

## CHAPTER XVII.

Wolsey quits York Place.—His progress to Esher.—Thomas Cromwell.—He defends Wolsey in Parliament.—Sir Thomas More, Chancellor.—Statutes against ecclesiastical abuses.—Resistance of the Clergy.—Heresy.—The king discharged of his debts by statute.—Christmas at Greenwich.—Embassy to the pope.—Cranmer.—Opinions of the Universities on the divorce.—Wolsey in his see of York.—His popularity.—Is arrested on a charge of treason.—His death, and the king's lament.

WOLSEY has left, and for ever, his palace of York Place. In its gallery hung with cloth of gold,—in its gilt chamber and its council chamber,—his cupboards are thrown open, and give to view his astonishing hoards of gold and silver plate, “whereof some was set with pearl and rich stones.” His velvet, satin, and damask stuffs; his richest suits of copes; his thousand pieces of fine holland cloth;—these visible riches are placed upon divers tables, with an inventory upon every table. All these effects—every thing that he possessed—were taken from him, under the sentence of the Court of King's Bench, that his lands, goods, and chattels were forfeited, and that his person was at the mercy of the king. The charge against him was, that as legate, he had violated the statutes of *præmunire*, by exercising his powers under a foreign authority. To this charge Wolsey answered: “I have the king's license in my coffers under his hand and broad seal, for exercising and using the authority thereof [of the legatine prerogative] in the largest wise, the which now remaineth in the hands of my enemies.”\* In departing from the scene of his magnificence, the minister, thus abandoned by his treacherous master says, “It hath pleased the king to take my house ready furnished for his pleasure at this time.”† His barge waits at those stairs where poor Buckingham landed and sought him in vain. “At the taking of his barge,” says Cavendish, “there was no less than a thousand boats full of men and women of the city of London, wafting up and down in Thames, expecting my lord's departing, supposing that he should have gone directly from thence to the Tower, whereat they rejoiced.” He adds: “I dare be bold to say that the most part never received damage at his hands.” Who can wonder at the

\* Cavendish, p. 276.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 348-50.

curiosity of this multitude to witness the ejection of the great statesman who had governed them for twenty years! All the harshness of a harsh time would be attributed to him. His ecclesiastical magnificence had been paraded too long before them, to amaze and subdue as of old. Wolsey was the representative of a Church that was becoming more proud and insolent as its true greatness was fast perishing. “The authority of this cardinal,” writes the contemporary chronicler, “set the clergy in such a pride that they disdained all men.”\* In his temporal office of chancellor the fallen judge had been a protector of the poor. But every man in high office was to some extent an oppressor: “the people be ever pillied and polled by hungry dogs.”† And so Wolsey went on amidst the thousand boats to Putney, pitied by the few, scorned by the many who “watch the sign to hate.” There was one in his train to whom in that hour all the changes of his own adventurous life must have been rendered doubly vivid by local associations. Thomas Cromwell, the son of a fuller of Putney; the agent of a factory at Antwerp; the trooper in the duke of Bourbon's army at the sack of Rome; the rough tool of Wolsey in the suppression of some of the smaller monasteries,—he, through the fall of his great master, is once more likely to be cast upon a frowning world and have to fight some new battle for preferment, perhaps even for safety. The cavalcade passes through Putney town. The cardinal has knelt in the dirt when a messenger from the king has brought him a ring in token of the royal favour. He has parted with his poor fool upon Putney-heath—the faithful fool, “who took on and fired so in such a rage when he saw that he must needs depart,” even though he was sent to make sport for a jovial king, instead of abiding with a humiliated priest. Wolsey has reached his desolate house of Esher, wholly unprovided with common necessities,—with “beds, sheets, tablecloths, cups, or dishes.” It is ten years since he was wont to say to the Venetian ambassador, “I shall do so and so.”‡ He now writes to Dr. Stephen Gardiner, praying him to extend his benevolence towards him; and begging for pecuniary help from the sovereign who has stripped him of everything. These are his abject words: “Remember, good Mr. Secretary, my poor degree, and what service I have done, and how now, approaching to death, I must begin the world again.”§

\* Hall, p. 774.

† Cavendish, p. 252.

‡ Despatches of Giustiniani, translated by R. Brown.

§ Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 9.

Well might the French ambassador write, of one who had gone through such a terrible trial to a proud spirit, that Wolsey could say nothing so expressive of his pitiable condition, as what was spoken in his face, "reduced to half its usual size."\*

It is All-hallown-tide, the 1st of November, when a strange scene occurs in the Great Chamber at Esher. Cavendish, the gentleman-usher, sees Thomas Cromwell leaning on the window, with a primer in his hand, repeating his matins. But "he prayed not more earnestly than the tears distilled from his eyes." Cavendish asks, "Why, Master Cromwell, what meaneth all this your sorrow?" Cromwell answers, "It is my unhappy adventure, which am like to lose all that I have travailed for all the days of my life for doing of my master true and diligent service." He is in disdain, he says, with most men for his master's sake; and then he imparts something to Cavendish, in confidence: "Thus much will I say to you, that I intend, God willing, this afternoon, when my lord hath dined, to ride to London, and so to the court, where I will either make or mar, or I come again." The bold man accomplished the purpose upon which he had mused amidst his prayers and tears. He returned from London, and told Cavendish, "that he had once adventured to put in his foot, where he trusted shortly to be better regarded, or [ere] all were done." He had whispered some words of magical import into the ears of the king, which saved Wolsey for a season, and made himself in due time, the most powerful of Henry's servants. The parliament met on the 3rd of November. Thomas Cromwell, through some sudden influence, became a member. Sir Thomas More, as chancellor, in his opening speech, had thus harshly spoken of his predecessor. The people he said were the sheep, and the king the shepherd: "And as you see that amongst a great flock of sheep some be rotten and faulty, which the good shepherd sendeth from the good sheep, so the great wether which has of late fallen, as you all know, so craftily, so scabbedly, yea, and so untruly juggled with the king, that all men must needs guess and think that he thought in himself, that he had no wit to perceive his crafty doing."† But Cromwell was in the Commons'-house, there to save the great wether from the knife. "There could nothing be spoken against my lord in the parliament-house," says Cavendish, "but he would answer it incontinent, or else take until the next day; against which time he would resort to my lord to know what answer he should make

\* Legrand, tom. iii. p. 370.

† Hall, p. 764.

in his behalf." The articles exhibited by the Lords against Wolsey—such as his writing to Rome, "Ego et Rex meus"—his putting the cardinal's hat on his York groat—his sending large sums to Rome—and similar charges of ecclesiastical assumption, were evidently held insufficient to sustain any accusation of offence "to the prince's person or to the state," as Wolsey himself alleged. It was not Henry's purpose then to crush Wolsey. We may be sure that Cromwell would not have dared to defend him if the king had willed his condemnation. The future was too doubtful to allow the king utterly to destroy a cardinal of the Roman see, whilst there was anything to hope in the matter of the divorce from the decision of the pope. Amongst the charges against Wolsey was one which was probably introduced to make the spiritual lords his severe judges: "He hath slandered the church of England in the court of Rome, for his suggestion to be legate was to reform the church of England." It was an offence to suppose that the church needed reformation. The reforms of Wolsey had touched only "small monasteries," as he wrote to the king, "wherein neither God is served nor religion kept." The endowments of Ipswich and Oxford were his alleged purpose in the appropriation of these monastic revenues. The abbot of York, offering the cardinal three hundred marks to save the priory of Romburgh, in Suffolk, from being united to St. Peter's of Ipswich, desires that his grace would "accept my poor mind towards your most noble acts."\* It is related of Cromwell that, in speaking of what might come after the fall of his master, he said, "New statesmen, like fresh flies, bite deeper than those which were chased away before them."† When Cromwell uttered this aphorism, the time was not come when the churchmen would have interpreted the saying as prophetic of his own career.

There had not been a parliament called since 1523. During the legatine rule of Wolsey, the pecuniary exactions of the church had become oppressive to all ranks of the people. The spirituality had grown essentially worldly-minded; and any attempt to resist their encroachments was stigmatised with the terrible name of heresy. In the six weeks of their session the Commons asserted their determination to set some bounds to a power which was more obnoxious, because more systematic in its pecuniary inflictions, than the illegal subsidies and compulsory loans of the crown. That

\* "Letters relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries," p. 3.

† Lloyd's "State Worthies," ed. 1670, p. 59.

acute observer, the bishop of Bayonne, saw the storm brewing when the protecting shield of Wolsey was removed from the clergy. On the 22nd of October he writes, "It is not yet known who will have the great seal; but I firmly believe that the priests will not touch it again, and that they will have terrible alarms at this parliament."\* Sir Thomas More, as we have seen, received the seal. There was a certain point of reform to which More would go; but not a step beyond. The reformers of doctrine were as obnoxious to him as to Wolsey; who in his dying hours sent a request to the king, "in God's name, that he have a vigilant eye to depress this new pernicious sect of Lutherans."† More had the reputation of leaning "much to the spiritual men's part in all causes."‡ But, though a rigid Catholic in doctrine and discipline, he was too wise and honest not to see that the rapacity of the officials of the church, and the general laxity as to pluralities and non-residence, were shaking the foundations of ecclesiastical authority, even more than the covert hostility of the dreaded Lutherans. We cannot doubt that it was with his sanction that three important statutes were passed in this parliament of the 21st year of Henry. The statutes themselves furnish a sufficient evidence of their necessity. "An act concerning fines and sums of money to be taken by the ministers of bishops and other ordinaries of the holy church for the probate of testament," recites a statute of Edward III., made "upon the complaint of his people for the outrageous and grievous fines" so taken; and a further statute of Henry V. It then proceeds to declare "that the said unlawful exactions of the said ordinaries and their ministers be nothing reformed nor amended, but greatly augmented and increased, against right and justice, and to the great impoverishment of the king's subjects."§ This was a grievance which touched every owner of property. Sir Henry Guildford declared in parliament, that as executor to Sir William Compton he had paid for the probate of his will, to the cardinal and the archbishop of Canterbury, a thousand marks. But there was another species of exaction which fastened upon the dead with the rapacity of the vulture, -- and reached even the humblest in the land. This was the taking of mortuaries, or corpse presents; which the statute describes as "over excessive to the poor people, and other persons of this realm."|| The chronicler, reciting this grievance, says, "for the

\* Legrand, tom. iii. p. 377.

† Cavendish, p. 389.

‡ Hall, p. 771.

§ 21 Hen. VIII. c. 5.

|| *Ibid.*, c. 6.

children of the defunct should all die for hunger, and go a-begging, rather than they would of charity give to them the sely cow which the dead man ought [owned], if he had only one."\* By these two statutes the fees upon probates, and the demand for mortuaries, were brought within reasonable limits. There were other causes of complaint against the ecclesiastics. It was objected, that spiritual persons occupied farms; bought and sold at profit various kinds of produce; kept tan-houses and breweries,—all which practices were declared unlawful, and were prohibited under heavy penalties. The dissatisfaction they provoked is indicated in the recital of the benefits to be expected from their abolition,—“the increase of devotion, and good opinion of the lay fee toward the spiritual persons.”† The same statute regulates the holding of pluralities, and enforces residence; but the exceptions are so numerous that we may readily believe that there was a wide door open for the evasion of its penalties. In spite of the reforming act there would be still too many churchmen “living in the court in lords’ houses, who took all of the parishioners, and nothing spent on them at all;” and too many well-learned scholars in the universities, which were able to preach and teach, having neither benefice nor exhibition.”‡

That the ecclesiastics would stoutly resist such attacks upon long-continued abuses, which in their minds had assumed the shape of rights, was a necessary result of their extensive power. No vital blow had as yet touched the strong fabric of their prosperity; but this assault upon its outworks portended danger close at hand. Their resistance was as unwise as it was useless. Fisher, the aged bishop of Rochester, in defending the churchmen in parliament, denounced the petitions of the Commons upon the subject of probates, mortuaries, non-residence, and other causes of complaint, as intending “to bring the clergy in contempt with the laity that they might seize their patrimony;” and he said, “see what a realm the kingdom of Bohemia was, and when the church went down, then fell the glory of the kingdom: now with the Commons is nothing but ‘down with the church,’ and all this, me seemeth, is for lack of faith only.”§ At this speech the Commons were indignant, and complained to the king through their Speaker, that in the bishop’s saying about ‘lack of faith,’ they were held as infidels and not as Christians. The bishop made what the chronicler calls “a blind excuse;” he declared that he applied the words to the Bo-

\* Hall, p. 765.

† 21 Hen. VIII. c. 13.

‡ Hall, p. 765.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 766.

hemians. During the progress of the discussions in parliament on these bills there was much railing on both sides. The spiritual persons regarded the promoters of these measures as heretics and schismatics, and defended their own practices by prescription and usage. The laity retorted in the words of a barrister of Gray's Inn,—“The usage hath ever been of thieves to rob on Shooter's hill—ergo, it is lawful.” In this first great quarrel of Church and the Commons there were wounds inflicted which never healed.

At a time when ancient habits of implicit obedience to authority were in some degree passing away, and men began to think and talk of the principles of government, whether in Church or State, we can easily imagine that the exactions of the clergy, thus repressed, had produced a far deeper hostility from their meanness and injustice than from their pecuniary amount. On every side there were the evidences of the vast endowments of the English church;—splendid cathedrals, rich abbeys, shrines of inestimable value, bishops and abbots surrounded with baronial splendour, ample provision for the working clergy. And yet all the wealth of this church, acknowledged to be greater than that of any other church in Christendom, could not protect the people from the irritating demands which were generally made at the season of family affliction, and pressed too often upon the widow and the fatherless. These oppressions were more keenly felt because, however the Commons might disavow the accusation, there was a doubt, very widely spread, of the infallibility of the Church, which doubt bishop Fisher denominated “lack of faith.” It was not only the dislike of proctors, and summoners, and apparitors—a dislike as old as the days of Chaucer—which influenced many sober and religious persons; but the craving for some higher teaching than that which led to the burning of the English Testament in St. Paul's Churchyard. Many copies of Tyndale's translation had been brought into the country, “which books the common people used and daily read privily; which the clergy would not admit, for they punished such persons as had read, studied, or taught the same, with great extremity.”\* Wolsey made strenuous efforts to restrain the printing of the Scripture in the people's tongue; as we learn from a most interesting letter of Anne Boleyn to Cromwell, after she became queen: “Whereas we be credibly informed that the bearer hereof, Richard Herman, merchant and citizen of Antwerp, in Brabant, was in the time of the late lord cardinal put and expelled from his

\* Hall, p. 771.

freedom and fellowship of and in the English house there, for nothing else, as he affirmeth, but only for this—that he did loth with his goods and policy, to his great hurt and hindrance in this word, help to the setting forth of the New Testament in English.” The queen, therefore, prays the powerful secretary, to restore “this good and honest merchant “to his liberty and fellowship.\* It is painful to think that whilst this toleration sprang out of the kind heart and clear understanding of “Mistress Anne,” the equally kind nature of Sir Thomas More was so crusted over by his rigid habits of submission to the discipline of the church, that for the use and study of Tyndale's and Joy's Testaments, “he imprisoned and punished a great number, so that for this cause a great rumour and controversy rose daily amongst the people.”† These persecutions against the possessors of the Testament were a part of that system of accusations for heresy, which had rendered England a terrible country for earnest men and women to live in, who sought a higher guide to duty than the absolute direction of the priest. Contrary to the statute of Henry IV., which, however to be condemned as sanctioning the persecution of the Lollards, required that they should be openly proceeded against, accused persons were now subjected to secret examination; were detained in custody for unlimited periods; were discharged without amends; or consigned to the stake if condemned of heresy, or to make purgation and bear a faggot to their shame and undoing. These examinations were conducted in the mode invariably pursued by spiritual authorities committing the most frightful wickedness in the assured belief that they were thus saving souls: “Upon the examination of the said accusation, if heresy be ordinarily laid unto the charge of the parties so accused, then the said ordinaries or their ministers are to put to them such subtle interrogatories concerning the high mysteries of our faith, as are able quickly to trap a simple unlearned, or yet a well-witted layman without learning, and bring them by such sinister introductions soon to their own confusion.”‡ Under “such subtle interrogatories” we may believe that many a person was set upon the scaffold at Paul's Cross, to bear the faggot and to be preached at, like James Baynham, in 1531. Lucky were those who thus escaped upon their submission. Those of the heroic mould, who could look death in the face for conscience sake—as this lawyer did, who

\* Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 46.

† Hall, p. 771.

‡ Petition of the Commons, 1529, given at length in Mr. Froude's “History,” as transcribed by him from the MS. in the Rolls' House.

refused to accuse his friends in the Temple, or to show where his books were, recanting his former abjuration,—such had to abide the fires of Smithfield, and find an honourable place in the Protestant martyrology.

Wolsey was a bold financier, and his projects, as we have seen, were not always successful when he attempted to raise money without the instrumentality of parliament. But when Wolsey was gone, there appeared less scrupulous managers of the royal revenues than the unhesitating cardinal. The king had obtained very large sums, by way of loan, from public bodies, and from individuals, in 1525, when the insurrections of Suffolk compelled him to withdraw the demand for a sixth of every man's substance. Those who had lent the money,—and Wolsey had used his rhetoric most unsparingly to swell the number,—“reckoned surely of the payment of the same, and therefore some made their wills of the same, and some other did set it over to other for debt.”\* The Lords and Commons had the audacity to renounce all claims to these base loans, not only for themselves, but for every man to whom the king was indebted, in consideration of his highness's constant labours to defend his kingdom, to uphold the church, and to establish peace amongst his subjects. For, say they, his highness “hath been fain to employ, not only such sums of money as hath risen and grown by any man's contribution made unto his grace by his said loving subjects, but also, over and above the same, sundry other and excellent sums of his own treasure, and yearly revenues, which else his grace might have kept and reserved for his own use.”† After this avowal, we may understand better how hard a struggle it has been to attain the principle and practice of a constitutional monarchy, the leading idea of which is, that the high place and prerogative of the crown is a trust for the benefit of the people; and that its hereditary revenues, after setting aside a fitting portion for the royal dignity, are for maintaining the safety and peace of the realm. It required all the insolent despotism of a Tudor to humiliate the parliament to an assertion that the enormous revenues which the Plantagenets had never hesitated to spend for public objects, were to be deemed as private funds, “which his grace might have kept and reserved to his own use.”

The parliament, which had accomplished such salutary reforms, and also perpetrated such gross injustice, was prorogued on the 17th December. “After the parliament was thus ended, the king removed

\* Hall, p. 767.

† 21 Hen VIII. c. 24.

to Greenwich, and there kept his Christmas with the queen in great triumph; with great plenty of viands, and divers disguisings and interludes, to the great rejoicing of his people.”\* In quoting this passage from the chronicler, Mr. Froude attributes this great rejoicing to a feeling of exultation at the church reforms effected by the parliament: “Lay England celebrated its exploits as a national victory.”† We fear that “lay England” was moved to its rejoicing by more vulgar considerations than the historian ascribes to this festive season. The statement of the chronicler must be compared with his previous notices of occasions of popular enthusiasm. We will take one of the third year of Henry: “The king this year kept the feast of Christmas at Greenwich, where was such abundance of viands served, to all comers of any honest behaviour, as hath been few times seen.” The “all comers” would shout over “the great plenty of viands,” though “when the release of the loan was known to the commons of the realm, lord! so they grudged and spoke ill of the whole parliament.”‡ Some simple people probably rejoiced that the king “kept his Christmas with the queen.” Those who saw the inside of the palace would not have hastily judged that the affair of the divorce was at an end because the great cardinal had fallen, and no mention was made of this unhappy matter in the parliament. On the 31st of December there is this record in the king's ‘Privy Purse Expenses:’ “Item, the last day delivered by the king's commandment to my lady Anne, Cx li.” At the end of November there is paid the enormous sum of 217*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.* “to Walter Walsh, for certain stuff by him prepared for Mistress Anne, of divers persons, as appeareth by a bill.” During this holiday-time we find, in the same book of expenses, evidence that one of Henry's early follies had not been extinguished by politics and polemics. In the second year of his reign Hall has this remark: “The king this time was much enticed to play at tennis and at dice, which appetite certain crafty persons about him perceiving, brought in Frenchmen and Lombards to make wagers with him.§ In his twenty-first year, the privy-purse keeper “delivered to the king's own hands for to game therewith, now at this time of Christmas,” 100*l.*; and on Twelfth night, 112*l.* 10*s.* 0*d.* In January there are four entries of payments for moneys lost by the king “at game:”—To Domingo, 400*l.*; to sir Thomas Palmer, 338*l.* 10*s.* 9*d.*; to Master Seymour, 376*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*; to my

\* Hall, p. 768. † “History,” vol. i. p. 233. ‡ Hall, p. 767. § *Ibid.*, p. 520.

lord of Suffolk 102*l.* 10*s.* 0*d.*\* The royal custom has survived amongst us in many a notorious example. The loans advanced by honest creditors are repudiated; the gambling debts to "crafty persons" are scrupulously discharged. He who said that "kings are fond of low company," must have had Henry, amongst others, in his mind. Domingo, and Palmer, were two hangers-on of the court, who made the king thus pay for their powers of amusement,—far more ignoble servants than his fools, Somers, Sexton, and Williams. Skelton, seven years before the king lost 400*l.* to Domingo, had celebrated the court doings of this worthy, who was a Lombard:—

"Domingo Lomelyn,  
That was wont to win  
Much money of the king  
At the cards and hazarding."†

But after these Christmas revelries, Henry's intimate sharpers walking off with their plunder, he has serious business on his hand. The disguisings and interludes of Greenwich, with Mistress Anne ever the gayest of the throng, whilst the queen sits in her solitary chamber, make the king more and more impatient on the subject of the divorce. The emperor is to be crowned by the pope at Bologna, in February, 1530. On the 23rd of January we find that the sum of 1743*l.* 8*s.* 0*d.* is paid "by the king's commandment for the depeachment of my lord Wiltshire and others, in their journey towards the emperor." "My lord of Wiltshire" was Anne Boleyn's father. The "others" were Doctor Stokesley, elected bishop of London, and Doctor Henry Lee, the king's almoner. With them were also "divers doctors both of law and divinity." Amongst these was Thomas Cranmer, who was an inmate of the house of the earl of Wiltshire. This divine, who occupies so prominent a part in the history of the Reformation, had now reached the discreet age of forty. He had obtained at the university of Cambridge a reputation for talent and learning; and Wolsey had offered him a fellowship in his new college at Oxford. This Cranmer declined. An accidental circumstance led to his passing from his quiet studies to the dangerous intrigues of the court. Whilst the sweating sickness prevailed at Cambridge, in 1528, Cranmer resided with a friend at Waltham Abbey. Gardiner and Fox, afterwards bishops, met him at the table of his

\* Sir N. H. Nicolas, "Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII" pp. 4-17.

† Skelton's Works, Mr. Dyce's edit., vol. i. p. 63.

friend; and the conversation turning upon the agitated matter of the divorce, he expressed his opinion that the question, whether a man might marry his brother's widow, might be settled upon scriptural authority, expounded by learned divines, which opinions could be obtained as well in England as from Rome. The notion was communicated to the king; and Cranmer had to work out his lucky idea in a book which he was desired to write. He maintained that the marriage of Henry was condemned by the authority of the Scriptures, and that of councils and fathers of the church; and that the pope had no power to give a dispensation opposed to those sources of belief. In the embassy to the emperor, which was truly an embassy to Clement VII., Cranmer was associated to defend his own propositions.

The pope was at Bologna, an unwilling agent in the humiliation of Italy. The war with the imperialists had desolated the fairest spots of Lombardy. Famine and pestilence had completed the misery which war had begun. There is a letter from sir Nic. Carew to Henry, dated from Bologna, the 12th of December, which presents as striking a picture as was ever drawn of the wide-spreading misery produced by the contests of ambition. In travelling fifty miles they saw no creature stirring in rural industry, except three women gathering grapes rotting upon the vines. In Pavia the children were crying about the streets for bread. There was neither horse-meat nor man's meat to be found. "There is no hope many years that Italia shall be restored, for want of people."\* Clement, the weak and vacillating bishop of Rome, but the patriotic Italian prince, had, amidst this misery, to place the crown on the head of Charles, as king of Lombardy and emperor of the Romans. The ceremony took place at Bologna on the 24th of February. One who was present at the coronation, and stood between the throne of the emperor and the pope, says that Clement "endeavoured to put on the most cheerful countenance in giving the emperor the sword, and placing the first crown on his head;" but he adds, "I believe that he never in his life performed a ceremony which so nearly touched his heart. For several times, when he thought that no one was observing him, he breathed such heavy sighs that his robe [chape] heavy as it was, was heaved up, as might well be seen."† Before the emperor departed from Bologna the earl of Wiltshire had arrived. He had a difficult office to per-

\* State Papers, vol. vii. p. 226.

† Letter of the bishop of Tarbes, dated February 24. Legrand, tom. iii. p. 386.

form—that of moving the pope to a decided course, in the presence of Charles, who had very sufficient reasons for strenuously resisting the demands of Henry. He had to conciliate the emperor, by offering the restitution of queen Catherine's original dowry. He had to work upon the pope's fears, by intimating that "the Defender of the Faith" would pursue his own career, if the holy see was inimical, without bending to its authority. To the father of Anne Boleyn the emperor objected that he was an interested party in the case; and although the earl replied with spirit, that he was there only as the subject and servant of his master, and to express the scruples of his conscience and his firm intention no longer to live in sin, Charles maintained a resolute attitude of hostility to the whole proceeding.\* The unhappy pope was in a fearful perplexity. He said to the bishop of Tarbes, several times, that he cared not how the marriage of Henry should be accomplished, by dispensation of the legate in England, or otherwise. All that he desired was to shift his personal responsibility.† The embassy returned home, having effected nothing. Cranmer remained, with the desire to contend the matter in a public disputation; but he was not permitted thus to support the opinions of his treaties, or to set forth the favourable decisions of some foreign universities which had been already obtained.

The declarations which were gathered from the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and from universities and ecclesiastical bodies in France and Italy, were favourable to the desires of the king of England, as they pronounced against the lawfulness of his marriage with his brother's widow. It has been a subject of historical contention whether these opinions were given with perfect fairness; or whether intimidation and bribery were not resorted to. Into this discussion it is scarcely necessary for us to enter. There are some characteristic letters of Henry, which clearly enough show that the younger members of the university of Oxford were frightened into a submission which the seniors readily yielded. When such a sovereign sent to the convocation his command that they should not lean "to wilful and sinister opinions of your own several minds;" and desired the heads of houses to conduce and frame the young persons into order and conformity; for "if the youth of the university will play masteries as they begin to do, we doubt not but they shall well perceive that non est bonum irritare

\* In a second letter of the bishop of Tarbes. Legrand, iii. p. 400.

† Legrand, iii. p. 400.

crabrones" [it is not good to disturb a hornet's nest]—then, he may be sure, it was quite unnecessary surreptitiously to affix to the decision the university seal gotten out "by strange subtil means," as queen Catherine intimated. Cambridge also admitted the unlawfulness of the marriage, according to the divine law; but gave no answer upon the question whether the pope had power to grant a dispensation. In March, 1531, these opinions were laid before the House of Commons; and More, as chancellor, said, "Now you of this Commons House may report in your countries what you have seen and heard; and then all men shall openly perceive that the king has not attempted this matter of will or pleasure, as some strangers report, but only for the discharge of his conscience, and surety of the succession of the realm."\* More, in his inmost heart, disliked the whole measure, and these official words must have come very hesitatingly from his lips. The religious plea, "for the discharge of his conscience;" and the political plea of the "surety of the succession of the realm," were the self-deceptions with which Henry covered the impulses of his own passions, prompting him to the grossest cruelty and injustice. The able historian who sets up the state necessity as an excuse for many of the enormities of this reign, considers that this question was one "vitally affecting the interests of a great nation;" and avers that "the laity, with the alternative before them of civil war, and the returning miseries of the preceding century, could brook no judgment which did not answer to their wishes."† Is it to be believed that the remote possibility of a disputed succession had thus interested the laity,—by which term we understand the body of the people,—to become enthusiastic supporters of the king's personal desire to put away the companion of more than half his life,—the mother of a daughter to whom their allegiance would have been readily transferred on the event of the king's death without the slightest chance of civil war? The English people were not then, nor have they been at any time, so ready to encounter a great present difficulty for a contingent danger. The general opinion is pretty clearly set forth by the contemporary chronicler: "When these determinations were published, all wise men in the realm much abhorred this marriage: but women, and such as were more wilful than wise or learned, spake against the determination, and said that the universities were corrupt, and enticed so to do,—which is not to be thought." The voice of nature

\* Hall, p. 780.

† Froude, "History," vol. i. p. 250.

spoke by the mouths of "women and such as were more wilful than wise or learned." They understood not the subtleties by which the so called "wise men" justified oppression. Those who desired the reform of the church did not see that this harsh measure was a step towards purity of doctrine. The foreign Protestants were decidedly hostile to what was held, by friend and by foe, not as a religious question, or a national question, but was denominated "the king's cause."

Whilst the earl of Wiltshire is vainly exercising his diplomatic skill upon the pope and the emperor, and Cranmer is vainly endeavouring to convince the Italian priests and the German Lutherans that a papal dispensation was of no avail, Wolsey has passed out of political life; and is doing his duty with a heartiness deserving of all respect. In the first prostration of his powerful mind, when he saw nothing before him but poverty and disgrace, he wrote to Cromwell from Esher, "Mine only comfort. At the reverence of God leave me not now, for if ye do, I shall not longer live in this wretched world."\* But Cromwell writes comfortable letters to his fallen master; who, next to the means of his future subsistence, has the deepest anxiety about the maintenance of his colleges, of which he dreaded the dissolution. He urges with a warmth that does him honour, that "great pity it is that for my commission in the præmunire, these poor scholars should suffer, either by dissolution of their body corporate, or by taking away any notable portion of their lands." Early in February, Wolsey received a general pardon; and having been assured of the temporalities of the see of York, he took up his residence in the archiepiscopal city. The council had agreed to advance him a sum for the expenses of his journey, to which the king had added a thousand pounds. A circular letter was also sent with the royal signet, calling upon the nobles and gentlemen of the country to show themselves as regarded him, "of toward and benevolent mind, using, entreating, and accepting him as to his dignity doth appertain."† The archbishop had now confidence in the kindness of Henry. He told Cavendish that in the matter of the præmunire he thought it better to take all blame upon himself "than to stand in trial with the king;" and he added,—"There was a continual serpentine enemy about the king that would, I am well assured, if I had been found stiff-necked, have called continually upon the king in his ear (I mean the night-crow) with such a vehemency that I should, with

\* State Papers, vol. i. p. 359.

† Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 17.

the help of her assistance, have obtained sooner the king's indignation than his lawful favour, and his favour once lost (which I trust at this present I have) would never have been by me recovered."\* Wolsey was deceived in his reliance upon his sovereign's "lawful favour." Upon the gratitude or generosity of that man no friend could rely. "The king," says Hall, "all this year dissembled the matter, to see what he [Wolsey] would do at length." What he did was in the highest degree commendable. He lived with rational hospitality instead of ostentatious grandeur. "He kept a noble house, and plenty of both meat and drink for all comers, both for rich and poor, and much alms given at his gates. . . . He used much charity and pity among his poor tenants and other. . . . He was much more familiar among all persons than he was accustomed, and most gladdest when he had an occasion to do them good."† This is the tribute of an affectionate follower. After he was dead, a book was published, bearing an official character, in which it was said, that "he gave bishops a right good example how they might win men's hearts." There is a most interesting letter from Cromwell to Wolsey, dated from London the 18th of August, in which the tone is that of sincerity and affection, mixed with some familiar advice, which sufficiently shows the altered positions of the proud cardinal and his once humble retainer. The magnificence which the great minister had practised for twenty years, had become too much a part of his nature to be wholly changed for true simplicity of life in his altered fortunes; "Sir, I assure your grace, that ye be much bound to Our Lord God, that in such wise hath suffered you so to behave and order yourself, in those parts, to attain the good minds and hearts of the people there; the report whereof in the court and elsewhere in these parts, is and hath been to the acquiring and augmenting the good opinions of many persons towards your grace; beseeching your grace, therefore, to continue in the same, after such a sort and fashion as ye may daily increase, not only in the favour of the people there, but also here and elsewhere, to the pleasure of God, and the prince. And notwithstanding your good, virtuous, and charitable demeaning and using yourself, in those parts, is not by your enemies interpreted after the best fashion, yet always follow and persevere ye attemperately in such things as, your worldly affections set apart, shall seem to stand best with the pleasure of God, and the king. Sir, some there be, that doth allege that your

\* Cavendish, p. 316.

† *Ibid.*, p. 318.



grace doth keep too great a house and family, and that ye are continually building; for the love of God, therefore, I eftsoons, as I often times have done, most heartily beseech your grace to have respect to everything, and, considering the time, to refrain yourself, for a season, from all manner buildings, more than mere necessity requireth; which I assure your grace shall cease, and put to silence, some persons that much speaketh of the same.\*

Within little more than two months after this warning of Cromwell, the enemies of Wolsey prevailed for the accomplishment of his complete ruin. Whether the influence of "the night-crow" operated upon the royal mind, so as to render the complaints of an impulsive and frank-speaking woman the chief incentive to a dire malignity, can only be conjectured. Wolsey had offended Anne Boleyn in 1528 by appointing a prioress to be an abbess of Wilton, when Henry had promised her that such appointment should not be made.† He perhaps had more seriously offended her by his hesitating conduct in the matter of the divorce. But no new cause of offence, to the king or to herself, is revealed by any authentic historical documents. On the 4th of November, the time approaching for his installation at York as archbishop, Wolsey was sitting at dinner at Cawood Castle, when he was told that the earl of Northumberland was come into his hall, with a great company. Wolsey went to receive him, and proffered him the hospitality of his house. He led the earl into his bed-chamber, "where," as the courteous host he said, "is a good fire," and there "ye may shift your apparel until your chamber be made ready." Cavendish kept the door as gentleman-usher. "These two lords standing at a window by the chimney, in my lord's bed-chamber, the earl trembling said, with a very faint and soft voice unto my lord (laying his hand upon his arm), 'My lord, I arrest you of high treason.'" Wolsey was committed to the custody of the earl's people, Cavendish having been chosen to attend upon him as the chief person, and taking an oath that was prescribed to him. In a few days they departed, amidst the tears and prayers of the archbishop's household. As he passed out of the gates of Cawood Castle, three thousand people surrounded him, exclaiming, "God save your grace, God save your grace! The foul evil take all them that hath thus taken you from us." The unhappy man must have had some cheering thoughts in that ominous hour. He was not wholly deserted. He had earned the blessings of the poor. He remained at Shef-

\* State Papers, vol. i. p. 366.

† *Ibid.*, p. 314.

field-park for a fortnight, under the charge of the earl of Shrewsbury. Here he became ill. Thither came Master Kingston, the constable of the Tower. Wolsey knew well what the presence of that officer implied. Kingston said some soothing words to him, such as gaolers were sometimes wont to speak to state prisoners. He replied, "Master Kingston, all these comfortable words which ye have spoken be but for a purpose to bring me into a fool's paradise: I know what is provided for me." After three days' riding, the sick man and his guards reached Leicester Abbey; and he was received by torch-light, with great reverence, on a Saturday night. "Father abbot, I am come hither to leave my bones among you," were his memorable words. On the following Tuesday he was at the point of death; when he uttered these more memorable words to Master Kingston: "If I had served God as diligently as I have done the king, he would not have given me over in my gray hairs. He died on the 29th of November, aged 59. Cavendish, after the funeral, repaired to London; and was sent for by the king to come to Hampton Court. Henry was shooting at the rounds in the park. The gentleman-usher leant against a tree; when Henry came suddenly behind him, and slapt him on the shoulder, telling him to wait till he had made an end of his game. Cavendish then discoursed with him for more than an hour. One rankling grief was upon the sovereign's mind, with reference to the friend and adviser of twenty years. A sum of fifteen hundred pounds had been entered in Wolsey's accounts, which entry the earl of Northumberland had seen. Kingston had pressed the dying man to account for the money, who said that he had borrowed it to distribute amongst his servants, and for his own burial; and had placed it in the hands of an honest man. The chief business of this magnanimous king with Cavendish was to obtain the knowledge where this treasure was hidden; and Cavendish told him. "Well, then," quoth the king, "let me alone, and keep this gear secret between yourself and me, and let no man be privy thereof; for if I hear any more of it, then I know by whom it is come to knowledge."\* He had broken the great heart of his too faithful servant; but he thought only of the contents of the money-bags, to be appropriated to jewels for my lady Anne, and to wagers with Domingo.

\* Cavendish, p. 398.