

CHAPTER XXVII.

Events immediately after the death of Henry VIII.—Executors of his Will.—Somerset chosen Protector.—Character of the young King.—War with Scotland.—Scottish alliance with France.—Somerset's desire for union between England and Scotland.—Invasion.—Battle of Pinkie.—Progress of the Reformation.—Parliament of 1547.—Various Statutes in matters of religion.—Proclamation against certain processions and ceremonies.—The Act for the Uniformity of Service.—Publication of the Book of Common Prayer.

On Friday, the 28th of January, 1547, Edward, the son of king Henry VIII., is sojourning at Hertford Castle. His father lies dead in the palace at Whitehall. Between one and two o'clock of the morning of Saturday, the 29th, the earl of Hertford, his uncle, is also at Hertford Castle. Not twenty-four hours have elapsed since he was at the side of the dying king. He has left a confidential friend behind him, sir William Paget, one of the secretaries of state; and in answer to a despatch which has been forwarded to him, the earl writes, before day-break of that January morning, with regard to the late king's Will, "that it might be well considered how much thereof were necessary to be published;" adding, "for divers respects I think it not convenient to satisfy the world." The Will was in safe custody. Hertford had locked it up; but he confides in Paget, and says in this letter, "I have sent you the key of the Will."* As the day advances, prince Edward and his uncle, with sir Anthony Brown, ride to Enfield. There, in the Manor House, dwells the lady Elizabeth. The son of Henry by Jane Seymour is a few months above nine years of age. Henry's daughter by Anne Boleyn has seen thirteen years and four months. This boy and girl are attached to each other. Their elder sister, Mary, who is now in her thirty-second year, has few sentiments in common with these young people. She clings to the principles and institutions which, since their births, have been rapidly perishing. They have been taught to believe that the new opinions to which she has been compelled to assent will go forward into a more complete and permanent revolution. Edward and Elizabeth are brought together at Enfield, before their father's death is declared to them. "Never," says Hayward the historian of Edward VI., "was sorrow more sweetly set forth.

* Tyler, "Original Letters," vol. i. p. 15.

The parliament, which was sitting at the time of king Henry's decease, met on the 29th of January, and transacted business without receiving any intimation of the great change in the monarch: y. On the 31st, on which day Edward was conducted to the Tower of London and proclaimed king, Wriothesley, the chancellor, announced to the lords and commons the death of "their late dread lord." A portion of the king's Will was then read, and the parliament was dissolved. That Will was dated the 30th of December; and under it sixteen executors were appointed, to exercise the powers of the crown during Edward's minority. To assist these executors in cases of doubt, a second council of twelve persons was also nominated. At the accession of Henry VI., at the age of nine years, the peers assembled and issued writs for a parliament. Henry V. had desired by his Will that his brother Gloucester should be regent; but the parliament declared that a king could not appoint a regent during the minority of his successor. They committed a limited power to Gloucester under the title of Protector. The Executors of Henry VIII. raised the earl of Hertford to that office. The very act of appointing executors was the assertion of the royal prerogative to deal with the kingdom as with a private estate. A servile parliament had passed a statute under which Henry thus attempted to supersede the ancient powers of the legislature. The solemn trust conferred upon numerous executors propitiated the ruling passion strong in death; but the administrative power of many would necessarily be usurped by one, or by a few. Wriothesley opposed the nomination of any one of the council with an authority superior to the rest. Hertford reasonably enough pointed out the difficulties of conducting a government with such a large executive. The chancellor was overruled. The influence of Hertford prevailed. He was soon after created duke of Somerset; and Wriothesley was removed from office; having in his struggle for power committed a political offence. In these proceedings, the party of the Reformation was triumphant. Without the support of a powerful party Somerset could not have gone so direct to the object of his ambition. No one appears to have offered any resistance but the ex-chancellor; and after Edward's coronation, which took place on the 28th of February, the Protector was not only confirmed in his authority by letters-patent under the great seal, but his powers were extended, and the functions of the executors were merged in those of a general council, who were bound to act by the advice and

consent of the real head of the state. The boy-king had been crowned and anointed. He had taken the coronation oath. He had proclaimed a general pardon. But Somerset was the sovereign of England for the time being. He and his faithful co-executors had wealth as well as titles showered upon them, under the pretence that the late king had, by a clause in his will, required his executors to make good all that he had promised; and witnesses were ready to prove what these promises were. The same spirit of rapacity which had swallowed up so large a portion of the church property, in the days of Henry, was still unsated; and the zeal for a reformed church, earnest as it was amongst the more intelligent and truly religious of the nation, was thus exposed to reproach and misconstruction. When it was alleged that Henry VIII. had promised the earl of Hertford the revenues of six good prebends, the disinterested sincerity of the Protector in seeking a further reformation of religion might well be doubted.

In tracing the course of events in the reign of Edward VI.—a reign which lasted only six years and a half—we feel strongly impressed with the contrast between the influence of the personal character of a king whose will was almost absolute, and that of the personal character of a king whose nonage prevented him exercising any real control over public affairs. And yet we cannot speak of the tendencies of the government without feeling that the disposition, the abilities, and the acquirements of this youth, who died before he had completed his sixteenth year, could not be without some effect upon the opinions of the time, if they had little share in the direction of its policy. The "Journal" written with his own hand, which is preserved in the Cotton Library, is very remarkable, not only for what it contains, but for what it omits. There is not the slightest display of learning in it—there are no puerilities. It is a very simple record of public affairs, without any expression of strong feeling. Not exhibiting any large or original views, it yet manifests a perfect acquaintance with the general nature of the matters which came under the writer's observation. A very competent judge has said, "It is perhaps somewhat brief and dry for so young an author; but the adoption of such a plan, and the accuracy with which it is written, bear marks of an untainted taste and of a considerate mind."* Of the first and second years of his reign, and of three months of the third year, it presents only a short summary. From the 24th of March, 1549, it becomes

* Sir J. Mackintosh, "History," vol. ii. p. 249.

a Diary, and is continued till the 30th of November, 1552. In the introductory part, his own birth is recorded; and his early education is thus described: "Afterwards was brought up, till he came to six years old, among the women. At the sixth year of his age he was brought up in learning by Master Doctor Cox, who was after his almoner, and John Cheke, Master of Arts, two well-learned men, who sought to bring him up in learning of tongues, of the scripture, of philosophy, and all liberal sciences. Also John Belmaine, Frenchman, did teach him the French language." In a very curious paper, without date, addressed to Edward by William Thomas, clerk of the council, a series of eighty-five questions upon matters of policy are put before him. These are of the most general nature, but of much significance—such as, "Whether it be better for the commonwealth that the power be in the nobility or in the people?" These questions the writer recommends by saying, "there is not so small a one amongst them as will not minister matter of much discourse worthy the argument and debating; which your highness may, either for pastime or in earnest, propose to the wisest men."* The very nature of these questions is some testimony to the opinion held of this prince's understanding; and this opinion may be valued at a higher rate than the eulogy of Cardan, an Italian physician, who saw him professionally in 1552, that he was "a marvellous boy"—"*monstrificus puellus*."

At the period of Henry's death England was at peace. The pacification of 1546 with France included Scotland; and it was a leading object of Henry's policy, which he held to in his dying hour, that the union of England and Scotland should be cemented by the marriage of his son with the child Mary, the Scottish queen. The attempt to force this marriage upon Scotland had aroused the old national spirit of independence in her nobility; and the proposal of Somerset, that the former treaty for this marriage should be renewed and ratified, was coldly listened to. Within a month after the accession of Edward, the Council Book shows that a state of active hostility was approaching. On the 27th of February, Sir Andrew Dudley is appointed to the command of the ship Pauncey, to cruise in the North Seas off the English and Scottish coasts. † In less than a fortnight, Dudley had captured the Scottish vessel Lion. This casual encounter appears to have made a strong impression upon the young king, for it is recorded with

* See Ellis, "Second Series," vol. ii. p. 187.

† Lemon, "Calendar of State Papers," p. 2.

more than usual minuteness in his Journal. At this juncture an event occurred which materially affected the relations of England with France and Scotland. Francis I. died on the 31st of March, at Rambouillet. He had reigned thirty-two years; during which period his affairs had been so mixed up with those of Henry VIII., either as friends or enemies, that their fates seemed in some degree to be linked together, and Francis had entertained a notion that he should die in the same year as the English king. When Henry died, Francis caused a funeral service to be celebrated in the church of Notre Dame; and he gradually fell into a state of dejection, which, if not a tribute of friendship to the memory of his rival in pomp and pageantry, was a submission to the lesson, which even kings must learn, that "all is vanity." The son and successor of Francis, Henry II., was playing at tennis, two days after his father's death,—by advice of his physicians.* He gave a more convincing proof of his slight regard for his father's memory, by calling about him the councillors against whom he had received a death-bed warning. Twenty days before the death of Francis, a treaty had been concluded between France and England. This the new king of France refused to ratify. He preferred to cultivate an alliance with the Scots. The duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine were the brothers of the queen-dowager of Scotland, and they were amongst the chief advisers of the French king. To stay the progress of the reformed opinions in Scotland, and to prevent the marriage of the young Mary with Edward, were sufficient motives to a decided change of policy. The castle of St. Andrews, after the murder of cardinal Beaton, in 1546, had been held against the regent Arran, by those who were favourable to the English alliance. A truce between the regent and the possessors was concluded in February, 1547; and they subsequently proceeded to make a treaty with Somerset, in which they engaged to forward the projected marriage, and to aid any English force that should enter Scotland for the purpose of obtaining possession of the queen's person. The French government, in the summer of 1547, sent a fleet to assist in the reduction of the castle. It was finally surrendered on the 29th of July, and was afterwards demolished. On the 2nd of September, the protector crossed the border at Berwick, with a powerful invading army.

It would be injustice to the policy of Somerset to assume that he entered upon the war with Scotland in the arrogant spirit with

* Wotton to Somerset, "Tytler," vol. i. p. 38.

which Henry VIII. had conducted his negotiations and his assaults. There was a treaty under the Great Seal of Scotland for the marriage of Edward with Mary; but the determination to demand its fulfilment was conducted in a tone of moderation, in the first instance, which shows that the empire of force was gradually yielding to the empire of opinion. The Protector addressed a remarkable letter "to the nobility and counsellors, gentlemen and commons and all other the inhabitants of the realm of Scotland," in which, with "greeting and peace," he sets forth the desire of England to establish the amity of the two countries by the union of the Crowns. In this document we recognise the expression of the sagacious statesman rather than that of the ambitious intriguer—of one who saw what was inevitable, but who did not sufficiently estimate the force of national pride and individual interest in retarding a great good. What the statesmen of queen Anne had the utmost difficulty in accomplishing, the minister of king Edward vainly expected to realise by appeals to great principles which were imperfectly understood even two centuries later. Somerset said to the people of Scotland, that living in one island, speaking the same language, alike in manners and conditions, it was "unmeet, unnatural, and unchristian, that there should be betwixt us so mortal war, who, in respect of all other nations, be and should be like as two brethren." He proposed a solid union by the marriage of king Edward and queen Mary—the circumstances being so favourable that the Divine Providence manifestly pointed out the road to amity. In this union of two kingdoms, England was ready "to take the indifferent old name of Britain again, because nothing should be left on our part to be offered. * * * We seek not to take from you your laws nor customs, but we seek to redress your oppressions, which of divers ye do sustain." If eloquent writing could have been more effectual than sturdy blows, such an appeal as this might have prevented the battle of Pinkie: "If we two, being made one by amity, be most able to defend us against all nations, and having the sea for wall, the mutual love for garrison, and God for defence, should make so noble and well-agreeing monarchy, that neither in peace we may be ashamed, nor in war afraid of any worldly or foreign power, why should not you be as desirous of the same, and have as much cause to rejoice at it as we?"* But the words of peace were not hearkened to.

* This letter, given at length in Holinshed, p. 998, is far more interesting than the paraphrase of Hayward, which Hume quotes as his authority.

The influence of France prevailed. The priests stirred up the Scottish people to resist the English heretics. Knox was a prisoner in France; and the friends of the Reformation were scattered and proscribed.

Somerset advanced from Berwick along the shore, whilst a fleet under lord Clinton kept the sea within view of the coast; and as the army marched by Dunbar, the ships were seen sailing into the Frith of Forth. Turning westward the cavalry forded the river Lynn, and the infantry crossed at Linton Bridge. Bands of Scottish horsemen now began to appear; and the earl of Warwick was nearly taken prisoner in a rash advance. On the 8th the English were encamped near Preston-pans; and the fleet was at anchor near Musselburgh. The Scottish army was within a distance of little more than two miles; the ridge of Falside being between the two hosts. On the 9th, after a sharp skirmish, Somerset and Warwick reconnoitred the Scots from this hill. They occupied a strong position, with the sea on their left flank, and a deep marsh on their right. The river Esk protected their front; and the bridge crossing the Esk was held and strongly defended. On the morning of the 10th, when the English army began to move, it was discovered that the Scots had abandoned their strong position, and had crossed the river. They had taken up an opinion that the English were about to retreat to their ships, and would escape unless attacked in their camp. This belief was fatal to them. Although the Scots fought with the most determined valour, and successfully resisted a furious charge of the English cavalry, their rash movement had placed a portion of their force within the ability of the English "to compass them," says one present in the battle, "in that they should no ways escape us; the which by our force and number we were as well able to do as a spinner's web to catch a swarm of bees."* The fight had been very doubtful until this superiority was gained in one portion of the field. A general panic then ensued; and the Scottish army fled before their slaughtering pursuers. We shall not follow Patten, the "Londoner," in his narrative of the horrible traces of this slaughter, by the sands of Leith, by the high road and King's Park to Edinburgh, and through the marsh to Dalkeith. The pursuit was not ended till nightfall; when the victors returned to plunder the Scottish camp. This great victory—the last field, most happily, in which England and Scotland were engaged in a quarrel that could be called na-

* Patten's Narrative; in "Dalyell's Fragments of Scottish History."

tional—was without any benefit beyond the unsubstantial glory of the victors. Ten thousand Scots perished, and fifteen hundred were taken prisoners, without any serious loss on the part of the English. Leith was set on fire. Several castles were taken. But in three weeks after the battle of Pinkie, Somerset recrossed the Tweed; and entered London on the 8th of October, declining, however, any triumphant reception. The young king congratulated his uncle in a short and sensible letter written on the 18th of September;* and the successful general received additional grants of landed estates. Some have ascribed the sudden return of Somerset to the necessity of resisting intrigues that were proceeding against him in the English council. It is probable that he trusted more to the gradual effects of his victory upon the minds of the Scottish nation, than to any immediate attempts to control the course of its government. But the spirit of resistance to the English heretics was excited rather than allayed by the disaster of the Black Saturday, as the day of Pinkie was long called. The desired amity was still far distant. There was a young man in the battle whose influence upon the politics of Scotland was ultimately more powerful than the prowess of the Protector, of whom he was a confidential servant. In that field the future great minister of Elizabeth "was like to have been slain; but was miraculously saved by one that, putting forth his arm, to thrust Mr. Cecil out of the level of the cannon, had his arm stricken off."†

Before the departure of Somerset for Scotland writs had been issued to summon a parliament. During the seven months which had elapsed of the reign of Edward the intentions of the government as to the reform of religion had been decidedly manifested; and there could be little doubt that a parliament would carry forward the principles of which the archbishop of Canterbury and the Protector were now the open and fearless advocates. Cranmer and his coadjutors in the church sought to prepare a broad and solid foundation for their reforms, in the enlightenment of the people. Vain ceremonies and superstitious observances might be attacked by statutes and proclamations. The ancient rubbish might be cleared away by the strong hand. But a fairer temple could not be built up except by the force of national opinion. The influence of the printing-press and the influence of the pulpit were to be exerted to lead the people to think, and in thinking to reject the

* Ellis, First Series, vol. ii. p. 148.

† Life of Lord Burghley by a Domestic; in Peck's "Desiderata Curiosa, p. 8.

tyranny which had so long kept them in darkness. Cranmer had selected the Paraphrase of the New Testament, by Erasmus, as a fitting book to be translated into English, and set up in churches. It was the work of one of the most moderate of reformers, and contained little that could be offensive to the professors of the old faith. But any mode of enlightening the people was offensive to the anti-reforming party in the church; and Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, attacked this translation with clever bitterness which many a dignified ecclesiastic, even to this day, has been proud to imitate. One objection was made by Gardiner to the circulation of the Paraphrase, which may deserve a passing notice. He says that the injunctions to set up the book "charge the realm for buying rather above 20,000*l.* than under; whereof I have made account by estimate of the number of buyers, and the price of the whole books." The Paraphrase is in two folio volumes. It was translated by several persons; and each portion of the book being separately paged, it was either issued in sections, as it came from the press, or was divided amongst many printers to secure a rapid completion. The cost of this book, thus objected to by Gardiner, was probably as injurious to its circulation as "the arrogant ignorance of the translator," which he unsparingly ridiculed. In the same spirit the bishop of Winchester attacked the Book of Homilies, "appointed by the king's majesty to be declared and read by all parsons, vicars, or curates, every Sunday in their churches, were they have cure." With all his rancour and prejudice there is a boldness and honesty in Gardiner's remonstrances against the measures of this period, which were ill answered by committing him to the Fleet. His voice was thus silenced before the meeting of parliament. An ecclesiastical visitation, to which Gardiner and Bonner, the bishop of London, were strongly opposed, went forward during the Protector's absence in Scotland. The kingdom was divided into six circuits; and the commissioners in each had to inquire as to the removal of images, when they were abused by pilgrimages and offerings; whether the Scriptures were read, and the Litany sung, in English; whether the clergy declared to their parishioners the articles for the abolition of superfluous holidays; whether they diligently taught their parishioners, and especially the youth, the Pater Noster, the articles of our faith, and the Ten Commandments, in English; whether the Bible, of the largest volume in English, was provided in some convenient place in the

church. These, and many other subjects of inquiry, furnished a clear assurance that the government was not disposed to slumber over the work of the Reformation. The commissioners appear to have been armed in some particulars not only with a power of inquiry, but of absolute authority to repress abuses. There was no open resistance to their proceedings. Burnet says, that when the Protector returned from Scotland, "he found the visitors had performed their visitation, and all had given obedience. And those who expounded the secret providences of God with an eye to their own opinions took great notice of this,—that on the same day on which the visitors removed, and destroyed, most of the images in London, their armies were so successful in Scotland at Pinkie-field."*

The parliament which assembled on the 4th of November, 1547, sat only till the 24th of December; but in those fifty days it passed some measures of the highest importance. The "Act for the repeal of certain statutes concerning treasons, felonies, &c.," swept away the manifold treasons which had been created, by statute after statute, in the reign of Henry VIII. In the reign of Richard II. the same process of making new treasons had been resorted to; and the statute of Henry IV. by which they are abrogated, says that "no man knew how he ought to behave himself, to do, speak, or say, for doubt of such pains of treason." So it was when Edward VI. came to the throne; and the remedy, as in the reign of Henry IV. was to go back to the Statute of Treasons of the 25th of Edward III., and entirely to repeal what Blackstone calls the "new-fangled treasons" of "the bloody reign of Henry VIII."† By this act of the 1st of Edward VI., all "estatutes touching, mentioning, or in any wise concerning religion,"—the statutes of Richard II., of Henry V., and of Henry VIII., "concerning punishment and reformation of heretics and Lollards;" the recent statutes of the Six Articles, and against uttering certain books; and "all and every other act concerning doctrine and matter of religion," were repealed and utterly annulled. All new Felonies made by statute since the 1st of Henry VIII. were also repealed. The penalties for affirming that the king is not supreme head of the Church were, however, retained. In this comprehensive statute, the despotic law of the preceding reign, that the Proclamations of the King in Council should be as valid as acts of parliament, was, further, wholly repealed.‡ Whatever might be the errors of the Protec-

* "Reformation," Part II. book i.

† "Commentaries," book iv. c. 6, p. 82, of Mr. Kerr's edition. ‡ 1 Edward VI. c. 12.

tor's administration, this Statute alone furnishes a proof that the detestable spirit of unbridled tyranny which was the characteristic of the second half of the reign of Henry was not to be perpetuated. In the rebellion of 1549, when the insurgents were moved by the enemies of the Reformation to desire that the laws should be placed again on their tyrannous foundation, Somerset, writing in the name of the king, thus adverted to the circumstances of their repeal: "The Six Articles, and the statutes that made words treason, and other such severe laws, ye seem to require again; the which all our whole parliament almost, on their knees, required us to abolish and put away; and when we condescended thereto, with a whole voice gave us most humble thanks, for they thought before that no man was sure of his life, lands, or goods. And would you have these laws again? Will you that we shall resume the scourge again, and hard snaffle for your mouths?"* In this short parliament an act was passed regarding "the Sacrament of the Altar." It imposed the penalties of fine and imprisonment upon such as by preaching, reading, arguments, talks, rhymes, songs, or plays, "call it by such vile and unseemly words as Christian ears do abhor to hear rehearsed." There can be no doubt that the abuse and ribaldry with which the doctrine of the real presence had been assailed, had seriously tended to bring all religion into contempt, and had nourished a spirit of irreverence wholly opposed to the principles of the Reformation. But coupled with this enactment was a clause that marked the distinction between the Romish and the Reformed Church, by prescribing that the Sacrament should be administered in both kinds—the bread and the wine—thus providing that the cup should not be refused to the laity. The people, according to the usage of the primitive church, were to receive the sacrament with the priest. † By another Statute, bishops were to be elected by the king's letters patent, and process in the ecclesiastical courts was to be in the king's name. ‡ Another Act, which indicates a good intention most unrighteously carried out, provides that all the revenues of chantries, by which vain opinions of purgatory and masses were upheld, should be bestowed upon the crown; considering that "the alteration, change, and amendment of the same, and converting to good and godly uses, as in erecting of Grammar-Schools to the education of youth in virtue and godli-

* Tyler, "Original Letters," vol. i. p. 180. This is one of the many interesting documents which was first given in Mr. Tyler's collection from the State Paper Office.

† 1 Edward VI. c. 1.

‡ *Ibid.*, c. 2.

ness, the farther augmenting of the universities, and better provision for the poor and needy," could not be effected in any other way than by committing their disposition to the king and his council.* Cranmer, who knew the avidity with which the rapacious courtiers seized upon the spoils of the Church, had the honesty to vote against this bill. The great Reformer was in a minority with Bonner, the most intolerant enemy of Reformation.

The parliament had been prorogued till April, 1548; but the houses having met, it was alleged that the war betwixt England and Scotland had prevented the attendance of many members, and parliament was again prorogued, and did not finally meet till the 2nd of January, 1549. During this interval of legislation, the country was in an unsettled state. The Statute against Vagabonds, passed in the first session,—that cruel enactment which Edward in his Journal calls "an extreme law"—had removed none of the evils of this period of transition. † The Reformation kept on its steady course; offending the greater number of the people who clung to ancient habits, but gradually winning over the thoughtful and educated to an earnest reception of its principles. In February, 1548, a proclamation went forth to forbid the carrying of candles on Candlemas-day; taking ashes on Ash Wednesday; and bearing palms on Palm Sunday. The commemoration of Christ's entry into Jerusalem was, in some places, burlesqued in the ancient procession of the wooden ass, before which the people prostrated themselves, and strewed their palm-branches. Burnet has described the differences of opinion as to the abolition of these old ceremonies; "The country-people generally loved all these shows, processions, and assemblies, as things of diversion: and judged it a dull business only to come to church for divine worship and the hearing of sermons: therefore they were much delighted with the gaiety and cheerfulness of these rites. But others, observing that they kept up all these things just as the heathens did their plays and festivities for their gods, judged them contrary to the gravity and simplicity of the Christian religion, and were earnest to have them removed." ‡ But the Reformers gave the people something of far higher value than the shows and processions which they took away. They gave them an English Liturgy.

The first measure of the Parliament of 1549 was "An Act for the Uniformity of Service," &c. The preamble states that the king having appointed "the archbishop of Canterbury, and certain

* 1 Edward VI. c. 14. † See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 486. ‡ "Reformation," Part II. book i.

of the most learned and discreet bishops and other learned men of this realm," that they should "draw and make one convenient and meet order of common and open prayer and administration of the sacraments," they had "by the aid of the Holy Ghost, with one uniform agreement concluded and set forth" the same, "in a book entitled the Book of Common Prayer, and administration of the Sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the Church, after the use of the Church of England." * This form of service was to be read by all ministers in cathedrals and parish churches, from the ensuing feast of Pentecost, under penalties for refusal; and the book of the said service was to be obtained at the cost of the parishioners, before that festival. The office of the Communion had been previously issued as a separate publication. Of the "Book of the Common Prayer" there were two authorized printers, Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch. They appear to have commenced the issue as fast as their presses could produce copies; some having the date of March, 1549; some of May, some of June. The price of a copy was limited, thus, by a notice on the last leaf of the folio volume: "The king's majesty, by the advice of his most dear uncle the Lord Protector, and other his highness' council, straitly chargeth and commandeth that no manner of person do sell this present book, unbound, above the price of two shillings and twopence the piece; and the same bound in paste or in boards, not above the price of three shillings and eightpence the piece." † With some variations in a subsequent edition of 1552, which was called "the second book," this Liturgy is not essentially different from that of the present day. It was based upon the ancient catholic services, which had been handed down from the primitive ages of the Church; and which the English people had for generations heard sung or said, without comprehending their meaning. In the western insurrection of 1549, the rebels declared, "We will have the mass in Latin, as was before." The answer of Cranmer to this point of their complaints is a logical appeal to the common sense of Englishmen: "The priest is your proctor and attorney, to plead your cause and to speak for you all; and had you rather not know than know what he saith for you? I have heard suitors murmur at the bar, because their attorneys have pleaded their cases in the French tongue, which they understood not. Why then be you offended that the priests, which plead your cause before God, should speak such language

* 2 & 3 Edward VI. c. 1.

† Herbert's Ames.

as you may understand?" * The resistance to the Act for the Uniformity of Service, to which the people in some places were stimulated by high counsels and examples, was of itself an indication of the fears of the anti-reformers, that the habitual use of a Common Prayer Book, so pure and simple, so earnest and elevated, —so adapted to the universal wants and feelings of mankind—so touching and solemn in its Offices—would establish the reformed worship upon a foundation which no storm of worldly policy could afterwards overthrow. The change in the habits of the people produced by this Book of Common Prayer must indeed have been great. When they gathered together in the spacious cathedral or the narrow village church, they no longer heard the Litany sung by the priests in procession; but they joined their own voices to the sacred words which they received into their hearts, with "Spare us good Lord," and "We beseech thee to hear us." This constant feeling that they themselves were to take part in the service, and not be mere listeners to unintelligible though euphonious sentences, was to give a new interest to the reformed worship, far beyond the formal "Amen" of the Latin ritual, and the other routine words which they had been taught to speak, "like pies or parrots." † For a short time it was objected to the new service that "it was like a Christmas game;" but when the people, after a few years, had come to understand this service, in which they took a real part, they could not be readily led back to the "fond play" of their forefathers, "to hear the priest speak aloud to the people in Latin, and the people listen with their ears to hear; and some walking up and down in the church; some saying other prayers in Latin; and none understandeth other." ‡ The English Liturgy, and the constant reading of the Lessons in English, were the corner-stones which held together that Church of England which the reformers had built up. Those who rejected the Liturgy consistently demanded that the English Bible should be called in again. The records of the Printing-press show how vain was such a demand. The art of Gutenberg and Caxton had made a return to the old darkness an impossibility. Not without reason did John Day, one of the printers of the many editions of the Bible that appeared in the reign of Edward VI., take, in allusion to his own name, a device of the sun rising and the sleeper awakened.

* Strype, "Memorials of Cranmer," vol. ii. p. 518. Oxford, 1848.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 544.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Difficulties of the government of the Protector.—Proceedings of his brother, Lord Seymour.—His arrest.—His attainder and execution.—Participation of Somerset in Seymour's condemnation.—Dangers of the country.—Somerset's attempts to resist the oppression of the Commons.—Proclamations against inclosures.—Insurrections of 1549.—The Cornish and Devonshire rebellion against religious innovations.—Siege of Exeter.—The Norfolk rebellion against inclosures.—Encampments on Mousehold-heath.—Dispersion of the rebels.—The Scottish war continued.

ALTHOUGH the great ecclesiastical policy of the government of Edward VI. had, during the first two years of the reign, gone steadily onward, the evils incidental to a royal minority were rapidly developing themselves. The power of the Protector was to some extent an usurpation. The authority which had been conferred upon him by letters patent was naturally offensive to many of the council. The resistance of Gardiner and others of the higher clergy kept alive the hostility of the great Romish party. The princess Mary, too, as might have been expected from the determination of her character, refused to conform to the change of religion, and maintained that as her father's executors were sworn to his laws, she should defer her obedience to other laws until the king were of sufficient years to enforce them.* This doctrine was openly or covertly upheld by persons of less importance; and the bonds of submission to the ruling powers of the state were thus relaxed, wherever conscience, so called, could be set up against the duty of the subject. The Protector himself, of whose character it is difficult to judge dispassionately amidst a mass of contradictory opinions, was, like all persons whose authority is in any degree questionable, disposed to enforce it beyond the limits of prudence. He gave offence to a proud nobility, by taking precedence in parliament, and sitting upon an elevated seat on the right hand of the throne. He gave offence by putting his own opinion above the opinions of the council; so that a Spaniard who had visited England, said that Somerset rode upon so strong and big a horse, that the fair goodly animal carried the Protector

* Strype, "Eccl. Memorials," II. part I. p. 238.

and the king's council at once upon his back.* His confidential friend, sir William Paget, ventured to remonstrate against his "great choleric fashions;" and mentioning a case in which sir Richard a Lee had complained, with weeping, of the Protector's "handling of him," most wisely says, "a king who shall give men discouragement to say their opinions frankly receiveth thereby great hurt and peril to his realm. But a subject in great authority, as your grace is, using such fashion, is like to fall into great danger and peril of his own person, beside that to the commonwealth."† The first great danger and peril which Somerset encountered came from his own brother.

Admiral sir Thomas Seymour, created by Edward VI. lord Seymour of Sudley, had, within a very short time of the death of Henry VIII., become a suitor to his widow, queen Catherine Parr. In king Edward's Journal, immediately after a notice of the recantation of Dr. Smith, at Paul's Cross, on the 15th of May, there is this significant entry:—"The lord Seymour of Sudley married the queen whose name was Catherine, with which marriage the Lord Protector was much offended." The Protector, after the marriage was avowed, withheld the royal widow's jewels, which she alleged the late king had given her; and he opposed her wish as to the lease of a crown manor. Amiable as she appears to have been, she manifested her indignation in no measured terms, in a letter to her husband:—"This shall be to advertise you that my lord your brother hath this afternoon made me a little warm. It was fortunate we were so much distant; for I suppose else I should have bitten him."‡ The wife of lord Seymour was not long fated to kindle her husband's wrath against his brother. She gave birth to a daughter on the 1st of September, 1548, and died on the 7th. Seymour had hoped for a son, "trusting," as he writes to his wife in June, that, "if God should give him life to live as long as his father, he will revenge such wrongs as neither you nor I can at this present."§ It appears not improbable that what Seymour deemed his wrongs were the results of his brother's sense of his public duty. There is a remarkable letter of the Protector to the lord admiral, dated on the 1st of September, 1548, in which he remonstrates against his brother's conduct in his private relations with his neighbours:—"If you do so behave yourself amongst your poor neighbours, and others the king's subjects, that they

* Strype, "Eccl. Memorials," II. part I. p. 238.

† *Ibid.*, part II. p. 427.

‡ Haynes' Burghley Papers.

§ Tytler, vol. i. p. 103.

may have easily just cause to complain upon you, and so you do make them a way and cause to lament unto us and pray redress, we are most sorry therefore, and would wish very heartily it were otherwise; which were both more honour for you, and quiet and joy and comfort for us. But if you mean it, that for our part we are ready to receive poor men's complaints, that findeth or thinketh themselves injured or grieved, it is our duty and office so to do. And though you be our brother, yet we may not refuse it upon you."*

The death of the queen, his wife, opened to the rash and turbulent Seymour, a new prospect for his ambition. If the scandalous stories of that time are to be believed—and they appear in the evidence of the princess Elizabeth's governess—there had been many strange familiarities between the admiral and the princess, then a girl of fifteen, who was residing under the care of queen Catherine.† He now paid secret addresses to the princess; who appears, in that spirit of coquetry which she retained through life, to have given some encouragement to a man who is described as "fierce in courage, courtly in fashion, in personage stately, in voice magnificent, but somewhat empty in matter."‡ It was one of the charges against him, as set forth in Articles of Treason in the Council Book, that before he married the queen he attempted to marry "the lady Elizabeth, second inheritor in remainder to the crown," but was then prevented by the Lord Protector, and others of the council. The charge then goes on to say, "that you sithence that time, both in the life of the queen continued your old labour and love, and after her death, by secret and crafty means, practised to achieve the said purpose of marrying the said lady Elizabeth, to the danger of the king's majesty's person, and peril of the state, of the same."§ In January, 1549, Seymour was arrested and sent to the Tower. The opposition to his designs upon the princess Elizabeth had probably driven him to engage in the rash enterprises which led to his destruction.

The proceedings against Seymour were conducted under that approved instrument of oppression, a bill of attainder. After his committal he had been several times examined; but on the 23rd of February the council proceeded to the Tower, and presented to him thirty-three articles, to which they required his answers. He demanded a trial, and to be confronted with his accusers. This

* Tytler, vol. i. p. 121.

† Hayward, "Life of Edward VI."

‡ Burghley Papers.

§ Burnet, Records, part II. No. 31.

demand was refused; and the articles formed the foundation of the bill of attainder, which was brought into the house of lords. "Then the evidence was brought. Many lords gave it so fully that all the rest with one voice consented to the bill; only the Protector, for natural pity's sake, as is in the Council Book, desired leave to withdraw."* The bill was sent to the Commons; but some of the old constitutional feeling had revived; and it was urged that the admiral should be heard upon a trial. But the Lords who had given evidence went to the House of Commons, and there repeating what they had said, the bill passed. The royal assent was given on the 5th of March; and the unhappy man was executed on the 20th. The warrant for his execution was signed, amongst others of the council, by Somerset and by Cranmer. The historian of Edward VI. says, with regard to the Protector, "Hereupon many of the nobility cried out upon him that he was a blood-sucker, a murderer, a parricide, † a villain, and that it was not fit the king should be under the protection of such a ravenous wolf."‡ The extent to which a determination to sacrifice private feelings to public duty may carry a statesman, can scarcely be estimated by those who treat of such matters with the natural sympathies for the unfortunate, and the common reverence for the ties of blood. But it is clear that Somerset was not of a cruel nature; and we may readily believe in the record of the council, which says that the necessity for his brother's attainder was felt by him to be "heavy, lamentable, and sorrowful." It would appear, also, from a trustworthy evidence, that the sad alternative of a brother's death, or the danger of the State, was in some degree forced upon him. The princess Elizabeth, when she was suspected of being privy to a conspiracy against her sister, queen Mary, earnestly entreated to be admitted to see her; saying, "I have heard in my time of many cast away for want of coming to the presence of their prince; and, in late days, I have heard my lord Somerset say that, if his brother had been suffered to speak with him, he had never suffered; but the persuasions were made to him so great, that he was brought in belief that he could not live safely if the admiral lived, and that made him give his consent to his death."§ "He could not live safely if the admiral lived" would seem to make the

* Burnet.

† The term "parricide" was not always restricted to the murderer of a father or mother. Blackstone explains the *parricide* of the Roman Law as "the murder of one's parent or children," p. iv. c. 14.

‡ Hayward.

§ Ellis, Second Series, vol. ii. p. 256.

quarrel between the two brothers a mere personal question. But in this quarrel the tranquillity of the government was involved. The realm was surrounded with dangers. The war with Scotland and France required that the people should be united for defence; but they were greatly divided in religious opinions, and a large proportion of the labouring population were disposed to insurrection. There can be little doubt that, if Seymour had no designs upon the young king's life, he sought to make himself master of his person. He had propitiated the boy by little kindnesses, which contrasted with Somerset's somewhat strict governorship; and he had endeavoured to persuade the king that it was his interest to take the royal authority into his own hands. Edward himself was examined before the Council and his testimony furnishes a very sufficient example of the public dangers of a minority, under which the executive power does not rest upon well defined constitutional principles. Edward from the first was a puppet in the hands of Somerset; and his name was often affixed to important papers by a stamp which the Protector used. That a quick and intelligent youth should desire to be freed from a somewhat stern control, was an inevitable consequence of his position; and Seymour made an artful use of this discontent, to supplant his brother, and in so doing to convulse the government. It is tolerably clear that Edward regarded his uncle, the Protector, with slight affection. The marquis of Dorset in his examination before the Council said, "The king's majesty hath divers times made his moan unto me; saying that my uncle of Somerset dealeth very hardly with me, and keepeth me so strait that I cannot have money at my will; but my lord admiral both sends me money and gives me money." One sentence of the young king's statement is conclusive as to the effect which had been produced upon his mind by the intrigues of Seymour: "Within this two year at least, he [the admiral] said, ye must take upon yourself to rule, for ye shall be able enough, as well as other kings, and then ye may give your men somewhat; for your uncle is old, and I trust will not live long. I answered, it were better that he should die." * Seymour had fortified Holt Castle; had tampered with sir John Sharrington, the master of the mint at Bristol, to furnish him with a large supply of money, as Sharrington confessed; and had taken measures to embody a large armed force. Unless we were to refuse our belief to a great body of testimony, however illegally applied to the purpose of attainder.

* These curious revelations are in the Burghley Papers, published by Haynes.

we must believe that Seymour suffered the inevitable, and in many respects just, punishment of those who seek to change a government by craft and violence, and fail in the enterprise. The reformers appear to have associated the designs of Seymour with some covert objects of hostility to the changes of religion. Cranmer signed his death-warrant; "which," says Burnet, "being in a cause of blood was contrary to the canon law." * * * But it seems Cranmer thought his conscience was under no tie from these canons, and so judged it not contrary to his function to sign that order. The act was one of those compliances with power, of which the life of Cranmer furnishes too many proofs. Latimer preached a sermon before the king, in which he said of Seymour that "he died very dangerously, irksomely, horribly." It appears from this sermon, that Latimer was indignant at a characteristic act of the unhappy man, who nourished his revenge at the last hour. He had contrived to write letters to the princesses Mary and Elizabeth, to excite their hatred of the Protector, who was represented therein as their great enemy; and these letters, sewed in a velvet shoe, were to be delivered by his servant after his death, to whom he sent a message that "he should speed the thing that he wot of." Latimer in his sermon exclaimed, "What would he have done, if he had lived still, that went about that gear when he had laid his head on the block?" * In the statute book, the act of attainder of sir John Sharrington precedes that of lord Seymour. The charge against him was that he had forged twelve thousand pounds of the king's coin; and had also defrauded the government by clipping and shearing the coin, making false entries in his indentures. This master of the Bristol mint was alleged to have handed over ten thousand pounds of this false coin to the use of Seymour. This was at the period when the money of the State was enormously debased; so that the government which thus cheated its subjects was cheated by its own officer. The clipping and shearing was an easy process when the current money was roughly hammered out; and, having no milled edge, could be slightly reduced in size without detection. † Sharrington was ultimately pardoned, probably because he had betrayed the man who incited him to his offence; and Latimer proclaimed that his fervent repentance warranted his being forgiven.

* Strype, Eccles. Mem. vol. ii. part i. p. 108. This passage of Latimer's Fourth Sermon before King Edward, is only found in the first edition of the Sermons.

† See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 493.

The circumstances under which Somerset was placed in supreme power, although carrying on the government in the name of the young king, were such as to demand the union of the highest qualities of the statesman. The rule of Henry VIII. had been of the most arbitrary nature; putting down all opposition of the great by a system of terror; and repressing the crimes and disorders of the humble by the sternest administration of sanguinary laws. Somerset was, by nature, and out of the necessity of his position, opposed to harsh courses. The preamble of the statute for the repeal of the new laws of treason says, that, although these laws of Henry VIII. were "expedient and necessary," they might appear "very strait, sore, extreme, and terrible;" but as in tempest or winter, one garment is convenient, and in calm or warm weather a lighter garment may be worn, so the sore laws of one time may be taken away in a calmer and quieter reign.* This belief in a coming halcyon season, when men by diligent teaching should be won to the knowledge of the truth—when all should be contented to live under the reign of clemency and love—was doubtless the foundation of Somerset's policy. But he stood apart from the men who had been trained to administer the rough discipline of Henry's tyranny; and who had no sympathy with the great mass of the people. Somerset really saw that a State was something more than a king, a nobility, a church, an army;—that there were other interests to be regarded besides those of property; and that, to use the words of one of his confidential officers, "if the poorest sort of the people, which be members of the same body as well as the rich, be not provided and cherished in their degree, it cannot but be a great trouble of the body, and a decay of the strength of the realm."† But Somerset had not those rare qualities of firmness and prudence which can make a mild government safe in unsettled times. He saw oppression everywhere around him—the powerful assailing the weak by open tyranny, or under the forms of law—the judges venal—the courts of justice practically closed to the needy suitor; and he attempted to redress these evils by his own personal vigilance. He opened a Court of Requests, where he himself heard complaints, and interfered with the regular tribunals to prescribe equitable remedies. This is the oriental system of justice, which looks so beautiful in a Haroun Alraschid,

* 1 Edw. VI. c. 12.

† The charge of John Hales for redress of inclosures. *Strype, Eccles. Mem. vol. ii. part ii. p. 356.*

but which is simply an indication of general corruption too powerful for the laws. Paget, an acute and honest adviser, wrote to Somerset, "meddle no more with private suits, but remit them to ordinary courses." Somerset would feel that the ordinary courses were evil, and beyond his power legally to remedy. Latimer preached that Cambyses was a great emperor who flayed a judge alive, and laid his skin in his chair of judgment, for that the judge was "a briber, a gift-taker, a gratifier of rich men." Latimer cried out, "I pray God we may once see the sign of the skin in England."* But if the official system were too dangerous for Somerset to meddle with by constitutional methods, so were the oppressions of tenants by landlords, and of labourers by masters. The evils of society were of too complicated a nature to be dealt with by any one bold measure for the redress of grievances. Even if the government could have seen how vain were all attempts to regulate prices—how impossible to prevent men applying capital to land in the way most profitable—the Protector could scarcely have forbore yielding to the popular clamour. Proclamations were issued "for the speedy reformation of the unreasonable prices of victuals in markets;" and "against inclosures, and taking in of fields and commons that were accustomed to lie open for the behoof of the inhabitants dwelling near to the same."† Of course these proclamations were wholly ineffectual. There was a general scarcity throughout Europe; and the nominal prices of commodities were raised in England by the tampering with the coin. Those who were commanded by the proclamation against inclosures to throw open their parks and pastures by a certain day, held the order in contempt; for in the country districts they were the sole administrators of local authority. But there was a spirit in the English people against which Paget had warned Somerset when he first took the reins of government. "What is the matter troweth your grace? By my faith, sir, even that which I said to your grace in the gallery at the Tower, the next day after the king's first coming there—Liberty, Liberty."‡ The old Saxon temper had not been trodden out. The government was powerless to redress the complaints of the masses, and they rushed into insurrection. There had been a partial rising in Cornwall in 1548; for which a general pardon was granted to all, with the exception of the leaders. In the summer of 1549 half of England was in a state of rebellion.

* Third Sermon before Edward VI.

† Holinshed, p. 1002.

‡ Paget to Somerset. *Strype, vol. ii. part ii. p. 432.*