was yet to triumph over his enemies and recover the favour of his sovereign; the kindly messages from court, the approaching ceremony of his installation, and his increasing popularity, had raised his decaying hopes, and persuaded him that they were on the eve of fulfilment, when the arrest came upon him, to overwhelm him in a moment, and plunge him at once into the lowest depths of despair. After this he never raised his head; and, although cheered on his leaving Cawood by the universal sympathy of the people, he continued in a depressed state, able only for slow journeys, and suffer-

His reception of Northumberland.

Surprise at his fall.

Assertion of his innocence.

Ambition and weakness.

CHAP. VI.

Vascillation of the king.

ing much both in body and mind. It is a singular fact, that even at this moment the king was strongly disposed to favour his fallen minister, and had repeatedly addressed letters to the Earl of Shrewsbury, requiring him to receive and entertain him as one whom he still loved and favoured, notwithstanding the accusations which had been brought against him. But Henry was unfortunately under the dominion of an infatuated passion; and his mistress, who now held the undisputed rule at court, had lent herself to be the instrument of that faction which had resolved on the utter ruin of the cardinal. It was the knowledge of such machinations, operating upon a mind which was a stranger alike to Christian fortitude and to that proud endurance of adversity we sometimes meet in great men, which at last entirely broke the heart of this poor sufferer. At Sheffield Park, the seat of Lord Shrewsbury, he was confined a fortnight by illness, and on resuming his journey towards London, was so weak as to be scarcely able to mount his mule. On reaching the monastery at Leicester, he said to the abbot, who received him at the gates, "Father, I am come to lay my bones among you." The speech was prophetic; for he gradually became worse, and took to his bed, from which he never rose again. The following passage from Cavendish, which relates to this last period of his illness, is deeply interesting. It will be seen from it, that the cardinal had been in the habit of consulting, like many great men in those times, with astrologers and fortune-tellers, who had predicted to him the exact hour of his departure:*—"Upon Monday, in the morning, as I stood

Influence of Anne Boleyn.

Arrival of Wolsey at Leicester.

* Strype, Ecclesiast. Memor., vol. i. p. 189. "He cast the king's nativity, a common practice then among the Popish prelates, whereby he saw whereunto the king's grace should be inclined all his life, and what should be like to chance him at all times. It is spoken by divers, that he made by craft of necromancy graven imagery, to bear upon him, wherewith he bewitched the king's mind, and made the king to dote upon him more than ever he did on a lady or a gentlewoman." This passage is from Tindale's Practice of Prelates.

by his bedside, about eight of the clock, the windows being close shut, having waxlights burning upon the cupboard, I beheld him, as me seemed, drawing fast to his end. He, perceiving my shadow upon the wall by his bedside, asked 'Who was there?'—'Sir, I am here,' quoth I.—'How do you?' quoth he to me.—'Very well, sir,' quoth I, 'if I might see your grace well.'—'What is it of the clock?' said he to me. 'Forsooth, sir,' said I, 'it is past eight o'clock in the morning.'—'Eight of the clock,' quoth he, 'that cannot be;' rehearsing divers times, 'eight of the clock, eight of the clock. Nay, nay,' quoth he at the last, 'it cannot be eight of the clock; for by eight of the clock ye shall lose your master; for my time draweth near that I must depart out of this world.'"* On the night which followed, Wolsey repeatedly swooned away; and on Tuesday morning, it was evident to his attendants that he could not survive many hours. Yet he retained his faculties entire; and when Kingston, the lieutenant of the Tower, came into his chamber, and bid him good morrow, asking him how he did, "Sir," said he, "I tarry but the will and pleasure of God, to render unto him my simple soul into his Divine hands." On being required to be of better cheer, for he would yet live, he discoursed minutely on the nature of his disease, and demonstrated that it must either be terminated quickly by death, or bring on mortification of the intestines and phrensy. "And now, Mr Kingston," he continued, "I pray you, with all my heart, to have me commended most humbly to his majesty, beseeching him in my behalf that he would call to his gracious remembrance all matters that have passed between us from the beginning, and then shall his conscience declare whether I have offended him or no. He is assuredly 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 endanger the loss of half his realm. I assure

Consultation with astrologers.

Rapid increase of illness.

Message to the king

* Cavendish, vol. i. pp. 313, 314.

CHAP. VI.

Discrimination of his church

you, I have often kneeled before him, in his privy-chamber, on my knees the space of three hours together, to persuade him from his appetite, but I could never prevail. Therefore, if it chance you hereafter to be one of his privy-council, I warn you to be well advised what matter ye put in his head, for you shall never put it out again. And this I will say, that had I served God as diligently as I have done the king, he would not have given me over thus in my gray hairs. Howbeit, this is the just reward that I must receive for all my worldly diligence and pains, only to satisfy his vain pleasure, not regarding my godly duty."* His voice now failed him, and the attendants having sent for the abbot, he administered extreme unction. He expired soon after, as the clock was striking eight,—the hour to which he had himself alluded on the preceding day, and a coincidence which his servants at that moment were disposed to regard as supernatural.

His death.

Cavendish's message.

The accounts of his death were brought to the king by Cavendish, his faithful and affectionate chamberlain, who found the king occupied with his archery in the park at Hampton Court. The messenger leant against a tree till the sport was over, and falling into a profound reverie, he was roused by some one slapping him on the shoulder. It was Henry, who had stolen up behind him, and, smiling, promised to speak with him when he had finished his rounds. None, when his selfish passions were not roused, could be more playfully courteous than this monarch; and in the interview which succeeded he showed the value he put on his late counsellor, by declaring he would gladly have given £20,000 to save his life. Yet the impression was evanescent; and, with an eagerness which shows how low the royal purse had fallen, he put some questions to Cavendish regarding a sum of £1500, which it was reported the cardinal had concealed in some private place. On being informed that the bags containing the gold had been delivered to

Effect of the news on Henry.

* Cavendish, pp. 319, 320.

a certain priest, he anxiously inquired if this was true; and, on being assured of the fact, enjoined the strictest secrecy. "Keep this gear secret," said he, "between yourself and me, and let no man be privy thereof. Three may keep counsel if two be away. If I thought my cap knew my mind, I would cast it into the fire and burn it. If I hear any more of this, I shall know by whom it has been revealed." The king then commended his truth and honesty to his old master, and took him into his own service.*

His selfish conduct.

These interesting events, embracing the disgrace and death of this extraordinary man, having necessarily led us to anticipate, we must now revert to the proceedings of the king, and the situation of the country immediately subsequent to his fall. Upon the occurrence of this important revolution, the Duke of Norfolk became president of the council, and possessed a preponderating influence. His chief associates, who retained their places and warmly adopted his measures, were the Duke of Suffolk, Henry's brother-in-law, now earl-marshal, and Viscount Rochford, the father of Anne Boleyn, and soon after created Earl of Wiltshire. It remained to dispose of the important and responsible office of chancellor; and, after some deliberation, the king selected Sir Thomas More, who, by his integrity and profound knowledge of the law, was singularly qualified to discharge its duties with advantage to the country. Sir Thomas, when a member of the privy-council, had repeatedly opposed his opinion to that of the cardinal, and was well aware of the misfortunes which the pride, selfishness, and extravagance of that minister, had entailed upon the kingdom. When the articles of impeachment against him were brought into the Commons, he opened the Parliament as chancellor, in a speech which was remarkable for its flattery, and its abuse of his distinguished predecessor. Henry was represented as a vigilant and faithful shepherd, deeply solicitous for the

Situation of the country.

The royal council.

Sir Thomas More.

* Cavendish, vol. i. p. 328-330.

CHAP. VI.

Speech at opening of parliament.

safety and happiness of his flock or people, and Wolsey as a "great rotten wether," whom it had been found necessary to separate from the sound sheep, because he had juggled with the king craftily and untruly.* With better taste, and in a style of oratory which awakens more congenial sympathies, More, on taking his seat in Westminster Hall, described his unwillingness to accept this great office. "Unwillingly," said he, "I came, as his majesty has often allowed, to court and to service, but this dignity is most of all against my will; yet such is the goodness, such the benignity of the king, that he magnifies the smallest duties of his subjects, and richly remunerates his servants if they be but desirous of pleasing him. The burden of the office," he then observed, "was greater than his shoulders could bear,—a care, not a glory,—a solicitude, not a dignity. And now," said he, "when I look on this seat, and recollect how great persons have filled it before me,—when I contemplate who sat in it last,—a man of such singular wisdom, such skill in business, blest with such long and prosperous fortune, and visited at last with so high and inglorious a fall, I cannot but see the difficulty of my situation, and these new honours are rendered less grateful and pleasant than they may seem to many. For it is difficult to succeed with approbation to one of such genius, wisdom, authority, and splendour, or to trace his footsteps with an equal pace. It seems as if we should light a taper after gazing on the setting sun; and the unexpected and sudden fall of so great a man is a terrible admonition to me, not to let my new honour please me too much, or its splendour dazzle my eyes."†

Reluctance to accept office.

Comparison with his predecessors.

* Parl. History, vol iii. p. 41.

† More's Life of More, p. 168. It has been erroneously asserted in the Life of More, in the Biographia Britannica, vol. v. p. 3162, that Sir Thomas was the first layman to whom the high office of chancellor was intrusted; and I perceive the assertion has misled Sir J. Mackintosh, History of England, vol. ii. p. 179. In the 16th of Edward the Third, A. D. 1342, Sir Robert Bourchier, knight, was made chancellor. In 1372, the same monarch made Sir Robart de Thorp, knight, chancellor. In 1379, Richard the Second

Yet it was not long after pronouncing this bold eulogium upon the talents of the cardinal, that we find More describing the same minister in the low and abusive terms which have just been quoted. The two statements, indeed, are not altogether inconsistent. The praise is given to Wolsey's talents for business, which were undoubtedly of a high order; the censure is directed against his want of integrity, and his subtle and crafty administration of the affairs of the government,—faults notorious to all the country, and which the new chancellor, although he might have selected a more delicate appellation than a "rotten wether," was justified in laying to his charge. And it was soon apparent, as far as related to the discharge of the duties of the first law-officer in the kingdom, that the people had gained much by the appointment of More.

Contrasted speeches.

It was now necessary to adopt some decided measures regarding the divorce; and a circumstance which occurred about this time gave a new and unexpected turn to the proceedings. When the king was on his progress into Northamptonshire, he was attended by Gardiner, then secretary, and Dr Fox; and these two, finding it impossible to have a lodging in the court with the rest of the royal suite, took up their abode at the house of a neighbouring gentleman named Cressy. At supper, the question of the royal marriage, then talked of at every table, became the subject of conversation, and the difficulty occasioned by the removal of the cause to Rome was strongly insisted on. A person of grave and pleasing manners, who was tutor in the family, expressed surprise that there should be so much hesitation as to the best mode of deciding it. On being pressed to explain himself, he said the proper plan would be, to have the matter

Measures regarding the divorce.

First appearance of Cranmer.

made Sir Richard de la Scrope chancellor. In 1383, Sir Michael de la Pole had the great-seal delivered to him by the same monarch; and in the reign of Henry the Fifth, Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, held the same high office. In Henry the Fourth's reign, that monarch, 1410, made Sir Thomas Beaufort, knight, lord-chancellor.

CHAP. VI. Appeal to Scripture.

discussed and determined by divines upon the authority of the Word of God. "There is but one truth in it," said he, "which the Scripture will soon declare, being searched into by learned and holy doctors; and without waiting from year to year for the judgment of the Pope, this might be done immediately by consulting the universities in England, as well as those of other countries. The truth of Scripture being once ascertained by the judgment of the most learned and holy divines, it would then be open to the king to proceed upon that sentence, as the foundation of a process of divorce, without any reference to the decision of the Pope, he being the Supreme Head of the Church in his own dominions, and the cause being cognizable in his own ecclesiastical courts."* The idea of consulting foreign universities had already been acted upon by Wolsey;† but it had never before been seriously proposed to Henry, first to fix the truth by Scripture, and then, by dispensing with the Pope altogether, to proceed upon his own authority. On the conversation being reported to him he caught eagerly at the idea, and, exclaiming "that the man who spoke thus had the right sow by the ear," sent for him immediately. The person who suggested this new solution was Thomas Cranmer; and on being introduced into the presence of his sovereign, he would have excused himself from embarking any farther in so delicate a matter, but it was the nature of the king's mind to take no denial. "I perceive well," said he, "that you have the right scope of this matter; and therefore, master doctor, I pray you,—and, because you are a subject, I charge and command you, all other business and affairs set apart, to take some pains to see this my cause furthered, according to your device." The doctor now explained his views upon the point,‡ and Henry declared himself so much pleased with the advice, that he com-

Delight of Henry.

Introduction of Cranmer to the king.

* Le Bas, Life of Cranmer, vol. i. p. 35. Bailey's Life of Fisher, pp. 89, 96. Tod's Cranmer, vol. i. p. 17.

† Burnet, vol. i. pp. 45, 46.

‡ Fox. *apud* Tod, Life of Cranmer, vol. i. p. 20.

manded him to follow the court, and to draw up his opinion at greater length in writing.* Cranmer, who now set himself to obey the royal injunction, had already reached the middle period of life; and, although little known to the world, enjoyed amongst divines the reputation of a profound theologian. He was sprung from an ancient family in Nottinghamshire, and, till he attained the age of twenty-three, had been neglected in his education, so far at least as related to useful learning; his master being an ignorant and severe priest, who taught him nothing but to suffer punishment with patience, and his father an honest English gentleman of the old times, entirely devoted to martial exercises and country sports. This mode of nurture, however, had its advantages,—it gave him a strong robust constitution and a spirit of early endurance. He could ride, hunt, hawk, handle his weapons, and draw the long-bow with a skill and dexterity which he never forgot, and not unfrequently exercised after he had become a grave prelate; and when he began his studies in earnest, the strength of his body did not sink, as is sometimes the case, under the intense application of his mind. The works of Luther had already made their way into England, and were known at Cambridge; and Cranmer becoming deeply interested in the controversies of religion, devoted himself for three years uninterruptedly to the study of the Scriptures, the perusal of the ancient fathers, and the examination of the treatises and doctrines of the great reformer. This was followed, as might have been anticipated, by a deep conviction of the corruptions of the Romish hierarchy, and of the departure of the Mother-church from the pure doctrines of Scripture and the practice and principles of the primitive ages of the faith; but he who entertained these opinions was a man whose quiet and unobtrusive habits avoided display, and who loved truth for its own sake; so that, being little

Command to draw up an opinion.

Origin.

Early nurture.

Interest in the religious controversies of the period.

* Biog. Brit. Art. Cranmer, vol. iii. Edition by Kippis, vol. vi. p. 225.

CHAP. VI.

Progress at college.

known beyond his own college, he was permitted to continue his researches undisturbed. In 1523 he took the rank of doctor in divinity. Soon after, he read the divinity-lecture, and, in consequence of the reputation he had acquired, was appointed one of the examiners for conferring theological degrees. In this situation he

Hated by the friars.

incurred the hatred of the friars for the strictness with which he questioned them out of the Scriptures, frequently sending them back to the study of the Bible, and reprimanding them for the shameful ignorance which they exhibited. When engaged in this manner, the plague broke out at Cambridge; and Cranmer, with his pupils, had retired to Mr Cressy's house at Waltham

Meeting with Fox and Gardiner.

in Essex, where he met Fox and Gardiner, apparently by accident. The interview, however, was one of those secret springs set in motion by the hand which is ever working for good, though ever invisible. It brought this eminent man out of the depth of his studious retirement into immediate contact with the king, and thus raised him up as the principal instrument in the accomplishment of the Reformation. Soon afterwards Henry appointed him his chaplain, and requested the Earl of Wiltshire, father of Anne Boleyn, to receive him into his family, and furnish him with books and conveniences for study, when composing his work on the divorce. The earl was one of the most learned and accomplished noblemen in England, the friend of Erasmus, and a general patron of scholars. Nothing, therefore, could be more agreeable to Cranmer than this retreat; and such was the urbanity of his manners, and his unaffected simplicity of life, that, before much time elapsed, he succeeded in endearing himself to the whole family.

Completion of his treatise.

He soon completed his treatise, in which he proved, by the united testimony of Scripture, of general councils, and of the most ancient fathers of the Church, that the Bishop of Rome had no authority to grant a dispensation for a marriage which was condemned in Scripture. In the mean time, Henry had obtained the opinion of some learned foreign divines; he had consulted the most

Consultation of the universities.

celebrated continental universities; and it was judged expedient to have, in like manner, the decision of Oxford and Cambridge. Abroad, all things succeeded according to his wishes; and from one of the letters of Croke, who was despatched into Italy on this business, it appears that such was the venality of the Italian canonists, that nothing but money was required to procure a favourable opinion from them all.* Such being the obsequiousness of those scholars, Henry was deeply irritated to find an unexpected opposition at Oxford, where the subject was debated with the utmost violence. "After the reception of the king's letters," says Anthony Wood, "a convocation was called, and, in consulting about the matter, great difference arose between the doctors and seniors on one part, and the juniors on the other. The doctors, in hopes of reward, or out of fear, gave their opinions concerning the matter such as they thought would please the king; but the juniors disputed it very eagerly, and could not be drawn to their minds. Some of them gathered together in a contemptuous manner, and, rather out of rashness than discretion, would not conform themselves to the minds of wise men, and so, without any thing done at this time, the convocation was dissolved.

Unexpected opposition at Oxford.

Remonstrance to the universities.

"The king, on the occurrence of these dissensions, addressed a remonstrance to the university, in which he recommended the more discreet and aged men to frame these persons into greater order and conformity, admonishing the young gentlemen themselves, that if they go on to play the masters as they begin to do, they will find that *non est bonum irritare crabrones.*"† At length, overawed by the power and persuasions of the monarch, a certain number of the doctors and bachelors in divinity drew up an opinion, in which they decided against the legality of his marriage; to which public deed, after some opposition, the seal of the university was affixed.

* British Biography, vol. ii. p. 252.
† Ant. Wood, Hist. of Oxford, vol. ii. pp. 41, 42.

CHAP. VI.

Nature of the decision.

Burnet, the historian of the Reformation, has laboured to show that every thing was managed with strict impartiality; but, on a careful examination of his and Lord Herbert's account of the transaction with the detailed and minute narrative of the historian of Oxford, the reader will probably come to the conclusion, that the decision could not be considered altogether unbiassed and impartial.* Still, by whatever means it may have been procured, the decree condemning the king's marriage was pronounced, and ratified by the official seal.

Opinion from Cambridge.

An opinion to the same effect was obtained at Cambridge, though not without great debate and difficulty; whilst abroad the answers of the canonists were almost universally in favour of the king, and against his union with Catherine. Thus, in France, the Faculty of the Canon Law at Paris, and the College of the Sorbonne, with the Universities of Orleans, Angers, Bourges, and Toulouse, decided against the marriage on the ground of the prohibition in Leviticus. In Italy, the faculties of divinity at Bologna and Pavia, at Padua and Ferrara, were equally clear on the same subject.

Meeting of the pope and emperor.

A meeting, however, which now took place between the Pope and the emperor in the city of Bologna, retarded the progress of the English monarch in this affair, which he had so much at heart. The object of Charles the Fifth, who, by his conquests, had acquired a preponderating influence in Italy, was to conclude a final arrangement with his holiness, and to hold the ceremony of his coronation. On the 22d February the iron crown of Lombardy, and, two days after, the golden diadem of the empire, were placed upon his head by

* In the State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 377, will be found an important letter on this subject, which confirms the opinion stated in the text: Bishop Longland, Dr Fox, and Dr Bell, to Henry the Eighth, Oxford, 5th April 1530. And in the same volume of State-papers, p. 398, it is worthy of notice, that Queen Catherine corroborates the story of Anthony Wood, as to the surreptitious manner in which the seal of the university was affixed to the decision, "that the seals of these universities were gotten out, she will not say by what strange subtil means."

Coronation of Charles V.

the unwilling hands of the Pontiff, who, on this occasion, affected a joy which did not blind the spectators.* But although Clement was little disposed to favour the emperor, still less partiality did he feel for the cause of Henry, who, dreading the meeting at Bologna, despatched the Earl of Wiltshire as his ambassador, along with Cranmer, to watch the proceedings and further the cause of the divorce. On being introduced to the Supreme Pontiff, the peer peremptorily refused to kiss his foot,—a ceremony to which Charles, a short time before, had submitted with great apparent devotion. He, at the same time, expostulated freely on the late conduct of the Papal See, and concluded by assuring him, that such was the prerogative of the crown of England, that his master, the king, would not obey any citation to a foreign court, nor allow his cause to be tried at Rome. To this his holiness replied, that although urged by the queen to proceed in the citation, and decide upon the validity of her marriage, he would be content to leave the matter at rest, provided Henry himself would proceed no further, nor innovate in religion; and when Cranmer published his book, and eagerly offered to maintain what he had written in a disputation with their most learned canonists and divines, no one could be found who would openly maintain the lawfulness of the connubial contract. When the Earl of Wiltshire was admitted to an audience with the emperor, the latter alluded with severe irony to the deep interest which, as the father of Anne Boleyn, he must feel in the decision of the suit, and openly expressed his repugnance to receive so partial an envoy. The earl with spirit remarked, that he attended, not as a father, but as the minister of his sovereign,† who would assuredly not be diverted from his object by any ill-humour of his Spanish Majesty; to which the other retorted, that he was resolved not to abandon his aunt, the Queen of England, whose cause was that of truth and justice, and whom

Bold conduct of the English ambassador at Rome.

Effects of Cranmer's publication

* Turner, vol. ii. p. 311-313.

† Le Grand, vol. iii. p. 401.

CHAP. VI.

Influence of Cranmer on the pope.

he was in honour bound to protect from oppression. Cranmer, in the mean time, although disappointed of a public disputation, was so successful in private argument with those about the Pope, that even in the chief court of the Rota it was admitted that the king's marriage was against the law of God. Having gained this concession, he maintained with equal boldness, but not with equal effect, that the pontiff had no authority to dispense with any portion of the Divine law,—a tenet which, although self-evident, was too strongly opposed to the long-established monopoly of spiritual power to be admitted by any zealous servant of the Popedom.*

Difficulties of his position.

The difficulties which surrounded Clement became, so far as England was concerned, every day more complicated and inextricable. Early in March 1530, previous to the emperor's leaving Bologna, Henry was informed that he had been cited to appear before the Consistory at Rome, to which judicature the cause had been avocated. As access to his dominions was unsafe, the Papal summons was affixed to the churches at Bruges, Dunkirk, and Terouenne; and the king was prohibited from contracting a second marriage under pain of excommunication. This proceeding greatly irritated him; and, scorning to appear and answer the citation either in person or by proxy, he determined to adopt such measures as should convince his holiness, that the terrors of his spiritual thunder were not so great as they had once been held in Britain. It had been whispered, soon after the disgrace of the cardinal, that an attack was meditated by the Duke of Norfolk and the new ministers upon the ecclesiastical establishment and the overgrown property of the Church. About the same time, a letter, signed by the lords spiritual and temporal and the most considerable commoners, was addressed to the Pope, in which they represented how much they and the whole body of the nation were interested in the king's divorce, and re-

Citation of Henry to appear at Rome.

* British Biography, vol. ii. p. 252.

quested him with all speed to annul the marriage, that there might be no necessity for their resorting to other and more disagreeable remedies.* In the event of Clement persisting in his refusal, Norfolk, the Earl of Wiltshire, the Duke of Suffolk, and others of the cabinet, had determined that it should be dissolved by the absolute authority of Parliament, from the obsequiousness of which they expected to be able to carry their designs, for the appropriation of a large portion of the ecclesiastical lands and tithes,—the payment of the king's debts, which, in consequence of the large sums lately borrowed, pressed heavily on the crown,—and the concentration of the whole power of the government into their hands. Matters, however, did not proceed with the expected smoothness and equanimity. In the House of Lords, Fisher, bishop of Rochester, a prelate whose simplicity, integrity, and learning, gave great weight to his opinions, boldly exposed the designs against the Church. "I hear," said he, "there is a motion made that the smaller monasteries should be given into the king's hands, which, notwithstanding the extraordinary anxiety professed for the reformation of the vicious lives of the clergy, makes me suspect that it is not so much the good as the goods of the Church which men are now looking after. To what purpose have we these portentous and inquisitorial petitions from the Commons? To none other than that they may bring the clergy into contempt and collision with the laity, and seize upon their patrimony. Beware, my lords," he continued, "beware of yourselves, your country, your religion, and your Holy Mother, the Catholic Church: the people are subject to novelties: Lutheranism is spreading amongst them; and let me beseech ye to remember, from the recent miseries of Germany and Bohemia, what disasters, from the same causes, are impending over ourselves. Resist, then," he concluded, "resist manfully,

Determination to proceed in defiance of the pope.

Opposition in the House of Lords.

Warning of Fisher.

* Burnet, vol. i. p. 92. The letter of the nobles and clergy is dated 13th July; the Pope's answer the 27th September. Herbert, p. 143.

CHAP. VI.

Its effect on the Peers.

my lords, as becomes ye, the mischiefs intended by the Commons; or, if you do not, be prepared to see all obedience withdrawn, not only from the clergy but from yourselves."* This spirited address was received by the peers with different feelings, as they were inclined to favour or to take alarm at the king's designs; but the Duke of Norfolk, whose schemes it exposed, could not repress his resentment. "My Lord of Rochester," said he, "many of these words might well have been spared; but I trow 'tis often seen that the greatest clerks are not always the wisest men:" to which Fisher jocularly retorted, "My Lord Duke, I do not remember any fools in my time that ever proved great clerks."† In the House of Commons, the affair was taken up more warmly. They sent Audley, their speaker, with a deputation of their members, to complain to his majesty of the attack which had been made upon them; and Henry so far listened to the remonstrance, that he enjoined the bishop to express himself more guardedly in future.

Cause of the king's line of conduct.

It is singular that this temperate rebuke was the full extent to which the king carried his censure; but we are perhaps to ascribe such lenity to the state of suspense in which his mind was involved. Every expedient to procure the dissolution of his marriage had now been exhausted. It was found impossible to remove the opposition of the emperor,—it was equally vain to expect the consent of the Pope. The opinions of the learned, and the judgment of the universities, even could they be quoted as impartial, all proceeded on the assumption of a fact which he could not establish by proof. Henry thought, therefore, that his difficulties were insurmountable; he had brought himself into a dilemma, from which there appeared no escape, unless he triumphed over a passion which had become a part of himself: he became abstracted, pensive, and unhappy;

* This took place in the Parliament of November 1529, which brought in the articles against Wolsey.

† Parl. Hist. of England, vol. iii. p. 57-59.

he complained to his confidential servants that he had been deceived by those who had assured him the Papal approbation might easily be obtained; and it began to be whispered in public, that the project for a divorce was about to be abandoned for ever.

Rise of Thomas Cromwell.

It was at this moment of uncertainty, when dismay was seen in the countenances of the powerful ministerial faction, who derived their chief strength from the prospect of a divorce, that the advice of an extraordinary man gave a new turn to events, and led the way to the entire separation of England from its dependence upon the Roman See. This person was Thomas Cromwell, a servant of the fallen Wolsey, and his chief assistant in the dissolution of the smaller monasteries. Cromwell's early pursuits had been calculated to improve his talents more than to settle his principles,—to give him accurate habits of business, a thorough knowledge of the world, and a deep insight into the lower and more selfish parts of human nature. He began life as a clerk in the English factory at Antwerp; he afterwards became a military adventurer, served in the army of the Duke of Bourbon, and was present at the sack of Rome; he next acted as a commercial agent to a Venetian merchant; and after this anomalous career in Italy, returned home to study law. When thus engaged, he became known to Wolsey, who appreciated his talents, took him into his service, and employed him, after his own disgrace, in his most delicate and confidential affairs. The household of a fallen minister, however, was no sphere for so ambitious and restless a disposition, and under a veil of what, without any breach of charity, we may pronounce religious hypocrisy, he appears to have concealed a determined purpose to retrieve his fortunes, and establish himself in favour with the king. It is at this moment that Cavendish, the affectionate biographer of the great cardinal, gives us this graphic picture of the aspiring adventurer:—"It chanced me, upon Al-hallown-day, to come there into the great chamber at Asher, in the morning, to give mine attend-

His origin.

Employment by Wolsey.

CHAP. VI.

Cavendish's account of him.

ance, where I found Master Cromwell leaning in the great window, with a primer in his hand, saying Our Lady Matins, which since had been a strange sight. He prayed not more earnestly than the tears distilled from his eyes. Whom I bade good-morrow; and with that I perceived the tears upon his cheeks. To whom I said, 'Why, Master Cromwell, what meaneth all this your sorrow? Is my lord in any danger, for whom ye lament thus; or is it for any loss ye have sustained by any misadventure?'—'Nay, nay,' quoth he, 'it is my unhappy adventure, which am like to lose all that I have travailed for all the days of my life, for doing my master true and diligent service.'—'Why, sir,' quoth I, 'I trust ye be too wise to commit any thing by my lord's commandment, otherwise than ye might do of right, whereof ye have any cause to doubt of loss of your goods.'—'Well, well,' quoth he, 'I cannot tell; but all things I see before mine eyes is as it is taken; and this I understand right well, that I am in disdain with most men for my master's sake, and surely without just cause. Howbeit, an ill name, once gotten, will not lightly be put away. I never had any promotion by my lord to the increase of my living; and 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 ere I come back again."*

His sudden resolution.

Interview with Henry.

Cromwell obeyed this ambitious impulse, and posted to court, where he sought and obtained an interview with the monarch. The state of the royal mind, wavering between its wishes and its fears, was not unknown to him; and it can scarcely be doubted, that this able and artful man, when he declared to Cavendish his resolution to advance or to hazard his fortunes upon a cast, had the project in his head which at once brought him into notice. "He felt," he said, when introduced to the king, "his boldness in presuming to advise, and

* Cavendish, by Singer, vol. i. p. 194.

his inability to become a counsellor; but the sight of his sovereign's anxiety, and his affection as well as duty, compelled him to address him. He acknowledged that the question regarding the divorce was not without difficulties; but, in his opinion, the embarrassment arose principally out of the timidity of his majesty's ministers, who were deceived by appearances, and misled by vulgar opinion. Already the universities and the most learned divines had given an opinion in favour of the divorce,—nothing was wanting but the confirmation of the Pope. And with what object was the Papal approbation so anxiously desired? It might indeed have some beneficial effect in moderating the indignation of the emperor; but was it so imperatively necessary that, if refused, Henry ought silently to submit and surrender his right? Had other princes done so? Did not his majesty live in the same age with the princes of Germany,—and what had they done? They had thrown off the yoke of Rome, and had proclaimed their independence of the Popedom. Why then might not the King of England, strengthened by the authority of his Parliament, declare himself the head of the Church within his own realm? At this moment England was little else than a monster with two heads.* But," said he, "every contradiction, every difficulty would disappear, if your majesty would take into your own hands the authority now usurped by the Pontiff. The clergy would then become obsequious to your will, when they were placed on an exact level with your other subjects. At present they considered themselves not so much the king's as the Pope's subjects. They took, indeed, the oath of allegiance, but they were afterwards released from this obligation, and sworn anew to the Pope; so that your majesty," said he, "is but half a king, and they but half your subjects." In this bold address, it will be seen that Cromwell brought before the king two

CHAP. VI.

Bold address of Cromwell.

Contempt for papal authority.

Proposed royal supremacy.

Dubious position of the clergy.

* Apologia Regin. Poli ad Carolum v. Poli Epistolæ, vol. i. pp. 120, 121.

CHAP. VI.

Novel ideas.

ideas which were entirely new to him. The first, a project for claiming the supremacy; the second, a design for placing the whole body of the clergy within his power. When he had done, the monarch pondered for a few moments, and regarding the speaker with a piercing look, demanded if he could prove what he had last said. Cromwell drew from his pocket a copy of the

Oath of the bishops.

oath administered to the bishops at their consecration, read it over, explained the manner in which the clergy had brought themselves within a charge of treason, and demonstrated that by the statutory law their lives and possessions were at the mercy of the king. Henry was convinced and delighted; his mind seized on the new ideas suggested by his able and unscrupulous adviser with its characteristic impetuosity and vigour; he warmly thanked Cromwell, took him into his service, promoted him to the seat of a privy-councillor, and determined to follow out his suggestion.*

Statute against provisors.

It may be necessary to inform the reader, that when that legal enactment, which was entitled the statute against Provisors, was passed, a power of dispensing with its operation was conferred on the crown, which had frequently been exercised in favour of individuals who procured letters of protection and license from the king, permitting them to act contrary to the statute, and thus, to use the technical language, saving them from incurring a præmunire. Thus Wolsey, before he

Precaution of Wolsey.

ventured to exercise the legatine authority, took the precaution of procuring a permission under the great-seal by which he was empowered to do so; and, had he acted with the spirit and courage of an innocent man, he ought undoubtedly to have stood upon his defence. But his pusillanimity, as we have seen, induced him to plead guilty; and it was now argued by Cromwell, that, on the ground of his conviction, the clergy were brought under the same statute, for they had acknowledged his authority as legate—and by so doing they

* Biographia Britannica, Art. Cromwell. Lingard, vol. vi. p. 234.

had become his abettors, and were clearly liable to the same penalties. When he had once adopted an idea, Henry was never slow in following it with decision. The attorney-general received orders to file an information in the King's Bench against the whole body of the clergy; and Henry, taking his ring or private signet from his finger, presented it to Cromwell, and commanded him to attend the convocation, and inform them of the proceedings which were in contemplation against them. After taking his seat amongst the bishops, and stating to them by whose command he was sent, this artful minister expounded the prerogative of the sovereign, enlarged upon their duty as subjects, and, to their astonishment, concluded by pronouncing them to have heinously offended both against the one and the other; they had consented to Wolsey's legatine authority; they had sworn to the Pope, contrary to their allegiance; and, being guilty of treason, had forfeited their entire possessions to the crown. It was in vain that the prelates explained, remonstrated, and entreated; the cause was brought on in the King's Bench; their defence was not listened to for a moment; ignorance of the law, or the fear of incurring the resentment of Wolsey, could not, they were informed, be accepted as an excuse; and judgment was only postponed, from the idea that they would be induced to purchase a pardon by such concessions as their master was willing to receive.*

Decisive steps adopted by Henry

Proceedings of Cromwell at the convocation.

Explanations and remonstrances of the bishops.

Henry was not slow to perceive the advantage he had gained, and determined to act upon it. His first object was to procure the judgment of the clergy in his favour on the subject of the divorce; his second, to render it unnecessary that this sentence should be confirmed by the Pope, by placing the supremacy of the Church in his own person, and procuring the consent of the bishops to this extraordinary measure. But in prosecution of these designs it was thought proper to proceed gradu-

Objects aimed at by Henry.

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 107. Biographia Britannica, Art. Cromwell.

CHAP. VI.

Questions submitted to the convocation.

Decision in favour of divorce.

Dilemma of the clergy.

Qualified acknowledgment of royal supremacy.

ally. He accordingly sent to the convocation two questions for their determination,—the first, Whether it was forbidden by the law of God to marry a brother's widow! and, secondly, Whether there was sufficient evidence of the consummation of Prince Arthur's marriage with the Princess Catherine! At the same time, it was suggested to them that they would do well to deliberate upon the amount of the sum which they were willing to pay to the king, should he be inclined to exempt them from the penalties of a præmunire. On the 7th of February, the convocation decided both questions as to the divorce in the affirmative. After some discussion, they offered £100,000 for a full pardon, and little doubt was entertained that their troubles had ceased, and that no further difficulties remained; but, to their consternation, the monarch refused their offer, unless a clause were introduced into the grant, by which they recognised him as the sole protector and supreme head of the church in England.* The king's designs were now plain, and the clergy found themselves in a perilous dilemma. A discussion of three days ensued. Many violently opposed the insertion of a title, which they contended was subversive of one of the first and best-established principles of the Catholic faith; others, intimidated by the situation to which they saw themselves reduced, were disposed to admit the words with an amendment or explanation; consultations were held with Cromwell, the prime agitator in the whole matter, and for a while Henry would hear of no alteration. At length he relented. The words, "Protector and Supreme Head, as far as the law of Christ will allow," were substituted instead of the insulated and obnoxious title; and to this qualified acknowledgment of supremacy the upper and lower convocation assented. Although the king at last agreed to the qualification,—*quantum per legem Christi liceat*,† he was at first highly offended with the additions; and calling those before him whom

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 108. Lingard, vol. vi. p. 235. Herbert, p. 151.
† Strype's Ecclesiastical Memorials, vol. i. p. 206.

he had deputed to manage the matter in the convocation, abused them for permitting themselves to be overreached by the bishops. "Mother of God!" said he, with that violence and irreverence which marked his fits of passion, "you have played me a shrewd turn. I thought to have made fools of those prelates, and now you have so ordered the business that they are likely to make a fool of me, as they have done of you already. Go to them again, and let me have the business passed without any quantums or tantums: I will have no quantum nor no tantum in the matter, but let it be done out of hand."* Even with this salvo the matter did not pass without much opposition and several protests. Of these, the most remarkable was that of Tonstal, the bishop of Durham, a man, as we have seen, eminent as one of the chief restorers of classical learning in England, and whose talents were highly appreciated by the king. He declared himself ready to acknowledge his sovereign as supreme head in temporal matters: —"If," said he, "the clause meaneth nothing more than this, why not say so, and I shall instantly sign my name; but if it be meant that the king is head in spirituals, such an assertion is directly contrary to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and I call upon all present to witness my dissent." This prelate had recently succeeded to his diocese, and, undeterred by the fate of Wolsey, had procured a Bull of translation and provision in direct breach of the statute of Richard II., and of a late enactment forbidding English subjects to procure from Rome any Papal documents contrary to the royal prerogative. These misdemeanours rendered him liable to instant prosecution, and he could scarcely expect that this last denial of the royal supremacy would be passed over; yet he escaped; no proceedings were instituted against him, and he appears to have continued in favour,—a proof that the king's mind was yet in a state of irresolution, and that probably, at this

Anger of Henry at the qualifying clause.

Tonstal, bishop of Durham.

His position in relation to the law.

Evidences of indecision.

* Bailey's Life of Fisher, edition 1739, p. 133-135.

CHAP. VI.

moment, his purpose was rather to intimidate than absolutely to separate from the Roman See.*

Pardon of the clergy.

Having attained his object, Henry signed a bill which pardoned the clergy their alleged treason. It was readily passed in the Lords; but the other House demurred and hesitated. They had taken the alarm lest they should be excluded from the act of indemnity, and afterwards subjected in a penalty as having also consented to Wolsey's legatine authority; and with this persuasion, it was judged expedient to send their speaker, Sir Thomas Audley, with a deputation of the members, to wait upon the monarch. The interview which followed was characteristic. Audley, kneeling to the king, declared that his faithful Commons lamented deeply their misfortune in having occasion to think themselves out of his favour, because he had granted his pardon to his spiritual subjects on the præmunire, and had not extended it to them, which they most humbly besought him now to do. Henry severely chid them for their presumption. "He was," he said, "their prince and sovereign lord; it little became them to dictate to him, or to compel him to show mercy; it belonged to him, according to his pleasure, to use the laws in their utmost severity, or to mitigate their rigour. Wherefore," he concluded, "since you have denied your consent to the pardon of the clergy, I must inform you that such consent is not necessary; I can pass it under my great-seal; and, look ye, I shall be well advised before I pardon those who endeavour to restrain my liberty and compel my mercy."† With this stern answer the members were obliged to depart, "very pensive and melancholy;" but, to their satisfaction, a pardon was soon after brought to the House by Hales, the attorney-general. Having been thus assured of the favour of their sovereign, they were soon after visited by the lord-chancellor and a de-

Doubts of the commons.

Scornful reply of the king.

Pardon of the commons.

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 107-109. Herbert, p. 151. Lingard, vol. vi. p. 237. Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iii. p. 745.

† Parliamentary History, vol. iii. p. 80.

putation from the Peers. More shortly informed them of the king's anxiety to satisfy his conscience regarding the validity of his marriage, and of his having for this purpose consulted the most celebrated universities, both in his own realm and on the Continent. The opinions of these learned bodies were then read; a hundred different papers, containing the judgment of foreign civilians and canonists against the lawfulness of the marriage, were exhibited; and, the day being far spent, the chancellor exhorted the members to report in their several counties what they had now seen and heard, so that it might be openly perceived by all men that the king had not attempted this matter to gratify his will or pleasure, but only for the discharge of his conscience, and the security of the succession to his realm.*

Representation to them of the grounds of divorce.

Having instructed the Commons, it was thought expedient to make a last attempt to shake the decision of the queen. Accordingly, some lords of the council waited upon Catherine at Greenwich, informed her of the determination of the universities, and earnestly exhorted her to depart from her appeal to the Pope, and submit the question to the decision of four temporal and four spiritual peers. Her reply to this was given meekly, but with resolution and dignity. "You affirm, my lords," said she, "that, for quietness to the king's conscience, I should commit the cause to eight persons of this realm. I pray God his grace may have a quiet conscience; but for me, this shall be your answer:—I say I am his lawful wife, and to him lawfully married by the order of Holy Church. To him I was espoused as his true wife, and in that state I will abide until the court of Rome, which was privy to the beginning, shall thereof have made an end." Henry had hitherto lived with his queen, although apart from her intimate society. From that moment he never saw her again; and his mind, irritated by opposition, and inflamed by the violence of his passions, assumed a darker and more cruel character.

Attempt to move the queen.

Resolution and dignity.

Message to the king.

* Parliamentary History, vol. iii. p. 82.

CHAP. VI.

Thomas Bilney.

This was soon after shown by the execution of Thomas Bilney, a learned and amiable man, who was burnt at Smithfield for heresy. He was the intimate friend of Bishop Latimer, and, having been accused of holding erroneous doctrines in 1528, had been persuaded by the affectionate entreaties of Tonstal to save his life by a recantation of his opinions. From that moment, however, he became heartbroken and solitary; the joy of his relatives, who welcomed him back amongst them, seemed to distress him deeply; his accustomed cheerfulness entirely forsook him; he shunned all company, and sometimes would break out into pathetic and passionate complaints of those false friends by whose unseasonable affection he had suffered himself to be overcome.

Temporary seclusion.

During this time he read much, and having buried himself for nearly three years in a religious seclusion, he began to throw out obscure hints of some extraordinary design. He would say that he was now almost prepared; that he would shortly go up to Jerusalem; and that God must be glorified in him. What he meant was not at first understood; but after a while he plainly told them, that he had long determined to expiate his former abjuration by death, and that he was now ready. Nor could any entreaties move him from his purpose.

Open renouncement of popery.

Breaking at once from all his attachments at Cambridge, he took his journey into Norfolk, and there, in the place of his nativity, began publicly to expose the errors of Popery, and to confess his guilt in abjuring the faith, which he was now convinced had its foundation in eternal truth. As he had anticipated, he was immediately apprehended and thrown into prison, where, as he lay expecting the arrival of the writ for his execution, nothing could exceed the serenity and joy of his whole demeanour.

Joyful demeanour in prison.

The weight which had oppressed him, and rendered life an intolerable burden, seemed now completely removed; and, on the evening before he suffered, his friends, who came to bid him farewell, found him at supper, in the most cheerful frame of mind. On expressing their surprise, he told them he

was only keeping the ruinous house of his body in repair so long as he inhabited it;* and on the succeeding day he welcomed death with heavenly composure and courage, repeating the 143d psalm, and dwelling with deep emphasis on these words, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."† Triumphant death.

To return to the progress of the divorce, Catherine, about this time, addressed a pathetic letter to the Pontiff, in which she informed him of her banishment from court, and implored his protection. Clement replied by an epistle to the English monarch, wherein, for the last time, he attempted to awaken in him some sense of justice and feelings of penitence. He painted in strong language the horror and infamy with which his late conduct had already caused his name to be regarded throughout Christendom. "He had been informed," he said, "that he had of late changed his conduct towards the Queen of England. Formerly he had lived with her in his palace, and treated her, during the dependence of the controversy, as his wife; but now it was reported that he had removed her from his person and court, and even banished her from the city, taking in her room a certain Lady Anne, with whom he lived, and to whom he showed that conjugal love and affection which was only due to the queen." These proceedings the Pope declared himself unwilling to believe. "For what," said he, in a strain which mingled severity with flattery, "can be more unnatural to you, or less consistent with your integrity, than on the one hand, by your letters and ambassadors, to implore our assistance in determining your cause, and on the other, by your actions, to prejudge and decide it for yourself. Alas! how little should we expect to find this contempt for the authority of the Church in him who has so ably

Appeal of the queen to the pope.

Clement's letter to Henry

Accusation of inconsistency.

* Fox, vol. ii. p. 922.

† Burnet's History of the Reformation, vol. i. p. 164. British Biography, vol. ii. p. 155-157. Fox, vol. ii. p. 923.

CHAP. VI.

Flattering address.

defended our most holy faith, by the strength of argument and by the power of the sword! It was a miserable thing," he observed, "that this one action, if it turned out as was reported, should cast an everlasting blemish upon the glory of Henry's former life and behaviour; and it was for this reason that, as he could not overlook or neglect a more strict inquiry into a matter of such moment, he was anxious to address to him the admonition of a loving father, before he was compelled to proceed against him as a severe and impartial judge." In conclusion, the Pontiff exhorted him that, as he regarded the favour of the Holy See and tendered his own salvation, he would amend his ways, recall his injured queen, and dismiss her rival from his intimate and domestic conversation.*

Measures against the popedom.

It was, however, too late for a letter of this nature to produce any favourable effect, and Henry condescended to reply in no other manner than by precipitating his measures against the Popedom. It had been a long-established usage for the clergy in most nations in Europe to pay annats, or first-fruits of their benefices, to Rome,—a tax which in England amounted to a large sum. An act for the abolition of this ecclesiastical burden was now passed in Parliament, and it was expressly provided, that any prelate who should in future attempt to transmit the wonted revenue to Rome, should forfeit to the king the whole profits of his see. It was added, that if any omission to pay those annats should be resented by a refusal of the necessary Bulls, the consecration of the prelate should proceed as usual, and all censures or interdicts from the Pope be totally disregarded. This blow was followed up by another not less decided. It deprived the convocation of a power which the Commons, in an address to the throne, complained had been improperly usurped, that of enacting laws regarding temporal matters, without consultation with the other estates; and his holiness, perceiving that

Act against the payment of annats.

Restraint of the convocation.

* Herbert, pp. 157, 158.

every attempt at conciliation was productive only of more violent innovations, rejected the excuses offered by Sir Edward Carne, Henry's envoy to Rome, and summoned the monarch to proceed with the cause on an early day. Soon after, upon the information that the English king still lived with his mistress, he pronounced sentence of excommunication (November 15, 1532) against Anne Boleyn and her royal lover, and, in the event of their presuming to marry, declared such union unlawful and invalid.* Nevertheless, actuated probably by some vague idea that a total rupture might yet be prevented, he delayed the publication of this sentence.

Decisive steps adopted by the pope.

Excommunication of the king.

These measures necessarily confirmed the league between the Pope and the Emperor; and to balance this formidable alliance, Henry, on his part, entered into a stricter amity with Francis the First. This monarch, who found it useful to employ the friendship of England in accomplishing the purposes of his political ambition, addressed a threatening letter to the court of Rome, in which he hinted, that unless a favourable decision were given for his ally, other remedies would be adopted which might not be agreeable to the pontiff.† Not long after a meeting was held between the two sovereigns. Henry, with a royal train, and accompanied by Anne Boleyn, whom he had lately created Marchioness of Pembroke, passed the seas, and proceeding to Boulogne, was there received by Francis, who, after entertaining him four days, conducted him back to Calais. During this conference, the English king indulged his usual love of magnificence. The lodging to which he brought his royal brother was furnished with cloth of gold and tissue, and embroidered with pearl and precious stones; his service consisted of 170 dishes, all of massive gold; and a masque was given by the new marchioness, thus enthusiastically described by the contemporary

Political leagues.

Meeting between Henry and Francis.

* Lingard, vol. vi. p. 247. Le Grand, vol. iii. p. 566-568.
† Herbert, p. 159.

CHAP. VI.

Lady Anne Boleyn and her attendants.

chronicler :—"After supper came in the Marchioness of Pembroke, with seven ladies in masking apparel of strange fashion, made of cloth of gold, slashed with crimson tinsel, and knit with laces of gold; these ladies were led into the chamber by four damsels apparelled in crimson satin, with tabards of fine cipress; after which the lady-marchioness took the French king, and the Duchess of Derby the King of Navarre, and every lady a lord, and, in dancing, the King of England plucked away the ladies' visors, so that their beauties were discovered. After they had danced awhile they ceased: the French king then conversed with the marchioness a space, and so took leave of the ladies."*

Proposed crusade against the infidels.

The time, however, was not wholly spent in these pageants; the late encroachments of the Turks upon Christendom engaged the attention of the monarchs, and it was agreed to assemble, during the course of the succeeding year, an army of 80,000 men, to repel the infidels from the European frontier. The sincerity of this first resolution may be questioned, as it led to nothing; and we find that at the same time the two princes communicated to each other the wrongs which they had received from the Pope, and earnestly deliberated on the proper remedies. Henry, with his usual headstrong impetuosity, proposed to set at defiance the authority of Clement, and if he persisted in refusing him justice, to depose him by a general council. Francis, whose resentment was less a personal than a political feeling, advised a more temperate course. An invitation was sent to his holiness, requesting him to meet the two rulers in a conference at Marseilles, where, it was hoped, their mutual differences might be brought to an amicable conclusion. The two cardinals, Grandmont and Tournon, were despatched by the French monarch to Rome, with instructions to arrange the preliminaries of the interview; and in a letter addressed to the supreme bishop, he remonstrated strongly against his conduct,

Measures for inducing the pope to yield.

* Hall, pp. 793, 794.

complained of the insult committed on the regal dignity in his citing the King of England out of his dominions, and declared that he could repair the injustice already committed in no other way than by empowering delegates to determine the cause upon the spot, without appeal or procrastination.* In the mean time, Henry promised, that should the Pontiff agree to this, he would attend either in person, or by the first nobleman in his realm, and in the interval abstain from any proceedings which might have the effect of prejudging the cause, or imbittering the feelings between himself and the Head of the Church. Francis, however, in this proposal was insincere. There is evidence, that he had already advised Henry to marry Anne Boleyn, and promised, that if the validity of the union were brought into question, he would support him with all his influence.†

Letter of Francis to Clement.

Promised concessions of Henry.

It was evident that this event would not be long delayed; and all who had studied the king's character, and were attached to the ancient faith, began to look with alarm to the consequences which might ensue. Amongst these, the most distinguished was the lord-chancellor, Sir Thomas More. No one knew better than he the temper and disposition of his royal master, and few trusted it less. An anecdote related by Roper strikingly shows this. "The king," says he, "one day paid More an unexpected visit, coming to dine with him at his house at Chelsea, and after dinner walked with him for an hour in his garden with his arm round the chancellor's neck. As soon as his majesty was gone, Mr Roper, son-in-law to Sir Thomas, observed to him how happy he was, since the king had treated him with a familiarity which he had never shown to any person before, except once to Cardinal Wolsey. 'I thank our Lord,' answered More, 'I find his grace my very good lord indeed; and I believe he doth as singularly favour me as any subject within this realm. However, son

Apprehensions suggested by the aspect of affairs.

Sir Thomas More.

His opinion of the king.

* Lingard, vol. vi. p. 249. † Herbert, p. 160.

CHAP. VI.

Roper, I may tell thee, I have no cause to be proud thereof; for if my head would win him a castle in France, it would not fail to go.'"*

Resignation of the great seal.

This eminent man had now filled the high office of chancellor with extraordinary ability and integrity for three years; but observing some unequivocal presages of the future storm, and having already declared his opinion on the lawfulness of Henry's marriage with Catherine, he resigned the great-seal. His master, the king, received the intimation with expressions of regret and reluctance, but did not insist on his continuance in office; and More, whose facetiousness and pleasantry often strangely mingled with the gravest transactions, acquainted his wife and family with the event in the following somewhat original manner:—On the morning after his resignation, being a holiday, he went with his lady to Chelsea church, where, during the service, he sat as usual in the choir. Whilst he held office it had been the custom for one of his gentlemen, after service was concluded, to go to his lady's pew and inform her that the chancellor was gone. Sir Thomas, on this occasion, took this office on himself, and coming up, pulled off his cap, and, making a low reverence to his wife, said, "Madam, my lord is gone." It was his misfortune to be united to a helpmate who loved his rank and disliked his jest; and believing this to be one of his usual ebullitions of pleasantry she took little notice. On discovering, however, that he was in earnest, her mortification vented itself in a fit of passion. "Tilly vally—tilly vally, Mr More!" said she,—"what will you do now? will you sit and hatch goslings in the ashes?"—"Alas, children!" said the late chancellor, turning to his daughters, "look at your poor mother,—what a transformation is she under! her nose has suddenly become awry!" The transition, however, was sufficient to have shaken the nerves of a less worldly person than Mrs More; for we are informed by Roper, that after his resignation of

Mode of announcing it to his lady.

Unseemly passion.

* Roper's Life, by Singer, pp. 21, 22.

office and the payment of his debt, his whole fortune, in gold and silver, was not worth a hundred pounds."*

Death of Archbishop Warham.

About the same time that More relinquished the seals, and retired to a life of study and contemplation, the see of Canterbury became vacant by the death of the learned and venerable Warham; and Henry, who had despatched Cranmer to Germany for the purpose of collecting the opinions of the most eminent scholars and divines in favour of his divorce, immediately selected him to fill the primacy. Those were times, however, in which the highest places in the Church only served to expose their possessors to more imminent danger; and, on receiving the king's letters, the primate-elect protracted his stay on the Continent. He had little desire to be encumbered by the irksome greatness and responsibility of so splendid a dignity. His love of study, and the endearments of social and domestic life, strongly prompted him to retirement, and he earnestly besought his royal master to look out for some more worthy person. Henry, however, was resolved; and Cranmer, finding that he would take no denial, explained to the monarch a new difficulty which he had hitherto deemed it prudent to conceal. "If," said he, "I am to accept this place, I must, like my predecessors, receive it from the hands of the Pope, and this my conscience will not permit me to do. I am convinced that your majesty is the only Supreme Head and Governor of the Church of England, as well in causes ecclesiastical as temporal: to you, and not to any foreign authority, belongs the right of donation to all benefices and bishoprics; and therefore, if I am to serve God, my sovereign, and my country, in this dignity, I will consent to accept it from the king my master alone, and not from the hand of a stranger who has no power within this realm."† This declaration startled his majesty. Although two years before he had assumed the title of Supreme Head of the Church, and extorted an unwilling acknowledg-

The new primate.

Difficulty of Cranmer.

Total rejection of papal supremacy.

* Cayley's Life, vol. i. pp. 124, 125.

† Strype's Memoirs of Archbishop Cranmer, p. 16.

CHAP. VI.

Undecided posture of the king.

ment of it from the convocation, he had not decidedly followed up the measure, but was still disposed to regard the Pope as superior in spiritual concerns; his mind, although it had not yet arrived at the point which was now so boldly stated, was however strongly disposed to follow on the same road. He paused for a short season, and then demanded how these assertions could be proved. Cranmer in reply cited several passages from Scripture and the Fathers, deducing from them the supreme authority possessed by kings within their own dominions, and at the same time pointed out the usurpations of the Roman Pontiffs. Henry was staggered, but not yet convinced. He renewed the subject again and again, and finding that the alleged scruples could not be overcome, had recourse to the advice of Dr Oliver, an eminent civilian, who proposed to remove the difficulty by sending a person to take the oath to the Pope in the name of the new primate, whilst he himself was permitted to ratify it under protestation. To this equivocal salvo for his conscience Cranmer agreed. The Pope confirmed his nomination to the archbishopric of Canterbury, and his consecration took place 30th March 1533. With one hand he received the Bulls addressed to the king and to himself, in virtue of which he was invested with the pall; with the other he surrendered these instruments to the crown, declaring that he did not recognise the Pontiff, but his royal master, as the giver of this ecclesiastical dignity. This was followed by his protestation, repeated publicly and three several times, in which he stated, that in taking the oath to the Pope he did not admit his authority to any further extent than it agreed with the Word of God, and that he claimed it as his lawful right to speak against him and impugn his errors at all times, where occasion was justly given.* It is not easy to determine whether

Advice of Dr. Oliver.

Confirmation by the pope.

Protest against the papal authority.

* Strype's Memorials of Archbishop Cranmer, pp. 14, 16, 17, 19. Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iii. p. 757. Burnet's History of the Reformation, vol. i. p. 19. Remains of Cranmer, by Jenkyns, vol. iv. p. 247.

such inconsistent conduct in this great man arose out of an error in judgment, incident to a mind which had not yet escaped from the mischievous casuistry in which he had been educated, or from a want at this moment of that firmness and sincerity which afterwards undoubtedly distinguished him.* Inconsistent conduct.

It was now five years since Henry had separated himself from the society of his queen, and solicited a divorce; and for three years he had lived in such familiar intercourse with Anne Boleyn, that no doubt could be entertained regarding the nature of the connexion between them. The situation of the Marchioness of Pembroke at length confirmed this in the most unequivocal manner; and the king, becoming alarmed for the legitimacy of his expected offspring, determined to make her his wife. The marriage was conducted in so private and obscure a manner that the date of its occurrence has been much disputed. According to an account which has been questioned by Burnet, but apparently on insufficient grounds, the ceremony took place two months before the consecration of Cranmer, on the 25th of January 1533. On the morning of that day, before light, Dr Roland Lee, one of the royal chaplains, was summoned to celebrate mass in a remote attic chamber of the palace of Whitehall. On entering he found the king, attended solely by Norris and Heneage, two of the grooms of his bedchamber, and Anne Boleyn, with her train-bearer, Mistress Savage, afterwards the Lady Berkely. The chaplain, on being commanded to celebrate the marriage, betrayed some

Nature of Henry's intercourse with Anne Boleyn.

Private marriage.

Dr. Rowland Lee.

* Tod's Life of Cranmer, vol. i. p. 57-67, inclusive. Le Bas's Life of Cranmer, vol. i. p. 58-61. Mr Tod has established beyond a doubt that the protest was a public act, contrary to Dr Lingard's assertion that it was secret,—and Mr Le Bas has made out that Warham, on a somewhat similar occasion, acted in a manner more objectionable than that pursued by Cranmer; but this is all. Warham's deeper evasion cannot vindicate Cranmer's public sophistry. To take an oath protesting that you do not believe in the assertions it contains, and in which its whole meaning and essence consists, is a transaction to which no conscientious minister in the present day could possibly become a party.

CHAP. VI.

Deceptive statement of the king.

scruples; upon which Henry informed him that the cause of the divorce had at length been heard at Rome, —a decision, he said, had been pronounced in his favour, and the Papal instrument which permitted him to marry a second time was at that moment in his possession. This unfounded assertion quieted the conscience of the chaplain; the marriage was performed without further question; the parties separated as quietly as they had assembled, and Viscount Rochford was despatched to communicate the event to the King of France, and request him to send a confidential minister to England.*

Temporary concealment of the nuptials.

In a conference with Langey, the French envoy, to whom this affair was intrusted, Henry agreed to conceal his nuptials till May, by which time it was expected the intended interview between Francis and the Pope would have taken place; but some delay occurred; it was found impossible to have any further postponement; and on the 12th of April he publicly celebrated his marriage, and commanded her to receive the honours of queen.

Ecclesiastical convocation.

This proceeding was soon after followed by a still more solemn transaction, in which Archbishop Cranmer held an ecclesiastical convocation, for the purpose of determining the long-debated controversy upon the lawfulness of the first union with Catherine. The members of the court were divided into two classes,—theologians and canonists; and it was required of them to deliver their opinion on the validity of the Papal dispensation, and the fact of consummation between Arthur and the Spanish princess. On both points their decision was in favour of the king; and having assured himself upon this point, the Primate requested the royal license to examine and pronounce final sentence in the cause of the divorce.† This was accordingly

Decision for divorce

* Lingard, vol. vi. p. 250. Turner, vol. ii. p. 331. Le Grand, vol. i. pp. 237, 238; vol. ii. pp. 110, 111.

† State-papers published by Government, vol. i. pp. 390, 391. It is a remarkable circumstance, that there are preserved in the

granted. Catherine was cited to appear before the archbishop; but it was anxiously concealed from her that there was any intention of proceeding to a final judgment in the cause. She disregarded the summons, was pronounced contumacious,* and the marriage between her and Henry declared null and invalid. One thing only remained, namely, to sanction in an equally solemn manner the union between Anne Boleyn and the king, which had been contracted, as we have seen, previous to this decision. For this purpose another

CHAP VI.

Citation of the queen.

Her marriage declared null and void.

State-paper Office two letters of Cranmer's to the king, written on this subject, both holograph of the archbishop, both dated on the same day, both bearing marks of having been folded and sealed, and received by the king. It is a mysterious circumstance, but perhaps it may be thus explained: It is evident the whole matter relative to the request of Cranmer had been previously concerted between the archbishop and the king. After which Henry had directed the primate to make his request by a formal letter, which might be shown to his privy-council. The archbishop did so; but the letter, which I conjecture to have been the first written, was not exactly in the terms Henry liked. It did not request the king's *license* to hold his court; but talked only of his wish not to proceed till his majesty's *pleasure* was known, and it also spoke of its being the prerogative of the archbishop to decide all spiritual causes, *according to the laws of God and Holy Church.* These last expressions, "according to the laws of Holy Church," might have opened a wide field of debate; and it appears to me, that Henry directed Cranmer to write a second letter, in which he demanded the king's license to hold his court, and left out all allusion to the laws of Holy Church. This second letter is the one printed in the text of the State-papers; the first is the letter printed in the notes. The reply of the king, printed in the same volume of State-papers, p. 392, corroborates this solution. It is impossible to read it attentively without perceiving Henry's jealousy respecting his own supremacy. "In consideration whereof," says he, "*albeit, we being your king and sovereign, do recognise no superior in earth, but only God, and not being subject to the laws of any earthly creature*, yet, because ye be under us, by God's calling and ours, the most principal minister of our spiritual jurisdiction," &c. And, again, he observes, he grants his humble request, "*our pre-eminent power and authority to us and our successors nevertheless saved.*" And, again, he marks strongly Cranmer's desire to obtain *his license;* and accordingly declares, that under his sign-manual he has granted him "license to proceed in the said cause."

* State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 394-397. Rymer, Fœdera, vol. xiv. p. 462.

CHAP. VI.

Confirmation of the marriage with Anne Boleyn.

court was held at Lambeth, in which Cranmer, having first heard the royal proctor, declared that Henry and the Marchioness of Pembroke had been joined in lawful wedlock, and confirmed their marriage by his pastoral authority.*

New style of Queen Catherine.

All was thus accomplished for the king by the ingenuity of his councillors, and the ready acquiescence of his prelates. Intimation was now sent to Catherine that she must, in future, be contented with the style of Dowager Princess of Wales; all persons were prohibited from giving her the title of queen; and her income was reduced to the sum settled upon her by Prince Arthur, her first husband. The ungrateful intelligence was conveyed to her personally by the Duke of Suffolk, and, considering the general mildness of her deportment, was received with unwonted indignation. She declared that she was and ever would remain the queen, and that before she would renounce that title, she would be hewn in pieces; as to her removal to any other residence, where she was to have a new household, and commence a new life as princess-dowager, she peremptorily refused to give her consent: "They might bind her with ropes," she affirmed, "but willingly she would never go."†

Her indignant reply

Coronation of the new queen.

Little moved by this violence, the monarch determined to conclude his triumph over the Pope by the coronation of his new consort. The ceremony was peculiarly magnificent, and, in an age when those pageants were carried to the highest perfection, rivalled any former exhibition of the same kind. In the procession, which was by water to the Tower, the lord-mayor's state-barge led the way, adorned by flags and pennons hung with rich tapestries, and ornamented on the outside with scutcheons of metal, suspended on cloth of gold and silver. It was preceded by a wafter or flat vessel, full

* Lingard, vol. vi. pp. 258, 259.

† State-papers published by Government, vol. i. pp. 416, 417; Duke of Suffolk and others to Henry the Eighth, 19th December 1533.

of ordnance, on the deck of which a dragon pranced about furiously, twisting his tail and belching out wild-fire. The mayor's was followed by fifty other barges belonging to the trades and merchant-companies, all sumptuously decked with silk and arras, and having bands of music on board. On his lordship's left hand was seen a raft with an artificial mountain, having on its summit a wheel of gold, whereon was perched a white falcon crowned, and surrounded by garlands of white and red roses. This was the queen's device, and on the mountain sat virgins who sang and played sweetly. This civic cavalcade rowed down to Greenwich, where her majesty appeared habited in cloth of gold, and, entering her barge, accompanied by her suite of ladies and gentlewomen, set forward to the Tower. Around her were many noblemen,—the Duke of Suffolk, the Marquis Dorset, her father the Earl of Wiltshire, with the Earls of Arundel, Derby, Rutland, Worcester, and others, all in their private barges. She thus rowed to the Tower amidst the shouts of the people, and peals of ordnance from the ships which were anchored close in shore. On arriving at the fortress, she was received by the lord-chamberlain, and brought to the king, who met her at the postern, and kissed her. She then turned to the mayor, and having gracefully thanked him and the citizens for the honour they had done her, entered the Tower. Here a dinner was given by Henry to those nobles and gentlemen who were to be created knights; after which, according to the ancient usage of England, they were bathed, shriven, and dubbed, with all accustomed ceremonies, on the morning of the succeeding day.

Procession on the Thames.

Device of the queen.

Reception at the Tower.

On the same day the queen took her progress through London to the king's manor at Westminster, with still more gorgeous state than in her conveyance to the Tower. The streets were railed and gravelled, that the horses might not slide on the pavement, and order was kept by the city-constables clothed in silk and velvet. When all was ready, the mayor, Sir Stephen Peacock

Progress to Westminster

CHAP. VI.

Attendance of the Lord Mayor.

Ambassador's suit.

Barons and clergy.

Appearance of the queen.

Pageants and devices

(an appropriate appellation), in a dress of crimson velvet, with a collar of gold round his neck, and attended by two footmen in liveries of damask, rode to the Tower, to give attendance on his royal mistress. The streets through which she was to pass were hung with cloth of gold and rich arras, and the windows crowded with the citizens in their best dresses. The splendid procession commenced with twelve gentlemen, belonging to the suite of the French ambassador, clothed in blue velvet, and their horses' trappings of blue sarcenet, powdered with white crosses. They were followed by the gentlemen and squires, two and two; the judges, the knights of the Bath, abbots, and barons, succeeded; after them came the bishops, earls, and marquises; then the Lord Chancellor of England, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, with the foreign ambassadors. To these succeeded the lord-mayor, with his mace and garter, in his coat-of-arms. Next came Lord William Howard, the Marshal, followed by the Duke of Suffolk, for that day High-constable; and, lastly, after the duke came the beautiful Anne Boleyn herself. She sat in a litter of white cloth of gold, which was open on all sides, so that the populace might freely gaze upon her. It was drawn by two palfreys in trappings of white damask, which swept the ground. Her dress was a surcoat of white tissue, over which was thrown a mantle, furred with ermine; she wore her hair in long tresses hanging down on her shoulders, and adorned by a rich circlet of precious stones. Above her was borne a canopy of cloth of gold; and she was followed by the officers and ladies of her court on horseback, and in chariots covered with red cloth of gold.

To enumerate all the various pageants and curious devices which were presented to her, would be tedious, although they illustrate the taste and manners of the age. At Fanchurch was a pageant of children apparelled as merchants, who welcomed her to the city; at Gracious-church Corner the merchants of the Stillyard soared higher, and exhibited Mount Parnassus and the

Fountain Helicon, which ran Rhenish wine till night. CHAP. VI.
At Leadenhall was a most complicated pageant, in which a white falcon, the queen's device, flew down and took its seat on a wheel of gold; after which an angel came and placed a crown on the falcon's head, and St Anne, with Mary Cleophas, addressed a goodly oration to her majesty. At Cornhill were the Three Graces seated on a throne; and, beside a fountain running wine at the Cross-in-Cheap, Master Baker, the recorder, came with low reverence, and, in the name of the city, laid at her feet a purse of gold containing a thousand marks; soon after she was saluted by Pallas, Juno, and Venus, who, making Mercury their spokesman, craved leave to present her with a ball of gold divided into three parts, signifying three gifts,—wisdom, riches, and felicity. Through these various exhibitions the queen proceeded to Westminster Hall, where she was taken out of her litter, and led up to the high dais under the cloth of estate; beside which was a cupboard of ten stages, wonderfully gorgeous. She was here served with spice and hippocras; and having sent these refreshments to her ladies, she turned to the mayor, with the noblemen and others who had attended her in the progress, expressed her heartfelt thanks, and withdrew to her chamber.*

Singular conceits.

Heathen deities.

After these splendid preliminaries, the coronation took place on the 1st of June. The queen, who wore a surcoat of purple velvet furred with ermine, was brought to the middle of the church, where she was placed in a rich chair. Having here rested a while, she descended to the high altar, and there prostrated herself, while the Archbishop of Canterbury repeated the appointed collects. She then rose, the primate anointed her on the head and on the breast, set the crown of St Edward on her head, delivered her the sceptre of gold in her right, and the rod of ivory with the dove in her left hand, after which the whole choir sang *Te Deum*. The archbishop then took off the crown of St Edward, which

Coronation.

Anointing.

* Hall, p. 800-802.

CHAP. VI. was heavy, and placed upon her head the diadem which had been made for the occasion. She then received the sacrament, made her offering, and was conducted out of the chapel into Westminster Hall, where the banquet was prepared. The coronation concluded by the wonted feudal accompaniments of jousts and tourneys.*

Banquet and jousting.

Such is an outline of the brilliant ceremonial which placed Anne Boleyn upon that perilous elevation from which she was so soon to be precipitated.

Policy of Francis I.

It is now time to attend to the consequences of these events, which were of deep interest, and involved important changes. Francis the First, for his own political purposes, was anxious to prevent any irremediable rupture between Henry and the Pope; yet, after his utmost efforts, he found this to be impossible. On being informed of the late proceedings in England, Clement annulled Cranmer's judgment in the divorce between Catherine and the king; and, on the 11th July, published his Bull, by which he declared that monarch excommunicated, unless he chose to separate himself from his new queen before the following September. Henry, on his part, was equally decisive. He sent Bonner, a determined and violent ecclesiastic, to the Roman court; and this envoy, having obtained an audience of the Pope, boldly read his commission, by which the king, his master, appealed from him to a general council. At this first interview the Pontiff behaved towards him with tolerable courtesy; but on a succeeding occasion, when he, by the directions of Cranmer, began to appeal from the Papal censures to an assembly of the Church, the arrogance of his manner so irritated his holiness, that he threatened to throw the unwelcome intruder into a caldron of boiling lead,—an intimation which, as might be expected, compelled him to make a hurried retreat.†

Decisive steps of the pope.

Bonner despatched to Rome.

Anger of the pope.

* Hall, pp. 802, 803. In Ellis' Letters, vol. ii. p. 34, will be found a long letter from Cranmer to Mr Hawkins, describing the coronation, dated 17th June 1533

† Turner, vol. ii. p 345.

Mediation of Francis.

Francis declared himself offended with the precipitancy of these measures on the part of his ally; and having despatched the Bishop of Paris as his ambassador to London, made, through this prelate, a last and ineffectual attempt to promote a reconciliation between England and the Papal See. His plans were frustrated by the violent counsels of Henry; and, through the influence of the emperor at the Roman court, on the 23d March 1534, a consistory was held. Out of two and twenty cardinals, nineteen declared for the validity of the marriage; and Clement, acceding to the opinion of so numerous a majority, pronounced his definitive sentence, declared the union between Henry and Catherine lawful and valid, annulled the proceedings against this princess, and commanded the king to take her back again as his legitimate and faithful wife. With his usual vacillation, however, he forbade the immediate publication of this decree, and entertained a hope that the enmity of the English monarch might yet be conciliated.

Final decision of the pope.

Assembly of the English Parliament.

But all such expectations were ridiculous and desperate, considering the temper of the king, and the present disposition of the Parliament. On the 15th of January, that great council of the nation assembled; and before they rose, the Church of England was established on an independent basis, and completely separated from that of Rome. The formation of those bills by which this great revolution was effected had been committed to Cromwell; and the manner in which he executed his task evinces that he had no intention of doing it by halves. The provisions of a statute, passed in the preceding Parliament, forbidding, in certain cases, all appeals to Rome, were extended to all cases whatsoever. In addition to the act which already prohibited the payment of all annats or taxes to the Holy See, it was declared that, in future, no bishops should be presented to the Pope for confirmation, nor sue out Bulls in his court; but that, when a vacancy occurred in a cathedral church, his majesty should grant to the dean and chapter

Statutes against all connection with Rome.

CHAP. VI.

Arrangements for filling up ecclesiastical vacancies.

permission to elect the person whom he had previously named in his missive letters. It was enacted, that the prelate thus chosen should first take the oath of fealty to the sovereign, after which he should receive investiture and consecration from the hands of the archbishop, and from the crown restitution of the possessions and profits of his bishopric. In a former Parliament, the clergy had recognised the king as the supreme head of the Church of England; and this was now followed up by the prohibition of every kind of payment which had hitherto been made to the apostolic chamber, as well as of all licenses, grants, and dispensations, which were usually obtained from Rome.*

Birth of Elizabeth.

In the month of September, previous to the meeting of this Parliament, Queen Anne Boleyn had been delivered of a female infant, who was christened Elizabeth, and became afterwards the illustrious sovereign of that name; and, in consequence of this event, which disappointed the king, who anxiously looked for a boy, a statute was brought in for the regulation of the succession. It was declared that the crown should descend on Henry's issue-male, in a lineal cognate order; and, in default of such issue-male, on the Princess Elizabeth and his other issue by Queen Anne. It had already been ordered that Catherine should be styled dowager, or late consort of Prince Arthur, and this gentle and unfortunate princess had given great offence by insisting upon retaining her former title.† An act was now passed, which declared the unlawfulness and invalidity of her marriage, and confirmed the justice of Cranmer's proceedings in having dissolved it. Anything printed, written, or done, to the slander or disinherison of the king's issue, to whom the crown was made de-

Statute for the succession.

* Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iii. pp. 771–784, inclusive.

† An interesting account of the manner in which she received Henry's second intimation of his wishes regarding her abstaining from the style of queen will be found in the State-papers published by Government, p. 397. Report of the Lord Mountjoy, Sir Robert Dimmock, &c. Her answers are marked by great dignity, meekness, and talent.

scendible, was pronounced high treason; and all subjects being of age were compelled to take an oath for keeping and maintaining the contents of this statute, under the pain, on refusal, of being deemed guilty of treason.

New oath and declaration.

An extraordinary imposture was discovered about this time, practised by means of a pretended prophetess, named Elizabeth Barton, otherwise designated the Holy Maid of Kent. The case of this unfortunate person may be regarded as the last of those unjustifiable and shocking frauds, which were not unfrequent in the times of Romish superstition. She was a poor girl, a native of Aldington in Kent, and being subject to fits, in which her body was distorted, and her language incoherent, some of the more ignorant of her neighbours began to consider her paroxysms supernatural, and to regard her delirious ravings as prophecies. In her more quiet moments she cunningly availed herself of this belief; and having formed a premeditated scheme of deception, began to utter rhapsodies, which she impiously alleged were communicated by the Holy Spirit. She afterwards confessed that these were dictated by Richard Maister, the rector of the parish. Having taken the habit of a nun, she acted her trances under the management of Bocking, her confessor, a monk of Christ Church, Canterbury: her pretended revelations were taken down, printed, and dispersed throughout the kingdom; and, as the object of them all was to excite the people against the king's divorce and second marriage, it may easily be supposed that Henry's quick and jealous attention was soon directed to an investigation of the matter. This, as it was prosecuted with much ability and acuteness, resulted in a complete detection of the imposture. She was seized, with her accomplices, and being brought before the Star-chamber, confessed the whole fraud. Their declarations exposed the plan and management of the imposition; and the unhappy culprit herself with her chief assistants, being attainted of high treason, were executed at Tyburn. Upon the scaffold, she addressed the people, and acknowledged the justice of

The Maid of Kent.

Premeditated imposture.

Directed against the king's marriage.

CHAP. VI. her condemnation. She lamented her having brought
Confession of guilt. others to share the same fate, but pleaded her ignorance in extenuation of her offence; and affirmed that the learned men who suffered with her might easily have seen through the delusion, and discovered her to have been a counterfeit. She hinted, however, that they were willing to be deceived, because the predictions she uttered coincided with their wishes, and were supported by their preconceived opinions. It was not the least
Bishop Fisher. extraordinary part of this story, that one of the persons misled by her pretended claims was Fisher, bishop of Rochester,—a prelate upon whom Erasmus has bestowed the highest eulogium. He had received from her own lips various mysterious warnings relating to the king's conduct, and the probability of his death, if he continued his persecution of Queen Catherine; and having concealed these, contrary to his oath of allegiance, he was tried and found guilty of misprision of treason. His sentence was imprisonment for life, and the forfeiture of all his estate to the crown.*

Deliberations in convocation. We have already adverted to the late proceedings in Parliament, which, having sat till the 30th March 1534, was prorogued till the 31st of November; but, after the rising of the two houses, the Convocation continued to hold its deliberations, and in it was determined a question of very great importance. In answer to a query presented by the king, the convocation of Can-
Denial of the supremacy of the pope. terbury resolved, that the Bishop of Rome had no greater jurisdiction given him by God in the Holy Scriptures than any other foreign bishop,—four voices only opposing it in the lower house, and one doubting; whilst the convocation of York unanimously came to the same decision. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge agreed in a similar determination; and Archbishop Cranmer, laying down his style of legate of the apostolic seat, assumed that of metropolitan. The name of the Pope was ordered to be struck out of the

* Carte, vol. iii. pp. 123, 124.

hymns in the Divine service, and the prayer in his behalf abolished; all persons were commanded to speak of him only as the Bishop of Rome; whilst the chapters, monasteries, and collegiate bodies, renounced his jurisdiction under their common seals, acknowledged the king's supremacy, and professed their willing obedience to the laws by which the power of the Papacy was completely extinguished.*

Bishop of Rome.

Henry, acting under the dictates of his passions, listening to the advice of his confidential minister, the subtle and interested Cromwell, and occasionally employing the more temperate agency of Cranmer, had now attained the two great objects of his wishes. His love, if the feeling by which he was animated may be designated by so pure a name, had been fixed for the last six years upon Anne Boleyn. She was now his wife and his queen. His selfish and imperious temper had been thwarted during the same period by the opposition of the Popedom; he now saw himself the acknowledged head of an independent church, and amenable to no foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction. But the possession of these objects was attended with the worst effects. Unlimited indulgence and despotic power are calculated to pervert even the best disposition; and, at an early period of his regal career, all the fair promises of his youth were seen to wither under their influence, though it was not till the moment at which we have now arrived that his character assumed its fiercer and more sanguinary complexion.

Accomplishment of the king's wishes.

Evil effects on his mind.

In the statute already mentioned regarding the regulation of the succession to the crown, the oath to be taken by the subjects of the realm was not included; but, before the prorogation of Parliament (March 30), it had been drawn up, and was sworn by the members of both houses. In it they bound themselves to bear faith, truth, and obedience, only to the king's majesty, and to the heirs of his body, begotten or to be begotten

New oath.

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 125.

CHAP. VI.

Refusal of it by Bishop Fisher.

by his beloved lawful wife, Queen Anne. This oath, Fisher, the bishop of Rochester, declared he could not take with a safe conscience; upon which he was committed to close confinement in the Tower; and, although an infirm old man, treated with extreme rigour. On being visited by some bishops who were his friends, and earnestly reasoned with upon the subject, he showed a disposition to make concessions; declaring that he would swear to the succession, and was ready never to dispute about the marriage with Catherine, but that his conscience was not convinced it was against the law of God.

Attainted and imprisoned.

This, however, would not satisfy the king; he was attainted in Parliament, deprived of his bishopric, and remitted to the Tower. The cruelty which he experienced, and the manner in which Henry treated the victims of his resentment, may be seen from the following pathetic passage in a letter which he addressed to

His cruel treatment.

Cromwell:—"Furthermore, I beseech you, be good master to me in my necessity. For I have neither shirt, nor suit, nor any other clothes that are necessary for me to wear, but that be ragged and rent too shamefully; notwithstanding, I might easily suffer that, if they would keep my body warm. But my diet, also, God knoweth how slender it is at many times. And now, in mine age, my stomach may not away but with a few kinds of meats; which, if I want, I decay forthwith, and fall into crases and diseases of my body, and cannot keep myself in health. And also, I beseech you, that it may

Appeal to the king.

please you, by your high wisdom, to move the king's highness to take me into his gracious favour again, and to restore me to my liberty out of this cold and painful imprisonment, whereby ye shall bind me to be your poor bedesman for ever unto Almighty God, who ever have you in his protection and custody. Other twain things I must desire upon you. The one is, it may please you that I may take some priest with me in the Tower, to hear my confession against this holy time. The other is, that I may borrow some books to say my devotion more effectually these holy days, for the com-

fort of my soul. This I beseech you to grant me of your charity. And thus our Lord God send you a merry Christmas and a comfortable, to your heart's desire. At the Tower, the 22d December, by your poor bedesman."*

Unwise honours from the pope.

That this affecting letter had any effect in mollifying the rigour of his imprisonment, there is no proof. He continued a year after it in the Tower; and it appeared probable, considering his advanced age, and the treatment he received, that death would in a little time put a period to his sufferings, when an unseasonable honour paid him by Paul the Third, in creating him a cardinal, hastened his destruction. As soon as intelligence of this promotion reached England, the king gave the strictest orders that none should be permitted to bring the hat into his dominions, and immediately despatched Secretary Cromwell to the Tower to examine the old man. After some introductory conference, Cromwell asked him,—"My Lord of Rochester, what would you say if the Pope should send you a cardinal's hat,—would you accept it?" The bishop replied, "Sir, I know myself to be so far unworthy of any such dignity, that I think of nothing less; but if any such thing should happen, assure yourself, I should improve that favour to the best advantage that I could in assisting the Holy Catholic Church of Christ, and in that respect I would receive it upon my knees." When this answer was reported to him, the king could not restrain his passion. "Yea," said he, "is he yet so lusty? Well, let the Pope send him a hat when he will. Mother of God! he shall wear it on his shoulders then, for I will leave him never a head to set it on."

Examination of Fisher.

Solicitor-General Rich.

From this moment his destruction was determined; and nothing could be more base and cruel than the mode in which Henry contrived to get him into his power. Rich, the solicitor-general, a man of a fawning and crafty disposition, came to the Tower with a message

* Biog. Brit., Art. Fisher, vol. iii. p. 1933.

CHAP. VI.

Base betrayal of Fisher.

from the king. He informed him, that his majesty, for the better satisfaction of his own conscience, had sent him in this secret manner, to know his opinion respecting the supremacy; and in order to encourage him to make a disclosure of his mind, Rich added, that the king assured him, on his honour, that whatever he should say unto him, he should abide no danger or peril for it, nor should any advantage be taken of the opinions thus confidentially communicated.* Trusting to this promise, and unsuspicious of the snare, which, by royal ingenuity, had been laid for him, the bishop inconsiderately declared,

His candour.

"that as to the business of the supremacy, he must needs tell his majesty, as he had often told him before, and would so tell him were he to die that very hour, that it was utterly unlawful, and that the king should beware of taking such title upon him as he valued his own soul and the good of his posterity." For these words Fisher was brought to trial, found guilty on the evidence

His trial and condemnation.

of Rich, and condemned to be beheaded. He suffered with the utmost calmness and serenity. On the day of his execution, being told at five in the morning that it was his last, he received the intelligence with an unchanged countenance, laid himself down, and slept soundly two hours. He then rose, and caused himself to be dressed with greater care, and in a finer suit than usual; which being remarked by his servant, who hinted that he would soon have to put them off and lose them,—

Cheerful anticipation of death.

"What of that," said he; "dost thou not know that this is our marriage-day, and that it behoves us, on that joyful occasion, to use more costliness, for the sake of this solemnity?" Such was the fate of a prelate, who, whatever may have been his errors, was a pious minister, a man of extreme simplicity of life and sweetness of temper; and, as an indefatigable and enthusiastic restorer of learning, worthy to be had in all honourable remembrance.

Henry's next victim was one still more illustrious

* Biog. Brit., Art. Fisher.

Sir Thomas More.

than Fisher. Sir Thomas More, upon his resignation of the seals as chancellor, had retired with joy into the obscurity of private life, and in the bosom of his family divided his time between study and devotion. Intimately acquainted with the character of the king, and no inattentive observer of the aspect of the times, he soon discovered, and intimated to his children, those presages of a coming storm, which he anticipated would be connected with his own fate. When the commission was given to Cranmer to try the cause of the divorce, and his decision was followed by the king's marriage to Anne Boleyn, "God grant," said Sir Thomas, "these matters be not within a while confirmed by oaths;" and, communicating his apprehensions to his wife and household, he remarked, that if they would encourage him to die in a good cause, it would make him merrily run to death.* More was too distinguished a person, and his opinions had too preponderating an influence, not in England only but in Europe, to permit him to remain unnoticed, and the king accordingly employed every method both by promise and persuasion to bring him over to his party. On discovering that there was no hope of altering his opinion concerning the unlawfulness of his second marriage, the monarch made an attempt to entangle him in a charge of misprision of treason, on account of Elizabeth Barton; but although he had slightly implicated himself in the case of this poor impostor, more out of curiosity than conviction, he so judiciously managed his defence, that his enemies were compelled to abandon all thoughts of a prosecution. He was aware, however, that their enmity was delayed only, not extinguished; and when his favourite daughter, Mrs Roper, informed him that his name was struck out of the bill, he observed, with his accustomed sprightliness, "In faith, Meg, *quod differtur non aufertur*."† Nor was it long before these apprehensions were realized. When the oath enjoined by the act of supremacy in

Dread of the oaths.

Attempt to charge him with treason

Anticipation of the results.

* Roper's Life, pp. 68, 69.

† Roper's Life of More, by Singer, p 68.

CHAP. VI.

The oaths tendered and refused.

1534 was ratified in Parliament, Henry, who had scarcely breathed himself from his exertions to entrap Fisher, commanded that it should be next tendered to More. As was anticipated, he refused to take it, and was committed a close prisoner to the Tower. During his confinement he was visited by Cromwell, Cranmer, and others, who held out the fairest promises to induce him to alter his resolution; but to no purpose. On one of these occasions, when much pressed, and admonished that his obstinacy in refusing the oath gave a bad example to others, he replied, as he has himself stated in an affecting letter to his daughter, that he gave no man occasion to hold any point one way or other. "I

His defence.

am," said he, "the king's true faithful subject and daily bedesman. I pray for his highness, and all his, and all the realm. I do nobody harm, I say no harm, I think none harm, and wish every body good; and if this be not enough to keep a man alive, in good faith I long not to live. I am dying already, and since I came here have been divers times in the case that I thought to die within one hour. And I thank our Lord I was never sorry for it, but rather sorry when I saw the pang past; and therefore my poor body is at the king's pleasure. Would to God my death might do him good!"* Soon

Deprived of books and writing materials.

after the last of these conferences, which ended as they had begun, in his steadily declining the oath, Rich, the king's solicitor, was sent to take away his books. He found him engaged in drawing up a treatise on the passion of our Lord, and unmoved by this circumstance, not only removed all his volumes, but carried away his instruments of writing. He still, however, contrived to procure some scraps of paper, on which he wrote with a coal, and it was in this manner that his last affecting letter to his favourite daughter was composed.

* Roper's Life of More, by Singer, p. 153, Appendix. In the State-papers published by Government, vol. i. see Interrogatories ministered to John Fisher, pp. 431, 432, and Interrogatories ministered to Sir Thomas More, with his Answers, pp. 432, 435, inclusive.

Trial for treason.

At length, after having been kept a year in prison, he was brought to trial in the King's Bench, and arraigned of treason for having refused the oath. Upon this occasion, although worn out with long confinement and sickness, he made an admirably eloquent defence; but its effect was lost on the venal and subservient court to which it was addressed. A pliant consent to the caprices of the sovereign was the character of this reign; and it appears to have been the peculiar pride of the prince to make his judges and juries the mere creatures of his will and passion. More was accordingly found guilty, and the only indulgence he met with was, the changing the usual sentence of hanging into beheading. On being called upon to acknowledge the king's favour in this, he pleasantly remarked, "he trusted God would save all his friends from any similar experience of his majesty's goodness." On sentence being pronounced, he addressed the court in the following solemn and affecting manner:—"I have nothing farther to say, my lords, but that, as the blessed Apostle St Paul was present, and consented to the death of Stephen, and kept their clothes who stoned him to death, and yet they are now both holy saints in heaven, and shall there continue friends for ever, so I verily trust, and shall therefore right heartily pray that though your lordships have now been judges on earth to my condemnation, we may yet hereafter all meet together in heaven, to our everlasting salvation; and so I pray God preserve you all, and especially my sovereign lord the king, and send him faithful counsellors." He was then carried from Westminster Hall to the Tower, with the axe borne before him. A touching circumstance occurred on reaching Tower Wharf. His favourite daughter, Margaret, who had ever regarded her father with a passionate affection, had there stationed herself amongst the crowd, and the moment he came in sight she flew towards him, heedless of every impediment, burst through the officers and halberdiers by whom he was surrounded, and passionately folding him in her arms, sobbed aloud on his neck.

Found guilty and condemned.

Address to the court.

Meeting with his daughter Margaret.

CHAP. VI.

Affecting farewell

Sir Thomas tenderly consoled her, inculcating submission to the will of God; after which she so far collected herself as to bid him farewell, and the procession moved on; but scarce had she retired a few paces, when, miserable at the thought that she had taken her last look, she again broke through the crowd, and once more clung round his neck, eagerly embracing him. This great man had been unshaken by the terrors of the law, and perfectly calm in listening to the sentence of death; but, on again beholding the distress and anguish of his daughter, his self-command for a moment deserted him, and, being inexpressibly moved, his tears fell upon her cheek as he gave her his blessing, and bade her be comforted. At this tender scene many in the crowd began to weep; and even the guards were so much affected, that it was some time before they prevailed on themselves to separate them.

Deep feeling of More.

Sir Thomas Pope.

On the day of his execution, Sir Thomas Pope, one of his familiar friends, was sent by the king, at an early hour in the morning, to inform him that he should hold himself in readiness,—a commission which he could not execute without weeping; but More received the information with the utmost cheerfulness, and only requested that his daughter Margaret might be present at his burial. He then dressed himself, and, out of the little money he had left, sent a gold coin to the executioner. About nine o'clock he was led to Tower Hill, where, on coming to the scaffold, that cheerfulness and pleasantry which was the habitual temper of his mind did not desert him. Observing it to be so weakly built that it seemed ready to fall down, he turned to the lieutenant, and leaning on him, said, "Mr Lieutenant, see me safe up; and, as for coming down again, you may let me shift for myself." He then knelt down, and spent some time in his devotions; after which, rising from his knees, he addressed the executioner with much vivacity. "Pluck up thy spirits, man," said he, "and look not cast down, or be afraid to do thine office. My neck is very short; take heed, therefore,

Cheerfulness on the scaffold.

that thou strike not awry, for thy credit's sake." He then laid himself down, and carefully composed his body for the stroke; in doing which he put his beard to one side, observing, with a smile, that it at least had not committed treason. His head was then severed at a single stroke from his body. His execution.

I have already said something on the early history of this eminent man,—his character undoubtedly degenerated in some small degree in his latter days. It was strange, that as the Reformation proceeded his mind became first stationary and then disposed to retrograde. He presents us in this way with a striking contrast to his great contemporaries, Luther and Cranmer. The minds of both were educated in the midst of the ignorance and darkness of Catholicism; both gradually but progressively threw off its fetters; and, irradiated at first with a feeble glimmering of the truth, they emerged at last into the full light and liberty of the Gospel. More, on the contrary, began by entertaining the most free and enlightened views, which contracted as he advanced in years, and at last seemed, on some subjects, to have settled down into the hardened principles of intolerance and superstition. In his early career in life, none seemed to have less hesitation in attacking the abuses of the Romish Church. Like Erasmus, he lashed the vices and impositions of the friars, till his satire almost bordered on profanity. He seemed ever ready to deplore the licentiousness, ignorance, and fanaticism, of the various religious orders. Their tyranny over the minds, their pillage on the property of the people, were his favourite subjects of declamation; nor could any one more indignantly point out the barriers which they had raised against the progress of those elegant and classical studies in which he so much delighted. But he drew a marked distinction between the evils of a system and the effort to destroy it, or to question the truth of the principles upon which it was founded. Nor is it unworthy of remark, that, in her palmy days of power, the Romish Church did not much interfere

Character of Sir Thomas More

Early impressions of More

Exposure of the friars.

CHAP. VI.

Freedom of early opinions.

with the right of private judgment upon religious subjects,—provided always the supremacy of the Apostolic See and the temporal interests of the hierarchy were left untouched. In his early years, before the minds of the people had begun to be agitated by the first workings of the new opinions,—in the repose of literary and philosophic retirement, when all was as yet bright and settled around him, he could indulge in speculations which carried the freedom of human opinion to the very borders of scepticism,—he availed himself to the utmost of the liberty of private thought, and, deeply interested for the cause of reviving literature, exposed with unsparing severity its cloistered and cowled opponents. But when the storm began to howl around him, and the pillars of those ancient and venerable institutions in which he had been educated were seen tottering under the ground-swell of the Reformation, he evidently dreaded the consequences of a convulsion of which he had himself been an unconscious instrument, though he had not been able to anticipate the conclusion. Hence the early boldness of his youth, and the superstitious timidity of his latter days. It is more difficult to find an apology for his intolerance,—his practical, and even personal severities to those he esteemed heretics. The object which he wished to accomplish must have been to impose silence, and not to create conviction; for he had early declared that no man could be constrained into a particular belief: And here, before we pronounce with too much severity upon this unquestionable blot on his amiable character, let it be remembered that toleration, though essentially a Christian principle, was in that age a stranger alike to the creed of Protestants and Catholics; and that persecution for religious opinion did not riot only in the proceedings of such bigots as Bonner and Gardiner, but polluted also the placid, unbiassed, and charitable intellect of Cranmer.

Change of views.

Intolerance.

Henry had now gratified his revenge and immolated his victim; but that victim was one of the most illus-

trious and virtuous men of his age, and the news of his execution was received, not at home only, but throughout Europe, with a universal cry of horror and detestation. Englishmen who were employed abroad found their country the object of dread and abhorrence. Erasmus, at that time the greatest living scholar, and whose works were read with avidity in every nation which had been visited by the light of reviving letters, composed a minute and affecting account of his trial and death. He had long been the dear friend of More, and was so intimately acquainted with his character and virtues that his treatise possessed the fidelity of a portrait. In Italy, the Romish Church claimed him as one of the greatest of her martyrs; and Cardinal Pole, an illustrious exile, and nearly related to the royal family, denounced the cruelty of his kinsman in strains of the most severe and affecting eloquence. When, too, the Emperor Charles the Fifth was informed of the execution, he sent for Sir Thomas Elliot, the English ambassador at his court, and thus addressed him :—"My Lord Ambassador, we understand the king, your master, has put to death his faithful servant, and grave and wise councillor, Sir Thomas More." To which Elliot answered, that he had heard nothing of it. "Well," said the emperor, "it is too true; and this will we say, that if we had been master of such a servant, of whose abilities ourself have had these many years no small experience, we would rather have lost the best city in our dominions than so worthy a councillor."* Even Henry himself appears to have been touched with compunction on the occasion. We are informed, that when an account of the last scene was brought him, being at that time playing at tables with the queen, he cast his eyes upon her and said, "Thou art the cause of this man's death!" after which, rising up, he immediately left his play, and shut himself up in his chamber in great perturbation of mind.

Effect produced by More's execution.

Feeling in Italy.

Address of the emperor to the English ambassador.

* British Biography, vol. ii. p. 97.

CHAPTER VII.

Henry excommunicated—Suppression of Monasteries—Fall of Anne Boleyn—War with France—Tyranny, Caprice, and Death of the King.

Henry publicly excommunicated—Kingdom laid under an Interdict—Suppression of Monasteries—Appropriation of their Revenues—Death of Queen Catherine—Fall of Anne Boleyn—Marriage of the King to Jane Seymour—Articles of Religion—Death of the Queen—Henry's Tyranny—He marries Anne of Cleves—Fall of Cromwell—Henry marries Catherine Howard—Her Execution—War with France, and with Scotland—Murder of Beaton—Henry marries Catherine Parr—Ascendency of the Romish Party—Execution of the Earl of Surrey—Trial and condemnation of the Duke of Norfolk—Death of Henry the Eighth—His Character—Reflections on his Reign.

CHAP. VII.

Advances to the new Pope Paul III.

THE history of this monarch is perpetually putting us in mind of the remark of Lord Herbert, "that it is impossible to draw his picture well who hath several countenances." On the death of Clement, whom he regarded with a rooted enmity, Henry appears to have made advances to his successor, Paul the Third, empowering Sir Gregory de Casalis to confer with the new Pontiff on the cause so long under the consideration of the Papal See. The application, it is probable, met with some favour; but when intelligence arrived in Italy of the extraordinary severities used to those who denied the king's supremacy, of the execution of several monks who had refused the oath, and above all, of the death of Fisher and More, a sudden revolution took place in

Effect of Fisher and More's death.

the sentiments of the Roman hierarchy. By a Bull, dated August 30, Paul, in the severest language which could be employed, warned the king to repent of the grievous sins which he had committed in the divorce of Queen Catherine, the marriage with Anne Boleyn, and the promulgation of the laws against the Papal authority. If he should refuse obedience, he cited him to appear at Rome within ninety days, and give his answer; and if he neglected this, he, by the same Bull, declared him to be excommunicated, pronounced the kingdom to be under an interdict, declared the issue by Anne illegitimate, interdicted his subjects from paying him allegiance, forbade other states from engaging in commerce with England, set free all foreign princes from the leagues which bound them to that country, commanded the clergy to depart forth of the realm, and enjoined the nobility to take arms against their sovereign.*

Excommunication of Henry

Although this Bull was not instantly made public, the monarch against whom it was directed was soon informed of its contents, and with the object of strengthening himself against the terrors of the Popedom, and the formidable power of its ally the emperor, he opened a negotiation with the Protestant princes of Germany. In this he was joined by Francis the First, who, with no very serious convictions of religion, but rather under the influence of political ambition, began at this time to show some favour to the opinions of the Reformers. Henry endeavoured also about the same period to engage his nephew, James the Fifth of Scotland, in his opposition to the overgrown power of the Romish Church, but with little success.†

Negotiation of Henry with the Protestant princes of Germany

Not long after this, another important abridgment of the power and revenues of the Papal See took place, in the suppression of the monasteries,—a measure chiefly recommended by Cromwell. The great abuses which, under the cloak of devotion, were practised in the religious houses so widely scattered over the kingdom,

Abridgement of the revenues of the Papal See.

* Herbert, p. 184. Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iii. p. 792.
† Strype, vol. i. p. 347.

CHAP. VII.

Notorious abuses in the religious houses.

were well known to the Romish Church, and, soon after the accession of Henry, had excited in some of its more conscientious adherents the most earnest desire for reformation. No serious measures for effecting this purification, however, had been taken; and such were the blindness, the obstinacy, and the jealousy, of those interested in the continuance of the evil, that little amelioration was to be expected. But when the king's supremacy was declared, and that oath by which it was acknowledged came to be tendered to all persons throughout the country, it met with a determined opposition from the monastic orders, and some of their most eminent members did not scruple to seal their refusal with their blood. About this same time Henry had appointed Cromwell, who already held the offices of chancellor of the exchequer and chief secretary, his royal vicegerent, vicar-general, and principal commissary. In this new dignity was vested the spiritual authority, which belonged to the king as Head of the Church, to be exercised in all cases which regarded ecclesiastical jurisdiction, or the reformation of errors in sacred matters.* The refusal of the monks and friars to acknowledge the royal supremacy came accordingly under the direct cognizance of this high officer; and his attention being naturally directed to the abuses in the religious houses, he, with the unscrupulous boldness which belonged to his character, proposed a general dissolution of them throughout the kingdom, and the assumption of their immense revenues by the crown. The vicar-general was too crafty not to be aware that this idea would be eagerly adopted by his master, who was irritated by the discourses which the monks had not hesitated to deliver against him in all parts of the country, and not indisposed to get rid of his opponents by an act which at the same time would so infinitely benefit his exchequer.

Opposition to the king's supremacy.

Cromwell made vicar-general.

Proposed dissolution of the monasteries.

The monasteries, which, even in their primitive institution, were not founded upon strictly Christian prin-

* Lingard, vol. vi. p. 298.

ciples, in the course of ages had been perverted from their original purposes, and, in many cases, from schools of holy living and pious seclusion, had grown into seminaries of immorality and licentiousness. Yet, although in some instances this was the case, it was not so in all, perhaps not so even in the majority; and whilst in the privy-council, where the matter was first debated, no one opposed a general reformation, the expediency of their entire destruction came to be much questioned. It was argued that, admitting their excessive multiplication, their immense wealth, and luxurious idleness, to be an evil, it sprung out of the perversion of an otherwise useful institution. When kept within due bounds as to numbers, and compelled to follow the strictness of their original rules, such establishments, it was contended, were nurseries of devotion, retreats for learning in a dark and barbarous age, and hospitals for the sick and infirm, where the universal charity, and practical benevolence inculcated by the Christian faith, might be found in their purest exercise. Nor was it concealed, that their entire suppression would be a great wrong committed against their founders, who had as much right to give their lands to that use as their heirs have to enjoy the remainder. On the other hand, the immense revenues of the clergy were pointed out as a great and growing evil. The state, it was observed, ought to be a symmetrical body, in which no part should exceed its just proportion; and yet, when the tenth paid to the clergy in one kind, and the lands they held in another, were taken together, it would be found that the fourth part of the revenues of the kingdom was engrossed by the ministers of religion. It might not be inexpedient, therefore, to follow the example already set by Wolsey, and suppress some, employing the money for the more urgent occasions of state, and keeping the rest like public jewels, unprofitable indeed at the moment, but ready to be converted into coin when the necessity arrived.* In the mean time, the wisest

Perversion of the monasteries.

Arguments in their favour.

Unequal revenues of the clergy.

Example of Wolsey.

* Herbert, p. 185.

CHAP. VII. course, previous to any more decisive measure, appeared to be a general visitation.

General visitation ordered

Having weighed these arguments, Henry adopted the last expedient; and Cromwell being appointed to superintend this duty, despatched his emissaries, Layton, Leigh, and Detre, doctors of law, with London, dean of Wallingford, to make inquiry into the condition of the convents at large. Their instructions were ample, directing them to investigate, in the strictest manner, the government, education, and behaviour of persons of both sexes,—to find out all their offences,—and, with this object, to encourage them in accusing both their governors, and each other,—to compel them to exhibit their mortmains, evidences, and conveyances of land,—to discover their jewels and relics,—and to take inventories of their plate and money. In addition to this, injunctions were given for the better regulation and government of those houses, and for the acknowledgment of the king's supremacy by every religious order in the kingdom.*

Results of the investigation.

The result of this investigation, pursued at different times, was the disclosure of such a system of imposture, and the detection of so much immorality in the lives of the pretended devotees, who had been long secluded from observation, that nothing short of a total dissolution of the monasteries appeared likely to remove the evil. The machinery of the pretended miracles, by which the poor and ignorant people were abused, was, in many places, laid open in a striking manner. At

Shameless impostures.

Boxley in Kent, for example, there was found a crucifix which, by the pulling of certain wires, was made sometimes to move its head and eyes, sometimes to incline its body as if in the act of receiving prayers; whilst, by a different mechanism, those gestures were imitated which might be interpreted into a rejection of them. Many and great were the offerings which, for a long period, the ignorant devotion of pilgrims had presented to this image; but the imposition having been detected,

* Herbert, p. 186.

and the internal construction exposed, it was commanded to be destroyed. At Hales, in the county of Gloucester, a liquid, which the priests declared to be the blood of our Saviour, was shown in a phial of crystal, which the people sometimes were able and sometimes unable to see. On investigation, it was found out that they were made to believe that they could not be blessed with a sight of the sacred substance as long as they continued in mortal sin, even when the phial was placed immediately before their eyes, and they continued therefore to make offerings till Heaven was said to relent and give them a view of this holy relic. Upon minute examination, it was discovered that the blood enclosed in the phial was nothing more than that of a duck, which was renewed every week; that one side of the vessel was thick and opaque, and the other side thin and transparent: it was placed in such a manner upon the altar, that a person concealed behind could turn either the one side or the other to the spectators. The whole was an impudent contrivance to drain those who came to see it of as much money as possible; after which, the credulous votaries were made happy by having the transparent side turned towards them.* Many of these superstitious images were publicly exposed, and afterwards destroyed at St Paul's Cross; whilst a great number of pretended relics were discovered in different parts of the kingdom.

Pretended miracles.

Their exposure.

Pretended relics.

Of the monks and nuns, the fate was various, according to their several circumstances and condition of life. Many of them alleged that they were weary of the habit, having been professed before they reached the years of discretion, while some represented that the late injunctions were too strict to be observed; upon which his majesty seized and dissolved the house. All who had taken the vows when under the age of twenty-four were set at liberty, and those who had entered the monastery after that age had license to depart if they

Fate of the monks and nuns.

* British Biography, vol. ii. p 115.

CHAP. VII.

Pensions and redemptions.

thought proper. To some were given small pensions for life, on condition that they should surrender their establishments to the king; others redeemed their monasteries from immediate destruction by the payment of great sums to Cromwell,* and the sacrifice of money, ornaments, and jewels, to the royal exchequer. These rigorous inquiries into the state of the monasteries took place on two different occasions, in 1535 and 1537; and such was the scandal and indignation occasioned by the discoveries of the feigned miracles, and the licentious lives of the religious orders, that, although the king was at first disposed to pause as to their entire dissolution, the Parliament judged otherwise; and, by an act passed in February 1536, suppressed 380 of the lesser monasteries, by which a revenue of £32,000 a-year accrued to the public exchequer, besides £100,000 in plate and precious stones.

Effect produced by these exposures.

Rebellion in Lincoln and Yorkshires.

Such, however, was the influence of the monks in the remoter parts of the kingdom, that the measure occasioned much discontent, which at length broke out into open rebellion in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. On the suppression of these disturbances, it was thought proper, by two successive acts of the legislature, the first passed in the year 1539 and the last in 1545, to put down the remaining religious houses, and to vest their ample possesions for ever in the crown. The monarch, it is to be observed, however, did not come immediately into the possession of their immense revenues, nor is it to be imagined that the wealth thus appropriated was spent exclusively for civil purposes. Henry created six new bishoprics: Westminster, afterwards changed into a deanery by Elizabeth, Peterborough, Chester, Gloucester, Bristol, and Oxford. In eight other sees he established chapters, by converting the situations held by the priors and monks into appointments for deans and prebendaries. He also conferred an endowment on the College of Christ Church in Oxford, laid the founda-

New bishoprics.

* Herbert, pp. 191, 192, 216, 217.

tion of Trinity in Cambridge, and finished King's College in that university. He instituted professorships of divinity, law, and physic, as well as of the Greek and Hebrew languages; while, for charitable purposes, he gave the convent of Grey Friars and St Bartholomew's Hospital to the city of London. In concluding this account of the suppression of the religious houses, it ought to be observed, that all were not found alike criminal in their course of life. "Some societies," says Lord Herbert, "behaved themselves so well, that their visiters became intercessors for them; their life being not only exempt from notorious faults, but their leisure times bestowed in writing books, painting, carving, engraving, and the like exercises. But of those," continues this author, "I find not many mentioned; and even they were at last involved in the common fate; it being thought dangerous to use distinction, both lest the faults of manners, which might be corrected, should be taken by the people as the sole cause of their dissolution, and, as was pretended, that the revenues should be employed to some better uses."*

College endowments.

Exceptions to the licentiousness of the monasteries.

About this time, Queen Catherine, who resided at Kimbolton, in Huntingdonshire, was seized with an alarming distemper, of which she died,† in the fiftieth year of her age. During her illness, finding all hope of recovery gone, she addressed a request to the king, that he would permit her to see for once and for the last time her dear child, from whom she had been so long separated, were it only to cast her eyes upon her and to give her her blessing. It is painful to think, that this tender request Henry had the tyranny and heartlessness

Illness of Queen Catherine.

* Herbert, pp. 191, 192, 216, 217.

† See State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 451. A letter from Sir Edmund Bedingfield to Cromwell, from Kimbolton, 31st Decem
Edmund Be
nuary, about ten of the clock before noon, the Lady-dowager was aneled with the holy ointment, Master Chamberlain and I called to the same, and before two of the clock at afternoon she departed to God."

CHAP. VII.

to refuse; yet Catherine could forgive even this refinement of cruelty, and very shortly before her death she dictated this affecting letter to the king:—

Farewell letter to the king.

"My most dear Lord, King, and Husband,—The hour of my death now approaching, I cannot choose, out of the love I bear you, but advise you of your soul's health, which you ought to prefer before all considerations of the world or flesh whatsoever. For which yet you have cast me into many calamities, and yourself into many troubles. But I forgive you all, and pray God to do so likewise. For the rest, I commend unto you Mary, our daughter, beseeching you to be a good father unto her, as I have heretofore desired. I must entreat you also to respect my maids, and give them in marriage, which is not much, they being but three; and to all my other servants (I solicit) a year's pay, lest otherwise they should be unprovided for. Lastly, I make this vow, that mine eyes desire you above all things."

Voyage of discovery.

It was about this time that Henry encouraged a voyage of discovery to the north-west coast of America,* which was undertaken by Mr Hore, a merchant of London, who is quaintly described by Hakluyt as a "man of goodly stature, great courage, and given to the study of cosmography."† Hore fitted out two ships,—the Trinity and the Minion,—whose united crews amounted to 120 persons; but of these thirty were gentlemen-adventurers, many of whom belonged to the Inns of Court and Chancery, who willingly engaged in the enterprise, "being desirous to see the strange things of the world." Having mustered at Gravesend, they received the sacrament, and sailed from that port in the end of April 1536, and after having been about two months at sea, made Cape Breton, from which they shaped their course north-eastward, till they arrived at

* See Edinburgh Cabinet Library, No. I., Polar Seas and Regions (4th edition), p. 190-192.

† Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 129.

CHAP. VII.

the island of Penguin. Here, after a while, their provisions failed them, and, if we may trust the story told to Hakluyt by Buts and Dawbeny, two of the gentlemen engaged in the voyage, their sufferings became so intolerable, that the sailors, having wandered into the country in search of roots, were at length rendered desperate by famine, so that at last they murdered and ate some of their companions. "By this means," says the chronicler, "the company decreased, and the officers knew not what was become of them. And it fortuned that one of the company, driven with hunger to seek abroad for relief, found out in the fields the savour of broiled flesh; and fell out with one, for that he would suffer him and his fellows to starve, enjoying plenty, as he thought; and this matter growing to cruel speeches, he that had the broiled meat burst out into these words: —'If thou must needs know, the broiled meat that I had was a piece of such a man's buttock.' The report of this being brought to the ship, the captain found what became of those that were missing, and was persuaded that some of them were neither devoured by wild beasts nor destroyed by savages."* Shocked at this discovery, the leader of the expedition exposed to the sailors, in the strongest manner, the heinousness of the crime they had committed, but apparently with little effect. Their sufferings increased, and they were about to cast lots whom they should choose as the next victim to be devoured, when a French vessel arrived, of which they made themselves masters by a stratagem; and, refreshed by the provisions they found on board, set sail for England, arriving at St Ives, in Cornwall, about the end of October. "Mr Buts," it is remarked, "was so changed in the voyage, with hunger and misery, that Sir William, his father, and my lady, his mother, knew him not to be their son, until they found a secret mark, which was a wart upon one of his knees." It was from him that Hakluyt derived the account of this voyage,

Failure of provisions.

Dreadful sufferings.

Seizure of a French vessel.

* Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 130

CHAP. VII.

Hakluyt's informant.

he being then the only man alive that was in the expedition. As far, however, as discovery was contemplated, the voyage was unproductive of any result; and it may be suspected that the survivor, relating in his old age the perilous adventures of his youth, may have been disposed to add a deeper colouring of horror to the narrative than was authorized by the truth. It is certain, however, that the enterprise received encouragement from the king, who, on a complaint made by the owners of the French vessel, repaid them the damages out of his privy-purse.*

Anne Boleyn's behaviour on the death of the queen.

Anne Boleyn is said to have expressed herself with bitter exultation on receiving the first intelligence of the death of her unhappy predecessor; but she herself was about to experience the fatal effects of that unbridled passion and tyranny which degraded the character of her husband. Jane Seymour, the daughter of Sir John Seymour of Wolff Hall, in Wiltshire, was one of the maids of honour to the queen. She was remarkable for the extreme beauty of her countenance, and the graceful and delicate symmetry of her person. Her manners were easy, yet dignified, remote alike from the Spanish reserve and gravity of Catherine, and the French vivacity and imprudent familiarity of discourse which somewhat deteriorated from the dignity of Anne. It might have been expected, that at Henry's mature period of life, for he was now forty-five, the influence of his lovely consort was not likely to be shaken by any new attachment. But it was the misery of this wretched prince to be the slave of his desires; and as the office of Seymour brought her frequently into the royal presence, he fell violently in love with her. Her majesty was now near her confinement, and it has been alleged, although not on sufficient grounds, that her discovery of the king's passion brought on a premature delivery. The monarch had anxiously looked for a son, and when he received word that she had borne a male

Jane Seymour.

New passion of the king.

* Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 131

infant, who was dead, his disappointment, operating upon an ungenerous and selfish temper, produced a complete alienation of all remaining affection. But this was not all. Having once set his affections upon another, Henry, whose base ingenuity seldom left him at a loss for means to execute his worst purposes, determined to institute an inquiry into the conduct of his wife, to convict her of adultery, and to bring her to the scaffold. Till this moment, we have the evidence of Lord Herbert that nothing to condemn, or even to excite suspicion, had been found in the conduct of the queen. "The whisperings of her enemies," says he, "could not divert the king's good opinion from her, though yet he was in his own nature more jealous than to be satisfied easily."* But, from this same passage we learn, that there were insinuations against her, the object of which was to work upon his suspicious and tyrannical temper; though the probability seems to be, that they were totally ineffectual, till the king's passion for Jane Seymour rendered it convenient for him to believe that which he had formerly discredited.

Alienation from Anne Boleyn.

Whisperings against her.

On the 24th of April 1536 a royal commission was issued, which directed certain peers and judges to institute an inquiry into her conduct. This, however, was either kept profoundly secret, or, if suspected, did not prevent her from appearing in public with the state and honours due to her rank. On May-day a splendid joust was held in the tilt-yard at Greenwich, the queen being present, and in which the principal challengers were Viscount Rochford, her brother, and Henry Norris, one of the grooms of the stole. In the midst of this pageant, something occurred which suddenly exasperated the king, who, rising up, abruptly quitted the royal balcony; the queen did the same, the sports broke up, and soon after it was known that she was arrested in her apartment. Lord Rochford, Norris, her alleged admirer, Sir

Commission of inquiry.

Jousts at Greenwich.

* Ellis' Letters, vol. ii., Second Series, p. 76.

CHAP. VII.

Seizures,

Francis Weston of the king's privy-chamber, William Brereton, and Mark Smeaton, a musician, were all seized at the same time and imprisoned. On the 2d of May, the Duke of Norfolk, her uncle, conducted the unfortunate lady to the Tower. Before entering its fatal portal she knelt down, and in much agony of heart exclaimed, "Oh Lord, help me, as I am guiltless of that whereof I am accused!"* The Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir William Kingston, was then beside her, and addressing him, she inquired whether he was about to take her to a dungeon. "No, madam," said he, "you shall go to your own lodging, where you lay at your coronation." The recollection of this joyous event now rushed back upon her memory, and bursting into tears, she cried out, "It is too good for me. Jesus have mercy on me!" In saying this, she again sunk down upon her knees, and, overpowered by anguish, fell into a convulsive fit of weeping and laughing. On coming to herself, she gazed round her for some moments, and then, in the utter uncertainty in which her sudden arrest had left her regarding the fate of her relatives, began to hurry out many questions. "Wherefore am I here, Mr Kingston? When saw you the king? Where is my sweet brother?" She then added, with much compassion, "Oh my mother, thou wilt die with sorrow!" This excess of grief had little effect upon the hardened hearts around her, and none upon her husband. He commanded her female attendants, with her aunt, Mrs Boleyn, to remain as spies about her person, and scrupulously report every thing that passed. They performed their base commission with an infamous accuracy; they noted all the incoherent ravings of her hysterical agitation; they used every art to entrap her into an admission of criminality; but it was in vain. She from the first to the last solemnly asserted her innocence, and

Anne Boleyn committed to the Tower.

Hardheartedness of the king.

* Wyatt's Memoir. Cavendish's Wolsey, by Singer, vol. ii. p. 209.

repeatedly affirmed to Kingston, the lieutenant, "I am as clear from the company of men as I am from you. I am the king's true wedded wife."* CHAP. VII. Affirmation of innocence.

Soon after this, on the 6th of May, she addressed the following touching letter to Henry:—

"Sir,—Your grace's displeasure and my imprisonment are things so strange to me, that 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 a one as you know to be my 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 ever preceded. And to speak truth, never prince had wife more loyal in all duty, and in all true affection, than you have ever found in Anne Boleyn, with which name and place I could willingly have contented myself, if God and your grace's pleasure had been so pleased. Neither did I at any time so far forget myself in my exaltation or received queenship, but that I always looked for such an alteration as now I find; for the ground of my preferment being on no surer foundation than your grace's fancy, the least alteration, I knew, was fit and sufficient to draw that fancy to some other subject. You have chosen me from a low estate to be your queen and companion, far beyond my desert and 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

Letter to Henry.

Declaration of her fidelity.

* Strype, vol. i. p. 432. Mackintosh's Hist. of Eng., vol. ii. p. 194.

CHAP. VII.

Demand of a fair trial.

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 shames. Then shall you see either mine innocency cleared, your suspicion and conscience satisfied, the ignominy and slander of the world stopt, or my guilt openly declared. So that whatsoever God or you may determine of me, your grace may be freed from an open censure, and mine offence being so lawfully proved, your grace is at liberty, both before God and man, not only to execute worthy punishment on me as an unfaithful wife, but to follow your affection, already settled upon that party for whose sake I am now as I am; whose name I could some good while since have pointed unto, your grace not being ignorant of my suspicion therein.

Appeal on behalf of others.

"But if you have already determined of me, and that not only my death, but an infamous slander, must bring you the enjoyment of your desired happiness, then I desire of God that he will pardon your great sin therein, and likewise mine enemies, the instruments thereof, and that he will not call you to a strict account of your unprincely and cruel usage of me, at his general judgment-seat, where both you and I myself must shortly appear, and in whose judgment I doubt not mine innocence, whatsoever the world may think of me, shall be openly known and sufficiently cleared. My last and only request shall be, that myself may only bear the burden of your grace's displeasure, and that it may not touch the innocent souls of those poor gentlemen who, as I understand, are likewise in strait imprisonment for my sake. If ever I have found favour in your sight, if ever the name of Anne Boleyn hath been pleasing in your ears, then let me obtain this request; and I will leave to trouble your grace any farther, with mine earnest prayers to the Trinity to have your grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all your actions.

From my doleful prison in the Tower, this 6th May, your most loyal and ever faithful wife, ANNE BOLEYN."* CHAP. VII.

Intercession of Cranmer on behalf of Anne Boleyn.

The same day which brought this pathetic and beautiful appeal, written with that spirit of fearless and almost imprudent indignation which is strongly characteristic of innocence, and which might well have moved any heart but one thoroughly depraved by selfishness and passion, Henry received a letter from Cranmer, who had been forbidden to approach the court, in which he earnestly and persuasively, but without effect, interceded for the queen. It was the misfortune of England at this time to be ruled by a monarch who made his will his law; and it was her disgrace that amongst her nobility and judges there was scarcely to be found a single man who was not ready to lend himself as the pliant and unscrupulous instrument of his atrocious proceedings.

Faithless courtiers.

All those who had formerly been her friends and flatterers, all those mean and supple creatures who had basked in the sunshine of her favour, were now the first to forsake her; and she appears to have been left without a friend to whom she could look for sympathy or advice. Having been carried to Greenwich to be examined before the privy-council, she had the mortification to find that its members were strongly prejudiced against her, and ready to interpret the expressions of familiarity which were permitted by the manners of the age and the court in which she lived, into decided proofs of her guilt and dishonour. On returning to the Tower, she described herself as having been cruelly handled by the council,† and chiefly by her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, who was indeed the most busy and powerful of her enemies.

Indictment against her

A few days after this, on the 10th of May, the grand jury found an indictment of high treason against the Lady Anne, queen of England, along with Henry Norris,

* There seems no good reason to question the authenticity of this letter. See Remarks on it in Sir James Mackintosh's History of England, vol. ii. pp. 366, 367. † Strype, vol. i. p. 434.

CHAP. VII.

Persons involved in the charge.

Sir Francis Weston, William Brereton, and Mark Smeaton, a musician, who, for his skill, had been made a groom of the chamber. It charged the queen with having been for three years engaged in an adulterous intercourse with these persons, who were all members of the royal household; and it included George Boleyn, Viscount Rochford, her brother, as the accomplice in her treason and sharer in her guilt. It stated also, that,

Charged with plots against the king's life.

assisted by her confederates, she had repeatedly engaged in various plots against the life of the king, and had lent herself as a party to the intended perpetration of divers abominable treasons. No record containing an account of the evidence brought forward to support these dark and most improbable charges has been discovered; but the research of a late historian has brought to light part of an inquisition, in which the dates of the various offences alleged against the queen are minutely given; from the terms of which there arises a strong presumption of her innocence.

Their trial and execution.

On the 12th of May, the four commoners, Norris, Weston, Brereton, and Smeaton, were tried, condemned, and soon after executed. The three first asserted their innocence to the last moment; and with regard to the musician, who pleaded guilty to the charge, it is worthy of observation, that the whole circumstances attending his trial are involved in a suspicious mystery. How his confession was obtained, and how far it extended, are both equally unknown, and it is impossible, under such circumstances, to give full credit to the vague and general averment that he acknowledged the crime.

Trial of the queen.

The same suspicious suppression of evidence attended the trial of the queen herself. On the 15th of May, a temporary building was erected in the King's Hall in the Tower, and here a commission, composed of a certain number of peers, assembled for the arraignment. Her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, whose enmity to her was well known, sat as president, and amongst the twenty-six other lords who constituted the court, the tyranny of Henry had included her unhappy father. Although

unbefriended and without counsel, conscious that the king was resolved upon her ruin, and aware that her judges were ready to lend themselves to the will of their sovereign, the spirit of the queen was not overwhelmed by her misfortunes. The consciousness of innocence was so strongly marked in her demeanour, that even before she spoke, all present were moved in her favour; and when she addressed the court, it was admitted, even by her judges, that she made a wise and noble defence. Upon each point of the accusation she argued with so much clearness, and in so convincing a manner proved its inconsistency and falsehood, that the lord-mayor, who attended the proceedings, and who was certainly an honester man than any of her judges, declared that the only conclusion he could draw from the whole, was that they were resolved to seek occasion to get rid of her. So deep was the impression made by her defence, that every spectator anticipated an acquittal; but those who expected this knew not the fierce temper of the king, and the base pliability of her judges. She herself was well aware that, from the first, her fate was determined. She had laughed in bitter scorn, when assured by Kingston, the lieutenant of the Tower, that she would have a fair trial; and the result now proved the accuracy of her suspicions. She was found guilty, and the Duke of Norfolk, pronouncing the sentence of the court, condemned her to be burned or beheaded, as was most consistent with the king's pleasure. On hearing the sentence, she raised her hands to heaven, and solemnly exclaimed, "Oh, Father and Creator! Oh, Thou who art the way, and the truth, and the life! Thou knowest that I have not deserved this death."* She then turned to her judges, and, in an address which, even in the garbled and imperfect state in which it has reached us, is remarkable for its simplicity and natural eloquence, protested her innocence of the crimes for which she had been condemned. "I have always," said she,

Spirited defence of the queen.

Opinion of the lord mayor.

Her consciousness of her fate.

Sentence.

Reply.

* Meteren, Histoire de Pays Bas, p. 21; in Turner, vol. ii. p. 446.

CHAP. VII.

Declaration of her faithfulness and loyalty.

"been a faithful and loyal wife to the king, my lord. But, perhaps, I have not always shown to him such a perfect humility and reverence as his graciousness and courtesy deserved, and which his good temper and the honour he hath done me required. I confess that I often have had suspicious fancies against him, in which I freely own that I have been deficient in strength and wisdom; but Heaven is witness that I have not otherwise trespassed against him; and at the moment of death I shall confess nothing else. Think not that I say this to prolong my life; for I have learned from God to die, who can also recall me again, and by his grace fortify my spirit."*

Letter of Cranmer.

To the trial and condemnation of the queen another extraordinary event succeeded. Cranmer, on the day of the arrest of Anne Boleyn, had received a message from Henry enjoining him not to leave his palace of Lambeth; and on the succeeding morning he addressed a letter to his majesty, in which he expressed his grief and astonishment on being informed of the proceedings against the queen. His former good opinion encouraged him, he declared, to think her innocent, and to him she had proved so signal a benefactor, that he trusted he might be allowed to wish and pray for the establishment of her innocence; yet he added, that his knowledge of the king's justice and prudence induced him to believe her guilty. He had loved her, he remarked, because he believed she loved the gospel; though, were she found guilty, he trusted his royal master would not permit any consideration of this kind to arrest that great work of reformation which she indeed had favoured, but which he was convinced his sovereign had undertaken from his regard to the truth, and not from any affection for her. That this was a prudent letter none will deny; but that it merits the high encomium bestowed on it by Burnet may be questioned; nor was this precisely the moment which a judicious eulogist would have seized to commend the courage or chivalry of Cranmer.

Appeal on behalf of the Reformation.

* Meteren, Histoire de Pays Bas, p. 21; in Turner, vol. ii. p. 447.

CHAP. VII.

Anne divorced.

This prelate had pronounced the divorce which separated Henry and Catherine; he had examined with the utmost care and judicial acumen the marriage between him and Anne; he had declared it valid, and solemnly sanctioned it by his authority as metropolitan and judge. The king now called upon him to weigh the proofs of his consort's guilt which would be laid before him, and to dissolve in due form this matrimonial union. No record remains of the evidence upon which he was commanded to act this strange part; nor has any letter or document been left by himself which might lead us to form even a conjecture of its nature or sufficiency. Whatever it was, the archbishop appears not to have hesitated; and, with his knowledge of the tyrannical temper of the monarch, it is probable he considered doubt or delay as equivalent to ruin! He seems instantly to have sanctioned the objections to the validity of the marriage, and, transmitting copies to the king and queen, summoned them to appear in his court, and show cause why a sentence of divorce should not be passed.* Henry selected Dr Sampson to act as his proctor, while the queen appointed Dr Wotton and Dr Barbour to attend the ecclesiastical court in the same capacity upon her part. The objections were read, admitted on the one side, silently acquiesced in by the other, and judgment having been demanded, Cranmer, in the most solemn manner, pronounced that the marriage formerly contracted between Henry and Anne Boleyn was, and in consequence of certain just and lawful impediments always had been, utterly null and void. These, it was said in the same sentence, were unknown at the time of the union, but had been confessed by the Lady Anne before the archbishops sitting in judgment. Unfortunately neither the sentence itself nor the statute subsequently passed upon it contains any allusion to their nature or description, or to the evidence by which they were supported,—a suspicious omission,

King's proctor.

Absence of all evidence.

* Lingard, vol. vi. p. 321.

CHAP. VII. which almost entitles us to concur in the opinion of an acute historian, who has described the whole trial as a solemn mockery of the forms of justice.*

The Princess Elizabeth pronounced illegitimate.

Scarcely had the queen been subjected to this cruel sentence, by which her daughter, afterwards the great Elizabeth, was pronounced illegitimate, when they who were condemned as the companions of her alleged guilt suffered the last punishment of the law. Her brother, Viscount Rochford, an accomplished nobleman, who had eloquently asserted his innocence on his trial, reiterated his asseverations on the scaffold, and solemnly declared that he had never wronged the king. Weston and Brereton positively pronounced her guiltless at the same awful moment; and Norris, to whom Henry gave a promise of life if he would purchase it by an acknowledgment of his crime, indignantly spurned at the proposal. He protested, in his conscience, that he thought her blameless; and affirmed that whether she was or not he could not lay any thing to her charge, and that he would die a thousand deaths rather than accuse an innocent person.† Smeaton, the musician,

Declaration of the queen's innocence.

* Lingard, p. 321. Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iii. pp. 803, 804.

† Carte, vol. iii. p. 134. In describing the execution of these unfortunate men, Dr Lingard has this sentence. "*He* (Smeaton) did not revoke his confession; *they* neither admitted nor denied the offence for which they suffered." (Lingard, vol. vi. p. 323.) As the words he and they are printed in italics, an argument is indirectly given from which the reader may infer the guilt of the queen. This important error must, no doubt, be unintentional; but the point is of consequence in determining the guilt or innocence of the queen. Let not Anne Boleyn, therefore, be wronged by so grave a misstatement. Rochford, Brereton, Weston, and Norris, all gentlemen and men of honour, and of whom probably all (but certainly one) might have procured a pardon by their confession, *concurred in asserting the innocence of the queen.*—only Mark Smeaton, a musician, confessed his guilt; but, says Carte, he was worked upon by a promise of life to confess; but, fearing he could not stand it out if confronted with her, no use was made of his evidence at her trial, and he was convicted and hanged to procure some credit to his defamation (Carte, vol. iii. p. 133): Tindal's note upon Rapin, vol. i. p. 811, is also well worthy of notice, "All protested their innocence; only Smeaton confessed he had well deserved to die, which gave occasion to many reflections. They were all beheaded but Smeaton,

who was hanged, is alleged to have adhered upon the scaffold to his crimination of the queen; but there are circumstances connected with his confession which entitle us at least to question, if not entirely to disbelieve, the fact. Soon afterwards she herself received intimation to prepare for death; and, that her execution might be conducted as privately as possible, an order was given for the dismissal of all strangers from the Tower. Although she had been allowed to cherish a hope that her sentence might be changed into banishment, the message did not surprise or overwhelm her; on the contrary, it was heard with an unaffected tranquillity and cheerfulness which is deeply moving: "Mr Kingston," said she to the Lieutenant of the Tower, "I hear that I am not to die before noon, and I am very sorry for it, for I thought ere now to be dead and past my pain." On being assured that there would be no pain, she answered, "I have heard say the Calais executioner, who has been brought over, is more expert than any in England, —this is very good, and," added she, spanning her neck with her delicate fingers, and smiling, "I have a little neck." These affecting particulars were communicated by Kingston to Cromwell; and had there remained a single spark of kindness or of common humanity in the selfish bosom of the king, it might have been expected that they would have had some effect in exciting his sympathy. But his nature was now hardened; he would hear neither of pardon nor respite; and, on the 19th of May, Anne was led from her chamber in the Tower to the scaffold, which had been prepared for her on the green within that fortress. It was surrounded by those only whom the jealous precautions of Henry had selected to be witnesses rather than spectators; the Dukes of Suffolk and Richmond, the Lord Chancellor Audley, Secretary Cromwell, and the Mayor and Alder-

Alleged confession of Smeaton.

Anne's reception of the order for execution.

Preparations for its execution.

who was hanged. It was generally said he was bribed into that confession, and had his life promised; but it was not fit to let him live to tell tales." This is taken from Burnet, vol. i. p. 201; vol. iii. p. 120.

CHAP. VII. men of London. She ascended the platform with a countenance in which composure and sweetness were strongly depicted, and casting her eyes upon those who stood around it, spoke these few words: "Good Christian people, I am come hither to die according to law; by the law I am judged to die, and therefore I will speak nothing against it.—I am come hither to accuse no man, nor to speak any thing of that whereof I am accused. I pray God save the king, and send him long to reign over you; for a gentler or more merciful prince was there never. To me he was ever a good, gentle, and sovereign lord, and if any person will meddle with my cause, I require them to judge the best; and thus I take my leave of the world and of you all, and I heartily desire you all to pray for me." Having said this, she removed the hat and collar, which might have impeded the stroke, and meekly kneeling down, exclaimed in an audible voice, "Christ, I pray thee, receive my spirit,—Jesus receive my soul." Whilst she was yet repeating these words, the sword descended, and at one blow her head was severed from her body.* Such was the miserable fate of this beautiful and once highly favoured

Address from the scaffold.

Execution.

* Wyatt, pp. 214, 215. Hall, p. 819. The reader will find an interesting note by Ellis, vol. ii. p. 65, on the execution of Anne Boleyn. It is well observed by him that, at almost every execution in that sanguinary period, the praise of the sovereign was pronounced by those who fell on the scaffold. "It seems," says he, "to have been so directed by government." The process by which this was effected is pointed at by Tyndale in the following passage quoted by Ellis from his Practice of Prelates: "When any great man is put to death, how his confessor entreateth him, and what penance is enjoined him, concerning what he shall say when he cometh unto the place of execution. I could guess at a practice that might make men's ears glow." Queen Anne was executed early on the morning of the 19th May, and it is proved by a remarkable letter from Kingston to Cromwell, written on the 18th, that she protested her innocence to him in the most solemn manner. Ellis, vol. ii. p. 64, and Cavendish, Life of Wolsey, by Singer, vol. ii. p. 228. As illustrative of the revealing of confessions in this reign, see State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 558, for a curious paper entitled "The Saying of Robert Aske to me, Richard Coren, out of Confession tofore his Death." It was communicated to Cromwell.

queen; and after a careful examination of the whole circumstances of her story, and a disposition to weigh with a strict scrutiny the few fragments of evidence which have been preserved, it is impossible to resist the strong presumption which arises of her innocence. Her last declaration upon the scaffold, in which she equally avoided a confession or denial of her guilt, whilst she introduced a eulogy on the mercy of the king, is startling, and difficult of explanation. We must remember, however, the dictation and garbling of confessions which disgraced this reign, and that there is no certainty this was her own composition, although, from a fear to irritate the mind of the king against her daughter Elizabeth, she might have consented to read or to recite any words which he may have thought proper to dictate. A modern historian, Dr Lingard, appears to consider the unrelenting hatred of her husband as a proof of her guilt; but he forgets in making this remark the selfish and inexorable temper of that monarch, when roused by appetite or provoked by opposition; and admitting, as I willingly do, the acuteness of this author, it appears to me that in this portion of his work he has not been able to divest himself of that prepossession against the queen, which he partakes in common with every Romish writer. That Henry waited with unfeeling impatience for the death of Anne is certain; and a tradition is yet preserved in Epping Forest, which strikingly illustrates this fact. On the morning of the day which was to be her last, he went to hunt in that district; and as he breakfasted, surrounded by his train and his hounds, under a spreading oak which is still shown, he listened from time to time with a look of intense anxiety. At length the sound of a distant gun boomed through the wood. It was a preconcerted signal, and marked the moment when the execution was completed. "Ah, ah! it is done," said he, starting up, "the business is done; uncouple the dogs, and let us follow the sport."* On the succeeding

Presumption of her innocence.

Her last address.

Conclusions of Dr. Lingard.

Impatience of Henry for her death.

* Nott's Life of Surry, p. 35.

CHAP. VII.

Marriage of Jane Seymour.

morning he was married to Jane Seymour. Thus, within the short space of a month, was an extraordinary example of the uncertainty and vicissitude of human grandeur exhibited in England. The first of May it was known the queen was suspected, the second saw her imprisoned, the fifteenth condemned, the seventeenth deprived of her brother and friends who suffered in her cause, and the nineteenth executed.

Impression on the continent.

The impression made by such tragedies on the Continent was that of pity for the nation, abhorrence for the character of the king, and caution as to any transactions with so remorseless and capricious a tyrant. Melancthon and Bucer, being about to proceed to his court on a mission from the Protestant princes of Germany, who had entertained thoughts of placing him at the head of their league, relinquished all immediate intention of their journey; and Erasmus emphatically described the state of the country by remarking, that the most intimate friends were fearful of corresponding with each other.*

Subserviency of the parliament.

The Parliament soon after assembled, and evinced in every thing its complete subserviency to the wishes of the king; a former act concerning the succession to the crown was repealed, the issue of his two first marriages, namely the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth, were declared illegitimate, and the sentence against Anne Boleyn confirmed. All this might have been anticipated; but the next step denoted a sacrifice of independence which could scarcely have been expected. Power was committed to him to dispose of the kingdom, and declare his successor to the throne, either by his letters under the great seal, or by his last will. At the same time assembled the Convocation, which, though equally obsequious in all things to the views of the sovereign, directed its chief attention to the progress of the reformed opinions in the country.

The difference between Henry and the Pope at this

* Jortin's Life. vol. ii. p. 72.

period, amounted solely to the rejection of the Papal jurisdiction. The king was a schismatic indeed, or a separatist, because he had himself assumed the title and authority of Supreme Head of the Church of England; but, as he still adhered to the doctrines of the Romish Church, he could not yet be called a heretic. Happily, however, for the truth, the death of the queen, who was a favourer of the reformers, was not attended by any evil consequences to their cause. The influence of Cranmer, and of Cromwell, now made vicar-general over the whole spiritual estate, continued undiminished; and in consequence of a memorial, drawn up by the lower house of Convocation against certain errors formerly held by the Lollards and now professed by the Anabaptists, the latter functionary brought an important message from the king. It commanded them to proceed to the reformation of the rites and ceremonies of the Church by the test of the Scriptures; and, laying aside the decrees of popes and the lessons of schoolmen, to maintain nothing but what was founded on divine authority. A keen debate ensued, in which Cranmer and Fox argued strenuously for reform, and Gardiner and Stokesley as strongly against it.

Grounds of difference with the pope.

Influence of Cranmer and Cromwell.

Convocation.

At last, a middle course was adopted, and some articles agreed on relative to the sacraments and manner of worship, which were revised by Henry himself, and afterwards published under his authority. By them the Scriptures, with the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, were made the standards of faith, and the people were instructed to believe what was contained therein. The epistles and gospels were ordered to be read in English, and it was commanded that a Bible in the same tongue should be kept in every parish-church and explained to the congregation. Three sacraments only were admitted as instituted by our Saviour,—Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Penance; the direct adoration of saints and images was forbidden; although it was added that saints might be honoured, and even asked to pray for us, provided we do not expect from

Articles agreed on.

English Bible.

Sacrament.

CHAP. VII.

Images.

Purgatory.

them what can be obtained only from God. As to images, they were to be permitted to remain in churches as representatives of virtue, yet people were to be dissuaded from the genuflexions and superstitions formerly practised before them. Purgatory, by the same articles, was declared uncertain upon any scriptural grounds; but, its abuses being abolished, permission was still given to pray for departed souls."* These advances towards a reformation were gratifying to all who longed to see the Church established on the simple and solid foundation of Scripture; the corporeal presence in the eucharist, and the necessity of auricular confession, were indeed still received as articles of faith; but important points had been gained, and the rest they trusted would follow.

Feelings of the people.

The abolition of the Papal supremacy was probably, to a majority of the people of England, a matter of satisfaction, as it relieved them from the burden of many exactions by which they had been so long oppressed; but that universal suppression of the monasteries, which was carried through by Cromwell with considerable rigour and occasional injustice, proved by no means so popular a measure. Men were attached to these ancient institutions by long habit; their splendid edifices, their liberal though often misdirected alms, their pompous processions, their sacred relics, the concourse of rich pilgrims which they occasioned, their frequent holidays and religious fêtes, were all calculated to make an impression upon the imagination; and although no one, rightly informed upon the subject, will be disposed to deny the evils which they occasioned, or to question that their abolition was attended with the best effects to the cause of truth, still some minor advantages were sacrificed in their removal. The poor regretted that they no longer experienced the liberal charity of the religious houses; the gentry, who used to provide for

Attachment to the old institutions.

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 138. State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 561. Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iii p. 810-812.

their younger children and decayed friends in these institutions, and to be themselves sumptuously entertained at the abbots' tables; the substantial yeomen, or the mercantile travellers, who were there comfortably lodged upon their journeys; all for the moment regretted and were disposed to be unreasonably discontented with the change. The legislative act, indeed, by which they had been suppressed, obliged the farmers, to whom the sites of convents were leased by the crown, to maintain the accustomed hospitality, and the lands and religious houses were sold at easier rates to enable the purchasers to obey this injunction; but such munificence was at first imperfectly exercised, and soon totally discontinued. Treatises had been published which, in strong colours, exposed the vices, indolence, and impostures of the religious orders; but these the great body of the rural inhabitants could not read, and their pity was awakened when innumerable bands of monks were seen wandering from place to place, soliciting the charity which they had formerly bestowed. Nor was this all. To prevent the monasteries from being ever re-established, and perhaps to counteract that affection in the people which still clung to the beautiful and gorgeous edifices which they had so long venerated, it was thought proper, in some places, not only to chase away the birds, but to destroy the nests. Churches and cloisters were thus demolished; bells, shrines, images, and even the monuments of the dead, were pulled down, and their materials sold,—a havoc which not only roused the indignation of the simple and devout followers of the ancient faith, but as it appeared wanton and unnecessary, was viewed with displeasure by the whole community.

Feelings regarding the monasteries.

Exposure of their vices.

Sacrilegious havoc.

These causes of discontent, it may be easily imagined, were exaggerated and inflamed by the representations of the sufferers; and the evil at last getting to a head, broke out into a popular insurrection nearly about the same time in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. To the petition of the insurgents in the former county Henry

Causes of discontent.

CHAP. VII.

Reply of the king to the remonstrants.

immediately directed an answer, which bears indisputable marks of being composed by himself. The rebels had objected to his choice of counsellors, and the king thus reproaches them :—How presumptuous 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 counsellors and prelates ; and to take upon you, contrary to God's law and man's law, to rule your prince, whom ye are bound by all laws to obey and serve, with both your lives, lands, and goods, and for no worldly cause to withstand.* The first rising was, however, easily suppressed ; and although the rebels were 20,000 strong, the military skill and prompt severity of the Duke of Suffolk, who was sent against them, speedily induced them to disperse. Their leaders, one Mackrel a prior, and a person named Melton, who took the name of Captain Cobler, were afterwards executed.†

Formidable rising in Yorkshire.

In Yorkshire the rebellion was more formidable ; its friends were encouraged by their proximity to Scotland ; and under the guidance of a gentleman of some talent and energy, named Aske, a body of 40,000 men was rapidly assembled, and not contemptibly organized. From its religious character, it bore the appearance of a crusade. They styled their march the Pilgrimage of Grace. Priests advanced before them with crosses in their hands, a crucifix was enwoven upon their banners, and every soldier wore embroidered on his sleeve, as a badge of the party, the five wounds of Christ, with the name of Jesus. The objects for which they had taken up arms were enumerated in their oath. Their single aim, they declared, was the defence of the cross and

Pilgrimage of Grace.

* State-papers published by Government, p. 463. Henry told Secretary Wriothesly, that he would rather sell all his plate than that these traitors should not be put down as an example to others. —State-papers by Government, p. 478. Nor was this a vain boast. The king ordered Cromwell to go to the Jewel-house in the Tower, and take as much plate as he thought could be spared, and have it coined.—Ibid. p. 482.

† State-papers by Government, vol. i. p. 462.

faith of Christ, the restitution of the Church, and the suppression of heresy.*

Success of the rebels.

The success of the rebels was at first sufficiently rapid and appalling. The insurrection spread in Durham, Westmoreland, and Lancashire, and, as their numbers increased, they became masters of the whole of the northern counties.† This dangerous crisis was fortunately averted by the intrepidity of the Earl of Shrewsbury, and the sagacity of the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk. These last, to whom Henry had intrusted the chief command against the rebels, wisely avoided any engagement, and allowed them to fall into distress from the want of supplies; they then, by their agents, who secretly entered their camp, spread reports that their officers were about to desert them, and seizing this moment to offer them a general pardon, the insurgents dispersed, and some of the principal leaders were executed.‡

Irish rebellion.

Some years before this a formidable rebellion had been raised by Thomas, earl of Kildare, in Ireland, who, on its suppression, was imprisoned, with his five uncles, in the Tower. Through the exertions of Lord Grey, the English deputy of that country, it was at length reduced to a state of subordination; upon which this nobleman earnestly interceded for a pardon to the Irish earl. The king, however, peremptorily refused the request, and hoping, by the extermination of the race, to ensure a permanence of tranquillity, ordered them all to be executed,—a sanguinary policy which defeated its object. The late acts extinguishing the Papal power, and establishing the supremacy, were at the same time

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 140. Godwin, pp. 146, 147. See also State-papers, vol. i. p. 466; Robert Aske's Address.

† In State-papers published by Government, p. 463-551, inclusive, will be found many interesting and curious letters, illustrative of the insurrection. See, in particular, Robert Aske's Address, p. 466, and 463, Henry's answer to the rebels in Lincolnshire, which, in some parts, is evidently the composition of the king himself.

‡ Herbert, p. 206-209, inclusive. Carte, vol. iii. p. 140-142.

CHAP. VII.

Birth of Prince Edward.

extended to that country; and Henry, secure alike from internal commotions and foreign aggression, was soon after gladdened by an event which he had long anxiously desired,—the birth of a son, who succeeded him on the throne by the title of Edward the Sixth. His joy at this event, however, and that of his subjects, who had dreaded the evils of a disputed succession, was clouded by the death of the queen, who only survived the event twelve days.*

Demolition of Shrines.

We have already fully acquainted the reader with the dissolution of the monasteries, and the appropriation of their rich revenues by the crown. This measure, which had been partially adopted in 1535, and carried into effect in 1536 and 1537, was followed up in 1538 by the removal of those memorials of the dead which, from the ideas of peculiar sanctity attached to them, were sources of immense wealth to their churches and convents. Of

Shrine at Canterbury.

these the most famous now demolished was that dedicated to Thomas à Becket, at Canterbury, against whom, although he had been buried for almost four centuries, a criminal information was exhibited by the king's attorney, by which he was cited to appear in court, and answer to the charges brought against him. After his condemnation, his shrine, which was covered with plates of gold, and adorned by the zeal of former times with gems of large size and exquisite lustre, was entirely

Spoils of his monument.

broken up. "The spoil of this monument," says Godwin, "wherein nothing was meaner than gold, filled two chests so full, that each required eight strong men to bear th m away." Among the jewels was a stone of especial lustre, called the Royal of France, which had been offered by Lewis the Seventh, in the year 1179, with a massy cup of gold. This stone Henry highly prized, and afterwards continually wore in a ring on his finger.†

It was not to be expected that the Papal court should

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 143. The queen died probably soon after the 24th of October 1537. State-papers, vol. i. p. 572.

† Godwin, p. 160.

CHAP. VII.

tamely behold all these outrages upon their ritual system. A bull of excommunication had been prepared and signed by Paul III. immediately after the death of Bishop Fisher, but he had suspended it during pleasure; it was now published. It deprived Henry of his crown, absolved his subjects from their allegiance, and exhorted every Christian prince to declare war against him. The agent to whom he intrusted its execution was Reginald Pole, an English ecclesiastic of illustrious birth, who, from his attachment and services to the Church of Rome, had, in 1536, been created a cardinal. He was the son of Sir Richard Pole, by Margaret, countess of Salisbury, who was daughter to George, duke of Clarence, brother to Edward the Fourth, and consequently second cousin to Henry himself. This monarch had manifested an affectionate interest in his young relative,—had maintained him for many years whilst he prosecuted his studies at Paris and Padua,—and was anxious to promote him to the highest dignities; but, on the rupture with the Supreme Pontiff, Pole declined all preferment, and when commanded to give his reasons, published a work on ecclesiastical uniformity (De Unione Ecclesiastica), which, with some argument, contained much bitter invective against the English king. This procured for him a cardinal's hat and the determined hatred of his royal kinsman. He was a man of considerable genius and ready eloquence; and his classical education, insinuating manners, and high lineage, rendered him a dangerous agent of the Romish see, to which he was entirely devoted. He had been sent with the character of legate into the Low Countries, where his vicinity to England facilitated his correspondence with the Papal faction in that country; and it was believed that the late rebellion in the north, which had been more generally supported by the Catholic nobility and clergy than was at first conjectured, owed its origin to his intrigues. Henry's power over the politics of Francis the First induced that ruler to refuse him a passage through his realm. He was afterwards, by the same influence, com-

Publication of the bull of excommunication.

Reginald Pole.

Created a cardinal.

Sent as legat to the Low Countries.

CHAP. VII.

pelled to leave the dominions of the Queen of Hungary, then Regent of the Low Countries, and to take up his residence at Liege, from which place he continued to carry on a secret intercourse with his friends at home.*

Alarm of the king.

The determined measures adopted by the Pope,—the abilities of Pole,—and the knowledge that the innovations in religion were unpopular with a large proportion of his subjects, caused serious alarm to the king. This fear was soon after increased by the reconciliation between the emperor and Francis, in a treaty concluded

Treaty of Toledo.

at Toledo (10th January 1539), in which they came to the resolution of taking no part with England, except by common consent,—a determination of which the effect was perceived when this country attempted to establish an alliance with the confederated princes of

Protestant league.

Protestant Germany. Their league, which had been formed solely for the cause of religion, embraced twenty-six cities, and twenty-four princes; but Henry and they differed on some important points of religious faith, and he was too conceited in his own orthodoxy, and too vain of his learning, to give up his opinions. Private masses, communion in one kind, and the celibacy of the clergy, were still parts of the creed of the English Church, against which the Germans strongly remonstrated; nor could either the arguments of such divines as they sent over to manage the negotiation, or the milder remonstrances of Melancthon, produce the least effect upon the king.

Malignant disposition of Henry.

It was characteristic of this prince, that any opposition to his wishes commonly produced a paroxysm of more determined obstinacy, and brought out the relentless parts of his nature. He had already written his title of Supreme Head of the Church in letters of blood,—he had commemorated his separation from the Roman see by the sacrifice of More and Fisher,—he now determined to show that he was prepared to maintain his former style of Defender of the Faith,—and that he

* Carte, vol. iii. pp. 145, 146.

reserved to himself the power of holding the balance of belief between the two great religious parties which divided his kingdom. These were distinguished by the names of the professors of the old and of the new learning. At the head of the former class, who, whilst they acknowledged the king's supremacy, resolutely maintained the Romish doctrines, were Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, Lee, archbishop of York, and the prelates of London, Durham, and Bath and Wells. The latter, or the men of the new learning, were led by Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, and included Latimer, bishop of Worcester, Fox of Hereford, and Shaxton of Salisbury. They were supported by the powerful co-operation of Cromwell, and, till recently, had enjoyed the complete confidence of their sovereign. But Henry's late experience of the independent spirit of the German princes awakened in him a jealousy of the Protestant doctrines; and his desertion by Francis, as well as by the emperor, convinced him that the alleged heresies which now prevailed in his dominions, and which, it was contended, had been encouraged by his quarrel with the Pope, might draw after them the most serious political consequences. It was time, therefore, he persuaded himself, to make an exhibition of his orthodoxy; and an opportunity soon after presented itself in the case of Lambert, a clergyman in priest's orders, who taught a school in London. This man had narrowly escaped a prosecution for heresy whilst Warham held the primacy; and having afterwards dissented from the doctrine of the real presence, Dr Taylor, to whom he explained his opinions, consulted Dr Barnes, and this divine informed Cranmer, by whom the schoolmaster was summoned before the Archiepiscopal Court. From the judgment of the primate, who afterwards held the same opinions which he now condemned, the accused appealed to the king, and Henry eagerly embraced an opportunity of exercising his judicial functions as Supreme Head of the Church.

Old and new learning.

Heads of the reforming party.

Lambert.

The court was held in Westminster Hall; and, for

CHAP. VII.

Trial in Westminster Hall.

the accommodation of the people, whom the sovereign was not unwilling to admit as spectators of the scene, scaffolds were erected. On the right hand of the throne were the prelates, the judges, and the most eminent lawyers; on the left stood the temporal lords and the great officers of the court and the household; but every eye was bent upon the monarch, who took his station on the judgment-seat, clothed in robes of white satin, and turned a severe countenance upon the prisoner. The proceedings were opened by the Bishop of Chichester. He stated that Lambert, having been accused of heresy before his ordinary, had made his appeal to the king; "from which circumstance," he observed, "his majesty was inclined to credit a report which had reached his ears, that credulous people were persuaded that he had embraced the new doctrines lately circulated in Germany. True it was, he found the tyranny of Rome intolerable, and had therefore shaken it off; he had discovered monks to be the drones in the bee-hive, and had expelled them; he had abolished the idolatrous worship of images, and given to his people the power of reading God's Word, which had hitherto been prohibited by the Church of Rome; but in all other things he had resolved that, during his reign, there should be no further change; and this resolution he was now prepared to enforce."*

Proceedings opened.

Conduct of Henry.

The bishop having concluded his oration, Henry rose, and, looking sternly on the accused, exclaimed, "Ho! good fellow, what is thy name?" The prisoner, kneeling, replied, "his real name was Nicolson, although of many he was called Lambert."—"What," said the king, "have you two names? I would not trust a man with two names were he my own brother." Waving this however, the monarch came to the main point in debate. "What sayest thou as to the sacrament of the altar? wilt thou agree to the doctrine of the Church, or wilt thou deny that it is the body of Christ?"—at which

* Godwin, p. 165. Fox, vol. ii. p. 1025.

word he lifted his cap. The other then proceeded, but with less vigour and resolution than had been expected, to declare his reasons against admitting the real presence. Henry replied: then came Cranmer, and for five hours the disputation lasted,—the king being his principal opponent, whilst the archbishop and nine other prelates pressed their arguments upon the prisoner. Lambert, however, was not convinced; and the day being past, and torches beginning to be lighted, it was judged time to conclude the disputation. "What sayest thou now," exclaimed the royal disputant, "after these solid reasons and instructions brought forward by such learned men! art thou satisfied! wilt thou live or die?"—"I commit myself," replied he, "into the hands of your majesty."—"Then," said the king, "commit thyself into the hands of God, and not into mine."—"My soul, indeed, I do commend into the hands of God," was the reply of the meek but courageous prisoner; "but my body I wholly yield unto your clemency."—"Then," said the king, "if you do commend yourself unto my judgment, you must die, for I will not be a patron unto heretics." Cromwell was then desired to read the sentence. It condemned him, "as an obstinate opponent of the truth," to be led to the stake, and he was accordingly executed a few days afterwards. "As touching the terrible manner and fashion," says Fox, "of the burning of this blessed martyr, here it is to be noted that, of all others that have been burned and offered up at Smithfield, there was yet none so cruelly and piteously handled as he. For, after his legs were consumed and burned up to the stumps, and that the wretched tormentors and enemies of God had withdrawn the fire from him, so that but a small fire and coals were left under him, then two that stood on each side of him with their halberds, pitched him upon their pikes as far as the chain would reach; and he, lifting up such hands as he had, and his finger-ends flaming with fire, cried unto the people in these words, 'None but Christ, none but Christ;' and so, being

Lambert's reply.

Appeal to the king.

Condemnation.

Cruel sufferings at the stake.

CHAP. VII. let down again from their halberds, fell into the fire, and gave up his life."*

Mean flattery of Cromwell.

Although he failed in this instance to make a convert, yet the monarch was probably consoled by the incense offered to his vanity, and the extravagant praises bestowed upon his learning. "It was wonderful," says Cromwell, in a strain of abject flattery, "to see how princely, with what excellent gravity, and inestimable majesty, his highness exercised there the very office of Supreme Head of the Church of England. How benignly his grace essayed to convert the miserable man; how strong and manifest reasons his highness alleged against him. I wish the princes and potentates of Christendom to have had a meet place to have seen it."†

Intrigues of the Romish party.

Such cruel executions, however, although they drew forth the encomiums of his dependents and sycophants, must have rendered Henry an object of horror to the majority of his subjects, and probably gave encouragement to Cardinal Pole and the Romish party, then strong in England, in their hopes that a revolution might be effected in the government. The intrigues which this able ecclesiastic carried on by means of his friends and relatives, cannot, owing to the destruction of contemporary evidence, be accurately ascertained. He had virtually invited foreign princes to an invasion of the realm, by publishing the Papal Bull; and it is probable that his brothers, who were lineal descendants of the house of York, and, on the death of the present monarch without issue, perhaps looked to the throne,

* Fox, vol. ii. p. 1026.

† Lingard, vol. vi. p. 270. quoting Collier, vol. ii. p. 152. "That Henry really cared little about the religious instruction of his subjects, is strikingly shown by a letter of Fitzwilliam to Cromwell, where the king requires that minister to give a benefice to a priest who was kept in the royal service because he had trained two hawks for his majesty's pastime, which flew and killed their game very well." State-papers published by Government, vol. i. pp. 364, 365. The king wishes "that, for the pains the said priest takes about the same (hawks), he should have one of Mr Bedyll's benefices, if there be any ungiven."

may at the same time have been secretly adopting measures which amounted to treason.* Henry, however, received information of their proceedings; and, in the midst of their correspondence, the principal leaders were seized and sent to the Tower. These were the cardinal's elder brothers, Lord Montacute and Sir Geoffrey Pole; Courtenay, marquis of Exeter, cousin-german to the king; Sir Edward Neville; and Sir Nicholas Carew, who was master of the horse and a knight of the garter. All were tried and found guilty; but Sir Geoffrey, who had given information against them, and on whose evidence they were convicted, received a pardon. The rest were executed; and not many months after, Margaret, countess of Salisbury, a venerable matron upwards of seventy years of age, was thrown into confinement, on suspicion of having been connected with the treasonable designs of her sons.†

Seizure of the leaders.

Trial and condemnation.

This noble lady seems to have been worthy of the blood of the Plantagenets, of whom she was the last descendant in the direct line. In her examination she exhibited a masculine strength of intellect, and a courageous deportment, which rebuked those who conducted it. "We may rather call her," said they to Cromwell, "a strong and constant man than a woman;"‡ and, although, she had seen her son perish on the scaffold, and now beheld her grandchild, the son of Lord Montacute, involved in the same charges which were brought against herself, nothing could shake her resolution, or induce her to save her life by a confession. Unable to extract from her examination any materials for a criminal information, Cromwell, whose head was fertile in expedients, whilst his conscience on most occasions gave him little trouble as to their justice, sent for the judges,

The Countess of Salisbury.

* A letter published by Sir Henry Ellis, 2d series, vol. ii. p. 109, from Sir Thomas Wriothesly, at Brussels, to Sir Thomas Wyatt, in Spain, asserts, "that the accusations against the Poles were of great importance and duly proved; and that to avoid the malice intended against his royal person and the safety of the prince, 'our only jewel after his majesty,' the king had committed them to ward."

† Ellis' Letters, vol. ii. 2d series, pp. 111, 112. ‡ Ibid. p. 115.

CHAP. VII.

Bill of attainder.

and inquired of them, whether Parliament might condemn an accused person without giving a hearing; in other words, whether a bill of attainder might be passed without the formality of a previous trial. They answered that the question was a nice and dangerous one; that every consideration of law and of equity required that the accused should be heard; but that Parliament, being the supreme court of the realm, from whose decrees there could be no appeal, the validity of their sentence, of whatever nature it might be, could not be controverted.

Subserviency of the Bench.

The question was such as might have been expected from the tyranny of a monarch who "sought not justice but revenge."* The answer betrayed the subserviency of the bench, and the immediate consequences exhibited the tameness and pliability of the Parliament. A bill of attainder was brought in, which contained the names of several persons who had been condemned in the lower courts. Amongst these were introduced the Countess of Salisbury, the Marchioness of Exeter, and the eldest son of the Lord Montacute recently executed for treason. None of these individuals were heard in their own defence,—they had made no confessions of their guilt, and no evidence was adduced against them. Cromwell, the chief agent in this iniquitous proceeding, reported the opinion of the judges, and went through the farce of exhibiting a tunic of white silk, found, as was alleged, by the high-admiral, among the countess' linen, and having embroidered upon the front the arms of England, and on the back the five wounds of Christ. This implied a suspicion that she was connected with the rebellion called the Pilgrimage of Grace, and had corresponded with her son, the cardinal; and on these grounds, she, her grandson, and the marchioness, were found guilty of treason, and sent to the Tower. This extraordinary measure, of attainting in Parliament without trial, has justly been considered as one of the

Iniquitous proceedings.

* Lingard, vol. vi. p. 378.

darkest blots, not only on the character of Henry, for he had been already guilty of as flagrant outrages upon law and justice, but on the legislative assembly of the country. Even Coke, who lived in times of little parliamentary purity, thus speaks of it:—"Although I question not the power of Parliament, for, without doubt, the attainder stands good in law, yet this I say of this manner of proceeding, 'auferat oblivio, si potest, si non utrumque silentium tegat.'"* It was, no doubt, the king's deep dislike to Cardinal Pole which dictated such severe proceedings against his mother, the countess; but having obtained her condemnation, he contented himself for the present with her strict imprisonment in the Tower, whilst, after a short interval, a pardon was extended to the Marchioness of Exeter.

CHAP. V'I

Disgraceful character of the proceedings.

From these severe proceedings, we might be apt to infer that the reformers, or men of the new learning, were gaining a preponderating influence. But it was the policy of the monarch to hold the balance between the parties with a despotic and jealous hand; and it is not improbable that he found a capricious enjoyment in keeping both in suspense. His pride, as a theologian and dictator in matters of religious belief, had lately risen to a ridiculous height; and, whilst he triumphed in his independence, he was induced, by Gardiner and the men of the old learning, to adopt some decided measures for abolishing that diversity of opinions upon some important articles of faith which prevailed throughout the country. This he did by introducing into Parliament those provisions which were called the Six Articles or the Bloody Statute. These, which are believed to have been originally drawn up by Gardiner, having received the approval of the king,† were submitted to the legislature by the Duke of Norfolk, and, after a debate, in which the royal theologian bore a

Policy of the king.

Six Articles.

* Parliamentary History of England, vol. iii. p. 143.

† In the Cotton MSS. Cleop. v. fol. 313, is the draft of the act of Parliament, with corrections in the king's own hand.

CHAP. VII.

Nature of their requirements.

prominent share, were passed in both houses. They established the doctrine of the real presence, enacting that, in the sacrament of the altar, the natural body and blood of Christ, conceived of the Virgin Mary, is really present under the form of bread and wine; and that, after the consecration, there remains no substance of bread and wine, nor any other substance but that of Christ,—God and man. They declared, that the communion in both kinds is not necessary for salvation to all persons; that priests, by the law of God, ought not to marry after their ordination; and that, by the same law, vows of chastity whether in man or woman ought to be observed; and private masses, as well as auricular confession, to be continued.*

Penalties of dispute.

Such were the articles of faith dictated by Henry to the consciences of his subjects: all of them it was made felony to dispute; and some they were required to believe and practise, under the tremendous penalty of being delated for heresy, and, even though they abjured their errors, of being delivered over to the flames.

Panic among the Protestant party.

Their publication caused, as may be believed, an immediate panic to the Protestant party, and to none more than Cromwell and Cranmer. The archbishop had been a prominent leader in the debate against them; admitting the first, because at that period he held the doctrine of transubstantiation, but earnestly opposing the rest, as having no ground in Scripture. When it came to a division, Henry, who favoured Cranmer, and was desirous that he should not give his vote against them, advised him to withdraw silently; but he excused himself firmly, though meekly, and, remaining in the House, gave his voice in the negative.†

---

* Carte, vol. iii. pp. 150, 151.

† Ridley's Life of Bishop Ridley, p. 128. British Biog., vol. ii. p. 260. Carte, vol. iii. p. 151. Lingard, on what appears to me insufficient evidence, has departed from the common account, and asserted that Cranmer owned himself convinced by the king's arguments, and gave up his opinion. The letter on which he founds his opinion is a fragment. Le Bas's Life of Cranmer, vol. i. p. 207.

Proceedings of Cranmer.

He deemed it prudent, however, to send his wife and children abroad, whilst he himself remained in the hope of mitigating the severity of the new laws, if he could not procure their abrogation. It is to the credit of the king that he admired the courage and constancy of the prelate, and not only commended the great eloquence and learning which he had exhibited during the debate on the six articles, but sent the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Cromwell to Lambeth, that they might assure him of his continued good opinion. It was on this occasion that Cromwell congratulated the archbishop on having been born in a happy hour; "for," said he, "do or say what you will, the king will always take it well at your hand; against you he will not listen to a whisper; but let me or any other of the council be complained of, and his grace will most seriously fall out with us, and chide."*

Henry's favour for him.

Subserviency of the parliaments.

Never were Parliaments more pusillanimously subservient than those of this monarch. In a former session they had conferred upon him the unconstitutional power of disposing of his kingdom by testament, and they now bestowed an absolutely despotic authority, by declaring that the proclamations he issued should have the same force, and bind his subjects to the same obedience, as the acts of the legislature. It was not indeed without opposition that this extravagant proposal was carried; but those who spoke against it succeeded only in introducing some limitations, which were obscurely worded, and extremely nugatory.† At the same time, the last blow was given to the religious houses by an enactment which conferred upon the crown the entire revenues of all that had been suppressed subsequently to the 4th

Last blow to the religious houses.

Strype's Memorials of Cranmer, p. 73, App. No. 40; and in his Defence against Gardiner he expressly affirms that "he never consented to these articles." See also Remains of Cranmer by Jenkyns, vol. ii. p. 212, and vol. iii. p. 366; Preface, vol. i. p. 25.

* Strype's Memor. of Cranmer, pp. 73, 74. British Biog., vol. ii. p. 262.

† Herbert, p. 218. Le Grand, vol. ii. p. 206.

CHAP. VII. February 1535, as well as of those which still remained to be dissolved.* "To please those of the new learning," says Strypè, in speaking of this dissolution of the greater monasteries, "it was given out that by their revenues better provision should be made for the poor, and preachers should have salaries to go about and preach the knowledge of Christ. But nothing of this came to pass; for neither was there provision made for the poor, nor yet order set for preaching the Gospel; and, in fine, a great part of it was turned to the upholding of dice-playing, masking, and banqueting."† Out of these treasures, however, some good did arise, and an original draft of an act of Parliament for the erection of six new bishoprics is still to be seen amongst the Cotton manuscripts, with the preamble written wholly in the king's hand. It alludes in strong language to the slothful lives of those sects which have been named religious folks, and declares the desire of the royal mind that they might be turned to better use, by which God's Word might be set forth, children brought up in learning, clerks nourished in the universities, old decayed servants provided in livings, alms-houses erected for the poor, readers of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, rewarded with good stipends, daily charity distributed, highways amended, and exhibitions furnished for the ministers of the Church.‡

Reputed destination of their revenues.

Erection of new bishoprics.

The king's knowledge of the objects required.

His advisers.

These meritorious designs prove, that the king was fully awake to the objects which ought to have been kept in view in the disposal of that immense wealth which accrued to the crown by the dissolution of the monasteries and religious houses. But though he formed good plans, he could not consent to the sacrifices which were necessary to carry them into execution. In seizing the revenue of the abbeys, he chiefly consulted with Cromwell and Cranmer; and these ministers were guided by very opposite principles, although both agreed in the expediency of the measure itself. The former, a poli-

* Herbert, p. 218.

† Strype, vol. i. p. 533. ‡ Ibid. vol. i. p. 541.

tician of great craft and ability, whose religious opinions sat rather loosely upon him, considered it as the only means for establishing the supremacy of the king over the church, and placing the monarchy upon a sure foundation. He acted in a political, not in a religious spirit, and appears to have regarded the monastic treasures pretty much in the light of any other fund, of which the king had the entire disposal, according to his own wishes and necessities.* Cranmer, however, had arrived at a very different conclusion. "He would not dissipate," says an excellent writer, "nor did he think it lawful to divert from its original destination, the promotion of God's glory, so ample a revenue, and make it over at once, and for secular purposes only, to the crown. He therefore was for considering it still as a sacred treasure to be applied to sacred ends, and out of the old and corrupted monasteries he was desirous to see arise new and better foundations; houses attached to all the cathedrals to serve as nurseries for the clergy of the diocese in religion and learning; an addition made to the incomes of the inferior class; and the number of sees increased, with a corresponding diminution in their extent, that the bishop might be in deed, as well as in name, the overseer."

Character of Cromwell.

Cranmer's views.

His wishes.

Such appear to have been the sound sentiments of Cranmer; but his less scrupulous colleagues, and the capricious and despotic monarch whom they served, were far from adopting them in their full extent. Upon the dissolution of the monasteries, and the destruction of the greater abbeys, Cromwell, aware of the unpopularity of the measure with a large proportion of the people, that he might strengthen the king's hands, and attach to the new order of things the most influential members in the state, suggested the sale of the abbey demesnes and tithes, at easy prices, to the nobles and

Opposition of his colleagues

* Blunt's Sketch of the Reformation in England, p. 150,—an able work, written in a quaint style, but full of original thought and research.

CHAP. VII.

Sale of church-lands.

gentry. Church-lands thus became the property of civilians; in other words, that system of lay-impropriations arose, the disadvantages of which were great at the moment, if we may trust to the following picture drawn by an eyewitness:—"Now there is no vicar at all, but the farmer is vicar and parson altogether; and only an old cast-away monk or friar, which can hardly say his matins, is hired for twenty or thirty shillings, meat and drink; yea, in some places for meat and drink alone without any wages. I know," he continues, "and not I alone, but twenty thousand men know, more than five hundred vicarages and parsonages, thus well and gospelly served after the new gospel of England."*

Disadvantages of the system.

Natural results of the change.

It would, indeed, have been vain to expect that nothing but pure and unalloyed good should result from so general a convulsion, as the dissolution of the religious houses, and the seizure and secularization of their property. The system of monasteries, in their origin, their enormous multiplication, their extraordinary wealth, and their whole internal administration, was founded in error. But it would be ridiculous to contend that such institutions were wholly without their advantages. Their learning, indeed, was contemptible, and deserved the severe satire of Erasmus; but what would he himself have been without those authors, which the libraries of the monks alone saved from destruction? The annals of the times which they have left us are barbarous in their composition, and full of matter that is absurd and apocryphal; but without them, let it be remembered, we should not have possessed even this miserable substitute for history. Their sumptuous palaces, their splendid chambers and refectories, their cellars, storehouses, vineyards, granges, and all the apparatus of comfort and luxury, of which we now behold only the ruins, demonstrate what a life of pleasure and magnificence, what a devotedness to sensual enjoyments, must have been pursued within their cloisters. But if their wealth was

Advantages of the monastic system.

Excessive luxury.

* Blunt's Sketch of the Reformation in England, p. 144.

great, their charities were also extensive,—no provision for the poor was required so long as the monasteries existed; and it is not unworthy of notice, that, as soon as their property was transferred to other hands, the necessity of those poor-laws, which now eat like a canker into the core of our national prosperity, began first to be discovered.* These institutions came in place of the alms-houses, the infirmaries,—the retreats for the destitute and unfortunate, where the aged servant, who had survived his powers of maintaining himself, the decayed or crippled artisan, the unbefriended orphan, the outcast foundling, received relief and sympathy; where charity was bestowed without grudging, and accepted without humiliation. "They had been inns," says a late writer, in a beautiful passage, which itself falls on the ear like a vesper-bell on a summer's evening, "they had been inns for the wayfaring man, who heard from afar the sound of the vesper-bell, at once inviting him to repose and devotion, and who might sing his matins with the morning star, and go on his way rejoicing."† They supplied, during the middle ages, the place of those public institutions which have been found indispensable to meet the wants of society in our more advanced times; and whilst such advantages as we have pointed out are not by any means to be weighed against the evils which they occasioned in riveting the chains of ignorance, prolonging the reign of superstition, upholding the tyranny of Rome, and obstructing the progress of the truth; whilst we are not to suffer ourselves, with the sentimental despondency which has infected some of our antiquaries, to weep over the fallen shrines and ivy-covered chapter-houses, and to hesitate upon the expediency of their dissolution; it would be, at the same time, unjust to condemn them, in the unreflecting spirit of puritanism, as having been utterly useless. The distinction drawn by the good sense of Cranmer seems to be the exact line of a beneficial refor-

Extensive charities.

Blunt's description of them.

Just medium of praise and censure.

* Blunt's Sketch of the Reformation, p. 143. † Ibid. p. 141

CHAP. VII.

Proper destination of monastic revenues.

mation. The monasteries ought, undoubtedly, to have been dissolved; but, after the task of ecclesiastical expurgation was completed, their revenues ought to have been kept sacred for religious purposes. It is, however, time to leave these reflections, and pursue the course of our history.

Imperfect reform.

Although, by the overruling influence of Cromwell and his creatures, the work of reform was left in an imperfect state, there was one redeeming measure which probably originated with this minister, or at least received his full encouragement. This was the resolution to communicate the Scriptures to the people; and the subject is so important that I have preferred to bring it under one head, rather than to separate it into details.

William Tindal.

It is to WILLIAM TINDAL that we owe the first translation of the Holy Scriptures which appeared after the days of Wickliffe, although this excellent and pious labourer was not suffered to live to complete his task. Educated originally at Oxford, and distinguished early by his classical attainments, Tindal became a canon of Wolsey's newly-founded college. Having imbibed the Lutheran opinions he removed to Cambridge, where he

Reputation as a preacher and scholar.

pursued his theological studies; and, coming afterwards to London, acquired reputation both as a preacher and a scholar, enjoying the patronage of Sir Henry Guilford, master of the horse to Henry the Eighth and the friend of Erasmus. About this time, becoming more awakened to the errors of the Romish Church, he formed his great design of exhibiting the Scriptures in his native idiom; and aware that his own country was not then the most favourable spot to prosecute his labours, he passed over into Saxony, visited Luther, and, after some interval, settled at Antwerp, where the opinions of this great reformer were much favoured by the English merchants.

His version of the New Testament.

In this city he commenced his version of the New Testament, which was published in 1526; and fifteen hundred copies being immediately sent home, were rapidly circulated throughout the country. It was received, however, with great indignation by the Popish

party; and Tonstal, bishop of Durham, having at his own expense bought up the remainder of the impression, publicly burned the whole in London,—a proceeding as idle as it was bigoted, for it only led to a new and more accurate edition, which came out in 1527. He next translated the five books of Moses; but, when proceeding with his labours in giving to the world a version of the remaining parts of the Old Testament, he was seized by the Catholics in the Netherlands, having been betrayed into their hands by a villain named Philips, whom they employed for that purpose; and, after languishing some time in prison, he was brought to trial as a heretic, and condemned to be burnt. This cruel sentence was executed in the year 1536, at the castle of Vilvorden,—the last words of the martyr being a prayer, "that God would open the eyes of the King of England."

Opposition of Bishop Tonstal.

Seizure and death of Tindal.

Tindal was a man of primitive simplicity of manners and sanctity of life, and his prayer was heard; for Henry, who in 1531 had most strenuously interdicted the reading of the Scriptures by the common people without the license of their superiors, at length was induced to alter his opinion, and agree to the proposal of Cromwell and Cranmer, that the Bible should be communicated to all classes of his subjects. Under the patronage of these two powerful names, Miles Coverdale, afterwards bishop of Exeter, published, in 1535, the first English translation of the whole Bible, with a dedication to the king, in which Henry is compared to a second Josiah, who had commanded that the law of God, hitherto deprest and cast aside, should be read and taught unto all men.* Soon afterwards, Cromwell, in directing his injunctions to the clergy, commanded them to provide a copy of the whole Bible, both in English and in Latin, which was to be laid in the choir for the study and spiritual edification of every one who desired to read the Word of God.† So deeply intent was Cranmer on this great subject,—so solicitous to ac-

Change of the king's views.

Coverdale's Bible.

The English and Latin Bible made public.

* Newcome's Biblical Translations, p. 29. † Ibid. p. 33.

CHAP. VII.

Zeal of Cranmer for the translation of the Scriptures.

complish a perfect translation of the Scriptures, that, not long after this, he divided into nine parts an old English version of the New Testament, and, having caused these parts to be transcribed, distributed them amongst the most learned bishops and divines, requiring them to correct their respective portions and return them to him. On the 10th of June 1535, we find Gardiner informing the vicar-general that he had finished the revisal of St Luke and St John, upon which he had spent great labour.* This project, however, appears to have utterly failed; and, in 1537, Cranmer encouraged Grafton to reprint the translation made by Tindal and Coverdale; employing John Rogers, a learned and pious academician, who afterwards suffered under Mary, to superintend and correct it. It is this work which we find the archbishop recommending to Cromwell in warm terms, praying him to exhibit it to the king, and obtain license that it may be sold and read by all, until such time as the bishops shall set forth a better translation, "which, I think," says he, "will not be till a day after doomsday."† He accordingly obtained his majesty's permission; and it was this joint edition which, in 1537, was commanded to be kept in all parish churches.

Reprinting of Tindale and Coverdale's Bible.

Injunctions to the clergy to set up the English Bible.

In the succeeding year (1538) an injunction of the vicar-general again required the clergy to set up the Bible in English, in a convenient place within their churches, for the use of the parishioners; and this order was followed by a royal declaration, which informed the people that the king had commanded the Scriptures, in their mother-tongue, to be openly "laid forth" in every parish church for their perusal. They were cautioned, at the same time, not to make them the subject of contention or indecent disputation, but to consult them with reverence. Upon this occasion the curates, most of whom were still attached to the Romish ritual, exhibited a coldness and indifference, which amounted almost to opposition. They read the royal

* State-papers published by Government, p. 430.
† Ibid. p. 561; Cranmer to Cromwell.

warrant so low and confusedly, that it could not be understood; and some went so far as to exhort their parishioners to neglect it, bidding them live as their fathers had done in times past, the old fashion being the best.* The people, however, knew and appreciated the value of the boon which had been bestowed. "It was wonderful," says Strype, "to see with what joy this book of God was received, not only among the more learned, and those who were noted lovers of the Reformation, but generally all over England among all the common people, and with what greediness God's Word was read, and what resort there was to the place appointed for reading it. Every one that could bought the book, and busily read it, or heard it read, and many elderly persons learnt to read it on purpose."†

Opposition of the curates.

Joyful reception of the Bible.

In this year (1539) a new edition of the Holy Scriptures appeared, generally known as Cranmer's Bible;‡ and the exertions of this excellent person for the more general diffusion of the sacred volume were eminently successful. A copy of it had already been given to the churches,—it was now to be more especially communicated to the people at large. In a letter from Cromwell to the prelates and clergy, it was required that the curates should have it openly laid forth in their own houses, so that every man, having free access to it by reading of the same, may both be more apt to understand the declaration of it at the preacher's mouth, and also the more able to teach and instruct his wife, family, and children at home. The same letter enjoins the preachers and curates to desire their flocks to read the Bible, according to the tenor of an instruction which is sent them; and, turning to this document, we find it breathing a purer spirit than might have been expected

Cranmer's Bible.

Free access required to it.

* Newcome, Bib. Tr., p. 38.

† Ibid. p. 39. Life of Cranmer, p. 69.

‡ See some letters illustrative of this subject, in State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 575, Coverdale and Grafton to Cromwell, Paris, 23d June 1538; p. 578, Coverdale and others to Cromwell, 9th August 1538; p. 589, Cranmer to Cromwell, 14th November 1538; p. 591, Grafton to Cromwell, Paris, 1st December 1538.

CHAP. VII.

Royal message to the people.

in those dark times. It contains a message from the sovereign to his good subjects, informing them that he has permitted the Bible in the English tongue to be published, that, by the reading thereof, accompanied by a true explanation of the faith, they might learn their duties to God, to the king, and to each other. It enjoins them to peruse it humbly and reverently, always having in remembrance that all contained in that book is the undoubted will, law, and commandment of Almighty God, the only means to know His goodness, our duty, and the way to serve Him according to His will; and it observes, that if at any time doubts should arise in the course of reading, as to the meaning of any part of Scripture, they should, in that case, have recourse to such learned men as were authorized to preach and declare the Scriptures, and should beware of trusting too much to their own minds, fantasies, or opinions.* Although bearing the signature of Cromwell, then lord-privy-seal, this letter was, in all probability, the work of Cranmer; and the interest he took in the measure is proved by his simple and interesting expressions of delight when it was carried into effect. "It was a day of rejoicing to me," says he, "greater than if there had been given me a thousand pounds."†

Its author.

Cause of rejoicing.

The archbishop had good reason to be happy; for the doctrines of the Reformation, although gradually progressive at this time, were much impeded by the success and subtilty of the Romish party; and the articles devised by the king, and published in 1536, for the establishment of Christian quietness in the realm, exhibited a singular mixture of Popish and Protestant tenets. Soon after these, however, another work was brought out under public authority, which, tinctured as it was by the remains of error, had a tendency to promote the Reformation. It was entitled the Institution of a

* Strype, vol. i. pp. 474, 475.

† Strype's Memorials of Cranmer, p. 58. Blunt's Sketch of the Reformation, p. 188.

Christian Man; and having been drawn up, in 1537, chiefly by the prelates, in consequence of a commission issued by the king, was familiarly termed the Bishops' Book.* At this time the Lutheran envoys, who had arrived on a mission from the Protestant princes of Germany with the idea of promoting a union with Henry, were still in the country; and the preponderance of the old opinions in this noted performance convinced them of the vanity of such expectations, and proved the increasing influence of the party now led by Gardiner, and opposed to the improvements of Cranmer. Yet, even in this, many errors were attacked, if not exploded.

The Bishop's Book.

Cromwell, who perceived that he was gradually losing ground, now determined, by a stroke of statesmanship, to recover his influence over the king, who had been a widower two years. It has been erroneously supposed that Henry evinced his love for Jane Seymour by a two years' constancy to her memory; for the king, during this interval, made several attempts to marry.† He sent a proposal to the Duchess-dowager of Milan, who facetiously replied, that, if she had two heads, one should be at the service of his majesty; whereas, having but one, she preferred to lead a single life. He next made overtures to the Duchess of Guise, whom he found already betrothed to James the Fifth of Scotland, his nephew. Disappointed in this, he entreated Francis to bring to Calais her two sisters, that he might make his choice; but the French monarch declined the coarse commission. From two letters in Cromwell's corre-

New schemes of Cromwell.

Proposals of marriage.

* In the State-papers published by Government, vol. i. pp. 555, 562, we find two letters from Bishop Fox to Cromwell, and another from Latimer, p. 563, regarding the publication of the Institution of a Christian Man. They completely refute the fact which is assumed as true by Hume, p. 342, that this treatise is to be regarded as Henry's own composition. In the same passage the historian erroneously states, that it came out in 1543, instead of 1537, the true date of its publication.

† Ellis' Letters, vol. ii. p. 121, for some curious notices in a letter of Nicholas Wotton to the king; also note, p. 123.

CHAP. VII.

Madame de Montreuil.

Proposed interview.

spondence, it may be presumed that Henry was an admirer of Madame de Montreuil, one of the ladies who accompanied Magdalen of France, the first queen of James the Fifth, to Scotland. On her return to France, in August 1538, she passed through London; and the king evinced an extraordinary anxiety to have a personal interview with her. "His grace thinketh," says Sadler in a letter to Cromwell, "that you may wondrous well take occasion honestly to stay her, after such sort as she may speak with his majesty; and his grace thinketh best, that when she shall be at Dover, his highness may take occasion, as he goeth there abroad to see his haven, to enter into her lodging, and to see her and speak with her there."* A second letter from one of his lordship's agents to that minister informs us, that the wishes of the sovereign were communicated to the lady, who was pleased to praise the "fruitfulness, fairness, and pleasantness of England, with the civility of the men."† Moreover, being right glad to follow the king's pleasure, she delayed her departure from Canterbury, where by his orders the most flattering attentions were paid her."‡ But whether a personal interview with the king took place seems uncertain.

Anne of Cleves.

At length Cromwell proposed a marriage between his master and the Princess Anne, second daughter to John, duke of Cleves, one of the princes of the Germanic Confederacy. It was confidently expected that such an alliance would neutralize, if not destroy, the power of the Popish party in England; and, although opposed by Gardiner, the vicar-general laboured so zealously to carry his point, that he at last succeeded. The interested accounts of those instructed by the minister,§ and

* State-papers published by Government, p. 581; Sadler to Cromwell.

† Ellis' Letters, vol. ii. p. 109.

‡ State-papers published by Government, vol. i. pp. 583, 584.

§ "Every man," says Cromwell in a letter to Henry (18th March 1539), "praiseth the beauty of the said lady, as well for the face as for the whole body, above all other ladies excellent.

a flattering miniature of the princess, executed by Holbein, deceived the monarch into a belief that she was extremely handsome; and it was one of his weak points, that as he advanced in years he became more enthusiastically devoted to beauty. Misled by these representations,—for Anne was really a plain woman,—the king consented to the match without having seen his bride; and when he heard that she had landed with a splendid suite at Rochester, he disguised himself, and hastened to meet her with the ardour and romantic hope of a youthful lover. The scene which followed must have been an extraordinary one: Henry despatched Sir Anthony Brown, the master of the horse, to inform the princess that he had brought her a new-year's gift if she liked to see it; and, on entering the apartment, and being shown the future queen, this knight declares he was "never so much dismayed in his life, to see the lady so far unlike what was reported."* Like a prudent courtier, however, he said nothing; and the king himself coming in, advanced to meet her. A single look, however, seems to have been enough. His majesty, to use the naïve expressions of Lord Russell, who stood beside him, was, at the first view, "mervaillesly astonied and abashed,"† and it was evident to all who were present, that hope had in a moment changed into disappointment and disgust. Yet, he so far did violence to his feelings, that he embraced and kissed her; the present, however, which he had prepared, he would not himself deliver. The interview did not last above the speaking of twenty words, and next morning he sent his gift by Sir Anthony Brown, with a cold message.

Injudicious misrepresentations.

Sir Anthony Brown's opinion of the princess.

The first meeting with the king.

Smarting under this unlooked-for reverse, Henry's first resolution was to proceed no farther; but a dread

One, among other purposes, said lately, that she excelleth as far the duchess as the golden sun excelleth the silvery moon."—State-papers published by Government, p. 605.

* Strype's Eccles. Memor., vol. ii. p. 457. † Ibid. p. 455.

CHAP. VII.

Unwilling marriage.

of the indignation of the Protestant princes of Germany compelled him to go through the ceremony of the marriage, although apparently with a very bad grace. On the evening before he was heard to lament that he had a great yoke to enter into, and bitterly bewailed the necessity of the case to Cromwell. Matters, however, grew worse after the solemnization; and within a few months he became impatient and enraged. He upbraided the vicar-general with having deceived him, described his wife as a great Flanders mare, with forbidding, coarse manners, and a clumsy person; declared that he never could take any pleasure in her society; and commanded his minister, in a peremptory tone, to invent some method by which he might be for ever separated from so unlovely a companion.

Inculpation of Cromwell.

His precarious position.

This powerful statesman, who for so long a period had possessed the confidence of the king, and ruled with an arrogant and uncontrolled authority, was now hastening to his fall. Even before the arrival of Anne, his influence had experienced a check from the Popish party, led by the Duke of Norfolk and Gardiner. Nor is it to be questioned, that the disappointment of the king, in a match which he had principally originated, must have produced a temporary alienation of esteem.

Real cause of his fall.

Yet the common opinion seems to ascribe more to this circumstance than the facts themselves support, as it is certain that after the marriage Cromwell not only continued but increased in favour. It is far more probable, that the growing strength of the Romish faction, who laboured assiduously to dispossess him of the pre-eminent station which he occupied, was the chief cause of his ruin.

Catherine Howard.

Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, aware of the power of female charms over his master, contrived that Henry should frequently meet, at his house, Catherine Howard, the beautiful niece of the Duke of Norfolk, and as had been anticipated, he soon became enamoured of her. This naturally increased his aversion to the queen, and his irritation under such bondage; whilst a theological

dispute between Gardiner and Dr Barnes, an eminent divine who was protected by Cromwell, contributed its influence against the minister. The prelate had preached a sermon at St Paul's Cross against what he esteemed the heretical tenet of justification by faith alone, and had been answered by Barnes, who defended the alleged heresy, and animadverted in severe terms upon the bishop. In those days the style of preaching partook much of the coarseness, personality, and levity, which distinguished the sermons of the Dominican friars. In the course of his argument, we learn from Fox, that he called out Stephen Gardiner by name to answer him, and alluded in a pleasant allegory to a cockfight, describing the Bishop of Winchester as one fighting-cock and himself as another; but the garden-cock, he said, lacked good spurs.*

Bishop Gardiner and Dr. Barnes.

Style of controversy.

For this offence he was summoned before the king and a commission of divines, by whose representations he was induced to sign a recantation, and commanded to deliver a discourse on the same subject on the first Sunday after Easter. He appeared accordingly in the pulpit, read his retractation, asked pardon of Gardiner, and proceeded in his sermon to repeat the very doctrines which he had abjured. Henry regarded this as an insult, and immediately committed him to the Tower, along with two of his companions, named Garret and Jerome, who had maintained the same opinions. Barnes was deeply in the confidence of Cromwell, had been frequently employed by him in secret missions to Germany, and it was naturally suspected by those who knew the king best, that the disgrace of the agent would lead to a strict inquiry into the proceedings of the principal. The divines of the old learning began to congratulate themselves on the probable fall of their great enemy, and already his two chief offices of vicar-general and keeper of the privy-seal were, by report, bestowed respectively on the Bishops of Durham and Bath.

Nominal recantation of Barnes.

Committed to the Tower.

Triumph of the Romish party.

* Fox, vol. ii. p. 1093.

CHAP. VII.

Continued influence of Cromwell.

Yet these anticipations were at least premature, and Cromwell for a short season appeared likely to triumph over his enemies. On the opening of Parliament he took his usual seat in the House of Lords, and delivered a message from the king, in which he alluded to the religious dissensions which agitated the country, declaring how much grief they occasioned to the monarch, who neither favoured the one side nor the other, but professed himself a sincere Christian, directing his steps by the pure Word of God. It distressed his majesty, he remarked, to behold the bitterness of the opposite factions, who branded each other with the appellations of heretics and papists; and these unworthy proceedings he was the less prepared to expect, after having published the Word of God amongst his people, and given it to them in their native language. To remove such great evils, and root out all errors, was, he observed, the first object of the sovereign, and for this purpose he had appointed two committees of prelates and doctors,—one to reform the tenets, the other the ceremonies of the Church; nor, said he, would there be wanting to the assistance of both, his majesty's own judgment and suffrage, which would crown the whole of their determinations.*

Message from the king.

Subserviency of parliament.

Cromwell was highly unpopular in the House of Lords; but such was the subservient hypocrisy of both Peers and Commons at this period, that they bestowed upon him extravagant praises for the eloquent and courteous manner in which he had communicated the king's intentions. Nor did his influence, when they came to the delicate subject of supplies, appear to be in any way diminished. Under the pretext of expenses incurred in the defence of the kingdom, by building forts along the seacoast and repairing the fortifications which had fallen into decay, the vicar-general obtained an enormous tax, which was forthwith levied both on

* Parliament. History, vol. iii. pp. 159, 160. Lingard, vol. vi. p. 395.

clergy and laity.* A bill was next introduced, by which a jointure was settled on the queen; and another which, dissolving the Knights Hospitallers, vested their property in the crown. As a reward for these services, he received the garter, was created Earl of Essex, and soon after promoted to the high office of lord-chamberlain.

Cromwell created Earl of Essex.

Yet Cromwell was now on the brink of ruin, and the suddenness of his fall immediately after such splendid appointments is an extraordinary circumstance in his history. Confident in the favour of the king, and arrogant in the exercise of a despotic and undefined authority, he treated the clergy and the nobility with equal haughtiness. The Bishop of Chichester and Dr Wilson were committed by him to the Tower, on a charge of releasing prisoners who had been confined for refusing the oath of supremacy; and even the Duke of Norfolk, his principal rival, was threatened with the royal displeasure. To the last hour, it is singular that he seems to have had no suspicion of the dangerous precipice on which he stood. On the 10th of June, he took his seat in the House of Lords with the same steady countenance and high demeanour which had always distinguished him: in the evening, he was arrested at the council-board by the duke just named, on a charge of high treason, and instantly sent to the Tower. He had himself been the contriver of that iniquitous statute which introduced attainder without trial, and he now became its victim. His papers were seized; and, out of the materials they furnished, a series of charges were brought forward, upon which it is now impossible to decide, as the principal evidence has been suppressed. It was said, that in his capacity of prime-minister he had received bribes, and encroached upon the royal authority; as vicar-general, he was accused of entertaining heretical notions; and to bring up his offences to

His confidence and arrogance.

Arrested for high treason

Suppression of evidence.

* It consisted of four-tenths and fifteenths, besides ten per cent. on their income from lands, and five per cent. on their goods from the laity; and from the clergy a grant of two-tenths, and twenty per cent. on their incomes for two years.

CHAP. VII.

Grounds of the charge of treason.

the level of treason, it was alleged that he had, at the distance of two years, in the course of a private conversation on the new opinions, drawn out his dagger, and declared that he would maintain the cause of the Reformation, sword in hand, were it necessary, against the king himself.* It was impossible for any man who held such various offices, and who busied himself so much in public affairs, to avoid all mistakes, or to be able to withstand an inquisition into his whole life, conducted by those who hated his person and were quite unscrupulous as to the means which they employed.

Circumstances concurring against him.

Their hands, too, were strengthened at this moment by a discovery which Henry made of the insincerity of Francis; in consequence of which, he threw himself into the arms of the emperor, and thereby became more attached to the Romish party. All this weighed heavily against Cromwell, who now showed himself as abject in his adversity as he had been proud and intolerant in his days of power. He sent a letter to the king from his prison, which he concluded in the following terms:—"Written at the Tower, with the heavy heart and trembling hand of your highness' most miserable prisoner and poor slave. Most gracious prince, I cry for mercy, mercy, mercy."† In another supplicating epistle, he entered more minutely into the charge made against him; but the appeals of this unhappy man, who had fallen at last into the toils of his enemies, were not successful. On one occasion, indeed, the king seemed disposed to relent; and having ordered a letter, which was brought by Sir Ralph Sadler, to be read thrice over, appeared much moved. But the influence of Norfolk and the attractions of Catherine Howard, whom he had now resolved to marry, checked all feelings of compassion; and a bill of attainder being brought into Parliament, was hurried through the House of Lords with a rapidity which seemed to dread the return of milder emotions in the royal bosom.

Abject petition for mercy.

Adverse influence.

* Carte, vol. iii. p. 157.

† Biographia Britannica, Art. Cromwell, vol. iii. p. 1536.

CHAP. VII.

Of all the summer-friends of this once powerful minister, Cranmer was the only one who did not desert him. The archbishop addressed an urgent letter to the king, in which he warmly interceded for his former associate, and commended him as such a servant in wisdom, diligence, faithfulness, and experience, as no former monarch in England had ever possessed.* This appeal was also fruitless. Cromwell was denied the benefit of a trial by his peers; the bill, after some little delay, passed the Commons; sentence of death was instantly pronounced upon him as a traitor; and on the 28th of July 1540 he was executed on Tower-hill.

Fidelity of Cranmer.

Sentence and execution of Cromwell.

Amid the bitter attacks of the Popish, and the extravagant eulogies of the Protestant parties, it is difficult to discover the true character of this great minister. In the pages of the one he is described as an extortioner who trampled upon every principle of justice, and an unbeliever who derided every creed; by the other we might be misled into the idea that so pure and excellent a person was rarely to be met with in this world. It is evident that in neither of these descriptions, coloured as they are by the prejudices of their authors, are we to look for the truth. Uncommon natural abilities, indefatigable application, a profound knowledge of men's weak parts, caution in concealing and craft in accomplishing his purposes, a devotedness to the will of his sovereign, and an occasional indifference as to the means he employed to gratify it, are views of his character which admit of no question. Some writers have extolled the moderation which was exhibited by a man who was raised from the lowest origin to the exercise of an almost uncontrollable power; but the research of an ingenious writer has demonstrated the fallacy of such an opinion. Although a principal mover in that great religious revolution, which partially restored truth and liberty to his country, his own theological opinions have been made matter of dispute; and, could we trust to the

Contradictory accounts of him.

His true character

* Ellis' Letters, vol. ii. p. 163. Second Series.

CHAP. VII.

Uncertain theological opinions.

authenticity of the speech which he is said to have delivered on the scaffold, it might be doubted whether, after all, he did not die in the faith of the Romish Church. It appears that he was in the practice of drawing up short notes, or "Remembrances to guide his memory when he attended the king or the council." Some of these have been preserved, and they exhibit him as equally tyrannical and unjust, despising the authority of the law, and unscrupulous in the use of the torture.* Yet he was the author of one truly valuable improvement,—the institution of parish-registers; and his services in the Reformation, although the motives may be questioned, are never to be forgotten. He was a friend of the virtuous Cranmer, a patron of some of the holiest and most learned divines of his time, and so munificent in his charities, that two hundred persons were served twice a-day with bread and meat at the gate of his house.

Unscrupulous conduct.

New scheme of divorce.

The king was now deeply enamoured of Catherine Howard, and earnestly intent on procuring a divorce from the queen. Nor was it long before this was accomplished, where an absolute monarch and unscrupulous ministers united their efforts to discover the means. A former contract of marriage between Anne of Cleves and the young Prince of Lorraine was made the pretext for raising a doubt as to the validity of their union. Parliament having met, presented an address to their sovereign, requiring him to investigate the subject; a commission was issued, ordering the case to be tried in convocation; witnesses were examined; and on the 9th of July it was unanimously decided in that ecclesiastical court, that the matrimonial alliance was null, he having married the princess against his will, without the inward consent of his mind, and there having been a pre-contract between her and another person.† This sentence was immediately communicated to the lady, who, by her

Its easy accomplishment.

* Ellis' Letters, vol. ii. Second Series. Notes on pp. 117, 125, 160, for an interesting view of the character of Cromwell.

† Wilkins' Concilia, vol. iii. p. 851.

ready and humble acquiescence, appears to have considered the issue rather as an escape than a subject for resentment. She sent back to the king the ring with which he had wedded her, received joyfully her own domestic servants instead of those who had formed her household as queen, and declared her entire satisfaction with every thing which had taken place.* Henry assured her, that he would by letters-patent declare her his adopted sister, that he would settle on her an annual pension of £3000, and leave it in her choice either to retire to the Continent or inhabit the palace of Richmond. She cheerfully agreed, and expressed her resolution to reside in England; his majesty's goodness to her was even made the subject of a letter to her brother; and on the 12th of July a bill was brought into Parliament by which the marriage was solemnly annulled, and both the parties permitted to enter into wedlock again at their pleasure. The monarch lost no time in availing himself of his recovered liberty; and having privately espoused Catherine Howard, he, on the 8th of August, acknowledged her in public as his queen.

Ready acquiescence of Anne of Cleves.

Requital of her compliance.

A few days after the execution of Cromwell, the people were called to witness a spectacle of a similar kind, which awakened a more deep and general sympathy. Henry, as he advanced in years, became jealous of the slightest question relative to his supremacy, and on this account the situation of all conscientious adherents of the Romish Church was painful and precarious; but since the publication of the Six Articles he had been equally an object of dread to the Reformers, from the rigorous observance which he insisted should be paid to their contents by every individual in his dominions. It was his delight to hold the balance with a strict and cruel hand between the two parties; and the same day which beheld a Catholic seized and imprisoned

Executions.

* State-papers published by Government, pp. 637, 638; Anne of Cleves to Henry, 11th July 1540. 644, 645, Declaration of the Duke of Suffolk and others, touching certain proceedings with the Lady Anne of Cleves.

CHAP. VII.

Catholic and Protestant victims.

for denying the supremacy, witnessed a Reformer subjected to the same severities for denying the real presence, or questioning the utility of auricular confession. During the sitting of Parliament, three persons, named Abel, Powel, and Featherstone, had been attainted for a denial of the supremacy; whilst three others, Barnes, Garret, and Jerome, were condemned for the dissemination of heretical opinions. To exhibit his impartiality as Head of the Church, the king commanded them to be placed together in pairs, Catholic and Lutheran on the same hurdle, and thus dragged from the Tower to Smithfield, where the assertors of the Papal authority were hanged as traitors, and their companions consumed at the stake as heretics.* It would be unprofitable to describe minutely all those disgusting executions for offences of the same nature, which occurred during the remainder of this reign. It may be sufficient merely to state, that ten Protestants and fourteen Catholics were, in the space of four years, sacrificed to the sanguinary temper of a monarch, whose heart seemed steeled against every touch of pity.

Execution at Smithfield.

Ascendancy of the Romish party.

Notwithstanding this apparent impartiality in those paroxysms of cruelty which now became so frequent, the Romish party gained a complete ascendency in the council. Its leader was Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, who, having been the principal instrument in the ruin of Cromwell, now occupied his place in the confidence of Henry. This prelate had been employed in the household of Wolsey along with the vicar-general, but both were too able and ambitious to remain friends; and although the bishop, by the prominent part which he took in the king's divorce and the establishment of the supremacy, appeared likely to become a reformer, it was soon discovered that upon every other point he was attached to the ancient faith. His character, however, did the cause little credit, although his abilities upon many occasions defeated the measures of better men, and

Bishop of Winchester.

* Godwin, pp. 177, 178.

prolonged the reign of error. His natural parts, which were by no means contemptible, had been improved by a classical education, and subsequently sharpened in the study of the civil law, and the Machiavelian school of negotiation in Italy. Reserved, crafty, and impenetrable in his purposes, he was at the same time bold in their execution, and unsparing in his vengeance. Proud and impatient of any rivalry in power, he made himself feared and hated by all who had the misfortune to act along with him; whilst he possessed so much dissimulation in the management of state intrigue, and could work with so much darkness and skilfulness upon the fears or interests of others, that Henry described him well when he declared to Sir Anthony Brown, "that none could rule or use Gardiner but his royal self; so troublesome was his nature, and so sure was he to cumber all with whom he was associated."* The king, however, felt his vanity gratified by the idea of employing as his chief minister the man whom all suspected or dreaded, whilst the latter submitted, dissembled, or flattered, for the sake of supporting a power which he could not otherwise have attained.

Character of Gardiner.

His estimation by the king.

A rebellion not long after this broke out in Yorkshire, which originated probably in the discontent of the Catholic party, and the encouragement they received from the Court of Rome acting through Cardinal Pole. Such at least appears to have been the opinion of the king, who, having succeeded in its speedy suppression, determined to make an example of its authors. Fourteen of the principal leaders were executed, and the aged Countess of Salisbury, who for two years had been imprisoned in the Tower, was, with a severity which would have been extraordinary under any other reign, condemned to die for the supposed offences of her son. She was the last lineal descendant of the Plantagenets; and, although past seventy years of age, possessed a

Rebellion in Yorkshire.

Countess of Salisbury.

* Life of Archbishop Ridley, p. 183. Fox's Acts and Monuments, vol. ii. p. 647. British Biography vol. ii. p. 223.

CHAP. VII.

Proceedings at her execution.

masculine courage and spirit which were worthy of that race. On being desired to lay her neck on the block, she refused, declaring that it belonged to traitors to do so, and bidding the executioner take her life as he best could. Thus dared in the performance of his office, a horrid scene occurred: the countess moved swiftly round the scaffold, tossing her head from one side to the other, and avoiding the blows which were aimed at her; nor

Horrible scene.

was the appalling spectacle concluded till her grey locks which streamed over her shoulders were covered with blood. Are we to wonder that her celebrated son should have lashed with the keenest invectives the memory of the tyrant by whom she was sacrificed? Not a month now passed without being stained with gore, shed either by the sword or at the stake, so that the history of the times becomes little else than a chronicle of executions.

Relations with Scotland.

For a considerable period the relations between Henry and his nephew, the Scottish king, had been of an amicable nature. Many attempts, indeed, were made by England during the minority of James the Fifth, to obtain an ascendency in his councils, and induce him to imitate the example of his uncle, by seizing the property of the Church and introducing a reformation; but,

James V.

detecting their object, he remained steady in his attachment to the Romish faith, although not indisposed to watch rigorously over the conduct of his clergy. At this moment Henry's earnest desire was to prevail upon his young relation to join him in assuming the ecclesiastical supremacy over his own Church. To accomplish

Attempted ecclesiastical changes

this, he despatched Sir Ralph Sadler, an able and unscrupulous politician, on a mission to Scotland, and by his efforts James at last consented to hold a conference with his kinsman at York.* Cardinal Beaton, however,

* MS. in the State-paper Office. Copy of articles delivered by the Bishops of Aberdeen and Orkney, and Mr Thomas Ballendean, the Scottish ambassador, to the privy-council, by which they agreed that the King of Scotland should certainly meet the king at York on 15th January next (1541). It appears, that immediately on the meeting at York being evaded Henry took measures for war.—Letter from the English privy-council (April 28, 1542), State-paper Office. Also Sir T. Wriothesly to Sir Richard Bowes, July 28, 1542

to whom the chief management in state-affairs was intrusted by the Scottish prince, opposed this projected interview with all the influence of his rank and talent, and prevailed upon his master, on some frivolous pretext, to break his appointment,—a deep affront to so proud a monarch, especially as he had proceeded to York, and impatiently expected his nephew. The consequences were fatal to Scotland,—a kingdom torn with internal dissensions, divided by religious disputes, and whose nobility, jealous of the power of the crown, were intent only on securing their own independence. War was declared by Henry, who, on this occasion, foolishly revived the exploded claim of superiority as Lord Paramount;* and the Duke of Norfolk invaded the country at the head of a powerful army. In vain did James attempt to inspire his barons with the determined spirit of resistance by which he was himself animated. They obeyed, indeed, his feudal summons to muster their vassals and meet him in the field; but treachery had entered the camp, the principal leaders were in the interests of England, and when a favourable opportunity occurred for attacking Norfolk in his retreat, they disgraced themselves by refusing to advance against the enemy.† This affront sunk deep into the spirit of a prince who possessed a keen sense of honour; and a defeat, which his army soon after sustained at Solway Moss, so completely overwhelmed him with shame and despair, that he never held up his head again, but sunk into a low fever, which carried him speedily to the

Cardinal Beaton's unwise policy.

War with Scotland

Treachery of the Scottish nobles.

* Instructions (State-paper Office) from the Earl of Rutland to the Archbishop of York, directing him to institute a search into the ancient records and muniments, so as to ascertain his majesty's title to the kingdom of Scotland.

† Letter of John Carr to my Lord of Norfolk, 1st November 1542; MS. State-paper Office:—"Pleaseth your Grace, the King of Scotlande the last day of October was at Lauder, and the lordes 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 disparcled."—Carr was evidently a Scottish spy of Norfolk's. Tytler's History of Scotland, vol. v. pp. 297, 298.

CHAP. VII.

Death of James V.

grave. He left the kingdom to his daughter Mary, an infant only eight days old; and Henry immediately embraced the project of procuring a marriage between her and his son, the Prince of Wales,—a measure against which, had it been wisely and temperately pursued, no plausible argument could be maintained.*

Infidelity of Catherine Howard.

In the mean time a heavy calamity had fallen upon the English monarch, in the sudden discovery of the infidelity of that beautiful woman who was now his fifth queen. The story is too painful and revolting to be minutely detailed; but it appears, that for a year after his union with Catherine Howard nothing could surpass his matrimonial contentment. In his late progress into Yorkshire she had accompanied him; and when he had received the sacrament, he requested the Bishop of Lincoln to unite with him in thanksgiving for the happiness which he found in her society. On his return, Cranmer, whose perverse fate seemed formed to embroil him with queens, requested a private audience, and presented a paper to him, which revealed the dreadful secret. It stated that a servant of the old Duchess of Norfolk, who brought up the Lady Catherine, had asserted that she was utterly unworthy of the rank which she held, having before her marriage led an abandoned life; it specified her paramours; alleged that one of them, Francis Derham, a relation of her own,† who was in Ireland at the time of her marriage, had been again sent for, and was now in her retinue; and it asserted that an examination of the others, named Mannock and Culpepper, would lead to the detection of the most shameless proceedings.

Cranmer's disclosure of the secret.

Incredulity of Henry.

The king at first imagined that the whole tale was forged, and he determined to inquire into it with such secrecy as should preserve the queen, were she innocent,

* Instructions to Sir George Douglas, MS. in the State-paper Office, May 1543. Tytler's History of Scotland, vol. v. p. 307.

† This fact, which is new, appears from a letter of the Earl of Southampton and Wriothesly to Sadler, dated 21st December 1541; State-papers published by Government, p. 722.

from all scandal. But the examination of the principal delinquents at once established the story. They admitted the facts; and it appeared that Lady Rochford had been a chief accomplice in bringing the queen and Culpepper together. It may perhaps be recollected, that the evidence of this profligate woman had weighed heavily against Anne Boleyn and her own husband, Lord Rochford, whom she brought to the scaffold; and the discovery of her shameless character now threw the strongest suspicion upon the truth of her former allegations. When the result of the investigation was communicated to Henry, he was deeply affected, and unable to utter a syllable till relieved by tears.* After a while he so far recovered himself as to appoint Cranmer, with the chancellor and the Duke of Norfolk, to examine her majesty, who, after a vain denial, discovering that her practices were completely brought to light, acknowledged the truth of the charges, and signed a written confession of her crimes.

Evidence of the facts.

Deep feeling of the king.

From a letter which has been lately published, it appears that Henry employed Cranmer to obtain from the queen a complete disclosure of her guilt, under an express promise, that although her life had been forfeited by the law, the king had determined to extend unto her his "most gracious mercy." This communication was accordingly made by the archbishop to the unhappy woman, who received it with deep thankfulness. "Alas, my lord!" said she, "that I am alive: the fear of death grieved me not so much before, as doth now the remembrance of the king's goodness; for when I remember how gracious and loving a prince I have I cannot but sorrow; but this sudden mercy, and more than I could have looked for, showed unto me so unworthy at this time, maketh mine offences to appear before mine eyes much more heinous than they did before; and the more that I consider the greatness of his mercy, the more I do

Promise of royal pardon.

Reply of the queen.

* Carte, vol. iii. pp. 162, 163.

CHAP. VII.

sorrow in my heart that I should so misorder myself against his majesty."*

Object aimed at by Henry.

One object contemplated by Henry in thus promising her life to the queen, was to obtain full information from her own lips regarding an alleged pre-contract of marriage between her and Derham. Could this have been made out, his own marriage with her would have been found invalid; and she never having been his queen, could not be liable to a charge of treason. She accordingly imparted to Cranmer all that had passed between her and Derham upon the subject of their intended marriage; and this, under the circumstances that afterwards occurred, the archbishop thought enough to establish a pre-contract. These particulars, which are new in the domestic history of this monarch, although they do not in any degree exculpate the queen, place Cranmer and his sovereign in a situation that requires explanation. The promise of mercy and of life, once solemnly given, ought to have been sacredly kept; yet, on the 16th January, Catherine Howard was attainted in Parliament of high treason, and on the 13th of February, she and her accomplice, Lady Rochford, were executed within the Tower.† Familiarized as were the people with blood, it was not without some feelings of national abasement that they beheld another queen ignominiously led to the scaffold. Derham and Culpepper had been hanged some time before. Mannock, with many others whose crime lay in the concealment of the transactions, were indulged with a pardon.

Catherine's contract with Derham.

Her execution.

Foreign relations.

The death of the King of Scotland, and the duplicity with which England had been treated by Francis,

* In State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 689, will be found this interesting letter of Cranmer to Henry, giving a description of his interview with the queen, and her confession of her guilt.

† In Ellis' Letters, vol. ii. p. 128, will be found a curious letter, dated 15th February 1541-2, written by an eye-witness of the execution of the queen and Lady Rochford.

occasioned a revolution in the politics of Henry, which demands our attention. He determined upon a war with that monarch, entered into a league with his late enemy, the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and resolved that the intended marriage between his son, the Prince of Wales, and the infant Queen of Scots, should be instantly carried into effect. This design, had it been as honestly pursued as it was wisely conceived, might have proved a blessing to both countries; but, under the specious proposal, the king concealed two ulterior projects, which, on being discovered, completely defeated the end in view. The first was a plot carried on through Sir George Douglas, and his brother the Earl of Angus, who had long been exiles in England, by which, immediately after the marriage, he was to be declared Governor of Scotland, and that realm incorporated with England; the second was the introduction of such a religious reformation into the former country as he had achieved in his own. By the first, he instantly raised against him the great body of Mary's subjects; so that, as Sir Ralph Sadler expressed it, the Scots declared the very stones would rise and rebel against it. By the second, he incurred the enmity of that strong and influential party which favoured the ancient religion, at the head of which was Cardinal Beaton, the archbishop of St Andrews, a man of unscrupulous principles, but of no mean abilities as a politician.

War with France resolved on.

Plot against Scotland.

Determined enmity of the Scots.

This potent prelate, immediately after the death of the king, his master, exhibited a will which bore the royal signature, and appointed himself, with three other noblemen, to be regents during the minority of the princess. The Parliament, however, disregarding this deed, which was alleged to be a forged instrument, intrusted the government to the Earl of Arran, the nearest heir to the crown, a man of a weak and vacillating character, who at first appeared much inclined to favour the project of Henry, but afterwards threw his whole interest into the faction of the cardinal. In the mean

Cardinal Beaton.

Earl of Arran appointed regent.

CHAP. VII.

Partial success of Henry.

time, the ambitious monarch was so far successful, that a treaty of marriage and alliance was carried in the Scottish Parliament, the utmost precaution being taken that his designs against the independence of the country should be concealed from all,* except those who were in his pay. Such were the Earls of Angus, Cassillis, Glencairn, Maxwell, Sir George Douglas, Crichton of Brunston, and many others. On the side of Beaton were found some of the most powerful of the nobility and gentry,—the Earls of Argyle, Huntly, and Athole, the Catholic clergy, and the whole body of the common people. These naturally looked for their chief support from France; when the English sovereign, irritated at the countenance and assistance which they received, precipitated a declaration of war against that kingdom, and determined to invade it in person. Nor did this content him. The governor Arran, having been gained over by the cardinal, refused to fulfil the conditions of the late treaty; the Earl of Angus, with the other nobles upon whose cordial co-operation Henry had securely rested, deserted their engagements;† and in the vain expectation that he could compel the nation, at the point of the sword, to deliver up their infant queen to be forthwith united to his son, he commanded the Earl of Hertford to enter Scotland at the head of a powerful army, which sacked the capital, and carried havoc and desolation into the adjoining country. Such impolitic proceedings were attended with effects very opposite to those which were anticipated; and Beaton, profiting by the indignation excited by the invasion, was enabled to muster a formidable opposition. At the same time, jealous of the introduction of the reformed opinions, he commenced a violent persecution against all who were infected with the new doctrines, and so

Party opposed to him.

Invasion of Scotland.

Opposition to the Reformation.

* Henry's Articles with the Earl of Angus. MS. in the Hamilton MSS. vol. iv. Catalogue, p. 13. Also his "Secret Articles, subscribed by ten of the prisoners."

† Duke of Suffolk to the Council of England; MS. letter in Hamilton MSS. See Catalogue, p. 38.

effectually thwarted the designs of the enemy, that the haughty monarch, conceiving the most violent hatred against him, endeavoured to seize his person, and carry him a prisoner into England. CHAP. VII.

Meeting of the English parliament.

Whilst such was his policy towards Scotland, some important events had taken place within his own kingdom. Parliament having met at Westminster (January 1543), the state of religion, and the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures, became one of the principal subjects of consideration. Archbishop Cranmer, since the period of passing the cruel act of the Six Articles, had laboured for some mitigation of their severity; yet, although the king never withdrew his favour from the primate individually, the party of the Reformation appear to have lost ground, and their opponents, led by Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, acquired a paramount influence.

Anticipated changes.

Some anticipated that the disgrace and execution of the queen, nearly connected as she was with the most powerful Catholic family in the kingdom, would be productive of a change in the royal mind favourable to the Protestants; but the event did not fulfil their expectations. An act was brought into Parliament, of which the object was declared to be the advancement of true religion and the abolishment of the contrary. For this end, it declared that a certain formulary should be immediately published as a standard of belief; and with this view a treatise soon after appeared, by authority of the king and convocation, entitled, "A necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man."* Gardiner, who lost no opportunity of paying his court to Henry, called it the King's Book, in opposition to the Bishops' Book, which we have already noticed; and its tenets, which are far less orthodox than those contained in the latter, afford a melancholy proof that the Reformation at this period was not progressive.

The king's book.

Under the blighting auspices of the same prelate, another fatal measure was adopted. The Bible had

* Strype, vol. i. pp. 584, 587, inclusive. Blunt, pp. 190, 191.

CHAP. VII.

English Bible withdrawn.

been lately given to the people in an English translation; and now, under the pretext that Tindal's version was in many places corrupt and faulty, this precious boon was withdrawn from all under the degrees of gentlemen and gentlewomen.*

New matrimonial project.

Henry had now so far recovered the shock he received from the fate of Catherine Howard, that he began once more to think of matrimony; and, being probably somewhat cooled in his excessive admiration of youth and beauty, he espoused, for his sixth wife, the Lady

Lady Catherine Parr.

Catherine Parr, a widow of mature age. Her first husband was Neville, lord Latimer; and having received a learned education under the roof of her father, Sir Thomas Parr, she was the more likely to please a monarch who prided himself upon his scholarship. The marriage was deemed a favourable occurrence by Cranmer and his party, as it was generally known that the

Her expected influence.

queen had devoted her attention to those controversies which now occupied so much of the public mind, and had expressed herself strongly in favour of the Protestant opinions. Nor could such an increase of influence to those who earnestly laboured in the cause of the Reformation have come at a more happy time. The

Renewed persecution.

persecution under the Six Articles had been resumed at the instigation of Gardiner. Three Protestants were led to the stake at Windsor; and instead of nuptial torches, the wedding of the king had been lighted up by the flames in which those unhappy men were consumed.

Plot against Cranmer.

These and similar measures so far encouraged the Romish party, that they laid a plot to ruin Cranmer and some other eminent persons who favoured the new learning. Their chief assistants in this base scheme were certain prebendaries of the church of Canterbury, men addicted to Popery, and violent enemies to the archbishop. These persons were easily induced to draw up a series of accusations, along with a book of "articles against the primate," which, after being revised by

* Parliamentary History of England, vol. iii. p. 192.

CHAP. VII.

Gardiner, were presented to the privy-council, and so came into the king's hands. It was one of the few laudable points about this stern ruler, that he loved and admired the character of Cranmer, and on this occasion he gave him a memorable proof of his esteem. After the meeting of the privy-council, Henry called for his barge, and placing the book of articles in his bosom, rowed towards Lambeth. As he approached, the servants of the archbishop recognised him, and acquainted their master, who hastened down the steps to pay his respects to his majesty. The king desired him to come into the barge, and, beginning to discourse on the state of the Church, lamented the growth of heresy, declaring it to be his intention to find out the chief encourager of those new opinions, and make him an example to others. Cranmer applauded the resolution, but recommended caution as to the mode in which it was executed; entreating him to consider well what heresy was, and to beware of condemning those as heretics who stood for the Word of God against human inventions. "Oh, my chaplain," exclaimed the royal divine, "now I know who is the greatest heretic in Kent;" upon which he drew out the articles of accusation from his bosom, and showed them, signed by his own prebendaries, whose treachery for a moment overpowered the archbishop. Recovering himself, however, he first perused them with attention; and, kneeling to the king, earnestly requested him to grant a commission to inquire into the truth of such accusation. He acknowledged that, as to the act of the Six Articles, he remained of the same opinion as when he opposed it; but observed, that since it had passed, he had done nothing against it. The king, alluding to his marriage, then asked him if his grace's bedchamber could stand the scrutiny; to which he replied, "It could; for, although he had taken a wife previous to the act, he had sent her into Germany when it became law." Henry, then, commending his sincerity, assured him he would grant a commission for the trial, but added, that such was the confidence he

Articles against Cranmer.

Henry's visit to Lambeth.

Exhibition of the articles.

Appeal for a fair investigation.

CHAP. VII. entertained of his fidelity, that he should himself be the chief commissioner. "Nay, your grace," said the primate, "that may not be, as I am the party accused." But the king was positive, declaring, "he was sure his chaplain would not halt with him, although he were driven to accuse himself, but would speak the truth if he had offended." The result was the detection of the whole plot, and the complete unmasking of Gardiner and his assistants. It was deeply painful to so confiding a temper as that of Cranmer to find those of his own household intriguing against him. Some he was compelled to dismiss; but his leniency was so remarkable, that it became a common saying, "Do my Lord of Canterbury an ill turn, and he will be your friend as long as you live."*

Favour of the king.

Detection of Gardiner's plot.

But, although baffled in this attempt against the archbishop, his enemies soon made a more desperate effort for his destruction, in which he was once more protected from their malice by the prompt and generous interposition of the king. As the story strikingly illustrates the character of the times, and presents Henry in one of those attitudes of mercy and justice which he so rarely assumed, I need make no apology for giving it with those minute details which have been fortunately preserved by a contemporary. At the instigation of the Bishop of Winchester, the Duke of Norfolk and others of the Romish party in the privy-council repaired to his majesty, and made a formal complaint against the primate: "insisting that he, with his learned men, had so infected the whole land with their doctrine, that three parts of the people were become abominable heretics. It might prove dangerous," they said, "to the realm, being likely to produce such commotions as were sprung up in Germany; and therefore they desired that he should be committed to the Tower until he could be examined." To this the king was unwilling to accede; but they told him, "that the archbishop being one of

Renewed attempt at his ruin.

Complaint against him.

* Strype's Memor. of Cranmer, pp. 109, 121. Ridley's Life of Bishop Ridley, pp. 153, 158. British Biog., vol. ii. p. 268.

CHAP. VII.

the privy-council, no man would dare to object matters against him until he were in confinement; then indeed men would be bold to tell the truth and say their consciences." Upon this his majesty gave his consent that they should next day summon him before them, and if they saw just reason, commit him to the Tower.

The king consents to his imprisonment.

The king however had other designs in view, and about eleven o'clock, the same night, sent a messenger to the archbishop at Lambeth, desiring him to come immediately to Westminster; upon which the prelate, who was in bed, got hastily up and repaired to his majesty, whom he found in the gallery at Whitehall. Henry informed him what a bitter complaint the council had brought against him: "they had affirmed that he and his learned men had infected the whole realm with heresy; they had asserted that, as he was at liberty and a member of the privy-council, none would venture to bring against him those accusations which otherwise could easily be substantiated. I have therefore," said he, "granted their request, and given them permission to send you to the Tower; have I done well or no? what say you, my lord?" Cranmer humbly expressed his thanks to his sovereign for having given him this timely notice. He observed, "that he was very well contented to go to the Tower, since it would lead to a more impartial examination of his doctrines and actions; nor did he doubt but his majesty would see that he should have a fair hearing." The king for a moment turned his eyes full on the archbishop, as if he would read his inmost thoughts, and then smiling, cried out, "Oh, Lord God! what fond simplicity have you, thus easily and contentedly to permit yourself to be imprisoned, that every enemy of yours may take advantage against you! Do you not know that when they have you once in prison, three or four false knaves will soon be procured to witness against you, who else, now you are at liberty, would not once dare to open their lips, or appear before your face? No, not so, my lord. I have more regard for you than to permit your enemies to overthrow you

Henry's real design.

Sends for Cranmer.

Simplicity of the archbishop.

Facilities of false evidence.

CHAP. VII.

The king's directions to him.

in this manner; and therefore I will have you come to-morrow to the council, which, no doubt, will send for you. And when they break this matter, require them, that, being one of them, you may have so much favour as they would have themselves, that is, to have your accusers brought before you; and if they oppose this, and will not comply with your request, but must needs commit you to the Tower, then do you appeal from them to our person, and give to them this ring (taking it at the moment from his finger), which ring they well know I use for none other purpose but to call matters from the council into mine own hands to be ordered and determined." The king having said this, dismissed his chaplain, who thanked his majesty for his goodness, and took his leave.

Gives him his signet ring.

Summoned before the Privy Council.

Next day, at eight in the morning, a message was brought from the privy-council, requiring Cranmer to appear before them. When he arrived he was not permitted to enter, but was kept waiting, with the servants and ushers, nearly an hour at the door of the chamber, —many of the members of the council going in and out in the mean time. The archbishop's secretary, who attended him, being astonished at this rude treatment, slipt away and related the matter to Dr Butts, the king's physician, who went to the palace and told him he had seen a strange sight. "What is that?" said Henry. "Marry," said the doctor, "my Lord of Canterbury is become a lackey or a serving-man; for, to my knowledge, he hath stood among them this hour at the council-chamber door."—"Have they served my lord so?" said Henry. "It is well enough; I shall talk with them by and by." At length the archbishop was called in, when it was intimated to him, that a great complaint was made of him, both to the king and to them, that he and others had infected the realm with heresy; and therefore it was the royal pleasure that they should commit him to the Tower, in order that he might be examined and brought to his trial.

Report of his treatment to the king.

Cranmer called in.

The primate, in reply, offered many reasons to induce

them to call his accusers before him in that place and at that moment; and, on being confronted with them, to suffer him to defend himself against their charges, before they should proceed to any farther extremities. But all was in vain; and he was told in a peremptory manner that he must go to the Tower. "Then," said Cranmer, "I am sorry, my lords, that you drive me to the necessity of appealing from you to his majesty, who, by this token," showing them the ring, "hath resumed this matter into his own hand, and dischargeth you thereof."

Reasoning with the Privy Council.

The sight of the king's signet, and the suddenness of its appearance, appalled the council. Lord Russell swore a great oath, and, turning upon them, exclaimed, "Did not I tell you, my lords, what would surely come of this matter? I knew right well the king would never permit my Lord of Canterbury to have such a blemish as to be imprisoned, unless it were for high treason." The councillors, however, having received the ring, were compelled instantly to repair to Henry; and it may easily be imagined that he received them with no very placid countenance. "Ah, my lords!" said he, "I thought I had had a discreet and wise council; but now I perceive that I am deceived. In what an unworthy manner have you treated my Lord of Canterbury? Have you not used him like a slave, by shutting him out of the council-chamber among serving-men? Would ye be so handled yourselves?" After other words to this effect, the king, raising his voice, spoke thus:—"I would have you all know, that I esteem my Lord of Canterbury to be as faithful a man towards me as any prelate in this realm ever was; and one," added his majesty, laying his hand upon his heart, "to whom I am many ways beholden by the faith I owe unto God; and, therefore, whosoever loveth me will, upon that account, regard him." Upon this his submissive auditors retired, and Cranmer, during the remainder of this reign, escaped from any further attacks.*

Disappointment of the Council.

The king's reception of them.

Declaration of confidence in Cranmer.

* Strype, Memor. of Archbishop Cranmer, p. 124-126. Fox's Acts and Monuments, vol. iii. p. 158. Brit. Biog., vol. ii. p. 269-272.

CHAP. VII.

Disclosure of the system of false accusation.

Perhaps the most remarkable part of this beautiful story is the picture it contains, drawn by the hand of the king himself, of the shocking manner in which the most innocent men were often sacrificed to false accusations,—shut up from every opportunity of confronting the evidence brought against them, and liberated from the Tower only to be led to the scaffold! Happy was it for Cranmer that, on this occasion, his master's feelings towards him were providentially turned into the unusual current of justice and mercy. But what opinion are we to form of the general character of a monarch who was thus familiar with the base prostitution of the law, and, when his own passions were to be gratified, not only permitted, but commanded it?

Revived martial spirit.

The late successes in Scotland appear to have revived a martial spirit in Henry, who entered into a league with the emperor, and determined once more to invade France in person. It was the fate of this prince to be perpetually deceived by his allies; and in the present case, Charles, having by the war acquired every thing he desired, as soon as it suited his own purposes, concluded a separate treaty with the French king at Crespy (19th September 1544), in which he made no scruple of violating his engagements to England. This conduct, on the part of his great ally, opened his eyes to the folly of a continental war; and after a series of successes and discomfitures, which left the balance of military glory equally poised between the two countries, he was content to restore Boulogne to France, and, receiving two millions as an equivalent, to sign a peace.*

Faithlessness of the emperor.

War with Scotland.

He could now direct his undivided efforts to his war with Scotland,—a contest in which his imperious, vindictive temper, and his impatience of the slightest opposition to his wishes, was manifested in a more striking manner, than in any of his former enterprises. He had secured to himself, immediately after the death of his nephew, the co-operation of Angus, Glencairn, Cassillis,

* Rymer, Fœdera, vol. xv. p. 93.

CHAP. VII.

and many others who were attached to the principles of the Reformation. These persons were not only anxious to promote a marriage between the Prince of Wales and their young queen, but in the prosecution of their enmity against France and their attacks upon the Catholics, they were prepared to sacrifice their country as a separate kingdom; and had Henry been less hasty and impetuous; had he, according to the earnest entreaty of Sir George Douglas, who was one of his principal agents, abstained from hostilities, and endeavoured to conciliate rather than to exasperate the people, the consequences might have been calamitous to their independence. But the cruel expedition of Hertford, the insolent demands of his master regarding the delivery of the princess, and the discovery of the base and venal conduct of many of the nobles, who were pensioned by England, revived in the nation all the feelings of ancient animosity to the sister kingdom, and so effectually strengthened the party of Cardinal Beaton, that they succeeded in attaching the Regent Arran to their interest, and possessing themselves of the supreme power in the government. At the same time, this ambitious churchman, who had received from the Pope the dignity of *legate à latere*, commenced a violent persecution against the Reformers, and was in return regarded by them with feelings of deep and bitter animosity. Repeated proposals for the seizure, and even for the assassination of the cardinal, were made to Henry by some of the leaders of the Protestant party; and these intentions were abandoned for the time, not because he did not approve of getting rid of his enemy even by the most questionable means, but because he would not agree to the terms stipulated by the conspirators.*

Faithless nobles.

Excessive haste of Henry.

Cardinal Beaton's party.

The cruelty and intolerance of Beaton at last precipitated his fate. He had seized George Wishart, a man of eminent piety, who having imbibed the reformed opinions abroad, had returned to his native country with

George Wishart.

* Tytler's History of Scotland, vol. v. pp. 425, 426.

CHAP. VII.

His seizure and condemnation.

the determination to preach the truth. After having employed himself assiduously for more than two years in a successful attack upon the superstitions of the Romish clergy, and in expounding to the people the doctrines of the Gospel, he at length fell into the hands of his mortal enemy the cardinal, who, contrary to the remonstrances of the governor, arraigned him as a heretic, and condemned him to the flames.

Effect of Wishart's execution.

This barbarous sentence was carried into instant execution; but it proved fatal to the proud churchman. Wishart was a gentleman of ancient family, well connected, and much beloved by the leaders of the Protestant party. Beaton had already made himself unpopular by his excessive arrogance and ambition; the profligacy of his private life rendered him disreputable in the eyes of the people; and the cruel execution of the reformer not only excited indignation, but prompted a desire of revenge. Some of those daring and unscrupulous men, who had already proposed his assassination, now renewed the conspiracy against him; they were joined by others,

Assassination of Beaton.

who acted from a fanatical persuasion that it was justifiable to remove by any means so determined an enemy of the truth; and there seems the strongest ground for believing that they were encouraged by the King of England. On the morning of the 29th of May 1545, they seized the Castle of St Andrews, in which the legate had deemed himself secure; and, bursting into his bedchamber, which he had vainly attempted to barricade against them, murdered him in a manner as barbarous as it was deliberate. They immediately opened a correspondence with Henry, offered to hold the castle for his behoof, and received from him assurances of assistance and support.*

Habits and temper of Henry.

This monarch, from the natural habit of his body, increased by a devotion to the pleasures of the table, had now grown extremely unwieldy and corpulent; his temper, at all times headstrong, had become of late un-

* Tytler's History of Scotland, vol. v. pp. 429, 469.

usually fierce; and the utmost care in those who attended him was frequently unsuccessful in preventing the most frightful paroxysms of resentment and fury. His jealousy of any encroachments upon his supremacy, or any deviations from that standard of religious doctrine which he had laid down, was excessive; and Gardiner, with the men of the ancient learning, profited by this disposition to renew the persecutions under the act of the Six Articles, and to oppose every attempt which was made by the zeal of Cranmer to proceed in the Reformation.

Paroxysms of Henry.

On one occasion the queen herself made a narrow escape. Catherine, who was attached to the new principles, had been at first encouraged by the king to communicate her opinion upon religious subjects; and she would sometimes exert her influence with her lord in pleading the cause of the oppressed, and attempting to mitigate the severity of persecution. Hitherto he had taken this in good part; but when confined to his chamber, and rendered irritable by constant pain from ulcers in his limbs, her prudence in continuing such polemical discussions may be justly doubted. She, however, had the honesty or the temerity to persevere; and, on one occasion, finding Gardiner with the sick monarch, ventured not only to differ from him in opinion, but to urge her husband to perfect the work he had begun. When she retired, he could not conceal his dissatisfaction. "A good hearing it is," said he, "when women become such clerks, and a thing much to my comfort, to come in mine old age to be taught by my wife."

Critical position of the queen.

Her imprudent zeal.

This opportunity the craft of Gardiner failed not to improve. He extolled Henry's great learning and profound acquaintance with divinity, and wondered that any should be found who had the rashness to question his judgment in such matters. He observed, that those who acted thus would not scruple to oppose him in deeds as well as words; and aggravated the royal displeasure by insinuating, that he could make great discov-

Craft of Gardiner.

CHAP. VII.

eries against the queen, if he were not deterred by the power of her faction, and a regard for his own safety.

Articles of accusation against the queen.

By such representations Henry was so far moved that he permitted articles of accusation to be prepared against his consort, and actually signed them with his own hand, previous to the intended impeachment. It was resolved also to arrest some of her female relatives, and to bring them to trial on the statute of the Six Articles. The day and even the hour in which she was to be seized had been determined on; but Wriothesly, the chancellor, who had engaged in the plot with Gardiner, accidentally dropt the bill of articles which had received the royal signature. It was fortunately found by one of her friends, and carried to her immediately; she perused the contents, saw the king's hand at the bottom of the paper, and, giving herself up for lost, fell into a dangerous sickness. It was apparent to Wendy, her physician, that her malady was in the mind; and his majesty, whose sympathy began to be awakened, not only visited her, but showed much kindness, and, in conversation with the medical attendant, let out the secret of the designs contemplated against her.

Fortunate chance.

Prudent physician.

Happily for his royal patient, the physician was a man of sense as well as skill; and he instructed the queen in the most prudent way of effecting a reconciliation. When somewhat recovered, she went to wait upon the king, who received her kindly, and soon turned the discourse upon religion. To his surprise, Catherine avoided the discussion, and began to talk in a submissive manner of the subjection which, as a woman, she owed, in that as well as in all other points, to her lord, and the happiness she enjoyed in having so learned a prince for her instructor. "Not so, by St Mary!" said Henry; "you are become a doctor, Kate, more fitted to instruct us than receive our instructions." But here, too, the queen was ready. She replied, "his majesty had much mistaken the freedom she had taken to argue with him; her object was to engage him in discourse,

Policy of the queen.

Reconciliation.

to divert his attention from his disorder, and thereby alleviate his pain; whilst, at the same time, she received profit by his majesty's learned expositions."—"And is it so, sweetheart?" said the king; "then are we perfect friends again." Upon which he embraced her, expressed the utmost satisfaction at this explanation, and dismissed her with assurances of his love.

Enmity of Wriothesly and Gardiner.

Meanwhile her enemies, Wriothesly and Gardiner, were unacquainted with this reconciliation. The very day which succeeded it had been appointed for carrying her to the Tower; the weather was fine, and Henry having gone to take the air in the garden, sent for his spouse, who immediately joined him. During this interview, and whilst engaged in conversation, the hour appointed for the arrest arrived, and the chancellor entered the garden, with forty of the guard, to seize the queen. The king, who knew his errand, stept aside with him, and, after some little discourse, was heard to call him knave, arrant knave, fool, and beast,—bidding him instantly avaunt out of his sight. Catherine, unaware of his enmity to her, endeavoured to pacify the monarch, and earnestly interceded for the chancellor. But Henry, repeating his invectives against Wriothesly, only smiled at her ignorance. "Ah! poor soul," said he, "thou little knowest how ill he deserves this grace at thy hand. On my word, sweetheart, he hath been to thee an arrant knave; and so let him go." After this the king never could endure the sight of Gardiner, who laboured in every way, but in vain, to recover the confidence which had been deservedly withdrawn; yet we are told that the prelate continued to shuffle himself in among the councillors, and proceed with them to the ante-chamber, waiting till they had concluded their labours, and then go down again, thus preserving the appearance of retaining a share in the public business.*

Henry's reception of the chancellor

Gardiner's disgrace.

* In State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 883, is preserved a letter from Gardiner to Henry, dated 2d December 1546, in which he apologizes for his conduct, and requests forgive-

CHAP. VII.

Dark period of the reign.

It would have been pleasing could we have dwelt upon this escape made by the queen as one of the last transactions which illustrate the personal character of this monarch. But, short and dark as was the period of life now allotted him, it was to be lighted up by the flames of martyrs, and stained by the blood of the noblest and the most accomplished of his victims. About this

Anne Askew.

time Mrs Anne Askew, a lady of ancient family, remarkable accomplishments, and great beauty, had embraced the reformed opinions. Her chief offence appears to have been a denial of transubstantiation; upon which point she was repeatedly brought before the council. Of her examinations, on these occasions, she has herself left a pathetic and interesting account, which has been preserved by Fox, and presents a picture of religious persecution which it is impossible to read without horror. On finding her fixed in the resolution to maintain her belief, the next object of the inquisitors was to discover her accomplices, as the king had been informed she could name, if she were willing, a great number of her sect. Strong suspicions were even entertained that she was secretly encouraged by some of the privy-council; this,

Torture.

however, she positively denied; upon which Gardiner and Wriothesly, the lord-chancellor, ordered Knevet, the lieutenant of the Tower, to put her on the rack. She was then let down into the lower dungeon, where she beheld that dreadful instrument, and the gaoler standing beside it, his sleeves tucked up, and ready for his office. Still, her courage was unshaken; and the

Relenting of Knevet.

lieutenant, although compelled by his office to obey, was anxious to spare her the extremity of the torture. He commanded the gaoler to stretch her on the iron platform, but only to "pinch" her; after which, being about to take her down, he was reprimanded by Wriothesly, and ordered to proceed. This he refused, although threatened with the royal displeasure; upon

---

ness in some matter not clearly described. See also Gardiner to Paget, State-papers, p. 884.

which the other threw off his gown, and drew the rack himself, till her bones and joints were almost plucked asunder. She was then untied, and having fainted away from the excess of torture inflicted on her by this legal monster, was removed from the dungeon in a chair or litter.* No persuasions, not even the offer of her life, could prevail on her to recant, and she was soon after, with three other sacramentarians, publicly burnt at Smithfield.†

Barbarity of Wriothesly.

Her firmness and death.

It is a melancholy feature of those times, that so inhuman an execution appears to have made little impression, and is passed over by contemporary annalists with cold brevity; but it was otherwise when the Duke of Norfolk, the first peer of the realm, and his son, the Earl of Surrey, were arrested on a charge of high treason, and sent to the Tower. The circumstances which led to their imprisonment, and the manner in which their trial was conducted, present us with one of those exhibitions of successful intrigue, which so frequently occur under a despotic government.

Arrest of the Duke of Norfolk and his son.

It had been apparent for some years, that a bitter rivalry existed between the ancient house of Howard and the powerful but comparatively modern family of the Seymours. The Duke of Norfolk was a man whose public services, especially as an excellent military leader, were acknowledged by all. Amongst the nobility, he was the first in dignity as well as in power; his family-alliances were extensive, his patrimonial estates great; and what, perhaps, at this moment, rendered his authority more formidable, was his being considered the head of the Popish party, both at home and abroad. From the time that he captured the celebrated Scottish seaman, Andrew Barton (1511) to his suppression of the rebellion named the Pilgrimage of Grace, his life had been little else than an uninterrupted series of benefits conferred upon his country.

Rivalry of the Howards and Seymours.

Duke of Norfolk.

His son, the Earl of Surrey, whose name shines with

* Fox, vol ii. p. 1129. † Ibid. p. 1230. Godwin, p. 201.

CHAP. VII. so bright a lustre in the history of English poetry, was undoubtedly one of the most remarkable men of his age,—of an aspiring mind, undaunted resolution, and extraordinary abilities, both in the council and the field; but he was haughty to the new nobility, obstinate and headstrong in his temper, ready to take fire at the slightest appearance of injustice, and quick and thoughtless in his expressions of resentment. Having a principal command in the late French war, he had sustained a defeat, which irritated the king, and occasioned his being superseded by the Earl of Hertford,—a circumstance which must necessarily have increased a jealousy already existing between these two noblemen.

Earl of Surrey.

Earl of Hertford.

Hertford, a man of equal ambition,—daring in his designs, and little solicitous regarding the means he employed, was uncle to Prince Edward, the heir-apparent; and, as it became every day more certain that the death of the king could not be far distant, he was anxious to secure for himself the protectorship of the realm during the minority of the youthful monarch. In this project, none were so likely to thwart and perhaps to defeat him as the Howards; and it became therefore an object with him and his party to accomplish their ruin. This, it is evident, was the true origin of the prosecution against these noble persons. Surrey had imprudently declared his resolution to revenge himself on Hertford after the king's death; and this nobleman, aware of such designs, determined to anticipate them. Henry, sensible that he had short time to live, had settled the crown on his son; he was solicitous to adopt every measure which could secure him in the undisturbed possession of the throne, and not less anxious that the independence of the kingdom with reference to the see of Rome, and the partial reformation which he had established, should not be disturbed under his successor. All this made him naturally jealous of the Howards, the only persons who were capable of thwarting his measures; and Hertford availed himself of such suspicions to effect the downfal of those whose

Settlement of the Crown.

influence he dreaded, and with whose resentment he had been openly threatened.

Sir Richard Southwell.

Surrey's principal accuser was Sir Richard Southwell, who, coming to the privy-council, declared that he could reveal certain things which touched his fidelity to the king.* What these accusations were does not appear; but the earl was instantly summoned from Kennington, where he was engaged in his favourite literary pursuits; and he obeyed with the promptitude and courage of a man conscious of innocence. He denied solemnly the truth of the charges brought against him; he demanded a public trial, and to be confronted with his accuser; and should this be refused, he challenged him to single combat, declaring that he felt so confident in the purity of his motives, that he was ready to renounce the advantage of his armour, and to fight him in his shirt,—a defiance which may sound unknightly to our ears, but which was then not uncommon.† Nothing of this, however, was permitted by the privy-council; they were too intent on securing their victim to suffer it; and, without further investigation, he was ordered into confinement (2d Dec. 1546).

Surrey demands a public trial.

Duke of Norfolk lodged in the Tower.

Almost immediately after, his father the duke was sent for; and, on his arrival in London, was also lodged in the Tower. This, as we have learnt from Henry himself, who best knew the tyranny he had fostered, was a certain prelude to destruction; and the event justified his prediction. Depositions preparatory to their trial were immediately taken; and it happened, unfortunately for them both, that the domestic dissensions in their family afforded their enemies the means of procuring evidence against them. Norfolk had been four years separated from his duchess, a daughter of the late Duke of Buckingham, and a woman of fierce and vindictive temper. Surrey, on the other hand, had incurred the enmity of his sister, the Duchess of Rich-

* Nott's Life of Surrey, p. 96. Carte, vol. iii. p. 190.

† Nott, ut supra, pp. 97, 98, and Fabliaux par le Grand, vol. i. p. 168.

CHAP. VII

mond; and it presents us with a melancholy picture of the malignity and subserviency of those times, that amongst the principal witnesses who came forward to depose against the father and the son were the wife and the sister. Yet, after all, their accusations amounted to little or nothing; the duchess affirmed that she had heard her brother speak with bitterness against the Earl of Hertford, to whom he attributed his imprisonment. She observed that he wore on his arms, instead of a ducal coronet, what appeared to her much like a close crown, with the cipher H. R., which she took to be the king's cipher. It appeared that Norfolk, in right of his wife, had quartered the arms of her father, the Duke of Buckingham, which, owing to his lineal descent from Edward the Third, were the king's arms; but, on his attainder, the duke had substituted a blank quarter in their place.* Surrey, however, had reassumed them, contrary to his father's wishes; so that, instead of the ducal coronet, he wore a cap of maintenance, with powdered fur, and a close crown.† In addition to this, it was proved by the evidence of two persons, named Knevett and Pope, that the earl had entertained some Italians, who were suspected to be spies; that the duke had expressed some dissatisfaction with the changes in religion; that he had remarked the

Family discord.

Charge of treason.

Its foundation.

* In the State-papers published by Government, vol. i. p. 891, is a curious paper, entitled "Charges against the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Surrey." It is, we are informed by the editor, in the handwriting of Wriothesly, the chancellor, but contains various interlineations and corrections, written by Henry himself in a tremulous hand. Of these charges, which undoubtedly formed the groundwork of the impeachment, the most singular is the following, suggested probably to the king by the jealousy of Hertford:—"If a man *compassing with himself to govern the realm, do actually go about to rule the king, and* should, for that purpose, advise his daughter or sister to become his harlot, *thinking thereby to bring it to pass, and so would rule both father and son, as by this next article doth more appear what this importeth.* If a man say these words,—'If the king die, who should have the rule of the prince but my father or I,' what it importeth."—The words in *italics* are interlineations in the king's hand.

† Carte, vol. iii. p. 191.

increasing infirmities of the king; had lamented his having withdrawn his confidence from him; and had spoken with severity of some of the "new nobility, who, he affirmed, did not love him. CHAP. VII.

Such was the sum of the depositions against these distinguished persons; and it is evident that, even admitting their truth, they amount to no crime, and scarcely infer a shade of moral delinquency; yet, upon being duly weighed by the judges, they gave it as their opinion, that the offence of the Earl of Surrey amounted to high treason. He was immediately brought to trial before a special commission, on the charge of having traitorously borne the arms of Edward the Confessor, mixed and quartered with the coat of his own family. He defended himself, as had been anticipated, with extraordinary spirit and ability, being, in the words of Lord Herbert, a man of deep understanding, sharp wit, and high courage. He admitted that he had borne the arms of the Confessor, but he exhibited the authority of the heralds for so doing; he proved that his ancestors had invariably worn them, both at home and abroad, and that the same shield had been constantly and without quarrel borne by himself in Henry's presence and by his ancestors in the court of his royal predecessors. But all was in vain, the jury pronounced him guilty, and, within a week after, he was beheaded in the Tower, with extreme privacy, and a studious suppression of all circumstances attending his death.* There appears even some doubt whether the warrant for his execution could have been signed by the king. Subserviency of the judges. Spirited defence. Condemned and executed.

During the proceedings against Surrey, the illness of the unhappy monarch had increased to an alarming height. Owing to his enormous bulk, it had been for some time necessary to employ a machine to lift him into his chair, or remove him from one chamber to another; the ulcers in his legs gave him at times excruciating torture; and, with a slow fever which had Illness of the king.

* Herbert, p. 265.

CHAP. VII

Anticipated death.

long lurked about him, seemed to be rapidly undermining his strength. Meanwhile Somerset and his faction were earnestly solicitous to rid themselves of the Duke of Norfolk; but no sufficient evidence had been procured against him; and as the king's death was daily expected, there was no time for the formalities of a trial. It was resolved to proceed against him therefore by bill of attainder; but even this most unjust method required some plea on which it should be founded.

Norfolk entrapped.

In these circumstances, his enemies, in whom he well knew at this moment the whole power of the government was centred, acted towards him with the utmost craft and cruelty. They alleged that his majesty was willing and anxious to pardon him if he would merely acknowledge his guilt; and the unfortunate nobleman, falling into the snare, permitted himself to sign a confession, which is evidently a manufactured document, and goes far to establish his innocence. He allowed that he had occasionally communicated to various persons the secrets of the privy-council, contrary to his allegiance; that he had concealed the treasonable act of his son, the Earl of Surrey, in using the arms of Edward the Confessor; and that he himself had been guilty of equally traitorous conduct in bearing the same arms, which of right belonged alone to Prince Edward.* This acknowledgment the duke believed was to be followed by his immediate pardon; but he was miserably deceived. It was, in truth, only extorted from him to compass his destruction; and a bill of attainder founded on his confession was hurried through Parliament. As the king was then lying on his deathbed, the usual mode of waiting for the royal assent till the end of the session might have permitted their victim to escape: to obviate this, the chancellor produced a commission under the sign-manual, empowering him to signify the consent of the monarch, which he declared he accordingly did; and

His confession.

Bill of attainder passed.

* Rymer, Fœdera, vol. xv. p. 110.

the disgraceful scene was concluded by despatching a messenger to the Tower to order the execution at an early hour on the morning of the following day. CHAP. VII.

These proceedings took place on the 27th of January; but before their cruel purpose could be accomplished Henry was no more. On the evening of that day, the royal physicians having warned those around him that death was rapidly approaching, Sir Anthony Denny had the courage to undertake a task from which all who knew the temper of the royal sufferer were willing to shrink. He approached his bed, and leaning over the king, explained to him that all help from human aid was now vain; that it was meet for him to think over his past life, and seek for God's mercy through Christ. Contrary to expectation, he thanked him for his fidelity, and expressing much contrition for his many and aggravated sins, declared his hope of pardon through Christ. It was then suggested, that he should confer with some divines, and Henry replied,—"With no other but Archbishop Cranmer, and not with him as yet. Let me repose a little, and as I find myself, I will determine." After an hour's sleep he awoke, and becoming faint, commanded that Cranmer, who was then at Croydon, should be sent for with all haste. By the time he arrived the sovereign was speechless, yet he knew him, and taking him by the hand, appeared to hear the words of the archbishop, who earnestly exhorted him to place all his hopes of salvation in God's mercy through his Saviour, and besought him, if not in words, at least by some sign, to testify his hope. The king upon this regarded him steadily for a moment, wrung his hand, and expired.*

Last hours of the king.

Cranmer sent for.

Henry's death.

It may be doubted whether, in the wide range of English history, there is to be found any monarch whose moral features, upon minute examination, become more harsh and repulsive than Henry the Eighth. Vain, capricious, profligate, and tyrannical, he seems, even in the generous season of youth, to have exhibited but few

His character.

* Godwin, p. 207. Rapin, p. 102.

CHAP. VII.

Early promise.

Fostering of his worst qualities.

Parliaments and people.

State of the law.

Great results from unlikely sources.

indications of a better mind; and these promises soon withered under the influence of that greatest curse of princes, the early possession of supreme power. It was this that acted so fatally upon a heart, from the first intensely selfish, never disciplined by misfortune, and which, experiencing no check to unlimited enjoyment, became early the abject slave of its passions. It is this same omnipotence of his own will, fostered in an extraordinary degree by the subserviency of his parliaments, the servility of his nobles, and the timid acquiescence of his people, which produced, as he advanced in years, that portentous combination of sensuality and intolerance, from which the mind painfully and instinctively recoils.

Turning from the prince to the people, to the power of its great legislative assembly, the consideration possessed by the Upper House, or the protection enjoyed by the citizens, we find the retrospect equally mortifying. Reasoning from what they did to what they might have done, it may be questioned whether any outrage upon the law, or any infringement, however gross, upon the property and liberty of the subject, was not likely, under this reign, to have found a sanction in Parliament and on the bench. It is not indeed to be forgotten, that the law itself was, in many respects, in a degraded state —often unjust, loose, informal, and affording an easy handle to tyranny, without being perverted from its established course; yet, even with this allowance, the history of the period affords repeated examples to corroborate the remarks here made.

But perhaps the most striking feature in those times is the contrast presented between the great results which were brought to pass by Divine Providence, during the course of this reign, and the character of the instruments employed to work out these beneficent designs. If we look to the most eminent and powerful men of the age, we find in most of them a lamentable contradiction between their profession and their practice; in their letters, the purest expositions of revealed truth; in their actions, a reckless disregard of it, little or no value set on human

life, a familiarity with conspiracy; encouragements held out to assassination, and a full admission of that flagrantly wicked principle, that the end justifies the means. Yet by these persons it was that the ancient strongholds of error and superstition were successfully assailed; by their efforts that the despotism of Papal infallibility was shaken off; the Scriptures communicated to the people in their own language, and the light of Divine truth let in upon the cold and comfortless twilight which covered the human mind. CHAP. VII. Base public conduct.

Religion had rather convinced the reason than converted the heart of the age; upon which some of the worst features of feudalism were yet discernible in fresh and prominent relief. It remained, alas! it still remains for us to see its blessed effects, in the dissemination of that universal charity which is the fulfilment of the law, —which, once established in its sweet and all-pervading influences, would convert this world from an arena, stained with the blood of contending sects, and ringing with the din of spiritual polemics, into that blessed retreat of peace and love, to which angels might delight to come on their errands of mercy, and where man might enjoy some little antepast of Heaven. Religious and political feeling.

THE END

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY T. NELSON AND SONS.