

rington found the sons of Tyrone learning it, to whom he gave his translation of Ariosto. But the rebellious earl had still his "boys" about him, "without shirts, who, in the frost, wade as familiarly through rivers as water-spaniels." Harrington says, "With what charm such a master makes them love him, I know not; but if he bid come, they come; if go, they do go; if he say do this, they do it." They lived, as Tyrone said, as "wolves, that fill their bellies sometime, and fast as long for it."\* But full or starving they were faithful. The charm was in the interchange of service and protection; in the reverence for claims that went back, through song and tradition, to the days of cairns and cromlechs. Nothing could weaken these claims, and convert a land of sept into a nation, but a real paternal government; and such a government was not likely to proceed out of the selfish despotism of the eighth Henry. Although he had some able advisers in the Irish Council, a detestable policy was at the root of their measures. There was ever a suspicion where confidence might have begot allegiance; and a low treachery which met its reward in lip-service and conspiracy. A government must have been essentially base when its chief legal officer thus advises: "Because the nature of Irish men is such, that for money one shall have the son to war against the father, and the father against the child, it shall be necessary that the king's grace have always treasure here, as a present remedy against sudden rebellions."†

\* "Nugæ Antiquæ," vol. i. p. 248.

† J. Allen to Scutiger, State Papers, vol. ii. p. 485.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Three years without an English parliament.—Proclamation for the abolition of holidays.—The Lincolnshire insurrection.—Demands of the insurgents.—The king's answer.—The Yorkshire insurrection.—The Lancaster Herald at Poulfret.—Negotiations with the Yorkshire rebels.—They disperse.—Disturbed state of the Northern counties.—Second rebellion.—The rebels defeated.—Executions.—Martial law proclaimed.—Birth of prince Edward.—Death of queen Jane.—Immediate proceedings for a new marriage of the king.—Position of Cranmer and Cromwell.—The Bible set up in parish churches.—Papists and heretics.—Trial of Lambert before Henry.—Burnings in Smithfield.—Surrenders of the larger religious houses.—Visitations of the Commissioners.—Relics and images.—"Abomination of living" in monasteries.—Concealment of property.—Abbot of Glastonbury.—Deprivations.—Pensions.—Plunder.—Destruction of monastic houses.

THE English parliament soon did the work which it was called together to do in 1536; and the executive, seeing vast pecuniary resources within its reach, did not care for three more years to be troubled with a representative body. Henry, with his new queen, was passing the autumn amidst "the large green courts" and "the wild forest" of Windsor; happy, if it were possible, in forgetfulness of the past. Yet startling memories must sometimes have obtruded upon him—slight associations that must have for a moment disturbed his selfish complacency. Thus, when he looked upon the dedication to him of Coverdale's first Bible, and saw the mode in which the name of his queen was introduced,—by printing J. A. over the original A. N., so that "Anne" might be changed to "Jane,"—the clumsiness of the substitution might have suggested the moral deformity of his own work. But he soon had stirring occupation. A large body of his English subjects were in rebellion.

On the 2nd of October, 1536, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were to hold their Visitation at Louth. The smaller monastic houses had been suppressed. The progress of the official inquiry into the condition of all houses of religion appeared only a prelude to their final extinction. The parochial clergy were called upon, in the king's name, no longer to teach that there was any virtue in relics or images; or that pilgrimages were beneficial exercises of faith. They were also to make known the royal proclamation for



the abolition of many holidays, especially those of the harvest-season. There appears some principle of utility in declaring that the harvest-time holidays were "much to the hindrance of the gathering in of corn, hay, fruit, and other such-like necessary and profitable commodities." But even a material good cannot suddenly be effected, nor ought it to be, when it is revolting to the ancient habits of a people. The ecclesiastical reformers saw, in some of these holidays, the superstitions of the earlier times of the Church engrafted upon the customs of Roman heathenism. They did not see how they had a still deeper foundation in the natural feelings of the human heart. The harvest-time was, to the great body of the people, a time of uncontrollable gladness; for their food became cheap after the long period of privation which they had to endure, when their small stores of barley and rye were exhausted. Potatoes were then unknown. The esculents of the garden were little cultivated. Under these circumstances the labourer was not very likely to neglect his reaping to make holiday before the harvest was wholly gathered. But in the final ceremony of the hock-cart, when the last load of corn was crowned with flowers; when the rude image, derived from the classic Ceres, rode on the wain; when the shouting crowd would "bless the cart," and "cross the fill-horse," and

"some with great  
Devotion stroke the home-borne wheat;" \*

it may readily be imagined that the early reformers, who were not yet prepared to deal with essential differences in a spirit of religious liberty, would strive to suppress such popular traces of "the old learning." On the 2nd of October, then, in Louth, the ecclesiastical commissioners, instead of proceeding quietly to their occupation, found a great body of peasantry in arms, clamouring for their holidays; and proclaiming that they were gathered together for the maintenance of the faith, which was about to be destroyed. The course of this Lincolnshire insurrection, and of one more formidable which followed in Yorkshire, may be minutely traced in the official letters and proclamations of the period.

The "Answer to the Petitions of the Rebels and Traitors of Lincolnshire," by Henry, fully shows what was the character of their demands. They objected to the councillors that were about the king, and the prelates that he had appointed. He replies that

\* Herrick.

he had never read nor heard, that "princes' councillors and prelates should be appointed by rude and ignorant common people;" and he adds, "how presumptuous then are ye, the rude commons of one shire, and that one of the most brute and beastly of the whole realm, and of least experience, to find fault with your prince, for the electing of his councillors and prelates."\* This was not a polite expression from a king to his lieges; but probably the inhabitants of the fenny country, of old the seat of a peculiar population, were more than commonly opposed to innovations, and might therefore be rated as "brute and beastly" in manifesting the ancient Saxon stubbornness. According to this rough answer of the king, they objected "to the suppression of religious houses and monasteries." The parliament, said the king, had granted them to him. There were none suppressed but where there was abomination of living. He derided the alleged hospitality of those who spent the substance of their goods in nourishing vice. Their possessions were much better in the hands of their sovereign lord, who spent his own possessions in the defence of his people. It was the same with the First Fruits, to which they also objected. When they demanded a release from the subsidy which had been granted, he answered, "Think ye that we be so faint-hearted that, perforce, ye of one shire,—were ye a great many more—would compel us with your insurrections and such rebellions to remit the same?" So Henry reasoned with these angry men, and told them no more to intermeddle with the weighty affairs of the realm. His arguments were supported by the approach of some military force, under the duke of Suffolk, and the earls of Shrewsbury, Rutland and Huntingdon. The prior of Oxney, and a leader named Melton, who assumed the name of Captain Cobler, could no longer keep together the terrified bands, when the king's troops were nigh at hand, and the royal proclamation had somewhat appeased them. It may appear strange, that a monarch so despotic as Henry should have entered into discussion, through his proclamations, with rebels in arms. But the danger was not foreseen. The earth was heaving, and toppling down old institutions; but the Crown was fancied to be safe. The king was terribly alarmed. Wriothesley wrote to Cromwell, "his grace's pleasure is, you shall go to the Jewel-House in the Tower, and there take as much plate as you shall think his grace shall not necessarily occupy, and put it strait to coining. His grace appeareth to fear much this matter, specially if he should

\* State Papers, vol. i. p. 463.



want money.\* On the 13th of October the Lincolnshire rebels dispersed; and the Lancaster herald, who had read and posted up his proclamation at Louth, went on to Pontefract, where he had a more obstinate assembly to deal with. His report is one of the most curious pictures remaining of the state of English society.

Thomas Myller, Lancaster Herald, was approaching the town of Pomfret, wearing the king's coat of arms, when he overtook a large number of the rebels, "being common people of the husbandry." They saluted him gently, and gave honour to his badge of office. The herald asked, why they were in harness; and they said it was for the commonwealth, and that if they did not so, the commonalty and the church would be destroyed. Some of them the herald persuaded to disperse, telling them that the notion that the king was about to tax them when they wedded, or christened, or buried, was a false rumour. Riding into the town the herald was about to fix his proclamation on the market-cross, when he was prevented, and commanded to go to the castle. He passed through three wards, full of harnessed men, "very cruel fellows;" and was brought into the hall, full of people. He got upon the high table, and showed the cause of his coming; when he was conveyed into another chamber. There sat Robert Aske, the captain of the rebellious host; with the archbishop of York, lord Darcy, and other honourable persons. But Aske sat there, "keeping his port and countenance, as though he had been a great prince, with great rigour, and like a tyrant." He gave no reverence to the herald's tale, but demanded a sight of his proclamation; and then told him that it should not be read at the market-cross, nor in any other place amongst his people; and he set forth the articles of reformation which he sought, and for which he would die. "And I fell down of my knee before him," says the herald, "showing him how I was a messenger, and charged by the king's council to read the proclamation, which I brought, for my discharge." But Aske declared that he should not read it; led him by the arm out of the castle; and there proclaimed that he that wore the king's coat should go safe, under pain of death. That bending of the knee to Robert Aske cost Thomas Myller his life. He was indicted for high treason in kneeling down before traitors, with the king's most honourable coat of arms on his back, and so encouraging and comforting them; and he suffered death at York, in the following year.†

\* State Papers, vol. i. p. 482.

† *Ibid.*, p. 485.

Straitened for want of money; having no standing army at his command; relying upon the prompt aid of nobles, some of whom were not favourable to extreme changes in religion,—the king appears to have conducted himself in the beginning of these insurrections with some prudence and moderation. It was a great crisis, and he met it, under all its difficulties, with the decision of character which belonged to him for good or for evil. His pecuniary means were so scanty that Wriothesley, the Secretary of State, wrote to Cromwell, on the 21st of October, "I think your lordship should not only do the king high service to send him, for his help, four or five hundred pounds with speed, but win his heart therewith for ever."\* Henry, from his castle of Windsor, gives minute directions for the movements of a few troops which the duke of Norfolk and the other nobles had with them. He commends "the politic device" of Norfolk. He exhorts him "never to give stroke" unless he thought he had some great advantage over the rebels. He trusted very much to his own elaborate answers to the demands of the insurgents. But, however, indicating his vigilance and energy, these documents are curiously indicative of the capricious and jealous temper of the king, rather than of the sober consistency of responsible advisers. He promises mercy, and threatens vengeance, in a style which exhibits more of weakness than of strength. His "most noble and princely heart," he says to the rebels, "is touched with more mercy, pity, and compassion of you, and of your poor wives and innocent children, than your deserts have merited;" but if you "continue one whole day longer, after the receipt hereof, we shall execute all extremity against you, your wives and children, without mercy to the most terrible and fearful example of all others whilst the world shall endure hereafter."† In his correspondence he shows his despotic character to those who were striving to serve him. He is exceedingly indignant that Norfolk recommended a free general pardon, and a parliament to be summoned. The crafty nature of the man is abundantly shown in these instructions. His agent, sir John Russell, brought the pardon in his pocket, to be used only in the last necessity. But meanwhile Norfolk was to hold out to the rebels hopes that he might obtain such pardon from the king; and, if they made any special conditions, to keep them in suspense for twenty days, until new forces were brought up. What he meant is indicated by his subsequent reproach to Norfolk that he "fell to a point to the

\* State Papers, vol. i. p. 489.

† *Ibid.*, p. 470.



rebels," when he had declared that he would not hold his honour violated if he kept no promise made to them.\* There were forty thousand of the insurgents in arms on one side of the river Don, with the king's forces on the other side. The chroniclers record that no battle took place, because the shallow stream "suddenly rose of such a height, depthness, and breadth, that the like no men that there did inhabit could tell that ever they saw it there before."† No blood was shed in fight. Shrewsbury writes on the 29th of October that the rebels had dispersed, and the king's army was dissolved. It was this which provoked Henry's indignation. Yet he was compelled to yield to circumstances; and he emulated the prudence of Norfolk, by writing a courteous letter to Aske, the leader of the insurgents, inviting him to come to him, as "we have conceived a great desire to speak with you, and to hear, of your mouth, the whole circumstance and beginning of that matter."‡ The pardoned rebel went to the king; and he returned, to receive Henry's letter, thanking him for "his good endeavours for the stay of such our subjects, as have been moved or inclined to a new commotion."§ The disturbed state of the northern counties at this time, January 1537, is graphically described in two letters from Ralph Sadler to Cromwell. He was proceeding on an embassy to Scotland. Between Doncaster and York, there were bills posted up on the church doors, with these words, in effect: "Commons, be ye true amongst yourselves, and stick one to another, for the gentlemen have deceived you; but yet, if need be, ye shall lack no captains."|| Passing from York to Newcastle, he found the people much excited by a report that the duke of Norfolk was coming "with a great army and power, to do execution, and to hang and draw, from Doncaster to Berwick, in all places northward, notwithstanding the king's pardon."¶ He reached Darlington about six o'clock in the evening; and having entered his inn, about thirty or forty persons assembled in the street, with clubs and bats, and a large crowd soon gathered together. The host of the inn said that when any one came out of the south, they always thus gathered, to hear news. Sadler observed that such assemblies were unlawful, and that the heads of the town ought to lay some of them by the heels. "God defend," said the prudent host; "for so might we bring a thousand men in our tops within an hour." The innkeeper pacified them, in some sort. But they demanded to know when the duke

\* State Papers, p. 514 and p. 519.

† Hall, p. 233.

‡ State Papers, vol. ii. p. 543

§ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 529.

|| *Ibid.*, 526.

¶ *Ibid.*, 530.

of Norfolk would come, and with what company; and Sadler sent them word that he would be at Doncaster on Candlemas-day, and bring none with him but his household servants. At Newcastle, the mayor and aldermen had reasoned and threatened the commons into obedience; and had placed cannon upon the walls and gates, which ordnance the merchants had brought out of their ships; and they had made new gates of iron upon the bridge, and had victualled the town for a whole year. Such preparations sufficiently show that the character of this northern revolt was very formidable;—that the mass of the people, so rarely stirred into insurrection, were agitated by a deep feeling, stronger than their habitual obedience to their political rulers; and that the name which had been given to their dangerous enterprise, The Pilgrimage of Grace, expressed a sentiment well calculated to make them feel as heroes and martyrs. They broke out again into open rebellion in February. A parliament, to be held at York, had been promised by Norfolk on the first outbreak. The promise was not kept; and the leaders, lord Darcy, Aske, and others, were again in arms. Yet the men of influence, for the most part, adhered to the government. Norfolk writes from Pomfret, on the 3rd of February, "I think never man was more welcome, of my degree, to the gentlemen of the country, than I am; which, without doubt, is most principally for their own safeguards, being in the greatest fear of the people that ever I saw men."\* But Norfolk had come with other company than those of his own household. The insurgents made an attack upon Carlisle, and also upon Hull. They were unsuccessful; and their leaders were taken prisoners. Martial law was proclaimed; and, says the chronicler, threescore and fourteen of them were hanged on Carlisle walls. There was a terrible interval for the leaders of the insurrection. In the brief entries in the chronicle of a religious fraternity of London, we have a more fearful picture of the severities which followed the northern tumults than in the most elaborate descriptions. On the 29th of March, which was on Maundy Thursday, the Lincolnshire men were hanged, and headed, and quartered. They had been brought out of Newgate to the Guildhall in ropes, and there had their judgment. On the 14th of May, lord Darcy and lord Hussey were condemned at Westminster. On the 25th of May, Sir John Bulmer, and five others, of whom three were ecclesiastics, were executed at Tyburn; and the lady Bulmer was burnt at Smithfield. On the 2nd of June, sir Thomas

\* State Papers, 534.



Percy, sir Francis Bigod, and three others, of whom two were ecclesiastics, were hanged and headed at Tyburn. On the 20th of June lord Darcy was beheaded at Tower-hill.\* We may add that lord Hussey was executed at Lincoln; sir Robert Constable at Hull; and Robert Aske and the unfortunate Lancaster herald at York. But if the commands of the king were not disobeyed,—a very unlikely circumstance—there was a far more terrible vengeance than these executions of the leaders. Thus writes Henry to Norfolk, on the 22nd of February, commending him for having displayed the king's banner; "by reason whereof, till the same shall be closed again, the course of our laws must give place to the ordinances and estatutes martial. Our pleasure is, that, before you shall close up our said banner again, you shall, in any wise, cause such dreadful execution to be done upon a good number of the inhabitants of every town, village, and hamlet, that have offended in this rebellion as well by the hanging them up in trees, as by the quartering of them, and the setting of their heads and quarters in every town, great and small, and in all such other places, as they may be a fearful spectacle to all others hereafter that would practise any like matter; which we require you to do, without pity or respect, according to our former letters." The king adds to this command one equally stringent. "Norfolk is to repair to certain specified abbeyes, and all other places where there has been resistance to the suppression, or conspiracy, where "you shall, without pity or circumstance, now that our banner is displayed, cause all the monks and canons that be in any wise faulty, to be tied up, without further delay or ceremony, to the terrible example of others." Seven months after, his highness grows merciful, and begs Norfolk, "concerning punishment," to "remember they be our subjects, though evil men and offenders." †

It would seem, from a curious passage in Hall's Chronicle, that in this season of trouble there was sympathy for the northern rebels even in the neighbourhood of Henry's palace of Windsor: "In this time of insurrection, and in the rage of hurley-burley, even when the king's army and the rebels were ready to join, the

\* Chronicle of the Grey Friars, p. 40.

† Thus we read in State Papers, vol. i. p. 537 and p. 565. It is from some higher authority, no doubt, that we are told, "The rebellion was put down; and in the punishment of the offenders there was unusual leniency; not more than thirty persons were executed, although forty thousand had been in arms."—Mr. Froude, in "Fraser's Magazine," January, 1867.

king's banner being displayed, and the king's majesty then lying at Windsor, there was a butcher dwelling within five miles of Windsor which caused a priest to preach that all such as took part with the Yorkshiremen, whom he named God's people, did fight and defend God's quarrel; and further, the said butcher, in selling of his meat, one did bid him a less price of a sheep than he made of it, he answered, 'Nay by God's soul, I had rather the good fellows of the north had it among them, and a score more of the best I have.' This priest and butcher were accused to the king's majesty's council of the treason above-said on the Monday in the morning, and the same day were both sent for, which confessed their treason, and so according to the law martial they were adjudged to die; and so the said Monday they were both examined, condemned, and hanged. The butcher was hanged on a new pair of gallows set at the bridge-end, before the castle gate; and the priest was hanged on a tree at the foot of Windsor bridge." The tree at Windsor bridge and the gallows at the castle gate must have given Henry satisfactory assurance of the efficacy of "ordinances and estatutes martial" in the distant rebellious districts. What his subjects thought of such exhibitions did not affect him.

On the 12th of October the same form of circular letter went forth as when the princess Elizabeth was born, to announce that queen Jane had given birth to a son. The event seems to have caused great gladness. Latimer, amongst others, is in extacies; and writes to Cromwell, "Here is no less joying and rejoicing for the birth of our prince, whom we hungered for so long, than there was, I trow, (inter vicinos,) at the birth of St. John Baptist."\* But the queen was not destined to partake of the nation's joy. She died on the 24th of October. † On that day Cromwell wrote to lord William Howard, who was in France, that the infant "is in good health, and sucketh like a child of his puissance;" but that "our mistress, through the fault of them that were about her, which suffered her to take great cold and to eat things that her fantasy in sickness called for, is departed unto God." ‡ Another passage in the same letter may scarcely appear credible. But there it stands in its undoubted authenticity: "Though his majesty is not anything disposed to marry again,—albeit his highness, God be

\* State Papers, vol. i. p. 571.

† The Chroniclers wrote that the queen died on the 14th. But the date is now clearly shown by extant letters.

‡ State Papers, vol. viii. p. 1



thanked, taketh this chance as a man that, by reason, with force overcome his affection, may take such an extreme adventure"—at the earnest entreaty of his Council "that his grace will again couple himself," the king desires that lord William Howard will report of "the conditions and qualities." of the French king's daughter, and of those of the widow of the duke de Longueville. Similar instructions, to inquire into the conditions and qualities of particular ladies, are immediately sent to ambassadors at other courts. On the 9th of December John Hutton writes from Brussels to Cromwell, speaking highly of the duchess of Milan; and in a letter of the same day to Wriothesley, he adds, "She is not so pure white as was the late queen, whose soul God pardon; but she hath a singular good countenance; and when she chanceth to smile there appeareth two pits in her cheeks, and one in her chin, the which becometh her right excellently well."\* Fortunately, perhaps, for herself, the dimpled duchess was not chosen, for she was in the degree of forbidden relationship to Henry's first queen, Catherine. Hutton gave other information as to eligible ladies. There was a maiden of fourteen who would have "a good dote." There was a widow, "of goodly personage." The duke of Cleves has a daughter; but, says the ambassador, "I hear no great praise neither of her personage nor beauty." Hutton is aware that in such ticklish affairs his frank opinions might get him into trouble; and he adds, "I have not much experience amongst ladies, and therefore this commission is to me very hard; so that, if in anything I offend, I beseech your lordship to be my mean for pardon." The time would come when Cromwell himself would regret that he had not imitated the prudence of the ambassador to the Netherlands; "leaving the further judgment to other that are better skilled in such matter," † than directing his capricious master's choice, at the peril of his own head.

If we rightly interpret the policy of the counsellors of king Henry, it was their endeavour, by these toys, so to speak, to divert him from intermeddling with the desire of the reformers to effect a substantial change in religion. Cromwell, in his position of vicegerent, had an almost absolute power in regulating ecclesiastical affairs. In the parliament of 1539, we find that he had precedence before the archbishop of Canterbury. Cranmer, with his quiet and temporising habits, was under the control of Cromwell; but they each had a course of policy to be worked out with the

\* State Papers, vol. viii. p. 7.

† *Ibid.*

greatest caution. In the suppression of the monasteries they would have the thorough support of the king, for his revenues would thence receive an enormous increase. In every form of resistance to the papal supremacy they would have the same countenance. But in the disputed matters of doctrine, their individual desires, if such they truly held, for an enlarged liberty of conscience, would be of no avail against an absolute ruler, who felt his inordinate vanity flattered in prescribing what his subjects should believe and what not believe. "Henry was a king with a pope in his belly," truly says an old and plain-spoken writer. They went forward in a course of inconsistency, hanging disobedient abbots, and racking and burning Lutheran reformers. There is nothing absolutely to hate in either of these men; but there is little to love. Cranmer was a servile tool. Cromwell was a bold and unscrupulous minister. They accomplished one good work, of which their intolerant master did not see the final result. They gave us the English Bible.

The circulation of Tyndale's English Testament, printed at Antwerp in 1526, had been prohibited by Henry, in his zeal against Luther and the reformed doctrines. Ten years later he was moved to consent to the publication of an English Bible. In August, 1537, Cranmer wrote to Cromwell to exhibit a Bible in English to the king, which was of "a new translation and a new print;" soliciting him "to obtain of his grace, if you can, a licence that the same may be sold, without danger of any act, proclamation, or ordinance heretofore granted to the contrary; until such time that we, the bishops, shall set forth a better translation, which, I think, will not be till a day after doomsday."\* This was Coverdale's Bible, printed anew under the name of Matthews. In 1538, another Bible was printing in Paris by Coverdale and Grafton; and they write to Cromwell, sending specimens of the same, desiring "to be defended from the papists by your lordship's favourable letters." † Another edition of the Bible was printed in 1538, known as "Cranmer's, or the Great Bible." These Cranmer appointed to be sold at 13s. 4d. each; unless Cromwell would give the printers exclusive privileges, when they might be sold at 10s. In 1538, injunctions were given to the clergy to set up the Bible in parish churches; and to encourage the people to peruse it. In a few years that liberty was partially withdrawn. But the great principle was proclaimed in Cromwell's injunctions, that in the Scriptures was to be sought the way to eternal happiness, they "being the

\* State Papers, vol. i. p. 561.

† *Ibid.*, p. 576.



true lively word of God, which every Christian ought to believe, embrace, and follow, if he expected to be saved."

If the English people could have viewed the extraordinary anomalies of this period of the Reformation in England as we now view them, they would have probably subsided into that most unhappy condition of a nation—universal scepticism. There appear to us to have been no secure resting-places for honest opinion. Those who held, as many earnestly did, to the principles and forms of the old religion, based as it was upon obedience to one spiritual head of the church, were traitors. Those who, in rejecting the papal supremacy, rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, were heretics. The shrine of Thomas à Becket is plundered and destroyed; and a royal proclamation forbids him to be any longer received as a saint. Instead of the pilgrims to Canterbury wearing the steps of the high altar, there is a great crowd in Westminster Hall to hear a king confute a "sacramentarian." John Nicholson (known commonly as Lambert) has been accused of denying the corporal presence in the eucharist. Henry has renewed the old excitement of his polemical studies; and he causes it to be solemnly proclaimed that he will publicly examine and judge the heretic. He sits upon his throne dressed in white satin, with his guards all in white. He calls upon the unhappy man to declare his opinion, which, according to Burnet, did not differ from that then held by Cranmer and Latimer, being the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation. The king, the bishops, and the accused, entered upon scholastic disputations, which lasted five hours. The poor unaided disputant, with ten opponents, one after another, engaging with him, and the king frowning in his most awful manner, was at last silenced; and the people in the hall shouted their applause at the royal victory. Lambert was then asked by Henry whether he would live or die; and he answered, "that he committed his soul to God, and submitted his body to the king's clemency." He was condemned to be burnt, and Cromwell read the sentence; and burnt he was in Smithfield, crying aloud in his agony, "None but Christ." It is fearful to see those whose memories we must regard with some respect mixed up with these horrors. The superstitions of the ignorant are pitiable. The zealotry of the wise and learned is revolting. There was an image in Wales called Darvell Gathern, to which the people resorted by hundreds, believing that the wooden block had power to save. Darvell Gathern was brought to London, and was burnt in Smithfield. But the "huge and great

image" was brought under the gallows where an Observant friar, Forest, was hung in chains alive; and the idol being set on fire under the wretched man, who was accused of heresy and treason they were consumed together. Worst of all, "there was also prepared a pulpit, where a right reverend father in God, and a renowned and pious clerk, the bishop of Worcester, called Hugh Latimer, declared to him (Forest) his errors; and openly and manifestly by the Scripture of God confuted them; and with many and godly exhortations moved him to repentance. But such was his frowardness that he neither would hear nor speak."\*

After the great insurrections of 1536-7 had been effectually repressed, it became evident that the destruction of the larger religious houses would soon follow that of the smaller. It was not necessary for a parliament to be sitting to pass a second law of suppression. The government adopted the principle of terrifying or cajoling the abbots and priors into a surrender of their possessions. The ecclesiastical commissioners continued their work with larger powers. Their reports exhibit a dreary catalogue of abuses which, however coloured by the prejudices and interests of the reporters, would afford some justification for the sweeping spoliation, if particular examples could be received as types of a general depravity. The records of these proceedings, imperfect as they are, present so many interesting points of historical information as to this great ecclesiastical and political revolution, that we shall endeavour to condense some of the facts, in addition to the details we have already given.†

The act of 1539, for Dissolution of Abbeys, recites that since the 4th of February, in the 27th year of the reign of Henry, divers heads of religious houses had voluntarily surrendered their possessions to the king. The 27th regnal year comprised the period between the 22nd of April, 1535, and the 21st of April, 1536. In that 27th year, after the 4th of February, there were four surrenders. In the 28th year there were three. In the 29th year there were twenty-four. In the 30th year there were a hundred and seventy-four. In the 31st year there were seventy-six. We may judge, therefore, what powerful influences were set in action, after the chances of a successful popular resistance were at an end.‡ The visitation of the commissioners had several objects—to search

\* Hall's Chronicle, p. 826.

† See ante, p. 366.

‡ In Burnet (Records) the Lists of Surrenders, as found in the Augmentation Office, are given.



out and publicly expose the alleged impostures and depravities of the monastic life; to induce the abbots and monks to resign, and to arrange the terms of resignation; to appropriate the revenues and available property of these institutions. In addressing the rebels of Lincolnshire, in 1536, the king had said,—“There be none houses suppressed, where God was well served, but where most vice, mischief, and abomination of living was used.”\* In carrying out a much more extensive measure of suppression, it became necessary to have materials for urging the same plea.

The impostures connected with images and relics are amongst the most curious manifestations of human credulity; and it was a necessary step in the establishment of a pure worship that the system of deceit, which was of no modern origin, should be thoroughly exposed. In 1538 Cranmer writes to Cromwell, “Because I have in great suspect, that St. Thomas of Canterbury his blood, in Christ’s Church in Canterbury, is but a feigned thing, and made of some red ochre, or of such like matter, I beseech your lordship that Dr. Lee, and Dr. Barbour, my chaplain, may have the king’s commission to try and examine that, and all other like things there.”† The commissioners went to the abbey of Hales, in Gloucestershire and reported of their finding “jewels, plate, ornaments, and money, besides the garnishing of a small shrine, wherein was reposed the counterfeit relic in times past.”‡ This counterfeit relic was “the blood of Hales,” which Latimer made famous, by preaching at Paul’s Cross that it was “no blood, but honey clarified, and coloured with saffron.” But when the same plain-speaking bishop preached before Edward VI., he told a tale of “the blood of Hales,” which shows how the most palpable imposture had established its stronghold, even in the mind of the supreme head of the Church, Henry himself believed that in the crystal vessel, opaque on one side, and transparent on the other, was held the blood that flowed in the Agony in the Garden. The pretended blood was shown or not according to the price paid for the sight. Latimer says, “What ado was there to bring this out of the king’s head. This great abomination of the blood of Hales could not be taken a great while out of his mind. . . . Unpreaching prelates have been the cause that the blood of Hales did so long blind the king.”§ Barlow, bishop of St. David’s, writes to Cromwell that he had openly detected the abuse of “the taper of Haverfordwest;” “but sithence

\* State Papers, vol. i. p. 464.

† See *ante*, p. 246.

‡ Suppression of Monasteries, p. 237.

§ Seventh Sermon before Edward VI.

I chanced upon another taper of much greater credit, and of more shameful detestation, called Our Lady’s taper of Cardigan, which I have sent here to your lordship, with convenient instructions of that devilish delusion.” There was in the priory of Cardigan an image of the Virgin, with a taper in her hand, which was found standing on the river Tyne, with the taper always burning; but being carried into Christ’s Church, in Cardigan, the image would not stay there, “but was found three or four times in the place where now is builded the church of our Lady, and the taper burning in her hand, which continued still burning the space of nine years without wasting, until the time that one forswore himself thereon, and then it extincted, and never burned after.” So stated the prior, in his examination.\* Wales was the especial seat of these superstitions. There was an image at Bangor, worth to the friars “twenty marks by the year in corn, cheese cattle, and money.”† But the counties nearer London had their relics, ancient and modern. At Caversham, near Reading, the friars showed “the holy knife that killed St. Edward,” and “the holy dagger that killed king Henry.”‡ At Reading abbey the relics “would occupy four sheets of paper to make an inventory of every part thereof.” Walsingham, famous for these curiosities, contributed a more than common proportion to the bonfire which Cromwell made at Chelsea of these memorials of a perishing belief. At St. Paul’s Cross some of the images were exhibited and broken in pieces. The famous rood of Boxley, of which the figure could move his threatening eyes, twitch his nostrils, throw back his head, or nod approbation, is elevated on a scaffold, and goes through the performance at which past generations had trembled and wondered. The imposture is proclaimed from the pulpit; the image is cast down into the street; its machinery is disclosed; and amidst the hootings of the people is consigned to the flames.

The “abomination of living,” of which the inmates of the religious houses were accused, are exhibited in these returns of the commissioners. Sometimes their neighbours have evil things to say of them; sometimes the monks themselves relate some of the evil doings of their brethren, at which they duly profess their horror. Richard Beerley, a monk of Pershore, implores Cromwell as “the most gracious lord and most worthiest vicar that ever

\* Suppression of Monasteries, pp. 186—188.

† *Ibid.*, p. 212.

‡ Suppression of Monasteries, p. 222.



came amongst us," to "help me out of this vain religion." He says that monks come to matins drunk; play at cards, dice, and tables, with many other vices.\* In some cases an abbot and his monks were at variance; and the disorders of the house hastened its suppression. In the terror that preceded the surrenders and suppressions, some of these institutions became wholly disorganised. The brethren of the Charterhouse, in the isle of Axholm, write to the prior of Shene, that their father prior is daily conveying goods out of their house. He went to London, leaving the monks without money. Our husbandry, they say, is not looked upon; our land is not tilled; muck is not carried; our corn lieth in the barn, and taketh hurt with vermin. All their servants are gone away.† The heads of some of the richer houses hid their valuables, or carried them off. At Glastonbury, the commissioners write to Cromwell, "we have daily found and tried out both money and plate, hid and buried up in walls, vaults, and other secret places;" and that "the abbot and the monks have embezzled and stolen as much plate and adornments as would have sufficed to have begun a new abbey.‡ The abbot and the monks felt as the people of an invaded country feel when they conceal their treasures from the foreign marauders; and the commissioners felt as a rapacious soldiery feel when their hopes of booty are disappointed. The abbot of Glastonbury had little chance against his persecutors. He was tried at Wells on the 14th of November, 1539; "and the next day put to execution with two other of his monks, for the robbing of Glastonbury church, on the Tor hill next unto the town of Glaston; the said abbot's body being divided in four parts, and his head stricken off."§ Richard Whiting's head was fixed on the abbey gate, to crumble into dust with the perishing fabric, once so glorious.

George Giffard, one of the ecclesiastical commissioners, ventures, however, to speak a good word in favour of the house of Woolstrobe, in Lincolnshire. The head of the house is well-beloved of all the inhabitants; the priests are of good conversation, living religiously; they employ their time in embroidering, writing books, making their own garments, carving, painting, or engraving. In the house, standing very solitary, such hospitality is kept that unless there were singular good provision, the lands

\* Suppression of Monasteries, p. 133.

† State Papers, vol. i. p. 620.

‡ Lord Russell to Cromwell, Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 98.

§ *Ibid.*, 126.

could not maintain the relief which is daily afforded to the poor inhabitants. But George Giffard trembles at his own boldness in writing the truth, for he says, that when he wrote to the Chancellor, of the Augmentations in favour of the abbey of St. James and the nunnery of Catesby, the Chancellor showed his letter to the king, whereof "the king's highness was displeased, as he said to my servant, Thomas Harper, saying that it was like that we had received rewards which caused us to write as we did."\* Is it to be wondered that we find few records of the virtues of the monks? And yet the unwelcome honesty will occasionally have its course. At the Benedictine nunnery of Polesworth, in Warwickshire, still picturesque in its ruins, the abbess was a discreet and religious woman, and the nuns of virtuous lives, by the fame and report of all the country. The nuns, it would seem, educated children of the neighbouring gentry, who boarded in the house to the number of thirty or forty, who were right virtuously brought up. "And in the town of Polesworth are forty-four tenements, and never a plough but one; the residue be artificers, labourers, and victuallers, and live in effect by the said house."† The nunnery and its school were swept away. The artificers and labourers had to swell the number of vagabonds, that were stocked, whipped, and hanged when the means of profitable industry were taken from them. The nuns of Polesworth protested against leaving and forsaking their habits and religion. They were unfitted for the ordinary duties of the world; and so were the whole regular clergy. They had, for the most part, small pensions assigned them, "of his grace's charity;" but we have hints and assertions that they were rarely paid. The commissioners made bargains for the crown, of which Tewkesbury may serve as an example. The clear yearly value of the possessions was 1595*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.* They gave the abbot the large annual sum of 266*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* Seven monks had pensions varying from 7*l.* to 16*l.* Twenty-seven monks had 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* each; making a total of 551*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* "And so remains clear, 1044*l.* 8*s.* 10*d.*"‡ In the smaller monasteries the ejected monks had pensions varying, according to their ages, from 4*l.* to 53*s.* 4*d.* But some monasteries were in a state of miserable poverty, with only a few acres of arable land, and the ruinous house that sheltered the half-starved inmates. Many of the convents were deeply in debt. The bishop of Dover writes, "many shall lose much money by the friars, the

\* Suppression of Monasteries, p. 136.

† *Ibid.*, p. 139.

‡ Burnet, Records.



which will make a great clamour among the people."\* But whether the houses were rich or poor, resistance was useless. The abbot of St. Albans "sheweth himself so stiff, that as he saith, he would rather choose to beg his bread all the days of his life than consent to any surrender."† The plan pursued in such cases is set forth in the commissioner's letter. It was to pass a sentence of deprivation on the abbot for alleged misconduct; "which done, the house will be in such debt that we think no man will take the office of abbot here upon him, except any do it only for that purpose to surrender the same to the king's hands; and by these means we think this thing may most easily and with least speech be brought to the king's highness' pleasure."

With the king's highness eager for the silver shrines, the parcel-gilt cups, the embroidered copes, the very lead and timber of the conventual buildings, to be turned into money; with grasping courtiers ready to bribe the king's vicegerent for grants of land and leases,—there was no difficulty in converting the monastic possessions to immediate advantage. It is lamentable to trace the degradation of a period when to bribe and be bribed was no disgrace. Audley, the chancellor, offers two hundred pounds to Cromwell for one job. Sir Thomas Elyot, a scholar, an accomplished writer, the friend of More, offers the vicegerent the first year's fruits of "some convenient portion of the suppressed lands." All this was natural. But the shamelessness of public men was never more clearly exhibited than in Elyot's slavish address to Cromwell, in which he beseeches him, "to lay apart the remembrance of the amity between me and sir Thomas More." He thinks so meanly of the king and of his minister, that he cannot ask a favour without declaring his base ingratitude to the memory of the man who was his dearest friend. With such a spirit in the rapacious suitors of the court, it was not likely that the work of spoliation should not be carried through most thoroughly. There were hungry claimants for the crumbs of the table, as well as for the sumptuous banquet. Stow records that the widow Cornwallis obtained a fair house and tenements of a dissolved priory by the timely present of some fine puddings to the king. Cromwell had a grant of Lewes abbey, besides many other valuable estates and manors. It was one of the first to be swept away. In 1537, Cromwell has a minute account from some officer, "how we had begun to pull the whole down to the ground;" and "with how many men

\* Suppression of Monasteries, p. 241. † *Ibid.*, p. 250. Legh and Peto to Cromwell

we have done this." The superintendent brought from London seventeen persons—"these are men exercised much better than the men that we find here in the country."\* The first process, in all cases, was to strip the roofs of the churches and other buildings, and to cast the lead or make it up into foddors. At Jervaux, the nimble destroyers got down the lead; but "the said lead cannot be conveyed nor carried until the next summer, for the ways in that country are so foul and deep that no carriage can pass in winter." The careful Richard Bellasis, who has the superintendence of this work, is much distressed that he cannot sell the bells for above twenty-five shillings the hundred.† Sir Richard Rich was now chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, for managing the revenues of the suppressed houses. He writes to John Scudamore, one of the king's officers for the dissolved possessions, that he is informed "that the late monastery of Bordesley is defaced and plucked down, and the substance thereof sold to divers persons without profit or lucre paid or answered to the king's majesty's use for the same."‡ It was a season of general plunder and waste. Philip Hoby desires John Scudamore to let him have what is left of the stone of Evesham. The anxious Philip had obtained a grant of the monastery; and no doubt he made the best of his bargain: "As concerning the spoil or waste that ye wrote to me of that hath been done there, I assure you both I and mine be guiltless thereof."§ When Leland visited Evesham soon after 1539, the abbey was called by him "the late abbey." John Scudamore had cleaned out the sixteen altars, and the hundred and sixty-four gilded pillars of its church. Chapter-house, library, refectory, dormitory—all were gone. The campanile of the cemetery alone remains to indicate its ancient splendour.

\* Suppression of Monasteries, p. 165.

† *Ibid.*, p. 180.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 283.