

FROUDE JAMES ANTHONY

HISTORY OF ENGLAND
FROM THE FALL OF
WOLSEY TO THE DEATH
OF ELIZABETH. VOL. III

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CHAPTER XII FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC ASPECTS OF THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

In the sensitive condition of Europe the effect of events was felt beyond their natural consequence. The death of Catherine of Arragon led to the renewal of the war between France and the Empire. Paul III., in real or pretended reluctance to proceed to the last extremity, had for a time suspended the Bull of Deposition which he had drawn against the King of England.¹ It was idle to menace while he was unable to strike; and the two great Catholic powers had declined, when his intention was first

¹ He told Sir Gregory Cassalis that he had been compelled by external pressure to issue threats, “quæ tamen nunquam in animo habuit ad exitum perducere.” – Sir Gregory Cassalis to Henry VIII.: *MS. Cotton. Vitellius*, B 14, fol. 215.

made known to them, to furnish him with the necessary support. Francis I., who trifled, as it suited his convenience, with the court of London, the see of Rome, the Smalcaldic League, and the Divan at Constantinople, had protested against a step which would have compelled him to a definite course of action. The Emperor, so long as Solyman was unchecked upon the Danube, and Moorish corsairs swept the Mediterranean and ravaged the coasts of Italy, had shrunk from the cost and peril of a new contest.

Animosity of the Spaniards against the King of England
Fostered by English and Irish refugees,
And shared by the Emperor.

A declaration of war, in revenge for the injuries of the divorced queen, would indeed have been welcomed with enthusiasm by the gentlemen of Spain. A London merchant, residing at Cadiz, furnished his government with unwelcome evidence of the spirit which was abroad in the Peninsula: "I have perceived," he wrote to Cromwell, "the views and manners of these countries, and favour that these Spaniards do bear towards the King's Grace and his subjects, which is very tedious in their hearts both in word and deed, with their great Popish naughty slanderous words in all parts. And truly the King's Grace hath little or no favour now. We be all taken in derision and hated as Turks, and called heretics, and Luterians, and other spiteful words; and they say here plainly they trust shortly to have war with England, and to set in the Bishop of Rome with all his

disciples again in England.”² The affront to a Castilian princess had wounded the national honour; the bigotry of a people to whom alone in Europe their creed remained a passion, was shocked by the religious revolution with which that affront had been attended; and the English and Irish refugees, who flocked to their harbours, found willing listeners when they presented themselves as the missionaries of a crusade.³ Charles himself was withheld only by prudence from indulging the inclination of his subjects. He shared to the full their haughty sensitiveness; again and again in his private consultations with the Pope he had spoken of the revenge which he would one day exact against his uncle; and one of the best informed statesmen of the age, whose memoirs have descended to us, declares that every person who understood anything of the condition of Europe, believed assuredly that he would at last execute his threat.⁴

The Emperor returns from his successes in Africa,

But as yet no favourable opportunity had offered itself. His

² Richard Ebbes to Cromwell: *MS. Cotton. Vespasian*, B 7, fol. 87.

³ “There be here both Englishmen and Irishmen many that doth daily invent slander to the realm of England, with as many naughty Popish practices as they can and may do, and specially Irishmen.” – *Ibid*.

⁴ “L’Empereur a deux fois qu’il avoit parlè audit Evesque luy avoit fait un discours long et plein de grande passion de la cruelle guerre qu’il entendoit faire contre le dit Roy d’Angleterre, au cas qu’il ne reprint et restituast en ses honneurs la Reyne Catherine sa tante, et luy avoit declarè les moyens qu’il avoit executer vivement icelle guerre, et principalement au moyen de la bonne intelligence ce qu’il disoit avoir avec le Roy d’Ecosse.” Martin du Bellay: *Memoirs*, p. 110.

arms were occupied with other enemies; the Irish rebellion had collapsed; the disaffection in England seemed unable to coalesce with sufficient firmness to encourage an invasion in its support. It was not till the close of the year 1535, when Charles returned to Naples covered with glory from his first expedition into Africa, that means and leisure for his larger object at length offered themselves. His power and his fame were now at their zenith. He had destroyed the Moslem fleet; he had wrested Tunis from the dreaded Barbarossa; he had earned the gratitude of the Catholic world by the delivery of twenty thousand Christian slaves. The last ornament might now be added to his wreath of glory, if he would hush down the tumults of heresy as he had restored peace to the waters of the Mediterranean.

And meditates a crusade against heresy.

With this intention Charles remained in Italy for the winter. The Pope again meditated the publication of the Bull of Deposition;⁵ a circular was issued from the Vatican, copies of which were sent even to the Lutheran princes, inviting a crusade against England,⁶ and Cardinal Granvelle was instructed to sound the disposition of Francis, and persuade his coöperation. The Emperor would be moderate in his demands; an active participation would not be required of him;⁷ it

⁵ Reginald Pole states that the issue was only prevented by the news of Queen Catherine's death. – Pole to Prioli: *Epistles*, Vol. I. p. 442.

⁶ Sleidan.

⁷ Du Bellay's *Memoirs*, p. 135.

would be sufficient if he would forget his engagement with an excommunicated sovereign to whom promises were no longer binding, and would remain passive.

Dubious disposition of Francis.

Persecution of Protestants in Paris.

There was reason to believe that Granvelle's mission would be successful. The year preceding, Charles had played off a hope of Milan as a bribe to disunite the French from England; he was ready now to make a definite promise. With the first slight inducement Francis had wavered; while again, in point of religion, his conduct was more satisfactory than had been expected. He adhered in appearance to the English alliance, but he had deceived Henry's hopes that he would unite in a rupture with Rome; he had resisted all entreaties to declare the independence of the Gallican church; he had laboured to win back the Germans out of schism, partly to consolidate the French influence in Europe as opposed to the Imperial, but partly also, as he had taken pains to prove, that no doubt might be entertained of the position of France in the great question of the Reformation. He had allowed himself, indeed, as a convenience, to open negotiations for a treaty with Solyman; but the Turks, in the eyes of devout Catholics, were less obnoxious than heretics;⁸ and the scandal was obscured by an open repentance

⁸ "The Turks do not compel others to adopt their belief. He who does not attack their religion may profess among them what religion he will; he is safe. But where this pestilent seed is sown, those who do not accept, and those who openly oppose, are

for past shortcomings, and a declaration that for the future he would eschew the crime of toleration, and show no mercy to any Protestant who might fall within his grasp. An English stranger saw Francis of France march through the streets of Paris with the princes of the blood, the queen, the princesses, the bishops, cardinals, dukes, lords, counts, the “blue blood” of the nobility. They had torches, and banners, and relics of the saints, the whole machinery of the faith: and in the presence of the august assemblage six heretics were burnt at a single fire; the king gave thanks to God that he had learnt his obligations as a Christian sovereign; and, imploring the Divine forgiveness because in past years he had spared the lives of some few of these wretches whom it was his duty to have destroyed, he swore that thenceforward they should go all, as many as he could discover, to the flames.⁹

in equal peril.” – Reginald Pole: *De Unitate Ecclesiae*. For the arch-enemy of England even the name of heretic was too good. “They err,” says the same writer elsewhere, “who call the King of England heretic or schismatic. He has no claims to name so honourable. The heretic and schismatic acknowledge the power and providence of God. He takes God utterly away.” —*Apology to Charles the Fifth*.

⁹ “Sire, je pense que vous avez entendu du supplication que le Roy fit, estant la present luy même allant en ordre apres les reliques me teste portant ung torche en son mayn avecques ses filz, ses evesques, et cardinaulz devant luy, et les ducs, contes, seigneurs, seneschals, esquieres, et aultres nobles gens apres luy; et la Reyne portée par deux hommes avecques la fille du Roy et ses propres. Apres tous les grosses dames et demoiselles suivants a pié. Quant tout ceci fit fayt on brûlait vi. a ung feu. Et le Roy pour sa part remercioit Dieu qu’il avoit donne cognoissance de si grand mal le priant de pardon qu’il avoit pardonne a ung ou deux le en passé; et qu’il na pas este plus diligente en faysant execution; et fit apres serment que dicy en avant il les brulerait tous tous

The Emperor offers Milan to the Duke of Orleans.
Francis consents to the formation of a league against
England.

Thus, therefore, good hopes were entertained of Francis; but inasmuch it was known with what a passion he had set his heart on Milan, Charles resolved not to trust too entirely to his zeal for orthodoxy; and, either through Granvelle or through his ambassadors, he signified his consent to an arrangement which would have consigned Italy conclusively to a Gallican supremacy. Sforza, the last reigning duke, whose claims had hitherto been supported by the Imperialists, had died childless in the previous October. The settlement which had been made in the treaty of Cambray had thus been rendered nugatory; and Francis desired the duchy for his second son, the Duke of Orleans, who, in right of his wife, Catherine de' Medici, would inherit also the dukedoms of Florence and Urbino. If the Emperor was acting in good faith, if he had no intention of escaping from his agreement when the observance of it should no longer be necessary, he was making no common sacrifice in acquiescing in a disposition the consequence of which to the House of Austria he so clearly foresaw.¹⁰ He, however, seemed for the present to

tant qu'il en trouveroit." – Andrew Baynton to Henry VIII.: *MS. State Paper Office*, temp. Henry VIII., second series, Vol. IV.

¹⁰ "The Duke of Orleans is married to the niece of Clement the Seventh If I give him Milan, and he be dependent only on his father, he will be altogether French ... he will be detached wholly from the confederacy of the Empire." – Speech of Charles the Fifth in the Consistory at Rome. *State Papers*, Vol. VII. p. 641.

have surrendered himself to the interests of the Church;¹¹ and, in return for the concession, Francis, who had himself advised Henry VIII. to marry Anne Boleyn, – Francis, who had declared that Henry’s resistance to the Papacy was in the common interest of all Christian princes, – Francis, who had promised to make Henry’s cause his own, and, three years previously, had signed a treaty, offensive and defensive, for the protection of France and England against Imperial and Papal usurpations, – sank before the temptation. He professed his willingness to join hand and heart with the Emperor in restoring unity to Christendom and crushing the Reformation. Anticipating and exceeding the requests which had been proposed to him, he volunteered his services to urge in his own person on Henry the necessity of submitting to the universal opinion of Christendom; and, to excuse or soften the effrontery of the demand, he suggested, that, in addition to the censures, a formal notice should be served upon all Christian princes and potentates, summoning them to the assistance of the Papacy to compel the King of England with the strong hand to obey the sentence of the See of Rome.¹² A

¹¹ Charles certainly did give a promise, and the date of it is fixed for the middle of the winter of 1535-36 by the protest of the French court, when it was subsequently withdrawn. “Your Majesty,” Count de Vigny said, on the 18th of April, 1536, “promised a few months ago that you would give Milan to the Duke of Orleans, and not to his brother the Duke of Angoulesme” – *Ibid.*: *State Papers*, Vol. VII.

¹² “Bien estoit d’advise quant au faict d’Angleterre, afin qu’il eust plus de couleur de presser le Roy dudit pays a se condescendre a l’opinion universelle des Chrétiens, que l’Empereur fist que notre Saint Pere sommast de ce faire tous les princes et potentats Chrétiens; et a luy assister, et donner main forte pour faire obeir le dit Roy à la sentence

Catholic league was now on the point of completion. The good understanding so much dreaded by English ministers, between France, the Empire, and the Papacy, seemed to be achieved. A council, the decision of which could not be doubtful, would be immediately convoked by Paul, under the protectorate of the two powers; and the Reformation would become a question no longer of argument, but of strength.

January. The death of Queen Catherine is known in Italy.

New hopes are formed of a reconciliation.

March. The Emperor withdraws his offer of Milan.

Advances of the Pope and the Catholic powers to Henry

Happily, the triple cord was not yet too secure to be broken by an accident. The confederacy promised favourably till the new year. At the end of January it became known in Italy that the original cause of the English quarrel existed no longer – that Queen Catherine was no more. On the first arrival of the news there was an outburst of indignation. Stories of the circumstances of her death were spread abroad with strange and frightful details. Even Charles himself hinted his suspicions to the Pope that she had been unfairly dealt with, and fears were openly expressed for the safety of the Princess Mary.¹³ But, in a short time, calmer counsels began to prevail. Authentic accounts of the

et determination de l'Eglise.” – Du Bellay: *Memoirs*, p. 136.

¹³ Du Bellay: *Memoirs*. “Hic palam obloquuntur de morte illius ac verentur de Puellâ regiâ ne brevi sequatur.” – “I assure you men speak here tragice of these matters which is not to be touched by letters.” – Harval to Starkey, from Venice, Feb. 5, 1535-36: Ellis, second series, Vol. II.

queen's last hours must have been received early in February from the Spanish ambassador, who was with her to the end; and as her decease gave no fresh cause for legitimate complaint, so it was possible that an embarrassing difficulty was peacefully removed. On both sides there might now, it was thought, be some relaxation without compromise of principle; an attempt at a reconciliation might at least be made before venturing on the extremity of war. Once more the Pope allowed the censures to sleep.¹⁴ The Emperor, no longer compelled by honour to treat Henry as an enemy, no longer felt himself under the necessity of making sacrifices to Francis. He allowed his offer of Milan to the Duke of Orleans to melt into a proposal which would have left uninjured the Imperial influence in Italy; and Francis, who had regarded the duchy at last as his own, was furious at his disappointment, and prepared for immediate war. So slight a cause produced effects so weighty. Henry, but a few weeks before menaced with destruction, found himself at once an object of courteous solicitation from each of the late confederates. The Pope found a means of communicating to him the change in his sentiments.¹⁵ Francis, careless of all considerations beyond revenge, laboured to piece together the fragments of a friendship which his own treachery had dissolved: and Charles, through his resident at the court of London, and even with his own hand

¹⁴ Pole to Prioli: *Epist.*, Vol. I. p. 442.

¹⁵ "There hath been means made unto us by the Bishop of Rome himself for a reconciliation." — Henry VIII. to Pace: Burnet's *Collectanea*, p. 476.

in a letter to Cromwell, condescended to request that his good brother would forget and forgive what was past. The occasion of their disagreement being removed, he desired to return to the old terms of amity. The Princess Mary might be declared legitimate, having been at least born *in bonâ fide parentum*; and as soon as this difficulty should have been overcome, he promised to use his good offices with the Pope, that, at the impending council, his good brother's present marriage should be declared valid, and the succession arranged as he desired.¹⁶ Finally, that he might lose no time in reaping the benefit of his advances, he reminded Henry that the old treaties remained in force by which they had bound themselves to assist each other in the event of invasion; that he looked to his good offices and his assistance in the now imminent irruption of the French into Italy.

The English government lavished large sums as secret service money in the European courts. Though occasionally misled in reports from other quarters, they were always admirably informed by their agents at Rome.¹⁷ Henry knew precisely the history of the late coalition against him, and the value which he might attach to these new professions. He had no intention of retracing any step which he had taken. For his separation from the rest of Christendom, Rome and the other powers were alone responsible.

¹⁶ Henry VIII. to Pace: Burnet's *Collectanea*, p. 476. Lord Herbert, p. 196. Du Bellay's *Memoirs*.

¹⁷ Du Bellay.

The Spanish ambassador has an audience at Greenwich.

Events would now work for him. He had only to stand still. To the Pope he sent no answer; but he allowed Sir Gregory Cassalis to hold an indirect commission as his representative at the Papal court. To Francis he remained indifferent. The application on the part of the Emperor had been the most elaborate, and to him his answer was the most explicit. He received the Spanish ambassador in an audience at Greenwich, and, after a formal declaration had been made of Charles's message, he replied with the terms on which he would consent to forget the events of the preceding years. The interruption of friendly relations between England and Spain was the fault wholly and entirely, he said, of the Emperor. When the crown of the Cæsars was last vacant, it had been at the disposal of himself; and he it was who had permitted the choice to fall on its present wearer. In Charles's difficulties he had lent him money: to him Charles was indebted for his power, his influence, and his fame; and, in return, he had met only with ingratitude. To remember injuries, however, was not in his nature. "We can continue our displeasure to no man," he said, "if he do once remove the cause thereof; so if he which is a prince of honour, and a personage whom we once chose and thought worthy for his virtue and qualities to be advanced, will, by his express writings, either desire us to put his doings towards us in oblivion, or by the same purge himself and declare that such things wherein we have noted unkindness at his hands have been unjustly imputed to him, we shall gladly embrace his offer

touching the reconciliation.” Being the injured party, he could receive no advance and treat of no conditions unless with this necessary preliminary. Let the Emperor deal with him frankly, and he should receive a reasonable answer to all his reasonable requests.

“For the Bishop of Rome, he had not,” he continued, “proceeded on so slight grounds as he would alter any one piece of his doings. In all his causes he had laid his foundation upon the laws of God, nature, and honesty, and established his works made upon the same with consent of the states of the realm in open and high court of parliament.” The Bishop, however, had himself made known his desire for a return to a better understanding with him, and he did not think it expedient that a third party should interfere.¹⁸

Anxiety of Henry to be on good terms with the Emperor.

The haughty answer concealed a less indifferent feeling. Henry was seriously conscious of the danger of the isolation of the country; and though he chose in words to defend his self-respect, though he saw, perhaps, in a high bearing the surest means to command the respect of others, he was anxious from his heart to resume his old relations with Spain and Flanders, so important for English commerce, and still more important for the tacit sanction of his past conduct, which would be implied in a renewed treaty with the nephew of Catherine. He directed

¹⁸ Henry VIII. to Pace: Burnet's *Collectanea*, p. 476.

the English resident at the Imperial court to report the manner in which his reply had been received: he desired him at the same time to lose no opportunity of impressing, both on Charles and on his ministers, the benefits which would accrue to all Christendom, as well as to themselves, if they were again on good terms.¹⁹

War between France and the Empire.

So matters hung uncertain through the spring. The court of Rome continued hopeful,²⁰ although at that very time the English parliaments were debating the contents of the Black Book, and decreeing the dissolution of the smaller monasteries. Rumour was still favourable to a reconciliation, when, for the moment, all other considerations were absorbed in the breaking out of the French war.

D'Annebault overruns Piedmont.

Francis had not waited for the declaration of a change of policy on the part of Charles to collect an army. On the first hint of a difficulty he saw what was intended. Milan, after all, was not to be surrendered. His chief military successes had been gained by a suddenness of movement which approached to treachery. Instantly that he knew Charles to be hesitating, he took advantage of some trifling Border differences to open a quarrel; and he declared war and struck his first blow at the same moment.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Pole to Prioli, March, 1536; *Epist. Reg. Poli*, Vol. I.

His troops entered Savoy, and the brilliant D'Annebault, who commanded in chief, sweeping all before him, had overrun Piedmont and had secured and fortified Turin, before a man had been raised to oppose him.

April 17. Charles denounces Francis in the consistory at Rome.

And challenges him to single combat.

This unwelcome news found the Emperor at Naples in the middle of March. Report slightly, but only slightly, anticipating the reality, brought information at the same time of a Franco-Turkish alliance, and of the approach of a fresh Ottoman fleet; and in the first burst of anger and mortification Charles swore that this time he would not lay down his arms till either he or his rival had ceased to wear a crown.²¹ Antonio de Leyva was left to collect and equip an army; Charles himself went in the first week in April to Rome, to make a public protest against the French aggression. On the seventeenth of that month, Pope, prelates, cardinals, and foreign ambassadors being all assembled in the consistory, he rose, and with his bonnet in his hand poured out in Spanish a long and passionate invective, denouncing the King of France as the enemy of God and man – the wanton and wicked disturber of the world. When peace was necessary before all things to compose schism, and to repel the Turks, Francis was breaking that peace – was bringing in the Turks – was

²¹ Sir Gregory Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, Vol. VII. p. 641.

confounding heaven and earth only for his own ambition. In the interests of Europe, even now he would give Milan to the Duke of Angoulesme; the union of the duchies was too formidable a danger to allow him to bestow it on the Duke of Orleans. This was his last concession: if it was refused, he challenged Francis to decide their differences in single combat, laying Burgundy in gage against Lombardy, the victor to have both in undisputed possession.

Explosions of passion were not unfrequent with Charles, and formed the most genuine feature in his character. His audience, however, were fluttered by his violence. His own prudence taught him the necessity of some explanation. On the following day the consistory reassembled, when, in calmer tones, he reaffirmed his accusations, and renewed his proposals.

“I am not against peace,” he said; “those who so accuse me slander me. The Pope is the common friend of myself and the King of France. Without his Holiness’s permission I should not have spoken as I spoke yesterday. I bear no personal malice. I received the sacrament before I entered your assembly, and many as are my errors and infirmities, I am not so bad a Christian as to communicate while in mortal sin. But a confederate of the Empire is attacked – it is my duty to defend him. The Duke of Savoy is my near relative; but were he a stranger, so long as he is one of my lieges, I must expose my life for him, as he would expose his life for me. I have challenged the King of France to mortal combat; but not in malice, not in vain bravado or appetite

for glory. Wise men do not thrust themselves into desperate duels, least of all with an antagonist so strong and skilful. I offered him the alternative of this combat only if peace was impossible, that the terrible evils which menace Christendom might be thus avoided. For here I say it, and while I say it I do but claim my proper privilege as an honest sovereign, not only would I expose my person to peril, but gladly would I sacrifice my life for the welfare of the Christian world.”²²

The challenge might naturally have touched Francis, whose one sound quality was personal courage; but on this occasion the competitors had exchanged their characters. Francis had the start in the field: he had twelve thousand picked troops in Turin; the remainder of the invading force was distributed in impregnable positions over Piedmont and Savoy.²³ For once he determined to win a reputation for prudence as well as daring, and he left Charles to seek his remedy where he could find it. The Pope entreated, but in vain; and the campaign followed which was so disastrous to the Empire, which for a time reversed so signally the relative position of the two princes, and defeated the expectations of the keenest statesmen.

June. Charles invades Provence.
He finds the country wasted.

²² An interesting account of these speeches and of the proceedings in the consistory is printed in the *State Papers*, Vol. VII. p. 646. It was probably furnished by Sir Gregory Cassalis.

²³ Sir Gregory Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, Vol. VII.

He is unable to advance.

August. He loses 30,000 men and retreats.

Finding himself too late, without delay and difficulty, to expel the French out of their Italian conquests, Charles, in spite of the remonstrance of his generals, and relying, as was thought, on a repetition of the treason of the Duke of Bourbon, by one or more of the Gallican nobility,²⁴ led his army into Provence. He trusted either that he would find the country undefended, or that the French chivalry, when attacked in their homes, would, with their usual recklessness, risk a decisive battle; or, at least, that in a fertile district he would find no difficulty in procuring provisions. In each of his calculations he found himself fatally mistaken. The inhabitants of Provence had themselves destroyed their crops, and driven away their cattle. In his front, Montmorency lay intrenched at Avignon, and Francis between Lyons and Valence, in fortified camps. Time and necessity had on this occasion been enlisted as the allies of France; and with the garrison of Marseilles in his rear intercepting his supplies, unable to advance, and shut up in a country which had been left barren as an Arabian desert, the Emperor sate still in the sultry summer heats, while his army melted away from him with famine and disease. De Leyva, his ablest commander, and thirty thousand veterans, miserably

²⁴ “Omnes qui sollerti judicio ista pensare solent, ita statuunt aliquid proditiōnis in Galliâ esse paratum non dissimile Ducis Borboniæ proditiōni. Non enim aliud vident quod Cæsarem illuc trahere posset.” – Sir Gregory Cassalis to Cromwell: *State Papers*, Vol. VII.

perished. He escaped only from being driven into the sea by a retreat; and crept back into Italy with the broken remnant of his forces, baffled and humiliated in the only European war into which no fault of his own had plunged him.

Indifferent attitude of England.

Of the feelings with which these events were regarded by Henry, we have little evidence. No positive results followed from the first interchange of messages, but Charles so far endured the tone in which his advances had been received, that fresh communications of moderate friendliness were interchanged through Sir Gregory Cassalis at the beginning of the summer.²⁵ In July Henry offered his services as a mediator with the court of France both to the Emperor and to the Queen Regent of the Netherlands.²⁶ At the same time English engineers were in the French camp in Provence, perhaps as professional students of the art of war, perhaps as volunteers indirectly countenanced by the government.²⁷ The quarrel, in reality, admitted of no solution except by the sword; and if the English felt no absolute

²⁵ See Cassalis's Correspondence with Cromwell in May, 1536: *State Papers*, Vol VII.

²⁶ The clearest account which I have seen of the point in dispute between Charles V. and Francis I. is contained in a paper drawn by some English statesman apparently for Henry's use. —*Rolls House MSS.* first series, No. 757.

²⁷ When the English army was in the Netherlands, in 1543, the Emperor especially admired the disposition of their entrenchments. Sir John Wallop, the commander-in-chief, told him he had learnt that art some years before in a campaign, of which the Emperor himself must remember something, in the south of France.

satisfaction in seeing two powers crippling each other's strength, who, a few months previously, were in league for their own ruin, the government at least saw no reason to co-operate with either side, in a cause which did not concern them, or assist in bringing a dispute to a close which had broken out so opportunely for themselves.

Meanwhile the probabilities of a reunion with Rome had for a moment brightened. It was stated at the close of the last volume that, on the discovery of the adulteries of the queen, a panic arose among the Reformers, lest the king should regard her crime as a judgment upon the divorce, and in the sudden revulsion retrace his steps. It was seen, too, that after her punishment their fears were allayed by an act of parliament against the Papal usurpations, the most emphatic which had yet been passed, and that the country settled back into an equilibrium of permanent hostility. There are circumstances remaining to be explained, both with respect to the first alarm and to the statute by which it was dispelled.

May. Expectations formed at Rome on the disgrace of Queen Anne.

May 27. The Pope entreats Sir Gregory Cassalis to intercede with Henry for a reconciliation.

The partial advances which had been made by the Pope had been neither accepted nor rejected, when, on the 20th of May, a courier from England brought the news of Anne's misdemeanours to Rome. The consistory would have been more

than mortal if they had not been delighted. From the first they had ascribed the king's conduct to the infatuating beauty of Catherine's rival. It was she who, tigress-like, had thirsted for the blood of their martyrs, and at her shrine they had been sacrificed.²⁸ Her character appeared at last in its true colours; the enchantment was broken, and the abhorrence with which Henry's name had so lately been regarded was changed throughout Italy to a general feeling of pity.²⁹ The precious sheep who had been lost to the Church would now return to the fold, and the Holy Father would welcome back his erring child with paternal affection.³⁰ This seems to have been the general expectation; unquestionably it was the expectation of the Pope himself. Paul sent again for Sir Gregory Cassalis, and after expressing his delight that God had delivered the king from his unhappy connexion, he told him that he waited only for the most trifling

²⁸ Pole, in writing to Charles V., says that Henry's cruelties to the Romanists had been attributed wholly to the "Leæna" at his side; and "when he had shed the blood of her whom he had fed with the blood of others," every one expected that he would have recovered his senses. – *Poli Apologia ad Carolum Quintum*.

²⁹ "The news, which some days past were divulged of the queen's case, made a great tragedy, which was celebrated by all men's voices with admiration and great infamy to that woman to have betrayed that noble prince after such a manner, who had exalted her so high, and put himself to peril not without perturbation of all the world for her cause. But God showed Himself a rightful judge to discover such treason and iniquity. All is for the best. And I reckon this to the king's great fortune, that God would give him grace to see and touch with his hand what great enemies and traitors he lived withal." – Harvel to Starkey, from Venice, May 26: Ellis, second series, Vol. II. p. 77.

³⁰ Pole to Contarini: *Epist.*, Vol. I. p. 457.

intimation of a desire for reunion to send a nuntio to England to compose all differences and to grant everything which the king could reasonably demand.³¹ Limiting, like a man of business, the advantages which he had to offer to the present world, the Pope suggested that Henry, in connexion with himself, might now become the arbiter of Europe, and prescribe terms to the Empire as well as to France. For himself and for his office he said he had no ambition. The honour and the profit should alike be for England. An accession of either to the pontificate might prove its ruin.³² He lauded the king's early character, his magnanimity, his generous assistance in times past to the Holy See, his devotion to the Catholic faith. Forgetting the Holy League, glossing over the Bull of Deposition as an official form which there had been no thought of enforcing, he ventured to say that for himself he had been Henry's friend from the beginning. He had urged his predecessor to permit the divorce; at Bologna he had laboured to persuade the Emperor to consent to it.³³ He had sent a red hat

³¹ "Dicerem in ipso me adeo bonum animum reperisse ut procul dubio vestra Majestas omnia de ipso sibi polliceri possit." – Sir Gregory Cassalis to Henry VIII.: *MS. Cotton. Vitellius*, B 14, fol. 215.

³² Neque ea cupiditate laborare ut suas fortunas in immensum augeat aut Pontificales fines propaget unde accidere posset ut ab hâc.. institutâ ratione recederet. – *Ibid.* The MS. has been injured by fire – words and paragraphs are in places wanting. In the present passage it is not clear whether Paul was speaking of the Papal authority generally, or of the Pontifical states in France and Italy.

³³ Causâ vero matrimonii et in consistoriis et publice et privatim apud Clementem VII. se omnia quæ [potuerit pro] vestrâ Majestate egisse; et Bononiæ Imperatori per [horas] quatuor accurate persuadere conatum fuisse. – Sir Gregory Cassalis to Henry

to the Bishop of Rochester only that he might have the benefit of his assistance at the approaching council; and when he heard of his death, being surrounded by solicitations and clamours for vengeance, he had but seemed for a time to consent to measures which would never have been executed.

The consistory are confident of success,
And possibly not without some reason.

A warmer overture could scarcely have been conceived, and Cassalis ventured to undertake that it was made in good faith.³⁴ It was true that, as Cardinal of Ravenna, Paul III. had been an advocate for Henry; and his abrupt change on his election to the see proves remarkably how the genius of the Papacy could control the inclination of the individual. Now, however, the Pope availed himself gladly of his earlier conduct, and for a month at least nothing transpired at Rome to damp his expectation. On the 5th of June Cardinal Campeggio wrote to the Duke of Suffolk to feel his way towards the recovery of his lost bishopric of Salisbury.³⁵ As late as St. John's day (June 24th) the Papal council were rejoicing in the happy prospect which seemed to be reopened. Strange it was, that so many times in this long struggle some accident or some mistake occurred at a critical contingency to ruin hopes which promised fairly, and which, if realized, would have changed the fortunes of England. Neither

VIII.: *MS. Cotton. Vitellius*, B 14, fol. 215.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *State Papers*, Vol. VII., June 5, 1536.

the king nor the country would have surrendered their conquered liberties; the Act of Appeals would have been maintained, and, in substance if not in name, the Act of Supremacy. It is possible, however, that, if at this juncture the Pope would have relinquished the high pretensions which touched the allegiance of subjects, Henry, for the sake of peace, would have acknowledged in the Bishop of Rome a titular primacy.

Many times a good cause has been ruined by the over-zeal of its friends. If there really existed such a danger, England may thank a young nobleman for its escape, who was permitted to do his country a service far different from his intentions. Once already we have seen Reginald Pole in reluctant employment in Paris, receiving opinions on the divorce. Henceforth for some years he will fill a prominent place in this history, and he must be introduced with a brief account of his life.

History of Reginald Pole.

Reginald, second son of Margaret Plantagenet, Countess of Salisbury, was born in the year 1500. His mother, so long as the first of the Tudor princes was on the throne, remained in obscurity. The titles and estates of the Nevilles being afterwards restored to her and to her eldest son, Reginald shared the benefits of the revival of his family, and was selected by Henry VIII. for particular favour.

He is educated by Henry for the Church.
Studies at Paris and Padua.

He was educated under the king's eye, and at the king's expense; he was pensioned and endowed, according to the fashion of the time, while still a boy, with an ecclesiastical benefice; and he was designed, should his inclination permit him, for the highest office in the English church. These general kindnesses he himself gratefully acknowledges; and he professes to have repaid Henry's care with a child's affection. He says that he loved the king for his generosity to himself and his family; that he loved him for his own high and noble qualities, his liberality, his gentleness, his piety, his princely illustrious nature.³⁶ Nor did

³⁶ Since Pole, when it suited his convenience, could represent the king's early career in very different colours, it is well to quote some specimens of his more favourable testimony. Addressing Henry himself, he says: "Quid non promittebant præclaræ illæ virtutes quæ primis annis principatûs tui in te maxime elucebant. In quibus primum pietas quæ una omnium aliarum, et totius humanæ felicitatis quasi fundamentum est se proferebat. Cui adjunctæ erant quæ maxime in oculis hominum elucere solent justitia clementia liberalitas, prudentia denique tanta quanta in illâ tenerâ ætate esse potuit. Ut dixit Ezechiel de Rege Assyriorum, in paradiso Dei cedrus te pulcrior non inveniebatur." —*De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, lib. 3. Again, writing to Charles V., after speaking of the golden splendour of Henry's early reign, his wealth, his moderation, the happiness of the people, and the circle of illustrious men who surrounded his throne, he goes on — "Hi vero illam indolem sequebantur quam Regi Deus ipsi prius dederat cujus exemplar in Rege suo viderunt. Fuit enim indoles ejus aliquando prorsus regia. Summum in eo pietatis studium apparebat et religionis cultus; magnus amor justitiæ; non abhorrens tamen natura ut tum quidem videbatur a clementiâ." And the time at which the supposed change took place is also marked distinctly: — "Satanas in carne adhuc manentem naturâ hominis jam videtur spoliasse.. suâ induisse.. in quâ nihil præter formam videtur reliquisse quod sit hominis;.. ne vitia quidem.. sed cum omni virtute et donis illis Dei cœlestibus quibus cum optimis Regum comparari poterat antequam in vicariatum Filii ejus se ingereret [præditus est] postquam illum honorem impie ambivit et arripuit, non solum virtutibus omnibus privatus est sed etiam," etc. —

he fail to profit by the advantages which were heaped upon him. He studied industriously at Paris and at Padua, acquiring, as he believed, all knowledge which living teachers could impart to him; and he was himself so well satisfied with the result, that at the mature age of thirty-six he could describe himself to Henry as one who, although a young man, “had long been conversant with old men; had long judged the eldest man that lived too young for him to learn wisdom from.”³⁷ Many ambitious youths have experienced the same opinion of themselves; few have ventured on so confident an expression of it. But for his family’s sake as much as for his own, the king continued to regard him with favour; and could he have prevailed upon himself to acquiesce in the divorce of Queen Catherine, it is possible that he would have succeeded Warham in the English primacy.

He opposes the divorce.

Exertions are made to gain him over.

He wavers, but recovers his firmness

And writes a remonstrance.

He goes abroad with leave of absence, and is exempted

Poli Apologia ad Carolum Quintum. It was “necessary to the position” of Romanist writers to find the promise of evil in Henry’s early life, after his separation from the Papacy, and stories like those which we read in Sanders grew like mushrooms in the compost of hatred. But it is certain that so long as he was orthodox he was regarded as a model of a Catholic prince. Cardinal Contarini laments his fall, as a fall like Lucifer’s: “Quî fieri potuit per Deum immortalem,” he wrote to Pole, “ut animus ille tam mitis tam mansuetus ut ad bene merendum de hominum genere a naturâ factus esse videatur sit adeo immutatus.” —*Epist. Reg. Poli*, Vol. II. p. 31.

³⁷ Pole to Henry VIII.: Strype’s *Memorials*, Vol. II. p. 305.

from the obligation of the oath of allegiance.

From conviction, however, or from the tendency to contradiction characteristic of a peculiar kind of talent, Pole was unable to adopt an opinion so desirable for his interests. First doubtfully, and afterwards emphatically and positively, he declared his dissent from the resolutions of parliament and convocation. He had witnessed with his own eyes the means by which the sentences had been obtained of the universities abroad. He was satisfied of the injustice of the cause. He assured himself that to proceed in it would be perilous to the realm.

His birth and the king's regard for him gave an importance to his judgment which it would not otherwise have obtained. Repeated efforts were made to gain him. His brother, Lord Montague, the Duke of Norfolk, even Henry himself, exerted all their powers of persuasion. On the death of Wolsey the archbishopric of York was held out to him as the reward of compliance.³⁸ Once only he wavered. He had discovered, as he imagined, a means of making a compromise with his conscience, and he went down to Whitehall to communicate his change. But, as he rather theatrically relates, when he found himself in the presence-chamber he could not utter the words which he had intended to use; either he was restrained by a Higher Power, or the sight of that Henry whom he loved so tenderly paralysed his tongue; he burst into tears, and the king left him

³⁸ Pole to the English Council: *Epist.*, Vol. I.

in displeasure.³⁹ On retiring from the palace he wrote a letter of apology; accompanying it, perhaps, with the formal statement of the grounds of his opposition, which about this time he submitted to the government.⁴⁰ His defence was received kindly; but, though clever, it was little to the purpose. The arguments were chiefly political; and Henry, who listened patiently to any objection on the ground of principle, paid no very high respect to the opinion of a university student in matters of state. Pole, finding his position increasingly uneasy, in 1532 applied for and obtained permission to reside for a time at Avignon. In his absence the divorce was completed; and England becoming more than ever distasteful to him, he removed to the monastery of Carpentras, and thence to his old quarters at Padua. Meantime Henry's personal kindness towards him remained undiminished. His leave of absence was indefinitely extended. His pension was continued to him; the revenues of the deanery of Exeter were regularly paid to his account; and he was exempted specially from the general condition required of all holders of ecclesiastical benefices, the swearing allegiance to the children of Queen Anne. He could himself neither have desired nor expected a larger measure of forbearance.⁴¹

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Said by Cranmer to have been an able paper: "He suadeth with such goodly eloquence; both of words and sentences, that he is like to persuade many." – Cranmer's *Works*, edit. Jenkyns Vol. I. p. 2.

⁴¹ Phillips' *Life of Cardinal Pole*.

His opinion is required on the supremacy of the see of Rome,

This was his position in the year 1535, when, in common with all other English noblemen and gentlemen, he was requested to send in his opinion on the authority in foreign countries claimed by the see of Rome, and at the same time to state whether his sentiments on the previous question remained unchanged. The application was not formally made through the council. A civilian, a Mr. Starkey, a personal acquaintance, was entrusted with the commission of sending it; and Starkey took the opportunity of advising his friend to avoid the errors into which he had previously fallen. Pole's opinion on political perils, foreign invasions, internal commotions, was not wanted. "As touching the *policy* of the separation from Rome, and the divorce, and of the bringing them to effect, whether it were done well or ill," Starkey ironically wrote, "his Grace requireth no judgment of you, as of one that of such things hath no great experience as yet. Whether it should be *convenient* that there should be one head in the Church, and that the Bishop of Rome ... set this aside, ... and in the matrimony, whether the policy he hath used therein be profitable to the realm or no ... leave that aside ... only shew you whether the supremacy which the Bishop of Rome has for many ages claimed be of Divine right or no ... and if the first matrimony see of Rome, were to make, you would approve it then or no ... and the cause why you would not."

And he is warned to answer sincerely.

Finally, as Pole once before had been tempted to give an opinion against his conscience, Starkey warned him to reply sincerely and honestly; to think first of God and the truth; and only when his conscience would permit him, to consider how he could satisfy the king. "His Grace said to me," the letter concluded, "that he would rather you were buried there than you should, for any worldly promotion or profit to yourself, dissemble with him in these great and weighty causes."⁴²

He composes the book "De Unitate Ecclesiæ," and submits it to Cardinal Contarini.

The tone of this concluding passage teaches us not to rely too absolutely on Pole's own version of the attempts which had before been made upon his constancy. Perhaps the admonition, perhaps the irony, of his correspondent galled him. At any rate, the king desired the truth, and the truth he should have. Other things had been in rapid development since Pole left England. He, too, had chosen his course, and his mind had not stood still. It was now the winter of 1535, when the scheme of the crusade was first taking shape. At this juncture he sat down to comply with the king's demands. Instead of brief answers to brief questions, he composed a considerable volume; and as the several parts were completed, they were submitted to the inspection of Cardinal Contarini. Had the project of war gone forward, and had

⁴² Strype's *Memorials*, Vol. II. p. 281.

other matters remained unchanged, it is possible that Contarini would have found no fault with a composition which afterwards was regarded in the Catholic world with so much complacency. Under the actual circumstances, his language alarmed by its violence. The cardinal protested against an invective which could only irritate, and entreated Pole to reconsider what he had written.

Contarini protests, and Pole tells him that the book is chiefly intended for the English nation.

If Pole had been honest – if he had desired only the interests of the Catholic church – he would have listened to advice; but he replied that he well knew the king’s character, and that the evil had risen to its present height because no one had ventured to speak the truth to him. Henry was not a man who could be moved by gentleness. Long ago the heaviest censures of the Church ought to have been launched upon him, and by that time he would have returned to his obedience. He said also (and this is especially to be noticed), that he was not so much addressing the king as addressing the English nation, who were impassive and hard to move. He was determined to open their eyes to the delusion into which they were betrayed, and he must go beyond the matter and beside it, and insinuate when he was unable to assert.⁴³

⁴³ “Quibus si rem persuadere velis multa præter rem sunt dicenda multa insinuanda.” —*Epist. Reg. Pol.*, Vol. I. p. 434. And again: “Illum librum scribo non tam Regis causâ quam gregis Christi qui est universus Regni populus, quem sic deludi vix ferendum est.” – *Ibid.* p. 437. I draw attention to these words, because in a subsequent

In this mood, and while the book was still unsent, he learnt with utter mortification of the relinquishment of the Emperor's intended enterprise, and the possible peaceful close of the quarrel. He had proposed to himself a far different solution. It may be that he was convinced that no such peaceful close could lead to good. It may have been, that the white rose was twining pure before his imagination, with no red blossoms intermixed, round the pillars of a regenerated church. Or, perhaps, many motives, distinct and indistinct, were working upon him. Only the fact is certain, that he might have mediated, but that he was determined rather to make mediation impossible; the broken limb should not be set in its existing posture.

He considers that Henry must not be reconciled to the Church, except on his unconditional submission.

In March he heard that the Pope was softening. He wrote, urgently entreating that his Holiness would commit himself in nothing till in possession of secrets which he could

defence of himself to the English Privy Council, Pole assured them that his book was a private letter privately sent to the king; that he had written as a confessor to a penitent, under the same obligations of secrecy: "Hoc genere dicendi Regem omnibus dedecorosum et probrosum reddo? Quibus tandem illustrissimi Domini? Hisne qui libellum nunquam viderunt? an his ad quos legendum dedi? Quod si hic solus sit Rex ipse, utinam ipse sibi probrosus videretur Ad eum certe solum misi; quocum ita egi ut nemo unquam a confessionibus illi secretior esse potuisset hoc tantum spectans quod confessores ut illi tantum sua peccata ostenderem." – *Apologia ad Ang. Parl.: Epist.*, Vol. I. p. 181. So considerable an inconsistency might tempt a hasty person to use hard words of Pole.

communicate.⁴⁴ Contarini having desired that he might show the book to Paul, he refused, under the plea that others might see it, and that he was bound to give Henry the first perusal; an honourable answer, if his other insincerity allowed us to accept his word. We may believe, with no want of charity, that his real fear was, lest Paul should share the feelings of Contarini, and for the present discourage its despatch.⁴⁵ His letters at this time display an unveiled anxiety for immediate open hostility. His advice to the Pope was to send out his bull without more delay. He passionately deplored the change which the death of Catherine had worked upon Charles. “Alas!” he said, “that the interests of the Church should be affected by the life or death of a single woman! Oh that his Holiness could but convince the Emperor of his blessed privileges as the champion of the Catholic faith!”⁴⁶ “The Emperor preferred to fight against the Turks. What were the Turks compared with the antichrist of England? What advantages would be gained if the Crescent were driven out of Europe, and England were lost? Let him strike at once while the wound was green: it would soon gangrene and mortify, and then it would be too late.”

This language, under some aspects, may appear pardonable – may, perhaps, be admired as the expression of a fine enthusiasm. Those whose sympathy with sentimental emotions is restrained

⁴⁴ Pole to Prioli: *Epist.*, Vol. I. p. 441.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 442.

⁴⁶ Pole to Prioli: *Epist.*, Vol. I. p. 445.

within the prosaic limits of ordinary law, would call it by a harder name. High treason, if it be not a virtue, is the worst of crimes; and for a subject to invite a foreign power to invade his country is the darkest form of treason. An unjust exile might be pleaded as a faint palliation – a distinct religious obligation might convert the traitor into a patriot. Neither of these pretexts could be urged at the existing crisis in defence of Reginald Pole.

The book was completed in the middle of the winter; the correspondence connected with it extended through February, March, and April. In May came the news of Anne Boleyn's crimes, and the fresh impulse which I have described to the hopes of the Pope and his more moderate advisers. The expectation of a reconciliation was approaching to a certainty, and if he waited longer it might be too late. That particular time he selected to despatch his composition, and rouse again (it is idle to suppose that he was blind to the inevitable consequence) the full storm of indignation and suspicion.⁴⁷

May. He sends his book to England.

A production, the effect of which was so considerable, requires some analysis. It shall be as brief as is consistent with the due understanding of the feeling which the book created.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Tunc statim misi cum ille e medio jam sustulisset illam quæ illi et regno totius hujus calamitatis causa existimabatur. —*Apologia ad Carolum Quintum*.

⁴⁸ A MS. copy of this book, apparently the original which was sent by Pole, is preserved among the *Records* in the Rolls House, scored and underlined in various places, perhaps by members of the Privy Council. A comparison of the MS. with the

He writes as a faithful servant to his sick master.

“Whether to write or not to write,” commenced the youthful champion of the faith, “I cannot tell; when to write has cost the lives of so many and so noble men, and the service of God is counted for the worst of crimes. Duty urges me to write; yet what shall I write? The most faithful servant may hesitate in what language to address his sick master, when those who so far have approached his bed have forfeited their lives. Yet speak I will – I will cry in your ears as in the ears of a dead man – dead in your sins. I love you – wicked as you are, I love you. I hope for you, and may God hear my prayer. You desire the truth; I should be a traitor, then, did I conceal from you the truth. I owe my learning to your care. I will use against yourself the weapons with which yourself have armed me.”

He will show Henry his crimes.

“You have done no wrong, you say. Come, then, I will show you your wrong. You have changed the constitution of your country, and that is wrong. When the Church had but one head,

printed version, shows that the whole work was carefully rewritten for publication, and that various calumnies in detail, which have derived their weight from being addressed directly to the king, in what appeared to be a private communication by a credible accuser – which have, therefore, been related without hesitation by late writers as ascertained facts – are not in the first copy. So long as Pole was speaking only to the king, he prudently avoided statements which might be immediately contradicted, and confined himself to general invective. When he gave his book to the world he poured into it the indiscriminate slanders which were floating in popular rumour. See *Appendix to the Fourth Volume*.

you have made her a monster with a separate head in every realm, and that is wrong. You, of all princes (bad and impious as many of them have been), are the first who has ventured so enormous an impiety. Your flatterers have filled your heart with folly; you have made yourself abhorred among the rulers of Christendom. Do you suppose that in all these centuries the Church has failed to learn how best she should be governed? What insolence to the bride of Christ! What insolence to Christ Himself! You pretend to follow Scripture! So say all heretics, and with equal justice. No word in Scripture makes for you, except it be the single sentence, ‘Honour the king.’ How frail a foundation for so huge a superstructure!”

Having thus opened the indictment, he proceeded to dissect a book which had been written on the Supremacy by Dr. Sampson. Here he for some time expatiated, and having disposed of his theological antagonist, opened his parallels upon the king by a discussion of the principles of a commonwealth.

His theory of the constitution of a state.

“What is a king?” he asked. “A king exists for the sake of his people; he is an outcome from Nature in labour;⁴⁹ an institution for the defence of material and temporal interests. But inasmuch there are interests beyond the temporal, so there is a jurisdiction beyond the king’s. The glory of a king is the welfare of his people; and if he knew himself, and knew his office, he would lay his

⁴⁹ Partus Naturæ laborantis.

crown and kingdom at the feet of the priesthood, as in a haven and quiet resting place. To priests it was said, ‘Ye are gods, and ye are the children of the Most High.’ Who, then, can doubt that priests are higher in dignity than kings. In human society are three grades – the people – the priesthood, the head and husband of the people – the king, who is the child, the creature, and minister of the other two.”⁵⁰

From these premises it followed that Henry was a traitor, a rebel against his true superior; and the first section closed with a fine rhetorical peroration.

The king is the man of sin and the prince of pride.

“Oh, Henry!” he exclaimed, “more wicked than Ozias, who was smitten with leprosy when he despised the warnings of Azariah – more wicked than Saul, who slew the priests of the Lord – more wicked than Dathan and Abiram, who rose in rebellion against Aaron – what hast thou done? What! but that which is written in the Scripture of the prince of pride – ‘I will climb up into heaven; I will set my throne above the stars; I will sit me down on the mount of the covenant; I will make myself even with the Most High.’.. He shall send his vengeance upon thee – vengeance sudden, swift, and terrible. It shall come; nor can I pray that it may longer tarry. Rather may it come and come quickly, to the glory of his name. I will say, like Elijah, ‘Oh, Lord! they have slain thy prophets with the edge of the sword;

⁵⁰ Populus enim regem procreat.

they have thrown down thine altars; and I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away. Up, Lord, and avenge the blood of thy holy ones.”

The English bishops are the robber Cacus; the Pope is the sleeping Hercules.

He now paused for a moment in his denunciation of Henry, and took up his parable against the English bishops, who had betrayed the flock of Christ, and driven them into the den of the villain king. “You thought,” he said to these learned prelates, “that the Roman pontiff slept – that you might spoil him with impunity, as the robber Cacus spoiled the sleeping Hercules. Ah! but the Lord of the sheep sees you. He sees you from his throne in heaven. Not we only who are left yet alive tell, with our bleating voices, whither you have driven us; but, in louder tones than ours, the blood of those whom ye have slain, because they would not hear your hireling voices, cries out of the dust to Christ. Oh, horrible! – most horrible! No penalty which human justice could devise can reach your crimes. Men look to see when some unwonted vengeance shall light upon you, like that which fell on Korah and his company, in whose footsteps ye now are following. If the earth open her mouth and swallow you up quick, every Christian man will applaud the righteous judgment of the Almighty.”

Responsibility of sovereigns to their subjects.

Again he passed back to the king, assailing him in pages of

alternate argument and reprobation. In most modern language he asserted the responsibility of sovereigns, calling English history to witness for him in the just rebellions provoked by tyranny; and Henry, he said, had broken his coronation oath and forfeited his crown. This and similar matter occupied the second part. It had been tolerably immoderate even so far, but the main torrent had yet to flow.

The third and most important section divides itself into an address, first to the king and then to England; finally to the foreign powers – the Emperor particularly, and the Spanish army.

He will be the king's physician, and unfold his wicked heart to him.

The king a thief and a robber.

“I have spoken,” he commenced, “but, after all, I have spoken in vain. Wine turns to vinegar in a foul vessel; and to little purpose have I poured my truth into a mind defiled with falsehood and impurity. How shall I purify you? How, indeed! when you imagine that yourself, and not I, are in possession of the truth; when you undertake to be a teacher of others; when, forsooth, you are head of a church. But, come, listen to me. I will be your physician. I will thrust a probe into those envenomed wounds. If I cause you pain, believe that it is for your good. You do not know that you have a wound to probe. You pretend that you have only sought to do the will of God. You will say so. I know it. But, I beseech you, listen to me. Was it indeed your conscience which moved you? Not so. You lusted after a woman who was not

your wife. You would make the Word of God bear false witness for you; and God's providence has permitted you to overwhelm yourself in infamy. I say, you desired to fulfil your lusts. And how, you ask, do I know this? How can I see your heart? Who but God can read those secrets? Yes, oh prince; he also knows – to whom God will reveal the heart. And I tell you that I am he to whom God has revealed yours. You will cry out against my arrogance. How should God open your heart to me? But contain yourself a little. I do not say that God has shewn more to me than he has shewn to any man who will use his understanding.⁵¹ You think that the offspring of your harlot will be allowed to sit on the throne, that the pure blood of England will endure to be her subjects. No, truly. If you dream thus, you have little of your father's wisdom. There is not a peer in all the land who will not hold his title better than the title of a harlot's bastard. Like Cadmus, you have flung a spear among your people, and armed them for mutual slaughter. And you – you, the vilest of plunderers – a thief – a robber – you call yourself supreme head of the Church! I acquit the nation of the infamy of their consent. They have not consented. The few suffrages which you can claim have been extorted by terrour. Again, how do I know this? I, who was absent from my country? Yes, I was absent. Nor have I heard one word of it from any creature. And yet so it is. I have a more sure testimony than the testimony of eyes and ears, which forbids

⁵¹ In the printed copy the king is here accused of having intrigued with Mary Boleyn before his marriage with Anne. See *Appendix*.

me to be mistaken.”

The witness was the death of Sir Thomas More, Bishop Fisher, and the Charterhouse monks; and the story of their martyrdom was told with some power and passion.

He calls on England to rise in rebellion.

The remedy for all its evils rested with England. England must rebel. He called on it, with solemn earnestness, to consider its position: its church infected with heresy, its saints slaughtered, its laws uprooted, its succession shattered; sedition within, and foreign war imminent from without; and the single cause of these accumulated miseries a licentious tyrant. “And oh! my country,” he exclaimed, “if any memory remains to you of your antient liberties, remember – remember the time when kings who ruled over you unjustly were called to account by the authority of your laws. They tell you that all is the king’s. I tell you that all is the commonwealth’s. You, oh! my country, are all. The king is but your servant and minister. Wipe away your tears, and turn to the Lord your God.”

He will invite the King of France to depose Henry.

Of his own conduct he would give Henry fair warning. “I myself,” he said, once more addressing him, “I myself shall approach the throne of your last ally, the King of France. I shall demand that he assist you no longer; that, remembering the honour of his father, with his own past fidelity to the Church of Christ, he will turn against you and strike you down. And think

you that he will refuse my petition? How long dream you that God will bear with you? Your company shall be broken up. The scourge shall come down upon you like a wave. The pirates who waste the shores of the Mediterranean are less the servants of Satan than you. The pirates murder but the bodies of men. You murder their souls. Satan alone, of all created beings, may fitly be compared with you.”

So far I have endeavoured to condense the voluminous language into a paraphrase, which but languidly approaches the blaze and fury of the original. Vituperation, notwithstanding, would have been of trifling consequence; and the safe exhortations of refugees, inciting domestic rebellions the dangers of which they have no intention of sharing, are a form of treason which may usually be despised. But it is otherwise when the refugee becomes a foreign agent of his faction, and not only threatens to invite invasion, but converts his menace into act. When the pages which follow were printed, they seemed of such grave moment that they were extracted and circulated as a pamphlet in the German States. The translation, therefore, will now adhere closely to the text.

The invocation of the Emperor.

Who are the true enemies of Christendom?

Not Turks, but heretics.

Heresy in Germany.

Deeper heresy in England,

Which will grow inveterate if it be not nipped in the bud.

“I call to witness,” he went on, “that love of my country which is engrafted in me by nature – that love of the Church which is given to me by the Son of God – did I hear that the Emperor was on the seas, on his way against Constantinople, I would know no rest till I was at his feet – I would call to him were he in the very narrows of the Bosphorus – I would force myself into his presence – I would address him thus: ‘Cæsar,’ I would say, ‘what is this which you are doing? Whither are you leading this mighty army? Would you subdue the enemies of Christendom? Oh! then, turn, turn your sails. Go where a worse peril is threatening – where the wound is fresh, and where a foe presses more fearful far than the Turk. You count it a noble thing to break the chains of Christian captives: and noble, indeed, it is. But more glorious is it to rescue from eternal damnation the many thousand souls who are torn from the Church’s bosom, and to bring them back to the faith of Christ. What will you have gained when you have driven back the Turks, if other Turks be sprung up meanwhile amidst ourselves? What are Turks save a sect of Christians revolted from the Church? The beginning of the Turks is the beginning of all heretics. They rejected the Head which was set over them by Christ, and thus by degrees they fell away from the doctrine of Christ. What then? See you not the seed of these self-same Turks scattered at home before your doors? Would, indeed, it were so scanty that there was any difficulty in discerning its presence! Yes; you see it, sad to say, in your own Germany. The disease is there, though not as yet in its worst

form. It is not yet set forth by authority. The German church may even now cast forth the seed of the adulterers, and bear again the true fruit of Catholic truth. But for England! Alas! in England that seed is sown thick and broad; and by the sovereign's hand. It is sown, and it is quickening, and the growing blade is defended by the sword. The sword is the answer to all opponents. Nay, even silence is an equal crime. Thomas More, the wisest, the most virtuous of living men, was slain for silence. Among the monks, the more holy, the more devout they be, the greater is the peril. All lips are closed by fear of death. If these fine beginnings do not prove to you what it is to forsake the head of the Church, what other evidence do you desire? The Turks might teach you: they, too, forsook him – they, too, brought in the power of the sword; by the sword these many ages they have maintained themselves, and now the memory of their mother has perished, and too late the Church cries to her lost children to return to her.⁵² Or, again, Germany may teach you. How calm, how tranquil, how full of piety was Germany! How did Germany flourish while it held

⁵² Elsewhere in his letters Pole touches on this string. If England is to be recovered, he is never weary of saying, it must be recovered at once, while the generation survives which has been educated in the Catholic faith. The poison of heresy is instilled with so deadly skill into schools and churches, into every lesson which the English youth are taught, that in a few years the evil will be past cure. He was altogether right. The few years in fact were made to pass before Pole and his friends were able to interfere; and then it *was* too late; the prophecy was entirely verified. But, indeed, the most successful preachers of the Reformation were neither Cranmer nor Parker, Cromwell nor Burleigh, Henry nor Elizabeth, but Pole himself and the race of traitors who followed him.

steadfast by the faith! How has it been torn with wars, distracted with mutinies, since it has revolted from its allegiance! There is no hope for Germany, unless, which God grant, it return to the Church – our Supreme Head. This is the Church’s surest bulwark; this is the first mark for the assaults of heretics; this is the first rallying point of true Catholics; this, Cæsar, those heroic children of the Church in England have lately died to defend, choosing rather to give their naked bodies to the swords of their enemies than desert a post which was the key to the sanctuary.

The venom of heresy has reached a king.

The servants of Christ cry to Charles to help them.

Legions of the faithful in England will rally to his banners.

“That post was stormed – those valiant soldiers were slain. What wonder, when the champion of the foemen’s host was a king! Oh, misery! worse than the worst which ever yet has befallen the spouse of Christ! The poison of heresy has reached a king, and, like the Turk, he shakes his drawn sword in the face of all who resist him. If he affect now some show of moderation, it is but to gain time and strength, that he may strike the deadlier blows; and strike he will, doubt it not, if he obtain his desire. Will you then, Cæsar – you who profess that you love the faith – will you grant him that time? When the servants of Christ cry to you, in their agony, for help, – when you must aid them now, or your aid will be for ever useless, – will you turn your arms on other foes? will you be found wanting to the passionate

hope of your friends, when that hope alone, that simple hope, has held them back from using their own strength and striking for themselves? Dream not, Cæsar, that all generous hearts are quenched in England – that faith and piety are dead. Judge rather those who are alive by the deaths of those who have gone to the scaffold for religion’s sake. If God reserved for Himself seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal, when Ahab and his cursed Jezebel slew his prophets, think not that, in these days of greater light, our Jezebel, with all her scent for blood, has destroyed the whole defenders of the truth. There are legions in England yet unbroken who have never yet bent their knees. Go thither, and God, who has been their Saviour, will bid them rally to your banners. They are the same English, Cæsar, who, unaided, and in slighter causes, have brought their princes to their judgment bar – have bidden them give account for moneys wasted to the prejudice of the commonwealth, and when they could not pass their audit, have stripped them of crown and sceptre. They are the same; and long ago, in like manner, would they have punished this king also, but that they looked to you. In you is their trust – in your noble nature, and in your zeal for God. Their cause is yours, peculiarly yours; by you they think the evil can be remedied with less hurt to England than by themselves. Wisely, therefore, they hold their hand till you shall come.

Catherine of Arragon appeals to her Spaniards.

“And you – you will leave them desolate; you turn your

back upon this glorious cause; you waste yourself in a distant enterprise. Is it that your soldiers demand this unhappy preference? are your soldiers so eager to face their old eastern enemies? But what soldiers, Cæsar! Your Spaniards? – your own Spaniards? Ah! if they could hear the noble daughter of Isabella, wasted with misery, appealing in her most righteous cause to their faithful hearts! The memory of that illustrious lady, well I know, is not yet so blotted from their recollection that a daughter worthy of so great a mother could pray to them in vain. Were they told that a princess of Spain, child of the proudest sovereign of that proud empire, after twenty years of marriage, had been driven out as if she had been the bastard of some clown or huckster that had crept from her filth into the royal bed, and to make room for a vile harlot – think you they would tamely bear an injury which the basest of mankind would wash out in blood? Think you that, when there scarce breathes a man so poor of soul who would not risk his life to requite so deep an indignity, the gentlemen of Spain will hesitate to revenge the daughter of their sovereign? Shall it go out among the nations to your shame and everlasting ignominy, that Spain sits down under the insult because she is faint-hearted – because she is feeble, and dares not move? It cannot be. Gather them together, Cæsar. Call your musters; I will speak to them – I will tell them that the child and grandchild of Isabella of Castile are dishonoured and robbed of their inheritance, and at the mention of that name you shall see them reverse their sails, and turn back of themselves their

vessels' prows.

Not for herself, but for the Church, for the faith, for England.

“But not for Catherine’s sake do I now stand a suitor either to you or them. For herself she desires nothing; she utters no complaint over her most unrighteous fate. You are now in the meridian of your glory, and some portion of its lustre should be hers; yet she is miserable, and she endures her misery. Each fresh triumph of your arms entails on her some fresh oppression; but hers is no selfish sorrow for herself or for her cause. She implores you, Cæsar, for the sake of England, of that England into which from her own noble stem she was once engrafted, which she loves and must love as her second country. Her private interests are nothing to her; but if it so happen that the cause of this illustrious and most dear land is so bound up in hers – that if she be neglected, England must forfeit her place among the nations – must be torn with civil distractions, and be plunged in ruin and disaster irretrievable – if the cause of religion be so joined to her cause that her desertion is the desertion of the Holy Church, that the ancient faith will be destroyed, new sects will spring up, not in that island only, which at her coming she found so true to its creed, but spreading like contagion, and bringing to confusion the entire communion of the faithful (and this is no conjectural danger: it is even now come – it is among us; already, in England, to be a friend to the old customs of the Church is fraught with deadly peril) – finally, if in this

matter there be every motive which ought to affect a prince who loves the name of Christ – then – then she does entreat you not to delay longer in hastening to deliverance of the Christian commonwealth, because it happens that the common cause is her cause – because Ferdinand of Spain was her father – because Isabella was her mother – because she is your own aunt – because her most ruthless enemies have never dared to hint that in word or deed she has been unworthy of her ancestors, or of the noble realm from which she sprang.

By all which Charles holds dear she implores him to come to her assistance.

“She implores you, if God has given you strength to defy so powerful an enemy as the Turk, in that case, not to shrink from marching against a foe more malignant than the Turk, where the peril is nothing, and victory is sure. By the ties of blood, which are so close between you and her – by the honour of Spain which is compromised – by the welfare of Christendom, which ought to be so dear to us all – she beseeches you, on her knees, that you will permit no mean object to divert you from so holy, so grand, so brilliant an enterprise, when you can vindicate at once the honour of your family and the glory of that realm which has made you famous by so many victories, and simultaneously you can shield the Christian commonwealth from the worst disasters which have menaced it for centuries.”

Here terminated this grand apostrophe, too exquisite a composition to be lost – too useful when hereafter it was to

be thrown out as a firebrand into Europe, although Catherine, happily for herself, had passed away before her chivalrous knight flung down his cartel for her. A few more words were, however, in reserve for Henry.

Concluding anathemas against Henry.

“I have spoken of Cæsar,” he turned and said to him; “I might have spoken of all Christian princes. Do you seriously think that the King of France will refuse obedience when the Pope bids him make peace with the Emperor, and undertake your chastisement? He will obey, doubt it not; and when you are trampled down under their feet there will be more joy in Christendom than if the Turks were driven from Constantinople. What will you do? What will become of your subjects when the ports of the Continent are closed, as closed they will be, against them and their commerce? How will they loathe you then? How will you be cast out among the curses of mankind?⁵³ When you die you shall have no lawful burial, and what will happen to your soul I forbear to say. Man is against you; God is against you; the universe is against you. What can you look for but destruction?”

The hurricane had reached its height; it spent its fury in its last gusts. The note changed, the threats ceased, and the beauty of humiliation and the promises of forgiveness to the penitent closed the volume.

Pole's central error.

⁵³ These paragraphs are a condensation of five pages of invective.

The witness of fact.

Thus wrote an English subject to his sovereign, and professed afterwards to be overwhelmed with astonishment when he learnt that his behaviour was considered unbecoming. As Samuel to Saul, as Nathan to David, as Elijah to Ahab, so was Reginald Pole to Henry the Eighth, the immediate messenger of Heaven, making, however, one central and serious error: that, when between Henry the Eighth and the Papacy there lay to be contended for, on the one side, liberty, light, and justice – on the other, tyranny, darkness, and iniquity, in this great duel the Pope was God's champion, and Henry was the devil's. No pit opened its mouth to swallow the English bishops; no civil wars wrecked the prosperity of the country; no foreign power overwhelmed it; no dishonour touched its arms, except in the short interval when Catherine's daughter restored the authority of the Papacy, and Pole was Archbishop of Canterbury, and the last relic of the empire of the Plantagenets in France was lost for ever. He was pleased with his composition, however. He determined, in spite of Contarini, to send it. He expected the English council to believe him when he declared that he had no sinister intention, that he seriously imagined that a monarch who had taken the Pope by the beard and hurled him out of the kingdom, would be frightened by the lectures and threats of a petulant youth.

Cuthbert Tunstall is desired to undertake the first perusal of the book.

On the 27th of May the book was despatched to England by a messenger from Venice, and with it Pole sent two letters, one to the king, the other to his friend Cuthbert Tunstall, the Bishop of Durham. The first contained little more than the credentials of the bearer. The letter to Tunstall, as well as a verbal message by which it was accompanied, was to the effect, that the book was long, too long for the king himself to read; he desired his friend to undertake, and the king to permit him to undertake, the first perusal. The contents were to be looked upon as a secret communication between himself and his Majesty; no eye had seen more than a small portion of what he had written, and that against his own will. The addresses and apostrophes inserted here and there, which might seem at first sight questionable, were dramatically introduced only to give effect to his argument.⁵⁴ These statements seem somewhat adventurous when we think of the correspondence with Cardinal Contarini, and of Pole's assertion that he was writing less for the king than to undeceive the English people; nor do we readily acquiesce in the belief that the invocation to Charles was not intended for Charles's eyes, when the writer very soon after submitted it to those eyes, and devoted the energies of years to bring the Spaniards into England.

Effect of the book in England.

Pole is required to return to England and explain himself.

The messenger arrived early in June. Parliament had just met

⁵⁴ Reginald Pole to the King, Venice, May 27. MS. *penes me*. Instructions to one whom he sent to King Henry by Reginald Pole. – Burnet's *Collectanea*, p. 478.

to receive the report of the queen's crimes and execution, and the king, occupied with other business, gladly complied with Pole's request, and left to others the examination of so bulky a volume. It was placed in the hands of Tunstall and Starkey. Whether Henry ever read it is not certain. If he saw it at all, it was at a later period.⁵⁵ At once, if any hope or thought had existed of a return to communion with the Papacy, that hope was at an end. Written from Italy, the book was accepted as representing the feeling if not dictated by the instructions of the Ultra-Catholics; and in such a mood they could only be treated as enemies. So much of its character as was necessary was laid before Henry, and, on the 14th of June, within a day or two therefore of its receipt, a courier was despatched with replies both from Henry himself, from the Bishop of Durham, Starkey, and Cromwell. If Pole expected to be regarded as a formidable person, his vanity was seriously mortified. The substance of what he had written was seen to be sufficiently venomous, but the writer himself was treated rather as foolish than as wicked, and by the king was regarded with some kind of pity. Henry wrote (it would seem briefly) commanding him on his allegiance, all excuses set apart, to return to England and explain himself.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Starkey to Pole: Strype's *Memorials*, Vol. II. p. 282.

⁵⁶ In his *Apology to Charles the Fifth*, Pole says that Henry in his answer to the book said that he was not displeased with him for what he had written, but that the subject was a grave one, and that he wished to see and speak with him. He, however, remembered the fable of the fox and the sick lion, and would not show himself less sagacious than a brute. Upon this, Lingard and other writers have built a charge of

Remonstrances of Pole's friends.

The king will forgive the book if his forgiveness is asked.

The summons was more fully explained by Starkey and Tunstall. The former declared that at the first reading of the book he was so much amazed and astonished that he knew not what to think except that he was in a dream.⁵⁷ The Bishop of Durham, on whose support Pole seems to have calculated, condescended to his arguments, and replied in formal Anglican language, that to separate from the Pope was not to separate from the unity of the Church: the Head of the Church was Christ, and unity was unity of doctrine, to which England adhered as truly as Rome: Pole had made a preposterous mistake, and it had led him into conduct which at present, if properly atoned for, might be passed over as folly, and covered and forgotten: if persevered in it would become a crime; but it was a secret so far, and if promptly repented of, should remain a secret from all eyes for

treachery against Henry, and urged it, as might be expected, with much eloquent force. It did not occur to them that if Henry had really said anything so incredible, and had intended treachery, the letters of Tunstall and Starkey would have been in keeping with the king's; they would not have been allowed to betray the secret and show Pole their true opinions. Henry's letter was sent on the 14th of June; the other letters bore the same date, and went by the same post. But, indeed, the king made no mystery of his displeasure. He may have written generally, as knowing only so much of the book as others had communicated to him. That he affected not to be displeased is as absurd in itself as it is contradicted by the terms of the refusal to return, which Pole himself sent in reply. – Strype's *Memorials*, Vol. II. p. 295.

⁵⁷ Starkey to Pole: Strype's *Memorials*, Vol. II. p. 282.

ever.⁵⁸ He was commanded by the government, he was implored by his friends to return to England, to make his peace in person, and entreat the king's forgiveness.

July. Pole protests that his book is a private letter, and that he meant no harm.

The king accepts his declaration, and will overlook his conduct.

But neither his friends nor the king understood Pole's character or comprehended his purpose. He was less foolish, he was more malicious than they supposed. When the letters reached him, he professed to be utterly surprised at the reception which his book had met with. He regretted that the Supremacy Act made it impossible for him to comply with a command to present himself in England; but he protested so loudly that he had meant neither injury nor disrespect, he declared so emphatically that his book was a *bonâ fide* letter addressed to the king only, and written for his own eyes and no other's, that at last Henry believed him, accepted his assurance, and consented to pass over his impertinence. In July or August he was informed by Starkey "that the king took the intolerable sharpness of his writings even as they that most friendly could interpret them. He thought, as few would think, that the exaggerations, the oft-returning to the same faults, the vehement exclamations, the hot sentences, the uncomely bitings, the spiteful comparisons, and likenings, all came of error and not of evil intent. His Grace supposed his

⁵⁸ Tunstall to Pole: *Rolls House MS.*, Burnet's *Collectanea*, p. 479.

benefits not forgotten, and Pole's love towards his Highness not utterly quenched. His Majesty was one that forgave and forgot displeasure, both at once." For his own part, however, Starkey implored his friend, as he valued his country, his honour, his good name, to repent himself, as he had desired the king to repent; the king would not press him or force his conscience; if he could be brought to reconsider his conduct, he might be assured that it would not be remembered against him.⁵⁹ Simultaneously with, or soon after this letter, the Bishop of Durham wrote also by the king's order, saying that, as he objected to return, it should not be insisted on; inasmuch, however, as he had affirmed so positively that his book was a private communication, there could be no further reason for preserving any other copies of it, and if he had such copies in his possession he was called upon to prove his sincerity by burning them. On his compliance, his property, which would be forfeited under the Supremacy Act, should remain in his hands, and he was free to reside in any country which he might choose.⁶⁰

Pole did not burn his book, nor was it long before he gave the government reason to regret their forbearance towards him. For the time he continued in receipt of his income, and the stir which he had created died away.

There are many scenes in human life which, as a great poet

⁵⁹ Starkey to Pole: *Rolls House MS.*

⁶⁰ Phillips' *Life of Cardinal Pole*, Vol. I. p. 148. Reginald Pole to Edward VI.: *Epist. Reg. Pol.*

teaches us, are either sad or beautiful, cheerless or refreshing, according to the direction from which we approach them.⁶¹ If, on a morning in spring, we behold the ridges of a fresh-turned ploughed field from their northern side, our eyes, catching only the shadowed slopes of the successive furrows, see an expanse of white, the unmelted remains of the night's hailstorm, or the hoarfrost of the dawn. We make a circuit, or we cross over and look behind us, and on the very same ground there is nothing to be seen but the rich brown soil swelling in the sunshine, warm with promise, and chequered perhaps here and there with a green blade bursting through the surface. Both images are true to the facts of nature. Both pictures are created by real objects really existing. The pleasant certainty, however, remains with us, that the winter is passing away and summer is coming; the promise of the future is not with the ice and the sleet, but with the sunshine, with gladness, and hope.

Other aspects of the condition of England.

Reginald Pole has shown us the form in which England appeared to him, and to the Catholic world beyond its shores, bound under an iron yoke, and sinking down in despair and desolation. To us who have seen the golden harvests waving over her fields, his loud raving has a sound of delirium: we perceive only the happy symptoms of lengthening daylight, bringing with it once more the season of life, and health, and fertility. But there

⁶¹ Wordsworth's *Excursion*, Book V.

is a third aspect – and it is this which we must now endeavour to present to ourselves – of England as it appeared to its own toiling children in the hour of their trial, with its lights and shadows, its frozen prejudices and sunny gleams of faith; when day followed day, and brought no certain change, and men knew not whether night would prevail or day, or which of the two was most divine – night, with its starry firmament of saints and ceremonies, or day, with the single lustre of the Gospel sun. It is idle to try to reproduce such a time in any single shape or uniform colour. The reader must call his imagination to his aid, and endeavour, if he can, to see the same object in many shapes and many colours, to sympathize successively with those to whom the Reformation was a terror, with those to whom it was the dearest hope, and those others – the multitude – whose minds could give them no certain answer, who shifted from day to day, as the impulse of the moment swayed them.

Sunday, June 9. Opening of convocation.

The gathering of the clergy in St. Paul's.

When parliament met in June, 1536, convocation as usual assembled with it. On Sunday, the ninth of the month, the two houses of the clergy were gathered for the opening of their session in the aisles of St. Paul's – high and low, hot and cold, brave and cowardly. The great question of the day, the Reformation of the Church, was one in which they, the spirituality of England, might be expected to bear some useful part. They had as yet borne no part but a part of obstruction. They had

been compelled to sit impatiently, with tied hands, while the lay legislature prescribed their duties and shaped their laws for them. Whether they would assume a more becoming posture, was the problem which they were now met to solve. Gardiner was there, and Bonner, Tunstall, and Hilsey, Lee, Latimer, and Cranmer, mitred abbots, meditating the treason for which, before many months were passed, their quartered trunks would be rotting by the highways; earnest sacramentaries, making ready for the stake: the spirits of the two ages – the past and the future – were meeting there in fierce collision; and above them all, in his vicar-general's chair, sate Cromwell, proud and powerful, lording over the scowling crowd. The present hour was his. His enemies' turn in due time would come also.

The mass had been sung, the roll of the organ had died away. It was the time for the sermon, and Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, rose into the pulpit. Nine-tenths of all those eyes which were then fixed on him would have glistened with delight, could they have looked instead upon his burning. The whole multitude of passionate men were compelled, by a changed world, to listen quietly while he shot his bitter arrows among them.

Latimer in the pulpit.

We have heard Pole; we will now hear the heretic leader. His object on the present occasion was to tell the clergy what especially he thought of themselves; and Latimer was a plain speaker. They had no good opinion of him. His opinion of them

was very bad indeed. His text was from the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

The convocation had sat for seven years.

What had the convocation done?

The race and parentage of all living things, he said, were known by their fruits. He desired by this test to try the parentage of the present convocation. They had sat – the men that he saw before him – for seven years, more or less, session after session. What measures had come from them? They were the spirituality – the teachers of the people, divinely commissioned; said to be and believed to be, children of light; what had they done?.. Mighty evils in those years had been swept away in England ... but whose hands had been at the work? – was it theirs? For his part, he knew that they had burned a dead man's bones; he knew that they had done their best to burn the living man who was then speaking to them... What else they had done he knew not.

England is reformed, but have the clergy reformed
England or has the King?

The end of your convocation shall show what ye are, he said, turning direct upon them; the fruit of your consultations shall show what generation ye be of. What now have ye engendered? what have ye brought forth? What fruit has come of your long and great assembly? What one thing that the people have been the better of a hair? That the people be better learned and taught

now than they were in time past, should we attribute it to your industry, or to the providence of God and the foreseeing of the King's Grace? Ought we to thank you or the King's Highness? Whether stirred the other first? – you the king, that ye might preach, or he you, by his letters, that ye should preach more often? Is it unknown, think you, how both ye and your curates were in manner by violence enforced to let books be made, not by you, but by profane and lay persons? I am bold with you; but I speak to the clergy, not to the laity. I speak to your faces, not behind your backs.

Certain things they had produced, but were they good or evil?

If, then, they had produced no good thing, what had they produced? There was false money instead of true. There were dead images instead of a living Saviour. There was redemption purchased by money, not redemption purchased by Christ. Abundance of these things were to be found among them ... and all those pleasant fictions which had been bred at Rome, the canonizations and expectations, the tot-quotes and dispensations, the pardons of marvellous variety, stationaries and jubilaries, manuaries and oscularies, pedaries, and such other vanities – these had gracious reception; these were welcomed gladly in all their multiplicity. There was the ancient purgatory pick-purse – that which was suaged and cooled with a Franciscan's cowl laid upon a dead man's back, to the fourth part of his sins; that which was utterly to be spoiled, but of none other but the most

prudent father the Pope, and of him as oft as he listed – a pleasant invention, and one so profitable to the feigners, that no emperor had taken more by taxes of his living subjects than those truly begotten children of the world obtained by dead men’s tributes.

The parentage of the English spirituality,
And the future which they are to expect.

This was the modern Gospel – the present Catholic faith, – which the English clergy loved and taught as faithfully as their brothers in Italy. “Ye know the proverb,” the preacher continued, “‘An evil crow an evil egg.’ The children of this world that are known to have so evil a father the world, so evil a grandfather the devil, cannot choose but be evil – the devil being such an one as never can be unlike himself. So of Envy, his well-beloved leman, he begot the World, and left it with Discord at nurse; which World, after it came to man’s estate, had of many concubines many sons. These are our holy, holy men, that say they are dead to the world; and none are more lively to the world. God is taking account of his stewards, as though he should say, ‘All good men in all places accuse your avarice, your exactions, your tyranny. I commanded you that ye should feed my sheep, and ye earnestly feed yourselves from day to day, wallowing in delights and idleness. I commanded you to teach my law; you teach your own traditions, and seek your own glory. I taught openly, that he that should hear you should hear Me; he that should despise you should despise Me. I gave you also keys – not earthly keys, but heavenly. I left my goods, that I have evermore esteemed,

my Word and sacraments, to be dispensed by you. Ye have not deceived Me, but yourselves: my gifts and my benefits shall be to your greater damnation. Because ye have despised the clemency of the Master of the house, ye have deserved the severity of the Judge. Come forth; let us see an account of your stewardship.’

“And He will visit you; in his good time God will visit you. He will come; He will not tarry long. In the day in which we look not for Him, and in the hour which we do not know, He will come and will cut us in pieces, and will give us our portion with the hypocrites. He will set us, my brethren, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth; and here, if ye will, shall be the end of our tragedy.”⁶²

Our glimpses into these scenes fall but fitfully. The sermon has reached us; but the audience – the five hundred fierce vindictive men who suffered under the preacher’s irony – what they thought of it; with what feelings on that summer day the heated crowd scattered out of the cathedral, dispersing to their dinners among the taverns in Fleet-street and Cheapside – all this is gone, gone without a sound. Here no friendly informer comes to help us; no penitent malcontent breaks confidence or lifts the curtain. All is silent.

Sullen temper of the clergy.

Their hopes and prospects.

Yet, although the special acts of this body were of no

⁶² *Sermons of Bishop Latimer*, Parker Society’s edition, p. 33.

mighty moment, although rarely have so many men been gathered together whose actual importance has borne so small a proportion to their estimate of themselves, yet not often, perhaps, has an assembly collected where there was such heat of passion, such malignity of hatred. For the last three years the clergy had remained torpid and half stunned, doggedly obeying the proclamations for the alterations of the service, and keeping beyond the grasp of the law. But, although too demoralized by their defeat to attempt resistance, the great body of them still detested the changes which had been forced upon their acceptance, and longed for a change which as yet they had not dared to attempt actively to compass.⁶³ The keener among the leaders had, however, by this time, in some degree collected themselves. They had been already watching their enemies, to strike, if they could see a vulnerable point, and had masked batteries prepared to unveil. Latimer taunted them with their inefficiency: he should find, perhaps to his cost, that their arms had not wholly lost their ancient sinew. To keep clear of suspicion of favouring heresy, in their duel with the Pope and Papal idolatries, they knew to be essential to the position of the government. When taunted with breaking the unity of the Church, the Privy Council were proud of being able to point to the purity of their doctrines; and although fighting against a stream too strong for them – contending, in fact,

⁶³ In the State Paper Office and the Rolls House there are numerous “depositions” as to language used by the clergy, showing their general temper.

against Providence itself – the king, Cromwell, and Cranmer struggled resolutely to maintain this phantom stronghold, which they imagined to be the key of their defences. The moving party, on the other hand, inevitably transgressed an unreal and arbitrary boundary; and through the known sensitiveness of the king on the real presence, with the defence of which he regarded himself as especially entrusted by the supremacy, the clergy hoped to recover their advantage, and in striking heresy to reach the hated vicar-general.

June 23.

The sermon was preached on the 9th of June; on the 23d the lower house of convocation indirectly replied to it, by presenting a list of complaints on the doctrines which were spreading among the people, the open blasphemy of holy things, and the tacit or avowed sanction extended by certain members of the council to the circulation of heretical books. As an evidence of the progress in the change of opinion, this document is one of the most remarkable which has come down to us.⁶⁴

The lower house present a list of heresies commonly taught among the people.

After a preface, in which the clergy professed their sincere allegiance to the crown, the renunciation, utter and complete, of

⁶⁴ Printed in Strype's *Memorials*, Vol. II. p. 260. The complaints are not exaggerated. There is not one which could not be illustrated or strengthened from depositions among the *Records*.

the Bishop of Rome and all his usurpations and injustices, the abuses which they were going to describe had, nevertheless, they said, created great disquiet in the realm, and required immediate attention.

To the slander of this noble realm, the disquietness of the people, and damage of Christian souls, it was commonly preached, thought, and spoke, that the sacrament of the altar was lightly to be esteemed.

Lewd persons were not afraid to say, “Why should I see the sacrificing of the high mass? Is it anything but a piece of bread or a little pretty piece Round Robin?”

Of baptism it was said that “It was as lawful to baptize in a tub of water at home or in a ditch by the wayside as in a font of stone in the church. The water in the font was but a thing conjured.”

Heresy on the sacraments.

Heresy on purgatory.

Priests, again, were thought to have no more authority to minister sacraments than laymen. Extreme unction was not a sacrament at all, and the hallowed oil “no better than the Bishop of Rome’s grease and butter.” Confession, absolution, penance, were considered neither necessary nor useful. Confession “had been invented” (here a stroke was aimed at Latimer) “to have the secret knowledge of men’s hearts and to pull money out of their purses.” “It were enough for men each to confess his own sins to God in public.” The sinner should allow himself to be a sinner and sin no more. The priest had no concern with him. Purgatory

was a delusion. The soul went straight from the body to heaven or to hell. Dirige, commendations, masses, suffrages, prayers, almsdeeds, oblations done for the souls departed out of the world, were vain and profitless. All sins were put away through Christ. If there were a place of purgatory, Christ was not yet born.

On the intercession of saints.

On the priesthood.

The Church was the congregation of good men, and prayer was of the same efficacy in the air as in a church or chapel. The building called the church was made to keep the people from the rain and wind, a place where they might assemble to hear the Word of God. Mass and matins were but a fraud. The saints had no power to help departed souls. To pray to them, or to burn candles before their images, was mere idolatry. The saints could not be mediators. There was one Mediator, Christ. Our Lady was but a woman, “like a bag of saffron or pepper when the spice was out.”⁶⁵ It was as much available to pray to saints “as to whirl a stone against the wind.” “Hallowed water, hallowed bread, hallowed candles, hallowed ashes, were but vanities. Priests were like other men, and might marry and have wives like other men.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ This, again, was intended for Latimer. The illustration was said to be his; but he denied it.

⁶⁶ Many of the clergy and even of the monks had already taken the permission of their own authority. Cranmer himself was said to be secretly married; and in some cases women, whom we find reported in this letter of Cromwell’s visitors as concubines

“The saying and singing of mass, matins, and evensong, was but roaring, howling, whistling, mumming, conjuring, and juggling,” and “the playing of the organs a foolish vanity.” It was enough for a man to believe what was written in the Gospel – Christ’s blood was shed for man’s redemption, let every man believe in Christ and repent of his sins. Finally, as a special charge against Cromwell, the convocation declared that these heresies were not only taught by word of mouth, but were set out in books which were printed and published *cum privilegio*, under the apparent sanction of the crown.

Difficulty of toleration.

Toleration a principle unknown to rulers or subjects.

Obligation of the magistrates to maintain truth.

of priests, were really and literally their wives, and had been formally married to them. I have discovered one singular instance of this kind. Ap Rice, writing to Cromwell in the year 1535 or 6, says: “As we were of late at Walden, the abbot, then being a man of good learning and right sincere judgment, as I examined him alone, shewed me secretly, upon stipulation of silence, but only unto you, as our judge, that he had contracted matrimony with a certain woman secretly, having present thereat but one trusty witness; because he, not being able, as he said, to contain, though he could not be suffered by the laws of man, saw he might do it lawfully by the laws of God; and for the avoiding of more inconvenience, which before he was provoked unto, he did thus, having confidence in you that this act should not be anything prejudicial unto him.” —*MS. State Paper Office*, temp. Henry VIII., second series, Vol. XXXV. Cromwell acquiesced in the reasonableness of the abbot’s proceeding; he wrote to tell him “to use his remedy,” but to avoid, as far as possible, creating a scandal. —*MS. ibid.* Vol. XLVI. The government, however, found generally a difficulty in knowing what to resolve in such cases. The king’s first declaration was a reasonable one, that all clergy who had taken wives should forfeit their orders, “and be had and reputed as lay persons to all purposes and intents.” – Royal Proclamation: Wilkins’s *Concilia*, Vol. III. p. 776.

Peculiar disposition of the king.

Thus were the two parties face to face, and the king had either to make his choice between them, or with Cromwell's help to coerce them both into moderation. The modern reader may imagine that he should have left both alone, have allowed opinion to correct opinion, and truth to win its own victory. But this "remedy for controversy," so easy now, was then impossible, — it would have been rejected equally by the governors and the governed. Deep in the hearts of all Englishmen in that century lay the conviction, that it was the duty of the magistrate to maintain truth, as well as to execute justice. Toleration was neither understood nor desired. The protestants clamoured against persecution, not because it was persecution, but because truth was persecuted by falsehood; and, however furiously the hostile factions exclaimed each that the truth was with them and the falsehood with their enemies, neither the one nor the other disputed the obligation of the ruling powers to support the truth in itself. So close the religious convictions of men lay to their hearts and passions, that, if opinion had been left alone in their own hands, they would themselves have fought the battle of their beliefs with sharper weapons than argument. Religion to them was a thing to die for, or it was nothing. It was therefore fortunate, most fortunate, for the peace of England, that it possessed in the king a person whose mind, to a certain extent, sympathized with both parties; to whom both, so long as they were moderate, appeared to be right; to whom the extravagances of both were

wrong and to be repressed. Protestant and Anglican alike might look to him with confidence – alike were obliged to fear him; neither could take him for their enemy, neither for their partisan. He possessed the peculiarity which has always distinguished practically effective men, of being advanced, as it is called, only slightly beyond his contemporaries. The giddy or imaginative genius soars on its own wings, it may be to cleave its course into the sunlight, and be the wonder of after times, but more often to fall like Icarus. The man of working ability tempers his judgment by the opinion of others. He leads his age – he bears the brunt of the battle – he wins the victory; but the motive force which bears him forward is not in himself, but in the great tidal wave of human progress. He is the guide of a great movement, not the creator of it; and he represents in his own person the highest average wisdom, combined necessarily in some measure with the mistakes and prejudices of the period to which he belongs.⁶⁷

He draws the first articles of religion.

On receiving the list of grievances, the king, then three weeks married to Jane Seymour, in the first enjoyment, as some historians require us to believe, of a guilty pleasure purchased by an infamous murder, drew up with his own hand,⁶⁸ and submitted

⁶⁷ Luther, by far the greatest man of the sixteenth century, was as rigid a believer in the real presence as Aquinas or St. Bernard.

⁶⁸ We were constrained to put our own pen to the book, and to conceive certain articles which were by you, the bishops, and the whole of the clergy of this our realm agreed on as Catholic. – Henry VIII. to the Bishops and Clergy: Wilkins's *Concilia*,

to the two houses of convocation, a body of articles, interesting as throwing light upon his state of mind, and of deeper moment as the first authoritative statement of doctrine in the Anglican church.

By the duties of his princely office, he said, he held himself obliged, not only to see God's Word and commandment sincerely believed and reverently kept and observed, but to prevent also, as far as possible, contentions and differences of opinion. To his regret he was informed that there was no such concord in the realm as he desired, but violent disagreement, not only in matters of usage and ceremony, but in the essentials of the Christian faith. To avoid the dangerous unquietness, therefore, which might, perhaps, ensue, and also the great peril to the souls of his subjects, he had arrived at the following resolutions, to which he required and commanded obedience.

On the three creeds.

I. As concerning the faith, all things were to be held and defended as true which were comprehended in the whole body and canon of the Bible, and in the three creeds or symbols. The creeds, as well as the Scripture, were to be received as the most holy, most sure and infallible words of God, and as such, "neither to be altered nor convell'd" by any contrary opinion. Whoever refused to accept their authority "was no member of Christ, or of his spouse the Church," "but a very infidel, or heretic, or member

of the devil, with whom he should be eternally damned.”

On the sacraments.

II. Of sacraments generally necessary to all men there were three – baptism, penance, and the sacrament of the altar.⁶⁹

Baptism.

[a] Of baptism the people were to be taught that it was ordained in the New Testament as a thing necessary for everlasting salvation, according to the saying of Christ, “No man can enter into the kingdom of heaven except he be born again of water and the Holy Ghost.” The promises of grace attached to the sacrament of baptism appertained not only to such as had the use of reason, but also to infants, innocents, and children, who, therefore, ought to be baptized, and by baptism obtain remission of sin, and be made thereby sons and children of God.

Penance.

[b] Penance was instituted in the New Testament, and no man who, after baptism, had fallen into deadly sin, could, without the same, be saved. As a sacrament it consisted of three parts – contrition, confession, and amendment. Contrition was the acknowledgment of the filthiness and abomination of sin, a sorrow and inward shame for having offended God, and a certain faith, trust, and confidence in the mercy and goodness of God, whereby the penitent man must conceive certain hope that God

⁶⁹ Whether marriage and ordination were sacraments was thus left an open question. The sacramental character of confirmation and extreme unction is *implicitly* denied.

would forgive him his sins, and repute him justified, of the number of his elect children, not for any worthiness of any merit or work done by the penitent, but for the only merits of the blood and passion of Jesus Christ. This faith was strengthened by the special application of Christ's words and promises, and therefore, to attain such certain faith, the second part of penance was necessary; that is to say, confession to a priest (if it might be had), for the absolution given by a priest was instituted of Christ, to apply the promises of God's grace to the penitent. Although Christ's death was a full, sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for which God forgave sinners their sin, and the punishment of it; yet all men ought to bring forth the fruits of penance, prayer, fasting, and almsdeeds, and make restitution in will and deed to their neighbour if they had done him any wrong, and to do all other good works of mercy and charity.

The altar.

[c] In the sacrament of the altar, under the form and figure of bread and wine, was verily, substantially, and really contained and comprehended the very self-same body and blood of our Saviour Christ, which was born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered upon the cross for man's redemption; and under the same form and figure of bread and wine was corporeally, really, and in very substance exhibited, distributed, and received of all them which receive the said sacrament.

Justification.

III. By justification was signified remission of sin and acceptance into the favour of God; that is to say, man's perfect renovation in Christ. Sinners obtained justification by contrition and faith, joined with charity; not as though contrition, or faith, or works proceeding therefrom, could worthily merit the said justification, for the only mercy and grace of the Father promised freely unto us for the Son's sake, and the merits of his blood and passion, were the only sufficient and worthy causes thereof; notwithstanding God required us to show good works in fulfilling his commands, and those who lived after the flesh would be undoubtedly damned.

Custom and ritual.

In these articles, which exhausted the essential doctrines of the faith, the principles of the two religions are seen linked together in connexion, yet without combination, a first effort at the compromise between the old and the new which was only successfully completed in the English Prayer-book. The king next went on to those matters of custom and ritual, which, under the late system, had constituted the whole of religion, and which the Reformers were now trampling upon and insulting. Under mediæval Catholicism the cycle of life had been enveloped in symbolism; each epoch from birth to death was attended with its sacrament, each act of every hour with its special consecration: the days were all anniversaries; the weeks, the months, the seasons, as they revolved, brought with them their sacred associations and holy memories; and out of imagery and

legend, simply taught and simply believed, innocent and beautiful practices had expanded as never-fading flowers by the roadside of existence.

Obligation of ceremonies long established.
Which be not lightly contemned,
Yet have no virtue or power in themselves.

Concerning these, Henry wrote: “As to having vestments in doing God’s service, such as be and have been most part used – the sprinkling of holy water to put us in remembrance of our baptism, and the blood of Christ sprinkled for our redemption on the cross – the giving of holy bread, to put us in remembrance of the sacrament of the altar, that all Christians be one body mystical in Christ, as the bread is made of many grains, and yet but one loaf – the bearing of candles on Candlemas-day, in memory of Christ the spiritual light – the giving of ashes on Ash-Wednesday, to put in remembrance every Christian man in the beginning of Lent and penance that he is but ashes and earth, and thereto shall return – the bearing of palms on Palm Sunday, in memory of the receiving of Christ into Jerusalem a little before his death, that we may have the same desire to receive Him into our hearts – creeping to the cross, and humbling ourselves on Good Friday before the cross, and there offering unto Christ before the same, and kissing of it in memory of our redemption by Christ made upon the cross – setting up the sepulture of Christ, whose body, after his death, was buried – the hallowing of the font, and other like exorcisms and benedictions by the

ministers of Christ's Church, and all other like laudable customs, rites, and ceremonies, – they be not to be contemned and cast away, but to be used and continued as good and laudable, to put us in remembrance of those spiritual things that they do signify, not suffering them to be forgot, or to be put in oblivion, but renewing them in our memories. But none of these ceremonies have power to remit sin, but only to stir and lift up our minds unto God, by whom only our sins be forgiven.”

So, too, of the saints. “The saints may be honoured because they are with Christ in glory; and though Christ be the only Mediator, yet we may pray to the saints to pray for us and with us unto Almighty God; we may say to them, ‘All holy angels and saints in heaven, pray for us and with us unto the Father, that for his dear Son Jesus Christ's sake we may have grace of Him and remission of our sins, with an earnest purpose to keep his holy commandments, and never to decline from the same again unto our lives' end.’”

Purgatory to be received in a general sense,

But special interpretation as far as possible to be avoided.

Finally, on the great vexed question of purgatory. “Forasmuch as the due order of charity requireth, and the books of Maccabees and divers antient doctors plainly shew, that it is a very good, charitable deed to pray for souls departed; and forasmuch as such usage hath continued in the Church for many years, no man ought to be grieved with the continuance of the same. But forasmuch as the place where they be, the name thereof, and kind of pains

there, be to us uncertain by Scripture, therefore this with all other things we remit unto Almighty God, unto whose mercy it is meet and convenient for us to commend them, trusting that God accepteth our prayers for them. Wherefore it is much necessary that such abuses be clearly put away, which, under the name of purgatory, hath been advanced; as to make men believe that through the Bishop of Rome's pardons men might be delivered out of purgatory and all the pains of it, or that masses said at any place or before any image might deliver them from their pain and send them straight to heaven."⁷⁰

We have now before us the stormy eloquence of Pole, the iconoclasm of Latimer, the superstitions of the complaining clergy – representing three principles struggling one against the other, and the voice of the pilot heard above the tempest. Each of these contained some element which the other needed; they were to fret and chafe till the dust was beaten off, and the grains of gold could meet and fuse.

The articles pass convocation, but create dissatisfaction.

The articles were debated in convocation, and passed because it was the king's will. No party were pleased. The Protestants exclaimed against the countenance to superstition; the Anglo-Catholics lamented the visible taint of heresy, the reduced number of the sacraments, the doubtful language upon

⁷⁰ *Formularies of Faith*, temp. Henry VIII., Oxford edition, 1825. Articles devised by the King's Majesty to stablish Christian quietness and unity, and to avoid contentious opinions.

purgatory, and the silence – dangerously significant – on the nature of the priesthood. They were signed, however, by all sides; and by Cromwell, now Lord Cromwell, lord privy seal, and not vicar-general only, but appointed vicegerent of the king in all matters ecclesiastical, they were sent round through the English counties, to be obeyed by every man at his peril.⁷¹

Convocation decree that the Pope has no power to call general councils.

The great matters being thus disposed of, the business of the session concluded with a resolution passed on the 20th of July, respecting general councils. The Pope, at the beginning of June, had issued notice of a council to be assembled, if possible, at Mantua, in the following year. The English government were contented to recognise a council called *ad locum indifferentem*, with the consent of the great powers of Europe. They would send no delegates to a petty Italian principality, where the decrees would be dictated by the Pope and the Emperor. The convocation pronounced that the Pope had gone beyond his authority: a general council could not legally be called without the consent of all Christian princes; to princes the right belonged of determining the time and place of such an assembly, of appointing the judges, of fixing the order of proceeding, and of deciding even upon the doctrines which might lawfully be allowed and defended.⁷²

⁷¹ Cromwell's patent as lord privy seal is dated the 2d of July, 1536. On the 9th he was created Baron Cromwell, and in the same month vicegerent *in rebus ecclesiasticis*.

⁷² The judgment of the convocation concerning general councils, July 20, 28 Henry

This was the last act of the year; immediately after, the convocation was prorogued. From the temper which had been displayed, it was easy to see that trouble was impending. The form which it would assume was soon to show itself.

Meanwhile, an event occurred of deeper importance than decrees of councils, convocation quarrels, and moves and counter-moves on the political chessboard; an event not to be passed by in silence, though I can only glance at it.

The agitation caused by the queen's trial had suspended hitherto the fate of the monasteries. On the dispersion of the clergy a commission was appointed by Cromwell, to put in force the act of dissolution;⁷³ and a series of injunctions were simultaneously issued, one of which related to the articles of faith, another to the observance of the order diminishing the number of holy-days; a third forbade the extolling the special virtue of images and relics, as things which had caused much folly and superstition; the people should learn that God would be better pleased to see them providing for their families by honest labour, than by idling upon pilgrimages; if they had money to spare, they might give it in charity to the poor.

Directions issued for the education of the people.

The paternoster, the apostles' creed, and the ten commandments had been lately published in English. Fathers of families, schoolmasters, and heads of households were to

VIII: Burnet's *Collectanea*, p. 88.

⁷³ Burnet's *Collectanea*, p. 89.

take care that these fundamental elements of the Christian faith should be learnt by the children and servants under their care; and the law of the land was to be better observed, which directed that every child should be brought up either to learning or to some honest occupation, “lest they should fall to sloth and idleness, and being brought after to calamity and misery, impute their ruin to those who suffered them to be brought up idly in their youth.”

A Bible in English to be provided in every parish.

An order follows, of more significance: “Every parson or proprietary of every parish church within this realm shall, on this side of the feast of St. Peter ad Vincula next coming,⁷⁴ provide a book of the whole Bible, both in Latin and also in English, and lay the same in the quire, for every man that will to read and look therein; and shall discourage no man from reading any part of the Bible, but rather comfort, exhort, and admonish every man to read the same, as the very word of God and the spiritual food of man’s soul; ever gently and charitably exhorting them, that using a sober and modest behaviour in the reading and inquisition of the true sense of the same, they do in nowise stiffly or eagerly contend or strive one with another about the same, but refer the declaration of those places that be in controversy to the judgment of the learned.”

⁷⁴ The Feast of St. Peter ad Vincula was on the 1st of August. These injunctions could hardly have been issued before August, 1536; nor could they have been later than September. The clergy were, therefore, allowed nearly a year to provide themselves.

Translations existing before the Reformation.

The publication of the English translation of the Bible, with the permission for its free use among the people – the greatest, because the purest victory so far gained by the Reformers – was at length accomplished; a few words will explain how, and by whom. Before the Reformation, two versions existed of the Bible in English – two certainly, perhaps three. One was Wicliffe's; another, based on Wicliffe's, but tinted more strongly with the peculiar opinions of the Lollards, followed at the beginning of the fifteenth century; and there is said to have been a third, but no copy of *this* is known to survive, and the history of it is vague.⁷⁵ The possession or the use of these translations was prohibited by the Church, under pain of death. They were extremely rare, and little read; and it was not till Luther's great movement began in Germany, and his tracts and commentaries found their way into England, that a practical determination was awakened among the people, to have before them, in their own tongue, the book on which their faith was built.

Tyndal's New Testament.

Rapid sale in England.

I have already described how William Tyndal felt his heart burn in him to accomplish this great work for his country; how he applied for assistance to a learned bishop; how he discovered rapidly that the assistance which he would receive

⁷⁵ Lewis's *History of the English Bible*.

from the Church authorities would be a speedy elevation to martyrdom; how he went across the Channel to Luther, and thence to Antwerp; and how he there, in the year 1526, achieved and printed the first edition of the New Testament. It was seen how copies were carried over secretly to London, and circulated in thousands by the Christian Brothers. The council threatened; the bishops anathematized. They opened subscriptions to buy up the hated and dreaded volumes. They burnt them publicly in St. Paul's. The whip, the gaol, the stake, did their worst; and their worst was nothing. The high dignitaries of the earth were fighting against Heaven, and met the success which ever attends such contests. Three editions were sold before 1530; and in that year a fresh instalment was completed. The Pentateuch was added to the New Testament; and afterwards, by Tyndal himself, or under Tyndal's eyes, the historical books, the Psalms and Prophets. At length the whole canon was translated, and published in separate portions.

The bishops' protest.

The king commands them to prepare a new translation.

Exertions of Cranmer.

The bishops are immoveable.

All these were condemned with equal emphasis – all continued to spread. The progress of the work of propagation had, in 1531, become so considerable as to be the subject of an anxious protest to the crown from the episcopal bench. They complained of the translations as inaccurate – of unbecoming

reflections on themselves in the prefaces and side-notes. They required stronger powers of repression, more frequent holocausts, a more efficient inquisitorial police. In Henry's reply they found that the waters of their life were poisoned at the spring. The king, too, was infected with the madness. The king would have the Bible in English; he directed them, if the translation was unsound, to prepare a better translation without delay. If they had been wise in their generation they would have secured the ground when it was offered to them, and gladly complied. But the work of Reformation in England was not to be accomplished, in any one of its purer details, by the official clergy; it was to be done by volunteers from the ranks, and forced upon the Church by the secular arm. The bishops remained for two years inactive. In 1533, the king becoming more peremptory, Cranmer carried a resolution for a translation through convocation. The resolution, however, would not advance into act. The next year he brought the subject forward again; and finding his brother prelates fixed in their neglect, he divided Tyndal's work into ten parts, sending one part to each bishop to correct. The Bishop of London alone ventured an open refusal; the remainder complied in words, and did nothing.⁷⁶

Miles Coverdale publishes the first complete version with the king's sanction.

⁷⁶ Lewis's *History of the English Bible*.

Finally, the king's patience was exhausted. The legitimate methods having been tried in vain, he acted on his own responsibility. Miles Coverdale, a member of the same Cambridge circle which had given birth to Cranmer, to Latimer, to Barnes, to the Scotch Wishart, silently went abroad with a licence from Cromwell; with Tyndal's help he collected and edited the scattered portions; and in 1536⁷⁷ there appeared in London, published *cum privilegio* and dedicated to Henry VIII., the first complete copy of the English Bible. The separate translations, still anomalously prohibited in detail, were exposed freely to sale in a single volume, under the royal sanction. The canon and text-book of the new opinions – so long dreaded, so long execrated – was thenceforth to lie open in every church in England; and the clergy were ordered not to permit only, but to exhort and encourage, all men to resort to it and read.⁷⁸

In this act was laid the foundation-stone on which the whole later history of England, civil as well as ecclesiastical, has been reared; the most minute incidents become interesting, connected with an event of so mighty moment.

Coverdale's preface and dedication.

“Caiphaz,” said Coverdale in the dedicatory preface, “being bishop of his year, prophesied that it was better to put Christ to death than that all the people should perish: he meaning that

⁷⁷ The printing was completed in October, 1535.

⁷⁸ There is an excellent copy of this edition in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

Christ was a heretic and a deceiver of the people, when in truth he was the Saviour of the world, sent by his Father to suffer death for man's redemption.

“After the same manner the Bishop of Rome conferred on King Henry VIII. the title of Defender of the Faith, because his Highness suffered the bishops to burn God's Word, the root of faith, and to persecute the lovers and ministers of the same; where in very deed the Bishop, though he knew not what he did, prophesied that, by the righteous administration of his Grace, the faith should be so defended that God's Word, the mother of faith, should have free course through all Christendom, but especially in his own realm.

“The Bishop of Rome has studied long to keep the Bible from the people, and specially from princes, lest they should find out his tricks and his falsehoods, lest they should turn from his false obedience to the true obedience commanded by God; knowing well enough that, if the clear sun of God's Word came over the heat of the day, it would drive away the foul mist of his devilish doctrines. The Scripture was lost before the time of that noble king Josiah, as it hath also been among us unto the time of his Grace. Through the merciful goodness of God it is now found again as it was in the days of that virtuous king; and praised be the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, world without end, which so excellently hath endowed the princely heart of his Highness with such ferventness to his honour and the wealth of his subjects, that he may be compared worthily unto that noble king, that lantern

among princes, who commanded straitly, as his Grace doth, that the law of God should be read and taught unto all the people.

“May it be found a general comfort to all Christian hearts – a continual subject of thankfulness, both of old and young, unto God and to his Grace, who, being our Moses, has brought us out of the old Ægypt, and from the cruel hands of our spiritual Pharaoh. Not by the thousandth part were the Jews so much bound unto King David for subduing of great Goliah as we are to his Grace for delivering us out of our old Babylonish captivity. For the which deliverance and victory I beseech our only Mediator, Jesus Christ, to make such mean with us unto his heavenly Father, that we may never be unthankful unto Him nor unto his Grace, but increase in fear of God, in obedience to the King’s Highness, in love unfeigned to our neighbours, and in all virtue that cometh of God, to whom, for the defending of his blessed Word, be honour and thanks, glory and dominion, world without end.”⁷⁹

The frontispiece.

Equally remarkable, and even more emphatic in the recognition of the share in the work borne by the king, was the frontispiece.

This was divided into four compartments.

In the first, the Almighty was seen in the clouds with outstretched arms. Two scrolls proceeded out of his mouth, to

⁷⁹ Preface to Coverdale’s *Bible*.

the right, and the left. On the former was the verse, “the word which goeth forth from me shall not return to me empty, but shall accomplish whatsoever I will have done.” The other was addressed to Henry, who was kneeling at a distance bareheaded, with his crown lying at his feet. The scroll said, “I have found me a man after my own heart, who shall fulfil all my will.” Henry answered, “Thy word is a lantern unto my feet.”

Immediately below, the king was seated on his throne, holding in each hand a book, on which was written “the Word of God.” One of these he was giving to Cranmer and another bishop, who with a group of priests were on the right of the picture, saying, “Take this and teach;” the other on the opposite side he held to Cromwell and the lay peers, and the words were, “I make a decree that, in all my kingdom, men shall tremble and fear before the living God.” A third scroll, falling downwards over his feet, said alike to peer and prelate, “Judge righteous judgment. Turn not away your ear from the prayer of the poor man.” The king’s face was directed sternly towards the bishops, with a look which said, “Obey at last, or worse will befall you.”

In the third compartment, Cranmer and Cromwell were distributing the Bible to kneeling priests and laymen; and, at the bottom, a preacher with a benevolent beautiful face was addressing a crowd from a pulpit in the open air. He was apparently commencing a sermon with the text, “I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men – for kings” – and at

the word “kings” the people were shouting “Vivat Rex! – Vivat Rex!” children who knew no Latin lisping “God save the King!” and, at the extreme left, at a gaol window, a prisoner was joining in the cry of delight, as if he, too, were delivered from a worse bondage.

The entire translation substantially the work of Tyndal.

This was the introduction of the English Bible – this the seeming acknowledgment of Henry’s services. Of the translation itself, though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are all familiar. The peculiar genius – if such a word may be permitted – which breathes through it – the mingled tenderness and majesty – the Saxon simplicity – the preternatural grandeur – unequalled, unapproached, in the attempted improvements of modern scholars – all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man – William Tyndal. Lying, while engaged in that great office, under the shadow of death, the sword above his head and ready at any moment to fall, he worked, under circumstances alone perhaps truly worthy of the task which was laid upon him – his spirit, as it were divorced from the world, moved in a purer element than common air.

Tyndal’s martyrdom.

His work was done. He lived to see the Bible no longer carried by stealth into his country, where the possession of it was a crime, but borne in by the solemn will of the king – solemnly recognised

as the word of the Most High God. And then his occupation in this earth was gone. His eyes saw the salvation for which he had longed, and he might depart to his place. He was denounced to the regent of Flanders; he was enticed by the suborned treachery of a miserable English fanatic beyond the town under whose liberties he had been secure; and with the reward which, at other times as well as those, has been held fitting by human justice for the earth's great ones, he passed away in smoke and flame to his rest.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE

Condition of society.

The Nun of Kent's conspiracy, the recent humour of convocation, the menaces of Reginald Pole, alike revealed a dangerous feeling in the country. A religious revolution in the midst of an armed population intensely interested in the event, could not be accomplished without an appeal being made at some period of its course to arms; and religion was at this time but one out of many elements of confusion. Society, within and without, from the heart of its creed to its outward organization, was passing through a transition, and the records of the Pilgrimage of Grace cast their light far down into the structure and inmost constitution of English life.

Waning influence of the House of Lords.

Their jealousy of Cromwell.

Conservative confederacy to check the Reformation.

Displeasure of the country families at the suppression of the abbeys.

Who missed the various conveniences which the abbeys had furnished.

The organic changes introduced by the parliament of 1529 had been the work of the king and the second house in the

legislature; and the peers had not only seen measures pass into law which they would gladly have rejected had they dared, but their supremacy was slipping away from them; the Commons, who in times past had confined themselves to voting supplies and passing without inquiry such measures as were sent down to them, had started suddenly into new proportions, and had taken upon themselves to discuss questions sacred hitherto to convocation. The upper house had been treated in disputes which had arisen with significant disrespect; ancient and honoured customs had been discontinued among them against their desire;⁸⁰ and, constitutionally averse to change, they were hurried powerless along by a force which was bearing them they knew not where. Hating heretics with true English conservatism, they found men who but a few years before would have been in the dungeons of Lollards' Tower, now high in court favour,

⁸⁰ "The Lord Darcy declared unto me that the custom among the Lords before that time had been that matters touching spiritual authority should always be referred unto the convocation house, and not for the parliament house: and that before this last parliament it was accustomed among the Lords, the first matter they always communed of, after the mass of the Holy Ghost, was to affirm and allow the first chapter of Magna Charta touching the rights and liberties of the church; and it was not so now. Also the Lord Darcy did say that in any matter which toucheth the prerogative of the king's crown, or any matter that touched the prejudice of the same, the custom of the Lords' house was that they should have, upon their requests, a copy of the bill of the same, to the intent that they might have their council learned to scan the same; or if it were betwixt party and party, if the bill were not prejudicial to the commonwealth. And now they could have no such copy upon their suit, or at the least so readily as they were wont to have in parliament before." – Examination of Robert Aske in the Tower: *Rolls House MS.*, A 2, 29, p. 197.

high in office, and with seats in their own body. They had learnt to endure the presence of self-raised men when as ecclesiastics such men represented the respectable dignity of the Church; but the proud English nobles had now for the first time to tolerate the society and submit to the dictation of a lay peer who had been a tradesman's orphan and a homeless vagabond. The Reformation in their minds was associated with the exaltation of base blood, the levelling of ranks, the breaking down the old rule and order of the land. Eager to check so dangerous a movement, they had listened, some of them, to the revelations of the Nun. Fifteen great men and lords, Lord Darcy stated, had confederated secretly to force the government to change their policy;⁸¹ and Darcy himself had been in communication for the same purpose with the Spanish ambassador, and was of course made aware of the intended invasion in the preceding winter.⁸² The discontent extended to the county families, who shared or imitated the prejudices of their feudal leaders; and these families had again their peculiar grievances. On the suppression of the abbeys the peers obtained grants, or expected to obtain them, from the forfeited estates. The country gentlemen saw only the desecration of the familiar scenes of their daily life, the violation

⁸¹ "The said Aske saith he well remembereth that the Lord Darcy told him that there were divers great men and lords which before the time of the insurrection had promised to do their best to suppress heresies and the authors and maintainers of them, and he saith they were in number fifteen persons." —*Rolls House Miscellaneous MSS.*, first series, 414.

⁸² Richard Coren to Cromwell: *State Papers*, Vol. I. p. 558.

of the tombs of their ancestors, and the buildings themselves, the beauty of which was the admiration of foreigners who visited England, reduced to ruins.⁸³ The abbots had been their personal friends, “the trustees for their children and the executors of their wills;”⁸⁴ the monks had been the teachers of their children; the free tables and free lodgings in these houses had made them attractive and convenient places of resort in distant journeys; and in remote districts the trade of the neighbourhood, from the wholesale purchases of the corn-dealer to the huckstering of the wandering pedlar, had been mainly carried on within their walls.⁸⁵

The Statute of Uses another grievance.

Difficulty of providing for younger children under the old common law.

The objects and the evils of the system of Uses.

“The Statute of Uses,” again, an important but insufficient measure of reform, passed in the last session of parliament but one,⁸⁶ had created not unreasonable irritation. Previous to the modification of the feudal law in the year 1540, land was

⁸³ “The abbeys were one of the beauties of the realm to all strangers passing through.” – Examination of Aske: *Rolls House MS.*, A 2, 29.

⁸⁴ Examination of Aske; MS. *ibid.* I am glad to have discovered this most considerable evidence in favour of some at least of the superiors of the religious houses.

⁸⁵ “Strangers and buyers of corn were also greatly refreshed, horse and man, at the abbeys; and merchandize was well carried on through their help.” – Examination of Aske: *Rolls House MS.*, A 2, 29.

⁸⁶ 27 Henry VIII. cap. 10.

not subject to testamentary disposition and it had been usual to evade the prohibition of direct bequest, in making provision for younger children, by leaving estates in “use,” charged with payments so considerable as to amount virtually to a transfer of the property. The injustice of the common law was in this way remedied, but remedied so awkwardly as to embarrass and complicate the titles of estates beyond extrication. A “use” might be erected on a “use”; it might be extended to the descendants of those in whose behalf it first was made; it might be mortgaged, or transferred as a security to raise money. The apparent owner of a property might effect a sale, and the buyer find his purchase so encumbered as to be useless to him. The intricacies of tenure thus often passed the skill of judges to unravel;⁸⁷ while, again, the lords of the fiefs were unable to claim their fines or fees or liveries, and the crown, in cases of treason, could not enforce its forfeitures. The Statute of Uses terminated the immediate difficulty by creating, like the recent Irish Encumbered Estates Act, parliamentary titles. All persons entitled to the use of lands were declared to be to all intents and purposes the lawful possessors, as much as if such lands had been made over to them by formal grant or conveyance. They became actual owners, with all the rights and all the liabilities of their special

⁸⁷ Among the unarranged MSS. in the State Paper Office is a long and most elaborate explanation of the evils which had been created by the system of uses. It is a paper which ought to find its place in the history of English landed tenure; and when the arrangement of these MSS. now in progress is completed, it will be accessible to any inquirer.

tenures. The embarrassed titles were in this way simplified; but now, the common law remaining as yet unchanged, the original evil returned in full force. Since a trust was equivalent to a conveyance, and land could not be bequeathed by will, the system of trusts was virtually terminated. Charges could not be created upon estates, and the landowners complained that they could no longer raise money if they wanted it; their estates must go wholly to the eldest sons; and, unless they were allowed to divide their properties by will, their younger children would be left portionless.⁸⁸

Small grievances are readily magnified in seasons of general disruption. A wicked spirit in the person of Cromwell was said to rule the king, and everything which he did was evil, and every evil of the commonwealth was due to his malignant influence.

Grievances of the commons.

Local limitation of English country life.

Each district self-supporting.

The discontent of the noblemen and gentlemen would in itself

⁸⁸ “Masters, there is a statute made whereby all persons be restrained to make their will upon their lands; for now the eldest son must have all his father’s lands; and no person, to the payment of his debts, neither to the advancement of his daughters’ marriages, can do nothing with their lands, nor cannot give to his youngest son any lands.” – Speech of Mr. Sheriff Dymock, at Horncastle: *Rolls House MS. A 2. 29.* “They want the Statute of Uses qualified, that a man be allowed to bequeath part of his lands by will. It will invade the old accustomed law in many things.” – Examination of Aske: *MS. ibid.* “Divers things should be reformed, and especially the Act of Uses. Younger brothers would none of that in no wise.” – Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *Miscellaneous MSS. State Paper Office, second series, Vol. I.*

have been formidable. Their armed retainues were considerable. The constitutional power of the counties was in their hands. But the commons, again, had their own grounds of complaint, for the most part just, though arising from causes over which the government had no control, from social changes deeper than the Reformation itself. In early times each petty district in England had been self-supporting, raising its own corn, feeding its own cattle, producing by women's hands in the cottages and farmhouses its own manufactures. There were few or no large roads, no canals, small means of transport of any kind, and from this condition of things had arisen the laws which we call short-sighted, against engrossers of grain. Wealthy speculators, watching their opportunity, might buy up the produce not immediately needed, of an abundant harvest, and when the stock which was left was exhausted, they could make their own market, unchecked by a danger of competition. In time no doubt the mischief would have righted itself, but only with the assistance of a coercive police which had no existence, who would have held down the people while they learnt their lesson by starvation. The habits of a great nation could only change slowly. Each estate or each township for the most part grew its own food, and (the average of seasons compensating each other) food adequate for the mouths dependent upon it.

Suffering occasioned by the introduction of large grazing farms.

The development of trade at the close of the fifteenth century

gave the first shock to the system. The demand for English wool in Flanders had increased largely, and holders of property found they could make their own advantage by turning their corn-land into pasture, breaking up the farms, enclosing the commons, and becoming graziers on a gigantic scale.

I have described in the first chapter of this work the manner in which the Tudor sovereigns had attempted to check this tendency, but interest had so far proved too strong for legislation. The statutes prohibiting enclosures had remained, especially in the northern counties, unenforced; and the small farmers and petty copyholders, hitherto thriving and independent, found themselves at once turned out of their farms and deprived of the resource of the commons. They had suffered frightfully, and they saw no reason for their sufferings. From the Trent northward a deep and angry spirit of discontent had arisen which could be stirred easily into mutiny.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ The depositions of prisoners taken after the rebellion are full of evidence on this point. George Gisborne says: "We were in mind and will to meet for certain causes, the which concerned the living of the poor people and commons, the which they say be sore oppressed by gentlemen, because their livings is taken away." —*Rolls House MS. miscellaneous, first series, 132.Wm.* Stapleton says: "Among the causes of the insurrection were pulling down of villages and farms, raising of rents, enclosures, intakes of the commons, worshipful men taking yeomen's offices, that is, becoming dealers in farm produce." —*Rolls House MS.* I am tempted to add a petition sent from one of the discontented districts to the crown, which betrays great ignorance of political economy, although it exhibits also a clear understanding both of the petitioners' sufferings and of the immediate causes of those sufferings. "Please it your noble Grace to consider the great indigence and scarcity of all manner of victual necessary to your subjects within this realm of England, which doth grow daily more

The rough character of the Yorkshire gentleman.

Encroachment upon local jurisdiction increases the expense of justice.

Nor were these the only grievances of the northern populace. The Yorkshire knights, squires, sheriffs, and justices of the peace, intent, as we see, on their own interests, had been overbearing and tyrannical in their offices. The Abbot of York, interceding with Cromwell in behalf of some poor man who

and more, by reason of the great and covetous misusages of the farms within this your realm; which misusages and the inconveniences thereof hath not only been begun and risen by divers gentlemen of the same your realm, but also by divers and many merchant adventurers, clothmakers, goldsmiths, butchers, tanners, and other artificers and unreasonable covetous persons, which doth encroach daily many farms more than they can occupy in tilth of corn; ten, twelve, fourteen, or sixteen farms in one man's hands at once; when in time past there hath been in every farm of them a good house kept, and in some of them three, four, five, or six ploughs kept and daily occupied, to the great comfort and relief of your subjects of your realm, poor and rich. For when every man was contented with one farm, and occupied that well, there was plenty and reasonable price of everything that belonged to man's sustenance by reason of tillage; forasmuch as every acre of land tilled and ploughed bore the straw and the chaff besides the corn, able and sufficient with the help of the shakke in the stubbe to succour and feed as many great beasts (as horses, oxen, and kine) as the land would keep; and further, by reason of the hinderflight of the crops and seeds tried out in cleansing, winnowing, and sifting the corn, there was brought up at every barn-door hens, capons, geese, ducks, swine, and other poultry, to the great comfort of your people. And now, by reason of so many farms engrossed in one man's hands, which cannot till them, the ploughs be decayed, and the farmhouses and other dwelling-houses; so that when there was in a town twenty or thirty dwelling-houses they be now decayed, ploughs and all the people clean gone, and the churches down, and no more parishioners in many parishes, but a neatherd and a shepherd instead of three score or four score persons.”
—*Rolls House MS.* miscellaneous, second series, 854.

had been needlessly arrested and troubled, declared that “there was such a company of wilful gentlemen within Yorkshire as he thought there were not in all England besides,”⁹⁰ and Cromwell in consequence had “roughly handled the grand jury.” Courts of arbitration had sate from immemorial time in the northern baronies where disputes between landlords and tenants had been equitably and cheaply adjusted. The growing inequality of fortunes had broken through this useful custom. Small farmers and petty leaseholders now found themselves sued or compelled to sue in the courts at Westminster, and the expenses of a journey to London, or of the employment of London advocates, placed them virtually at the mercy of their landlords. Thus the law itself had been made an instrument of oppression, and the better order of gentlemen, who would have seen justice enforced had they been able, found themselves assailed daily with “piteous complaints” which they had no power to satisfy.⁹¹ The occupation of the council with the larger questions of the Church had left them too little leisure to attend to these disorders. Cromwell’s occasional and abrupt interference had created irritation, but no improvement; and mischiefs of all kinds had grown unheeded till the summer of 1536, when a fresh list of grievances, some real, some imaginary, brought the crisis to a head.

⁹⁰ Abbot of York to Cromwell —*Miscellaneous MS.* State Paper Office, second series, Vol. LII.

⁹¹ See a very remarkable letter of Sir William Parr to Cromwell, dated April 8, 1536, a few months only before the outbreak of the rebellion: *Miscellaneous MS.* State Paper Office, second series, Vol. XXXI.

Papal leanings of the northern clergy.

The convocation of York, composed of rougher materials than the representatives of the southern counties, had acquiesced but tardily in the measures of the late years. Abuses of all kinds instinctively sympathize, and the clergy of the north, who were the most ignorant in England, and the laity whose social irregularities were the greatest, united resolutely in their attachment to the Pope, were most alarmed at the progress of heresy, and most anxious for a reaction. The deciding act against Rome and the king's articles of religion struck down the hopes which had been excited there and elsewhere by the disgrace of Queen Anne. Men saw the Papacy finally abandoned, they saw heresy encouraged, and they were proportionately disappointed and enraged.

Three commissions issued by the crown.

At this moment three commissions were issued by the crown, each of which would have tried the patience of the people, if conducted with greatest prudence, and at the happiest opportunity.

A subsidy commission.

The second portion of the subsidy (an income-tax of two and a half per cent. on all incomes above twenty pounds a year), which had been voted in the autumn of 1534, had fallen due. The money had been required for the Irish war, and the disaffected party in England had wished well to the insurgents, so that the

collectors found the greatest difficulty either in enforcing the tax, or obtaining correct accounts of the properties on which it was to be paid.

A commission to carry out the Act of Suppression,
And a commission for the examination of the character
and qualifications of the clergy.

Simultaneously Legh and Layton, the two most active and most unpopular of the monastic visitors, were sent to Yorkshire to carry out the Act of Suppression. Others went into Lincolnshire, others to Cheshire and Lancashire, while a third set carried round the injunctions of Cromwell to the clergy, with directions further to summon before them every individual parish priest, to examine into his character, his habits and qualifications, and eject summarily all inefficient persons from their offices and emoluments.

Complaints against the monastic commissioners.
The complaints were perhaps exaggerated,
But were not wholly without justice.

The dissolution of the religious houses commenced in the midst of an ominous and sullen silence. The act extended only to houses whose incomes were under two hundred pounds a year, and among these the commissioners were to use their discretion. They were to visit every abbey and priory, to examine the books, examine the monks; when the income fell short, or when the character of the house was vicious, to eject the

occupants, and place the lands and farm-buildings in the hands of lay tenants for the crown. The discharge of an unpopular office, however conducted, would have exposed those who undertook it to great odium. It is likely that those who did undertake it were men who felt bitterly on the monastic vices, and did their work with little scruple or sympathy. Legh and Layton were accused subsequently of having borne themselves with overbearing insolence; they were said also to have taken bribes, and where bribes were not offered, to have extorted them from the houses which they spared. That they went through their business roughly is exceedingly probable; whether needlessly so, must not be concluded from the report of persons to whom their entire occupation was sacrilege. That they received money is evident from their own reports to the government; but it is evident also that they did not attempt to conceal that they received it. When the revenues of the crown were irregular and small, the salaries even of ministers of state were derived in great measure from fees and presents; the visitors of the monasteries, travelling with large retinues, were expected to make their duties self-supporting, to inflict themselves as guests on the houses to which they went, and to pay their own and their servants "wages" from the funds of the establishments. Sums of money would be frequently offered them in lieu of a painful hospitality; and whether they took unfair advantage of their opportunities for extortion, or whether they exercised a proper moderation, cannot be concluded from the mere fact that there was a clamour against

them. But beyond doubt their other proceedings were both rash and blameable. Their servants, with the hot puritan blood already in their veins, trained in the exposure of the impostures and profligacies of which they had seen so many, scorning and hating the whole monastic race, had paraded their contempt before the world; they had ridden along the highways, decked in the spoils of the desecrated chapels, with copes for doublets, tunics for saddle-cloths,⁹² and the silver relic-cases hammered into sheaths for their daggers.⁹³ They had been directed to enforce an abrogation of the superfluous holy-days; they had shown such excessive zeal that in some places common markets had been held under their direction on Sundays.⁹⁴

Scenes like these working upon tempers already inflamed, gave point to discontent. Heresy, that word of dread and horror to English ears, rang from lip to lip. Their hated enemy was at the people's doors, and their other sufferings were the just vengeance of an angry God.⁹⁵ Imagination, as usual, hastened to assist and expand the nucleus of truth. Cromwell had formed the excellent design, which two years later he carried into effect, of instituting parish registers. A report of his intention had gone abroad, and mingling with the irritating inquiries of the subsidy

⁹² It was said that the visitors' servants had made apparel, doublets, yea, even saddle-cloths, of the churches' vestments. – Examination of John Dakyn: *Rolls House MS.* miscellaneous, first series, 402.

⁹³ *Rolls House MS.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Miscellaneous, first series, 402.

⁹⁵ Aske's Deposition: *Rolls House MS.*

commissioners into the value of men's properties, gave rise to a rumour that a fine was to be paid to the crown on every wedding, funeral, or christening; that a tax would be levied on every head of cattle, or the cattle should be forfeited; "that no man should eat in his house white meat, pig, goose, nor capon, but that he should pay certain dues to the King's Grace."

Expectation that the parish churches were to be destroyed with the abbeys.

In the desecration of the abbey chapels and altar-plate a design was imagined against all religion. The clergy were to be despoiled; the parish churches pulled down, one only to be left for every seven or eight miles; the church plate to be confiscated, and "chalices of tin" supplied for the priest to sing with.⁹⁶

Divided interests of the rich and poor.

Every element necessary for a great revolt was thus in motion, – wounded superstition, real suffering, caused by real injustice, with their attendant train of phantoms. The clergy in the north were disaffected to a man;⁹⁷ the people were in the angry humour which looks eagerly for an enemy, and flies at the first which seems to offer. If to a spirit of revolt there had been added a unity of purpose, the results would have been far other than they

⁹⁶ Depositions on the Rebellion, *passim*, among the MSS. in the State Paper Office and the Rolls House.

⁹⁷ George Lumley, the eldest son of Lord Lumley, said in his evidence that there was not a spiritual man in the whole north of England who had not assisted the rebellion with arms or money. —*Rolls House MS.*

were. Happily, the discontents of the nobility, the gentlemen, the clergy, the commons, were different, and in many respects opposite; and although, in the first heat of the commotion, a combination threatened to be possible, jealousy and suspicion rapidly accomplished the work of disintegration. The noble lords were in the interest of Pole, of European Catholicism, the Empire, and the Papacy; the country gentlemen desired only the quiet enjoyment of a right to do as they would with their own, and the quiet maintenance of a Church which was too corrupt to interfere with them. The working people had a just cause, though disguised by folly; but all true sufferers soon learnt that in rising against the government, they had mistaken their best friends for foes.

September. Uneasy movement among the clergy.
The commissioner is coming to Louth.

It was Michaelmas then, in the year 1536. Towards the fall of the summer, clergy from the southern counties had been flitting northward, and on their return had talked mysteriously to their parishioners of impending insurrections, in which honest men would bear their part.⁹⁸ In Yorkshire and Lincolnshire the stories of the intended destruction of parish churches had been

⁹⁸ The parish priest of Wyley, in Essex, had been absent for three weeks in the north, in the month of August, and on returning, about the 2d of September, said to one of his villagers, Thomas Rogers, "There shall be business shortly in the north, and I trust to help and strengthen my countrymen with ten thousand such as I am myself; and I shall be one of the worst of them all. The king shall not reign long." – Confession of Thomas Rogers: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, Vol. XXX, p. 112.

vociferously circulated; and Lord Hussey, at his castle at Sleaford, had been heard to say to one of the gentlemen of the county, that “the world would never mend until they fought for it.”⁹⁹ September passed away; at the end of the month, the nunnery of Legbourne, near Louth, was suppressed by the visitors, and two servants of Cromwell were left in the house, to complete the dissolution. On Monday, the 2d of October, Heneage, one of the examiners under the clerical commission, was coming, with the chancellor of the Bishop of Lincoln, into Louth itself, and the clergy of the neighbourhood were to appear and submit themselves to inspection.

Sunday, October 1.

Procession of the people of Louth on Sunday evening.

The evening before being Sunday, a knot of people gathered on the green in the town. They had the great silver cross belonging to the parish with them; and as a crowd collected about them, a voice cried, “Masters, let us follow the cross; God knows whether ever we shall follow it hereafter or nay.” They formed in procession, and went round the streets; and after vespers, a party, headed “by one Nicholas Melton, who, being a shoemaker, was called Captain Cobler,” appeared at the doors of the church, and required the churchwardens to give them the key of the jewel chamber. The chancellor, they said, was coming the next morning, and intended to seize the plate. The churchwardens

⁹⁹ Deposition of Thomas Brian: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29.

hesitating, the keys were taken by force. The chests were opened, the crosses, chalices, and candlesticks “were shewed openly in the sight of every man,” and then, lest they should be stolen in the night, an armed watch kept guard till daybreak in the church aisles.

October 2. Burst of the insurrection.

The commissioner is received with the alarm-bell.

He is sworn to the commons.

At nine o'clock on Monday morning Heneage entered the town, with a single servant. The chancellor was ill, and could not attend. As he rode in, the alarm-bell pealed out from Louth Tower. The inhabitants swarmed into the streets with bills and staves; “the stir and the noise arising hideous.” The commissioner, in panic at the disturbance, hurried into the church for sanctuary; but the protection was not allowed to avail him. He was brought out into the market-place, a sword was held to his breast, and he was sworn at an extemporized tribunal to be true to the commons, upon pain of death. “Let us swear! let us all swear!” was then the cry. A general oath was drawn. The townsmen swore – all strangers resident swore – they would be faithful to the king, the commonwealth, and to Holy Church.

In the heat of the enthusiasm appeared the registrar of the diocese, who had followed Heneage with his books, in which was enrolled Cromwell's commission. Instantly clutched, he was dragged to the market-cross. A priest was mounted on the stone steps, and commanded to read the commission aloud. He

began; but the “hideous clamour” drowned his voice. The crowd, climbing on his shoulders, to overlook the pages, bore him down. He flung the book among the mob, and it was torn leaf from leaf, and burnt upon the spot. The registrar barely escaped with his life: he was rescued by friends, and hurried beyond the gates.

Meanwhile, a party of the rioters had gone out to Legbourne, and returned, bringing Cromwell’s servants, who were first set in the stocks, and thrust afterwards into the town gaol.

The township of Louth in motion to Castre.

Furious demeanour of the clergy

The gentlemen take the oath.

So passed Monday. The next morning, early, the common bell was again ringing. Other commissioners were reported to be at Castre, a few miles distant; and Melton the shoemaker, and “one great James,” a tailor, with a volunteer army of horse and foot, harnessed and unharnessed, set out to seize them. The alarm had spread; the people from the neighbouring villages joined them as they passed, or had already risen and were in marching order. At Castre they found the commissioners fled; but a thousand horse were waiting for them, and the number every moment increasing. Whole parishes marched in, headed by their clergy. A rendezvous was fixed at Rotherwell; and at Rotherwell, on that day, or the next, besides the commons, “there were priests and monks” (the latter fresh ejected from their monasteries – pensioned, but furious) “to the number of

seven or eight hundred.”¹⁰⁰ Some were “bidding their bedes,” and praying for the Pope and cardinals; some were in full harness, or armed with such weapons as they could find: all were urging on the people. They had, as yet, no plans. What would the gentlemen do? was the question. “Kill the gentlemen,” the priests cried; “if they will not join us, they shall all be hanged.”¹⁰¹ This difficulty was soon settled. They were swept up from their halls, or wherever they could be found. The oath was offered them, with the alternative of instant death; and they swore against their will, as all afterwards pretended, and as some perhaps sincerely felt; but when the oath was once taken, they joined with a hearty unanimity, and brought in with them their own armed retainers, and the stores from their houses.¹⁰² Sir Edward Madyson came

¹⁰⁰ We find curious and humorous instances of monastic rage at this time. One monk was seen following a plough, and cursing his day that he should have to work for his bread. Another, a Welshman, “wished he had the king on Snowdon, that he might souse his head against the stones.” – Depositions on the Rebellion: *Rolls House MS.*

¹⁰¹ Sir Robert Dighton and Sir Edward Dymmock said they heard many of the priests cry, “Kill the gentlemen.” The parson of Cowbridge said that the lords of the council were false harlots; and the worst was Cromwell. “The vicar of Haynton, having a great club in his hand, said that if he had Cromwell there he would beat out his guts.” “Robert Brownwhite, one of the parsons of Nether Teynton, was with bow and arrows, sword and buckler by his side, and sallet on his head; and when he was demanded how he did, he said, ‘None so well;’ and said it was the best world that ever he did see.” My story, so far, is taken from the Miscellaneous Depositions, *Rolls MS.* A 2, 28; from the Examination of William Moreland, *MS.* A 2, 29; and from the Confession of John Brown, *Rolls House MS.*, first series, 892.

¹⁰² Very opposite stories were told of the behaviour of the gentlemen. On one side it was said that they were the great movers of the insurrection; on the other, that they

in, Sir Thomas Tyrwhit and Sir William Ascue. Lord Borough, who was in Ascue's company when the insurgents caught him, rode for his life, and escaped. One of his servants was overtaken in the pursuit, was wounded mortally, and shriven on the field.

October 3. Meeting at Horncastle.

So matters went at Louth and Castre. On Tuesday, October 3d, the country rose at Horncastle, in the same manner, only on an even larger scale. On a heath in that neighbourhood there was "a great muster"; the gentlemen of the county came in, in large numbers, with "Mr. Dymmock," the sheriff, at their head. Dr. Mackarel, the Abbot of Barlings, was present, with his canons, in full armour; from the abbey came a waggon-load of victuals; oxen and sheep were driven in from the neighbourhood and a retainer of the house carried a banner, on which was worked a plough, a chalice and a host, a horn, and the five wounds of Christ.¹⁰³ The sheriff, with his brother, rode up and down the heath, giving money among the crowd; and the insurrection now gaining point, another gentleman "wrote on the field, upon his saddlebow," a series of articles, which were to form the ground of the rising.

were forced into it in fear of their lives. There were many, doubtless, of both kinds; but it seems to me as if they had all been taken by surprise. Their conduct was that of men who wished well to the rising, but believed it had exploded inopportunately.

¹⁰³ The plough was to encourage the husbandmen; the chalice and host in remembrance of the spoiling of the Church; the five wounds to the couraging of the people to fight in Christ's cause; the horn to signify the taking of Horncastle – Philip Trotter's Examination; *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 29.

Articles of the rebels' petition.

Six demands should be made upon the crown: 1. The religious houses should be restored. 2. The subsidy should be remitted. 3. The clergy should pay no more tenths and first-fruits to the crown. 4. The Statute of Uses should be repealed. 5. The villein blood should be removed from the privy council. 6. The heretic bishops, Cranmer and Latimer, Hilsey Bishop of Rochester, Brown Archbishop of Dublin, and their own Bishop Longlands the persecuting Erastian, should be deprived and punished.

Messengers are despatched to the king.

The deviser and the sheriff sate on their horses side by side, and read these articles, one by one, aloud, to the people. "Do they please you or not?" they said, when they had done. "Yea, yea, yea!" the people shouted, waving their staves above their heads; and messengers were chosen instantly and despatched upon the spot, to carry to Windsor to the king the demands of the people of Lincolnshire. Nothing was required more but that the rebellion should be cemented by a common crime; and this, too, was speedily accomplished.

The Chancellor of the Bishop of Lincoln is murdered.

The rebellion in Ireland had been inaugurated with the murder of Archbishop Allen; the insurgents of Lincolnshire found a lower victim, but they sacrificed him with the same savageness. The chancellor of Lincoln had been the instrument through whom Cromwell had communicated with the diocese, and was

a special object of hatred. It does not appear how he fell into the people's hands. We find only that "he was very sick," and in this condition he was brought up on horseback into the field at Horncastle. As he appeared he was received by "the parsons and vicars" with a loud long yell – "Kill him! kill him!" Whereupon two of the rebels, by procurement of the said parsons and vicars, pulled him violently off his horse, and, as he knelt upon his knees, with their staves they slew him," the parsons crying continually, "Kill him! kill him!"

As the body lay on the ground it was stripped bare, and the garments were parted among the murderers. The sheriff distributed the money that was in the chancellor's purse. "And every parson and every vicar in the field counselled their parishioners, with many comfortable words, to proceed in their journey, saying unto them that they should lack neither gold nor silver."¹⁰⁴ These, we presume, were Pole's seven thousand children of light who had not bowed the knee to Baal – the noble army of saints who were to flock to Charles's banners.¹⁰⁵

The same Tuesday there was a rising at Lincoln. Bishop

¹⁰⁴ Examination of Brian Staines: *Rolls House MS. A 2*, 29. In the margin of this document, pointing to the last paragraph, is an ominous finger ☞, drawn either by the king or Cromwell.

¹⁰⁵ Compare the Report of Lancaster Herald to Cromwell, *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, Vol. XIX.: "My especial good lord, so far as I have gone, I have found the most corrupted and malicious spirituality, inward and partly outward, that any prince of the world hath in his realm; and if the truth be perfectly known, it will be found that they were the greatest corrupters of the temporality, and have given the secret occasion of all this mischief."

Longlands' palace was attacked and plundered, and the town occupied by armed bodies of insurgents. By the middle of the week the whole country was in movement – beacons blazing, alarm-bells ringing; and, pending the reply of the king, Lincoln became the focus to which the separate bodies from Castre, Horncastle, Louth, and all other towns and villages, flocked in for head quarters.

The duty and the conduct of Lord Hussey of Sleaford.

The duty of repressing riots and disturbances in England lay with the nobility in their several districts. In default of organized military or police, the nobility *ex officio* were the responsible guardians of the peace. They held their estates subject to these obligations, and neglect, unless it could be shown to be involuntary, was treason. The nobleman who had to answer for the peace of Lincolnshire was Lord Hussey of Sleaford. Lord Hussey had spoken, as I have stated, in unambiguous language, of the probability and desirableness of a struggle. When the moment came, it seems as if he had desired the fruits of a Catholic victory without the danger of fighting for it, or else had been frightened and doubtful how to act. When the first news of the commotion reached him, he wrote to the mayor of Lincoln, commanding him, in the king's name, to take good care of the city; to buy up or secure the arms; to levy men; and, if he found himself unable to hold his ground, to let him know without delay.¹⁰⁶ His letter

¹⁰⁶ Lord Hussey to the Mayor of Lincoln: *Cotton. MS. Vespasian*, F 13.

fell into the hands of the insurgents; but Lord Hussey, though he must have known the fate of it, or, at least, could not have been ignorant of the state of the country, sat still at Sleaford, waiting to see how events would turn. Yeomen and gentlemen who had not joined in the rising hurried to him for directions, promising to act in whatever way he would command; but he would give no orders – he would remain passive – he would not be false to his prince – he would not be against the defenders of the faith. The volunteers who had offered their services for the crown he called “busy knaves” – “he bade them go their own way as they would;” and still uncertain, he sent messengers to the rebels to inquire their intentions. But he would not join them; he would not resist them; at length, when they threatened to end the difficulty by bringing him forcibly into their camp, he escaped secretly out of the country; while Lady Hussey, “who was supposed to know her husband’s mind,” sent provisions to a detachment of the Lincoln army.¹⁰⁷ For such conduct the commander of a division would be tried by a court-martial, with no uncertain sentence; but the extent of Hussey’s offence is best seen in contrast with the behaviour of Lord Shrewsbury, whose courage and fidelity on this occasion perhaps saved Henry’s crown.

Wednesday, Oct. 4. Lord Shrewsbury raises a force,

Friday, October 6. And entreats Lord Hussey to join him.

¹⁰⁷ *Rolls House MS.* first series, 416. *Cutler’s Confessions MS.* *ibid.* 407. Deposition of Robert Sotheby: *Ibid.* A 2, 29.

But without effect.

He takes a position at Nottingham.

The messengers sent from Horncastle were Sir Marmaduke Constable and Sir Edward Madyson. Heneage the commissioner was permitted to accompany them, perhaps to save him from being murdered by the priests. They did not spare the spur, and, riding through the night, they found the king at Windsor the day following. Henry on the instant despatched a courier to Lord Hussey, and another to Lord Shrewsbury, directing them to raise all the men whom they could muster; sending at the same time private letters to the gentlemen who were said to be with the insurgents, to recall them, if possible, to their allegiance. Lord Shrewsbury had not waited for instructions. Although his own county had not so far been disturbed, he had called out his tenantry, and had gone forward to Sherwood with every man that he could collect, on the instant that he heard of the rising. Expecting the form that it might assume, he had sent despatches on the very first day through Derbyshire, Stafford, Shropshire, Worcester, Leicester, and Northampton, to have the powers of the counties raised without a moment's delay.¹⁰⁸ Henry's letter found him at Sherwood on the 6th of October. The king he knew

¹⁰⁸ Lord Shrewsbury to the King: *MS. State Paper Office*. Letter to the king and council, Vol. V. Hollinshed tells a foolish story, that Lord Shrewsbury sued out his pardon to the king for moving without orders. As he had done nothing for which to ask pardon, so it is certain, from his correspondence with the king, that he did not ask for any. Let me take this opportunity of saying that neither Hollinshed, nor Stow, nor even Hall, nor any one of the chroniclers, can be trusted in their account of this rebellion.

had written also to Lord Hussey; but, understanding the character of this nobleman better than his master understood it, and with a foreboding of his possible disloyalty, he sent on the messenger to Sleaford with a further note from himself, entreating him at such a moment not to be found wanting to his duty. "My lord," he wrote, "for the old acquaintance between your lordship and me, as unto him that I heartily love, I will write the plainness of my mind. Ye have always been an honourable and true gentleman, and, I doubt not, will now so prove yourself. I have no commandment from the king but only to suppress the rebellion; and I assure you, my lord, on my truth, that all the king's subjects of six shires will be with me to-morrow at night, to the number of forty thousand able persons; and I trust to have your lordship to keep us company."¹⁰⁹ His exhortations were in vain; Lord Hussey made no effort; he had not the manliness to join the rising – he had not the loyalty to assist in repressing it. He stole away and left the country to its fate. His conduct, unfortunately, was imitated largely in the counties on which Lord Shrewsbury relied for reinforcements. Instead of the thirty or forty thousand men whom he expected, the royalist leader could scarcely collect three or four thousand. Ten times his number were by this time at Lincoln, and increasing every day; and ominous news at the same time reaching him of the state of Yorkshire, he found it prudent to wait at Nottingham, overawing that immediate neighbourhood till he could hear again from the king.

¹⁰⁹ *MS. State Paper Office*, first series.

Musters are raised in London.

Monday, October 9. Sir John Russell reaches Stamford.

Meanwhile Madyson and Constable had been detained in London. The immediate danger was lest the rebels should march on London before a sufficient force could be brought into the field to check them. Sir William Fitzwilliam, Sir John Russell, Cromwell's gallant nephew Richard, Sir William Parr, Sir Francis Brian, every loyal friend of the government who could be spared, scattered south and west of the metropolis calling the people on their allegiance to the king's service. The command-in-chief was given to the Duke of Suffolk. The stores in the Tower, a battery of field artillery, bows, arrows, ammunition of all kinds, were sent on in hot haste to Amptill; and so little time had been lost, that on Monday, the 9th of October, a week only from the first outbreak at Louth, Sir John Russell with the advanced guard was at Stamford, and a respectable force was following in his rear.

Alarming reports came in of the temper of the north-midland and eastern counties. The disposition of the people between Lincoln and London was said to be as bad as possible.¹¹⁰ If

¹¹⁰ "My lord: Hugh Ascue, this bearer, hath shewed me that this day a servant of Sir William Hussey's reported how that in manner, in every place by the way as his master and he came, he hath heard as well old people as young pray God to speed the rebellious persons in Lincolnshire, and wish themselves with them; saying, that if they came that way, that they shall lack nothing that they can help them unto. And the said Hugh asked what persons they were which so reported, and he said *all*; which is a thing as meseemeth greatly to be noted." – Sir William Fitzwilliam to Lord Cromwell: *MS*.

there had been delay or trifling, or if Shrewsbury had been less promptly loyal, in all likelihood the whole of England north of the Ouse would have been in a flame.

The Duke of Suffolk follows two days after.

Wednesday, October 11. The rebels begin to disperse from want of provisions.

From the south and the west, on the other hand, accounts were more reassuring; Middlesex, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, all counties where the bishops had found heaviest work in persecuting Protestants, had answered loyally to the royal summons. Volunteers flocked in, man and horse, in larger numbers than were required; on Tuesday, the 10th, Suffolk was able to close his muster rolls, and needed only adequate equipment to be at the head of a body of men as large as he could conveniently move. But he had no leisure to wait for stores. Rumours were already flying that Russell had been attacked, that he had fought and lost a battle and twenty thousand men.¹¹¹ The security against a spread of the conflagration was to trample it out upon the spot. Imperfectly furnished as he was, he reached Stamford only two days after the first division of his troops. He was obliged to pause for twenty-four hours to provide means for crossing the rivers, and halt and refresh his men. The rebels on the Monday had been reported to be from fifty to sixty

State Paper Office, second series, Vol. VI.

¹¹¹ Richard Cromwell to Lord Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, Vol. VII.

thousand strong. A lost battle would be the loss of the kingdom. It was necessary to take all precautions. But Suffolk within a few hours of his arrival at Stamford learnt that time was doing his work swiftly and surely. The insurrection, so wide and so rapid, had been an explosion of loose powder, not a judicious economy of it. The burst had been so spontaneous, there was an absence of preparation so complete, that it was embarrassed by its own magnitude. There was no forethought, no efficient leader; sixty thousand men had drifted to Lincoln and had halted there in noisy uncertainty till their way to London was interrupted. They had no commissariat: each man had brought a few days' provisions with him; and when these were gone, the multitude dissolved with the same rapidity with which it had assembled. On the Wednesday at noon, Richard Cromwell reported that the township of Boston, amounting to twelve thousand men, were gone home. In the evening of the same day five or six thousand others were said to have gone, and not more than twenty thousand at the outside were thought to remain in the camp. The young cavaliers in the royal army began to fear that there would be no battle after all.¹¹²

The king's answer to the rebels' petition.

¹¹² "Nothing we lament so much as that they thus fly; for our trust was that we should have used them like as they have deserved; and I for my part am as sorry as if I had lost five hundred pounds. For my lord admiral (Sir John Russell), he is so earnest in the matter, that I dare say he would eat them with salt." – Richard Cromwell to Lord Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*.

Suffolk could now act safely, and preparatory to his advance he sent forward the king's answer to the articles of Horncastle.

“Concerning choosing of councillors,” the king wrote, “I have never read, heard, nor known that princes' councillors and prelates should be appointed by rude and ignorant common people. How presumptuous, then, are ye, the rude commons of one shire, and that one of the most brute and beastly of the whole realm, and of least experience, to take upon you, contrary to God's law and man's law, to rule your prince whom ye are bound to obey and serve, and for no worldly cause to withstand.

The suppression of the abbeys was by act of parliament, and in consequence of their notorious vice.

“As to the suppression of religious houses and monasteries, we will that ye and all our subjects should well know that this is granted us by all the nobles, spiritual and temporal, of this our realm, and by all the commons of the same by act of parliament, and not set forth by any councillor or councillors upon their mere will and fantasy as ye falsely would persuade our realm to believe: and where ye allege that the service of God is much thereby diminished, the truth thereof is contrary, for there be none houses suppressed where God was well served, but where most vice, mischief, and abomination of living was used; and that doth well appear by their own confessions subscribed with their own hands, in the time of our visitation. And yet were suffered a great many of them, more than we by the act needed, to stand; wherein if they amend not their living we fear we have more to

answer for than for the suppression of all the rest.”

Dismissing the Act of Uses as beyond their understanding, and coming to the subsidy, —

The subsidy is granted by parliament, and shall be paid.

“Think ye,” the king said, “that we be so faint-hearted that perforce ye would compel us with your insurrection and such rebellious demeanour to remit the same? Make ye sure by occasion of this your ingratitude, unnaturalness, and unkindness to us now administered, ye give us cause which hath always been as much dedicate to your wealth as ever was king, not so much to set our study for the setting forward of the same, seeing how unkindly and untruly ye deal now with us:

Let the rebels surrender their leaders and disperse to their homes.

“Wherefore, sirs, remember your follies and traitorous demeanour, and shame not your native country of England. We charge you eftsoons that ye withdraw yourselves to your own houses every man, cause the provokers of you to this mischief to be delivered to our lieutenant’s hands or ours, and you yourselves submit yourselves to such condign punishment as we and our nobles shall think you worthy to suffer. For doubt ye not else that we will not suffer this injury at your hands unrevenged; and we pray unto Almighty God to give you grace to do your duties; and rather obediently to consent amongst you to deliver into the hands of our lieutenant a hundred persons, to be ordered according

to their demerits, than by your obstinacy and wilfulness to put yourselves, lives, wives, children, lands, goods, and chattels, besides the indignation of God, in the utter adventure of total destruction.”¹¹³

Thursday, October 12. Disputes between the gentlemen and the commons.

When the letter was brought in, the insurgent council were sitting in the chapter-house of the cathedral. The cooler-headed among the gentlemen, even those among them who on the whole sympathized in the rising, had seen by this time that success was doubtful, and that if obtained it would be attended with many inconveniences to themselves. The enclosures would go down, the cattle farms would be confiscated. The yeomen's tenures would be everywhere revised. The probability, however, was that, without concert, without discipline, without a leader, they would be destroyed in detail; their best plan would be to secure their own safety. Their prudence nearly cost them their lives.

“We, the gentlemen,” says one of them, when the letters came, thought “to read them secretly among ourselves; but as we were reading them the commons present cried that they would hear them read or else pull them from us. And therefore I read the letters openly; and because there was a little clause there which we feared would stir the commons, I did leave that clause unread, which was perceived by a canon there, and he said openly the

¹¹³ Henry VIII. to the Rebels in Lincolnshire: *State Papers*, Vol. I. p. 463, &c.

letter was falsely read, by reason whereof I was like to be slain.”¹¹⁴

The gentlemen are nearly murdered.

The assembly broke into confusion. The alarm spread that the gentlemen would betray the cause, as in fact they intended to do. The clergy and the leaders of the commons clamoured to go forward and attack Suffolk, and two hundred of the most violent went out into the cloister to consult by themselves. After a brief conference they resolved that the clergy had been right from the first: that the gentlemen were no true friends of the cause, and they had better kill them. They went back into the chapter-house, and, guarding the doors, prepared to execute their intention, when some one cried that it was wiser to leave them till the next day. They should go with them into action, and if they flinched they would kill them then. There was a debate. The two hundred went out again – again changed their minds and returned; but by this time the intended victims had escaped by a private entrance into the house of the murdered chancellor, and barricaded the door. It was now evening. The cloisters were growing dark, and the mob finally retired to the camp, swearing that they would return at daybreak.

The yeomen and villagers join the gentlemen.

The gentlemen then debated what they should do. Lincoln cathedral is a natural fortress. The main body of the insurgents lay round the bottom of the hill on which the cathedral stands;

¹¹⁴ Confession of Thos. Mayne: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 432.

the gentlemen, with their retinues, seem to have been lodged in the houses round the close, and to have been left in undisputed possession of their quarters for the night. Suffolk was known to be advancing. They determined, if possible, to cut their way to him in the morning, or else to hold out in their present position till they were relieved. Meanwhile the division in the council had extended to the camp. Alarmed by the desertions, surprised by the rapidity with which the king's troops had been collected, and with the fatal distrust of one another which forms the best security of governments from the danger of insurrection, the farmers and villagers were disposed in large numbers to follow the example of their natural leaders. The party of the squires were for peace: the party of the clergy for a battle. The former in the darkness moved off in a body and joined the party in the cathedral. There was now no longer danger. The gentry were surrounded by dependents on whom they could rely; and though still inferior in number, were better armed and disciplined than the brawling crowd of fanatics in the camp. When day broke they descended the hill, and told the people that for the present their enterprise must be relinquished. The king had said that they were misinformed on the character of his measures. It was, perhaps, true, and for the present they must wait and see. If they were deceived they might make a fresh insurrection.¹¹⁵

Friday, October 13. The Duke of Suffolk enters Lincoln.

¹¹⁵ Confession of Thos. Mayne: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 432.

They were heard in sullen silence, but they were obeyed. There was no resistance; they made their way to the king's army, and soon after the Duke of Suffolk, Sir John Russell, and Cromwell rode into Lincoln. The streets, we are told, were crowded, but no cheer saluted them, no bonnet was moved. The royalist commanders came in as conquerors after a bloodless victory, but they read in the menacing faces which frowned upon them that their work was still, perhaps, to be done.

The ringleaders are surrendered, and the commotion ceases.

For the present, however, the conflagration was extinguished. The cathedral was turned into an arsenal, fortified and garrisoned;¹¹⁶ and the suspicion and jealousy which had been raised between the spirituality and the gentlemen soon doing its work, the latter offered their services to Suffolk, and laboured to earn their pardon by their exertions for the restoration of order. The towns one by one sent in their submission. Louth made its peace by surrendering unconditionally fifteen of the original leaders of the commotion. A hundred or more were taken prisoners elsewhere, Abbot Mackarel and his canons being of the number;¹¹⁷ and Suffolk was informed that these, who were the worst offenders, being reserved for future punishment, he might declare a free pardon to all the rest "without doing unto

¹¹⁶ Henry VIII. to the Duke of Suffolk: *Ibid.* 480.

¹¹⁷ Wriothesley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, Vol. I. p. 471. Examination of the Prisoners: *Rolls House MS.*

them any hurt or damage in their goods or persons.”¹¹⁸

In less than a fortnight a rebellion of sixty thousand persons had subsided as suddenly as it had risen. Contrived by the monks and parish priests, it had been commenced without concert, it had been conducted without practical skill. The clergy had communicated to their instruments alike their fury and their incapacity.

But the insurrection in Lincolnshire was but the first shower which is the herald of the storm.

On the night of the 12th of October there was present at an inn in Lincoln, watching the issue of events, a gentleman of Yorkshire, whose name, a few weeks later, was ringing through every English household in accents of terror or admiration.

September. A party of fox-hunters at Yorkyswold.

The family of the Askes.

Our story must go back to the beginning of the month. The law vacation was drawing to its close, and younger brothers in county families who then, as now, were members of the inns of court, were returning from their holidays to London. The season had been of unusual beauty. The summer had lingered into the autumn, and during the latter half of September young Sir Ralph Ellerkar, of Ellerkar Hall in “Yorkyswold,” had been entertaining a party of friends for cub-hunting. Among his guests were his three cousins, John, Robert, and Christopher Aske. John, the

¹¹⁸ Henry VIII. to the Duke of Suffolk: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 480.

eldest, the owner of the old family property of Aughton-on-the-Derwent, a quiet, unobtrusive gentleman, with two sons, students at the Temple: Robert, of whom, till he now emerges into light, we discover only that he was a barrister in good practice at Westminster; and Christopher, the possessor of an estate in Marshland in the West Riding. The Askes were highly connected, being cousins of the Earl of Cumberland,¹¹⁹ whose eldest son, Lord Clifford, had recently married a daughter of the Duke of Suffolk, and niece therefore of the king.¹²⁰

October 3. Robert Aske's going to London is stopped by the rebels in Lincolnshire.

October 4. He takes the command.

Crosses back into Yorkshire,

The hunting-party broke up on the 3d of October, and Robert, if his own account of himself was true, left Ellerkar with no other intention than of going direct to London to his business. His route lay across the Humber at Welton, and when in the ferry he heard from the boatmen that the commons were up in Lincolnshire. He wished to return, but the state of the tide would not allow him; he then endeavoured to make his way by by-roads and bridle-paths to the house of a brother-in-law at Sawcliffe; but he was met somewhere near Appleby by a party of the rebels. They demanded who he was, and on his replying, they

¹¹⁹ "The captain and the Earl of Cumberland came of two sisters." – Lord Darcy to Somerset Herald: *Rolls House MS.*

¹²⁰ *State Papers*, Vol. I. p. 523.

offered him the popular oath. It is hard to believe that he was altogether taken by surprise; a man of so remarkable powers as he afterwards exhibited could not have been wholly ignorant of the condition of the country, and if his loyalty had been previously sound he would not have thrown himself into the rising with such deliberate energy. The people by whom he was "taken," as he designated what had befallen him,¹²¹ became his body-guard to Sawcliffe. He must have been well known in the district. His brother's property lay but a few miles distant, across the Trent, and as soon as the news spread that he was among the rebels, his name was made a rallying cry. The command of the district was assigned to him from the Humber to Kirton, and for the next few days he remained endeavouring to organize the movement into some kind of form; but he was doubtful of the prospects of the rebellion, and doubtful of his own conduct. The commons of the West Riding beginning to stir, he crossed into Marshland; he passed the Ouse into Howdenshire, going from village to village, and giving orders that no bells should be rung, no beacon should be lighted, except on the receipt of a special message from himself.

And again returns into Lincolnshire.

October 12. And is at Lincoln when Suffolk enters.

Leaving his own county, he again hastened back to his command in Lincolnshire; and by this time he heard of Suffolk's

¹²¹ Manner of the taking of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

advance with the king's answer to the petition. He rode post to Lincoln, and reached the town to find the commons and the gentlemen on the verge of fighting among themselves. He endeavoured to make his way into the cathedral close, but finding himself suspected by the commons, and being told that he would be murdered if he persevered, he remained in concealment till Suffolk had made known the intentions of the government; then, perhaps satisfied that the opportunity was past, perhaps believing that if not made use of on the instant it might never recur, perhaps resigning himself to be guided by events, he went back at full speed to Yorkshire.

And events had decided: whatever his intentions may have been, the choice was no longer open to him.

October 13. The beacons lighted in Yorkshire.

As he rode down at midnight to the bank of the Humber, the clash of the alarm-bells came pealing far over the water. From hill to hill, from church-tower to church-tower, the warning lights were shooting. The fishermen on the German Ocean watched them flickering in the darkness from Spurnhead to Scarborough, from Scarborough to Berwick-upon-Tweed. They streamed westward, over the long marshes across Spalding Moor; up the Ouse and the Wharf, to the watershed where the rivers flow into the Irish Sea. The mountains of Westmoreland sent on the message to Kendal, to Cockermouth, to Penrith, to Carlisle; and for days and nights there was one loud storm of bells and blaze of beacons from the Trent to the Cheviot Hills.

October 9. An address bearing Aske's signature invites the commons of Yorkshire to rise.

All Yorkshire was in movement. Strangely, too, as Aske assures us, he found himself the object of an unsought distinction. His own name was the watchword which every tongue was crying. In his absence an address had gone out around the towns, had been hung on church-doors, and posted on market crosses, which bore his signature, though, as he protested, it was neither written by himself nor with his consent.¹²² Ill composed, but with a rugged eloquence, it called upon all good Englishmen to make a stand for the Church of Christ, which wicked men were destroying, for the commonwealth of the realm, and for their own livings, which were stolen from them by impositions. For those who would join it should be well; those who refused to join, or dared to resist, should be under Christ's curse, and be held guilty of all the Christian blood which should be shed.

Whoever wrote the letter, it did its work. One scene out of many will illustrate the effect.

Scene at Beverley.

October 8. Priests, women, and families.

¹²² "There was a letter forged in my name to certain towns, which I utterly deny to be my deed or consent." – Narrative of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS. A 2*, 28. This is apparently the letter which is printed in the *State Papers*, Vol. I. p. 467. It was issued on the 7th or 8th of October (see Stapleton's Confession: *Rolls House MS. A 2*, 28), the days on which, according to Aske's own confession, he seems to have been in the West Riding.

William Stapleton made captain of Beverley.

William Stapleton, a friend of Aske, and a brother barrister, also bound to London for the term, was spending a few days at the Grey Friars at Beverley, with his brother Christopher. The latter had been out of health, and had gone thither for change of air with his wife. The young lawyer was to have set out over the Humber on the 4th of October. At three in the morning his servant woke him, with the news that the Lincolnshire beacons were on fire, and the country was impassable. Beverley itself was in the greatest excitement; the sick brother was afraid to be left alone, and William Stapleton agreed for the present to remain and take care of him. On Sunday morning they were startled by the sound of the alarm-bell. A servant who was sent out to learn what had happened, brought in word that an address had arrived from Robert Aske, and that a proclamation was out, under the town seal, calling on every man to repair to Westwood Green, under the walls of the Grey Friars, and be sworn in to the commons.¹²³ Christopher Stapleton, a sensible man, made somewhat timid by illness, ordered all doors to be locked and bolted, and gave directions that no one of his household should stir. His wife, a hater of Protestants, an admirer of Queen Catherine, of the Pope, and the old religion, was burning with

¹²³ The oath varied a little in form. In Yorkshire the usual form was, “Ye shall swear to be true to God, the king, and the commonwealth.” – Aske’s Narrative: *Rolls House MS*. The tendency of the English to bind themselves with oaths, explains and partly justifies the various oaths required by the government.

sympathy for the insurgents. The family confessor appeared on the scene, a certain Father Bonaventure, taking the lady's part, and they two together "went forth out of the door among the crowd." – "God's blessing on ye," William Stapleton heard his sister-in-law cry. – "Speed ye well," the priest cried; "speed ye well in your godly purposes." The people rushed about them. "Where are your husband and his brother?" they shouted to her. "In the Freers," she answered. "Bring them out!" the cry rose. "Pull them out by the head; or we will burn the Freers and them within it." Back flew the lady in haste, and perhaps in scorn, to urge forward her hesitating lord – he wailing, wringing his hands, wishing himself out of the world; she exclaiming it was God's quarrel – let him rise and show himself a man. The dispute lingered; the crowd grew impatient; the doors were dashed in; they rushed into the hall, and thrust the oath down the throat of the reluctant gentleman, and as they surged back they swept the brother out with them upon the green. Five hundred voices were crying, "Captains! captains!" and presently a shout rose above the rest, "Master William Stapleton shall be our captain!" And so it was to be: the priest Bonaventure had willed it so; and Stapleton, seeing worse would follow if he refused, consented.

It was like a contagion of madness – instantly he was wild like the rest. "Forward!" was the cry – whither, who knew or cared? only "Forward!" and as the multitude rocked to and fro, a splashed rider spurred through the streets, "like a

man distraught,"¹²⁴ eyes staring, hair streaming, shouting, as he passed, that they should rise and follow, and flashing away like a meteor.

So went Sunday at Beverley, the 8th of October, 1536; and within a few days the substance of the same scene repeated itself in all the towns of all the northern counties, the accidents only varying. The same spirit was abroad as in Lincolnshire; but here were strong heads and strong wills, which could turn the wild humour to a purpose, – men who had foreseen the catastrophe, and were prepared to use it.

Lord Darcy of Templehurst a known opponent of the Reformation.

Lord Darcy of Templehurst was among the most distinguished of the conservative nobility. He was an old man. He had won his spurs under Henry VII. He had fought against the Moors by the side of Ferdinand, and he had earned laurels in the wars in France against Louis XII. Strong in his military reputation, in his rank, and in his age, he had spoken in parliament against the separation from the see of Rome; and though sworn like the rest of the peers to obey the law, he had openly avowed the reluctance of his assent – he had secretly maintained a correspondence with the Imperial court.

The king's letter to Lord Darcy.

The king, who respected a frank opposition, and had no

¹²⁴ Deposition of William Stapleton: *Rolls House MS.*

suspicion of anything beyond what was open, continued his confidence in a man whom he regarded as a tried friend; and Darcy, from his credit with the crown, his rank and his position, was at this moment the feudal sovereign of the East Riding. To him Henry wrote on the first news of the commotion in Lincolnshire, when he wrote to Lord Hussey and Lord Shrewsbury, but, entering into fuller detail, warning him of the falsehoods which had been circulated to excite the people, and condescending to inform him “that he had never thought to take one pennyworth of the parish churches’ goods from them.” He desired Lord Darcy to let the truth be known, meantime he assured him that there was no cause for alarm, “one true man was worth twenty thieves and traitors,” and all true men he doubted not would do their duty in suppressing the insurrection.¹²⁵

This letter was written on the same 8th of October on which the scenes which I have described took place at Beverley. Five days later the king had found reason to change his opinion of Lord Darcy.

Lord Darcy will not be in too great haste to check the rebellion.

He will raise no musters,
And shuts himself up in Pomfret Castle without provisions.

To him, as to Lord Hussey, the outbreak at this especial crisis appeared inopportune. The Emperor had just suffered

¹²⁵ Henry VIII. to Lord Darcy, October 8th: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 282.

a heavy reverse in France, and there was no prospect at that moment of assistance either from Flanders or Spain... A fair occasion had been lost in the preceding winter – another had not yet arisen... The conservative English were, however, strong in themselves, and might be equal to the work if they were not crushed prematurely; he resolved to secure them time by his own inaction... On the first symptoms of uneasiness he sent his son, Sir Arthur Darcy, to Lord Shrewsbury, who was then at Nottingham. Young Darcy, after reporting as to the state of the country, was to go on to Windsor with a letter to the king. Sharing, however, in none of his father's opinions, he caught fire in the stir of Shrewsbury's camp; – he preferred to remain where he was, and, sending the letter by another hand, he wrote to Templehurst for arms and men. Lord Darcy had no intention that his banner should be seen in the field against the insurgents. Unable to dispose of Sir Arthur as he had intended, he replied that he had changed his mind; he must return to him at his best speed; for the present, he said, he had himself raised no men, nor did he intend to raise any: he had put out a proclamation with which he trusted the people might be quieted.¹²⁶ The manœuvre answered well. Lord Shrewsbury was held in check by insurrections on either side of him, and could move neither on Yorkshire nor Lincolnshire. The rebels were buying up every bow, pike, and arrow in the country; and Lord Darcy now shut himself up with no more than twelve of his

¹²⁶ Letters to and from Lord Darcy: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 282.

followers in Pomfret Castle, without arms, without fuel, without provisions. and taking no effectual steps to secure either the one or the other. In defence of his conduct he stated afterwards that his convoys had been intercepted. An experienced military commander who could have called a thousand men under arms by a word, could have introduced a few waggon-loads of corn and beer, had such been his wish. He was taking precautions (it is more likely) to enable him to yield gracefully to necessity should necessity arise. The conflagration now spread swiftly. Every one who was disposed to be loyal looked to Darcy for orders. The Earl of Cumberland wrote to him from Skipton Castle, Sir Brian Hastings the sheriff, Sir Richard Tempest, and many others. They would raise their men, they said, and either join him at Pomfret, or at whatever place he chose to direct. But Darcy would do nothing, and would allow nothing to be done. He replied that he had no commission and could give no instructions. The king had twice written to him, but had sent no special directions, and he would not act without them.¹²⁷

The organization of the rebellion.

Lord Darcy played skilfully into the rebels' hands. The rebels made admirable use of their opportunity. With method in their madness, the townships everywhere organized themselves. Instead of marching in unwieldy tumultuous bodies, they picked

¹²⁷ Henry had written him a second letter on the 9th of October, in which, knowing nothing as yet of the rising in Yorkshire, he had expressed merely a continued confidence in Darcy's discretion.

their “tallest and strongest” men; they armed and equipped them; and, raising money by a rate from house to house, they sent them out with a month’s wages in their pockets, and a promise of a continuance should their services be prolonged. The day after his return from Lincoln, Aske found himself at the head of an army of horse and foot, furnished admirably at all points. They were grouped in companies by their parishes, and for colours, the crosses of the churches were borne by the priests.

Aske is chosen commander-in-chief.

Stapleton summons Hull.

The first great rendezvous in Yorkshire was on Weighton common. Here Stapleton came in with nine thousand men from Beverley and Holderness. The two divisions encamped upon the heath, and Aske became acknowledged as the commander of the entire force. Couriers brought in news from all parts of the country. Sir Ralph Evers and Sir George Conyers were reputed to have taken refuge in Scarborough. Sir Ralph Ellerkar the elder, and Sir John Constable were holding Hull for the king. These places must at once be seized. Stapleton rode down from Weighton to Hull gate, and summoned the town. The mayor was for yielding at once; he had no men, he said, no meat, no money, no horse or harness, – resistance was impossible. Ellerkar and Constable, however, would not hear of surrender. Constable replied that he would rather die with honesty than live with shame; and Stapleton carrying back this answer to Aske, it was agreed that the former should lay siege to Hull upon the spot,

while the main body of the army moved forward upon York.¹²⁸

Skirting parties meantime scoured the country far and near. They surrounded the castles and houses, and called on every lord, knight, and gentleman to mount his horse, with his servants, and join them, or they would leave neither corn-stack in their yards nor cattle in their sheds, and would burn their roofs over their heads.

The Percies join the insurgents.

Aske himself was present everywhere, or some counterfeit who bore his name. It seemed “there were six Richmonds in the field.” The Earl of Northumberland lay sick at Wressill Castle. From the day of Anne Boleyn’s trial he had sunk, and now was dying. His failing spirit was disturbed by the news that Aske was at his gates, and that an armed host were shouting “thousands for a Percy!” If the earl could not come, the rebels said, then his brothers must come – Sir Thomas and Sir Ingram. And then, with side-glances, we catch sight of Sir Ingram Percy swearing in the commons, and stirring the country at Alnwick: “using such malicious words as were abominable to hear; wishing that he might thrust his sword into the Lord Cromwell’s belly; wishing the Lord Cromwell were hanged on high, and he standing by to see it.” And again we see the old Countess of Northumberland at her house at Semar, “sore weeping and lamenting” over her children’s disloyalty; Sir Thomas Percy listening, half moved, to

¹²⁸ Stapleton’s Confession: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

her entreaties; for a moment pausing uncertain, then borne away by the contagion, and a few hours later flaunting, with gay plumes and gorgeous armour, in the rebel host.¹²⁹

Aske marches on York.

York surrenders.

The monks and nuns who had been dispossessed invited to return to their houses.

On Sunday, October the 15th, the main army crossed the Derwent, moving direct for York. On Monday they were before the gates. The citizens were all in the interest of the rebellion; and the mayor was allowed only to take precautions for the security of property and life. The engagements which he exacted from Aske, and which were punctually observed, speak well for the discipline of the insurgents. No pillage was to be permitted, or injury of any kind. The prices which were to be paid for victuals and horse-meat were published in the camp by proclamation. The infantry, as composed of the most dangerous materials, were to remain in the field. On these terms the gates were opened, and Aske, with the horse, rode in and took possession.¹³⁰ His first act, on entering the city, was to fix a proclamation on the doors of the cathedral, inviting all monks and nuns dispossessed from their houses to report their names and conditions, with a view to their

¹²⁹ Examination of Sir Thomas Percy: *Rolls House MS*. Demeanour of Sir Thomas and Sir Ingram Percy: *MS. ibid.* first series, 896.

¹³⁰ "The said Aske suffered no foot man to enter the city, for fear of spoils." – Manner of the taking of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS*. A 2, 28.

immediate restoration. Work is done rapidly by willing hands, in the midst of a willing people. In the week which followed, by a common impulse, the king's tenants were universally expelled. The vacant dormitories were again peopled; the refectories were again filled with exulting faces. "Though it were never so late when they returned, the friars sang matins the same night."¹³¹

Lord Darcy sends to Aske to inquire the meaning of the insurrection.

Orders were next issued in Aske's name, commanding all lords, knights, and gentlemen in the northern counties to repair to his presence; and now, at last, Lord Darcy believed that the time was come when he might commit himself with safety; or rather, since the secrets of men's minds must not be lightly conjectured, he must be heard first in his own defence, and afterwards his actions must speak for him. On the night of the surrender of York he sent his steward from Pomfret, with a request for a copy of the oath and of the articles of the rising, promising, if they pleased him, to join the confederacy. The Archbishop of York, Dr. Magnus, an old diplomatic servant of the crown, Sir Robert Constable, Lord Neville, and Sir Nicholas Babthorpe, were by this time with him in the castle. His own compliance would involve the compliance of these, and would partially involve their sanction.

He apologizes to the king, and professes inability to help

¹³¹ Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office*, second series, Vol. III.

himself.

Lord Shrewsbury promises to relieve him,
But Aske advances,
Thursday, October 19.

On the morning of the 16th or 17th he received a third letter from the king, written now in grave displeasure: the truth had not been told; the king had heard, to his surprise, that Lord Darcy, instead of raising a force and taking the field, had shut himself up, with no more than twelve servants, in Pomfret; “If this be so,” he said, “it is negligently passed.”¹³² Lord Darcy excused himself by replying that he was not to blame; that he had done his best; but there were sixty thousand men in arms, forty thousand in harness. They took what they pleased – horses, plate, and cattle; the whole population was with them; he could not trust his own retainers; and, preparing the king for what he was next to hear, he informed him that Pomfret itself was defenceless. “The town,” he said, “nor any other town, will not victual us for our money; and of such provision as we ourselves have made, the commons do stop the passage so straitly, that no victual can come to us; the castle is in danger to be taken, or we to lose our lives.”¹³³ The defence may have been partially true. It may have been merely plausible. At all events, it was necessary for him to come to some swift resolution. The occupation of Lincoln by the Duke of Suffolk had set Lord Shrewsbury at liberty; arms

¹³² Henry VIII. to Lord Darcy, October 13: *Rolls House MS.*

¹³³ Lord Darcy to the King, October 17: *Rolls House MS.*

had been sent down, and money; and the midland counties, in recovered confidence, had furnished recruits, though in limited numbers. He was now at Newark, in a condition to advance; and on the same 17th of October, on which this despairing letter was written, he sent forward a post to Pomfret, telling Darcy to hold his ground, and that he would join him at the earliest moment possible.¹³⁴ Neither the rebels nor Shrewsbury could afford to lose so important a position; and both made haste. Again, on the same Tuesday, the 17th, couriers brought news to Aske, at York, that the commons of Durham were hastening to join him, bringing with them Lord Latimer, Lord Lumley, and the Earl of Westmoreland. Being thus secure in his rear, the rebel leader carried his answer to Lord Darcy in person, at the head of his forces. He reached Pomfret on the afternoon of Thursday, the 19th; finding the town on his side, and knowing or suspecting Darcy's disposition, he sent in a message that the castle must be delivered, or it should be immediately stormed. A conference was demanded and agreed to. Hostages were sent in by Aske. Lord Darcy, the archbishop, and the other noblemen and gentlemen, came out before the gate.

Declares the intentions of the people,

“And there and then the said Aske declared unto the said lords spiritual and temporal the griefs of the commons; and how first the lords spiritual had not done their duty, in that they had

¹³⁴ Lord Shrewsbury to Lord Darcy: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 282. Darcy certainly received this letter, since a copy of it is in the collection made by himself.

not been plain with the King's Highness for the speedy remedy and punishing of heresy, and the preachers thereof; and for the taking the ornaments of the churches and abbeys suppressed, and the violating of relics by the suppressors; the irreverent demeanour of the doers thereof; the abuse of the vestments taken extraordinary; and other their negligences in doing their duty, as well to their sovereign as to the commons.

“And to the lords temporal the said Aske declared that they had misused themselves, in that they had not prudently declared to his Highness the poverty of his realm, whereby all dangers might have been avoided; for insomuch as in the north parts much of the relief of the commons was by favour of abbeys; and that before this last statute made the King's Highness had no money out of that shire in award yearly, for that his Grace's revenues of them went to the finding of Berwick; now the property of abbeys suppressed, tenths, and first-fruits, went out of those parts; by occasion whereof, within short space of years, there should no money nor treasure then be left, neither the tenant have to pay his yearly rent to his lord, nor the lord have money to do the king service. In those parts were neither the presence of his Grace, execution of his laws, nor yet but little recourse of merchandize; and of necessity the said country should either perish with skaith, or of very poverty make commotion or rebellion: and the lords knew the same to be true, and had not done their duty, for they had not declared the said poverty of the said country to the King's

Highness.”¹³⁵

And threatens to storm the castle.

Friday, October 20. Lord Darcy surrenders.

“There were divers reasonings on both parts.” Darcy asked for time; if not relieved, he said he would surrender on Saturday; but Aske, to whom Shrewsbury’s position and intentions were well known, and who was informed privately that the few men who were in the castle would perhaps offer no resistance to an attack, “would not condescend thereto.” He allowed Lord Darcy till eight o’clock the following morning, and no longer. The night passed. At the hour appointed, fresh delay was demanded, but with a certainty that it would not be allowed; and the alternative being an immediate storm, the drawbridge was lowered – Pomfret Castle was in possession of the rebels, and Lord Darcy, the Archbishop of York, and every other man within the walls, high and low, were sworn to the common oath.

The extent of deliberate treachery on the part of Darcy may remain uncertain. The objects of the insurrection were cordially approved by him. It is not impossible that, when the moment came, he could not resign his loyalty without a struggle. But he had taken no precautions to avert the catastrophe, if he had not consciously encouraged its approach; he saw it coming, and he waited in the most unfavourable position to be overwhelmed; and when the step was once taken, beyond any question he welcomed

¹³⁵ Manner of the taking of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

the excuse to his conscience, and passed instantly to the front rank as among the chiefs of the enterprise.¹³⁶

The afternoon of the surrender the insurgent leaders were sitting at dinner at the great table in the hall. A letter was brought in and given to Lord Darcy. He read it, dropped it on the cloth, and “suddenly gave a great sigh.” Aske, who was sitting opposite to him, stretched his hand for the paper across the board. It was brief, and carried no signature: Lord Shrewsbury, the writer merely said, would be at Pomfret the same night.¹³⁷

The rebels secure the passages of the Don.

The sigh may be easily construed; but if it was a symptom of repentance, Darcy showed no other. A council of war was held when the dinner was over; and bringing his military knowledge into use, he pointed out the dangerous spots, he marked the lines of defence, and told off the commanders to their posts. Before night all the passages of the Don by which Shrewsbury could advance were secured.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ I believe that I am unnecessarily tender to Lord Darcy’s reputation. Aske, though he afterwards contradicted himself, stated in his examination that Lord Darcy could have defended the castle had he wished. — *Rolls House MS.*, A 2, 29. It was sworn that when he was advised “to victual and store Pomfret,” he said, “there was no need; it would do as it was.” *Ibid.* And Sir Henry Saville stated that “when Darcy heard of the first rising, he said, ‘Ah! they are up in Lincolnshire. God speed them well. I would they had done this three years ago, for the world should have been the better for it.’” — *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Aske’s Deposition: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 414.

¹³⁸ Examination of Sir Thomas Percy: *Rolls House MS.*

Siege of Hull.

Leaving Pomfret, we turn for a moment to Hull, where Stapleton also had accomplished his work expeditiously. On the same day on which he separated from Aske he had taken a position on the north of the town. There was a private feud between Beverley and Hull. His men were unruly, and eager for spoil; and the harbour being full of shipping, it was with difficulty that he prevented them from sending down blazing pitch-barrels with the tide into the midst of it, and storming the walls in the smoke and confusion. Stapleton, however, was a resolute man; he was determined that the cause should not be disgraced by outrage, and he enforced discipline by an act of salutary severity. Two of the most unmanageable of his followers were tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be executed. "A Friar," Stapleton says, "was assigned to them, that they might make them clean to God," and they expected nothing but death. But the object so far was only to terrify. One of them, "a sanctuary man," was tied by the waist with a rope, and trailed behind a boat up and down the river, and "the waterman did at several times put him down with the oar under the head." The other seeing him, thought also to be so handled; "howbeit, at the request of honest men, and being a housekeeper, he was suffered to go unpunished, and both were banished the host; after which there was never spoil more."¹³⁹

Hull surrenders.

¹³⁹ Stapleton's Confession: Ibid. A 2, 28.

In the town there was mere despondency, and each day made defence more difficult. Reinforcements were thronging into the rebels' camp; the harbour was at their mercy. Constable was for holding out to the last, and then cutting his way through. Ellerkar would agree to surrender if he and his friend might be spared the oath and might leave the county. These terms were accepted, and on Friday Stapleton occupied Hull.

Skipton Castle holds out for the king.

So it went over the whole north; scarcely one blow was struck any where. The whole population were swept along in the general current, and Skipton Castle alone in Yorkshire now held out for the crown.

With the defence of this place is connected an act of romantic heroism which deserves to be remembered.

Robert Aske, as we have seen, had two brothers, Christopher and John. In the hot struggle the ties of blood were of little moment, and when the West Riding rose, and they had to choose the part which they would take, "they determined rather to be hewn in gobbets than stain their allegiance." Being gallant gentlemen, instead of flying the county, they made their way with forty of their retainers to their cousin the Earl of Cumberland, and with him threw themselves into Skipton. The aid came in good time; for the day after their arrival the earl's whole retinue rode off in a body to the rebels, leaving him but a mixed household of some eighty people to garrison the castle. They were soon surrounded; but being well provisioned, and

behind strong stone walls, they held the rebels at bay, and but for an unfortunate accident they could have faced the danger with cheerfulness. But unhappily the earl's family were in the heart of the danger.

Christopher Aske saves Lady Eleanor Clifford from outrage.

Lady Eleanor Clifford, Lord Clifford's young wife, with three little children and several other ladies, were staying, when the insurrection burst out, at Bolton Abbey. Perhaps they had taken sanctuary there; or possibly they were on a visit, and were cut off by the suddenness of the rising. There, however, ten miles off among the glens and hills, the ladies were, and on the third day of the siege notice was sent to the earl that they should be held as hostages for his submission. The insurgents threatened that the day following Lady Eleanor and her infant son and daughters should be brought up in front of a storming party, and if the attack again failed, they would "violate all the ladies, and enforce them with knaves" under the walls.¹⁴⁰ After the ferocious murder of the Bishop of Lincoln's chancellor, no villany was impossible; and it is likely that the Catholic rebellion would have been soiled by as deep an infamy as can be found in the English annals but for the adventurous courage of Christopher Aske. In the dead of the night, with the vicar of Skipton, a groom, and a boy, he stole through the camp of the besiegers. He crossed the moors,

¹⁴⁰ Examination of Christopher Aske: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 840

with led horses, by unfrequented paths, and he “drew such a draught”, he says, that he conveyed all the said ladies through the commons in safety, “so close and clean, that the same was never mistrusted nor perceived till they were within the castle;”¹⁴¹ a noble exploit, shining on the by-paths of history like a rare rich flower. Proudly the little garrison looked down, when day dawned, from the battlements, upon the fierce multitude who were howling below in baffled rage. A few days later, as if in scorn of their impotence, the same gallant gentleman flung open the gates, dropped the drawbridge, and rode down in full armour, with his train, to the market-cross at Skipton, and there, after three long “Oyez’s,” he read aloud the king’s proclamation in the midst of the crowd ... “with leisure enough,” he adds, in his disdainful way ... “and that done, he returned to the castle.”

The Duke of Norfolk goes down to the north to support Shrewsbury.

The government are in want of money.

October 24.

While the north was thus in full commotion, the government were straining every nerve to meet the emergency. The king had at first intended to repair in person to Lincolnshire. He had changed his mind when he heard of Suffolk’s rapid success.¹⁴² But Yorkshire seemed again to require his presence. The levies which had been sent for from the southern counties had been

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Henry VIII. to the Duke of Suffolk: *Rolls House MS.*

countermanded, but were recalled within a few hours of the first order. "The matter hung like a fever, now hot, now cold." Rumours took the place of intelligence. Each post contradicted the last, and for several days there was no certain news, either of the form or the extent of the danger. Lord Shrewsbury wrote that he had thrown his outposts forwards to the Don; but he doubted his ability to prevent the passage of the river, which he feared the rebels would attempt. He was still underhanded, and entreated assistance. The Earls of Rutland and Huntingdon were preparing to join him; but the reinforcement which they would bring was altogether inadequate, and the Duke of Norfolk and the Marquis of Exeter were sent down to add the weight of their names; their men should follow as they could be raised. Cromwell was collecting money in London. The subsidy had not been paid in; large sums belonging to the crown had fallen into the hands of Aske at York, and the treasury was empty. But "benevolences" were extorted from the wealthy London clergy: "they could not help in their persons," the king said, and "they must show their good will, if they had any," in another way.¹⁴³ Loans could be borrowed, besides, in the City; the royal plate could go to the Mint; the crown jewels, if necessary, could be sold. Henry, more than any of the council, now comprehended the danger. "His Majesty," wrote his secretary on the 18th of October, "appeareth to fear much this matter, specially if he should want money, for in Lord Darcy, his Grace said, he had no great hope." Ten thousand

¹⁴³ Wriothesley to Cromwell: *State Papers*, Vol. I. p. 472.

pounds were raised in two days. It was but a small instalment; but it served to “stop the gap” for the moment. Three thousand men, with six pieces of field artillery, were sent at once after Norfolk, and overtook him on the 24th of October at Worksop.

Norfolk and Shrewsbury advance to Doncaster,
Weak in numbers, and doubtful of their followers’
fidelity,

Henry urges Norfolk to be cautious.

In case of real danger he shall fall back on the Trent,
where the king will join him;

Norfolk, it was clear, had gone upon the service most reluctantly. He, too, had deeper sympathy with the movement than he cared to avow; but, even from those very sympathies, he was the fittest person to be chosen to suppress it. The rebels professed to have risen in defence of the nobility and the Catholic faith. They would have to fight their way through an army led by the natural head of the party which they desired to serve.¹⁴⁴ The force under Shrewsbury was now at Doncaster, where, on the 25th, the Duke joined him. The town was in their hands, and the southern end of the bridge had been fortified. The autumn rains had by this time raised the river, securing their flank, and it would have been difficult for an attacking army to force a passage, even with great advantage of numbers. Their situation,

¹⁴⁴ The Marquis of Exeter, who was joined in commission with the Duke of Norfolk, never passed Newark. He seems to have been recalled, and sent down into Devonshire, to raise the musters in his own county.

at the same time, was most precarious; of the forty thousand men, of whom Shrewsbury had written to Lord Hussey, he had not been able to raise a tenth; and, if rumour was to be believed, the loyalty of the few who were with him would not bear too severe a strain. With Norfolk's reinforcements, the whole army did not, perhaps, exceed eight thousand men, while even these were divided; detachments were scattered up the river to watch and guard the few points at which it might be passed. Under such circumstances the conduct which might be necessary could only be determined on the spot; and the king, in his instructions, left a wide margin of discretion to the generals.¹⁴⁵ He had summoned the whole force of the south and west of England to join him in London, and he intended to appear himself at their head. He directed Norfolk, therefore, to observe the greatest caution; by all means to avoid a battle, unless with a certainty of victory; and "the chances of war being so uncertain," he said, "many times devices meant for the best purpose turning to evil happs and notable misfortunes," he advised that rather than there should be any risk incurred, the duke should fall back on the line of the Trent, fortify Newark and Nottingham, and wait on his own arrival; "until," to use the king's own words, "with our army royal, which we do put in readiness, we shall repair unto you, and so with God's help be able to bear down the traitors before us; yourselves having more regard to the defence of us and of your natural country than to any dishonour that might be spoken of

¹⁴⁵ *State Papers*, Vol. I. p. 493.

such retirement, which in the end shall prove more honourable than with a little hasty forwardness to jeopard both our honour and your lives.” “For we assure you,” he said “we would neither adventure you our cousin of Norfolk, nor you our cousin of Shrewsbury, or other our good and true subjects, in such sort as there should be a likelihood of wilful casting of any of you away for all the lands and dominion we have on that side Trent.”

The Duke of Norfolk, on his way down, had written from Welbeck, “all desperately.” By any means fair or foul, he had said that he would crush the rebels; “he would esteem no promise that he would make to them, nor think his honour touched in the breach of the same.”¹⁴⁶

And he must be careful to make no promises which cannot afterwards be observed.

To this Henry replied, “Albeit we certainly know that ye will pretermitt none occasion wherein by policy or otherwise ye may damage our enemies, we doubt not, again, but in all your proceedings you will have such a temperance as our honour specially shall remain untouched, and yours rather increased, than by the certain grant of that you cannot certainly promise, appear in the mouths of the worst men anything defaced.” Finally, he concluded, “Whereas you desire us, in case any mischance should happen unto you, to be good lord unto your children, surely, good cousin, albeit we trust certainly in God that

¹⁴⁶ *State Papers*, Vol. I. p. 519.

no such thing shall fortune, yet we would you should perfectly know that if God should take you out of this transitory life before us, we should not fail so to remember your children, being your lively images, and in such wise to look on them with our princely favour as others by their example should not be discouraged to follow your steps.”¹⁴⁷

Saturday, October 21.

Lancaster Herald is sent to Pomfret.

Lord Shrewsbury, as soon as he found himself too late to prevent the capture of Pomfret, sent forward Lancaster Herald with a royal proclamation, and with directions that it should be read at the market cross.¹⁴⁸ The herald started on his perilous adventure “in his king’s coat of arms.” As he approached Pomfret he overtook crowds of the country people upon the road, who in answer to his questions told him that they were in arms to defend Holy Church, which wicked men were destroying. They

¹⁴⁷ *State Papers*, Vol. I. p. 495.

¹⁴⁸ This particular proclamation – the same, apparently, which was read by Christopher Aske at Skipton – I have been unable to find. That which is printed in the *State Papers* from the Rolls House Records, belongs to the following month. The contents of the first, however, may be gathered from a description of it by Robert Aske, and a comparison of the companion proclamation issued in Lincolnshire. It stated briefly that the insurrection was caused by forged stories; that the king had no thought of suppressing parish churches, or taxing food or cattle. The abbeys had been dissolved by act of parliament, in consequence of their notorious vice and profligacy. The people, therefore, were commanded to return to their homes, at their peril. The commotion in Lincolnshire was put down. The king was advancing in person to put them down also, if they continued disobedient.

and their cattle too, their burials and their weddings, were to be taxed, and they would not endure it. He informed them that they were all imposed upon. Neither the king nor the council had ever thought of any such measures; and the people, he said, seemed ready to listen, "being weary of their lives." Lies, happily, are canker-worms, and spoil all causes, good or bad, which admit their company, as those who had spread these stories discovered to their cost when the truth became generally known.

Lancaster Herald, however, could do little; he found the town swarming with armed men, eager and furious. He was arrested before he was able to unroll his parchment, and presently a message from the castle summoned him to appear before "the great captain."

He is introduced into the castle,

"As I entered into the first ward," he said, "there I found many in harness, very cruel fellows, and a porter with a white staff in his hand; and at the two other ward gates a porter with his staff, accompanied with harnessed men. I was brought into the hall, which I found full of people; and there I was commanded to tarry till the traitorous captain's pleasure was known. In that space I stood up at the high table in the hall, and there shewed to the people the cause of my coming and the effect of the proclamation; and in doing the same the said Aske sent for me into his chamber, there keeping his port and countenance as though he had been a great prince."

Where he has an interview with Aske.

The Archbishop of York, Lord Darcy, Sir Robert Constable, Mr. Magnus, Sir Christopher Danby, and several other gentlemen were in the room. As the herald entered, Aske rose, and, “with a cruel and inestimable proud countenance, stretched himself and took the hearing of the tale.” When it was declared to him, he requested to see the proclamation, took it, and read it openly without reverence to any person; he then said he need call no council, he would give an answer of his own wit himself.

“Standing in the highest place in the chamber, taking the high estate upon him, ‘Herald,’ he replied, ‘as a messenger you are welcome to me and all my company, intending as I do. And as for the proclamation sent from the lords from whom you come, it shall not be read at the market cross,¹⁴⁹ nor in no place amongst my people which be under my guiding.’”

Aske will go to London and restore the faith of Christ.

He spoke of his intentions; the herald enquired what they were. He said “he would go to London, he and his company, of pilgrimage to the King’s Highness, and there to have all the vile blood of his council put from him, and all the noble blood set up again; and also the faith of Christ and his laws to be kept, and full

¹⁴⁹ In explanation of his refusal, Aske said afterwards that it was for two causes: first, that if the herald should have declared to the people by proclamation that the commons in Lincolnshire were gone to their homes, they would have killed him; secondly, that there was no mention in the same proclamation neither of pardon nor of the demands which were the causes of their assembly. – Aske’s Narrative: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

restitution to Christ's Church of all wrongs done unto it; and also the commonalty to be used as they should be." "And he bade me trust to this," the herald said, "for he would die for it."

Lancaster begged for that answer in writing. "With a good will," Aske replied; "and he put his hand to his bill, and with a proud voice said, 'This is mine act, whosoever say to the contrary. I mean no harm to the king's person, but to see reformation; I will die in the quarrel, and my people with me.'"

Lancaster again entreated on his knees that he might read the proclamation. On his life he should not, Aske answered; he might come and go at his pleasure, and if Shrewsbury desired an interview with the Pomfret council, a safe conduct was at his service; but he would allow nothing to be put in the people's heads which might divert them from their purpose. "Commend me to the lords," he said at parting, "and tell them it were meet they were with me, for that I do is for all their wealths."¹⁵⁰

The gathering of the nobility at Pomfret.
Loyalty of the Earl of Northumberland.

By this time the powers of all the great families, except the Cliffords, the Dacres, and the Musgraves, had come in to the confederacy. Six peers, or eldest sons of peers, were willingly or unwillingly with Aske at Pomfret. Lord Westmoreland was represented by Lord Neville. Lord Latimer was present in person, and with him Lord Darcy, Lord Lumley, Lord

¹⁵⁰ Lancaster Herald's Report: *State Papers*, Vol. I. p. 485.

Scrope, Lord Conyers. Besides these, were the Constables of Flamborough, the Tempests from Durham, the Boweses, the Everses, the Fairfaxes, the Strangwayses, young Ellerkar of Ellerkar, the Danbys, St. Johns, Bulmers, Mallorys, Lascelleses, Nortons, Moncktons, Gowers, Ingoldsbys: we scarcely miss a single name famous in Border story. Such a gathering had not been seen in England since the grandfathers of these same men fought on Towton Moor, and the red rose of Lancaster faded before "the summer sun of York." Were their descendants, in another bloody battle, to seat a fresh Plantagenet on Edward's throne? No such aim had as yet risen consciously into form; but civil wars have strange issues – a scion of the old house was perhaps dreaming, beyond the sea, of a new and better-omened union; a prince of the pure blood might marry the Princess Mary, restored to her legitimate inheritance. Of all the natural chiefs of the north who were in the power of the insurgents, Lord Northumberland only was absent. On the first summons he was spared for his illness; a second deputation ordered him to commit his powers, as the leader of his clan, to his brothers. But the brave Percy chose to die as he had lived. "At that time and at all other times, the earl was very earnest against the commons in the king's behalf and the lord privy seal's." He lay in his bed resolute in loyalty. The crowd yelled before the castle, "Strike off his head, and make Sir Thomas Percy earl." – "I can die but once," he said; "let them do it; it will rid me of my pain." – "And therewith the

earl fell weeping, ever wishing himself out of the world.”¹⁵¹

The insurgents march to Doncaster.

They left him to nature and to death, which was waiting at his doors. The word went now through the army, “Every man to Doncaster.” There lay Shrewsbury and the Duke of Norfolk, with a small handful of disaffected men between themselves and London, to which they were going.

They marched from Pomfret in three divisions. Sir Thomas Percy, at the head of five thousand men, carried the banner of St. Cuthbert. In the second division, over ten thousand strong, were the musters of Holderness and the West Riding, with Aske himself and Lord Darcy. The rear was a magnificent body of twelve thousand horse, all in armour: the knights, esquires, and yeomen of Richmondshire and Durham.¹⁵²

In this order they came down to the Don, where their advanced posts were already stationed, and deployed along the banks from Ferrybridge¹⁵³ to Doncaster.

¹⁵¹ Stapleton’s Confession: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28. Does this solitary and touching faithfulness, I am obliged to ask, appear as if Northumberland believed that four months before the king and Cromwell had slandered and murdered the woman whom he had once loved?

¹⁵² “We were 30,000 men, as tall men, well horsed, and well appointed as any men could be.” – Statement of Sir Marmaduke Constable: *MS. State Paper Office.* All the best evidence gives this number.

¹⁵³ Not the place now known under this name – but a bridge over the Don three or four miles above Doncaster.

Disaffection in the royal army.

A deep river, heavily swollen, divided them from the royal army; but they were assured by spies that the water was the only obstacle which prevented the loyalists from deserting to them.¹⁵⁴

Expectation that the Duke of Norfolk would give way;

There were traitors in London who kept them informed of Henry's movements, and even of the resolutions at the council board.¹⁵⁵ They knew that if they could dispose of the one small body in their front, no other force was as yet in the field which could oppose or even delay their march. They had even persuaded themselves that, on the mere display of their strength, the Duke of Norfolk must either retire or would himself come over to their side.

Which, however, is disappointed.

Norfolk, however, who had but reached Doncaster the morning of the same day, lay still, and as yet showed no sign

¹⁵⁴ So Aske states. — Examination: *Rolls House MS.*, first series, 838. Lord Darcy went further. "If he had chosen," he said, "he could have fought Lord Shrewsbury with his own men, and brought never a man of the northmen with him." Somerset Herald, on the other hand, said, that the rumour of disaffection was a feint. "One thing I am sure of," he told Lord Darcy, "there never were men more desirous to fight with men than ours to fight with you." — *Rolls House MS.*

¹⁵⁵ "Sir Marmaduke Constable did say, if there had been a battle, the southern men would not have fought. He knew that every third man was theirs. Further, he said the king and his council determined nothing but they had knowledge before my lord of Norfolk gave them knowledge." — Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office.*

of moving. If they intended to pass, they must force the bridge. Apparently they must fight a battle; and at this extremity they hesitated. Their professed intention was no more than an armed demonstration. They were ready to fight;¹⁵⁶ but in fighting they could no longer maintain the pretence that they were loyal subjects. They desired to free the king from plebeian advisers, and restore the influence of the nobles. It was embarrassing to commence with defeating an army led by four peers of the purest blood in England.¹⁵⁷

Oct. 25, 26. Eagerness of the clergy to advance.

For two days the armies lay watching each other.¹⁵⁸ Parties of clergy were busy up and down the rebel host, urging an advance, protesting that if they hesitated the cause was lost; but their overwhelming strength seems to have persuaded the leaders that their cause, so far from being lost, was won already, and that there was no need of violence.

On the 25th, Lancaster Herald came across to desire, in Norfolk's name, that four of them would hold an interview with him, under a safe conduct, in Doncaster, and explain their

¹⁵⁶ "I saw neither gentlemen nor commons willing to depart, but to proceed in the quarrel; yea, and that to the death. If I should say otherwise, I lie." – Aske's Examination: *Rolls House MS.*

¹⁵⁷ Rutland and Huntingdon were in Shrewsbury's camp by this time.

¹⁵⁸ "They wished," said Sir Marmaduke Constable, "the king had sent some younger lords to fight with them than my lord of Norfolk and my lord of Shrewsbury. No lord in England would have stayed them but my lord of Norfolk." – Earl of Oxford to Cromwell: *MS. State Paper Office.*

objects. Aske replied by a counter offer, that eight or twelve principal persons on both sides should hold a conference on Doncaster bridge.

Council of war.

Aske advises negotiations.

Both proposals were rejected; the duke said that he should remain in his lines, and receive their attack whenever they dared to make it.¹⁵⁹ There was a pause. Aske called a council of war; and “the lords” – or perhaps Lord Darcy – knowing that in rebellions half measures are suicide, voted for an immediate onset. Aske himself was of a different opinion. Norfolk did not wholly refuse negotiation; one other attempt might at least be made to avoid bloodshed. “The duke,” he said, in his account of his conduct, “neither of those days had above six or eight thousand men, while we were nigh thirty thousand at the least; but we considered that if battle had been given, if the duke had obtained the victory, all the knights, esquires, and all others of those parts had been attainted, slain, and undone for the Scots and the enemies of the king; and, on the other part, if the Duke

¹⁵⁹ The chroniclers tell a story of a miraculous fall of rain, which raised the river the day before the battle was to have been fought, and which was believed by both sides to have been an interference of Providence. Cardinal Pole also mentions the same fact of the rain, and is bitter at the superstitions of his friends; and yet, in the multitude of depositions which exist, made by persons present, and containing the most minute particulars of what took place, there is no hint of anything of the kind. The waters had been high for several days, and the cause of the unbloody termination of the crisis was more creditable to the rebel leaders.

of Norfolk, the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Earl of Rutland, the Earl of Huntingdon, the Lord Talbot, and others, had been slain, what great captains, councillors, noble blood, persons dread in foreign realms, and Catholic knights had wanted and been lost. What displeasure should this have been to the king's public wealth, and what comfort to the antient enemies of the realm. It was considered also what honour the north parts had attained by the said duke; how he was beloved for his activity and fortune."¹⁶⁰

Commissioners from the rebels are sent into Doncaster.

Conditions on which the rebels will treat.

If a battle was to be avoided nevertheless, no time was to be lost, for skirmishing parties were crossing the river backwards and forwards, and accident might at any moment bring on a general engagement. Aske had gained his point at the council; he signified his desire for a further parley, and on Thursday afternoon, after an exchange of hostages, Sir Thomas Hilton, Sir Ralph Ellerkar, Sir Robert Chaloner, and Sir Robert Bowes¹⁶¹ crossed to the royal camp to attempt, if possible, to induce the duke to agree to the open conference on the bridge.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Second Examination of Robert Aske: *Rolls House MS.* first series, 838. It is true that this is the story of Aske himself, and was told when, after fresh treason, he was on trial for his life. But his bearing at no time was that of a man who would stoop to a lie. Life comparatively was of small moment to him.

¹⁶¹ Uncle of Marjory, afterwards wife of John Knox. Marjory's mother, Elizabeth, to whom so many of Knox's letters were addressed, was an Aske, but she was not apparently one of the Aughton family.

¹⁶² Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.* A 2, 28.

The conditions on which they would consent to admit even this first slight concession were already those of conquerors. A preliminary promise must be made by the duke that all persons who, in heart, word, or deed, had taken part in the insurrection, should have free pardon for life, lands, and goods; that neither in the pardon nor in the public records of the realm should they be described as traitors. The duke must explain further the extent of his powers to treat. If “the captain” was to be present on the bridge, he must state what hostages he was prepared to offer for the security of so great a person; and as Richard Cromwell was supposed to be with the king’s army, neither he nor any of his kin should be admitted among the delegates. If these terms were allowed, the conference should take place, and the objects of the insurrection might be explained in full for the duke to judge of them.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Instructions to Sir Thomas Hilton and his Companions: *Rolls House MS*. There are many groups of “articles” among the Records. Each focus of the insurrection had its separate form; and coming to light one by one, they have created much confusion. I have thought it well, therefore, to print in full, from Sir Thomas Hilton’s instructions, a list, the most explicit, as well as most authentic, which is extant. “I. Touching our faith, to have the heresies of Luther, Wickliffe, Huss, Melancthon, Œcolampadius, Bucer’s *Confessio Germanica*, *Apologia Melancthonis*, the works of Tyndal, of Barnes, of Marshal, Raskall, St. Germain, and such other heresies of Anabaptists, clearly within this realm to be annulled and destroyed.” “II. To have the supreme head, touching *cura animarum*, to be reserved unto the see of Rome, as before it was accustomed to be, and to have the consecration of the bishops from him, without any first-fruits or pensions to him to be paid out of this realm; or else a pension reasonable for the outward defence of our faith.” “III. We humbly beseech our most dread sovereign lord that the Lady Mary may be made legitimate, and the former statute therein annulled, for the danger if the

Conference on the bridge at Doncaster.

title might incur to the crown of Scotland. This to be in parliament.“IV. To have the abbeys suppressed to be restored – houses, lands, and goods.“V. To have the tenths and first-fruits clearly discharged, unless the clergy will of themselves grant a rent-charge in penalty to the augmentation of the crown.“VI. To have the friars observants restored unto their houses again.“VII. To have the heretics, bishops and temporals, and their sect, to have condign punishment by fire, or such other; or else to try the quarrel with us and our partakers in battle.“VIII. To have the Lord Cromwell, the lord chancellor, and Sir Richard Rich to have condign punishment as subverters of the good laws of this realm, and maintainers of the false sect of these heretics, and first inventors and bringers in of them.“IX. That the lands in Westmoreland, Cumberland, Kendal, Furness, the abbey lands in Massamshire, Kirkbyshire, and Netherdale, may be by tenant right, and the lord to have at every change two years’ rent for gressam [the fine paid on renewal of a lease; the term is, I believe, still in use in Scotland], and no more, according to the grant now made by the lords to the commons there under their seal; and this to be done by act of parliament.“X. The statute of handguns and crossbows to be repealed, and the penalties thereof, unless it be on the king’s forest or park, for the killing of his Grace’s deer, red or fallow.“XI. That Doctor Legh and Doctor Layton may have condign punishment for their extortions in the time of visitation, as bribes of nuns, religious houses, forty pounds, twenty pounds, and so to – leases under one common seal, bribes by them taken, and other their abominable acts by them committed and done.“XII. Restoration for the election of knights of shires and burgesses, and for the uses among the lords in the parliament house, after their antient custom.“XIII. Statutes for enclosures and intakes to be put in execution, and that all intakes and enclosures since the fourth year of King Henry the Seventh be pulled down, except on mountains, forests, or parks.“XIV. To be discharged of the fifteenth, and taxes now granted by act of parliament.“XV. To have the parliament in a convenient place at Nottingham or York, and the same shortly summoned.“XVI. The statute of the declaration of the crown by will, that the same be annulled and repealed.“XVII. That it be enacted by act of parliament that all recognizances, statutes, penalties under forfeit, during the time of this commotion, may be pardoned and discharged, as well against the king as strangers.“XVIII. That the privileges and rights of the Church be confirmed by act of parliament; and priests not to suffer by the sword unless they be degraded.

Hilton and his companions remained for the night in Doncaster. In the morning they returned with a favourable answer. After dinner the same four gentlemen, accompanied by Lords Latimer, Lumley, Darcy, Sir Robert Constable, and Sir John Bulmer, went down upon the bridge. They were met by an equal number of knights and noblemen from Norfolk's army; Robert Aske remaining on the bank of the Don, "the whole host standing with him in perfect array."¹⁶⁴

A man to be saved by his book; sanctuary to save a man for all cases in extreme need; and the Church for forty days, and further, according to the laws as they were used in the beginning of this king's days."XIX. The liberties of the Church to have their old customs, in the county palatine of Durham, Beverley, Ripon, St. Peter's at York, and such other, by act of parliament."XX. To have the Statute of Uses repealed."XXI. That the statutes of treasons for words and such like, made since anno 21 of our sovereign lord that now is, be in like wise repealed."XXII. That the common laws may have place, as was used in the beginning of your Grace's reign; and that all injunctions may be clearly decreed, and not to be granted unless the matter be heard and determined in Chancery."XXIII. That no man, upon subpoena from Trent north, appear but at York, or by attorney, unless it be upon pain of allegiance, or for like matters concerning the king."XXIV. A remedy against escheators for finding of false offices, and extortionate feestaking, which be not holden of the king, and against the promoters thereof."A careful perusal of these articles will show that they are the work of many hands, and of many spirits. Representatives of each of the heterogeneous elements of the insurrection contributed their grievances; wise and foolish, just and unjust demands were strung together in the haste of the moment. For the original of this remarkable document, see Instructions to Sir Thomas Hilton, Miscellaneous Depositions on the Rebellion: *Rolls House MS.*

¹⁶⁴ Aske's Narrative: *Rolls House MS.*

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