

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Parliament of 1539.—Conformable knights and burgesses.—A tractable parliament the instrument of tyranny.—Complaints against the suppression of the abbeyes.—Act for the king to make bishops.—Application of the revenues of religious houses.—Six new bishoprics.—Destruction of the Hospital of St. John.—The Six Articles.—Penalties under the Statute in which they are declared.—Latimer and Shaxton resign their bishoprics.—Reformers executed or expatriated.—Arrests of the Pole family, and convictions.—Margaret, countess of Salisbury.—Anne of Cleves.—Her progress to England.—The king and his bride.—The marriage declared invalid.—Fall of Cromwell.—His attander.—Queen Catharine Howard.

THE parliament which was summoned to assemble at Westminster on the 28th of April, 1539, met for the sole purpose of accomplishing a despotic revolution, with all the forms of representative government. Never had a parliament of England assembled under circumstances so full of strange anxiety. In the parliament of 1536, there were present fifteen abbots; and thirteen other abbots voted by proxy.\* In the parliament of 1539, there were seventeen abbots present, and three sent their proxies. Unwillingly the abbots must have come. There could be no doubt that they were about to pass away from their high position in the state. No more would the mitred lords of Tewkesbury and St. Albans, of St. Edmondsbury and Tavistock, of Colchester and Malmesbury, ride to Westminster with their armed and liveried servants, with crowds on the highways kneeling for their blessing. The abbot of Glastonbury earnestly entreats to be pardoned for non-attendance. "But if the king's pleasure be so, I would be gladly carried thither in a horse-litter, to accomplish his grace's pleasure and commandment, rather than to tarry at home." † He was not one of those who met to register their own fall. He had a harder fate than mere deprivation. In that parliament there were also present the two archbishops and eighteen bishops. There were forty-nine temporal peers summoned. If the ecclesiastics had mustered in their full strength, the spiritual and temporal peers would have been of equal number. ‡ In the second session of the same par-

\* Lords' Journals, July 17.

† State Papers, vol. i. p. 607.

‡ See the list in Parliamentary History, vol. i. p. 533.

liament the proportion was changed, never again to be restored. The abbots had then vanished from the legislature. "His grace's pleasure and commandment" had been accomplished. But it was not accomplished without an amount of labour and management which might appear to be a characteristic of modern rather than of ancient times. The returns to the Lower House of knights and burgesses, who should be wholly conformable, was accomplished by the unremitting care of Henry's ministers. On the 17th of March, five weeks before the meeting of parliament, Cromwell writes to Henry, "For your grace's parliament, I have appointed your majesty's servant, Mr. Morison, to be one of them. No doubt he shall be ready to answer, and take up such as would crack or face with literature of learning, or indirected ways, if any such shall be, as I think there shall be few or none; for as much as I, and other your dedicate councillors, be about to bring all things so to pass, that your majesty had never more tractable parliament."\* A "tractable parliament" was the machinery by which tyranny sought to do its work in England, after the old spirit of freedom had been crushed under the Tudor heel. It was necessary to put the drapery of representation over the naked form of despotism. One sound constitutional historian, in stating that the immense revolutions of Henry's time could never have been effected without the concurrence of parliament—that the spoliation of property, and the condemnation of the innocent, were accomplished by their acquiescence and co-operation—holds that their subservience was not ultimately injurious to public liberty, because "it accustomed the people to set no bounds to the authority of those who bestowed it on the king." † But let us not forget that if the people had not been trained, by long traditions of individual liberty, to rely upon themselves, the subservience of parliament might have ultimately accomplished a more dangerous, because more complicated, tyranny than that of uncontrolled monarchical supremacy. Happily the roots of English freedom were too deeply imbedded in the soil, for the old tree to be destroyed by the storms of regal power, or the blights of representative corruption. The ancient spirit which upheld justice and civil rights survived in the most dangerous times, such as in other countries left the people grovelling before the throne. The essential difference was, that in England, from the earliest days a great part of the administrative functions of government was wrought out by the people themselves. The local

\* State Papers, vol. i. p. 603.

† Mackintosh, History of England, vol. ii. p. 240.

constitutions of the feudal ages had not been destroyed or changed. They were carried forward into the whole theory and practice of a state of society from which slavery and villainage had departed. They retained their strongholds in parish and borough—in the village vestry and the corporate guild. They survived in the constable and the justice of the peace. There were institutions besides those of crown and parliament. These might be tyrannous and corrupt; but the elements of freedom still abided with the people. "The imperfection of certain organs matters nothing, because the whole is instinct with life."\* If Ralph Sadler, in 1539, could openly write to a new member to repair to him, "to speak with the duke of Norfolk by whom ye shall know the king his pleasure, how ye shall order yourself in the parliament-house,"† —there were, no doubt, others who endured such domination in secret displeasure. The Saxon temper would chafe and fume, and would have to bide its time, even for a century. But it was the spark that, some day, would fly up in the face of tyranny. Even in the ashes of freedom lived its wonted fires.

The "act for dissolution of abbeys" was a formal statute, to make perfect the work that was practically accomplished. It vested the remaining monastic possessions in the king, of which the greater number had been surrendered; and it confirmed all future surrenders. It annulled leases granted a year previous to each surrender. Other business had preceded this enactment; but all other matters were of secondary importance, or depended upon the accomplishment of this measure. Of the public opinion as to this sweeping confiscation, Burnet says, "this suppression of abbeys was universally censured; and besides the common exceptions which those that favoured the old superstition made, it was questioned whether the lands that formerly belonged to religious houses ought to have returned to the founders and donors, by way of *reverter*; or to have fallen to the lords of whom the lands were holden, by way of *escheat*; or to have come to the crown."‡ Lord Herbert says, "this rapine upon the Church, with the miserable ruin of themselves and houses, was divulged abroad in such terms as astonished the whole Christian world. For though the excessive number of them excused the king in some part, for the first suppression, the latter had no such specious pretext." In our day we

\* De Tocqueville, "Society in France," translated by Henry Reeve, p. 321.

† Letter in "Henry VIII.'s Scheme of Bishoprics," p. 101.

‡ Reformation, vol. i. p. 261, ed. 1681.

properly look upon these institutions as having been, if not nurseries of vice and idleness, unsuited even to their own times, and as utterly incompatible with the progress of religious freedom, and therefore with national prosperity and happiness. But we should grossly err if we believed that they were wholly useless. Even Henry did not dare to appropriate these vast possessions without a pretence that he was about to devote some portion of them to great public uses. The act for the dissolution of the abbeys was followed by "an act for the king to make bishops." The preamble to the draft of this statute is written in king Henry's own hand: "Forasmuch as it is not unknown the slothful and ungodly life which hath been used amongst all those sort which have borne the name of religious folk; and to the intent that from henceforth many of them might be turned to better use as hereafter shall follow, whereby God's word might be the better set forth; children brought up in learning; clerks nourished in the universities; old servants decayed to have livings; alms-houses for poor folks to be sustained in; readers of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin to have good stipend; daily alms to be ministered; mending of highways; exhibition for ministers of the Church; it is thought unto the king's highness most expedient and necessary that more bishoprics and colleges shall be established."\* Here is, indeed, a goodly catalogue of noble intentions. Who, after the effects of the first sudden change had passed away, could have failed to rejoice in seeing the Gospel preached, children educated, learning encouraged, the indigent assisted, the means of communication promoted! Here is a large project of civilisation, to be accomplished by the absorption of one-fifth of the lands of the kingdom into the possessions of the crown! What a noble title of the honest reformer would king Henry have attained by the realisation of these projects! The abbey-walls were pulled down; the lead melted; the timber sold; the painted windows destroyed. Alas! the records of the time show wonderful schemes for the establishment in each bishopric of preachers, readers, students, scholars, schoolmasters—large sums for alms, mending of highways—all to be "founded and established by the king's majesty's goodness." But the far greater part of these waste-paper projects remained wholly undone till the next reign, and then most grudgingly and imperfectly. "The king's majesty's goodness" remained satisfied that he should have a convenient fund to draw upon for the

\* 31 Henry VIII. c. 9.

maintenance of his extravagant household and his absurd wars; for "the upholding of dice-playing, masking, and banqueting," with other recreations that are not suited to delicate ears. The king grew bolder in a short time; and when he went to parliament to sanction another spoliation, the abolition of the chantries—ancient endowments for alms-giving connected with obits, or praying for souls—he honestly said, speaking by the voice of the slavish parliament, that the revenues of the same should be devoted to the expenses of the wars against France and Scotland; and "for the maintenance of your most royal estate, honour, dignity, and estimation, which all your said loving subjects, of natural duty, be bound to conserve and increase by all such ways and means as they can devise."\* Schools, alms-gifts, were attached to the smallest as well as the largest religious houses. These were all destroyed, when the funds for their support were swept into the king's exchequer. Henry's "goodness" was chiefly confined to the establishment of six new bishoprics, by his letters patent. This was a small performance of a large promise. Whilst he swept away the strongholds of the supremacy of Rome, he annihilated the greater part of those ancient possessions, out of which a pure religion might have been diffused over an instructed people. The magnificent endowments of ages that were past might have been preserved, not to perpetuate error, but to become living fountains of future piety and knowledge. It was the divine will that it should be otherwise; that, painfully and laboriously, the reformed faith might be built up upon sounder foundations than the temporal riches of an outworn institution.

The destruction of the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, in 1540, was as remarkable an example of the changes of opinion as the dissolution of the abbeys. Eighteen years only had passed since the heroic defenders of Rhodes had quitted their island for ever. When their conqueror, the Sultan Solymán, had paid a tribute of respect to their grand-master, he said, "It is not without pain that I force this Christian, at his time of life, to leave his dwelling." Henry of England had less generosity than the infidel. The act of parliament which expelled the knights of St. John from their ancient priory in Clerkenwell—to appropriate its vast buildings "as a storehouse for the king's toils and nets for hunting, and for the wars"†—coldly says, that "considering that the isle of Rhodes, whereby the said religion took their old name and foun-

\* 37 Hen. VIII. c. 4.

† Stow.

dation, is destroyed by the Turks," it is "much better that the possessions of the order should be "employed and spent within this realm."\* L'Isle Adam, the defender of Rhodes, broke his heart when he learnt that a king, who still affected some of the pomp of chivalry, had destroyed the last link that connected the England of the sixteenth century with the glories of the Crusades.

The act for dissolution of abbeys is immediately followed in the statute-book by "an act abolishing diversity in opinions." The very title of this statute is sufficient evidence of its vain presumption. The king's majesty, being by God's law Supreme head of the whole Church and congregation of England, calling to mind the commodities which have ever followed unity of opinions, and the dangers of diversities of minds, especially of matters of Christian religion, caused certain articles to be discussed in parliament and in convocation. And also he "most graciously vouchsafed in his own princely person to descend and come into his said high court of parliament and council, and there, like a prince of most high prudence, and no less learning, opened and declared many things of high learning and great knowledge touching the said articles, matters, and questions, for an unity to be had in the same."† The statute then sets forth that the desired unity was to be "charitably established," by the observance, under the most tremendous penalties, of Six Articles. Fox calls this statute, "The whip with six strings." It breathed the amplest threats of the stake in Smithfield and the gallows at Tyburn. The first article sets forth the doctrine that "in the most blessed sacrament of the altar, by the strength and efficacy of Christ's mighty word, it being spoken by the priest, is present really, under the form of bread and wine, the natural body and blood of our Saviour," and that "after the consecration there remaineth no substance of bread and wine, nor any other substance but the substance of Christ." This article regarding the real presence thus involves a condemnation of the minuter difference from the orthodox doctrine which the Lutherans called consubstantiation, as distinguished from the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation. The Defender of the Faith, in his character of Supreme head of the Church of England, has utterly rejected the papal authority; he has declared against pilgrimages, images, and relics; he has destroyed the monastic institutions; he has even permitted the translation of the scriptures in the vulgar

\* 32 Henry VIII. c. 24. † 31 Hen. VIII. c. 14.

tongue;—but not one tittle will he relax from the enforcement of those doctrines of the Romanists which are the barriers to any true reformation. The other five articles are directed against those who preached the necessity of administering the eucharist, in both kinds, to the laity; who advocated the marriage of priests, or the non-observance of female vows of chastity or widowhood; who maintained that private masses were not lawful or laudable; who asserted that auricular confession was not expedient. The jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts upon such subjects was removed; and commissioners were appointed to examine accused persons, to commit to prison, to try before a jury of twelve men, and to pass sentence. Those who were convicted under the first article, “shall be deemed and adjudged heretics;” and “every such offender shall therefore have and suffer judgment, execution, pain, and pains of death by way of burning, without any abjuration, clergy, or sanctuary to be therefore permitted.” Burnet remarks, that denying such offenders the benefit of abjuration was a severity beyond what had ever been put in practice before; for which remark Dr. Maitland sneers at the bishop’s ideas of “honesty and martyrdom.”\* For any violation of either of the five other articles, by preaching or teaching in any school to the contrary, “every offender, on the same being therefore duly convicted or attained,” shall be adjudged a felon; “and shall therefore suffer pains of death, as in cases of felony.” Any man or woman who had advisedly professed chastity or widowhood, and should afterwards marry, was to suffer the same penalty of death. Those who maintained doctrines against the articles where preaching was felony, were to lose lands and goods, and to be imprisoned; and for a second offence to suffer death.

This, then, from the 12th of July, 1539, when the act of the Six Articles was to take effect, to the end of the reign of Henry, was the England of the Reformation. It would be difficult to understand how such a statute could have passed, if the great body of the people had been inclined to a higher species of reformation than consisted in the destructive principle which assailed the externals of the Church. Cranmer was too yielding, and Cromwell too politic, to oppose the party which carried this statute, backed by the irresistible force of the king’s will. The doctrinal reformers were clearly a minority. The political reformers had got all they wanted in the plunder of the ancient Church. The

\* “Essays on the Reformation,” p. 255.

subservient courtiers, who had become impropiators, and provided half-starved monks to do the service of the altar at the cheapest rate, were wholly indifferent to the principles through which the continental reformers were daily waxing in strength. Cranmer spoke against the bill; but he finally sent away his wife, to evade its penalties, and locked up for a more convenient season the secret of his heart as to the real presence. Latimer, on the 11th of July, resigned his bishopric of Worcester. He was subsequently arrested, on a charge of having spoken against some of the Six Articles; and he wore out six years of his life in a close imprisonment in the Tower. Shaxton, the bishop of Salisbury, also resigned. But he had to endure something far more terrible than the close cell in which Latimer fortified his heart against all fear of man’s power to harm. The story of Shaxton’s fall will be told in its due order. An acute and learned writer, somewhat startled into another extreme by the exaggerated statements of bloody persecutions under the Six Articles, has given a list of all the martyrs whom Fox mentions as having been put to death during the time that the act was in force—that is, during the last seven years of Henry the Eighth’s reign.\* These amount to twenty-eight. But, says this writer, speaking of the statute against diversity in opinions, “it was meant to frighten rather than to hurt, to intimidate and quiet the people rather than to destroy and slaughter them by wholesale. In the first place it caused many of the more violent partisans of the Reformation to quit the country; and, secondly, it made those who stayed at home more quiet and peaceable.” He rightly attributes this act to the king, which we may readily infer from its preamble: “I believe that he was roused by an idea that the Church, of which he was resolved to be the supreme head, was likely to be overthrown by a torrent of what he considered infidelity and blasphemy; and that he devised, and insisted on, and would have, and carried such a measure as he thought was suited to check the frightful evil.”† Be it so. He who had stalled his horses in monasteries, even before the dissolution,‡ looked quietly on whilst painted windows were smashed, and consecrated bells were melted; saw noble libraries sold to grocers and soap-boilers; heard the cries of the unfed poor at the desolated abbey-gate, and consigned them to the beadle’s whip; turned out ten thousand nuns into the wide world, to find resting

\* Maitland; Essays, p. 259.

† *Ibid.*, p. 270.

‡ Latimer’s first sermon before Edward VI.

places where they might,—forbidden to marry under the pains of felony, with no strict or tender mother-abbess to watch over their ways;—he to oppose “a torrent of what he considered infidelity and blasphemy!” The profane songs—the plays and interludes, “tending any way against the six articles,”—the disturbances of congregations during the service of the mass—these things were evils. But it was a far greater evil to render England a land uninhabitable “by the more violent partisans of the Reformation:” by which “violent partisans” we understand that consistent body of earnest thinkers who have since been honoured with the name of Puritans. These were the men who did not rest satisfied that the king had “destroyed the pope, but not popery.”\* Whether twenty-eight persons were executed under the statute of the six articles, or twenty-eight hundred; whether ten reformers fled from England or ten thousand; whether the great mass of the people rejoiced in this persecuting law,—and, to use the words of Hooper in 1546, “the impious mass, the most shameful celibacy of the clergy, the invocation of saints, auricular confession, superstitious abstinence from meats, and purgatory, were never before held by the people in greater esteem”—we cannot, at this day, look upon such a law without horror, nor hesitate to entertain the most unmeasured disgust for its royal author and supporter. Our history tells of other tyrants, crafty and cruel as this Henry, who had slight regard for the life of man, and scrupled not to sacrifice friend and foe to their personal ambition. But this tyrant stands alone in his preposterous claim to unlimited obedience. He would absorb into himself all the inordinate powers of popes and councils, to prescribe what should be truth and what untruth. He would pretend to govern by parliament, according to the ancient laws of the realm, and yet procure his parliament to enact that his proclamations should have the force of statutes.† To the very last he looked upon the five millions of the people of England as his property; and the council that by his will were to govern during his son’s minority were called his executors, “to keep up,” says Mackintosh, “the language of the doctrine of ownership.”

The general proceedings of the English government,—not halting between two opinions, but punishing and threatening whoever differed from the fluctuating and inconsistent dogmas of the supreme head of the English Church,—outraged the earnest partisans of “the new learning,” and propitiated none of the vast body that

\* Letter of Hooper.

† 31 Hen. VIII. c. 8.

cleaved to the old religion. The papal bull against Henry had been published, after long delay; and the cardinal Pole, nearly allied in blood to Henry, had conducted negotiations to induce the emperor and the king of France to unite in hostilities against England. Neither of these powerful monarchs dared singly to brave the resentment of Henry; and they were too jealous of each other to join in any measures, such as those suggested for the conquest of England, or for removing its contumacious sovereign. But enough was done to provoke the revenge of Henry upon those who were within his reach. Reginald Pole was the grandson of George, duke of Clarence; and although educated by Henry, he published a book reflecting with bitterness upon the subject of the divorce of Catherine. The Tudor king, and the descendant of the house of York, thus became mortal enemies. Lord Montague, the elder brother of Reginald, with other relatives and friends of their family, were arrested in 1538, on a charge of treason. On the 13th of November, sir Thomas Wriothesley writes from Brussels to sir Thomas Wyatt, in Spain, to say that lord Montague had been sent to the Tower, with the Marquis of Exeter; that the king, through his special favour towards them, had “passed over many accusations made against the same of late by their own domestics,” but that he was constrained to commit them to ward, “for avoiding of such malice as was prepensed both against his person royal, and the surety of my lord prince, our only jewel after his majesty.”\* It is asserted that Geoffrey Pole, who was arrested at the same time, was a witness against his brother. Montague and Exeter were convicted by their peers, and executed, with sir Edward Neville, and other commoners, accused of treasonable and seditious offences. The life of Geoffrey Pole was spared, for the remorse of a life-long imprisonment. The aged mother of the Poles, the countess of Salisbury, was arrested at her house at Warblington, near Havant, by the earl of Southampton and the Bishop of Ely. They wrote to Cromwell, “We assure your lordship we have dealt with such a one as men have not dealt withal before us. We may call her rather a strong and constant man than a woman. For in all behaviour howsoever we have used her, she hath showed herself so earnest, vehement, and precise, that more could not be.”† She maintained her innocence with such consistency, and the materials for an arraignment were so utterly wanting, that Cromwell resorted

\* Ellis, Second Series, vol. ii. p. 109.

† *Ibid.*, p. 114.

to an expedient which has brought as much disgrace upon his memory as any of his acts of spoliation. He put a question to the judges whether parliament might condemn a person accused of treason without a hearing—without trial or confession. A nice and dangerous question, said the obsequious ministers of justice; but parliament is supreme, and an attainder in parliament is good in law. The bill of attainder was passed against the countess of Salisbury; her grandson, the eldest son of lord Montague; and the marchioness of Exeter. The marchioness obtained a pardon. The grandson's fate is unknown. Let us finish this hateful story. After more than two years' imprisonment, on the 27th of May, 1541, Margaret Plantagenet,—the last in the direct line of that illustrious race,—was brought out to suffer death on Tower-hill. If anything could add to the terror of this murder, the scene at the execution would have made a people, too much familiarised to exhibitions of blood, start and wonder how England endured such atrocities. The unyielding countess refused to lay her head upon the block. It was for traitors so to die, and she was not guilty of any treason. She struggled against the force which held her down; and her gray hairs were covered with gore before the head parted from the body. Ten months before this terrible event took place, the chief instrument in the attainder of the countess of Salisbury had fallen by the same mockery of justice—and few pitied him:

“For 'tis the sport to have the engineer  
Hoist with his own petar.”

It has been considered as a proof of king Henry's undissembled grief at the loss of Jane Seymour, that he continued two years a widower.\* We have seen that on the very day of her death his ambassadors were instructed to look out for a new consort. The real motive or the pretence was anxiety for the succession, which has been called “the ruling frenzy of Henry's mind.”† Hutton had disparaged the personal charms of Anne, the daughter of the duke of Cleves, upon the first intimation of the king's desire again to wed.‡ But Cromwell,—who felt the importance of a Protestant connection at a period when the Romanists were using every effort to regain their ascendancy,—was not to be diverted from his determination to marry his master to this daughter of one of the

\* See Southey, “History of the Church,” vol. ii. p. 77.

† Mackintosh, “History,” vol. ii. p. 243.

‡ See ante, p. 416.

princes of the German Confederacy, by vague statements that there was no great praise of her person. In March, 1539, Cromwell wrote to the king:—“Every man praiseth the beauty of the same lady, as well for the face as for the whole body, above all other ladies excellent. One amongst other purposes, said unto them of late, that she excelleth as far the duchess as the golden sun excelleth the silvery moon.”\* The “silvery moon” was the duchess of Milan, who is reported to have met Henry's advance by saying that she had but one head; if she had possessed two, one should have been at his majesty's service. In this affair the politic Cromwell was too eager. Nicholas Wotton and Richard Berde were sent to negotiate the marriage with Anne of Cleves. She was not bound, they wrote, by any covenants between the old duke of Cleves and the duke of Lorraine; she was at liberty to marry wherever she would. She had been very straitly brought up, they said, by the lady duchess, her mother. She occupied her time mostly with the needle. She knew not French nor Latin, neither could she sing nor play upon any instrument; “for they take it here in Germany for a rebuke and an occasion of lightness that great ladies should be learned or have any knowledge of music.” Her wit was good, and she would soon learn English. She was temperate in her diet:—“I could never hear that she is inclined to the good cheer of this country.” Finally, “your grace's servant, Hans Holbein, hath taken the effigies of my lady Anne and the lady Amelie, and hath expressed their images very lively.”† Thus wrote Wotton on the 11th of August, 1539. On the 12th of December, the lady Anne was at Calais, about to embark for England. She came from Dusseldorf, with a train of two hundred and sixty-three persons; and was received with the greatest state by Fitz-William, then the earl of Southampton, and four hundred noblemen and gentlemen, in coats of satin damask and velvet. The English admiral writes with honest pride of the exhibition he made of his country's naval power: “Her grace saw, as well the ship that is prepared for her passage, as other your grace's ships; which were not only right well appointed and trimmed with streamers, banners, and flags, but also no less well furnished with men standing on the tops, the shrouds, on the yard-arms, and other places accordingly; and their shot of ordnance therein marvellously well ordered. And

\* State Papers, vol. i. p. 605.

† Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 121. A miniature supposed to have been this identical picture was considered by Walpole the most perfect of Holbein's works. The Flemish fairness was remarkable.

surely not only she, but also all such strangers as were with her, much commended and liked the same; and though I say it, it was to be liked.\* But the weather was unfavourable for embarkation; and Southampton entreated, with great humility, "that your majesty, of your gracious goodness and high wisdom, will consider that neither the wind nor the sea will be ordered at man's will." But Southampton has a greater difficulty to contend with than the wind or the sea. Anne of Cleves will not readily conform to the English notions of royal dignity. She prays Southampton to come to supper with her, "and to bring some noble folks with me to sit with her, after the manner of her country. I showed her it was not the usage of our country so to do, and therefore besought her grace to pardon me of that, for I durst not consent thereunto." But again and again the princess repeated her request—"for this one night;"—for "she was much desirous to see the manner and fashion of Englishmen sitting at their meat." And so Anne of Cleves supped graciously with Southampton and eight other Englishmen. The earl begs for pardon if he had done amiss. Henry was perhaps not in the best humour at her freedom when he first met her, and was "marvellously astonished and abashed." Hans Holbein had been a flatterer. The king embraced her, but scarcely spoke twenty words, and did not offer the present he had prepared for her.† Sir Anthony Brown, the master of the horse, had gone before the king, and "was never so much dismayed in his life to see the lady so far unlike what was reported."‡ In the last month of his life, Cromwell was commanded by his master, on the peril of his soul, to write truly what he knew concerning the marriage with the princess of Cleves. What is fit to be repeated of this document is of curious interest. Anne was to be at Rochester on New Year's eve; and Henry declared to Cromwell that he would visit her privily, "to nourish love." The next day, at Greenwich, says Cromwell, "I demanded of your majesty, How ye liked the Lady Anne: your highness answered, as me thought, heavily, and not pleasantly—Nothing so well as she was spoken of; saying further, That if your highness had known as much before as ye then knew, she should not have come within this realm; saying, as by the way

\* Southampton to Henry, State Papers, vol. viii. p. 208.

† Modern history has its parallel scene. When George, prince of Wales, first met Caroline of Brunswick, lord Malmesbury says, "he embraced her, said barely one word, turned round, retired to a distant part of the apartment, and calling me to him said, 'Haris, I am not well; pray get me a glass of brandy.'"—*Malmesbury's Diaries, &c.*, vol. iii., p. 210.

‡ Strype, "Ecclesiastical Memorials."

of lamentation, What remedy?"\* After Anne's public entry at Greenwich, the king called a Council; and the agents of the duke of Cleves were questioned about covenants, and touching a pre-contract of marriage with the duke of Lorraine's son and the princess. The deputies offered to remain prisoners till ample satisfaction was given upon both points. But when Cromwell informed the king of all the circumstances, "your grace," he says, "was very much displeased, saying, 'I am not well handled'—adding, 'If it were not that she is come so far into my realm, and the great preparations that my states and people have made for her; and for fear of making a ruffle in the world,—that is to mean, to drive her brother into the hands of the emperor and the French king's hands,—being now together, I would never have married her.'" Anne was called upon to make a protestation that there was no pre-contract; which she readily made; and which Cromwell reported to Henry: "Whereunto your grace answered in effect these words, or much like,—'Is there none other remedy, but that I must needs, against my will, put my neck in the yoke?'" There was no instant remedy; and the marriage ceremony was gone through. The king, whilst waiting for the bride in the presence chamber, said to Cromwell, "My lord, if it were not to satisfy the world and my realm, I would not do that I must do this day, for none earthly thing." In this temper Henry sulked and lamented: he "should surely never have any more children for the comfort of this realm" if this marriage should continue. A second experiment of the Calais executioner's sword might have been dangerous with a foreign princess. There was a "remedy," of a less serious nature. Anne of Cleves made no resistance to a separation, with an adequate provision. She was a woman of judgment, and no doubt heartily despised the fastidious sensualist. A Convocation was called, exactly six months after the marriage, which was empowered to determine its validity. On the 4th of July Henry wrote to Pate, his ambassador at the emperor's court, to inform Charles that the Lords and Commons, "perceiving some doubts to be in our last marriage with the daughter of Cleves," and wishing "to draw a most perfect certainty of succession," had requested him to commit the examination of the marriage to the bishops and clergy of the realm. The cunning politician adds, that the ambassador was on no account to explain what were the "grounds and causes of

\* Cromwell's Letter in Burnet, vol. i., p. 193. The same letter is given by Sir H. Ellis, with considerable variations. The original in the Cotton Library is much injured by fire,

this motion."\* On the 10th of July the marriage was declared invalid; the chief pretence being a doubtful pre-contract; and the unblushing argument, "that the king having married her against his will, he had not given a pure inward and complete consent."† Cromwell had gone to the block; and "Cranmer, whether overcome with these arguments, or rather with fear, for he knew it was contrived to send him quickly after Cromwell, consented with the rest."‡

Cromwell had gone to the block. On the 17th of April, 1540, the fortune of Cromwell seemed at its culminating point, for he was created earl of Essex. On the 12th of April a parliament had been assembled, which Cromwell had addressed as the king's vicegerent, and had declared that "there was nothing which the king so much desired as a firm union amongst all his subjects. \* \* \* The rashness and licentiousness of some, and the inveterate superstition and stiffness of others in the ancient corruptions, had raised great distinctions, to the sad regret of all good Christians. Some were called papists; others heretics; which bitterness of spirit seemed the more strange, since now the Holy Scriptures, by the king's great care of his people, were in all their hands in a language which they understood."§ In this parliament he carried a bill for a great subsidy to be raised upon the laity and the clergy. The promises that the necessities of the state should be provided for out of the spoil of the church, were violated without the slightest apology. The odium of this taxation was solely laid upon Cromwell. The exorbitant demand "gained him an universal hatred amongst the people, and was one reason of his sudden fall after it."|| The minister's work was done. He had carried through a great revolution with comparative success. He had impartially racked, beheaded, and gibbeted papist and heretic. His loose papers of "Remembrances" show that he kept as careful memoranda of business to be done, as the most careful scrivener. Take a few specimens—

"Item, to remember all the jewels of all the monasteries in England, and specially for the cross at Paul's, of emeralds.

"Item, the Abbot of Reading to be sent down to be *tried* and *executed* at Reading with his complices.

"Item, the Abbot of Glaston to be tried at Glaston, and also to be executed there, with his complices.

\* State Papers, vol. viii. p. 374.

† Burnet, vol. i. p. 280.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

§ Burnet, and Parliamentary History.

|| Lord Herbert.

"Item, to see that the evidence be well sorted, and the evidence well drawn, against the said abbots and their complices.

"Item, to remember specially the Lady of Sar [Salisbury].

"Item, what the king will have done with the Lady of Sarum.

"Item, to send Gendon to the Tower to be racked.

"Item, to appoint preachers to go throughout this realm to preach the gospel and true word of God."\*

Well might Cromwell, in his adversity, write to Henry, "I have meddled in so many matters under your highness, that I am not able to answer them all; but one thing I am assured of, that wittingly and willingly I have not had will to offend your highness; but hard it is for me or any other, meddling as I have done, to live under your grace and your laws but we must daily offend."† The sky began to grow dark for Cromwell, at the very instant when parliament was to be prorogued, after the subsidy had been carried. On the 9th of May, a letter comes from the king to his "right trusty and well-beloved cousin"—in which the sign manual was affixed by a stamp—most probably as a mark of displeasure. The old familiar words are no longer written; but "our pleasure and commandment is, that forthwith, and upon the receipt of these our letters, setting all other affairs apart, ye do repair unto Us, for the treaty of such great and weighty matters, as whereupon doth consist the surety of our person, the preservation of our honour, and the tranquillity and quietness of you, and all other our loving and faithful subjects."‡ On the 10th of June, he was arrested by the duke of Norfolk, while at the council table. The divorce of Anne of Cleves had not yet been mooted. Had Cromwell imprudently pressed upon Henry to cleave to a Protestant queen? Had Norfolk as resolutely urged upon his master, who now hated heretics more than papists, to consider the charms of his niece, Catherine Howard, who would support him in resisting the "rashness and licentiousness" that had come upon the land? There is no solution of these questions, beyond the fact that Cromwell was attainted or treason and heresy, by act of parliament, on the 29th of June. He was charged to have been "the most corrupt traitor and deceiver of the king and the crown that had ever been known in his whole reign." It was alleged that "he, being also a heretic, had dispersed many erroneous books among the king's subjects, particularly some that were contrary to the belief of the sacrament;" and

\* See the curious extracts from the Cotton MS. in Ellis, Second Series, vol. ii. p. 120.

† Ellis, Second Series, vol. ii. p. 165.

‡ State Papers, vol. i. p. 628.

that when some complained to him of the new preachers—such as Barnes and others—he said that their preaching was good; and “that if the king would turn from it, yet he would not turn. And if the king did turn, and all his people with him, he would fight in the field in his own person, with his sword in his hand against him, and all others.” Whatever crimes may be laid to the charge of Cromwell, no one can believe that he was the foolish braggart which these words imply. That he was an oppressor; that he received bribes; that he had made a great estate for himself by extortion, were no doubt true. Some of the public plunder stuck to his fingers. He made as free with the lands and moneys of the king’s subjects, as he did with the wooden house in Throgmorton-street, belonging to old Stow’s father, which house he wanted out of the way when he built his own mansion: and so moved it upon rollers twenty-two feet, and seized the land upon which it stood.\* Cranmer said with truth, though not with firmness, “that he thought no king of England had ever such a servant . . . but if he was a traitor, he was glad it was discovered.” Though Cromwell was unscrupulous in carrying out the cruel judgments of his master and his base parliaments, he knew in his own case what was the justice which an Englishman had a right to demand. In his last letter to Henry, from the Tower, he says that he had been informed by the honourable personages who came to him, that “mine offences being by honest and probable witness proved, I was by your honourable lords of the Upper House, and the worshipful and discreet Commons of your nether House, convicted and attainted. Gracious sovereign, when I heard them I said, as now I say, that I am a subject and born to obey laws, and know that the trial of all laws only consisteth in honest and profitable witness. . . . Albeit, laws be laws.” The principle of attainder, without hearing or confession, was not law. He perished by attainder; having in vain written to his remorseless master—who, however, sent him a little money while in prison—“Most gracious prince, I cry for mercy, mercy, mercy.” The cry moved the heart of Henry for a moment; he dropped one tear. But the servant of twelve years was executed on the 28th of July. The divorce of Anne of Cleves had been completed four days before; and on the day when Cromwell was beheaded, king Henry married his fifth wife, Catherine Howard.

\* “Survey of London,” Thom’s edit. p. 67.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Three priests burned as heretics, and three hanged as traitors.—Other executions for denying the supremacy.—Queen Catherine Howard appears in public.—Her shame discovered.—Cranmer’s Letter to Henry.—Mercy promised to be extended towards her.—Act of attainder against her and lady Rochford.—New law of treason.—Catherine Parr.—War with Scotland and with France.—State of Scotland under James V.—David Beaton.—The first Scottish Reformer.—Efforts to stop the progress of Lutheran opinions.—James rejects the overtures of Henry.—Invasion of Scotland by forces of the duke of Norfolk.—James deserted by his nobles.—Flight of Solway Moss.—Death of James.—Birth of the princess Mary of Scotland.—Treaty for a marriage between prince Edward and the infant princess.—The treaty broken off.—Invasion of Scotland by Earl of Hertford.—Edinburgh taken.—Kelso destroyed.—Jedburgh burnt.—Ravages of the southern districts.—Proposition to assassinate cardinal Beaton.—He is murdered in the following year.—France invaded by Henry in person.—Boulogne besieged and taken.—Attempts of France to invade England.—Francis and the emperor concludes a peace.—French make continued efforts to retake Boulogne.—Peace with France, in which Scotland is included.—Anne Askew and others burnt as heretics.—Duke of Norfolk and the earl of Surrey arrested.—Surrey convicted of high treason and beheaded.—Norfolk attainted.—Death of king Henry.

THE public executioners had ample work in the dog-days of 1540. The record of Cromwell’s fate by the chronicler of the Grey-friars is followed by this entry: “And the 30th of the same month was Dr. Barnes, Jerome, and Garrard drawn from the Tower into Smithfield, and there burned for their heresies.” The heretics were clergymen. The record then continues: “And that same day also was drawn from the Tower, with them, Doctor Powell with two other priests; and there was a gallows set up at Saint Bartholomew’s Gate, and there were hanged, headed, and quartered.” The traitors were condemned for affirming the legality of the marriage with Catherine of Arragon; one of them named Abel having been her chaplain. In the Beauchamp tower, whose walls are covered with the sad memorials of the wretched, is the carving of a Bell with an A. Below this is another memento of a condemned prisoner, DOCTOR COOK.\* He was the prior of Doncaster, and with six others was executed at Tyburn, on the 4th of August, for denying the royal supremacy. It may be doubted whether the people exactly comprehended the nice

\* Bayley, “History of the Tower,” p. 160-1.