

brought in that case that they of their little cannot help us to earn our living, then must we perish and die miserably. I speak this, my lord; the cloth-makers have put all these people, and a far greater number from work; the husbandmen have put away their servants, and given up household; they say the king asketh so much that they be not able to do as they have done before this time, and then of necessity must we die wretchedly: wherefore my lord, now, according to your wisdom, consider our necessity. The duke was sorry to hear their complaint, and well he knew that it was true; then he said, Neighbours, sever yourselves asunder, let every man depart to his home, and choose further four that shall answer for the remnant, and on my honour I will send to the king and make humble intercession for your pardon, which I trust to obtain, so that you will depart. Then all they answered they would, and so they departed home.\*

Of this attempt to tax the people without the consent of parliament, Mr. Hallam has said, "In the most remote and irregular times it would be difficult to find a precedent for so universal and enormous an exaction; since tallages, however arbitrary, were never paid by the barons or freeholders, nor by their tenants, and the aids to which they were liable were restricted to particular cases." † The despot now learnt that his absolute rule was to have some limit. But for the artisans of Suffolk, England, at this period, would probably have passed into the condition of France, where the abuse of the royal power had long before deprived the people of their rights. "The courage and love of freedom natural to the English commons, speaking in the hoarse voice of tumult, though very ill supported by their superiors, preserved us in so great a peril." Henry, with a meanness equal to his rapacity, affected not to know "that the commissioners were so straight as to demand a sixth of every man's substance." Wolsey took the blame upon himself. Pardons were issued for all the rioters; the commissions were revoked; and the old trick of a voluntary "benevolence" was again resorted to. The rich did not dare to show the spirit of the poor; and they yielded to irregular exactions in the form of gifts and loans, under the terror of such speeches as one which Wolsey made to the mayor and alderman of London:—"It were better that some should suffer indigence than the king at this time should lack; and therefore beware, and resist not, nor ruffle not in this case, for it may fortune to cost some their heads." ‡

\* Hall, p. 700.

† "Constitutional History," vol. i. c. 1.

‡ Hall, p. 696.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Release of the king of France.—Spirit of the Italians.—The Sack of Rome.—Character of the armies at Rome.—The divorce of queen Catherine agitated.—Difficulties of Wolsey.—His embassy to France.—He returns to new difficulties.—Anne Boleyn at the English court.—War declared against the emperor.—Commission from the pope on the question of the divorce.—Cardinal Campegus in England as legate with Wolsey.—Interview of the legates with Catherine.—Temper of the people in England.—Opening of the legatine commission.—Wolsey surrenders the great seal.

AFTER the capture of Francis I., the emperor made no attempt to follow up his success by any bold measures against France. He was without the means of paying an army to invade his rivals' territories; and was too prudent, even if he had possessed the necessary finances, to risk an assault upon a brave and proud nation who would maintain the integrity of their own kingdom though their king was a captive. Charles V. told the English envoys that it was best to be quiet. "The deer was in the net, and thought need only to be taken for the division of his skin."\* He concluded an armistice with France for six months. He had complaints to make against the English government. His ambassador had been insulted. A secret envoy of France had been in communication with Wolsey in London. He had discovered that the princess Mary, who had long been contracted to him, had been the object of a matrimonial negotiation both with France and with Scotland. Charles now demanded that the contract should be fulfilled. Henry declined to complete the arrangement, on account of the youth of his daughter; and insisted that the marriage should depend upon the ability of the emperor to give him the crown of France, or his willingness to surrender Francis to his, the king of England's, keeping. Charles, it is said, assumed an arrogant tone in these negotiations; but there was a greater impediment to friendship than his haughty bearing. He had no money to give Henry or his profuse minister. A treaty was entered into with the government of France, under the regency of the queen-mother, in which this essential condition of

\* Legrand, "Histoire du Divorce," vol. i. p. 41. This curious book furnishes valuable materials for the history of this period; especially in the letters of Jean du Bellay, bishop of Bayonne, who formed one of an embassy from France to England.

an alliance was amply provided for. But whilst the French cabinet made the most lavish engagements with Henry and Wolsey, having the full consent of the parliament of Paris, a protest was solemnly recorded against these conditions, that Francis might at some future time repudiate the contracts made in his absence. The conduct of each of the governments exhibits the low cunning of the most unscrupulous chafferers, instead of the high faith that should belong to all the transactions of great nations. The policy of England now more and more inclined to a league with France, which was completed in August, 1525. Meanwhile, Francis remained in captivity—first in Italy and afterwards in Spain. Negotiations for his release were at length entered into at Madrid, he having, after repeated refusals, consented to restore Burgundy to the emperor. After being a prisoner for more than a year, the king of France was released; and when his foot touched the French territory, he exclaimed, "Now I am again a king!" French historians say that after his capture he wrote, "All is lost, except honour." When he became free, all was gained at the price of honour. He refused to ratify his engagement for the surrender of Burgundy, to which he had solemnly sworn. The pope dispensed with his oath; and Henry instructed his ambassadors to urge him to violate it. In these dishonourable transactions the apprehension of the power of Charles V. might have influenced the secret conduct of the English government; as the same fear impelled the court of Rome, and other Italian states, to open hostility with the emperor.

The war upon which the pope entered against the emperor, in 1526, has a claim upon our sympathy; for it was a war for the independence of Italy. Clement VII. engaged in this war as a temporal prince; but his position as bishop of Rome had a material influence upon its results. The able historian of the popes shows that a strong feeling of common interest had arisen throughout Italy at this crisis. He says—"I am persuaded that their vast literary and artistical pre-eminence above all other countries was the main cause of this. The arrogance and rapacity of the Spaniards, as well leaders as common soldiers, was intolerable; and it was with a mixture of scorn and rage that the Italians beheld these half barbarian strangers, masters, in their land."\* The passionate aspirations for a national unity—such feelings as have vainly blazed up again and again during three centuries—were expressed by Giberto,

\* Ranke, "History of the Popes," vol. i. p. 102.

the confidential minister of Clement VII.: "This time it is not a question of a petty vengeance, a point of honour, or a single city. This war will decide the deliverance or the eternal slavery of Italy."\* Had that distracted country possessed a leader in a temporal prince, endowed with qualities such as might have competed with the decision of character that distinguished Charles V., she might have then emancipated herself from foreign sway. She has borne the yoke to this hour; and she probably will continue to bear it as long as the head of the Roman Church is also a secular ruler. The interests of the papacy, and the welfare of Italy, have been, in too many cases, wholly conflicting.

The doctrines of Luther had made considerable progress in Germany. Many pious and moderate men had adopted them from an earnest principle. The worldly-minded had taken their sides in the contest of opinions, from the hope of political or personal advantage. The turbulent and discontented of the cities, and the fierce adventurers of the mercenary armies, saw in the general hatred of the papal power a coming opportunity for spoliation. Clement VII. had stirred up this spirit into a bitter hostility to himself amongst the Germans, by his rupture of an alliance with the emperor. George Frundsberg, a German noble of great influence, had raised an army of sixteen thousand men, with small pay and large promises. In November, 1526, his fierce lance-knights crossed the Alps, made more ferocious even than their ordinary temper by hunger and all destitution. "If I get to Rome," said their leader, "I will hang the pope."† Bourbon, now the general of the emperor's armies in Italy—he who had endured the reproach of the dying Bayard, at the battle of Rebec, for being in arms against his prince and his country—had no resources for the supply of a mutinous army of various nations but the plunder of some hostile state. In January, 1527, he marched from Milan at the head of twenty-five thousand men. The winter was one of uncommon severity. The troops were wholly unprovided with necessaries. All the munitions of war were wanting. Spaniards, Italians, Germans, Flemings, starving and blaspheming, marched on for two months with no success but the plunder of the villages on their route. They dared not attack Placentia; for the confederate army hovered about them. They had no artillery to besiege Bologna. Clement, meanwhile, had concluded a separate treaty with Lannoy, one of the imperial generals, for a suspen-

\* Ranke, vol. i. p. 104.

† *Ibid.*, p. 107.

sion of arms. Bourbon refused to be a party to the arrangement. He was the commander of men who, if he disappointed their hopes of booty, would turn and rend him. His plans were yet undecided. Florence or Rome were alike capable of furnishing plunder to his soldiers. At last, he moved out of Tuscany towards Rome. The pope made no attempt to defend the passes of the Roman territory. He repaired the breaches in the old city-walls; he erected a few new works; he armed the artificers. But in this hour of danger he appears to have relied too securely upon his spiritual weapons. He excommunicated Bourbon and his troops, denouncing the Germans as Lutherans and the Spaniards as Moors. On the 5th of May, Bourbon and his men were encamped before the magnificent capital; and as they gazed upon its domes and towers, they were told that the treasures which had there been accumulating for centuries would be theirs at the morrow's dawn. On that morrow the eternal city was assaulted in three separate attacks. The morning was misty; and their approach to the suburbs was unperceived. There was a brave resistance of the few who defended the outworks. Bourbon leapt from his horse; and planting a scaling-ladder against the wall, shouted to his men to follow him. A ball from the ramparts terminated his career. His death produced no relaxation in the ardour of his followers. Their prey was before them; and in a few hours the devoted city was in their hands. The pope and his cardinals shut themselves up in the castle of St. Angelo. The scene that followed has been described by Guicciardini, and by the historian of Charles V. The elaborate description of Robertson is familiar to the majority of readers. There is an incidental narrative of Gibbon which has some remarkable peculiarities. His spirited outline in which the atrocities at the taking of Rome by the troops of Charles V. are compared with those of the Goths in the beginning of the fifth century, offers a brief summary of the lamentable results of the assault of Bourbon. "The ravages of the barbarians whom Alaric had led from the banks of the Danube were less destructive than the hostilities exercised by the troops of Charles V., a catholic prince, who styled himself Emperor of the Romans. The Goths evacuated the city at the end of six days, but Rome remained above nine months in the possession of the Imperialists: and every hour was stained by some atrocious act of cruelty, lust, and rapine. The authority of Alaric preserved some order and moderation among the ferocious multitude which acknowledged him for their leader

and king; but the constable of Bourbon had gloriously fallen in the attack of the walls; and the death of the general removed every restraint of discipline from an army which consisted of three independent nations." Robertson has distinguished between the character of these different forces: "Whatever excesses the ferocity of the Germans, the avarice of the Spaniards, or the licentiousness of the Italians could commit, these the wretched inhabitants were obliged to suffer." Gibbon ascribes the same qualities to the Italians and Spaniards; but of the Germans he says, they "were less corrupt than the Italians, less cruel than the Spaniards; and the rustic, or even savage, aspect of these Tramontane warriors often disguised a simple and merciful disposition." What Gibbon adds of the Germans is more important than their national characteristics: "They had imbibed, in the first fervour of the Reformation, the spirit, as well as the principles, of Luther. It was their favourite amusement to insult, or destroy, the consecrated objects of catholic superstition; they indulged, without pity or remorse, a devout hatred against the clergy of every denomination or degree, who form so considerable a part of the inhabitants of modern Rome; and their fanatic zeal might aspire to subvert the throne of Antichrist,—to purify, with blood and fire, the abominations of the spiritual Babylon."\* Gibbon is impartial in his hatred of religious fanaticism: "Many of the Castilians who pillaged Rome were familiars of the Holy Inquisition." A recent writer, of great ability, has endeavoured to associate the persecuting and ribald spirit of some of the early reformers with the terrible lessons that were learnt at the Sack of Rome: "There is said to have been among the followers of the duke of Bourbon (whether he was among the mock cardinals who rode in procession on asses, I do not know) an Englishman, of low birth, vicious habits, and infidel principles, who afterwards became of terrific importance to the Church of England."† The "ruffian," so conjectured to have been at Rome in 1527, was Thomas Cromwell. The connexion which Gibbon desires to show between the spirit of Luther—"the furious spirit," as he expresses it in a note—is not more a proof of the ferocity of the reforming temper of Germany, than of the provocation which the impostures and mummeries, the greediness and luxury, of the Roman Church, had offered to rough and ignorant men, with strong understandings and not wholly without

\* "Decline and Fall," vol. iv. p. 109, Dr. Smith's edit.

† Dr. Maitland, "Essays on the Reformation," p. 228.

"merciful dispositions." The enormities against which Luther fought were of a character to make the people hate and despise them, when they could do so without the dread of the gibbet and the stake. That they should have been handled delicately by the multitude is somewhat too much to expect from human nature. If Thomas Cromwell learnt his statemanship in the plunder of Rome, as is inferred, the lessons derived from the exhibition of Luther's spirit must have been somewhat neutralised, if, as we are told, at the time when this event happened, "he had no preference and no respect for either popery or protestantism, and acted under no principle but that which taught him to do the best he could for himself."\* Instead of ascribing the outrages of 1527 to the fanatic zeal of the young Reformation, it might therefore be safer to assign such effects of unbridled wickedness chiefly to individual selfishness, and to believe that the fanaticism in such case is only the cloak under which the rapacious man does the best he can for his own dirty profit. At any rate we may believe that fanaticism was the weed that grew up amongst the corn in a prolific soil; not confounding the abuse of a great principle with the principle itself.

The intelligence of the triumph of his arms, and of the excesses which disgraced it, produced in the emperor a singular attempt of policy to discriminate between the spiritual and the temporal power of the pope. By his command the people were called upon to mourn in his dominions, and to offer up prayers for the deliverance of the pontiff. This has been called "hypocrisy."† It was an attempt to refine upon an occurrence which in the eyes of the multitude was a victory over the papal power, desecrated by wielding the carnal weapon. The people of England took this broad view of the question. Our English chronicler, who is a tolerably faithful expositor of the popular feeling, says,—“The king was sorry, and so were many prelates; but the commonalty little mourned for it. \* \* \* \* The pope was a ruffian. \* \* \* \* He began the mischief and was well served.”‡ Wolsey, according to the same authority, called upon the king to show himself a defender of the Church: and Hall puts this answer into Henry's mouth: “I more lament this evil chance than my tongue can tell; but when you say that I am Defender of the Faith, I assure you that

\* Dr. Maitland, "Essays on the Reformation," p. 228.

† Macintosh, "History," vol. ii. p. 130.

‡ Hall, p. 728.

this war between the emperor and the pope is not for the faith but for temporal possessions and dominions." We may take such formal speeches in the old historians for what they are worth—the setting forth of current opinion. The policy of the English government resolved itself into sending Wolsey as ambassador to France.

There is a passage in the chronicler which is as "the straw thrown up to show which way the wind blows." Hall, with reference to the projected embassy, says,—“This season began a fame in London that the king's confessor, being bishop of Lincoln, called Doctor Longland, and divers other great clerks, had told the king that the marriage between him and the Lady Catherine, late wife to his brother, Prince Arthur, was not good, but damnable; and the king hereupon should marry the duchess of Alençon, sister to the French king, at the town of Calais this summer; and that the viscount Rochfort had brought with him the picture of the said lady; and that at his return out of France the cardinal should pass the sea to go into France to fetch her. This rumour sprang so much that the king sent for sir Thomas Seymour, mayor of London, and strictly charged him to see that the people should cease of this communication, upon pain of the king's high displeasure."\* There can be no doubt that the question of the divorce had been agitated at this period; and it having been made matter of close discussion, "a fame in London" might have spread out of those secret counsels. Wolsey left the court on his embassy on the 3rd of July, 1527. On the 1st of July, he had sent a despatch to the king, in which he declares his trouble that, in consequence of a message which he had sent to his highness, it has been supposed that he, Wolsey, doubted "of your secret matter." He adds, "For I take God to record, that there is nothing earthly I covet so much as the advancing thereof."† On the 5th of July, the cardinal writes a most elaborate despatch to Henry, in which he describes an interview which he had with the archbishop of Canterbury, Warham, at sir John Wiltshire's house, near Dartford, where he lodged on the first night of his journey. The subject of their conversation was "of your secret matter, and such other things as have been done therein." Wolsey showed the archbishop "how the knowledge thereof is come to the queen's grace, and how displeasantly she taketh it." It was the business of Wolsey to make the primate an instrument for advancing the king's great object: "I have sufficiently instructed him how he shall order himself, in case

\* Hall, p. 728. † State Papers, published by the Record Commissioners, vol. i.

the queen do demand his counsel in the said matter." Henry's zealous minister had also an interview with bishop Fisher, which he relates with great minuteness. The bishop was reserved; but Wolsey thus attacked him, to obtain from him a knowledge of the point upon which the queen had desired his advice, but of which the bishop affirmed that he knew nothing: "I replied and said, 'My lord, ye and I have been of an old acquaintance, and the one hath loved and trusted the other, wherefore postponing all doubt and fear ye may be frank and plain with me, like as I, for my party, will be with you.'" The bishop still maintaining that he only conjectured what the matter was, Wolsey communicated to him the king's desire for a divorce, "taking an oath of him to keep it close and secret." Having explained to the prelate that the king's doubts of the legality of his marriage had been first raised by the bishop of Tarbes, when he came to negotiate a matrimonial alliance between Francis and the princess Mary, Wolsey induced Fisher to impute "great blame unto the queen, as well for giving so light credence in so weighty a matter; as also, when she heard it, to handle the same in such fashion as rumour and bruit should spread thereof." The unhappy queen was to remain impassive whilst "the great and secret affair" was maturing for her destruction. The pliant bishop doubted not but that if he might speak with her, and disclose unto her all the circumstances of the matter, "he should cause her greatly to repent, humble, and submit herself to your highness." The spirit of this injured woman was not understood by those who were thus labouring to render her a meek instrument of her own degradation.

The difficulties with which Wolsey was surrounded in this affair of the divorce appear to have been constantly in his mind during this journey to France. He was suspected by Catherine; for the queen, as he told Fisher, had said that it was by his "procurement and setting-forth a divorce was purposed." He dreaded the knowledge of the scheme being disclosed to the emperor; and therefore informs the king that according to his desire that Francis Philip's going into Spain "should be letted," he would endeavour so to order it that the traveller might be "stopped in some convenient place, without suspecting that the same proceedeth either of your highness or of me."\* On the 29th of July he thus expresses his deep solicitude for the accomplishment of the king's purpose:—"Daily and hourly musing and thinking on your grace's

\* State Papers, vol. i. 29th July.

great and secret affair, and how the same may come to good effect and desired end, as well for the deliverance of your grace out of the enthralled, pensive, and dolorous life that the same is in, as for the continuance of your health, and the surety of your realm and succession, I consider how the pope's holiness' consent must concur," &c.\* Of that consent Wolsey had no doubt, if the pope could be delivered from his imprisonment at Rome. "In case the said peace cannot be by these means brought to effect, whereupon might ensue the pope's deliverance, by whose authority and consent your grace's affair should take most sure, honourable, effectual, and substantial end." He adds, as to the disposition of the pope, "who, I doubt not, considering your grace's gratitude, would facily [easily] be induced to do all things therein that might be to your grace's satisfaction and purpose." Here was one of the sunken shoals upon which Wolsey's policy was wrecked. Another shifting sand, equally dangerous, was the secret passion of the king for a lady of his court, which the cardinal appears to have considered as one of those capricious intrigues in which Henry, during even the happiest hours of his married life, indulged. The queen was now upwards of forty years of age; the king was in his thirty-sixth year. "The surety of your realm and succession," as expressed in Wolsey's letter to the king, of the 29th July, was the panacea which the statesmen of Henry's time applied to their consciences, when they were called upon to sanction any outrageous act of the royal will. In the case of the divorce of queen Catherine there was greater peril to the succession in the agitation of the question, than in the peaceful continuance, to the end, of that marriage which had given a female heir to the throne; and which the virtues of the queen, during eighteen years, had reconciled to the scrupulous doubters of the dispensing power which had first sanctioned the union. The princess Mary was born in 1516. Her education was carefully attended to, her accomplishments were various. In 1525 she was regarded as the future queen of England, if we may judge from the circumstance that a vice-regal court was assigned her "to reside and remain in the marches of Wales." In the spring of 1527, when the bishop of Tarbes came upon an embassy to England, to demand her hand in marriage for Francis or one of his sons, the princess was at Greenwich. It was at this time that the doubt of the validity of the royal marriage with Catherine of Aragon was first raised. Within three months the

\* State Papers, vol. i., 29th July.

divorce was the subject of the anxious thoughts of Henry's minister. On the 18th June, though Henry had thrown many obstacles in the way of princess Mary's marriage when the ambassadors were in England, Wolsey received a commission to settle the alliance with the king of France. It was one of the objects of his embassy. The succour of the pope in his misfortunes, in concert with Francis, was another object. Why Henry and his minister so ardently desired that the pope should be free, had a more imperative motive than the defence of the Church. During the imprisonment of Clement in the castle of St. Angelo, Henry was the only person who displayed any sympathy, by sending him supplies for his urgent necessities. Wolsey saw the means by which the pope might "facily be induced" to give Henry "satisfaction." Wolsey was mistaken in the final issue of his complicated schemes; but his sagacity was not at fault in his first movements. The pope made no absolute promises to Henry, but he allowed him to think a divorce possible, "as soon as ever the Germans and the Spaniards were driven out of Italy."\* To conclude a league with France against the emperor was the mode in which this possibility was to be realised.

The pageantry of Wolsey's embassy, in 1527, has been described with great minuteness by Cavendish, one of his gentlemen-ushers. His mode of travelling, riding "like a cardinal, very sumptuously, on a mule trapped with crimson velvet," was not favourable to rapid progress. He rested at Canterbury; and at the feast of St. Thomas, when the monks sang in the litany, "Holy Mary, pray for our father Clement," he wept very tenderly. He landed at Calais, and before setting forward addressed all his suite, on the deportment they should observe, and on "the nature of the Frenchmen." He told them that it was their habit to commune with Englishmen in the French tongue, as though they understood every word: "therefore, in like manner, be ye as familiar with them again as they be with you. If they speak to you in the French tongue, speak you to them in the English tongue, for if you understand not them, they shall no more understand you." The cardinal, with that *bonhomme* which evidently made him beloved amidst all his haughtiness, turning to one of his gentlemen, a Welshman, said, "Rice, speak thou Welsh to him; and I am well assured that thy Welsh shall be more diffuse [obscure] to him than his French shall be to thee." Francis, with the queen-mother and

\* See Ranke, vol. i. p. 125.

a gorgeous court, came to meet the cardinal near Amiens. They remained at Amiens for more than two weeks, "consulting and feasting each other divers times." At Compiègne, to which the king and the cardinal travelled together, the chancellor of France and Wolsey had a violent dispute about the terms of the treaty; and the English minister hastily left the king of France's council, "wondrously offended." He was entreated to be reconciled, even by the queen-mother herself. He at length yielded; and accomplished more than he could attain before the quarrel. "He had the heads of all the council so under his girdle that he might rale them all there as well as he might the council of England."

Wolsey, having fulfilled his mission, returned to England in the autumn of 1527. His magnificent reception by Francis—his banquetings and his boar-hunts,—were not without some drawbacks of personal discomfort. A libellous book was published in France, about his embassy; of which the cardinal complained, saying, "that if the like had been attempted within the realm of England, he doubted not but to see it punished according to the traitorous demeanour and deserts."\* There was no redress after the complaint. Wolsey, with all his sagacity, had not learnt that the new power of the press was least dangerous when least controlled by despotic authority. The French did not look kindly upon the politic cardinal. "Some lewd person," says Cavendish, "whosoever it was, had engraved in the great chamber-windows where my lord lay, upon the leaning-stone there, a cardinal's hat with a pair of gallows over it, in derision of my lord." But he had greater inquietudes when he arrived home. He had risen at Compiègne at four o'clock in the morning, to write letters to the king, and had continued writing with only his nightcap and keverchief on his head till four o'clock in the afternoon. The cardinal had not only made a favourable treaty with France, and had added new strength to his own legatine authority in England, but was so confident in the matter of the divorce, that he had promised the mother of Francis that a princess of her house should wear the English crown within a year. Henry, at that time, was looking nearer home for a mistress or a wife.

In an old manor-house at Hever, near the river Eden, in Kent,—which under a license of Edward III. had assumed the character of a castle—dwelt Sir Thomas Boleyn, the grandson of a rich citizen of London, who was descended from an honourable Norfolk

\* Cavendish, p. 183.

family. Here was born to him a daughter Anne. In that sequestered place was her childhood passed—happy had she never gone beyond the moated walls of her father's house, to see more of the living world than she knew when she knelt in her village church, amidst the tenants of the manor. When Mary, the sister of Henry VIII., married Louis XII., in 1514, Anne Boleyn, then only seven years of age, was taken with her. Upon the widow of the French king returning to England as wife of Charles Brandon, the little Kentish girl remained in the household of the daughter of Louis, who afterwards became the wife of Francis I. This queen died in 1524; and Anne remained in France with the duchess of Alençon, the sister of Francis, till after the battle of Pavia, when she returned to England. Cavendish speaks of her influence at the court of Henry, before the embassy of Wolsey in 1527. She was one of the maids of honour to queen Catherine. It is clear that before the death of the earl of Northumberland, in 1526, the king had interfered to prevent her marriage with his son, "and even as my lord Percy was commanded to avoid her company, even so she was commanded to avoid the court, and sent home again to her father's for a season."\* Wolsey interfered in this matter between the two lovers; saying that the king intended to have preferred the lady unto another person, with whom he had opened the matter. Percy married a daughter of the earl of Shrewsbury; "wherewith Mistress Anne Boleyn was greatly offended, saying, that, if it ever lay in her power, she would work the cardinal as much displeasure."† The lines of Sir Thomas Wyatt were considered by his grandson, who wrote a memoir of the unfortunate lady, to express the character of her charms:—

"A face that should content me wondrous well,  
Should not be fair, but lovely to behold;  
Of lively look, all grief for to repel  
With right good grace; so would I that it should  
Speak, without words, such words as none can tell."‡

Her beauty was that of expression. The court of Francis I. was not the purest for an attractive girl to be brought up in; but the scandalous age was unable to fix any charge upon her but that of her "lively look," before the period when she had the misfortune to captivate a royal voluptuary. The passion of Henry has influenced the destinies of England to this hour.

\* Cavendish, p., 129.

† *Ibid.*, p. 129.

‡ "Songs and Sonnets."

In October, 1527, a splendid embassy from France arrived in London, comprising the Marshal de Montmorenci, the bishop of Bayonne, and two other eminent persons. They came to invest Henry with the order of St. Michael. The cardinal vied with the king in giving them the most splendid entertainments. Wolsey feasted them at Hampton Court, which he still occupied, although he had presented it to Henry in 1525 to propitiate his good will, or to avert his passing wrath. Some of Wolsey's buildings still remain, whose spacious courts and broad oriel windows show something of its palatial magnificence; and whose ornamental brick chimneys, and gateways decorated with carvings and terra-cottas, exhibit the foreign taste that was beginning to prevail in English architecture. Wolsey was in high spirits at this season. He was late in his arrival at a sumptuous banquet to the strangers. The trumpets had warned them to supper. But the host had not come. "Before the second course, my lord cardinal came in among them, booted and spurred, all suddenly." Without shifting his riding apparel, he "sat himself down in the midst of the table, laughing and being as merry as ever I saw him in all my life." The days of trouble were at hand. "The long-hid and secret love between the king and Mistress Anne Boleyn began to break out into every man's ears. The matter was then by the king disclosed to my lord cardinal; whose persuasion to the contrary, made to the king upon his knees, could not effect. The king was so amorously affectionate, that will bare place, and high discretion banished for the time."\*

At the beginning of 1528, war was formally declared against the emperor by France and England. "Guyon, herald for the French king, and Clarendieux for the king of England, the 14th day of January, in the city of Burgos, in Castile, came before the emperor being nobly accompanied with dukes, marquises, earls, and barons, in his great hall, and there made their defiance." \* \* \* \* The nobles and gentlemen present "drew out their swords, and swore that the defiances then made should be revenged."† This war against Charles was most unpopular in England. The clothiers could not sell their broad-cloths; the bulk of the people, who were suffering from a great dearth of corn, could not obtain their wonted

\* Cavendish, p. 204.

† Hall, p. 741-2. It is singular that Mr. Froude (Note in vol. i. p. 130) should have overlooked this most explicit statement. He says, referring to Hall, p. 744: "Hall says it [war] was declared. I do not find, however, that there was a positive declaration."

supplies out of Flanders. The conduct of the emperor towards England was marked by extreme moderation. He had thrown the blame of the quarrel upon Wolsey; alleging that he had provoked the war because the emperor would not satisfy his rapacity, or place him by force in the chair of St. Peter. Of the members of the French commission for the investment of Henry with the order of St. Michael, Jean du Bellay, bishop of Bayonne, remained as ambassador. His correspondence with the French government during the eventful years of 1528-9 presents us with incidental views of the state of England—the politics of the court, and the feelings of the people—more precise and life-like than we can derive from any other source. This clear-sighted bystander saw more of the game than the players. On the 16th of February, 1528, Bellay writes, "I think that he (the cardinal) is the only one in England who desires the war in Flanders." He describes how the London merchants had refused to go upon 'Change, so that the manufacturers being unable to sell their cloth, there might be revolt in the provinces. On the 23rd he says, that those who would gladly see Wolsey come to ruin, rejoice when everything goes wrong, and say, "These are the works of the legate." The government did not wholly set itself against the popular voice. An armistice was concluded between England and the Netherlands, whilst hostilities went on as between England and Spain. Meanwhile, the pope having been released from his confinement in December, 1527, it was the great object of Wolsey to obtain that favourable judgment of the king's "secret affair," which he had so confidently held out. In February, 1528, upon the urgent representations of Dr. Stephen Gardiner and Dr. Edward Fox, who had been sent to Rome, Clement granted a commission authorising Wolsey, as legate, with the aid of one of the English prelates, to inquire into the sufficiency of the dispensation for Henry's marriage with his brother's widow, and to pronounce accordingly upon the validity or invalidity of that marriage. Wolsey shrank from this fearful responsibility; the more so that the king expressed himself satisfied. He had to encounter technical objections which in the ardour of his political views he had overlooked. When Henry knew of his honest doubts he chafed with indignation. Wolsey obtained a new commission from the pope, dated in June, 1528, in which cardinal Campegius was associated with him to try this great question of the legality of the marriage. The bishop of Bayonne, before the arrival of

Campegius in England, says that Wolsey had to endure much anxiety in this matter, upon which Henry had set his heart. To the cardinal "the king uses the most terrible terms, because he fancies he is cooling." The great minister is talking of retiring from the affairs of the world. He walks with the French ambassador, and tells him "of the progress of his life to this hour, and by what means he had risen to such honour." Wolsey added, that "if God should give him grace to behold the hatred of the two peoples [the French and English] removed; a firm and perpetual peace accomplished between the sovereigns, as he hoped speedily to establish; and the laws and customs of the country reformed, as he would do if peace should come;—moreover, the succession of the kingdom assured, principally where this marriage is concerned and a heir male be born—then immediately he would retire and serve God for the remainder of his life." \* What the reforms were that Wolsey pointed at in this remarkable exposition of his political aspirations is not clear. It has been objected to him that he desired to supersede the Common law of England by the Civil law. That he even hinted at a reform of the Church may be greatly doubted. Of his express mention of such a purpose there is not a word in the ambassador's letter. He had suppressed some of the most insignificant of the monasteries by a special authority as legate; and he had devoted their revenues to his noble foundation of Christchurch, at Oxford, and his college at Ipswich. But that he contemplated any change approaching in the least degree to carrying out the principles of the Reformation, is a theory which his devotion to the see of Rome will scarcely warrant us in believing.

The alliance with France did not proceed satisfactorily in its influence upon secular politics, any more than it did in forwarding the great object of Henry's desire in the submission of the pope to his will in the matter of the divorce. If the emperor had been controlled by the armies of France in Italy, and by the dread of more active hostility from England, Clement would probably have been subservient to the English king, and Wolsey's policy would have triumphed. But at the moment when the forces of Francis, under Lautrec, the French general, had been successful at every point over the Imperialists, and were besieging Naples with every

\* Legrand, vol. iii. Letter of 20th August, pp. 157-168. Mr. Froude renders this declaration thus: "If he could only see the divorce arranged, the king remarried, the succession settled, and the laws and the church reformed, he would retire," &c. The words of the original are, with reference to the purposed reform, "*les Loix et Costumes du pays reformées*"

prospect of success, the malaria fever and the plague swept off his men with a rapidity far more fatal than the most sanguinary battle; and the miserable remnant of his army capitulated to the forces of Charles in September, 1528. The emperor was now predominant. The Germans and the Spaniards were not driven out of Italy, as Clement had thought probable. The aunt of Charles was the queen against whom the ungracious measure of the divorce was directed. He was naturally and honestly opposed to the project. The pope was obliged to resort to equivocation and half-measures. Wolsey was left to do his best with an imperious master and a discontented people.

Cardinal Campegius arrived in England on the 9th of October. He was to be received triumphantly; but he declined all solemnities, "being sore vexed with the gout." The chronicler says that, "on the coming of this legate, the common people, being ignorant of the truth, and in especial women and other that favoured the queen, talked largely, and said that the king would for his own pleasure have another wife, and had sent for the legate to be divorced from his queen."\* On the 8th of November, Henry summoned an assembly to his palace of Bridewell, and set before them the danger of the realm should he die without a true heir to the throne; the doubts that had been raised about the legitimacy of his daughter; and the care with which he had sought counsel of the greatest clerks in Christendom, having sent for the legate, as a man indifferent, to know the truth and to settle his conscience. † The king had set forth his own opinion in a treatise upon the question of his divorce, which, as he expressed himself in one of his letters to Anne Boleyn, "maketh substantially for my matter, in writing whereof I have spent above eleven hours this day, which causeth me now to write the shorter letter to you now at this time, because of some pain in my head." ‡ After the king had expounded his "matter" to the assembly in his palace, the two legates waited upon the queen, who was also there lodged; and "declared to her how they were deputed judges indifferent between the king and her." Hall, in his magniloquent style, puts a long and violent oration into the mouth of the queen. Cavendish also relates an interview between the queen and the legates, in his own graphic manner, so full

\* Hall, p. 754.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Henry's letters to Anne are printed in Grove's "Life of Wolsey." Also in the "Harleian Miscellany;" where the eleven hours of the above quotation appear as four. Vol. i. p. 198, ed. 1808, 8vo.

of natural touches that we may willingly put aside any doubts of its authenticity:—

"With that she came out of his privy chamber with a skein of white thread about her neck, into her chamber of presence, where the cardinals were giving of attendance upon her coming. At whose coming, quoth she, 'Alack, my lords, I am very sorry to cause you to attend upon me; what is your pleasure with me?' 'If it please you,' quoth my lord cardinal, 'to go into your privy chamber, we will show you the cause of our coming.' 'My lord,' quoth she, 'if you have anything to say, speak it openly, before all these folks; for I fear nothing that ye can say or allege against me, but that I would all the world should both hear and see it; therefore I pray you speak your minds openly.'" Then began my lord to speak to her in Latin. 'Nay, good my lord,' quoth she, 'speak to me in English, I beseech you; although I understand Latin.' 'Forsooth, then,' quoth my lord, 'madam, if it please your grace, we come both to know your mind, how ye be disposed to do in this matter between the king and you; and also to declare secretly our opinions and our counsel unto you, which we have intended of very zeal and obedience that we bear to your grace.' 'My lords, I thank you then,' quoth she, 'of your good wills, but to make answer to your request I cannot so suddenly, for I was set among my maidens at work, thinking full little of any such matter, wherein there needeth a longer deliberation, and a better head than mine, to make answer to so noble wise men as ye be; I had need of good counsel in this case, which toucheth me so near; and for any counsel or friendship that I can find in England, (they) are nothing to my purpose or profit. Think you, I pray you, my lords, will any Englishman counsel or be friendly unto me against the king's pleasure, they, being his subjects? Nay, forsooth, my lords! and for my counsel, in whom I do intend to put my trust be not here; they be in Spain, in my native country. Alas, my lords! I am a poor woman lacking both wit and understanding sufficiently to answer such approved wise men as ye be both, in so weighty a matter. I pray you to extend your good and indifferent minds in your authority unto me, for I am a simple woman, destitute and barren of friendship and counsel here in a foreign region; and as for your counsel I will not refuse but be glad to hear.'" It would appear that Cavendish, waiting upon the cardinal, heard what passed in "the chamber of presence." He adds, "And with that she took my lord by the hand and led him into her privy chamber, with the other car-

dinal; where they were in long communication. We, in the other chamber, might sometime hear the queen speak very loud; but what it was we could not understand." \*

The winter of 1528-29 was, in London, a season of great excitement. The court and the people were at issue. The sycophantic and unscrupulous of the higher classes were crowding to win the smiles of the triumphant lady whom the king did not hesitate to proclaim as the object of his affections. On the 9th of December, the bishop of Bayonne gave a minute account of the state of affairs in London: "Mistress Boleyn [Mademoiselle de Boulan] has at last come here; and the king has placed her in a beautiful lodging, which he has finely decorated, close to his own; and every day there is a greater court about her than, for a long time, has been about the queen." † Of the popular feeling he thus speaks: "I think that, little by little, they would accustom this people to endure her, that when the time comes to give the last blow it should not produce much surprise. \* \* \* \* An order has been issued that only ten shopkeepers of each nation shall reside in London." This banishment of strangers of three nations from the capital applied, we may suppose, to Flemings, Spaniards, and Germans. Its effect must have produced the most extensive derangement of commercial affairs, if, as is here said, "more than fifteen thousand Flemings would in consequence be removed." The people were suspected of a disposition to revolt. "There has been a search for fire-arms and cross-bows; and wherever they are found in the city they are taken away, so that they are left with no worse weapon than the tongue." With the great there was less indignation: "As to the nobles, the king has made them so understand his fantasy, that they speak more soberly than they were wont to do." Amidst all this open and suppressed dislike of the proceedings of the court, the national spirit was surging up at the notion of foreign dictation. The emperor, knowing his popularity in England, had threatened that he would expel Henry from his kingdom by his own subjects. Wolsey repeated this before an assembly of a hundred gentlemen. They were silent; but one at last said—"By those words the emperor has lost a hundred thousand hearts in England." Wolsey laboured hard to make Charles hated and Francis beloved in England; "but," says the French ambassador, "it is a hard thing to strive against nature." ‡

\* Cavendish, p. 227.

† Legrand, tom. iii. p. 231.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

Seven months elapsed between the arrival of cardinal Campegius in London and the opening of the legatine court, which he and Wolsey were authorised to hold. That these delays were the consequence of the pope's indecision—his dread of offending the emperor, and his fear of England and France—there can be small doubt. It was a time of anxiety for Wolsey that might make him well desire to escape from this position of danger to his own diocese—to do his duty as a churchman, instead of piloting the vessel of the state in these stormy waters. At length on the 18th of June, 1529, the court of the legates was solemnly opened, by reading the commission of the pope to the judges of the cause. "That done, the crier called the king, by the name of 'king Henry of England, come into the court, &c.' With that the king answered, 'Here, my lords.' Then he called also the queen, by the name of 'Catherine, queen of England, come into the court, &c.' who made no answer to the same." This is the account which Cavendish gives. Burnet denies that the king appeared, except by proxy; and says that the queen withdrew after reading a protest against the competency of the judges. The historian of the Reformation is clearly in error. There are many collateral proofs that the king was present. Cavendish makes the queen, kneeling, thus address the king, "in broken English:—" "Sir, I beseech you for all the loves that hath been between us, and for the love of God, let me have justice and right, take of me some pity and compassion, for I am a poor woman and a stranger born out of your dominions. I have here no assured friend, and much less indifferent counsel; I flee to you as to the head of justice within this realm. Alas! sir, wherein have I offended you, or what occasion of displeasure have I designed against your will and pleasure; intending (as I perceive) to put me from you? I take God and all the world to witness, that I have been to you a true, humble, and obedient wife, ever conformable to your will and pleasure, that never said or did anything to the contrary thereof, being always well pleased and contented with all things wherein you had any delight or dalliance, whether it were in little or much, I never grudged in word or countenance, or showed a visage or spark of discontentation. I loved all those whom ye loved only for your sake, whether I had cause or no; and whether they were my friends or my enemies. This twenty years I have been your true wife or more, and by me ye have had divers children, although it hath pleased God to call them all out of this world, which hath been no default in me." The remainder of

Catherine's speech dwells upon the circumstances of her second marriage—the wisdom of Henry VII. and of Ferdinand, who would not have promoted it had it not been good and lawful. The queen then rose, and “took her way strait out of the house.” Henry commanded the crier to call her again, of which she was informed by her receiver, Master Griffith, who supported her with his arm. “On, on,” quoth she, “it maketh no matter; for it is no indifferent court for me, therefore I will not tarry. Go on your ways.”\* Henry, according to the same authority, made a speech, touching his griefs and necessities, and Catherine's goodness.

The queen not again appearing, she was declared contumacious. The legates continued to sit till the 30th of July; having examined witnesses, and received documentary evidence, touching the marriage of prince Arthur. They then adjourned without coming to any decision. During the sittings of the court, Wolsey had to endure the anger of him whose passion was as uncontrollable as it was dangerous. At the breaking up of the court, one day, he was sent for by the king. “And to accomplish his commandment he went unto him, and being there with him in communication in his grace's privy chamber from eleven until twelve of the clock and past at noon, my lord came out and departed from the king and took his barge at the Black Friars, and so went to his house at Westminster. The bishop of Carlisle being with him in his barge, said unto him, (wiping the sweat from his face,) ‘Sir, quoth he, ‘it is a very hot day.’ ‘Yea,’ quoth my lord Cardinal, ‘if ye had been as well chafed as I have been within this hour, ye would say it were hot.’” †

The expected fall of the great cardinal was the political revolution which might now be accomplished at any moment. The queen was removed from the court; and Anne accompanied the king in his pleasure-progress during the hunting season. Campegius having made suit to return to Rome, he and Wolsey set out to meet the king at Grafton; “before whose coming there rose in the court divers opinions that the king would not speak with my lord cardinal.” But when Wolsey came into the presence of Henry, and knelt before him, “he took my lord up by both arms, and caused him to stand up; whom the king, with as amiable a cheer as ever he did, called him aside, and led him by the hand to a great window, where he talked with him and caused him to be covered.” ‡ Henry “dined that day with Mistress Anne Boleyn,

\* Cavendish, p. 213—17. † *Ibid.*, p. 225. ‡ Cavendish, p. 239.

in her chamber, who kept there an estate more like a queen than a simple maid.” The picture which Cavendish then presents is a curious illustration of the manners of the period, as well as of its politics:—

“As I heard it reported by them that waited upon the king at dinner, that Mistress Anne Boleyn was much offended with the king, as far as she durst, that he so gently entertained my lord, saying, as she sat with the king at dinner, in communication of him, ‘Sir,’ quoth she, ‘is it not a marvellous thing to consider what debt and danger the cardinal hath brought you in with all your subjects?’ ‘How so, sweetheart?’ quoth the king. ‘Forsooth,’ quoth she, ‘there is not a man within all your realm worth five pounds, but he hath indebted you unto him,’ (meaning by a loan that the king had but late of his subjects). ‘Well, well,’ quoth the king, ‘as for that there is in him no blame; for I know that matter better than you or any other.’ ‘Nay, sir,’ quoth she, ‘besides all that, what things hath he wrought within this realm, to your great slander and dishonour. There is never a nobleman within this realm, that if he had done but half so much as he hath done, but he were well worthy to lose his head. If my lord of Norfolk, my lord of Suffolk, my lord my father, or any other noble person within your realm, had done much less than he, but they should have lost their heads for this.’ ‘Why, then, I perceive,’ quoth the king, ‘ye are not the cardinal's friend?’ ‘Forsooth, sir,’ then quoth she, ‘I have no cause, nor any other that loveth your grace, no more have your grace, if ye consider well his doings.’ At this time the waiters had taken up the table, and so they ended their communication.”

Wolsey never again saw king Henry. When Michaelmas term commenced on the 9th of October, he went with his usual state to the Court of Chancery: it was the last time that he there sat as chancellor. On the 17th of October he surrendered the great seal, not without some contest with the dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk; and retired from his noble palace of York Place, to that humbler dwelling of Esher, whose tower still recalls the memory of the most influential man of his time.