THE TWO DIVORCES

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Chapter 1

Progress of the Reformation

While England seemed binding herself to the court of Rome, the general course of the church and of the world gave stronger presage every day of the approaching emancipation of Christendom. The respect which for so many centuries had hedged in the Roman pontiff was everywhere shaken; the Reform, already firmly established in several states of Germany and Switzerland, was extending in France, the Low Countries, and Hungary, and beginning in Sweden, Denmark, and Scotland. The South of Europe appeared indeed submissive to the Romish church; but Spain, at heart, cared little for the pontifical infallibility; and even Italy began to inquire whether the papal dominion was not an obstacle to her prosperity.

England, notwithstanding appearances, was also going to throw off the yoke of the bishops of the Tiber, and many faithful voices might already be heard demanding that the word of God should

be acknowledged the supreme authority in the church.

The conquest of Christian Britain by the papacy occupied all the seventh century, as we have seen. The sixteenth was the counterpart of the seventh. The struggle which England then had to sustain, in order to free herself from the power that had enslaved her during nine hundred years, was full of sudden changes; like those of the times of Augustine and Oswy. This struggle indeed took place in each of the countries where the church was reformed; but nowhere can it be traced in all its diverse phases so distinctly as in Great Britain. The positive work of the Reformation — that which consisted in recovering the truth and life so long lost — was nearly the same everywhere; but as regards the negative work — the struggle with the popedom — we might almost say that other nations committed to England the task by which they were all to profit. An unenlightened piety may perhaps look upon the relations of the court of London with the court of Rome, at the period of the Reformation, as void of interest to the faith; but

history will not think the same. It has been too often forgotten that the main point in this contest was not the divorce (which was only the occasion), but the contest itself and its important consequences. The divorce of Henry Tudor and Catherine of Aragon is a secondary event; but the divorce of England and the popedom is a primary event, one of the great evolutions of history, a creative act (so to speak) which still exercises a normal influence over the destinies of mankind. And accordingly everything connected with it is full of instruction for us.

Already a great number of pious men had attached themselves to the authority of God; but the king, and with him that part of the nation, strangers to the evangelical faith, clung to Rome, which Henry had so valiantly defended. The word of God had spiritually separated England from the papacy; the great matter separated it materially. There is a close relationship between these two divorces, which gives extreme importance to the process between Henry and Catherine. When a great revolution is to be effected in the bosom of a

people (we have the Reformation particularly in view), God instructs the minority by the Holy Scriptures, and the majority by the dispensations of the divine government. Facts undertake to push forward those whom the more spiritual voice of the word leaves behind. England, profiting by this great teaching of facts, has thought it her duty ever since to avoid all contact with a power that had deceived her; she has thought that popery could not have the dominion over a people without infringing on its vitality, and that it was only by emancipating themselves from this priestly dictatorship that modern nations could advance safely in the paths of liberty, order, and greatness.

For more than a year, as Henry's complaints testify, Anne continued deaf to his homage. The despairing king saw that he must set other springs to work, and taking Lord Rochford aside, he unfolded his plans to him. The ambitious father promised to do all in his power to influence his daughter.

"The divorce is a settled thing," he said to her;

“you have no control over it. The only question is, whether it shall be you or another who shall give an heir to the crown. Bear in mind that terrible revolutions threaten England if the king has no son.” Thus did everything combine to weaken Anne’s resolution. The voice of her father, the interests of her country, the king’s love, and doubtless some secret ambition, influenced her to grasp the proffered scepter. These thoughts haunted her in society, in solitude, and even in her dreams. At one time she imagined herself on the throne, distributing to the people her charities and the word of God; at another, in some obscure exile, leading a useless life, in tears and ignominy. When, in the sports of her imagination, the crown of England appeared all glittering before her, she at first rejected it; but afterwards that regal ornament seemed so beautiful, and the power it conferred so enviable, that she repelled it less energetically. Anne still refused, however, to give the so ardently solicited assent.

Henry, vexed by her hesitation, wrote to her frequently, and almost always in French. As the

court of Rome makes use of these letters, which are kept in the Vatican, to abuse the Reformation, we think it our duty to quote them. The theft committed by a cardinal has preserved them for us: and we shall see that, far from supporting the calumnies that have been spread abroad, they tend, on the contrary, to refute them. We are far from approving their contents as a whole; but we cannot deny to the young lady, to whom they are addressed the possession of noble and generous sentiments.

Henry, unable to support the anguish caused by Anne's refusal, wrote to her, as it is generally supposed, in May 1528: "By revolving in my mind the contents of your last letters, I have put myself into great agony, not knowing how to interpret them, whether to my disadvantage, as I understand some passages, or not, as I conclude from others. I beseech you earnestly to let me know your real mind as to the love between us two. It is needful for me to obtain this answer of you, having been for a whole year wounded with the dart of love, and not yet assured whether I shall succeed in

finding a place in your heart and affection. This uncertainty has hindered me of late from declaring you my mistress, lest it should prove that you only entertain for me an ordinary regard. But if you please to do the duty of a true and loyal mistress, I promise you that not only the name shall be given to you, but also that I will take you for my mistress, casting off all others that are in competition with you, out of my thoughts and affection, and serving you only. I beg you to give an entire answer to this my rude letter, that I may know on what and how far I may depend. But if it does not please you to answer me in writing, let me know some place where I may have it by word of mouth, and I will go thither with all my heart. No more for fear of tiring you.

Written by the hand of him who would willingly remain yours, “H. Rex.” Such were the affectionate, and we may add (if we think of the time and the man) the respectful terms employed by Henry in writing to Anne Boleyn. The latter, without making any promises, betrayed some little affection for the king, and added to her reply an

emblematical jewel, representing “a solitary damsel in a boat tossed by the tempest,” wishing thus to make the prince understand the dangers to which his love exposed her. Henry was ravished, and immediately replied: — “For a present so valuable, that nothing could be more (considering the whole of it), I return you my most hearty thanks, not only on account of the costly diamond, and the ship in which the solitary damsel is tossed about, but chiefly for the fine interpretation, and the too humble submission which your goodness hath made to me.

Your favor I will always seek to preserve, and this is my firm intention and hope, according to the matter, aut illic aut nullibi.

“The demonstrations of your affections are such, the fine thoughts of your letter so cordially expressed, that they oblige me for ever to honor, love, and serve you sincerely. I beseech you to continue in the same firm and constant purpose, and assuring you that, on my part, I will not only make you a suitable return, but outdo you, so great

is the loyalty of the heart that desires to please you. I desire, also, that if, at any time before this, I have in any way offended you, that you would give me the same absolution that you ask, assuring you, that hereafter my heart shall be dedicated to you alone. I wish my person were so too. God can do it, if he pleases, to whom I pray once a day for that end, hoping that at length my prayers will be heard. I wish the time may be short, but I shall think it long till we see one another. Written by the hand of that secretary, who in heart, body, and will, is “Your loyal and most faithful Servant, “H.T. Rex.” Henry was a passionate lover, and history is not called upon to vindicate that cruel prince; but in the preceding letter we cannot discover the language of a seducer. It is impossible to imagine the king praying to God once a day for anything but a lawful union. These daily prayers seem to present the matter in a different light from that which Romanist writers have imagined.

Henry thought himself more advanced than he really was. Anne then shrank back; embarrassed by the position she held at court, she begged for one

less elevated. The king submitted, although very vexed at first: “Nevertheless that it belongeth not to a gentleman,” he wrote to her, “to put his mistress in the situation of a servant, yet, by following your wishes, I would willingly concede it, if by that means you are less uncomfortable in the place you shall choose than in that where you have been placed by me. I thank you most cordially that you are pleased still to bear me in your remembrance.

“H.T.” Anne, having retired in May to Hever castle, her father’s residence, the king wrote to her as follows: — “My Mistress and my Friend, “My heart and I surrender ourselves into your hands, and we supplicate to be commended to your good graces, and that by absence your affections may not be diminished to us. For that would be to augment our pain, which would be a great pity, since absence gives enough, and more than I ever thought could be felt.

This brings to my mind a fact in astronomy, which is, that the longer the days are, the farther off is the sun, and yet the more scorching is his

heat. Thus is it with our love; absence has placed distance between us, nevertheless fervor increases, at least on my part. I hope the same from you, assuring you that in my case the anguish of absence is so great that it would be intolerable were it not for the firm hope I have of your indissoluble affection towards me. In order to remind you of it, and because I cannot in person be in your presence, I send you the thing which comes nearest that is possible, that is to say, my picture, and the whole device, which you already know of, set in bracelets; wishing myself in their place when it pleases you. This is from the hand of “Your Servant and Friend, “H.T. Rex.” Pressed by her father, her uncles, and by Henry, Anne’s firmness was shaken. That crown, rejected by Renee and by Margaret, dazzled the young Englishwoman; every day she found some new charm in it; and gradually familiarizing herself with her new future, she said at last: “If the king becomes free, I shall be willing to marry him.” This was a great fault; but Henry was at the height of joy.

The courtiers watched with observant eyes

these developments of the king's affection, and were already preparing the homage which they proposed to lay at Anne Boleyn's feet. But there was one man at court whom Henry's resolution filled with sorrow; this was Wolsey. He had been the first to suggest to the king the idea of separating from Catherine; but if Anne is to succeed her, there must be no divorce. He had first alienated Catherine's party; he was now going to irritate that of the Boleyns; accordingly he began to fear that whatever might be the issue of this affair, it would cause his ruin. He took frequent walks in his park at Hampton Court, accompanied by the French ambassador, the confidant of his sorrows: "I would willingly lose one of my fingers," he said, "if I could only have two hours' conversation with the king of France." At another time, fancying all England was pursuing him, he said with alarm, "The king my master and all his subjects will cry murder against me; they will fall upon me more fiercely than on a Turk, and all Christendom will rise against me!" The next day Wolsey, to gain the French ambassador, gave him a long history of what he had done for France against the wishes of

all England: “I need much dexterity in my affairs,” he added, “and must use a terrible alchemy.” But alchemy could not save him. Rarely has so much anguish been veiled beneath such grandeur. Du Bellay was moved with pity at the sight of the unhappy man’s sufferings. “When he gives way,” he wrote to Montmorency, “it lasts a day together; — he is continually sighing. — You have never seen a man in such anguish of mind.” In truth Wolsey’s reason was tottering. That fatal idea of the divorce was the cause of all his woes, and to be able to recall it, he would have given, not a finger only, but an arm, and perhaps more. It was too late; Henry had started his car down the steep, and whoever attempted to stop it would have been crushed beneath its wheels. However, the cardinal tried to obtain something. Francis I had intercepted a letter from Charles V in which the emperor spoke of the divorce as likely to raise the English nation in revolt.

Wolsey caused this letter to be read to the king, in the hope that it would excite his serious apprehensions; but Henry only frowned, and Du

Bellay, to whom the monarch ascribed the report on these troubles forboded by Charles, received “a gentle lash.” This was the sole result of the manoeuvre.

Wolsey now resolved to broach this important subject in a straightforward manner. The step might prove his ruin; but if he succeeded he was saved and the popedom with him. Accordingly, one day (shortly before the sweating sickness broke out, says Du Bellay, probably in June 1528) Wolsey openly prayed the king to renounce his design; his own reputation, he told him, the prosperity of England, the peace of Europe, the safety of the church, — all required it; besides the pope would never grant the divorce. While the cardinal was speaking, Henry’s face grew black; and before he had concluded the king’s anger broke out. “The king used terrible words,” said Du Bellay. He would have given a thousand Wolseys for one Anne Boleyn. “No other than God shall take her from me” was his most decided resolution.

Wolsey, now no longer doubting of his

disgrace, began to take his measures accordingly. He commenced building in several places, in order to win the affections of the common people; he took great care of his bishoprics, in order that they might ensure him an easy retreat; he was affable to the courtiers; and thus covered the earth with flowers to deaden his fall. Then he would sigh as if he were disgusted with honors, and would celebrate the charms of solitude. He did more than this. Seeing plainly that the best way of recovering the king's favor would be to conciliate Anne Boleyn, he made her the most handsome presents, and assured her that all his efforts would now be directed to raise her to the throne of England. Anne, believing these declarations, replied, that she would help him in her turn, "As long as any breath was in her body." Even Henry had no doubt that the cardinal had profited by his lesson.

Thus were all parties restless and uneasy — Henry desiring to marry Lady Anne, the courtiers to get rid of Wolsey, and the latter to remain in power — when a serious event appeared to put every one in harmony with his neighbor. About the

middle of June, the terrible sweating sickness (sudor anglicus) broke out in England. The citizens of London, “thick as flies,” said Du Bellay, suddenly feeling pains in the head and heart, rushed from the streets or shops to their chambers, began to sweat, and took to their beds. The disease made frightful and rapid progress, a burning heat preyed on their limbs; if they chanced to uncover themselves, the perspiration ceased, delirium came on, and in four hours the victim was dead and “stiff as a wall,” says the French ambassador. Every family was in mourning. Sir Thomas More, kneeling by his daughter’s bedside, burst into tears, and called upon God to save his beloved Margaret. Wolsey, who was at Hampton Court, suspecting nothing amiss, arrived in London as usual to preside in the Court of Chancery; but he ordered his horses to be saddled again immediately and rode back. In four days, 2000 persons died in London.

The court was at first safe from the contagion; but on the fourth day one of Anne Boleyn’s ladies was attacked; it was as if a thunderbolt had fallen

on the palace. The king removed with all haste, and stayed at a place twelve miles off, for he was not prepared to die. He ordered Anne to return to her father, invited the queen to join him, and took up his residence at Waltham. His real conscience awoke only in the presence of death. Four of his attendants and a friar, Anne's confessor, as it would appear, falling ill, the king departed for Hunsdon. He had been there two days only when Powis, Carew, Carton, and others of his court, were carried off in two or three hours. Henry had met an enemy whom he could not vanquish. He quitted the place attacked by the disease; he removed to another quarter; and when the sickness laid hold of any of his attendants in his new retreat, he again left that for a new asylum. Terror froze his blood; he wandered about pursued by that terrible scythe whose sweep might perhaps reach him; he cut off all communication, even with his servants; shut himself up in a room at the top of an isolated tower; ate all alone, and would see no one but his physician; he prayed, fasted, confessed, became reconciled with the queen; took the sacrament every Sunday and feast-day; received his Maker, to

use the words of a gentleman of his chamber; and the queen and Wolsey did the same. Nor was that all: his councillor, Sir Brian Tuke, was sick in Essex; but that mattered not; the king ordered him to come to him, even in his litter; and on the 20th of June, Henry after hearing three masses (he had never done so much before in one day) said to Tuke: “I want you to write my will.” He was not the only one who took that precaution. “There were a hundred thousand made,” says Du Bellay.

During this time, Anne in her retirement at Hever was calm and collected; she prayed much, particularly for the king and for Wolsey. But Henry, far less submissive, was very anxious. “The uneasiness my doubts about your health gave me,” he wrote to her, “disturbed and frightened me exceedingly; but now, since you have as yet felt nothing, I hope it is with you as it is with us.....I beg you, my entirely beloved, not to frighten yourself, or be too uneasy at our absence, for wherever I am, I am yours.

And yet we must sometimes submit to our

misfortunes, for whoever will struggle against fate, is generally but so much the farther from gaining his end. Wherefore, comfort yourself and take courage, and make this misfortune as easy to you as you can.” As he received no news, Henry’s uneasiness increased; he sent to Anne a messenger and a letter: “To acquit myself of the duty of a true servant, I send you this letter, beseeching you to apprize me of your welfare, which I pray may continue as long as I desire mine own.” Henry’s fears were well founded; the malady became more severe; in four hours eighteen persons died at the archbishop of Canterbury’s; Anne Boleyn herself and her brother also caught the infection. The king was exceedingly agitated; Anne alone appeared calm; the strength of her character raised her above exaggerated fears; but her enemies ascribed her calmness to other motives. “Her ambition is stronger than death,” they said. “The king, queen, and cardinal tremble for their lives, but she.....she would die content if she died a queen.” Henry once more changed his residence. All the gentlemen of his privy-chamber were attacked, with one exception; “he remained alone, keeping himself

apart," says Du Bellay, and confessed every day. He wrote again to Anne, sending her his physician, Dr. Butts: "The most displeasing news that could occur came to me suddenly at night. On three accounts I must lament it. One, to hear of the illness of my mistress, whom I esteem more than all the world, and whose health I desire as I do my own. I would willingly bear half of what you suffer to cure you. The second, from the fear that I shall have to endure my wearisome absence much longer, which has hitherto given me all the vexation that was possible; and when gloomy thoughts fill my mind, then I pray God to remove far from me such troublesome and rebellious ideas.

The third, because my physician, in whom I have most confidence, is absent. Yet, from the want of him, I send you my second, and hope that he will soon make you well. I shall then love him more than ever. I beseech you to be guided by his advice in your illness. By your doing this, I hope soon to see you again, which will be to me a greater comfort then all the precious jewels in the world." The pestilence soon broke out with more

violence around Henry; he fled in alarm to Hatfield, taking with him only the gentlemen of his chamber; he next quitted this place for Tittenhanger, a house belonging to Wolsey, whence he commanded general processions throughout the kingdom in order to avert this scourge of God. At the same time he wrote to Wolsey: “As soon as any one falls ill in the place where you are, fly to another; and go thus from place to place.” The poor cardinal was still more alarmed than Henry. As soon as he felt the slightest perspiration, he fancied himself a dead man. “I entreat your highness,” he wrote trembling to the king on the 5th of July, “to show yourself full of pity for my soul; these are perhaps the last words I shall address to you.....The whole world will see by my last testament that you have not bestowed your favor upon an ungrateful man.” The king, perceiving that Wolsey’s mind was affected, bade him “put apart fear and fantasies,” and wear a cheerful humor in the midst of death.

At last the sickness began to diminish, and immediately the desire to see Anne revived in

Henry’s bosom. On the 18th of August she re-appeared at court, and all the king’s thoughts were now bent on the divorce.

But this business seemed to proceed in inverse ratio to his desires. There was no news of Campeggio; was he lost in the Alps or at sea? Did his gout detain him in some village, or was the announcement of his departure only a feint? Anne Boleyn herself was uneasy, for she attached great importance to Campeggio’s coming. If the church annulled the king’s first marriage, Anne, seeing the principal obstacle removed, thought she might accept Henry’s hand. She therefore wrote to Wolsey: “I long to hear from you news of the legate, for I do hope (an’ they come from you) they shall be very good.” The king added in a postscript: “The not hearing of the legate’s arrival in France causeth us somewhat to muse. Notwithstanding we trust by your diligence and vigilancy (with the assistance of Almighty God) shortly to be eased out of that trouble.” But still there was no news. While waiting for the longdesired ambassador, every one at the English court played his part as

well as he could. Anne, whether from conscience, prudence, or modesty, refused the honors which the king would have showered upon her, and never approached Catherine but with marks of profound respect. Wolsey had the look of desiring the divorce, while in reality he dreaded it, as fated to cause his ruin and that of the popedom. Henry strove to conceal the motives which impelled him to separate from the queen; to the bishops, he spoke of his conscience, to the nobility of an heir, and to all of the sad obligation which compelled him to put away so justly beloved a princess. In the meanwhile, he seemed to live on the best terms with her, from what Du Bellay says. But Catherine was the one who best dissembled her sentiments; she lived with the king as during their happiest days, treated Anne with every kindness, adopted an elegant costume, encouraged music and dancing in her apartments, often appeared in public, and seemed desirous of captivating by her gracious smiles the good-will of England. This was a mournful comedy, destined to end in tragedy full of tears and agony.

Chapter 2

Coverdale and Inspiration

While these scenes were acting in the royal palaces, far different discussions were going on among the people. After having dwelt for some time on the agitations of the court, we gladly return to the lowly disciples of the divine word. The Reformation of England (and this is its characteristic) brings before us by turns the king upon his throne, and the laborious artisan in his humble cottage; and between these two extremes we meet with the doctor in his college, and the priest in his pulpit.

Among the young men trained at Cambridge under Barnes's instruction, and who had aided him at the time of his trial, was Miles Coverdale, afterwards bishop of Exeter, a man distinguished by his zeal for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Some time after the prior's fall, on Easter Eve, 1527, Coverdale and Cromwell met at the house of Sir Thomas More, when the former exhorted the

Cambridge student to apply himself to the study of sacred learning. The lapse of his unhappy master had alarmed Coverdale, and he felt the necessity of withdrawing from that outward activity which had proved so fatal to Barnes. He therefore turned to the Scriptures, read them again and again, and perceived, like Tyndale, that the reformation of the church must be effected by the word of God. The inspiration of that word, the only foundation of its sovereign authority, had struck Coverdale. “Wherever the Scripture is known it reformeth all things. And why? Because it is given by the inspiration of God.” This fundamental principle of the Reformation in England must, in every age, be that of the church.

Coverdale found happiness in his studies: “Now,” he said, “I begin to taste of Holy Scriptures! Now, honor be to God! I am set to the most sweet smell of holy letters.” He did not stop there, but thought it his duty to attempt in England the work which Tyndale was prosecuting in Germany.

The Bible was so important in the eyes of these Christians, that two translations were undertaken simultaneously. “Why should other nations,” said Coverdale, “be more plenteously provided for with the Scriptures in their mother-tongue than we?” — “Beware of translating the Bible!” exclaimed the partisans of the schoolmen; “your labor will only make divisions in the faith and in the people of God.” — “God has now given his church,” replied Coverdale, “the gifts of translating and of printing; we must improve them.” And if any friends spoke of Tyndale’s translation, he answered: “Do not you know that when many are starting together, every one doth his best to be nighest the mark?” — “But Scripture ought to exist in Latin only,” objected the priest. — “No,” replied Coverdale again, “the Holy Ghost is as much the author of it in the Hebrew, Greek, French, Dutch, and English, as in Latin.....The word of God is of like authority, in what language soever the Holy Ghost speaketh it.” This does not mean that translations of Holy Scripture are inspired, but that the word of God, faithfully translated, always possesses a divine authority.

Coverdale determined therefore to translate the Bible, and, to procure the necessary books, he wrote to Cromwell, who, during his travels, had made a collection of these precious writings. “Nothing in the world I desire but books,” he wrote; “like Jacob, you have drunk of the dew of heaven.....I ask to drink of your waters.” Cromwell did not refuse Coverdale his treasures. “Since the Holy Ghost moves you to bear the cost of this work,” exclaimed the latter, “God gives me boldness to labor in the same.” He commenced without delay, saying: “Whosoever believeth not the Scripture, believeth not Christ; and whoso refuseth it, refuseth God also.” Such were the foundations of the reformed church in England.

Coverdale did not undertake to translate the Scriptures as a mere literary task: the Spirit which had inspired him spoke to his heart; and tasting their life-giving promises, he expressed his happiness in pious songs: — Be glad now, all ye christen men, And let us rejoyce unfaynedly.

The kindnesse cannot be written with penne, That we have receaved of God’s mercy; Whose love towards us hath never ende: He hath done for us as a frende; Now let us thanke him hartely.

These lovnge wordes he spake to me: I will delyver thy soule from payne; I am desposed to do for thee, And to myne owne selfe thee to retayne.

Thou shalt be with me, for thou art myne; And I with thee, for I am thyne; Such is my love, I can not layne.

They will shed out my precyous bloude, And take away my lyfe also; Which I wyll suffre all for thy good: Believe this sure, where ever thou go.

For I will yet ryse up agayne; Thy synnes I beare, though it be payne, To make thee safe and free from wo.

Coverdale did not remain long in the solitude he desired. The study of the Bible, which had attracted him to it, soon drew him out of it. A

revival was going on in Essex; John Tyball, an inhabitant of Bumpstead, having learned to find in Jesus Christ the true bread from heaven, did not stop there. One day as he was reading the first epistle to the Corinthians, these words: “eat of this bread,” and “drink of this cup,” repeated four times within a few verses, convinced him that there was no transubstantiation. “A priest has no power to create the body of the Lord,” said he: “Christ truly is present in the Eucharist, but he is there only for him that believeth, and by a spiritual presence and action only.” Tyball, disgusted with the Romish clergy and worship, and convinced that Christians are called to a universal priesthood, soon thought that men could do without a special ministry, and without denying the offices mentioned in Scripture, as some Christians have done since, he attached no importance to them. “Priesthood is not necessary,” he said: “every layman may administer the sacraments as well as a priest.” The minister of Bumpstead, one Richard Foxe, and next a greyfriar of Colchester named Meadow, were successively converted by Tyball’s energetic preaching.

Coverdale, who was living not far from these parts, having heard speak of this religious revival, came to Bumpstead, and went into the pulpit in the spring of 1528, to proclaim the treasures contained in Scripture. Among his hearers was an Augustine monk, named Topley, who was supplying Foxe's place during his absence. This monk, while staying at the parsonage, had found a copy of Wickliffe's Wicket, which he read eagerly.

His conscience was wounded by it, and all seemed to totter about him. He had gone to church full of doubt, and after divine service he waited upon the preacher, exclaiming: "O my sins, my sins!" "Confess yourself to God," said Coverdale, "and not to a priest. God accepteth the confession which cometh from the heart, and blotteth out all your sins." The monk believed in the forgiveness of God, and became a zealous evangelist for the surrounding country.

The divine word had hardly lighted one torch, before that kindled another.

At Colchester, in the same county, a worthy man named Pykas, had received a copy of the Epistles of Saint Paul from his mother, with this advice “My son, live according to these writings, and not according to the teaching of the clergy.” Some time after, Pykas having bought a New Testament, and “read it thoroughly many times,” a total change took place in him. “We must be baptized by the Holy Ghost,” he said, and these words passed like a breath of life over his simple-minded hearers.

One day, Pykas having learned that Bilney, the first of the Cambridge doctors who had known the power of God’s word, was preaching at Ipswich, he proceeded thither, for he never refused to listen to a priest, when that priest proclaimed the truth. “O, what a sermon! how full of the Holy Ghost!” exclaimed Pykas.

From that period meetings of the brothers in Christ (for thus they were called) increased in number. They read the New Testament, and each imparted to the others what he had received for the

instruction of all. One day when the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew had been read, Pykas, who was sometimes wrong in the spiritual interpretation of Scripture, remarked: “When the Lord declares that not one stone of the temple shall be left upon another, he speaks of those haughty priests who persecute those whom they call heretics, and who pretend to be the temple of God.

God will destroy them all.” After protesting against the priest, he protested against the host: “The real body of Jesus Christ is in the Word,” he said; “God is in the Word, the Word is in God. God and the Word cannot be separated. Christ is the living Word that nourishes the soul.” These humble preachers increased. Even women knew the Epistles and Gospels by heart; Marion Matthew, Dorothy Long, Catherine Swain, Alice Gardiner, and above all, Gyrling’s wife, who had been in service with a priest lately burnt for heresy, took part in these gospel meetings. And it was not in cottages only that the glad tidings were then proclaimed; Bower Hall, the residence of the squires of Bumpstead, was open to Foxe, Topley,

and Tyball, who often read the Holy Scriptures in the great hall of the mansion, in the presence of the master and all their household: a humble Reformation more real than that effected by Henry VIII.

There was, however, some diversity of opinion among these brethren. “All who have begun to believe,” said Tyball, Pykas, and others, “ought to meet together to hear the word and increase in faith. We pray in common.....and that constitutes a church.” Coverdale, Bilney, and Latimer willingly recognized these incomplete societies, in which the members met simply as disciples; they believed them necessary at a period when the church was forming. These societies (in the reformers views) proved that organization has not the priority in the Christian church, as Rome maintains, and that this priority belongs to the faith and the life. But this imperfect form they also regarded as provisional. To prevent numerous dangers, it was necessary that this society should be succeeded by another, the church of the New Testament, with its elders or bishops, and deacons.

The word, they thought, rendered a ministry of the word necessary; and for its proper exercise not only piety was required, but a knowledge of the sacred languages, the gift of eloquence, its exercise and perfection.

However, there was no division among these Christians upon secondary matters.

For some time the bishop of London watched this movement with uneasiness. He caused Hacker to be arrested, who, for six years past, had gone from house to house reading the Bible in London and Essex; examined and threatened him, inquired carefully after the names of those who had shown him hospitality; and the poor man in alarm had given up about forty of his brethren. Sebastian Harris, priest of Kensington, Forman, rector of All Hallows, John and William Pykas, and many others, were summoned before the bishop. They were taken to prison; they were led before the judges; they were put in the stocks; they were tormented in a thousand ways. Their minds became

confused; their thoughts wandered; and many made the confessions required by their persecutors.

The adversaries of the gospel, proud of this success, now desired a more glorious victory. If they could not reach Tyndale, had they not in London the patron of his work, Monmouth, the most influential of the merchants, and a follower of the true faith? The clergy had made religion their business, and the Reformation restored it to the people. Nothing offended the priests so much, as that laymen should claim the right to believe without their intervention, and even to propagate the faith. Sir Thomas More, one of the most amiable men of the sixteenth century, participated in their hatred. He wrote to Cochlaeus: “Germany now daily bringeth forth monsters more deadly than what Africa was wont to do; but, alas! she is not alone. Numbers of Englishmen, who would not a few years ago even hear Luther’s name mentioned, are now publishing his praises! England is now like the sea, which swells and heaves before a great storm, without any wind stirring it.” More felt particularly irritated, because

the boldness of the gospellers had succeeded to the timidity of the Lollards.

“The heretics,” he said, “have put off hypocrisy, and put on impudence.” He therefore resolved to set his hand to the work.

On the 14th of May 1529, Monmouth was in his shop, when an usher came and summoned him to appear before Sir J. Dauncies, one of the privy council. The pious merchant obeyed, striving to persuade himself that he was wanted on some matter of business; but in this he was deceived, as he soon found out. “What letters and books have you lately received from abroad?” asked, with some severity, Sir Thomas More, who, with Sir William Kingston, was Sir John’s colleague. “None,” replied Monmouth.

“What aid have you given to any persons living on the continent?” — “None, for these last three years. William Tyndale abode with me six months,” he continued, “and his life was what a good priest’s ought to be.

I gave him ten pounds at the period of his departure, but nothing since.

Besides, he is not the only one I have helped; the bishop of London's chaplain, for instance, has received of me more than L50." — "What books have you in your possession?" The merchant named the New Testament and some other works. "All these books have lain more than two years on my table, and I never heard that either priests, friars, or laymen learned any great errors from them." More tossed his head. "It is a hard matter," he used to say, "to put a dry stick in the fire without its burning, or to nourish a snake in our bosom and not be stung by it. — That is enough," he continued, "we shall go and search your house." Not a paper escaped their curiosity; but they found nothing to compromise Monmouth; he was however sent to the Tower.

After some interval the merchant was again brought before his judges.

“You are accused,” said More, “of having bought Martin Luther’s tracts; of maintaining those who are translating the Scriptures into English; of subscribing to get the New Testament printed in English, with or without glosses; of having imported it into the kingdom; and, lastly, of having said that faith alone is sufficient to save a man.” There was matter enough to burn several men. Monmouth, feeling convinced that Wolsey alone had power to deliver him, resolved to apply to him. “What will become of my poor workmen in London and in the country during my imprisonment?” he wrote to the cardinal. “They must have their money every week; who will give it them?”.....Besides, I make considerable sales in foreign countries, which bring large returns to his majesty’s customs. If I remain in prison, this commerce is stopped, and of course all the proceeds for the exchequer.” Wolsey, who was as much a statesman as a churchman, began to melt; on the eve of a struggle with the pope and the emperor, he feared, besides, to make the people discontented. Monmouth was released from prison. As alderman, and then as sheriff of London, he was

faithful until death, and ordered in his last will that thirty sermons should be preached by the most evangelical ministers in England, “to make known the holy word of Jesus Christ.” — “That is better,” he thought, “than founding masses.” The Reformation showed, in the sixteenth century, that great activity in commerce might be allied to great piety.

Chapter 3

Political Changes

While these persecutions were agitating the fields and the capital of England, all had changed in the ecclesiastical world, because all had changed in the political. The pope, pressed by Henry VIII and intimidated by the armies of Francis I, had granted the decretal and despatched Campeggio.

But, on a sudden, there was a new evolution; a change of events brought a change of counsels. Doria had gone over to the emperor; his fleet had restored abundance to Naples; the army of Francis I, ravaged by famine and pestilence, had capitulated; and Charles V, triumphant in Italy, had said proudly to the pope: “We are determined to defend the queen of England against King Henry’s injustice.” Charles having recovered his superiority, the affrighted pope opened his eyes to the justice of Catherine’s cause. “Send four messengers after Campeggio,” said he to his officers; “and let each take a different road; bid

them travel with all speed and deliver our despatches to him." They overtook the legate, who opened the pope's letters. "In the first place," said Clement VII to him, "protract your journey. In the second place, when you reach England, use every endeavor to reconcile the king and queen. In the third place, if you do not succeed, persuade the queen to take the veil. And in the last place, if she refuses, do not pronounce any sentence favorable to the divorce without a new and express order from me. This is the essential: Summum et maximum mandatum." The ambassador of the sovereign pontiff had a mission to do nothing. This instruction is sometimes as effective as any.

Campeggio, the youngest of the cardinals, was the most intelligent and the slowest; and this slowness caused his selection by the pope. He understood his master. If Wolsey was Henry's spur to urge on Campeggio, the latter was Clement's bridle to check Wolsey. One of the judges of the divorce was about to pull forwards, the other backwards; thus the business stood a chance of not advancing at all, which was just what the pope

required.

The legate, very eager to relax his speed, spent three months on his journey from Italy to England. He should have embarked for France on the 23rd of July; but the end of August was approaching, and no one knew in that country what had become of him. At length they learned that he had reached Lyons on the 22nd of August. The English ambassador in France sent him horses, carriages, plate, and money, in order to hasten his progress; the legate complained of the gout, and Gardiner found the greatest difficulty in getting him to move. Henry wrote every day to Anne Boleyn, complaining of the slow progress of the nuncio. “He arrived in Paris last Sunday or Monday,” he says at the beginning of September; “Monday next we shall hear of his arrival in Calais, and then I shall obtain what I have so longed for, to God’s pleasure and both our comforts.” At the same time this impatient prince sent message after message to accelerate the legate’s rate of travelling.

Anne began to desire a future which surpassed

all that her youthful imagination had conceived, and her agitated heart expanded to the breath of hope. She wrote to Wolsey: “This shall be to give unto your grace, as I am most bound, my humble thanks for the great pain and travail that your grace doth take in studying, by your wisdom and great diligence, how to bring to pass honorably the greatest wealth [well-being] that is possible to come to any creature living; and in especial remembering how wretched and unworthy I am in comparison to his highness.....Now, good my lord, your discretion may consider as yet how little it is in my power to recompense you but alonely [only] with my good will; the which I assure you, look what thing in this world I can imagine to do you pleasure in, you shall find me the gladdest woman in the world to do it.” But the impatience of the king of England and of Anne seemed as if it would never be satisfied. Campeggio, on his way through Paris, told Francis I that the divorce would never take place, and that he should soon go to Spain to see Charles V.....This was significative. “The king of England ought to know,” said the indignant Francis to the duke of Suffolk, “that Campeggio is

imperialist at heart, and that his mission in England will be a mere mockery.” In truth, the Spanish and Roman factions tried every manoeuvre to prevent a union they detested. Anne Boleyn, queen of England, signified not only Catherine humbled, but Charles offended; the clerical party weakened, perhaps destroyed, and the evangelical party put in its place. The Romish faction found accomplices even in Anne’s own family. Her brother George’s wife, a proud and passionate woman, and a rigid Roman-catholic, had sworn an implacable hatred against her young sister. By this means wounds might be inflicted, even in the domestic sanctuary, which would not be the less deep because they were the work of her own kindred. One day we are told that Anne found in her chamber a book of pretended prophecies, in which was a picture representing a king, a queen shedding tears, and at their feet a young lady headless. Anne turned away her eyes with disgust. She desired, however, to know what this emblem signified, and officious friends brought to her one of those pretended wise men, so numerous at all times, who abuse the credulity of the ignorant by professing to interpret

such mysteries. “This prophetic picture,” he said, “represents the history of the king and his wife.” Anne was not credulous, but she understood what her enemies meant to insinuate, and dismissed the mock interpreter without betraying any signs of fear; then turning to her favorite attendant, Anne Saville, “Come hither, Nan,” said she, “look at this book of prophecies; this is the king, this is the queen wringing her hands and mourning, and this (putting her finger on the bleeding body) is myself, with my head cut off.” — The young lady answered with a shudder: “If I thought it were true, I would not myself have him were he an emperor.” — “Tut, Nan,” replied Anne Boleyn with a sweet smile, “I think the book a bauble, and am resolved to have him, that my issue may be royal, whatever may become of me.” This story is based on good authority, and there were so many predictions of this kind afloat that it is very possible one of them might come true; people afterwards recollected only the prophecies confirmed by the events. But, be that as it may, this young lady, so severely chastised in after-days, found in her God an abundant consolation.

At length Campeggio embarked at Calais on the 29th of September, and unfortunately for him he had an excellent passage across the Channel. A storm to drive him back to the French coast would have suited him admirably. But on the 1st of October he was at Canterbury, whence he announced his arrival to the king. At this news, Henry forgot all the delays which had so irritated him. “His majesty can never be sufficiently grateful to your holiness for so great a favor,” wrote Wolsey to the pope; “but he will employ his riches, his kingdom, his life even, and deserve the name of Restorer of the Church as justly as he has gained that of Defender of the Faith.” This zeal alarmed Campeggio, for the pope wrote to him that any proceeding which might irritate Charles would inevitably cause the ruin of the church. The nuncio became more dilatory than ever, and although he reached Canterbury on the 1st of October, he did not arrive at Dartford until the 5th, thus taking four days for a journey of about thirty miles. Meanwhile preparations were making to receive him in London. Wolsey, feeling contempt for the poverty

of the Roman cardinals, and very uneasy about the equipage with which his colleague was likely to make his entrance into the capital, sent a number of showy chests, rich carpets, litters hung with drapery, and harnessed mules. On the other hand Campeggio, whose secret mission was to keep in the back-ground, and above all to do nothing, feared these banners, and trappings, and all the parade of a triumphal entry. Alleging therefore an attack of gout in order to escape from the pomps his colleague had prepared for him, he quietly took a boat, and thus reached the palace of the bishop of Bath, where he was to lodge.

While the nuncio was thus proceeding unnoticed up the Thames, the equipages sent by Wolsey entered London through the midst of a gaping crowd, who looked on them with curiosity as if they had come from the banks of the Tiber. Some of the mules however took fright and ran away, the coffers fell off and burst open, when there was a general rush to see their contents; but to the surprise of all they were empty. This was an excellent jest for the citizens of London. “Fine

outside, empty inside; a just emblem of the popedom, its embassy, and foolish pomps," they said; "a sham legate, a procession of masks, and the whole a farce!" Campeggio was come at last, and now what he dreaded most was an audience. "I cannot move," he said, "or endure the motion of a litter." Never had an attack of gout been more seasonable. Wolsey, who paid him frequent visits, soon found him to be his equal in cunning. To no purpose did he treat him with every mark of respect, shaking his hand and making much of him; it was labor lost, the Roman nuncio would say nothing, and Wolsey began to despair. The king, on the contrary, was full of hope, and fancied he already had the act of divorce in his portfolio, because he had the nuncio in his kingdom.

The greatest effect of the nuncio's arrival was the putting an end to Anne Boleyn's indecision. She had several relapses: the trials which she foresaw, and the grief Catherine must necessarily feel, had agitated her imagination and disturbed her mind. But when she saw the church and her own enemies prepared to pronounce the king's divorce,

her doubts were removed, and she regarded as legitimate the position that was offered her. The king, who suffered from her scruples, was delighted at this change. “I desire to inform you,” he wrote to her in English, “what joy it is to me to understand of your conformableness with reason, and of the suppressing of your inutile and vain thoughts and fantasies with the bridle of reason. I assure you all the greatness of this world could not counterpoise for my satisfaction the knowledge and certainty thereof.....The unfeigned sickness of this wellwilling legate doth somewhat retard his access to your person.” It was therefore the determination of the pope that made Anne Boleyn resolve to accept Henry’s hand; this is an important lesson for which we are indebted to the Vatican letters. We should be grateful to the papacy for having so carefully preserved them.

But the more Henry rejoiced, the more Wolsey despaired; he would have desired to penetrate into Clement’s thoughts, but could not succeed.

Imagining that De Angelis, the general of the

Spanish Observance, knew all the secrets of the pope and of the emperor, he conceived the plan of kidnapping him. “If he goes to Spain by sea,” said he to Du Bellay, “a good brigantine or two would do the business; and if by land, it will be easier still.” Du Bellay failed not (as he informs us himself) “to tell him plainly that by such proceedings he would entirely forfeit the pope’s good will.” — “What matter?” replied Wolsey, “I have nothing to lose.” As he said this, tears started to his eyes. At last he made up his mind to remain ignorant of the pontiff’s designs, and wiped his eyes, awaiting, not without fear, the interview between Henry and Campeggio.

On the 22nd of October, a month after his arrival, the nuncio, borne in a sedan chair of red velvet, was carried to court. He was placed on the right of the throne, and his secretary in his name delivered a high-sounding speech, saluting Henry with the name of Savior of Rome, Liberator urbis.

“His majesty,” replied Fox in the king’s name, “has only performed the duties incumbent on a

Christian prince, and he hopes that the holy see will bear them in mind.” — “Well attacked, well defended,” said Du Bellay. For the moment, a few Latin declamations got the papal nuncio out of his difficulties.

Campeggio did not deceived himself: if the divorce were refused, he foresaw the reformation of England. Yet he hoped still, for he was assured that Catherine would submit to the judgment of the church; and being fully persuaded that the queen would refuse the holy father nothing, the nuncio began “his approaches,” as Du Bellay calls them. On the 27th of October, the two cardinals waited on Catherine, and in flattering terms insinuated that she might prevent the blow which threatened her by voluntary retirement into a convent. And then, to end all indecision in the queen’s mind, Campeggio put on a severe look and exclaimed: “How is it, madam, explain the mystery to us? From the moment the holy father appointed us to examine the question of your divorce, you have been seen not only at court, but in public, wearing the most magnificent ornaments, participating with

an appearance of gaiety and satisfaction at amusements and festivities which you had never tolerated before.....

The church is in the most cruel embarrassment with regard to you; the king, your husband, is in the greatest perplexity; the princess, your daughter, is taken from you.....and instead of shedding tears, you give yourself up to vanity. Renounce the world, madam; enter a nunnery. Our holy father himself requires this of you." The agitated queen was almost fainting; stifling her emotion, however, she said mildly but firmly: "Alas! my lords, is it now a question whether I am the king's lawful wife or not, when I have been married to him almost twenty years and no objection raised before?.....Divers prelates and lords are yet alive who then adjudged our marriage good and lawful, — and now to say it is detestable! this is a great marvel to me, especially when I consider what a wise prince the king's father was, and also the natural love and affection my father, King Ferdinand, bare unto me. I think that neither of these illustrious princes would have made me

contract an illicit union.” At these words, Catherine’s emotion compelled her to stop. — “If I weep, my lords,” she continued almost immediately, “it is not for myself, it is for a person dearer to me than my life. What! I should consent to an act which deprives my daughter of a crown? No, I will not sacrifice my child. I know what dangers threaten me. I am only a weak woman, a stranger, without learning, advisers or friends.....and my enemies are skillful, learned in the laws, and desirous to merit their master’s favor.....and more than that, even my judges are my enemies. Can I receive as such,” she said as she looked at Campeggio, “a man extorted from the pope by manifest lying?.....And as for you,” added she, turning haughtily to Wolsey, “having failed in attaining the tiara, you have sworn to revenge yourself on my nephew the emperor.....and you have kept him true promise; for of all his wars and vexations, he may only thank you. One victim was not enough for you. Forging abominable suppositions, you desire to plunge his aunt into a frightful abyss.....But my cause is just, and I trust it in the Lord’s hand.” After this bold language, the

unhappy Catherine withdrew to her apartments. The imminence of the danger effected a salutary revolution in her; she laid aside her brilliant ornaments, assumed the sober garments in which she is usually represented, and passed days and nights in mourning and in tears. Thus Campeggio saw his hopes deceived; he had thought to find a nun, and had met a queen and a mother.....He now proceeded to set every imaginable spring at work; as Catherine would not renounce Henry, he must try and prevail upon Henry to renounce his idea of separating from the queen. The Roman legate therefore changed his batteries, and turned them against the king.

Henry, always impatient, went one day unannounced to Campeggio's lodging, accompanied by Wolsey only: "As we are without witnesses," he said, taking his seat familiarly between the two cardinals, "let us speak freely of our affairs. — How shall you proceed?" But to his great astonishment and grief, the nuncio prayed him, with all imaginable delicacy, to renounce the divorce. At these words the fiery Tudor burst out:

“Is this how the pope keeps his word? He sends me an ambassador to annul my marriage, but in reality to confirm it.” He made a pause. Campeggio knew not what to say. Henry and Catherine being equally persuaded of the justice of their cause, the nuncio was in a dilemma. Wolsey himself suffered a martyrdom. The king’s anger grew fiercer; he had thought the legate would hasten to withdraw an imprudent expression, but Campeggio was dumb. “I see that you have chosen your part,” said Henry to the nuncio; “mine, you may be sure, will soon be taken also. Let the pope only persevere in this way of acting, and the apostolical see, covered with perpetual infamy, will be visited with a frightful destruction.” The lion had thrown off the lamb’s skin which he had momentarily assumed. Campeggio felt that he must appease the monarch. “Craft and delay” were his orders from Rome; and with that view the pope had provided him with the necessary arms. He hastened to produce the famous decretal which pronounced the divorce. “The holy father,” he told the king, “ardently desires that this matter should be terminated by a happy reconciliation between you and the queen; but if

that is impossible, you shall judge yourself whether or not his holiness can keep his promises.” He then read the bull, and even showed it to Henry, without permitting it, however, to leave his hands. This exhibition produced the desired effect: Henry grew calm. “Now I am at ease again,” he said; “this miraculous talisman revives all my courage. This decretal is the efficacious remedy that will restore peace to my oppressed conscience, and joy to my bruised heart. Write to his holiness, that this immense benefit binds me to him so closely, that he may expect from me more than his imagination can conceive.” And yet a few clouds gathered shortly after in the king’s mind.

Campeggio having shown the bull had hastened to lock it up again. Would he presume to keep it in his own hands? Henry and Wolsey will leave no means untried to get possession of it; that point gained, and victory is theirs.

Wolsey having returned to the nuncio, he asked him for the decretal with an air of candor as if it was the most natural thing in the world. He desired,

he said, to show it to the king's privy councilors. "The pope," replied Campeggio, "has granted this bull, not to be used, but to be kept secret; he simply desired to show the king the good feeling by which he was animated." Wolsey having failed, Henry tried his skill. "Have the goodness to hand me the bull which you showed me," said he. The nuncio respectfully refused. "For a single moment," he said. Campeggio still refused. The haughty Tudor retired, stifling his anger. Then Wolsey made another attempt, and founded his demand on justice. "Like you, I am delegated by his holiness to decide this affair," he said, "and I wish to study the important document which is to regulate our proceedings." — This was met by a new refusal. "What!" exclaimed the minister of Henry VIII, "am I not, like you, a cardinal?.....like you, a judge? your colleague?" It mattered not, the nuncio would not, by any means, let the decretal go. Clement was not deceived in the choice he had made of Campeggio; the ambassador was worthy of his master.

It was evident that the pope in granting the bull

had been acting a part: this trick revolted the king. It was no longer anger that he felt, but disgust.

Wolsey knew that Henry's contempt was more to be feared than his wrath. He grew alarmed, and paid the nuncio another visit. "The general commission," he said, "is insufficient, the decretal commission alone can be of service, and you do not permit us to read a word of it. .....The king and I place the greatest confidence in the good intentions of his holiness, and yet we find our expectations frustrated. Where is that paternal affection with which we had flattered ourselves? What prince has ever been trifled with as the king of England is now? If this is the way in which the Defender of the Faith is rewarded, Christendom will know what those who serve Rome will have to expect from her, and every power will withdraw its support. Do not deceive yourselves: the foundation on which the holy see is placed is so very insecure that the least movement will suffice to precipitate it into everlasting ruin. What a sad futurity!.....what inexpressible torture!.....whether I wake or sleep, gloomy thoughts continually pursue me like a

frightful nightmare.” This time Wolsey spoke the truth.

But all his eloquence was useless; Campeggio refused to give up the so much desired bull. When sending him, Rome had told him: “Above all, do not succeed!” This means having failed, there remained for Wolsey one other way of effecting the divorce. “Well, then,” he said to Campeggio, “let us pronounce it ourselves.” — “Far be it from us,” replied the nuncio; “the anger of the emperor will be so great, that the peace of Europe will be broken for ever.” — “I know how to arrange all that,” replied the English cardinal, “in political matters you may trust to me.” The nuncio then took another tone, and proudly wrapping himself up in his morality, he said: “I shall follow the voice of my conscience; if I see that the divorce is possible, I shall leap the ditch; if otherwise, I shall not.” — “Your conscience! that may be easily satisfied,” rejoined Wolsey. “Holy Scripture forbids a man to marry his brother’s widow; now no pope can grant what is forbidden by the law of God.” — “The Lord preserve us from such a principle,” exclaimed

the Roman prelate; “the power of the pope is unlimited.” — The nuncio had hardly put his conscience forward before it stumbled; it bound him to Rome and not to heaven. But for that matter, neither public opinion nor Campeggio’s own friends had any great idea of his morality; they thought that to make him leap the ditch, it was only requisite to know the price at which he might be bought. The bishop of Bayonne wrote to Montmorency: “Put at the close of a letter which I can show Campeggio something promissory, that he shall have benefices.....That will cost you nothing, and may serve in this matter of the marriage; for I know that he is longing for something of the sort.” — “What is to be done then,” said Wolsey at last, astonished at meeting with a resistance to which he was unaccustomed. “I shall inform the pope of what I have seen and heard,” replied Campeggio, “and I shall wait for his instructions.” Henry was forced to consent to this new course, for the nuncio hinted, that if it were opposed he would go in person to Rome to ask the pontiff’s orders, and he never would have returned. By this means several months were

gained.

During this time men’s minds were troubled. The prospect of a divorce between the king and queen had stirred the nation; and the majority, particularly among the women, declared against the king. “Whatever may be done,” the people said boldly, “whoever marries the Princess Mary will be king of England.” Wolsey’s spies informed him that Catherine and Charles V had many devoted partisans even at the court. He wished to make sure of this. “It is pretended,” he said one day in an indifferent tone, “that the emperor has boasted that he will get the king driven from his realm, and that by his majesty’s own subjects.....What do you think of it, my lords?” — “Tough against the spur,” says Du Bellay, the lords remained silent. At length, however, one of them more imprudent than the rest, exclaimed: “Such a boast will make the emperor lose more than a hundred thousand Englishmen.” This was enough for Wolsey. To lose them, he thought, Charles must have them. If Catherine thought of levying war against her husband, following the example of former queens

of England, she would have, then, a party ready to support her; this became dangerous.

The king and the cardinal immediately took their measures. More than 15,000 of Charles's subjects were ordered to leave London; the arms of the citizens were seized, "in order that they might have no worse weapon than the tongue;" the Flemish councilors accorded to Catherine were dismissed, after they had been heard by the king and Campeggio, "for they had no commission to speak to the other [Wolsey]" — and finally, they kept "a great and constant watch" upon the country. Men feared an invasion of England, and Henry was not of a humor to subject his kingdom to the pope.

This was not enough; the alarmed king thought it his duty to come to an explanation with his people; and having summoned the lords spiritual and temporal, the judges, the members of the privy-council, the mayor and aldermen of the city, and many of the gentry, to meet him at his palace of Bridewell on the 13th of November, he said to

them with a very condescending air: “You know, my lords and gentlemen, that for these twenty years past divine Providence has granted our country such prosperity as it had never known before. But in the midst of all the glory that surrounds me, the thought of my last hour often occurs to me, and I fear that if I should die without an heir, my death would cause more damage to my people than my life has done them good. God forbid, that for want of a legitimate king England should be again plunged into the horrors of civil war!” Then calling to mind the illegalities invalidating his marriage with Catherine, the king continued: “These thoughts have filled my mind with anxiety, and are continually pricking my conscience. This is the only motive, and God is my witness, which has made me lay this matter before the pontiff. As touching the queen, she is a woman incomparable in gentleness, humility, and buxomness, as I these twenty years have had experiment of; so that if I were to marry again, if the marriage might be good, I would surely choose her above all other women.

But if it be determined by judgment that our

marriage was against God’s law, and surely void, then I shall not only sorrow in departing from so good a lady and loving companion, but much more lament and bewail my unfortunate chance, that I have so long lived in adultery, to God’s great displeasure, and have no true heir of my body to inherit this realm.....Therefore I require of you all to pray with us that the very truth may be known, for the discharging of our conscience and the saving of our soul.” These words, though wanting in sincerity, were well calculated to soothe men’s minds. Unfortunately, it appears that after this speech from the crown, the official copy of which has been preserved, Henry added a few words of his own. “If however,” he said, according to Du Bellay, casting a threatening glance around him, “there should be any man whatsoever who speaks of his prince in other than becoming terms, I will show him that I am the master, and there is no head so high that I will not roll it from his shoulders.” This was a speech in Henry’s style; but we cannot give unlimited credit to Du Bellay’s assertions, this diplomatist being very fond, like others of his class, of “seasoning” his despatches. But whatever

may be the fact as regards the postscript, the speech on the divorce produced an effect. From that time there were no more jests, not even on the part of the Boleyns' enemies. Some supported the king, others were content to pity the queen in secret; the majority prepared to take advantage of a court-revolution which every one foresaw. "The king so plainly gave them to understand his pleasure," says the French ambassador, "that they speak more soberly than they have done hitherto." Henry wishing to silence the clamors of the people, and to allay the fears felt by the higher classes, gave several magnificent entertainments at one time in London, at another at Greenwich, now at Hampton Court, and then at Richmond. The queen accompanied him, but Anne generally remained "in a very handsome lodging which Henry had furnished for her," says Du Bellay. The cardinal, following his master's example, gave representations of French plays with great magnificence. All his hope was in France. "I desire nothing in England, neither in word nor in deed, which is not French," he said to the bishop of Bayonne. At length Anne Boleyn had accepted the

brilliant position she had at first refused, and every day her stately mansion (Suffolk House) was filled with a numerous court, — “more than ever had crowded to the queen.” — “Yes, yes,” said Du Bellay, as he saw the crowd turning towards the rising sun, “they wish by these little things to accustom the people to endure her, that when great ones are attempted, they may not be found so strange.” In the midst of these festivities the grand business did not slumber. When the French ambassador solicited the subsidy intended for the ransom of the sons of Francis I, the cardinal required of him in exchange a paper proving that the marriage had never been valid. Du Bellay excused himself on the ground of his age and want of learning; but being given to understand that he could not have the subsidy without it, he wrote the memoir in a single day. The enraptured cardinal and king entreated him to speak with Campeggio. The ambassador consented, and succeeded beyond all expectation. The nuncio, fully aware that a bow too much bent will break, made Henry by turns become the sport of hope and fear. “Take care how you assert that the pope had not the right to grant a

dispensation to the king," said he to the French bishop; "this would be denying his power, which is infinite. But," added he in a mysterious tone, "I will point out a road that will infallibly lead you to the mark. Show that the holy father has been deceived by false information. Push me hard on that," he continued, "so as to force me to declare that the dispensation was granted on erroneous grounds." Thus did the legate himself reveal the breach by which the fortress might be surprised. "Victory!" exclaimed Henry, as he entered Anne's apartments all beaming with joy.

But this confidence on the part of Campeggio was only a new trick.

"There is a great rumor at court," wrote Du Bellay soon after, "that the emperor and the king of France are coming together, and leaving Henry alone, so that all will fall on his shoulders." Wolsey, finding that the intrigues of diplomacy had failed, thought it his duty to put fresh springs in motion, "and by all good and honest means to gain the pope's favor.

He saw, besides, to his great sorrow, the new catholicity then forming in the world, and uniting, by the closest bonds, the Christians of England to those of the continent. To strike down one of the leaders of this evangelical movement might incline the court of Rome in Henry’s favor.

The cardinal undertook, therefore, to persecute Tyndale; and this resolution will now transport us to Germany.

Chapter 4

True Catholicity

The residence of Tyndale and his friends in foreign countries, and the connections there formed with pious Christians, testify to the fraternal spirit which the Reformation then restored to the church. It is in protestantism that true catholicity is to be found. The Romish church is not a catholic church. Separated from the churches of the east, which are the oldest in Christendom, and from the reformed churches, which are the purest, it is nothing but a sect, and that a degenerated one. A church which should profess to believe in an episcopal unity, but which kept itself separate from the episcopacy of Rome and of the East, and from the evangelical churches, would be no longer a catholic church; it would be a sect more sectarian still than that of the Vatican, a fragment of a fragment.

The church of the Savior requires a truer, a diviner unity than that of priests, who condemn one another. It was the reformers, and particularly

Tyndale, who proclaimed throughout Christendom the existence of a body of Christ, of which all the children of God are members. The disciples of the Reformation are the true catholics.

It was a catholicity of another sort that Wolsey desired to uphold. He did not reject certain reforms in the church, particularly such as brought him any profit; but, before all, he wished to preserve for the hierarchy their privileges and uniformity. The Romish church in England was then personified in him, and if he fell, its ruin would be near. His political talents and multiplied relations with the continent, caused him to discern more clearly than others the dangers which threatened the popedom. The publication of the Scriptures of God in English appeared to some a cloud without importance, which would soon disappear from the horizon; but to the foreseeing glance of Wolsey, it betokened a mighty tempest. Besides, he loved not the fraternal relations then forming between the evangelical Christians of Great Britain and of other nations. Annoyed by this spiritual catholicity, he resolved to procure the arrest of Tyndale, who was its

principal organ.

Already had Hackett, Henry's envoy to the Low Countries, caused the imprisonment of Harman, an Antwerp merchant, one of the principal supporters of the English reformer. But Hackett had in vain asked Wolsey for such documents as would convict him of treason (for the crime of loving the Bible was not sufficient to procure Harman's condemnation in Brabant); the envoy had remained without letters from England, and the last term fixed by the law having expired, Harman and his wife were liberated after seven months' imprisonment.

And yet Wolsey had not been inactive. The cardinal hoped to find elsewhere the cooperation which Margaret of Austria refused. It was Tyndale that he wanted, and everything seemed to indicate that he was then hidden at Cologne or in its neighborhood. Wolsey, recollecting senator Rincke and the services he had already performed, determined to send to him one John West, a friar of the Franciscan convent at Greenwich. West, a

somewhat narrow-minded but energetic man, was very desirous of distinguishing himself, and he had already gained some notoriety in England among the adversaries of the Reformation. Flattered by his mission, this vain monk immediately set off for Antwerp, accompanied by another friar, in order to seize Tyndale, and even Roy, once his colleague at Greenwich, and against whom he had there ineffectually contended in argument.

While these men were conspiring his ruin, Tyndale composed several works, got them printed, and sent to England, and prayed God night and day to enlighten his fellow countrymen. “Why do you give yourself so much trouble?” said some of his friends. “They will burn your books as they have burnt the Gospel.” — “They will only do what I expect,” replied he, “if they burn me also,” Already he beheld his own burning pile in the distance; but it was a sight which only served to increase his zeal.

Hidden, like Luther at the Wartburg, not however in a castle, but in a humble lodging,

Tyndale, like the Saxon reformer, spent his days and nights translating the Bible. But not having an elector of Saxony to protect him, he was forced to change his residence from time to time.

At this epoch, Fryth, who had escaped from the prisons of Oxford, rejoined Tyndale, and the sweets of friendship softened the bitterness of their exile. Tyndale having finished the New Testament, and begun the translation of the Old, the learned Fryth was of great use to him. The more they studied the word of God, the more they admired it. In the beginning of 1529, they published the books of Genesis and Deuteronomy, and addressing their fellow-countrymen, they said: “As thou readest, think that every syllable pertaineth to thine own self, and suck out the pith of the Scripture.” Then denying that visible signs naturally impart grace, as the schoolmen had pretended, Tyndale maintained that the sacraments are effectual only when the Holy Ghost sheds his influence upon them.

“The ceremonies of the law,” he wrote, “stood the Israelites in the same stead as the sacraments do

us. We are saved not by the power of the sacrifice or the deed itself, but by virtue of faith in the promise, whereof the sacrifice or ceremony was a token or sign. The Holy Ghost is no dumb God, no God that goeth a-mumming. Wherever the word is proclaimed, this inward witness worketh. If baptism preach me the washing in Christ's blood, so doth the Holy Ghost accompany it; and that deed of preaching through faith doth put away my sins. The ark of Noah saved them in the water through faith." The man who dared address England in language so contrary to the teaching of the middle ages must be imprisoned. John West, who had been sent with this object, arrived at Antwerp; Hackett procured for him as interpreter a friar of English descent, made him assume a secular dress, and gave him "three pounds" on the cardinal's account; the less attention the embassy attracted, the more likely it would be to succeed. But great was West's vexation, on reaching Cologne, to learn that Rincke was at Frankfort. But that mattered not; the Greenwich monk could search for Tyndale at Cologne, and desire Rincke to do the same at Frankfort; thus there would be

two searches instead of one. West procured a “swift” messenger, (he too was a monk,) and gave him the letter Wolsey had addressed to Rincke.

It was fair-time at Frankfort, and the city was filled with merchants and their wares. As soon as Rincke had finished reading Wolsey’s letter, he hastened to the burgomasters, and required them to confiscate the English translations of the Scriptures, and, above all, to seize “the heretic who was troubling England as Luther troubled Germany.” “Tyndale and his friends have not appeared in our fairs since the month of March 1528,” replied the magistrates, “and we know not whether they are dead or alive.” Rincke was not discouraged. John Schoot of Strasburg, who was said to have printed Tyndale’s books, and who cared less about the works he published than the money he drew from them, happened to be at Frankfort. “Where is Tyndale?” Rincke asked him. “I do not know,” replied the printer; but he confessed that he had printed a thousand volumes at the request of Tyndale and Roy. “Bring them to me,” continued the senator of Cologne. — “If a fair

price is paid me, I will give them up to you." Rincke paid all that was demanded.

Wolsey would now be gratified, for the New Testament annoyed him almost as much as the divorce; this book, so dangerous in his eyes, seemed on the point of raising a conflagration which would infallibly consume the edifice of Roman traditionalism. Rincke, who participated in his patron's fears, impatiently opened the volumes made over to him; but there was a sad mistake, they were not the New Testament, not even a work of Tyndale's, but one written by William Roy, a changeable and violent man, whom the reformer had employed for some time at Hamburg, and who had followed him to Cologne, but with whom he had soon become disgusted.

"I bade him farewell for our two lives," said Tyndale, "and a day longer." Roy, on quitting the reformer, had gone to Strasburg, where he boasted of his relations with him, and had got printed in that city a satire against Wolsey and the monastic orders, entitled the Burial of the Mass: this was the

book delivered to Rincke. The monk's sarcastic spirit had exceeded the legitimate bounds of controversy, and the senator accordingly dared not send the volumes to England. He did not however discontinue his inquiries, but searched every place where he thought he could discover the New Testament, and having seized all the suspected volumes, set off for Cologne. Yet he was not satisfied. He wanted Tyndale, and went about asking every one if they knew where to find him. But the reformer, whom he was seeking in so many places, and especially at Frankfort and Cologne, chanced to be residing at about equal distances from these two towns; so that Rincke, while travelling from one to the other, might have met him face to face, as Ahab's messenger met Elijah. Tyndale was at Marburg, whither he had been drawn by several motives. Prince Philip of Hesse was the great protector of the evangelical doctrines. The university had attracted attention in the Reform by the paradoxes of Lambert of Avignon.

Here a young Scotsman named Hamilton, afterwards illustrious as a martyr, had studied

shortly before, and here too the celebrated printer, John Luft, had his presses. In this city Tyndale and Fryth had taken up their abode, in September 1528, and, hidden on the quiet banks of the Lahn, were translating the Old Testament. If Rincke had searched this place he could not have failed to discover them. But either he thought not of it, or was afraid of the terrible landgrave. The direct road by the Rhine was that which he followed, and Tyndale escaped.

When he arrived at Cologne, Rincke had an immediate interview with West. Their investigations having failed, they must have recourse to more vigorous measures. The senator, therefore, sent the monk back to England, accompanied by his son Hermann, charging them to tell Wolsey: “To seize Tyndale we require fuller powers, ratified by the emperor. The traitors who conspire against the life of the king of England are not tolerated in the empire, much less Tyndale and all those who conspire against Christendom. He must be put to death; nothing but some striking example can check the Lutheran heresy. — And as

to ourselves," they were told to add, "by the favor of God there may possibly be an opportunity for his royal highness and your grace to recompense us." Rincke had not forgotten the subsidy of ten thousand pounds which he had received from Henry VII for the Turkish war, when he had gone to London as Maximillian's envoy.

West returned to England sorely vexed that he had failed in his mission.

What would they say at court and in his monastery? A fresh humiliation was in reserve for him. Roy, whom West had gone to look for on the banks of the Rhine, had paid a visit to his mother on the banks of the Thames; and to crown all, the new doctrines had penetrated into his own convent.

The warden, Father Robinson, had embraced them, and night and day the Greenwich monks read that New Testament which West had gone to Cologne to burn. The Antwerp friar, who had accompanied him on his journey, was the only person to whom he could confide his sorrows; but

he Franciscans sent him back again to the continent, and then amused themselves at poor West's expense. If he desired to tell of his adventures on the banks of the Rhine, he was laughed at; if he boasted of the names of Wolsey and Henry VIII, they jeered him still more. He desired to speak to Roy's mother, hoping to gain some useful information from her; this the monks prevented. "It is in my commission," he said. They ridiculed him more and more. Robinson, perceiving that the commission made West assume unbecoming airs of independence, requested Wolsey to withdraw it; and West, fancying he was about to be thrown into prison, exclaimed in alarm: "I am weary of my life!" and conjured a friend whom he had at court to procure him before Christmas an obedience under his lordship's hand and seal, enabling him to leave the monastery: "What you pay him for it," he added, "I shall see you be reimbursed." Thus did West expiate the fanatical zeal which had urged him to pursue the translator of the oracles of God. What became of him, we know not: he is never heard of more.

At that time Wolsey had other matters to engage him than this “obedience.” While West’s complaints were going to London, those of the king were travelling to Rome. The great business in the cardinal’s eyes was to maintain harmony between Henry and the church. There was no more thought about investigations in Germany, and for a time Tyndale was saved.

Chapter 5

Necessity of the Reformation

The king and a part of his people still adhered to the popedom, and so long as these bonds were not broken the word of God could not have free course. But to induce England to renounce Rome, there must indeed be powerful motives: and these were not wanting.

Wolsey had never given such pressing orders to any of Henry's ambassadors: "The king," he wrote to Da Casale on the 1st of November 1528, "commits this business to your prudence, dexterity, and fidelity; and I conjure you to employ all the powers of your genius, and even to surpass them. Be very sure that you have done nothing and can do nothing that will be more agreeable to the king, more desirable by me, and more useful and glorious for you and your family." Da Casale possessed a tenacity which justified the cardinal's confidence, and an active excitable mind: trembling at the thought of seeing Rome lose

England, he immediately requested an audience of Clement VII. “What!” said he to the pope, “just as it was proposed to go on with the divorce, your nuncio endeavors to dissuade the king!”.....There is no hope that Catherine of Aragon will ever give an heir to the crown. Holy father, there must be an end of this. Order Campeggio to place the decretal in his majesty’s hands.” — “What say you?” exclaimed the pope. “I would gladly lose one of my fingers to recover it again, and you ask me to make it public.....it would be my ruin.” Da Casale insisted: “We have a duty to perform,” he said; “we remind you at this last hour of the perils threatening the relations which unite Rome and England. The crisis is at hand. We knock at your door, we cry, we urge, we entreat, we lay before you the present and future dangers which threaten the papacy. ....The world shall know that the king at least has fulfilled the duty of a devoted son of the church. If your holiness desires to keep England in St. Peter’s fold, I repeat.....now is the time.....now is the time.” At these words, Da Casale, unable to restrain his emotion, fell down at the pope’s feet, and begged him to save the church

in Great Britain. The pope was moved.

“Rise,” said he, with marks of unwanted grief, “I grant you all that is in my power; I am willing to confirm the judgment which the legates may think it their duty to pass; but I acquit myself of all responsibility as to the untold evils which this matter may bring with it.....If the king, after having defended the faith and the church, desires to ruin both, on him alone will rest the responsibility of so great a disaster.” Clement granted nothing.

Da Casale withdrew disheartened, and feeling convinced that the pontiff was about to treat with Charles V.

Wolsey desired to save the popedom; but the popedom resisted. Clement VII was about to lose that island which Gregory the Great had won with such difficulty. The pope was in the most cruel position. The English envoy had hardly left the palace before the emperor’s ambassador entered breathing threats. The unhappy pontiff escaped the assaults of Henry only to be exposed to those of

Charles; he was thrown backwards and forwards like a ball. “I shall assemble a general council,” said the emperor through his ambassador, “and if you are found to have infringed the canons of the church in any point, you shall be proceeded against with every rigor.

Do not forget,” added his agent in a low tone, “that your birth is illegitimate, and consequently excludes you from the pontificate.” The timid Clement, imagining that he saw the tiara falling from his head, swore to refuse Henry everything. “Alas!” he said to one of his dearest confidants, “I repent in dust and ashes that I ever granted this decretal bull.

If the king of England so earnestly desires it to be given him, certainly it cannot be merely to know its contents. He is but too familiar with them. It is only to tie my hands in this matter of the divorce; I would rather die a thousand deaths.” Clement, to calm his agitation, sent one of his ablest gentlemen of the bed-chamber, Francis Campana, apparently to feed the king with fresh promises, but in reality

to cut the only thread on which Henry's hopes still hung. "We embrace your majesty," wrote the pope in the letter given to Campana, "with the paternal love your numerous merits deserve." Now Campana was sent to England to burn clandestinely the famous decretal; Clement concealed his blows by an embrace.

Rome had granted many divorces not so well founded as that of Henry VIII; but a very different matter from a divorce was in question here; the pope, desirous of upraising in Italy his shattered power, was about to sacrifice the Tudor, and to prepare the triumph of the Reformation. Rome was separating herself from England.

All Clement's fear was, that Campana would arrive too late to burn the bull; he was soon reassured; a dead calm prevented the great matter from advancing. Campeggio, who took care to be in no hurry about his mission, gave himself up, like a skillful diplomatist, to his worldly tastes; and when he could not, due respect being had to the state of his legs, indulge in the chase, of which he

was very fond, he passed his time in gambling, to which he was much addicted. Respectable historians assert that he indulged in still more illicit pleasures. But this could not last forever, and the nuncio sought some new means of delay, which offered itself in the most unexpected manner. One day an officer of the queen's presented to the Roman legate a brief of Julius II, bearing the same date as the bull of dispensation, signed too, like that, by the secretary Sigismond, and in which the pope expressed himself in such a manner, that Henry's objections fell of themselves. "The emperor," said Catherine's messenger, "has discovered this brief among the papers of Puebla, the Spanish ambassador in England, at the time of the marriage." — "It is impossible to go on," said Campeggio to Wolsey; "all your reasoning is now cut from under you. We must wait for fresh instructions." This was the cardinal's conclusion at every new incident, and the journey from London to the Vatican being very long (without reckoning the Roman dilatoriness), the expedient was infallible.

Thus there existed two acts of the same pope, signed on the same day — the one secret, the other public, in contradiction to each other. Henry determined to send a new mission to Rome. Anne proposed for this embassy one of the most accomplished gentlemen of the court, her cousin, Sir Francis Bryan. With him was joined an Italian, Peter Vannes, Henry's Latin secretary. "You will search all the registers of the time of Julius II," said Wolsey to them; "you will study the handwriting of Secretary Sigismond, and you will attentively examine the ring of the fisherman used by that pontiff. — Moreover, you will inform the pope that it is proposed to set a certain greyfriar, named De Angelis, in his place, to whom Charles would give the spiritual authority, reserving the temporal for himself. You will manage so that Clement takes alarm at the project, and you will then offer him a guard of 2000 men to protect him. You will ask whether, in case the queen should desire to embrace a religious life, on condition of the king's doing the same, and Henry should yield to this wish, he could have the assurance that the pope would afterwards release him from his vows. And,

finally, you will inquire whether, in case the queen should refuse to enter a convent, the pope would permit the king to have two wives, as we see in the Old Testament." The idea which has brought so much reproach on the landgrave of Hesse was not a new one; the honor of it belongs to a cardinal and legate of Rome, whatever Bossuet may say. "Lastly," continued Wolsey, "as the pope is of a timid disposition, you will not fail to season your remonstrances with threats.

You, Peter, will take him aside and tell him that, as an Italian, having more at heart than any one the glory of the holy see, it is your duty to warn him, that if he persists, the king, his realm, and many other princes, will for ever separate from the papacy." It was not on the mind of the pope alone that it was necessary to act; the rumor that the emperor and the king of France were treating together disturbed Henry. Wolsey had vainly tried to sound Du Bellay; these two priests tried craft against craft. Besides, the Frenchman was not always seasonably informed by his court, letters taking ten days to come from Paris to London.

Henry resolved to have a conference with the ambassador. He began by speaking to him of his matter, says Du Bellay, “and I promise you,” he added, “that he needs no advocate, he understands the whole business so well.” Henry next touched upon the wrongs of Francis I, “recalling so many things that the envoy knew not what to say.” — “I pray you, Master Ambassador,” said Henry in conclusion, “to beg the king, my brother, to give up a little of his amusements during a year only for the prompt despatch of his affairs. Warn those whom it concerns.” Having given this spur to the king of France, Henry turned his thoughts towards Rome.

In truth, the fatal brief from Spain tormented him day and night, and the cardinal tortured his mind to find proofs of its non-authenticity; if he could do so, he would acquit the papacy of the charge of duplicity, and accuse the emperor of forgery. At last he thought he had succeeded. “In the first place,” he said to the king, “the brief has the same date as the bull. Now, if the errors in the latter had been found out on the day it was drawn up, it would have been more natural to make

another than to append a brief pointing out the errors. What! the same pope, the same day, at the petition of the same persons, give out two rescripts for one effect, one of which contradicts the other! Either the bull was good, and then, why the brief? or the bull was bad, and then, why deceive princes by a worthless bull? Many names are found in the brief incorrectly spelt, and these are faults which the pontifical secretary, whose accuracy is so well known, could not have committed. Lastly, no one in England ever heard mention of this brief; and yet it is here that it ought to be found." Henry charged Knight, his principal secretary, to join the other envoys with all speed, in order to prove to the pope the supposititious character of the document.

This important paper revived the irritation felt in England against Charles V, and it was resolved to come to extremities. Every one discontented with Austria took refuge in London, particularly the Hungarians. The ambassador from Hungary proposed to Wolsey to adjudge the imperial crown of Germany to the elector of Saxony or the landgrave of Hesse, the two chiefs of

protestantism. Wolsey exclaimed in alarm: “It will be an inconvenience to Christendom, they are so Lutheran.” But the Hungarian ambassador so satisfied him, that in the end he did not find the matter quite so inconvenient. These schemes were prospering in London, when suddenly a new metamorphosis took place under the eyes of Du Bellay.

The king, the cardinal, and the ministers appeared in strange consternation.

Vincent da Casale had just arrived from Rome with a letter from his cousin the prothonotary, informing Henry that the pope, seeing the triumph of Charles V, the indecision of Francis I, the isolation of the king of England, and the distress of his cardinal, had flung himself into the arms of the emperor. At Rome they went so far as to jest about Wolsey, and to say that since he could not be St. Peter they would make him St. Paul.

While they were ridiculing Wolsey at Rome, at St. Germain’s they were joking about Henry. “I

will make him get rid of the notions he has in his head," said Francis; and the Flemings, who were again sent out of the country, said as they left London, "that this year they would carry on the war so vigorously, that it would be really a sight worth seeing." Besides these public griefs, Wolsey had his private ones. Anne Boleyn, who had already begun to use her influence on behalf of the despotic cardinal's victims, gave herself no rest until Cheyney, a courtier disgraced by Wolsey, had been restored to the king's favor. Anne even gave utterance to several biting sarcasms against the cardinal, and the duke of Norfolk and his party began "to speak big," says Du Bellay. At the moment when the pope, scared by Charles V, was separating from England, Wolsey himself was tottering. Who shall uphold the papacy?.....After Wolsey, nobody! Rome was on the point of losing the power which for nine centuries she had exercised in the bosom of this illustrious nation. The cardinal's anguish cannot be described; unceasingly pursued by gloomy images, he saw Anne on the throne causing the triumph of the Reformation: this nightmare was stifling him. "His

grace, the legate, is in great trouble," wrote the bishop of Bayonne.

"However.....he is more cunning than they are." To still the tempest Wolsey had only one resource left: this was to render Clement favorable to his master's designs. The crafty Campana, who had burnt the decretal, conjured him not to believe all the reports transmitted to him concerning Rome. "To satisfy the king," said he to the cardinal, "the holy father will, if necessary, descend from the pontifical throne." Wolsey therefore resolved to send to Rome a more energetic agent than Vannes, Bryan, or Knight, and cast his eyes on Gardiner. His courage began to revive, when an unexpected event fanned once more his loftiest hopes.

Chapter 6

The Pope’s Illness

On the 6th of January 1529, the feast of Epiphany, just as the pope was performing mass, he was attacked by a sudden illness; he was taken to his room, apparently in a dying state. When this news reached London, the cardinal resolved to hasten to abandon England, where the soil trembled under his feet, and to climb boldly to the throne of the pontiffs. Bryan and Vannes, then at Florence, hurried on to Rome through roads infested with robbers. At Orvieto they were informed the pope was better; at Viterbo, no one knew whether he was alive or dead; at Ronciglione, they were assured that he had expired; and, finally, when they reached the metropolis of the popedom, they learnt that Clement could not survive, and that the imperialists, supported by the Colonnas, were striving to have a pope devoted to Charles V. But great as might be the agitation at Rome, it was greater still at Whitehall. If God caused De’Medici to descend from the pontifical throne, it could only

be, thought Wolsey, to make him mount it. “It is expedient to have such a pope as may save the realm,” said he to Gardiner. “And although it cannot but be incommodious to me in this mine old age to be the common father, yet, when all things be well pondered, the qualities of all the cardinals well considered, I am the only one, without boasting, that can and will remedy the king’s secret matter. And were it not for the redintegration of the state of the church, and especially to relieve the king and his realm from their calamities, all the riches and honor of the world should not cause me to accept the said dignity. Nevertheless, I conform myself to the necessities of the times. Wherefore, Master Stephen, that this matter may succeed, I pray you to apply all your ingenuity, spare neither money nor labor. I give you the amplest powers, without restriction or limitation.” Gardiner departed to win for his master the coveted tiara.

Henry VIII and Wolsey, who could hardly restrain their impatience, soon heard of the pontiff’s death from different quarters. “The emperor has taken away Clement’s life,” said

Wolsey, blinded by hatred.

“Charles,” rejoined the king, “will endeavor to obtain by force or fraud a pope according to his desires.” “Yes, to make him his chaplain,” replied Wolsey, “and with that view, my lord, make up your mind to be pope.” — “That alone,” answered the cardinal, “can bring your Majesty’s weighty matter to a happy termination, and by saving you, save the church.....and myself also,” he thought in his heart. “Let us see, let us count the voters.” Henry and his minister then wrote down on a strip of parchment the names of all the cardinals, marking with the letter A those who were on the side of the kings of England and France, and with the letter B all who favored the emperor. “There was no C,” says a chronicler sarcastically, “to signify any on Christ’s side.” The letter N designated the neutrals. “The cardinals present,” said Wolsey, “will not exceed thirty-nine, and we must have two-thirds, that is, twenty-six. Now, there are twenty upon whom we can reckon; we must therefore, at any price, gain six of the neutrals.” Wolsey, deeply sensible of the

importance of an election that would decide whether England was to be reformed or not, carefully drew up the instructions, which Henry signed, and which history must register. “We desire and ordain,” the ambassadors were informed in them, “that you secure the election of the cardinal of York; not forgetting that next to the salvation of his own soul, there is nothing the king desires more earnestly.

“To gain over the neutral cardinals you will employ two methods in particular. The first is, the cardinals being present, and having God and the Holy Ghost before them, you shall remind them that the cardinal of York alone can save Christendom.

“The second is, because human fragility suffereth not all things to be pondered and weighed in a just balance, it appertaineth in matter of so high importance, to the comfort and relief of all Christendom, to succor the infirmity that may chance.....not for corruption, you will understand.....but rather to help the lacks and

defaults of human nature. And, therefore, it shall be expedient that you promise spiritual offices, dignities, rewards of money, or other things which shall seem meet to the purpose.

“Then shall you, with good dexterity, combine and knit those favorable to us in a perfect fastness and indissoluble knot. And that they may be the better animated to finish the election to the king’s desire, you shall offer them a guard of 2000 or 3000 men from the kings of England and France, from the viscount of Turin, and the republic of Venice.

“If, notwithstanding all your exertions, the election should fail, then the cardinals of the king’s shall repair to some sure place, and there proceed to such an election as may be to God’s pleasure.

“And to win more friends for the king, you shall promise, on the one hand, to the Cardinal de’Medici and his party our special favor; and the Florentines, on the other hand, you shall put in comfort of the exclusion of the said family

De’Medici. Likewise you shall put the cardinals in perfect hope of recovering the patrimony of the church; and you shall contain the Venetians in good trust of a reasonable way to be taken for Cervia and Ravenna (which formed part of the patrimony) to their contentment.” Such were the means by which the cardinal hoped to win the papal throne.

To the right he said yes, to the left he said no. What would it matter that these perfidies were one day discovered, provided it were after the election. Christendom might be very certain that the choice of the future pontiff would be the work of the Holy Ghost. Alexander VI had been a poisoner; Julius II had given way to ambition, anger, and vice; the liberal Leo X had passed his life in worldly pursuits; the unhappy Clement VII had lived on stratagems and lies; Wolsey would be their worthy successor: “All the seven deadly sins have worn the triple crown.” Wolsey found his excuse in the thought, that if he succeeded, the divorce was secured, and England enslaved for ever to the court of Rome.

Success at first appeared probable. Many cardinals spoke openly in favor of the English prelate; one of them asked for a detailed account of his life, in order to present it as a model to the church; another worshipped him (so he said) as a divinity.....Among the gods and popes adored at Rome there were some no better than he. But erelong alarming news reached England.

What grief! the pope was getting better. “Conceal your instructions,” wrote the cardinal, “and reserve them in omnem eventum.” Wolsey not having obtained the tiara, it was necessary at least to gain the divorce. “God declares,” said the English ambassadors to the pope, “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Therefore, the king, taking God alone for his guide, requests of you, in the first place, an engagement to pronounce the divorce in the space of three months, and in the second the avocation to Rome.” — “The promise first, and only after that the avocation,” Wolsey had said; “for I fear that if the pope begins with the avocation, he will never pronounce the

divorce.” — “Besides,” added the envoys, “the king’s second marriage admits of no refusal, whatever bulls or briefs there may be. The only issue of this matter is the divorce; the divorce in one way or another must be procured.” Wolsey had instructed his envoys to pronounce these words with a certain air of familiarity, and at the same time with a gravity calculated to produce an effect. His expectations were deceived: Clement was colder than ever. He had determined to abandon England in order that he might secure the States of the Church, of which Charles was then master, thus sacrificing the spiritual to the temporal. “The pope will not do the least thing for your majesty,” wrote Bryan to the king; “your matter may well be in his Pater noster, but it certainly is not in his Credo.” “Increase in importunity,” answered the king; “the cardinal of Verona should remain about the pope’s person and counterbalance the influence of De Angelis and the archbishop of Capua. I would rather lose my two crowns than be beaten by these two friars.” Thus was the struggle about to become keener than ever, when Clement’s relapse once more threw doubt on everything. He was always

between life and death; and this perpetual alternation agitated the king and the impatient cardinal in every way. The latter considered that the pope had need of merits to enter the kingdom of heaven. “Procure an interview with 1954 the pope,” he wrote to the envoys, “even though he be in the very agony of death; and represent to him that nothing will be more likely to save his soul than the bill of divorce.” Henry’s commissioners were not admitted; but towards the end of March, the deputies appearing in a body, the pope promised to examine the letter from Spain. Vannes began to fear this document; he represented that those who had fabricated it would have been able to give it an appearance of authenticity. “Rather declare immediately that this brief is not a brief,” said he to the pope. “The king of England, who is your holiness’s son, is not so like the rest of the world.

We cannot put the same shoe on every foot.” This rather vulgar argument did not touch Clement. “If to content your master in this business,” said he, “I cannot employ my head, at least I will my

finger.” — “Be pleased to explain yourself,” replied Vannes, who found the finger a very little matter. — “I mean,” resumed the pontiff, “that I shall employ every means, provided they are honorable.” Vannes withdrew disheartened.

He immediately conferred with his colleagues, and all together, alarmed at the idea of Henry’s anger, returned to the pontiff; they thrust aside the lackeys, who endeavored to stop them, and made their way into his bedchamber. Clement opposed them with that resistance of inertia by which the popedom has gained its greatest victories: siluit, he remained silent. Of what consequence to the pontiff were Tudor, his island, and his church, when Charles of Austria was threatening him with his armies?

Clement, less proud than Hildebrand, submitted willingly to the emperor’s power, provided the emperor would protect him. “I had rather,” he said, “be Caesar’s servant, not only in a temple, but in a stable if necessary, than be exposed to the insults of rebels and vagabonds.” At the same time he

wrote to Campeggio: “Do not irritate the king, but spin out this matter as much as possible; the Spanish brief gives us the means.” In fact, Charles V had twice shown Lee the original document, and Wolsey, after this ambassador’s report, began to believe that it was not Charles who had forged the brief, but that Pope Julius II had really given two contradictory documents on the same day. Accordingly the cardinal now feared to see this letter in the pontiff’s hands. “Do all you can to dissuade the pope from seeking the original in Spain,” wrote he to one of his ambassadors; “it may exasperate the emperor.” We know how cautious the cardinal was towards Charles. Intrigue attained its highest point at this epoch, and Englishmen and Romans encountered craft with craft. “In such ticklish negotiations,” says Burnet, (who had had some little experience in diplomacy,) “ministers must say and unsay as they are instructed, which goes of course as a part of their business.” Henry’s envoys to the pope intercepted the letters sent from Rome, and had Campeggio’s seized.

On his part the pope indulged in flattering smiles and perfidious equivocations. Bryan wrote to Henry VIII: “Always your grace hath done for him in deeds, and he hath recompensed you with fair words and fair writings, of which both I think your grace shall lack none; but as for the deeds, I never believe to see them, and especially at this time.” Bryan had comprehended the court of Rome better perhaps than many politicians. Finally, Clement himself, wishing to prepare the king for the blow he was about to inflict, wrote to him: “We have been able to find nothing that would satisfy your ambassadors.” Henry thought he knew what this message meant: that he had found nothing, and would find nothing; and accordingly this prince, who, if we may believe Wolsey, had hitherto shown incredible patience and gentleness, gave way to all his violence. “Very well then,” said he; “my lords and I well know how to withdraw ourselves from the authority of the Roman see.” Wolsey turned pale, and conjured his master not to rush into that fearful abyss; Campeggio, too, endeavored to revive the king’s hopes. But it was all of no use. Henry recalled his ambassadors.

Henry, it is true, had not yet reached the age when violent characters become inflexible from the habit they have encouraged of yielding to their passions. But the cardinal, who knew his master, knew also that his inflexibility did not depend upon the number of his years; he thought Rome's power in England was lost, and, placed between Henry and Clement, he exclaimed: "How shall I avoid Scylla, and not fall into Charybdis?" He begged the king to make one last effort by sending Dr.

Bennet to the pope with orders to support the avocation to Rome, and he gave him a letter in which he displayed all the resources of his eloquence.

"How can it be imagined," he wrote, "that the persuasions of sense urge the king to break a union in which the ardent years of his youth were passed with such purity? .....The matter is very different. I am on the spot, I know the state of men's minds.....Pray, believe me.....The divorce is the secondary question; the primary one is the fidelity

of this realm to the papal see. The nobility, gentry, and citizens all exclaim with indignation: Must our fortunes, and even our lives, depend upon the nod of a foreigner? We must abolish, or at the very least diminish, the authority of the Roman pontiff. ....Most holy father, we cannot mention such things without a shudder." .....This new attempt was also unavailing. The pope demanded of Henry how he could doubt his good will, seeing that the king of England had done so much for the apostolic see. This appeared a cruel irony to Tudor; the king requested a favor of the pope, and the pope replied by calling to mind those which the papacy had received from his hands. "Is this the way," men asked in England, "in which Rome pays her debts?" Wolsey had not reached the term of his misfortunes. Gardiner and Bryan had just returned to London: they declared that to demand an avocation to Rome was to lose their cause. Accordingly Wolsey, who turned to every wind, ordered Da Casale, in case Clement should pronounce the avocation, to appeal from the pope, the false head of the church, to the true vicar of Jesus Christ. This was almost in Luther's style.

Who was this true vicar? Probably a pope nominated by the influence of England.

But this proceeding did not assure the cardinal: he was losing his judgment.

A short time before this Du Bellay, who had just returned from Paris, whither he had gone to retain France on the side of England, had been invited to Richmond by Wolsey. As the two prelates were walking in the park, on that hill whence the eye ranges over the fertile and undulating fields through which the winding Thames pours its tranquil waters, the unhappy cardinal observed to the bishop: “My trouble is the greatest that ever was!.....I have excited and carried on this matter of the divorce, to dissolve the union between the two houses of Spain and England, by sowing misunderstanding between them, as if I had no part in it. You know it was in the interest of France; I therefore entreat the king your master and her majesty to do everything that may forward the divorce. I shall esteem such a favor more than if they made me pope; but if they

refuse me, my ruin is inevitable.” And then giving way to despair, he exclaimed: “Alas! would that I were going to be buried tomorrow!” The wretched man was drinking the bitter cup his perfidies had prepared for him. All seemed to conspire against Henry, and Bennet was recalled shortly after. It was said at court and in the city: “Since the pope sacrifices us to the emperor, let us sacrifice the pope.” Clement VII, intimidated by the threats of Charles V, and tottering upon his throne, madly repelled with his foot the bark of England. Europe was all attention, and began to think that the proud vessel of Albion, cutting the cable that bound her to the pontiffs, would boldly spread her canvass to the winds, and ever after sail the sea alone, wafted onwards by the breeze that comes from heaven.

The influence of Rome over Europe is in great measure political. It loses a kingdom by a royal quarrel, and might in this same way lose ten.

Chapter 7

Discussion between the Evangelicals and the Catholics

Other circumstances from day to day rendered the emancipation of the church more necessary. If behind these political debates there had not been found a Christian people, resolved never to temporize with error, it is probable that England, after a few years of independence, would have fallen back into the bosom of Rome. The affair of the divorce was not the only one agitating men’s minds; the religious controversies, which for some years filled the continent, were always more animated at Oxford and Cambridge. The Evangelicals and the Catholics (not very catholic indeed) warmly discussed the great questions which the progress of events brought before the world. The former maintained that the primitive church of the apostles and the actual church of the papacy were not identical; the latter affirmed, on

the contrary, the identity of popery and apostolic Christianity. Other Romish doctors in later times, finding this position somewhat embarrassing, have asserted that Catholicism existed only in the germ in the apostolic church, and had subsequently developed itself. But a thousand abuses, a thousand errors may creep into a church under cover of this theory. A plant springs from the seed and grows up in accordance with immutable laws; while a doctrine cannot be transformed in the mind of man without falling under the influence of sin. It is true that the disciples of popery have supposed a constant action of the Divine Spirit in the Catholic Church, which excludes every influence of error. To stamp on the development of the church the character of truth, they have stamped on the church itself the character of infallibility; quod erat demonstrandum. Their reasoning is a mere begging of the question. To know whether the Romish development is identical with the gospel, we must examine it by Scripture.

It was not university men alone who occupied themselves with Christian truth. The separation

which has been remarked in other times between the opinions of the people and of the learned, did not now exist. What the doctors taught, the citizens practiced; Oxford and London embraced each other. The theologians knew that learning has need of life, and the citizens believed that life has need of that learning which derives the doctrine from the wells of the Scriptures of God. It was the harmony between these two elements, the one theological, the other practical, which constituted the strength of the English reformation.

The evangelical life in the capital alarmed the clergy more than the evangelical doctrine in the colleges. Since Monmouth had escaped, they must strike another. Among the London merchants was John Tewkesbury, one of the oldest friends of the Scriptures in England. As early as 1512 he had become possessor of a manuscript copy of the Bible, and had attentively studied it; when Tyndale's New Testament appeared, he read it with avidity; and, finally, The Wicked Mammon had completed the work of his conversion. Being a man of heart and understanding, clever in all he

undertook, a ready and fluent speaker, and liking to get to the bottom of everything, Tewkesbury like Monmouth became very influential in the city, and one of the most learned in Scripture of any of the evangelicals.

These generous Christians, being determined to consecrate to God the good things they had received from him, were the first among that long series of laymen who were destined to be more useful to the truth than many ministers and bishops. They found time to interest themselves about the most trifling details of the kingdom of God; and in the history of the Reformation in Britain their names should be inscribed beside those of Latimer and Tyndale.

The activity of these laymen could not escape the cardinal’s notice.

Clement VII was abandoning England: it was necessary for the English bishops, by crushing the heretics, to show that they would not abandon the popedom. We can understand the zeal of these

prelates, and without excusing their persecutions, we are disposed to extenuate their crime. The bishops determined to ruin Tewkesbury. One day in April 1529, as he was busy among his peltries, the officers entered his warehouse, arrested him, and led him away to the bishop of London's chapel, where, besides the ordinary (Tonstall), the bishops of Ely, St. Asaph, Bath, and Lincoln, with the abbot of Westminster, were on the bench. The composition of this tribunal indicated the importance of his case. The emancipation of the laity, thought these judges, is perhaps a more dangerous heresy than justification by faith.

"John Tewkesbury," said the bishop of London, "I exhort you to trust less to your own wit and learning, and more unto the doctrine of the holy mother the church." Tewkesbury made answer, that in his judgment he held no other doctrine than that of the church of Christ. Tonstall then broached the principle charge, that of having read the Wicked Mammon, and after quoting several passages, he exclaimed: "Renounce these errors." — "I find no fault in the book," replied Tewkesbury. "It has

enlightened my conscience and consoled my heart. But it is not my gospel. I have studied the Holy Scriptures these seventeen years, and as a man sees the spots of his face in a glass, so by reading them I have learnt the faults of my soul. If there is a disagreement between you and the New Testament, put yourselves in harmony with it, rather than desire to put that in accord with you." The bishops were surprised that a leather-seller should speak so well, and quote Scripture so happily that they were unable to resist him. Annoyed at being catechized by a layman, the bishops of Bath, St. Asaph, and Lincoln thought they could conquer him more easily by the rack than by their arguments. He was taken to the Tower, where they ordered him to be put to the torture. His limbs were crushed, which was contrary to the laws of England, and the violence of the rack tore from him a cry of agony to which the priests replied by a shout of exultation. The inflexible merchant had promised at last to renounce Tyndale's Wicked Mammon. Tewkesbury left the Tower "almost a cripple," and returned to his house to lament the fatal word which the question had extorted from him, and to

prepare in the silence of faith to confess in the burning pile the precious name of Christ Jesus.

We must, however, acknowledge that the “question” was not Rome’s only argument. The gospel had two classes of opponents in the sixteenth century, as in the first ages of the church. Some attacked it with the torture, others with their writings. Sir Thomas More, a few years later, was to have recourse to the first of these arguments; but for the moment he took up his pen. He had first studied the writings of the Fathers of the church, and of the Reformers, but rather as an advocate than as a theologian; and then, armed at all points, he rushed into the arena of polemics, and in his attacks dealt those “technical convictions and that malevolent subtlety,” says one of his greatest admirers, “from which the honestest men of his profession are not free.” Jests and sarcasms had fallen from his pen in his discussion with Tyndale, as in his controversy with Luther. Shortly after Tewkesbury’ affair (in June 1529) there appeared A Dialogue of Sir Thomas More, Knt., touching the pestilent Sect of Luther and Tyndale, by the

one begun in Saxony, and by the other labored to be brought into England. Tyndale soon became informed of More's publication, and a remarkable combat ensued between these two representatives of the two doctrines that were destined to divide Christendom — Tyndale the champion of Scripture, and More the champion of the church. More having called his book a dialogue, Tyndale adopted this form in his reply, and the two combatants valiantly crossed their swords, though wide seas lay between them. This theological duel is not without importance in the history of the Reformation. The struggles of diplomacy, of sacerdotalism, and of royalty were not enough; there must be struggles of doctrine. Rome had set the hierarchy above the faith; the Reformation was to restore faith to its place above the hierarchy. MORE. Christ said not, the Holy Ghost shall write, but shall teach.

Whatsoever the church says, it is the word of God, though it be not in Scripture.

TYNDALE. What! Christ and the apostles not

spoken of Scriptures!.....These are written, says St. John, that ye believe, and through belief have life. (1 John 2:1; Romans 15:4; Matthew 22:29.) MORE. The apostles have taught by mouth many things they did not write, because they should not come into the hands of the heathen for mocking.

TYNDALE. I pray you what thing more to be mocked by the heathen could they teach than the resurrection; and that Christ was God and man, and died between two thieves? And yet all these things the apostles wrote. And again, purgatory, penance, and satisfaction for sin, and praying to saints, are marvelous agreeable unto the superstition of the heathen people, so that they need not to abstain from writing of them for fear lest the heathen should have mocked them. MORE. We must not examine the teaching of the church by Scripture, but understand Scripture by means of what the church says.

TYNDALE. What! Does the air give light to the sun, or the sun to the air? Is the church before the gospel, or the gospel before the church? Is not

the father older than the son? God begat us with his own will, with the word of truth, says St. James (i. 18). If he who begetteth is before him who is begotten, the word is before the church, or, to speak more correctly, before the congregation.

MORE. Why do you say congregation and not church?

TYNDALE. Because by that word church, you understand nothing but a multitude of shorn and oiled, which we now call the spirituality or clergy; while the word of right is common unto all the congregation of them that believe in Christ. MORE. The church is the pope and his sect or followers.

TYNDALE. The pope teacheth us to trust in holy works for salvation, as penance, saints' merits, and friars' coats. Now, he that hath no faith to be saved through Christ, is not of Christ's church.

MORE. The Romish church from which the

Lutherans came out, was before them, and therefore is the right one.

TYNDALE. In like manner you may say, the church of the Pharisees, whence Christ and his apostles came out, was before them, and was therefore the right church, and consequently Christ and his disciples are heretics.

MORE. No: the apostles came out from the church of the Pharisees because they found not Christ there; but your priests in Germany and elsewhere have come out of our church because they wanted wives.

TYNDALE. Wrong.....these priests were at first attached to what you call heresies, and then they took wives; but yours were first attached to the holy doctrine of the pope, and then they took harlots.

MORE. Luther’s books be open, if ye will not believe us.

TYNDALE. Nay, ye have shut them up, and have even burnt them.

....

MORE. I marvel that you deny purgatory, Sir William, except it be a plain point with you to go straight to hell. TYNDALE. I know no other purging but faith in the cross of Christ; while you, for a groat or a sixpence, buy some secret pills [indulgences] which you take to purge yourselves of your sins. MORE. Faith, then, is your purgatory, you say; there is no need, therefore, of works — a most immoral doctrine!

TYNDALE. It is faith alone that saves us, but not a bare faith. When a horse beareth a saddle and a man thereon, we may well say that the horse only and alone beareth the saddle, but we do not mean the saddle empty, and no man thereon. In this manner did the catholic and the evangelical carry on the discussion.

According to Tyndale, what constitutes the true

church is the work of the Holy Ghost within; according to More, the constitution of the papacy without. The spiritual character of the gospel is thus put in opposition to the formalist character of the Roman church. The Reformation restored to our belief the solid foundation of the word of God; for the sand it substituted the rock. In the discussion to which we have just been listening, the advantage remained not with the catholic. Erasmus, a friend of More's, embarrassed by the course the latter was taking, wrote to Tonstall: "I cannot heartily congratulate More." Henry interrupted the celebrated knight in these contests to send him to Cambray, where a peace was negotiating between France and the empire.

Wolsey would have been pleased to go himself; but his enemies suggested to the king, "that it was only that he might not expedite the matter of the divorce." Henry, therefore, despatched More, Knight, and Tonstall; but Wolsey had created so many delays that they did not arrive until after the conclusion of the Ladies' Peace (August 1529). The king's vexation was extreme. Du Bellay had in

vain helped him to spend a good preparatory July to make him swallow the dose. Henry was angry with Wolsey, Wolsey threw the blame on the ambassador, and the ambassador defended himself, he tells us, “with tooth and nail.” By way of compensation, the English envoys concluded with the emperor a treaty prohibiting on both sides the printing and sale of “any Lutheran books.” Some of them could have wished for a good persecution, for a few burning piles, it may be. A singular opportunity occurred. In the spring of 1529, Tyndale and Fryth had left Marburg for Antwerp, and were thus in the vicinity of the English envoys. What West had been unable to effect, it was thought the two most intelligent men in Britain could not fail to accomplish. “Tyndale must be captured,” said More and Tonstall. — “You do not know what sort of a country you are in,” replied Hackett. “Will you believe that on the 7th of April, Harman arrested me at Antwerp for damages, caused by his imprisonment? If you can lay anything to my charge as a private individual, I said to the officer, I am ready to answer for myself; but if you arrest me as ambassador, I know no

judge but the emperor. Upon which the procurator had the audacity to reply, that I was arrested as ambassador; and the lords of Antwerp only set me at liberty on condition that I should appear again at the first summons. These merchants are so proud of their franchises, that they would resist even Charles himself." This anecdote was not at all calculated to encourage More; and not caring about a pursuit, which promised to be of little use, he returned to England. But the bishop of London, who was left behind, persisted in the project, and repaired to Antwerp to put it in execution.

Tyndale was at that time greatly embarrassed; considerable debts, incurred with his printers, compelled him to suspend his labors. Nor was this all: the prelate who had spurned him so harshly in London, had just arrived in the very city where he lay concealed.....What would become of him?.....A merchant, named Augustin Packington, a clever man, but somewhat inclined to dissimulation, happening to be at Antwerp on business, hastened to pay his respects to the bishop. The latter observed, in the course of conversation:

“I should like to get hold of the books with which England is poisoned.” — “I can perhaps serve you in that matter,” replied the merchant. “I know the Flemings, who have bought Tyndale’s books; so that if your lordship will be pleased to pay for them, I will make sure of them all.” — “Oh, oh!” thought the bishop, “Now, as the proverb says, I shall have God by the toe. Gentle Master Packington,” he added in a flattering tone, “I will pay for them whatsoever they cost you. I intend to burn them at St. Paul’s cross.” The bishop, having his hand already on Tyndale’s Testaments, fancied himself on the point of seizing Tyndale himself.

Packington, being one of those men who love to conciliate all parties, ran off to Tyndale, with whom he was intimate, and said: — “William, I know you are a poor man, and have a heap of New Testaments and books by you, for which you have beggared yourself; and I have now found a merchant who will buy them all, and with ready money too.” — “Who is the merchant?” said Tyndale. — “The bishop of London.” — “Tonstall?.....If he buys my books, it can only be

to burn them — “No doubt,” answered Packington; “but what will he gain by it? The whole world will cry out against the priest who burns God’s word, and the eyes of many will be opened. Come, make up your mind, William; the bishop shall have the books, you the money, and I the thanks.”.....Tyndale resisted the proposal; Packington became more pressing. “The question comes to this,” he said; “shall the bishop pay for the books or shall he not? for, make up your mind.....he will have them,” — “I consent,” said the reformer at last; “I shall pay my debts, and bring out a new and more correct edition of the Testament.” The bargain was made.

Erelong the danger thickened around Tyndale. Placards, posted at Antwerp and throughout the province, announced that the emperor, in conformity with the treaty of Cambray, was about to proceed against the reformers and their writings. Not an officer of justice appeared in the street but Tyndale’s friends trembled for his liberty. Under such circumstances, how could he print his translation of Genesis and Deuteronomy? He made

up his mind about the end of August to go to Hamburg, and took his passage in a vessel loading for that port. Embarking with his books, his manuscripts, and the rest of his money, he glided down the Scheldt, and soon found himself afloat on the German Ocean.

But one danger followed close upon another. He had scarcely passed the mouth of the Meuse when a tempest burst upon him, and his ship, like that of old which bore St. Paul, was almost swallowed up by the waves.

— “Satan, envying the happy course and success of the gospel,” says a chronicler, “set to his might how to hinder the blessed labors of this man.” The seamen toiled, Tyndale prayed, all hope was lost. The reformer alone was full of courage, not doubting that God would preserve him for the accomplishment of his work. All the exertions of the crew proved useless; the vessel was dashed on the coast, and the passengers escaped with their lives. Tyndale gazed with sorrow upon that ocean which had swallowed up his beloved books and

precious manuscripts, and deprived him of his resources. What labors, what perils! banishment, poverty, thirst, insults, watchings, persecution, imprisonment, the stake!.....Like Paul, he was in perils by his own countrymen, in perils among strange people, in perils in the city, in perils in the sea. Recovering his spirits, however, he went on board another ship, entered the Elbe, and at last reached Hamburg.

Great joy was in store for him in that city. Coverdale, Foxe informs us, was waiting there to confer with him and to help him in his labors. It has been supposed that Coverdale went to Hamburg to invite Tyndale, in Cromwell's name, to return to England; but it is merely a conjecture, and requires confirmation. As early as 1527, Coverdale had made known to Cromwell his desire to translate the Scriptures. It was natural that, meeting with difficulties in this undertaking, he should desire to converse with Tyndale. The two friends lodged with a pious woman named Margaret van Emmersen, and spent some time together in the autumn of 1529, undisturbed by the

sweating sickness which was making such cruel havoc all around them. Coverdale returned to England shortly after; the two reformers had, no doubt, discovered that it was better for each of them to translate the Scriptures separately.

Before Coverdale’s return, Tonstall had gone back to London, exulting at carrying with him the books he had bought so dearly. But when he reached the capital, he thought he had better defer the meditated auto da fe until some striking event should give it increased importance. And besides, just at that moment, very different matters were engaging public attention on the banks of the Thames, and the liveliest emotions agitated every mind.

Chapter 8

The Royal Session

Affairs had changed in England during the absence of Tonstall and More; and even before their departure, events of a certain importance had occurred. Henry, finding there was nothing more to hope from Rome, had turned to Wosley and Campeggio. The Roman nuncio had succeeded in deceiving the king. “Campeggio is very different from what he is reported,” said Henry to his friends; “he is not for the emperor as I was told; I have said somewhat to him which has changed his mind.” No doubt he had made some brilliant promise.

Henry therefore, imagining himself sure of his two legates, desired them to proceed with the matter of the divorce without delay. There was no time to lose, for the king was informed that the pope was on the point of recalling the commission given to the two cardinals; and as early as the of March, Salviati, the pope’s uncle and secretary of

state, wrote to Campeggio about it. Henry's process, once in the court of the pontifical chancery, it would have been long before it got out again.

Accordingly, on the 31st of May, the king, by a warrant under the great seal, gave the legates leave to execute their commission, "without any regard to his own person, and having the fear of God only before their eyes." The legates themselves had suggested this formula to the king.

On the same day the commission was opened; but to begin the process was not to end it. Every letter which the nuncio received forbade him to do so in the most positive manner. "Advance slowly and never finish," were Clement's instructions. The trial was to be a farce, played by a pope and two cardinals.

The ecclesiastical court met in the great hall of the Blackfriars, commonly called the "parliament chamber." The two legates having successively taken the commission in their hands, devoutly

declared that they were resolved to execute it (they should have said, to elude it), made the required oaths, and ordered a peremptory citation of the king and queen to appear on the 18th of June at nine in the morning. Campeggio was eager to proceed slowly; the session was adjourned for three weeks. The citation caused a great stir among the people. “What!” said they, “a king and a queen constrained to appear, in their own realm, before their own subjects.” The papacy set an example which was to be strictly followed in after-years both in England and in France.

On the 18th of June, Catherine appeared before the commission in the parliament chamber, and stepping forward with dignity, said with a firm voice: “I protest against the legates as incompetent judges, and appeal to the pope.” This proceeding of the queen’s, her pride and firmness, troubled her enemies, and in their vexation they grew exasperated against her. “Instead of praying God to bring this matter to a good conclusion,” they said, “she endeavors to turn away the people’s affections from the king. Instead of showing Henry the love

of a youthful wife, she keeps away from him night and day. There is even cause to fear," they added, "that she is in concert with certain individuals who have formed the horrible design of killing the king and the cardinal." But persons of generous heart, seeing only a queen, a wife, and a mother, attacked in her dearest affections, showed themselves full of sympathy for her.

On the 21st of June, the day to which the court adjourned, the two legates entered the parliament chamber with all the pomp belonging to their station, and took their seats on a raised platform. Near them sat the bishops of Bath and Lincoln, the abbot of Westminster, and Doctor Taylor, master of the Rolls, whom they had added to their commission.

Below them were the secretaries, among whom the skillful Stephen Gardiner held the chief rank. On the right hung a cloth of estate where the king sat surrounded by his officers; and on the left, a little lower, was the queen, attended by her ladies. The archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops were

seated between the legates and Henry VIII, and on both sides of the throne were stationed the counsellors of the king and queen. The latter were Fisher, bishop of Rochester, Standish of St. Asaph, West of Ely, and Doctor Ridley. The people, when they saw this procession defile before them, were far from being dazzled by the pomp. “Less show and more virtue,” they said, “would better become such judges.” The pontifical commission having been read, the legates declared that they would judge without fear or favor, and would admit of neither recusation nor appeal. Then the usher cried: “Henry, king of England, come into court.” The king, cited in his own capital to accept as judges two priests, his subjects, repressed the throbbing of his proud heart, and replied, in the hope that this strange trial would have a favorable issue: “Here I am.” The usher continued: “Catherine, queen of England, come into court.” The queen handed the cardinals a paper in which she protested against the legality of the court, as the judges were the subjects of her opponent, and appealed to Rome. The cardinals declared they could not admit this paper, and consequently Catherine was again called into

court. At this second summons she rose, devoutly crossed herself, made the circuit of the court to where the king sat, bending with dignity as she passed in front of the legates, and fell on her knees before her husband. Every eye was turned upon her. Then speaking in English, but with a Spanish accent, which by recalling the distance she was from her native home, pleaded eloquently for her, Catherine said with tears in her eyes, and in a tone at once dignified and impassioned: “SIR, — I beseech you, for all the love that hath been between us, and for the love of God, let me have justice and right; take some pity on me, for I am a poor woman and a stranger, born out of your dominions. I have here no assured friends, much less impartial counsel, and I flee to you as to the head of justice within this realm.

Alas! Sir, wherein have I offended you, or what occasion given you of displeasure, that you should wish to put me from you? I take God and all the world to witness, that I have been to you a true, humble, and obedient wife, ever conformable to your will and pleasure. Never have I said or done

aught contrary thereto, being always well pleased and content with all things wherein you had delight; neither did I ever grudge in word or countenance, or show a visage or spark of discontent. I loved all those whom you loved, only for your sake. This twenty years I have been your true wife, and by me ye have had divers children, although it hath pleased God to call them out of this world, which yet hath been no default in me." The judges, and even the most servile of the courtiers, were touched when they heard these simple and eloquent words, and the queen's sorrow moved them almost to tears. Catherine continued: — "SIR, — When ye married me at the first, I take God to be my judge I was a true maid; and whether it be true or not, I put it to your conscience.....If there be any just cause that ye can allege against me, I am contented to depart from your kingdom, albeit to my great shame and dishonor; and if there be none, then let me remain in my former estate until death. Who united us? The king, your father, who was called the second Solomon; and my father, Ferdinand, who was esteemed one of the wisest princes that, for many years before, had

reigned in Spain. It is not, therefore, to be doubted that the marriage between you and me is good and lawful.

Who are my judges? Is not one the man that has put sorrow between you and me? .....a judge whom I refuse and abhor! — Who are the counsellors assigned me? Are they not officers of the crown, who have made oath to you in your own council?.....Sir, I conjure you not to call me before a court so formed. Yet, if you refuse me this favor.....your will be done.....I shall be silent, I shall repress the emotions of my soul, and remit my just cause to the hands of God.” Thus spoke Catherine through her tears; humbly bending, she seemed to embrace Henry’s knees. She rose and made a low obeisance to the king.

It was expected that she would return to her seat; but leaning on the arm of Griffiths, her receivergeneral, she moved towards the door. The king, observing this, ordered her to be recalled; and the usher following her, thrice cried aloud: “Catherine, queen of England, come into court.” —

“Madam,” said Griffiths, “you are called back.” — “I hear it well enough,” replied the queen, “but go you on, for this is no court wherein I can have justice: let us proceed.” Catherine returned to the palace, and never again appeared before the court either by proxy or in person. She had gained her cause in the minds of many. The dignity of her person, the quaint simplicity of her speech, the propriety with which, relying 1972 upon her innocence, she had spoken of the most delicate subjects, and the tears which betrayed her emotion, had created a deep impression. But “the sting in her speech,” as an historian says, was her appeal to the king’s conscience, and to the judgment of Almighty God, on the capital point in the cause. “How could a person so modest, so sober in her language,” said many, “dare utter such a falsehood? Besides, the king did not contradict her.” Henry was greatly embarrassed: Catherine’s words had moved him.

Catherine’s defense, one of the most touching in history, had gained over the accuser himself. He therefore felt constrained to render this testimony

to the accused: “Since the queen has withdrawn, I will, in her absence, declare to you all present, that she has been to me as true and obedient a wife as I could desire. She has all the virtues and good qualities that belong to a woman. She is as noble in character as in birth.” But Wolsey was the most embarrassed of all. When the queen had said, without naming him, that one of her judges was the cause of all her misfortunes, looks of indignation were turned upon him. He was unwilling to remain under the weight of this accusation. As soon as the king had finished speaking, he said: “Sir, I humbly beg your majesty to declare before this audience, whether I was the first or chief mover in this business.” Wolsey had formerly boasted to Du Bellay, “that the first project of the divorce was set on foot by himself, to create a perpetual separation between the houses of England and Spain; but now it suited him to affirm the contrary. The king, who needed his services, took care not to contradict him. “My lord cardinal,” he said, “I can well excuse you herein. Marry, so far from being a mover, ye have been rather against me in attempting thereof. It was the bishop of Tarbes, the

French ambassador, who begot the first scruples in my conscience by his doubts on the legitimacy of the Princess Mary." This was not correct. The bishop of Tarbes was not in England before the year 1527, and we have proofs that the king was meditating a divorce in 1526. "From that hour," he continued, "I was much troubled, and thought myself in danger of God's heavy displeasure, who, wishing to punish my incestuous marriage, had taken away all the sons my wife had borne me. I laid my grief before you, my lord of Lincoln, then being my ghostly father; and by your advice I asked counsel of the rest of the bishops, and you all informed me under your seals, that you shared in my scruples." — "That is the truth," said the archbishop of Canterbury. — "No, Sir, not so, under correction," quoth the bishop of Rochester, "you have not my hand and seal." — "No?" exclaimed the king, showing him a paper which he held in his hand; "is not this your hand and seal?" — "No, forsooth," he answered. Henry's surprise increased, and turning with a frown to the archbishop of Canterbury, he asked him: "What say you to that?" "Sir, it is his hand and seal,"

replied Warham. — “It is not,” rejoined Rochester; “I told you I would never consent to any such act.” — “You say the truth,” responded the archbishop, “but you were fully resolved at the last, that I should subscribe your name and put your seal.” — “All which is untrue,” added Rochester, in a passion. The bishop was not very respectful to his primate. “Well, well,” said the king, wishing to end the dispute, “we will not stand in argument with you; for you are but one man.” The court adjourned. The day had been better for Catherine than for the prelates.

In proportion as the first sitting had been pathetic, so the discussions in the second between the lawyers and bishops were calculated to revolt a delicate mind. The advocates of the two parties vigorously debated pro and con respecting the consummation of Arthur’s marriage with Catherine.

“It is a very difficult question,” said one of the counsel; “none can know the truth.” — “But I know it,” replied the bishop of Rochester. —

“What do you mean?” asked Wolsey. — “My lord,” he answered, “he was the very Truth who said: What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder: that is enough for me.” — “So everybody thinks,” rejoined Wolsey; “but whether it was God who united Henry of England and Catherine of Aragon, hoc restat probandum, that remains to be proved.

The king’s council decides that the marriage is unlawful, and consequently it was not God who joined them together.” The two bishops then exchanged a few words less edifying than those of the preceding day.

Several of the hearers expressed a sentiment of disgust. “It is a disgrace to the court,” said Doctor Ridley with no little indignation, “that you dare discuss questions which fill every right-minded man with horror.” This sharp reprimand put an end to the debate.

The agitations of the court spread to the convents; priests, monks, and nuns were

everywhere in commotion. It was not long before astonishing revelations began to circulate through the cloisters. There was no talk then of an old portrait of the Virgin that winked its eyes; but other miracles were invented. “An angel,” it was rumored, “has appeared to Elizabeth Barton, the maid of Kent, as he did formerly to Adam, to the patriarchs, and to Jesus Christ.” At the epochs of the creation and of the redemption, and in the times which lead from one to the other, miracles are natural; God then appeared, and his coming without any signs of power, would be as surprising as the rising of the sun unattended by its rays of light. But the Romish Church does not stop there; it claims in every age, for its saints, the privilege of miraculous powers, and the miracles are multiplied in proportion to the ignorance of the people. And accordingly the angel said to the epileptic maid of Kent: “Go to the unfaithful king of England, and tell him there are three things he desires, which I forbid now and for ever.

The first is the power of the pope; the second the new doctrine; the third Anne Boleyn. If he

takes her for his wife, God will visit him.” The vision-seeing maid delivered the message to the king, whom nothing could now stop.

On the contrary, he began to find out that Wolsey proceeded too slowly, and the idea sometimes crossed his mind that he was betrayed by this minister. One fine summer’s morning, Henry as soon as he rose summoned the cardinal to him at Bridewell. Wolsey hastened thither, and remained closeted with the king from eleven till twelve. The latter gave way to all the fury of his passion and the violence of his despotism. “We must finish this matter promptly,” he said, “we must positively.” Wolsey retired very uneasy, and returned by the Thames to Westminster. The sun darted his bright rays on the water. The bishop of Carlisle, who sat by the cardinal’s side, remarked, as he wiped his forehead: “A very warm day, my lord.” — “Yes,” replied the unhappy Wolsey, “if you had been chafed for an hour as I have been, you would say it was a hot day.” When he reached his palace, the cardinal lay down on his bed to seek repose; he was not quiet long.

Catherine had grown in Henry’s eyes, as well as in those of the nation.

The king shrank from a judgment; he even began to doubt of his success.

He wished that the queen would consent to a separation. This idea occurred to his mind after Wolsey’s departure, and the cardinal had hardly closed his eyes before the earl of Wiltshire (Anne Boleyn’s father) was announced to him with a message from the king. “It is his majesty’s pleasure,” said Wiltshire, “that you represent to the queen the shame that will accrue to her from a judicial condemnation, and persuade her to confide in his wisdom.” Wolsey, commissioned to execute a task he knew to be impossible, exclaimed: “Why do you put such fancies in the king’s head?” and then he spoke so reproachfully that Wiltshire, with tears in his eyes, fell on his knees beside the cardinal’s bed. Boleyn, desirous of seeing his daughter queen of England, feared perhaps that he had taken a wrong course. “It is well,” said the

cardinal, recollecting that the message came from Henry VIII, “I am ready to do everything to please his majesty.” He rose, went to Bath Place to fetch Campeggio, and together they waited on the queen.

The two legates found Catherine quietly at work with her maids of honor.

Wolsey addressed the queen in Latin; “Nay, my lord,” she said, “speak to me in English; I wish all the world could hear you.” — “We desire, madam, to communicate to you alone our counsel and opinion.” — “My lord,” said the queen, “you are come to speak of things beyond my capacity;” and then, with noble simplicity, showing a skein of red silk hanging about her neck, she continued: “These are my occupations, and all that I am capable of. I am a poor woman, without friends in this foreign country, and lacking wit to answer persons of wisdom as ye be; and yet, my lords, to please you, let us go to my withdrawing room.” At these words the queen rose, and Wolsey gave her his hand. Catherine earnestly maintained her rights as a woman and a queen. “We who were in the outer

chamber," says Cavendish, "from time to time could hear the queen speaking very loud, but could not understand what she said." Catherine, instead of justifying herself, boldly accused her judge. "I know, Sir Cardinal," she said with noble candor, "I know who has given the king the advice he is following: it is you. I have not ministered to your pride — I have blamed your conduct — I have complained of your tyranny, and my nephew the emperor has not made you pope.....Hence all my misfortunes. To revenge yourself you have kindled a war in Europe, and have stirred up against me this most wicked matter. God will be my judge.....and yours!" Wolsey would have replied, but Catherine haughtily refused to hear him, and while treating Campeggio with great civility, declared that she would not acknowledge either of them as her judge. The cardinals withdrew, Wolsey full of vexation, and Campeggio beaming with joy, for the business was getting more complicated. Every hope of accommodation was lost: nothing remained now but to proceed judicially.

Chapter 9

The Trial resumed

The trial was resumed. The bishop of Bath and Wells waited upon the queen at Greenwich, and peremptorily summoned her to appear in the parliament-chamber. On the day appointed Catherine limited herself to sending an appeal to the pope. She was declared contumacious, and the legates proceeded with the cause.

Twelve articles were prepared, which were to serve for the examination of the witnesses, and the summary of which was, that the marriage of Henry with Catherine, being forbidden both by the law of God and of the church, was null and void. The hearing of the witnesses began, and Dr. Taylor, archdeacon of Buckingham, conducted the examination. Their evidence, which would now be taken only with closed doors, may be found in Lord Herbert of Cherbury's History of Henry VIII. The duke of Norfolk, high-treasurer of England, the duke of Suffolk, Maurice St. John, gentleman-

carver to Prince Arthur, the viscount Fitzwalter and Anthony Willoughby, his cup-bearers, testified to their being present on the morrow of the wedding at the breakfast of the prince, then in sound health, and reported the conversation that took place. The old duchess of Norfolk, the earl of Shrewbury, and the marquis of Dorset, confirmed these declarations, which proved that Arthur and Catherine were really married. It was also called to mind that, at the time of Arthur's death, Henry was not permitted to take the title of prince of Wales, because Catherine hoped to give an heir to the crown of England. 1978 "If Arthur and Catherine were really married," said the king's counsellors after these extraordinary depositions, "the marriage of this princess with Henry, Arthur's brother, was forbidden by the divine law, by an express command of God contained in Leviticus, and no dispensation could permit what God had forbidden." Campeggio would never concede this argument, which limited the right of the popes; it was necessary therefore to abandon the divine right (which was in reality to lose the cause), and to seek in the bull of Julius II and in his famous brief, for

flaws that would invalidate them both; and this the king's counsel did, although they did not conceal the weakness of their position. "The motive alleged in the dispensation," they said, "is the necessity of preserving a cordial relation between Spain and England; now, there was nothing that threatened their harmony. Moreover, it is said in this document that the pope grants it at the prayer of Henry, prince of Wales. Now as this prince was only thirteen years old, he was not of age to make such a request. As for the brief, it is found neither in England nor in Rome; we cannot therefore admit its authenticity." It was not difficult for Catherine's friends to invalidate these objections. "Besides," they added, "a union that has lasted twenty years sufficiently establishes its own lawfulness. And will you declare the Princess Mary illegitimate, to the great injury of this realm?" The king's advocates then changed their course. Was not the Roman legate provided with a decretal pronouncing the divorce, in case it should be proved that Arthur's marriage had been really consummated? Now, this fact had been proved by the depositions. "This is the moment for delivering

judgment," said Henry and his counsellors to Campeggio.

"Publish the pope's decretal." But the pope feared the sword of Charles V, then hanging over his head; and accordingly, whenever the king advanced one step, the Romish prelate took several in an opposite direction. "I will deliver judgment in five days," said he; and when the five days were expired, he bound himself to deliver it in six. "Restore peace to my troubled conscience," exclaimed Henry. The legate replied in courtly phrase; he had gained a few days' delay, and that was all he desired.

Such conduct on the part of the Roman legate produced an unfavorable effect in England, and a change took place in the public mind. The first movement had been for Catherine; the second was for Henry. Clement's endless delays and Campeggio's stratagems exasperated the nation. The king's argument was simple and popular: "The pope cannot dispense with the laws of God;" while the queen, by appealing to the authority of the

Roman pontiff, displeased both high and low. “No precedent,” said the lawyers, “can justify the king’s marriage with his brother’s widow.” There were, however, some evangelical Christians who thought Henry was “troubled” more by his passions than by his conscience; and they asked how it happened that a prince, who represented himself to be so disturbed by the possible transgression of a law of doubtful interpretation, could desire, after twenty years, to violate the indisputable law which forbade the divorce?.....On the 21st of July, the day fixed ad concludendum, the cause was adjourned until the Friday following, and no one doubted that the matter would then be terminated.

All prepared for this important day. The king ordered the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk to be present at the sitting of the court; and being himself impatient to hear the so much coveted judgment, he stole into a gallery of the parliament chamber facing the judges.

The legates of the holy see having taken their seats, the attorney-general signified to them, “that

everything necessary for the information of their conscience having been judicially laid before them, that day had been fixed for the conclusion of the trial." There was a pause; every one feeling the importance of this judgment, waited for it with impatience. "Either the papacy pronounces my divorce from Catherine," the king had said, "or I shall divorce myself from the papacy." That was the way Henry put the question. All eyes, and particularly the king's were turned on the judges; Campeggio could not retreat; he must now say yes or no. For some time he was silent. He knew for certain that the queen's appeal had been admitted by Clement VII, and that the latter had concluded an alliance with the emperor. It was no longer in his power to grant the king's request. Clearly foreseeing that a no would perhaps forfeit the power of Rome in England, while a yes might put an end to the plans of religious emancipation which alarmed him so much, he could not make up his mind to say either yes or no.

At last the nuncio rose slowly from his chair, and all the assembly listened with emotion to the

oracular decision which for so many years the powerful king of England had sought from the Roman pontiff. “The general vacation of the harvest and vintage,” he said, “being observed every year by the court of Rome, dating from tomorrow the 24th of July, the beginning of the dog-days, we adjourn, to some future period, the conclusion of these pleadings.” The auditors were thunderstruck. “What! because the malaria renders the air of Rome dangerous at the end of July, and compels the Romans to close their courts, must a trial be broken off on the banks of the Thames, when its conclusion is looked for so impatiently?” The people hoped for a judicial sentence, and they were answered with a jest; it was thus Rome made sport of Christendom. Campeggio, to disarm Henry’s wrath, gave utterance to some noble sentiments; but his whole line of conduct raises legitimate doubts as to his sincerity. “The queen,” he said, “denies the competency of the court; I must therefore make my report to the pope, who is the source of life and honor, and wait his sovereign orders. I have not come so far to please any man, be he king or subject. I am an old man, feeble and

sickly, and fear none but the Supreme Judge, before whom I must soon appear. I therefore adjourn this court until the 1st of October.” It was evident that this adjournment was only a formality intended to signify the definitive rejection of Henry’s demand. The same custom prevails in the British legislature.

The king, who from his place of concealment had heard Campeggio’s speech, could scarcely control his indignation. He wanted a regular judgment; he clung to forms; he desired that his cause should pass successfully through all the windings of ecclesiastical procedure, and yet here it is wrecked upon the vacations of the Romish court. Henry was silent, however, either from prudence, or because surprise deprived him of the power of speech, and he hastily left the gallery.

Norfolk, Suffolk, and the other courtiers, did not follow him. The king and his ministers, the peers and the people, and even the clergy, were almost unanimous, and yet the pope pronounced his veto. He humbled the Defender of the Faith to

flatter the author of the sack of Rome. This was too much. The impetuous Suffolk started from his seat, struck his hand violently on the table in front of him, cast a threatening look upon the judges, and exclaimed: “By the mass, the old saying is confirmed today, that no cardinal has ever brought good to England.” — “Sir, of all men in this realm,” replied Wolsey, “you have the least cause to disparage cardinals, for if I, poor cardinal, had not been, you would not have a head on your shoulders.” It would seem that Wolsey pacified Henry, at the time of the duke’s marriage with the Princess Mary. “I cannot pronounce sentence,” continued Wolsey, “without knowing the good pleasure of his holiness.” The two dukes and the other noblemen left the hall in anger, and hastened to the palace. The legates, remaining with their officers, looked at each other for a few moments. At last Campeggio, who alone had remained calm during this scene of violence, arose, and the audience dispersed.

Henry did not allow himself to be crushed by this blow. Rome, by her strange proceedings,

aroused in him that suspicious and despotic spirit, of which he gave such tragic proofs in after-years. The papacy was making sport of him. Clement and Wolsey tossed his divorce from one to the other like a ball which, now at Rome and now in London, seemed fated to remain perpetually in the air. The king thought he had been long enough the plaything of his holiness and of the crafty cardinal; his patience was exhausted, and he resolved to show his adversaries that Henry VIII was more than a match for these bishops. We shall find him seizing this favorable opportunity, and giving an unexpected solution to the matter.

Wolsey sorrowfully hung his head; by taking part with the nuncio and the pope, he had signed the warrant of his own destruction. So long as Henry had a single ray of hope, he thought proper still to dissemble with Clement VII; but he might vent all his anger on Wolsey. From the period of the Roman Vacations the cardinal was ruined in his master’s mind. Wolsey’s enemies seeing his favor decline, hastened to attack him. Suffolk and Norfolk in particular, impatient to get rid of an

insolent priest who had so long chafed their pride, told Henry that Wolsey had been continually playing false; they went over all his negotiations month by month and day by day, and drew the most overwhelming conclusions from them. Sir William Kingston and Lord Manners laid before the king one of the cardinal's letters which Sir Francis Bryan had obtained from the papal archives. In it the cardinal desired Clement to spin out the divorce question, and finally to oppose it, seeing (he added) that if Henry was separated from Catherine, a friend to the reformers would become queen of England. This letter clearly expressed Wolsey's inmost thoughts: Rome at any price.....and perish England and Henry rather than the popedom! We can imagine the king's anger.

Anne Boleyn's friends were not working alone. There was not a person at court whom Wolsey's haughtiness and tyranny had not offended; no one in the king's council in whom his continual intrigues had not raised serious suspicions. He had (they said) betrayed in France the cause of England; kept up in time of peace and war secret

intelligence with Madam, mother of Francis I; received great presents from her; oppressed the nation, and trodden under foot the laws of the kingdom. The people called him Frenchman and traitor, and all England seemed to vie in throwing burning brands at the superb edifice which the pride of this prelate had so laboriously erected. Wolsey was too clearsighted not to discern the signs of his approaching fall. “Both the rising and the setting sun (for thus an historian calls Anne Boleyn and Catherine of Aragon) frowned upon him,” and the sky, growing darker around him, gave token of the storm that was to overwhelm him. If the cause failed, Wolsey incurred the vengeance of the king; if it succeeded, he would be delivered up to the vengeance of the Boleyns, without speaking of Catherine’s, the emperor’s, and the pope’s. Happy Campeggio! thought the cardinal, he has nothing to fear. If Henry’s favor is withdrawn from him, Charles and Clement will make him compensation.

But Wolsey lost everything when he lost the king’s good graces. Detested by his fellow-citizens,

despised and hated by all Europe, he saw to whatever side he turned nothing but the just reward of his avarice and falseness. He strove in vain, as on other occasions, to lean on the ambassador of France; Du Bellay was solicited on the other side. “I am exposed here to such a heavy and continual fire that I am half dead,” exclaimed the bishop of Bayonne; and the cardinal met with an unusual reserve in his former confidant.

Yet the crisis approached. Like a skillful but affrighted pilot, Wolsey cast his eyes around him to discover a port in which he could take refuge. He could find none but his see of York. He therefore began once more to complain of the fatigues of power, of the weariness of the diplomatic career, and to extol the sweetness of an episcopal life. On a sudden he felt a great interest about the flock of whom he had never thought before.

Those around him shook their heads, well knowing that such a retreat would be to Wolsey the bitterest of disgraces. One single idea supported him; if he fell, it would be because he had clung

more to the pope than to the king: he would be the martyr of his faith. — What a faith, what a martyr!

Chapter 10

Anne Boleyn at Hever

While these things were taking place, Anne was living at Hever Castle in retirement and sadness. Scruples from time to time still alarmed her conscience. It is true, the king represented to her unceasingly that his salvation and the safety of his people demanded the dissolution of a union condemned by the divine law, and that what he solicited several popes had granted. Had not Alexander VI annulled, after ten years, the marriage of Ladislaus and Beatrice of Naples? Had not Louis XII, the father of his people, been divorced from Joan of France? Nothing was more common, he said, than to see the divorce of a prince authorized by a pope; the security of the state must be provided for before everything else. Carried away by these arguments and dazzled by the splendor of a throne, Anne Boleyn consented to usurp at Henry’s side the rank belonging to another.

Yet, if she was imprudent and ambitious, she was feeling and generous, and the misfortunes of a queen whom she respected soon made her reject with terror the idea of taking her place. The fertile pastures of Kent and the gothic halls of Hever Castle were by turns the witnesses of the mental conflicts this young lady experienced. The fear she entertained of seeing the queen again, and the idea that the two cardinals, her enemies, were plotting her ruin, made her adopt the resolution of not returning to court, and she shut herself up in her solitary chamber.

Anne had neither the deep piety of a Bilney, nor the somewhat vague and mystic spirituality observable in Margaret of Valois; it was not feeling which prevailed in her religion, it was knowledge, and a horror of superstition and pharisaism. Her mind required light and activity, and at that time she sought in reading the consolations so necessary to her position. One day she opened one of the books prohibited in England, which a friend of the Reformation had given her: The Obedience of a Christian Man. Its author was William Tyndale,

that invisible man whom Wolsey's agents were hunting for in Brabant and Germany, and this was a recommendation to Anne. "If thou believe the promises," she read, "then God's truth justifieth thee; that is, forgiveth thy sins and sealeth thee with his Holy Spirit. If thou have true faith, so seest thou the exceeding and infinite love and mercy which God hath shown thee freely in Christ: then must thou needs love again: and love cannot but compel thee to work. If when tyrants oppose thee thou have power to confess, then art thou sure that thou art safe. If thou be fallen from the way of truth, come thereto again and thou art safe. Yea, Christ shall save thee, and the angels of heaven shall rejoice at thy coming." These words did not change Anne's heart, but she marked with her nail, as was her custom, other passages which struck her more, and which she desired to point out to the king if, as she hoped, she was ever to meet him again. She believed that the truth was there, and took a lively interest in those whom Wolsey, Henry, and the pope were at that time persecuting.

Anne was soon dragged from these pious

lessons, and launched into the midst of a world full of dangers. Henry, convinced that he had nothing to expect henceforward from Campeggio, neglected those proprieties which he had hitherto observed, and immediately after the adjournment ordered Anne Boleyn to return to court; he restored her to the place she had formerly occupied, and even surrounded her with increased splendor.

Every one saw that Anne, in the king's mind, was queen of England; and a powerful party was formed around her which proposed to accomplish the definitive ruin of the cardinal.

After her return to court, Anne read much less frequently The Obedience of a Christian Man and the Testament of Jesus Christ. Henry's homage, her friends' intrigues, and the whirl of festivities, bade fair to stifle the thoughts which solitude had aroused in her heart. One day having left Tyndale's book in a window, Miss Gainsford, a fair young gentlewoman attached to her person, took it up and read it. A gentleman of handsome mien, cheerful temper, and extreme mildness, named George

Zouch, also belonging to Anne's household, and betrothed to Miss Gainsford, profiting by the liberty his position gave him, indulged sometimes in "love tricks." On one occasion when George desired to have a little talk with her, he was annoyed to find her absorbed by a book of whose contents he knew nothing; and taking advantage of a moment when the young lady had turned away her head, he laughingly snatched it from her. Miss Gainsford ran after Zouch to recover her book; but just at that moment she heard her mistress calling her, and she left George, threatening him with her finger.

As she did not return immediately, George withdrew to his room, and opened the volume; it was the Obedience of a Christian Man. He glanced over a few lines, then a few pages, and at last read the book through more than once. He seemed to hear the voice of God. "I feel the Spirit of God," he said, "speaking in my heart as he has spoken in the heart of him who wrote the book." The words which had only made a temporary impression on the preoccupied mind of Anne Boleyn, penetrated

to the heart of her equerry and converted him. Miss Gainsford, fearing that Anne would ask for her book, entreated George to restore it to her; but he positively refused, and even the young lady's tears failed to make him give up a volume in which he had found the life of his soul. Becoming more serious, he no longer jested as before; and when Miss Gainsford peremptorily demanded the book, he was, says the chronicler, "ready to weep himself." Zouch, finding in this volume an edification which empty forms and ceremonies could not give, used to carry it with him to the king's chapel.

Dr. Sampson, the dean, generally officiated; and while the choir chanted the service, George would be absorbed in his book, where he read: "If when thou seest the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, thou believest in this promise of Christ: This is my body that is broken for you, and if thou have this promise fast in thine heart, thou art saved and justified thereby; thou eatest his body and drinkest his blood. If not, so helpeth it thee not, though thou hearest a thousand masses in a day: no

more than it should help thee in a dead thirst to behold a bush at a tavern door, if thou knewest not thereby that there was wine within to be sold.” The young man dwelt upon these words: by faith he ate the body and drank the blood of the Son of God. This was what was passing in the palaces of Henry VIII; there were saints in the household of Caesar.

Wosley, desirous of removing from the court everything that might favor the Reformation, had recommended extreme vigilance to Dr. Sampson, so as to prevent the circulation of the innovating books. Accordingly, one day when George was in the chapel absorbed in his book, the dean, who, even while officiating, had not lost sight of the young man, called him to him after the service, and rudely taking the book from his hands, demanded: “What is your name, and in whose service are you?” Zouch having replied, the dean withdrew with a very angry look, and carried his prey to the cardinal.

When Miss Gainsford heard of this mishap, her grief was extreme; she trembled at the thought that

the Obedience of a Christian Man was in Wolsey's hands. Not long after this, Anne having asked for her book, the young lady fell on her knees, confessed all, and begged to be forgiven. Anne uttered not a word of reproach; her quick mind saw immediately the advantage she might derive from this affair. "Well," said she, "it shall be the dearest book to them that ever the dean or cardinal took away." "The noble lady," as the chronicler styles her, immediately demanded an interview of the king, and on reaching his presence she fell at his feet, and begged his assistance. "What is the matter, Anne?" said the astonished monarch. She told him what had happened, and Henry promised that the book should not remain in Wolsey's hands.

Anne had scarcely quitted the royal apartments when the cardinal arrived with the famous volume, with the intention of complaining to Henry of certain passages which he knew could not fail to irritate him, and to take advantage of it even to attack Anne, if the king should be offended. Henry's icy reception closed his mouth; the king confined himself to taking the book, and bowing

out the cardinal. This was precisely what Anne had hoped for. She begged the king to read the book, which he promised to do.

And Henry accordingly shut himself up in his closet, and read the Obedience of a Christian Man. There were few works better calculated to enlighten him, and none, after the Bible, that has had more influence upon the Reformation in England. Tyndale treated of obedience, “the essential principle,” as he terms it, “of every political or religious community.” He declaimed against the unlawful power of the popes, who usurped the lawful authority of Christ and of his Word. He professed political doctrines too favorable doubtless to absolute power, but calculated to show that the reformers were not, as had been asserted, instigators of rebellion. Henry read as follows: — “The king is in the room of God in this world. He that resisteth the king, resisteth God; he that judgeth the king, judgeth God. He is the minister of God to defend thee from a thousand inconveniences; though he be the greatest tyrant in the world, yet is he unto thee a great benefit of

God; for it is better to pay the tenth than to lose all, and to suffer wrong of one man than of every man." These are indeed strange doctrines for rebels to hold, thought the king; and he continued: — "Let kings, if they had lever [rather] be Christians indeed than so to be called, give themselves altogether to the wealth [well-being] of their realms after the ensample of Jesus Christ; remembering that the people are God's, and not theirs; yea, are Christ's inheritance, bought with his blood. The most despised person in his realm (if he is a Christian) is equal with him in the kingdom of God and of Christ. Let the king put off all pride, and become a brother to the poorest of his subjects." It is probable that these words were less satisfactory to the king. He kept on reading: — "Emperors and kings are nothing now-a-days, but even hangmen unto the pope and bishops, to kill whomsoever they condemn, as Pilate was unto the scribes and pharisees and high bishops to hang Christ." This seemed to Henry rather strong language.

"The pope hath received no other authority of Christ than to preach God's word. Now, this word

should rule only, and not bishops' decrees or the pope's pleasure. In praesentia majoris cessat potestas minoris, in the presence of the greater the less hath no power. The pope, against all the doctrine of Christ, which saith, My kingdom is not of this world, hath usurped the right of the emperor. Kings must make account of their doings only to God.

No person may be exempt from this ordinance of God; neither can the profession of monks and friars, or anything that the popes or bishops can lay for themselves, except them from the sword of the emperor or king, if they break the laws. For it is written, (Romans 13.) Let every soul submit himself unto the authority of the higher powers." "What excellent reading!" exclaimed Henry, when he had finished; "this is truly a book for all kings to read, and for me particularly."

Captivated by Tyndale's work, the king began to converse with Anne about the church and the pope; and she who had seen Margaret of Valois unassumingly endeavor to instruct Francis I strove

in like manner to enlighten Henry VIII. She did not possess the influence over him she desired; this unhappy prince was, to the very end of his life, opposed to the evangelical reformation; protestants and catholics have been equally mistaken when they have regarded him as being favorable to it. “In a short time,” says the annalist quoted by Strype at the end of his narrative, “the king, by the help of this virtuous lady, had his eyes opened to the truth.

He learned to seek after that truth, to advance God’s religion and glory, to detest the pope’s doctrine, his lies, his pomp, and pride, and to deliver his subjects from the Egyptian darkness and Babylonian bonds that the pope had brought him and his subjects under. Despising the rebellions of his subjects and the rage of so many mighty potentates abroad, he set forward a religious reformation, which, beginning with the triple-crowned head, came down to all the members of the hierarchy.” History has rarely delivered a more erroneous judgment. Henry’s eyes were never opened to the truth, and it was not he who made the Reformation. It was accomplished first of all by

Scripture, and then by the ministry of simple and faithful men baptized of the Holy Ghost.

Yet Tyndale's book and the conduct of the legates had given rise in the king's mind to new thoughts which he sought time to mature. He desired also to conceal his anger from Wolsey and Campeggio, and dissipate his spleen, says the historian Collyer; he therefore gave orders to remove the court to the palace of Woodstock. The magnificent park attached to this royal residence, in which was the celebrated bower constructed (it is said) by Henry II to conceal the fair Rosamond, offered all the charms of the promenade, the chase, and solitude. Hence he could easily repair to Langley, Grafton, and other country-seats. It was not long before the entertainments, horse-races, and other rural sports began. The world with its pleasures and its grandeur, were at the bottom the idols of Anne Boleyn's heart; but yet she felt a certain attraction for the new doctrine, which was confounded in her mind with the great cause of all knowledge, perhaps even with her own. More enlightened than the generality of women, she was

distinguished by the superiority of her understanding not only over her own sex, but even over many of the gentlemen of the court.

While Catherine, a member of the third order of St. Francis, indulged in trifling practices, the more intelligent, if not more pious Anne, cared but little for amulets which the friars had blessed, for apparitions, or visions of angels. Woodstock furnished her with an opportunity of curing Henry VIII of the superstitious ideas natural to him. There was a place in the forest said to be haunted by evil spirits; not a priest or a courtier dared approach it. A tradition ran that if a king ventured to cross the boundary, he would fall dead. Anne resolved to take Henry there. Accordingly, one morning she led the way in the direction of the place where these mysterious powers manifested their presence (as it was said) by strange apparitions; they entered the wood; they arrived at the so much dreaded spot; all hesitated; but Anne’s calmness reassured her companions; they advanced; they found.....nothing but trees and turf, and, laughing at their former terrors, they explored every corner of this

mysterious resort of the evil spirits. Anne returned to the palace, congratulating herself on the triumph Henry had gained over his imaginary fears. This prince, who could as yet bear with superiority in others, was struck with Anne Boleyn’s.

Never too gay nor yet too melancholy, A heavenly mind is hers, like angels holy.

None purer ever soared above the sky, O mighty marvel, thus may every eye See of what monster strange the humble serf am I; Monster indeed, for in her frame divine A woman’s form, man’s heart, and angel’s head combine. These verses of Clement Marot, written in honor of Margaret of Valois, faithfully express what Henry then felt for Anne, who had been with Marot in the household of that princess. Henry’s love may perhaps have deceived him as to Anne’s excellencies.

Chapter 11

Embarrassment of the Pope

While the court was thus taking its pleasure at Woodstock; Wolsey remained in London a prey to the acutest anguish. “This avocation to Rome,” wrote he to Gregory Da Casale, “will not only completely alienate the king and his realm from the apostolic see, but will ruin me utterly.” This message had hardly reached the pope, before the imperial ambassadors handed to him the queen’s protest, and added in a very significant tone: “If your holiness does not call this cause before you, the emperor, who is determined to bring it to an end, will have recourse to other arguments.” The same perplexity always agitated Clement: Which of the two must be sacrificed, Henry or Charles? Anthony de Leyva, who commanded the imperial forces, having routed the French army, the pope no longer doubted that Charles was the elect of Heaven. It was not Europe alone which acknowledged this prince’s authority; a new world had just laid its power and its gold at his feet. The

formidable priest-king of the Aztecs had been unable to withstand Cortez; could the priest-king of Rome withstand Charles V?

Cortez had returned from Mexico, bringing with him Mexican chiefs in all their barbarous splendor, with thousands of pesos, with gold and silver and emeralds of extraordinary size, with magnificent tissues and birds of brilliant plumage. He had accompanied Charles, who was then going to Italy, to the place of embarkation, and had sent to Clement VII costly gifts of the precious metals, valuable jewels, and a troop of Mexican dancers, buffoons, and jugglers, who charmed the pope and the cardinal above all things. Clement, even while refusing Henry's prayer, had not as yet granted the emperor's. He thought he could now resist no longer the star of a monarch victorious over two worlds, and hastened to enter into negotiations with him. Sudden terrors still assailed him from time to time: My refusal (he said to himself) may perhaps cause me to lose England. But Charles, holding him in his powerful grasp, compelled him to submit. Henry's antecedents were rather

encouraging to the pontiff. How could he imagine that a prince, who alone of all the monarchs of Europe had once contended against the great reformer, would now separate from the popedom? On the 6th of July, Clement declared to the English envoys that he avoked to Rome the cause between Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. In other words, this was refusing the divorce. “There are twenty-three points in this case,” said the courtiers, “and the debate on the first has lasted a year; before the end of the trial, the king will be not only past marrying but past living.” When he learned that the fatal blow had been struck, Bennet, in a tone of sadness, exclaimed: “Alas! most holy father, by this act the Church in England will be utterly destroyed; the king declared it to me with tears in his eyes.” — “Why is it my fortune to live in such evil days?” replied the pope, who, in his turn, began to weep; “but I am encircled by the emperor’s forces, and if I were to please the king, I should draw a fearful ruin upon myself and upon the church.....God will be my judge.” On the 15th of July, Da Casale sent the fatal news to the English minister.

The king was cited before the pope, and in case of refusal condemned in a fine of 10,000 ducats. On the 18th of July, peace was proclaimed at Rome between the pontiff and the emperor, and on the next day (these dates are important) Clement, wishing still to make one more attempt to ward off the blow with which the papacy was threatened, wrote to Cardinal Wolsey: “My dear son, how can I describe to you my affliction? Show in this matter the prudence which so distinguishes you, and preserve the king in those kindly feelings which he has ever manifested towards me.” A useless attempt! Far from saving the papacy, Wolsey was to be wrecked along with it.

Wolsey was thunderstruck. At the very time he was assuring Henry of the attachment of Clement and Francis, both were deserting him. The “politic handling” failed, which the cardinal had thought so skillful, and which had been so tortuous. Henry now had none but enemies on he continent of Europe, and the Reformation was daily spreading over his kingdom.

Wolsey’s anguish cannot be described. His power, his pomp, his palaces were all threatened; who could tell whether he would even preserve his liberty and his life. — A just reward for so much duplicity.

But the king’s wrath was to be greater than even the minister’s alarm. His terrified servants wondered how they should announce the pontiff’s decision. Gardiner, who, after his return from Rome, had been named secretary of state, went down to Langley on the 3rd of August to communicate it to him. What news for the proud Tudor! The decision on the divorce was forbidden in England; the cause avoked to Rome, there to be buried and unjustly lost; Francis I treating with the emperor; Charles and Clement on the point of exchanging at Bologna the most striking signs of their unchangeable alliance; the services rendered by the king to the popedom repaid with the blackest ingratitude; his hope of giving an heir to the crown disgracefully frustrated; and last, but not least, Henry VIII, the proudest monarch of

Christendom, summoned to Rome to appear before an ecclesiastical tribunal.....it was too much for Henry. His wrath, a moment restrained, burst forth like a clap of thunder, and all trembled around him. “Do they presume,” he exclaimed, “to try my cause elsewhere than in my own dominions? I, the king of England, summoned before an Italian tribunal!.....Yes,.....I will go to Rome, but it shall be with such a mighty army that the pope, and his priests, and all Italy shall be struck with terror. — I forbid the commission to consider its functions at an end.” Henry would have desired to tear off Campeggio’s purple robes, and throw this prince of the Roman church into prison, in order to frighten Clement; but the very magnitude of the insult compelled him to restrain himself. He feared above all things to appear humbled in the eyes of England, and he hoped, by showing moderation, to hide the affront he had received. “Let everything be done,” he told Gardiner, “to conceal from my subjects these letters of citation, which are so hurtful to my glory. Write to Wolsey that I have the greatest confidence in his dexterity, and that he ought, by good handling, to win over Campeggio

and the queen’s counsellors; and, above all, prevail upon them at any price not to serve these citatory letters on me.” But Henry had hardly given his instructions when the insult of which he had been the object recurred to his imagination; the thought of Clement haunted him night and day, and he swore to exact a striking vengeance from the pontiff. Rome desires to have no more to do with England.....England in her turn will cast off Rome.

Henry will sacrifice Wolsey, Clement, and the church; nothing shall stop his fury. The crafty pontiff has concealed his game, the king shall beat him openly; and from age to age the popedom shall shed tears over the imprudent folly of a Medici.

Thus after insupportable delays, which had fatigued the nation, a thunderbolt fell upon England. Court, clergy, and people, from whom it was impossible to conceal these great events, were deeply stirred, and the whole kingdom was in commotion. Wolsey, still hoping to ward off the ruin impending over both himself and the papacy, immediately put in play all that dexterity which

Henry had spoken of; he so far prevailed that the letters citatorial were not served on the king, but only the brief addressed to Wolsey by Clement VII. The cardinal, all radiant with this trivial success, and desirous of profiting by it to raise his credit, resolved to accompany Campeggio, who was going down to Grafton to take leave of the king. When the coming of the two legates was heard of at court, the agitation was very great. The dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk regarded this proceeding as the last effort of their enemy, and entreated Henry not to receive him. “The king will receive him,” said some. “The king will not receive him,” answered others. At length, one Sunday morning, it was announced that the prelates were at the gates of the mansion. Wolsey looked round with an anxious eye for the great officers who were accustomed to introduce him. They appeared, and desired Campeggio to follow them. When the legate had been taken to his apartments, Wolsey waited his turn; but great was his consternation on being informed that there was no chamber appointed for him in the palace. Sir Henry Norris, groom of the stole, offered Wolsey the use of his own room, and

the cardinal followed him, almost sinking beneath the humiliation he had undergone. He made ready to appear before the king, and summoning up his courage, proceeded to the presence-chamber.

The lords of the council were standing in a row according to their rank; Wolsey, taking off his hat, passed along, saluting each of them with affected civility. A great number of courtiers arrived, impatient to see how Henry would receive his old favorite; and most of them were already exulting in the striking disgrace of which they hoped to be witnesses. At last the king was announced.

Henry stood under the cloth of state; and Wolsey advanced and knelt before him. Deep silence prevailed throughout the chamber.....To the surprise of all, Henry stooped down and raised him up with both hands.....Then, with a pleasing smile, he took Wolsey to the window, desired him to put on his hat, and talked familiarly with him. “Then,” says Cavendish, the cardinal’s gentleman usher, “it would have made you smile to behold the countenances of those who had laid wagers that the

king would not speak with him." But this was the last ray of evening which then lighted up the darkening fortunes of Wosley: the star of his favor was about to set for ever.....The silence continued, for every one desired to catch a few words of the conversation. The king seemed to be accusing Wolsey, and Wolsey to be justifying himself. On a sudden Henry pulled a letter out of his bosom, and showing it to the cardinal, said in a loud voice: "How can that be? is not this your hand?" It was no doubt the letter which Bryan had intercepted.

Wolsey replied in an under-tone, and seemed to have appeased his master.

The dinner hour having arrived, the king left the room, telling Wolsey that he would not fail to see him again; the courtiers were eager to make their profoundest reverences to the cardinal, but he haughtily traversed the chamber, and the dukes hastened to carry to Anne Boleyn the news of this astonishing reception.

Wolsey, Campeggio, and the lords of the

council sat down to dinner. The cardinal, well aware that the terrible letter would be his utter ruin, and that Henry's good graces had no other object than to prepare his fall, began to hint at his retirement. "Truly," said he with a devout air, "the king would do well to send his bishops and chaplains home to their cures and benefices." The company looked at one another with astonishment. "Yea, marry," said the duke of Norfolk somewhat rudely, "and so it were meet for you to do also." — "I should be very well contented therewith," answered Wolsey, "if it were the king's pleasure to license me with leave to go to my cure at Winchester." — "Nay, to your benefice at York, where your greatest honor and charge is," replied Norfolk, who was not willing that Wolsey should be living so near Henry. — "Even as it shall please the king," added Wolsey, and changed the subject of conversation.

Henry had caused himself to be announced to Anne Boleyn, who (says Cavendish) "kept state at Grafton more like a queen than a simple maid." Possessing extreme sensibility, and an ardent

imagination, Anne, who felt the slightest insult with all the sensibility of her woman's heart, was very dissatisfied with the king after the report of the dukes. Accordingly, heedless of the presence of the attendants, she said to him: "Sir, is it not a marvelous thing to see into what great danger the cardinal hath brought you with all your subjects?" — "How so, sweetheart?" asked Henry. Anne continued: "Are you ignorant of the hatred his exactions have drawn upon you? There is not a man in your whole realm of England worth one hundred pounds, but he hath made you his debtor." Anne here alluded to the loan the king had raised among his subjects. "Well, well," said Henry, who was not pleased with these remarks, "I know that matter better than you." — "If my lord of Norfolk, my lord of Suffolk, my uncle, or my father had done much less than the cardinal hath done," continued Anne, "they would have lost their heads ere this." — "Then I perceive," said Henry, "you are none of his friends." — "No, sir, I have no cause, nor any that love you," she replied. The dinner was ended; the king, without appearing at all touched, proceeded to the presence-chamber,

where Wolsey expected him.

After a long conversation, carried on in a low tone, the king took Wolsey by the hand and led him into his private chamber. The courtiers awaited impatiently the termination of an interview which might decide the fate of England; they walked up and down the gallery, often passing before the door of the closet, in the hope of catching from Wolsey’s looks, when he opened it, the result of this secret conference; but one quarter of an hour followed another, these became hours, and still the cardinal did not appear.

Henry having resolved that this conversation should be the last, was no doubt collecting from his minister all the information necessary to him. But the courtiers imagined he was returning into his master’s favor; Norfolk, Suffolk, Wiltshire, and the other enemies of the prime minister, began to grow alarmed, and hastened off to Anne Boleyn, who was their last hope.

It was night when the king and Wolsey quitted

the royal closet; the former appeared gracious, the latter satisfied; it was always Henry's custom to smile on those he intended to sacrifice. "I shall see you in the morning," he said to the cardinal with a friendly air. Wolsey made a low bow, and, turning round to the courtiers, saw the king's smile reflected on their faces.

Wiltshire, Tuke, and even Suffolk, were full of civility. "Well," thought he, "the motion of such weathercocks as these shows me from what quarter the wind of favor is blowing." But a moment after the wind began to change. Men with torches waited for the cardinal at the gates of the palace to conduct him to the place where he would have to pass the night. Thus he was not to sleep beneath the same roof with Henry. He was to lie at Euston, one of Empson's houses, about three miles off. Wolsey, repressing his vexation, mounted his horse, the footmen preceded him with their links, and after an hour's riding along very bad roads he reached the lodging assigned him.

He had sat down to supper, to which some of

his most intimate friends had been invited, when suddenly Gardiner was announced. Gardiner owed everything to the cardinal, and yet he had not appeared before him since his return from Rome. He comes no doubt to play the hypocrite and the spy, thought Wolsey. But as soon as the secretary entered, Wolsey rose, made him a graceful compliment, and prayed him to take a seat. “Master Secretary,” he asked, “where have you been since your return from Rome?” — “I have been following the court from place to place.” — “You have been hunting then? Have you any dogs?” asked the prime minister, who knew very well what Gardiner had been doing in the king’s closet. “A few,” replied Gardiner. Wolsey thought that even the secretary was a bloodhound on his track. And yet after supper he took Gardiner aside, and conversed with him until midnight. He thought it prudent to neglect nothing that might clear up his position; and Wolsey sounded Gardiner, just as he himself had been sounded by Henry not long before.

The same night at Grafton the king gave

Campeggio a farewell audience, and treated him very kindly, “by giving him presents and other matters,” says Du Bellay. Henry then returned to Anne Boleyn. The dukes had pointed out to her the importance of the present moment; she therefore asked and obtained of Henry, without any great difficulty, his promise never to speak to his minister again. The insults of the papacy had exasperated the king of England, and as he could not punish Clement, he took his revenge on the cardinal.

The next morning, Wolsey, impatient to have the interview which Henry had promised, rode back early to Grafton. But as he came near, he met a numerous train of servants and sumpter-horses; and presently afterwards Henry, with Anne Boleyn and many lords and ladies of the court, came riding up. “What does all this mean?” thought the cardinal in dismay. “My lord,” said the king, as he drew near, “I cannot stay with you now. You will return to London with cardinal Campeggio.” Then striking the spurs into his horse, Henry galloped off with a friendly salutation. After him came Anne

Boleyn, who rode past Wolsey with head erect, and casting on him a proud look. The court proceeded to Hartwell Park, where Anne had determined to keep the king all day. Wolsey was confounded. There was no room for doubt; his disgrace was certain. His head swam, he remained immovable for an instant, and then recovered himself; but the blow he had received had not been unobserved by the courtiers, and the cardinal's fall became the general topic of conversation.

After dinner, the legates departed, and on the second day reached Moor Park, a mansion built by Archbishop Neville, one of Wolsey's predecessors, who for high treason had been first imprisoned at Calais, and afterwards at Ham. These recollections were by no means agreeable to Wolsey. The next morning the two cardinals separated; Campeggio proceeded to Dover, and Wolsey to London.

Campeggio was impatient to get out of England, and great was his annoyance, on reaching Dover, to find that the wind was contrary. But a still greater vexation was in reserve. He had hardly

lain down to rest himself, before his door was opened, and a band of sergeants entered the room. The cardinal, who knew what scenes of this kind meant in Italy, thought he was a dead man, and fell trembling at his chaplain's feet begging for absolution. Meantime the officers opened his luggage, broke into his chests, scattered his property about the floor, and even shook out his clothes. Henry's tranquility had not been of long duration. "Campeggio is the bearer of letters from Wolsey to Rome," whispered some of the courtiers; "who knows but they contain treasonable matter?" "There is, too, among his papers the famous decretal pronouncing the divorce," said one; "if we had but that document it would finish the business." Another affirmed that Campeggio "had large treasure with him of my lord's (Wolsey's) to be conveyed in great tons to Rome," whither it was surmised the cardinal of York would escape to enjoy the fruits of his treason. "It is certain," added a third, "that Campeggio, assisted by Wolsey, has been able to procure your majesty's correspondence with Anne Boleyn, and is carrying it away with him." Henry, therefore, sent a

messenger after the nuncio, with orders that his baggage should be thoroughly searched.

Nothing was found, neither letters, nor bull, nor treasures. The bull had been destroyed; the treasures Wolsey had never thought of intrusting to his colleague; and the letters of Anne and Henry, Campeggio had sent on before by his son Rodolph, and the pope was stretching out his hands to receive them, proud, like his successors, of the robbery committed by two of his legates.

Campeggio being reassured, and seeing that he was neither to be killed nor robbed, made a great noise at this act of violence, and at the insulting remarks which had given rise to it. “I will not leave England,” he caused Henry to be informed, “until I have received satisfaction.” “My lord forgets that he is legate no longer,” replied the king, “since the pope has withdrawn his powers; he forgets, besides, that, as bishop of Salisbury, he is my subject; as for the remarks against him and the cardinal of York, it is a liberty the people of England are accustomed to take, and which I

cannot put down.” Campeggio, anxious to reach France, was satisfied with these reasons, and soon forgot all his sorrows at the sumptuous table of Cardinal Duprat.

Wolsey was not so fortunate. He had seen Campeggio go away, and remained like a wrecked seaman thrown on a desert isle, who has seen depart the only friends capable of giving him any help. His necromancy had forewarned him that this would be a fatal year. The angel of the maid of Kent had said: “Go to the cardinal and announce his fall, because he has not done what you had commanded him to do.” Other voices besides hers made themselves heard: the hatred of the nation, the contempt of Europe, and, above all, Henry’s anger, told him that his hour was come.

It was true the pope said that he would do all in his power to save him; but Clement’s good offices would only accelerate his ruin. Du Bellay, whom the people believed to be the cardinal’s accomplice, bore witness to the change that had taken place in men’s minds. While passing on foot

through the streets of the capital, followed by two valets, “his ears were so filled with coarse jests as he went along,” he said, “that he knew not which way to turn.” “The cardinal is utterly undone,” he wrote, “and I see not how he can escape.” The idea occurred to Wolsey, from time to time, to pronounce the divorce himself; but it was too late. He was even told that his life was in danger. Fortune, blind and bald, her foot on the wheel, fled rapidly from him, nor was it in his power to stop her. And this was not all: after him (he thought) there was no one who could uphold the church of the pontiffs in England. The ship of Rome was sailing on a stormy sea among rocks and shoals; Wolsey at the helm looked in vain for a port of refuge; the vessel leaked on every side; it was rapidly sinking, and the cardinal uttered a cry of distress. Alas! he had desired to save Rome, but Rome would not have it so.

Chapter 12

A Meeting at Waltham

As Wolsey's star was disappearing in the West in the midst of stormy clouds, another was rising in the East, to point out the way to save Britain.

Men, like stars, appear on the horizon at the command of God.

On his return from Woodstock to Greenwich, Henry stopped full of anxiety at Waltham in Essex. His attendants were lodged in the houses of the neighborhood. Fox, the almoner, and Secretary Gardiner, were quartered on a gentleman named Cressy, at Waltham Abbey. When supper was announced, Gardiner and Fox were surprised to see an old friend enter the room. It was Thomas Cranmer, a Cambridge doctor. "What! is it you?" they said, "and how came you here?" "Our host's wife is my relation," replied Cranmer, "and as the epidemic is raging at Cambridge, I brought home my friend's sons, who are under my care." As this

new personage is destined to play an important part in the history of the Reformation, it may be worth our while to interrupt our narrative, and give a particular account of him.

Cranmer was descended from an ancient family, which came into England, as is generally believed, with the Conqueror. He was born at Aslacton in Nottinghamshire on the 2nd July 1489, six years after Luther. His early education had been very much neglected; his tutor, an ignorant and severe priest, had taught him little else than patiently to endure severe chastisement — a knowledge destined to be very useful to him in after-life.

His father was an honest country gentleman, who cared for little besides hunting, racing, and military sports. At this school, the son learned to ride, to handle the bow and the sword, to fish, and to hawk; and he never entirely neglected these exercises, which he thought essential to his health.

Thomas Cranmer was fond of walking, of the

charms of nature, and of solitary meditations; and a hill, near his father’s mansion, used often to be shown where he was wont to sit, gazing on the fertile country at his feet, fixing his eyes on the distant spires, listening with melancholy pleasure to the chime of the bells, and indulging in sweet contemplations. About, he was sent to Cambridge, where “barbarism still prevailed,” says an historian. His plain, noble, and modest air conciliated the affections of many, and, in 1510, he was elected fellow of Jesus College. Possessing a tender heart, he became attached, at the age of twenty-three, to a young person of good birth, (says Foxe,) or of inferior rank, as other writers assert. Cranmer was unwilling to imitate the disorderly lives of his fellowstudents, and although marriage would necessarily close the career of honors, he married the young lady, resigned his fellowship (in conformity with the regulations), and took a modest lodging at the Dolphin. He then began to study earnestly the most remarkable writings of the times, polishing, it has been said, his old asperity on the productions of Erasmus, of Lefevre of Etaples, and other great authors; every

day his crude understanding received new brilliancy. He then began to teach in Buckingham (afterwards Magdalene) College, and thus provided for his wants.

His lessons excited the admiration of enlightened men, and the anger of obscure ones, who disdainfully called him (because of the inn at which he lodged) the hostler. “This name became him well,” said Fuller, “for in his lessons he roughly rubbed the backs of the friars, and famously curried the hides of the lazy priests.” His wife dying a year after his marriage, Cranmer was re-elected fellow of his old college, and the first writing of Luther’s having appeared, he said: “I must know on which side the truth lies. There is only one infallible source, the Scriptures; in them I will seek for God’s truth.” And for three years he constantly studied the holy books, without commentary, without human theology, and hence he gained the name of the Scripturist. At last his eyes were opened; he saw the mysterious bond which united all biblical revelations, and understood the completeness of God’s design.

Then without forsaking the Scriptures, he studied all kinds of authors. He was a slow reader, but a close observer; he never opened a book without having a pen in his hand.

He did not take up with any particular party or age; but possessing a free and philosophic mind, he weighed all opinions in the balance of his judgment, taking the Bible for his standard.

Honors soon came upon him; he was made successively doctor of divinity, professor, university preacher, and examiner. He used to say to the candidates for the ministry: “Christ sendeth his hearers to the Scriptures, and not to the church.” — “But,” replied the monks, “they are so difficult.” — “Explain the obscure passages by those which are clear,” rejoined the professor, “Scripture by Scripture. Seek, pray, and he who has the key of David will open them to you.” The monks, affrighted at this task, withdrew bursting with anger; and erelong Cranmer’s name was a name of dread in every convent. Some, however, submitted to the labor, and one of them, Doctor

Barrett, blessed God that the examiner had turned him back; “for,” said he, “I found the knowledge of God in the holy book he compelled me to study.” Cranmer toiled at the same work as Latimer, Stafford, and Bilney.

Fox and Gardiner having renewed acquaintance with their old friend at Waltham Abbey, they sat down to table, and both the almoner and the secretary asked the doctor what he thought of the divorce. It was the usual topic of conversation, and not long before, Cranmer had been named member of a commission appointed to give their opinion on this affair.

“You are not in the right path,” said Cranmer to his friends; “you should not cling to the decisions of the church. There is a surer and a shorter way which alone can give peace to the king’s conscience.” — “What is that?” they both asked. — “The true question is this,” replied Cranmer: “What says the word of God? If God has declared a marriage of this nature bad, the pope cannot make it good. Discontinue these interminable Roman

negotiations. When God has spoken, man must obey.” — “But how shall we know what God has said?” — “Consult the universities; they will discern it more surely than Rome.” This was a new view. The idea of consulting the universities had been acted upon before; but then their own opinions only had been demanded; now, the question was simply to know what God says in his word. “The word of God is above the church,” was the principle laid down by Cranmer, and in that principle consisted the whole of the Reformation.

The conversation at the supper-table of Waltham was destined to be one of those secret springs which an invisible Hand sets in motion for the accomplishment of his great designs. The Cambridge doctor, suddenly transported from his study to the foot of the throne, was on the point of becoming one of the principal instruments of Divine wisdom.

The day after this conversation, Fox and Gardiner arrived at Greenwich, and the king summoned them into his presence the same

evening. “Well, gentlemen,” he said to them, “our holidays are over; what shall we do now? If we still have recourse to Rome, God knows when we shall see the end of this matter.” — “It will not be necessary to take so long a journey,” said Fox; “we know a shorter and surer way.” — “What is it?” asked the king eagerly. — “Doctor Cranmer, whom we met yesterday at Waltham, thinks that the Bible should be the sole judge in your cause.” Gardiner, vexed at his colleague’s frankness, desired to claim all the honor of this luminous idea for himself; but Henry did not listen to him. “Where is Doctor Cranmer?” said he, much affected. “Send, and fetch him immediately. Mother of God! (this was his customary oath) this man has the right sow by the ear. If this had only been suggested to me two years ago, what expense and trouble I should have been spared!” Cranmer had gone into Nottinghamshire; a messenger followed and brought him back. “Why have you entangled me in this affair?” he said to Fox and Gardiner. “Pray make my excuses to the king.” Gardiner, who wished for nothing better, promised to do all he could; but it was of no use. “I will have no

excuses," said Henry. The wily courtier was obliged to make up his mind to introduce the ingenuous and upright man, to whom that station, which he himself had so coveted, was one day to belong. Cranmer and Gardiner went down to Greenwich, both alike dissatisfied.

Cranmer was then forty years of age, with pleasing features, and mild and winning eyes, in which the candor of his soul seemed to be reflected.

Sensible to the pains as well as to the pleasures of the heart, he was destined to be more exposed than other men to anxieties and falls; a peaceful life in some remote parsonage would have been more to his taste than the court of Henry VIII. Blessed with a generous mind, unhappily he did not possess the firmness necessary in a public man; a little stone sufficed to make him stumble. His excellent understanding showed him the better way; but his great timidity made him fear the more dangerous. He was rather too fond of relying upon the power of men, and made them unhappy concessions with

too great facility. If the king had questioned him, he would never have dared advise so bold a course as that he had pointed out; the advice had slipped from him at table during the intimacy of familiar conversation. Yet he was sincere, and after doing everything to escape from the consequences of his frankness, he was ready to maintain the opinion he had given.

Henry, perceiving Cranmer's timidity, graciously approached him. "What is your name?" said the king, endeavoring to put him at his ease. "Did you not meet my secretary and my almoner at Waltham?" And then he added: "Did you not speak to them of my great affair?" — repeating the words ascribed to Cranmer. The latter could not retreat: "Sir, it is true, I did say so." — "I see," replied the king with animation, "that you have found the breach through which we must storm the fortress. Now, sir doctor, I beg you, and as you are my subject I command you, to lay aside every other occupation, and to bring my cause to a conclusion in conformity with the ideas you have put forth. All that I desire to know is, whether my marriage is

contrary to the laws of God or not. Employ all your skill in investigating the subject, and thus bring comfort to my conscience as well as to the queen's." Cranmer was confounded; he recoiled from the idea of deciding an affair on which depended, it might be, the destinies of the nation, and sighed after the lonely fields of Aslacton. But grasped by the vigorous hand of Henry, he was compelled to advance. "Sir," said he, "pray intrust this matter to doctors more learned than I am." — "I am very willing," answered the king, "but I desire that you will also give me your opinion in writing." And then summoning the earl of Wiltshire to his presence, he said to him: "My lord, you will receive Doctor Cranmer into your house at Durham Place, and let him have all necessary quiet to compose a report for which I have asked him." After this precise command, which admitted of no refusal, Henry withdrew.

In this manner was Cranmer introduced by the king to Anne Boleyn's father, and not, as some Romanist authors have asserted, by Sir Thomas Boleyn to the king. Wiltshire conducted Cranmer

to Durham House (now the Adelphi in the Strand), and the pious doctor, on whom Henry had imposed these quarters, soon contracted a close friendship with Anne and her father, and took advantage of it to teach them the value of the divine word, as the pearl of great price. Henry, while profiting by the address of a Wolsey and a Gardiner, paid little regard to the men; but he respected Cranmer, even when opposed to him in opinion, and until his death placed the learned doctor above all his courtiers and all his clerks.

The pious man often succeeds better, even with the great ones of this world, than the ambitious and the intriguing.

Chapter 13

Wolsey in the Court of Chancery

While Cranmer was rising notwithstanding his humility, Wolsey was falling in despite of his stratagems. The cardinal still governed the kingdom, gave instructions to ambassadors, negotiated with princes, and filled his sumptuous palaces with his haughtiness. The king could not make up his mind to turn him off; the force of habit, the need he had of him, the recollection of the services Henry had received from him, pleaded in his favor. Wolsey without the seals appeared almost as inconceivable as the king without his crown. Yet the fall of one of the most powerful favorites recorded in history was inevitably approaching, and we must now describe it.

On the 9th of October, after the Michaelmas vacation, Wolsey, desirous of showing a bold face, went and opened the high court of chancery with

his accustomed pomp; but he noticed, with uneasiness, that none of the king's servants walked before him, as they had been accustomed to do. He presided on the bench with an inexpressible depression of spirits, and the various members of the court sat before him with an absent air; there was something gloomy and solemn in this sitting, as if all were taking part in a funeral; it was destined indeed to be the last act of the cardinal's power.

Some days before (Foxe says on the 1st of October) the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, with other lords of the privy-council, had gone down to Windsor, and denounced to the king Wolsey's unconstitutional relations with the pope, his usurpations, "his robberies, and the discords sown by his means between Christian princes." Such motives would not have sufficed; but Henry had stronger. Wolsey had not kept any of his promises in the matter of the divorce; it would even appear that he had advised the pope to excommunicate the king, and thus raise his people against him. This enormity was not at that time known by the prince;

it is even probable that it did not take place until later. But Henry knew 2008 enough, and he gave his attorney-general, Sir Christopher Hales, orders to prosecute Wolsey.

While the heart-broken cardinal was displaying his authority for the last time in the court of chancery, the attorney-general was accusing him in the king's bench for having obtained papal bulls conferring on him a jurisdiction which encroached on the royal power; and calling for the application of the penalties of praemunire. The two dukes received orders to demand the seals from Wolsey; and the latter, informed of what had taken place, did not quit his palace on the 10th, expecting every moment the arrival of the messengers of the king's anger; but no one appeared.

The next day the two dukes arrived: "It is the king's good pleasure," said they to the cardinal, who remained seated in his arm-chair, "that you give up the broad seal to us and retire to Esher" (a countryseat near Hampton Court). Wolsey, whose presence of mind never failed him, demanded to

see the commission under which they were acting. “We have our orders from his majesty’s mouth,” said they. — “That may be sufficient for you,” replied the cardinal, “but not for me. The great seal of England was delivered to me by the hands of my sovereign; I may not deliver it at the simple word of any lord, unless you can show me your commission.” Suffolk broke out into a passion, but Wolsey remained calm, and the two dukes returned to Windsor. This was the cardinal’s last triumph.

The rumor of his disgrace created an immense sensation at court, in the city, and among the foreign ambassadors. Du Bellay hastened to York Place (Whitehall) to contemplate this great ruin and console his unhappy friend. He found Wolsey, with dejected countenance and lusterless eyes, “shrunk to half his wonted size,” wrote the ambassador to Montmorency, “the greatest example of fortune which was ever beheld.” Wolsey desired “to set forth his case” to him; but his thoughts were confused, his language broken, “for heart and tongue both failed him entirely;” he burst into tears.

The ambassador regarded him with compassion: “Alas!” thought he, “his enemies cannot but feel pity for him.” At last the unhappy cardinal recovered his speech, but only to give way to despair. “I desire no more authority,” he exclaimed, “nor the pope’s legation, nor the broad seal of England.....I am ready to give up everything, even to my shirt. ....I can live in a hermitage, provided the king does not hold me in disgrace.” The ambassador “did all he could to comfort him,” when Wolsey, catching at the plank thrown out to him, exclaimed: “Would that the king of France and madame might pray the king to moderate his anger against me. But, above all,” he added in alarm, “take care the king never knows that I have solicited this of you.” Du Bellay wrote indeed to France, that the king and madame alone could “withdraw their affectionate servant from the gates of hell;” and Wolsey being informed of these despatches, his hopes recovered a little. But this bright gleam did not last long.

On Sunday the 17th of October, Norfolk and

Suffolk reappeared at Whitehall, accompanied by Fitzwilliam, Taylor, and Gardiner, Wolsey's former dependant. It was six in the evening; they found the cardinal in an upper chamber, near the great gallery, and presented the king's orders to him. Having read them, he said: "I am happy to obey his majesty's commands;" then, having ordered the great seal to be brought him, he took it out of the white leather case in which he kept it, and handed it to the dukes, who placed it in a box, covered with crimson velvet, and ornamented with the arms of England, ordered Gardiner to seal it up with red wax, and gave it to Taylor to convey to the king.

Wolsey was thunderstruck; he was to drink the bitter cup even to the dregs: he was ordered to leave his palace forthwith, taking with him neither clothes, linen, nor plate; the dukes had feared that he would convey away his treasures. Wolsey comprehended the greatness of his misery; he found strength however to say: "Since it is the king's good pleasure to take my house and all it contains, I am content to retire to Esher." The

dukes left him.

Wolsey remained alone. This astonishing man, who had risen from a butcher's shop to the summit of earthly greatness — who, for a word that displeased him, sent his master's most faithful servants (Pace for instance) to the Tower, and who had governed England as if he had been its monarch, and even more, for he had governed without a parliament — was driven out, and thrown, as it were, upon a dunghill. A sudden hope flashed like lightning through his mind; perhaps the magnificence of the spoils would appease Henry. Was not Esau pacified by Jacob's present? Wolsey summoned his officers: "Set tables in the great gallery," he said to them, "and place on them all I have intrusted to your care, in order to render me an account." These orders were executed immediately. The tables were covered with an immense quantity of rich stuffs, silks and velvets of all colors, costly furs, rich copes and other ecclesiastical vestures; the walls were hung with cloth of gold and silver, and webs of a valuable stuff named baudy-kin, from the looms of

Damascus, and with tapestry, representing scriptural subjects or stories from the old romances of chivalry. The gilt chamber and the council chamber, adjoining the gallery, were both filled with plate, in which the gold and silver were set with pearls and precious stones: these articles of luxury were so abundant that basketfuls of costly plate, which had fallen out of fashion, were stowed away under the tables. On every table was an exact list of the treasures with which it was loaded, for the most perfect order and regularity prevailed in the cardinal's household. Wolsey cast a glance of hope upon this wealth, and ordered his officers to deliver the whole to his majesty.

He then prepared to leave his magnificent palace. That moment, of itself so sad, was made sadder still by an act of affectionate indiscretion. "Ah, my lord," said his treasurer, Sir William Gascoigne, moved even to tears, "your grace will be sent to the Tower." This was too much for Wolsey: to go and join his victims!.....He grew angry, and exclaimed: "Is this the best comfort you can give your master in adversity? I would have

you and all such blasphemous reporters know that it is untrue." It was necessary to depart; he put round his neck a chain of gold, from which hung a pretended relic of the true cross; this was all he took.

"Would to God," he exclaimed, as he placed it on, "that I had never had any other." This he said, alluding to the legate's cross which used to be carried before him with so much pomp. He descended the back stairs, followed by his servants, some silent and dejected, others weeping bitterly, and proceeded to the river's brink, where a barge awaited him.

But, alas! it was not alone. The Thames was covered with innumerable boats full of men and women. The inhabitants of London, expecting to see the cardinal led to the Tower, desired to be present at his humiliation, and prepared to accompany him. Cries of joy hailing his fall were heard from every side; nor were the cruelest sarcasms wanting. "The butcher's dog will bite no more," said some; "look, how he hangs his head."

In truth, the unhappy man, distressed by a sight so new to him, lowered those eyes which were once so proud, but now were filled with bitter tears. This man, who had made all England tremble, was then like a withered leaf carried along the stream. All his servants were moved; even his fool, William Patch, sobbed like the rest. “O, wavering and newfangled multitude,” exclaimed Cavendish, his gentleman usher. The hopes of the citizens were disappointed; the barge, instead of descending the river, proceeded upwards in the direction of Hampton Court; gradually the shouts died away, and the flotilla dispersed.

The silence of the river permitted Wolsey to indulge in less bitter thoughts; but it seemed as if invisible furies were pursuing him, now that the people had left him. He left his barge at Putney, and mounting his mule, though with difficulty, proceeded slowly with downcast looks. Shortly after, upon lifting his eyes, he saw a horseman riding rapidly down the hill towards them. “Whom do you think it can be?” he asked of his attendants.

“My lord,” replied one of them, “I think it is Sir Henry Norris.” A flash of joy passed through Wolsey’s heart. Was it not Norris, who, of all the king’s officers, had shown him the most respect during his visit to Grafton? Norris came up with them, saluted him respectfully, and said: “The king bids me declare that he still entertains the same kindly feelings towards you, and sends you this ring as a token of his confidence.” Wolsey received it with a trembling hand: it was that which the king was in the habit of sending on important occasions. The cardinal immediately alighted from his mule, and kneeling down in the road, raised his hands to heaven with an indescribable expression of happiness. The fallen man would have pulled off his velvet under-cap, but unable to undo the strings, he broke them, and threw it on the ground. He remained on his knees bareheaded, praying fervently amidst profound silence. God’s forgiveness had never caused Wolsey so much pleasure as Henry’s.

Having finished his prayer, the cardinal put on his cap, and remounted his mule. “Gentle Norris,”

said he to the king’s messenger, “if I were lord of a kingdom, the half of it would scarcely be enough to reward you for your happy tidings; but I have nothing left except the clothes on my back.” Then taking off his gold chain: “Take this,” he said, “it contains a piece of the true cross. In my happier days I would not have parted with it for a thousand pounds.” The cardinal and Norris separated: but Wolsey soon stopped, and the whole troop halted on the heath. The thought troubled him greatly that he had nothing to send to the king; he called Norris back, and, looking round him, saw, mounted on a sorry horse, poor William Patch, who had lost all his gaiety since his master’s misfortune. “Present this poor jester to the king from me,” said Wolsey to Norris; “his buffooneries are a pleasure fit for a prince; he is worth a thousand pounds.” Patch, offended at being treated thus, burst into a violent passion; his eyes flashed fire, he foamed at the mouth, he kicked and fought, an bit all who approached him; but the inexorable Wolsey, who looked upon him merely as a toy, ordered six of his tallest yeomen to lay hold of him. They carried off the unfortunate creature, who long continued to

utter his piercing cries. At the very moment when his master had had pity on him, Wolsey, like the servant in the parable, had no pity on his poor companion in misfortune.

At last they reached Esher. What a residence compared with Whitehall!.....It was little more than four bare walls. The most urgent necessaries were procured from the neighboring houses, but Wolsey could not adapt himself to this cruel contrast. Besides, he knew Henry VIII; he knew that he might send Norris one day with a gold ring, and the executioner the next with a rope. Gloomy and dejected, he remained seated in his lonely apartments. On a sudden he would rise from his seat, walk hurriedly up and down, speak aloud to himself, and then, falling back in his chair, he would weep like a child. This man, who formerly had shaken kingdoms, had been overthrown in the twinkling of an eye, and was now atoning for his perfidies in humiliation and terror, — a striking example of God’s judgment.

Chapter 14

Thomas More elected Chancellor

During all this time everybody was in commotion at court. Norfolk and Suffolk, at the head of the council, had informed the Star Chamber of the cardinal's disgrace. Henry knew not how to supply his place. Some suggested the archbishop of Canterbury; the king would not hear of him.

"Wolsey," says a French writer, "had disgusted the king and all England with those subjects of two masters who, almost always, sold one to the other. They preferred a lay minister." "I verily believe the priests will never more obtain it," wrote Du Bellay. The name of Sir Thomas More was pronounced. He was a layman, and that quality, which a few years before would, perhaps, have excluded him, was now a recommendation. A breath of Protestantism wafted to the summit of honors one

of its greatest enemies. Henry thought that More, placed between the pope and his sovereign, would decide in favor of the interests of the throne, and of the independence of England. His choice was made.

More knew that the cardinal had been thrown aside because he was not a sufficiently docile instrument in the matter of the divorce. The work required of him was contrary to his convictions; but the honor conferred on him was almost unprecedented; very seldom indeed had the seals been intrusted to a mere knight. He followed the path of ambition and not of duty; he showed, however, in after-days that his ambition was of no common sort. It is even probable that, foreseeing the dangers which threatened to destroy the papal power in England, More wished to make an effort to save it. Norfolk installed the new chancellor in the Star Chamber. “His majesty,” said the duke, “has not cast his eyes upon the nobility of the blood, but on the worth of the person. He desires to show by this choice that there are among the laity and gentlemen of England, men worthy to fill the

highest offices in the kingdom, to which, until this hour, bishops and noblemen alone think they have a right." The Reformation, which restored religion to the general body of the church, took away at the same time political power from the clergy. The priests had deprived the people of Christian activity, and the governments of power; the gospel restored to both what the priests had usurped. This result could not but be favorable to the interests of religion; the less cause kings and their subjects have to fear the intrusion of clerical power into the affairs of the world, the more will they yield themselves to the vivifying influence of faith.

More lost no time; never had lord-chancellor displayed such activity. He rapidly cleared off the cases which were in arrear, and having been installed on the 26th of October he called on Wolsey's cause on the 28th or 29th.

"The crown of England," said the attorney-general, "has never acknowledged any superior but God. Now, the said Thomas Wolsey, legate a latere, has obtained from the pope certain bulls, by

virtue of which he has exercised since the 28th of August 1523 an authority derogatory to his majesty's power, and to the rights of his courts of justice. The crown of England cannot be put under the pope; and we therefore accuse the said legate of having incurred the penalties of praemunire." There can be no doubt that Henry had other reasons for Wolsey's disgrace than those pointed out by the attorneygeneral; but England had convictions of a higher nature than her sovereign's. Wolsey was regarded as the pope's accomplice, and this was the cause of the great severity of the public officer and of the people. The cardinal is generally excused by alleging that both king and parliament had ratified the unconstitutional authority with which Rome had invested him; but had not the powers conferred on him by the pope produced unjustifiable results in a constitutional monarchy? Wolsey, as papal legate, had governed England without a parliament; and, as if the nation had gone back to the reign of John, he had substituted de facto, if not in theory, the monstrous system of the famous bull Unam Sanctam for the institution of Magna Charta.

The king, and even the lords and commons, had connived in vain at these illegalities; the rights of the constitution of England remained not the less inviolable, and the best of the people had protested against their infringement. And hence it was that Wolsey, conscious of his crime, “put himself wholly to the mercy and grace of the king,” and his counsel declared his ignorance of the statutes he was said to have infringed. We cannot here allege, as some have done, the prostration of Wolsey’s moral powers; he could, even after his fall, reply with energy to Henry VIII.

When, for instance, the king sent to demand for the crown his palace of Whitehall, which belonged to the see of York, the cardinal answered: “Show his majesty from me that I must desire him to call to his most gracious remembrance that there is both a heaven and a hell;” and when other charges besides those of complicity with the papal aggression were brought against him, he defended himself courageously, as will be afterwards seen. If, therefore, the cardinal did not attempt to justify himself for infringing the rights of the crown, it

was because his conscience bade him be silent. He had committed one of the gravest faults of which a statesman can be guilty. Those who have sought to excuse him have not sufficiently borne in mind that, since the Great Charter, opposition to Romish aggression has always characterized the constitution and government of England. Wolsey perfectly recollected this; and this explanation is more honorable to him than that which ascribes his silence to weakness or to cunning.

The cardinal was pronounced guilty, and the court passed judgment, that by the statute of praemunire his property was forfeited, and that he might be taken before the king in council. England, by sacrificing a churchman who had placed himself above kings, gave a memorable example of her inflexible opposition to the encroachments of the papacy. Wolsey was confounded, and his troubled imagination conjured up nothing but perils on every side.

While More was lending himself to the condemnation of his predecessor, whose friend he

had been, another layman of still humbler origin was preparing to defend the cardinal, and by that very act to become the appointed instrument to throw down the convents in England, and to shatter the secular bonds which united this country to the Roman pontiff.

On the 1st of November, two days after Wolsey's condemnation, one of his officers, with a prayer-book in his hand, was leaning against the window in the great hall, apparently absorbed in his devotions. "Goodmorrow," said Cavendish as he passed him, on his way to the cardinal for his usual morning duties. The person thus addressed raised his head, and the gentleman-usher, seeing that his eyes were filled with tears, asked him: "Master Cromwell, is my lord in any danger?" — "I think not," replied Cromwell, "but it is hard to lose in a moment the labor of a life." In his master's fall Cromwell foreboded his own. Cavendish endeavored to console him. "God willing, this is my resolution," replied Wolsey's ambitious solicitor; "I intend this afternoon, as soon as my lord has dined, to ride to London, and

so go to court, where I will either make or mar before I come back again.” At this moment Cavendish was summoned, and he entered the cardinal’s chamber.

Cromwell, devoured by ambition, had clung to Wolsey’s robe in order to attain power; but Wolsey had fallen, and the solicitor, dragged along with him, strove to reach by other means the object of his desires. Cromwell was one of those earnest and vigorous men whom God prepares for critical times. Blessed with a solid judgment and intrepid firmness, he possessed a quality rare in every age, and particularly under Henry VIII, — fidelity in misfortune. The ability by which he was distinguished, was not at all times without reproach: success seems to have been his first thought.

After dinner Cromwell followed Wolsey into his private room: “My lord, permit me to go to London, I will endeavor to save you.” A gleam passed over the cardinal’s saddened features. — “Leave the room,” he said to his attendants. He

then had a long private conversation with Cromwell, at the end of which the latter mounted his horse and set out for the capital, riding to the assault of power with the same activity as he had marched to the attack of Rome. He did not hide from himself that it would be difficult to procure access to the king; for certain ecclesiastics, jealous of Wolsey, had spoken against his solicitor at the time of the secularization of he convents, and Henry could not endure him. But Cromwell knew that fortune favors the bold, and, carried away by his ambitious dreams, he galloped on, saying to himself: “One foot in the stirrup, and my fortune is made!” Sir Christopher Hales, a zealous Roman-catholic, entertained a sincere friendship for him; and to this friend Cromwell applied. Hales proceeded immediately to the palace (2nd November) where he found a numerous company talking about the cardinal’s ruin. “There was one of his officers,” said Hales, “who would serve your majesty well.” — “Who is he?” asked Henry. — “Cromwell.” — “Do not speak to me of that man, I hate him,” replied the king angrily; and upon that all the courtiers chimed in with his majesty’s

opinion. This opening was not very encouraging; but Lord Russell, earl of Bedford, advancing to the midst of the group around the king, said boldly: “Permit me, Sir, to defend a man to whom I am indebted for my life. When you sent me privately into Italy, your majesty’s enemies, having discovered me at Bologna, would have put me to death, had not Thomas Cromwell saved me. Sir, since you have now to do with the pope, there is no man (I think) in all England who will be fitter for your purpose.” — “Indeed!” said the king; and after a little reflection, he said to Hales: “Very well then, let your client meet me in Whitehall gardens.” The courtiers and the priests withdrew in great discomfiture.

The interview took place the same day at the appointed spot. “Sir,” said Cromwell to his majesty, “the pope refuses your divorce.....But why do you ask his consent? Every Englishman is master in his own house, and why should not you be so in England? Ought a foreign prelate to share your power with you? It is true, the bishops make oath to your majesty, but they make another to the

pope immediately after, which absolves them from the former. Sir, you are but half a king, and we are but half your subjects. This kingdom is a two-headed monster. Will you bear with such an anomaly any longer? What! are you not living in an age when Frederick the Wise and other German princes have thrown off the yoke of Rome? Do likewise; become once more a king; govern your kingdom in concert with your lords and commons. Henceforward let Englishmen alone have any thing to say in England; let not your subjects' money be cast any more into the yawning gulf of the Tiber; instead of imposing new taxes on the nation, convert to the general good those treasures which have hitherto only served to fatten proud priests and lazy friars. Now is the moment for action. Rely upon your parliament; proclaim yourself the head of the church in England. Then shall you see an increase of glory to your name, and of prosperity to your people." Never before had such language been addressed to a king of England. It was not only on account of the divorce that it was necessary to break with Rome; it was, in Cromwell's view, on account of the independence, glory, and

prosperity of the monarchy. These considerations appeared more important to Henry then those which had hitherto been laid before him; none of the kings of England had been so well placed as he was to understand them. When a Tudor had succeeded to the Saxon, Norman, and Plantagenet kings, a man of the free race of the Celts had taken on the throne of England the place of princes submissive to the Roman pontiffs.

The ancient British church, independent of the papacy, was about to rise again with this new dynasty, and the Celtic race, after eleven centuries of humiliation, to recover its ancient heritage. Undoubtedly, Henry had no recollections of this kind; but he worked in conformity with the peculiar character of his race, without being aware of the instinct which compelled him to act. He felt that a sovereign who submits to the pope, becomes, like King John, his vassal; and now, after having been the second in his realm, he desired to be the first. The king reflected on what Cromwell had said; astonished and surprised, he sought to understand the new position which his bold adviser

had made for him. “Your proposal pleases me much,” he said; “but can you prove what you assert?” “Certainly,” replied this able politician; “I have with me a copy of the oath the bishops make to the Roman pontiff.” With these words he drew a paper from his pocket, and placed the oath before the king’s eyes. Henry, jealous of his authority even to despotism, was filled with indignation, and felt the necessity of bringing down that foreign authority which dared dispute the power with him, even in his own kingdom. He drew off his ring and gave it to Cromwell, declaring that he took him into his service, and soon after made him a member of his privy council. England, we may say, was now virtually emancipated from the papacy.

Cromwell had laid the first foundations of his greatness. He had remarked the path his master had followed, and which had led to his ruin, — complicity with the pope; and he hoped to succeed by following the contrary course, namely, by opposing the papacy. He had the king’s support, but he wanted more. Possessing a clear and easy style of eloquence, he saw what influence a seat in

the great council of the nation would give him. It was somewhat late, for the session began on the next day (3rd November), but to Cromwell nothing was impossible. The son of his friend, Sir Thomas Rush, had been returned to parliament; but the young member resigned his seat, and Cromwell was elected in his place.

Parliament had not met for seven years, the kingdom having been governed by a prince of the Roman church. The reformation of the church, whose regenerating influence began to be felt already, was about to restore to the nation those ancient liberties of which a cardinal had robbed it; and Henry being on the point of taking very important resolutions, felt the necessity of drawing nearer to his people. Everything betokened that a good feeling would prevail between the parliament and the crown, and that “the priests would have a terrible fright.” While Henry was preparing to attack the Roman church in the papal supremacy, the commons were getting ready to war against the numerous abuses with which it had covered England. “Some even thought,” says Tyndale, “that

this assembly would reform the church, and that the golden age would come again.” But it was not from acts of parliament that the Reformation was destined to proceed, but solely from the word of God.

And yet the commons, without touching upon doctrine, were going to do their duty manfully in things within their province, and the parliament of 1529 may be regarded (Lord Herbert of Cherbury observes) as the first Protestant parliament of England. “The bishops require excessive fines for the probates of wills,” said Tyndale’s old friend, Sir Henry Guilford.

“As testamentary executor to Sir William Compton I had to pay a thousand marks sterling.” — “The spiritual men,” said another member, “would rather see the poor orphans die of hunger than give them the lean cow, the only thing their father left them.” — “Priests,” said another, “have farms, tanneries, and warehouses, all over the country. In short, the clerks take everything from their flocks, and not only give them nothing, but

even deny them the word of God." The clergy were in utter consternation. The power of the nation seemed to awaken in this parliament for the sole purpose of attacking the power of the priest. It was important to ward off these blows. The convocation of the province of Canterbury, assembling at Westminster on the 5th of November, thought it their duty, in self-defense, to reform the most crying abuses. It was therefore decreed, on the 12th of November, that the priests should no longer keep shops or taverns, play at dice or other forbidden games, pass the night in suspected places, be present at disreputable shows, go about with sporting dogs, or with hawks, falcons, or other birds of prey, on their first; or, finally, hold suspicious intercourse with women. Penalties were denounced against these various disorders; they were doubled in case of adultery; and still further increased in the case of more abominable impurities. Such were the laws rendered necessary by the manners of the clergy.

These measures did not satisfy the commons. Three bills were introduced having reference to the

fees on the probate of wills, mortuaries, pluralities, non-residence, and the exercise of secular professions. “The destruction of the church is aimed at,” exclaimed Bishop Fisher, when these bills were carried to the lords, “and if the church falls, the glory of the kingdom will perish. Lutheranism is making great progress amongst us, and the savage cry that has already echoed in Bohemia, Down with the church, is now uttered by the commons.....How does that come about? Solely from want of faith. — My lords, save your country! save the church!” Sir Thomas Audley, the speaker, with a deputation of thirty members, immediately went to Whitehall. “Sir,” they said to the king, “we are accused of being without faith, and of being almost as bad as the Turks. We demand an apology for such offensive language.” Fisher pretended that he only meant to speak of the Bohemians; and the commons, by no means satisfied, zealously went on with their reforms.

These the king was resolved to concede; but he determined to take advantage of them to present a bill making over to him all the money borrowed of

his subjects. John Petit, one of the members for the city, boldly opposed this demand. “I do not know other persons’ affairs,” he said, “and I cannot give what does not belong to me. But as regards myself personally, I give without reserve all that I have lent the king.” The royal bill passed, and the satisfied Henry gave his consent to the bills of the commons. Every dispensation coming from Rome, which might be contrary to the statutes, was strictly forbidden. The bishops exclaimed that the commons were becoming schismatical; disturbances were excited by certain priests; but the clerical agitators were punished, and the people, when they heard of it, were delighted beyond measure.

Chapter 15

The last Hour

The moment when Henry aimed his first blows at Rome was also that in which he began to shed the blood of the disciples of the gospel. Although ready to throw off the authority of the pope, he would not recognize the authority of Christ: obedience to the Scriptures is, however, the very soul of the Reformation.

The king’s contest with Rome had filled the friends of Scripture with hope. The artisans and tradesmen, particularly those who lived near the sea, were almost wholly won over to the gospel. “The king is one of us,” they used to boast; “he wishes his subjects to read the New Testament.

Our faith, which is the true one, will circulate through the kingdom, and by Michaelmas next those who believe as we do will be more numerous than those of a contrary opinion. We are ready, if needs be, to die in the struggle.” This was indeed to

be the fate of many.

Language such as this aroused the clergy: “The last hour has come,” said Stokesley, who had been raised to the see of London after Tonstall’s translation to Durham; “if we would not have Luther’s heresy pervade the whole of England, we must hasten to throw it in the sea.” Henry was fully disposed to do so; but as he was not on very good terms with the clergy, a man was wanted to serve as mediator between him and the bishops. He was soon found.

Sir Thomas More’s noble understanding was then passing from ascetic practices to fanaticism, and the humanist turning into an inquisitor. In his opinion, the burning of heretics was just and necessary. He has even been reproached with binding evangelical Christians to a tree in his garden, which he called “the tree of truth,” and of having flogged them with his own hand. More has declared that he never gave “stripe nor stroke, nor so much as a fillip on the forehead,” to any of his religious adversaries; and we willingly credit his

denial. All must be pleased to think that if the author of the Utopia was a severe judge, the hand which held one of the most famous pens of the sixteenth century never discharged the duties of an executioner.

The bishops led the attack. “We must clear the Lord’s field of the thorns which choke it,” said the archbishop of Canterbury to Convocation on the 29th of November 1529; immediately after which the bishop of Bath read to his colleagues the list of books that he desired to have condemned.

There were a number of works by Tyndale, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingle, Oecolampadius, Pomeranus, Brentius, Bucer, Jonas, Francis Lambert, Fryth, and Fish. The Bible in particular was set down. “It is impossible to translate the Scripture into English,” said one of the prelates.

— “It is not lawful for the laity to read it in their mother tongue,” said another. — “If you tolerate the Bible,” added a third, “you will make us all heretics.” — “By circulating the Scriptures,”

exclaimed several, “you will raise up the nation against the king.” Sir T. More laid the bishops’ petition before the king, and some time after, Henry gave orders by proclamation that “no one should preach, or write any book, or keep any school without his bishop’s license; — that no one should keep any heretical book in his house; — that the bishops should detain the offenders in prison at their discretion, and then proceed to the execution of the guilty; — and, finally, that the chancellor, the justices of the peace, and other magistrates, should aid and assist the bishops.” Such was the cruel proclamation of Henry VIII, “the father of the English Reformation.

The clergy were not yet satisfied. The blind and octo-genarian bishop of Norwich, being more ardent than the youngest of his priests, recommenced his complaints. “My diocese is accumbered with such as read the Bible,” said he to the archbishop of Canterbury, “and there is not a clerk from Cambridge but savoureth of the frying-pan. If this continues any time, they will undo us all. We must have greater authority to punish them

than we have.” Consequently, on the 24th of May 1530, More, Warham, Tonstall, and Gardiner having been admitted into St. Edward’s chamber at Westminster, to make a report to the king concerning heresy, they proposed forbidding, in the most positive manner, the New Testament and certain other books in which the following doctrines were taught: “That Christ has shed his blood for our iniquities, as a sacrifice to the Father. — Faith only doth justify us. — Faith without good works is no little or weak faith, it is no faith. — Laboring in good works to come to heaven, thou dost shame Christ’s blood.” While nearly every one in the audience-chamber supported the prayer of the petition, there were three or four doctors who kept silence. At last one of them, it was Latimer, opposed the proposition. Bilney’s friend was more decided than ever to listen to no other voice than God’s. “Christ’s sheep hear no man’s voice but Christ’s,” he answered Dr. Redman, who had called upon him to submit to the church: “trouble me no more from the talking with the Lord my God.” The church, in Latimer’s opinion, presumed to set up its own voice in the place of

Christ’s, and the Reformation did the contrary; this was his abridgment of the controversy.

Being called upon to preach during Christmas tide, he had censured his hearers because they celebrated that festival by playing at cards, like mere worldlings, and then proceeded to lay before their eyes Christ’s cards, that is to say, his laws. Being placed on the Cambridge commission to examine into the question of the king’s marriage, he had conciliated the esteem of Henry’s deputy, Doctor Butts, the court physician who had presented him to his master, by whose orders he preached at Windsor.

Henry felt disposed at first to yield something to Latimer. “Many of my subjects,” said he to the prelates assembled in St. Edward’s hall, “think that it is my duty to cause the Scriptures to be translated and given to the people.” The discussion immediately began between the two parties; and Latimer concluded by asking “that the Bible should be permitted to circulate freely in English.”

— “But the most part overcame the better,” he tells us.” Henry declared that the teaching of the priests was sufficient for the people, and was content to add, “that he would give the Bible to his subjects when they renounced the arrogant pretension of interpreting it according to their own fancies.”

— “Shun these books,” cried the priests from the pulpit, “detest them, keep them not in your hands, deliver them up to your superiors.” Or if you do not, your prince, who has received from God the sword of justice, will use it to punish you.” Rome had every reason to be satisfied with Henry VIII.

Tonstall, who still kept under lock and key the Testaments purchased at Antwerp through Packington’s assistance, had them carried to St. Paul’s churchyard, where they were publicly burnt. The spectators retired shaking the head, and saying: “The teaching of the priests and of Scriptures must be in contradiction to each other, since the priests destroy them.” Latimer did more:

“You have promised us the word of God,” he wrote courageously to the king; “perform your promise now rather than tomorrow! The day is at hand when you shall give an account of your office, and of the blood that hath been shed with your sword.” Latimer well knew that by such language he hazarded his life; but that he was ready to sacrifice, as he tells us himself. Persecution soon came. Just as the sun appeared to be rising on the Reformation, the storm burst forth. “There was not a stone the bishops left unremoved,” says the chronicler, “any corner unsearched, for the diligent execution of the king’s proclamation; whereupon ensued a grievous persecution and slaughter of the faithful.” Thomas Hitton, a poor and pious minister of Kent, used to go frequently to Antwerp to purchase New Testaments. As he was returning from one of these expeditions, in 1529, the bishop of Rochester caused him to be arrested at Gravesend, and put to the cruelest tortures, to make him deny his faith. But the martyr repeated with holy enthusiasm: “Salvation cometh by faith and not by works, and Christ giveth it to whomsoever he willeth.” On the 20th of February 1530, he was

tied to the stake and there burnt to death. Scarcely were Hitton's sufferings ended for bringing the Scriptures into England, when a vessel laden with New Testaments arrived at Colchester.

The indefatigable Bayfield, who accompanied these books, sold them in London, went back to the continent, and returned to England in November; but this time the Scriptures fell into the hands of Sir Thomas More.

Bayfield, undismayed, again visited the Low Countries, and soon reappeared, bringing with him the New Testament and the works of almost all the Reformers. "How cometh it that there are so many New Testaments from abroad?" asked Tonstall of Packington; "you promised me that you would buy them all." — "They have printed more since," replied the wily merchant; "and it will never be better so long as they have letters and stamps [type and dies.] My lord, you had better buy the stamps too, and so you shall be sure." Instead of the stamps, the priests sought after Bayfield. The bishop of London could not endure this godly man.

Having one day asked Bainham (who afterwards suffered martyrdom) whether he knew a single individual who, since the days of the apostles, had lived according to the true faith in Jesus Christ, the latter answered: “Yes, I know Bayfield.” Being tracked from place to place, he fled from the house of his pious hostess, and hid himself at his binder’s, where he was discovered, and thrown into the Lollard’s tower. As he entered the prison Bayfield noticed a priest named Patmore, pale, weakened by suffering, and ready to sink under the ill treatment of his jailors. Patmore, won over by Bayfield’s piety, soon opened his heart to him. When rector of Haddam, he had found the truth in Wickliffe’s writings. “They have burnt his bones,” he said, “but from his ashes shall burst forth a well-spring of life.” Delighting in good works, he used to fill his granaries with wheat, and when the markets were high, he would send his corn to them in such abundance as to bring down the prices. “It is contrary to the law of God to burn heretics,” he said; and growing bolder, he added: “I care no more for the pope’s curse than for a bundle of hay.” His curate, Simon Smith, unwilling to imitate

the disorderly lives of the priests, and finding Joan Bennore, the rector's servant, to be a discreet and pious person, desired to marry her. "God," said Patmore, "has declared marriage lawful for all men; and accordingly it is permitted to the priests in foreign parts." The rector alluded to Wittenberg, where he had visited Luther. After his marriage Smith and his wife quitted England for a season, and Patmore accompanied them as far as London.

The news of this marriage of a priest — a fact without precedent in England — made Stokesley throw Patmore into the Lollards' tower, and although he was ill, neither fire, light, nor any other comfort was granted him. The bishop and his vicar-general visited him alone in his prison, and endeavored by their threats to make him deny his faith.

It was during these circumstances that Bayfield was thrust into the tower.

By his Christian words he revived Patmore's languishing faith, and the latter complained to the

king that the bishop of London prevented his feeding the flock which God had committed to his charge. Stokesley, comprehending whence Patmore derived his new courage, removed Bayfield from the Lollards' tower, and shut him up in the coal-house, where he was fastened upright to the wall by the neck, middle, and legs.

The unfortunate gospeller of Bury passed his time in continual darkness, never lying down, never seated, but nailed as it were to the wall, and never hearing the sound of human voice. We shall see him hereafter issuing from this horrible prison to die on the scaffold.

Patmore was not the only one in his family who suffered persecution; he had in London a brother named Thomas, a friend of John Tyndale, the younger brother of the celebrated reformer. Thomas had said that the truth of Scripture was at last reappearing in the world, after being hidden for many ages; and John Tyndale had sent five marks to his brother William, and received letters from him. Moreover, the two friends (who were both

tradesmen) had distributed a great number of Testaments and other works. But their faith was not deeply rooted, and it was more out of sympathy for their brothers that they had believed; accordingly, Stokesley, so completely entangled them, that they confessed their “crime.” More, delighted at the opportunity which offered to cover the name of Tyndale with shame, was not satisfied with condemning the two friends to pay a fine of L100 each; he invented a new disgrace. He sewed on their dress some sheets of the New Testament which they had circulated, placed the two penitents on horseback with their faces towards the tail, and thus paraded them through the streets of London, exposed to the jeers and laughter of the populace. In this, More succeeded better than in his refutation of the reformer’s writings.

From that time the persecution became more violent. Husbandmen, artists, tradespeople, and even noblemen, felt the cruel fangs of the clergy and of Sir Thomas More. They sent to jail a pious musician who used to wander from town to town, singing to his harp a hymn in commendation of

Martin Luther and of the Reformation. A painter, named Edward Freese, a young man of ready wit, having been engaged to paint some hangings in a house, wrote on the borders certain sentences of the Scripture. For this he was seized and taken to the bishop of London's palace at Fulham, and there imprisoned, where his chief nourishment was bread made out of sawdust. His poor wife, who was pregnant, went down to Fulham to see her husband; but the bishop's porter had orders to admit no one, and the brute gave her so violent a kick, as to kill her unborn infant, and cause the mother's death not long after. The unhappy Freese was removed to the Lollards' tower, where he was put into chains, his hands only being left free. With these he took a piece of coal, and wrote some pious sentences on the wall; upon this he was manacled, but his wrists were so severely pinched, that the flesh grew up higher than the irons. His intellect became disturbed; his hair in wild disorder soon covered his face, through which his eyes glared fierce and haggard. The want of proper food, bad treatment, his wife's death, and his lengthened imprisonment, entirely undermined his reason; when brought to

St. Paul’s, he was kept three days without meat; and when he appeared before the consistory, the poor prisoner, silent and scarce able to stand, looked around and gazed upon the spectators “like a wild man.” The examination was begun, but to every question put to him, Freese made the same answer: “My Lord is a good man.” They could get nothing from him but this affecting reply. Alas! the light shone no more upon his understanding, but the love of Jesus was still in his heart. He was sent back to Bearsy Abbey, where he did not remain long; but he never entirely recovered his reason. Henry VIII and his priests inflicted punishments still more cruel even than the stake.

Terror began to spread far and wide. The most active evangelists had been compelled to flee to a foreign land; some of the most godly were in prison; and among those in high station there were many, and perhaps Latimer was one, who seemed willing to shelter themselves under an exaggerated moderation. But just as the persecution in London had succeeded in silencing the most timid, other voices more courageous were raised in the

provinces. The city of Exeter was at that time in great agitation; placards had been discovered on the gates of the cathedral containing some of the principles “of the new doctrine.” While the mayor and his officers were seeking after the author of these “blasphemies,” the bishop and all his doctors, “as hot as coals,” says the chronicler, were preaching in the most fiery style. On the following Sunday, during the sermon, two men who had been the busiest of all the city in searching for the author of the bills were struck by the appearance of a person seated near them. “Surely this fellow is the heretic,” they said. But their neighbors’s devotion, for he did not take his eyes off his book, quite put them out; they did not perceive that he was reading the New Testament in Latin.

This man, Thomas Bennet, was indeed the offender. Being converted at Cambridge by the preaching of Bilney, whose friend he was, he had gone to Torrington for fear of the persecution, and thence to Exeter, and after marrying to avoid unchastity (as he says), he became schoolmaster.

Quiet, humble, courteous to everybody, and somewhat timid, Bennet had lived six years in that city without his faith being discovered. At last his conscience being awakened, he resolved to fasten by night to the cathedral gates certain evangelical placards. “Everybody will read the writing,” he thought, and “nobody will know the writer.” He did as he had proposed.

Not long after the Sunday on which he had been so nearly discovered, the priests prepared a great pageant, and made ready to pronounce against the unknown heretic the great curse “with book, bell, and candle.” The cathedral was crowded, and Bennet himself was among the spectators. In the middle stood a great cross on which lighted tapers were placed, and around it were gathered all the Franciscans and Dominicans of Exeter. One of the priests having delivered a sermon on the words: There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel, the bishop drew near the cross and pronounced the curse against the offender. He took one of the tapers and said: “Let the soul of the unknown heretic, if he be dead

already, be quenched this night in the pains of hell-fire, as this candle is now quenched and put out;" and with that he put out the candle. Then taking off a second, he continued: "and let us pray to God, if he be yet alive, that his eyes by put out, and that all the senses of his body may fail him, as now the light of this candle is gone;" extinguishing the second candle. After this, one of the priests went up to the cross and struck it, when the noise it made in falling re-echoing along the roof so frightened the spectators that they uttered a shriek of terror, and held up their hands to heaven, as if to pray that the divine curse might not fall on them. Bennet, a witness of this comedy, could not forbear smiling. "What are you laughing at?" asked his neighbors; "here is the heretic, here is the heretic, hold him fast." This created great confusion among the crowd, some shouting, some clapping their hands, others running to and fro; but, owing to the tumult, Bennet succeeded in making his escape.

The excommunication did but increase his desire to attack the Romish superstitions; and accordingly, before five o'clock the next morning

(it was in the month of October 1530), his servant-boy fastened up again by his orders on the cathedral gates some placards similar to those which had been torn down. It chanced that a citizen going to early mass saw the boy, and running up to him, caught hold of him and pulled down the papers; and then dragging the boy with one hand, and with the placards in the other, he went to the mayor of the city. Bennet's servant was recognized; his master was immediately arrested, and put in the stocks, "with as much favor as a dog would find," says Foxe.

Exeter seemed determined to make itself the champion of sacerdotalism in England. For a whole week, not only the bishop, but all the priests and friars of the city, visited Bennet night and day. But they tried in vain to prove to him that the Roman church was the true one. "God has given me grace to be of a better church," he said. — "Do you not know that ours is built upon St. Peter?" — "The church that is built upon a man," he replied, "is the devil's church and not God's." His cell was continually thronged with visitors; and, in default

of arguments, the most ignorant of the friars called the prisoner a heretic, and spat upon him. At length they brought to him a learned doctor of theology, who, they supposed, would infallibly convert him. “Our ways are God’s ways,” said the doctor gravely. But he soon discovered that theologians can do nothing against the word of the Lord. “He only is my way,” replied Bennet, “who saith, I am the way, the truth, and the live. In his way will I walk; — his truth will I embrace; — his everlasting life will I seek.” He was condemned to be burnt; and More having transmitted the order de comburendo with the utmost speed, the priests placed Bennet in the hands of the sheriff on the 15th of January 1531, by whom he was conducted to the Liverydole, a field without the city, where the stake was prepared.

When Bennet arrived at the place of execution, he briefly exhorted the people, but with such unction, that the sheriff’s clerk, as he heard him, exclaimed: “Truly this is a servant of God.” Two persons, however, seemed unmoved: they were Thomas Carew, and John Barnehouse, both

holding the station of gentlemen. Going up to the martyr, they exclaimed in a threatening voice: “Say, Precor sanctam Mariam et omnes sanctos Dei.” — “I know no other advocate but Jesus Christ,” replied Bennet.

Barnehouse was so enraged at these words, that he took a furze-bush upon a pike, and setting it on fire, thrust into the martyr’s face, exclaiming: “Accursed heretic, pray to our Lady, or I will make you do it.” — “Alas!” replied Bennet patiently, “trouble me not;” and then holding up his hands, he prayed: “Father, forgive them!” The executioners immediately set fire to the wood, and the most fanatical of the spectators, both men and women, seized with an indescribable fury, tore up stakes and bushes, and whatever they could lay their hands on, and flung them all into the flames to increase their violence. Bennet, lifting up his eyes to heaven, exclaimed: “Lord, receive my spirit.” Thus died, in the sixteenth century, the disciples of the Reformation sacrificed by Henry VIII.

The priests, thanks to the king’s sword, began

to count on victory; yet schoolmasters, musicians, tradesmen, and even ecclesiastics, were not enough for them. They wanted nobler victims, and these were to be looked for in London. More himself, accompanied by the lieutenant of the Tower, searched many of the suspected houses. Few citizens were more esteemed in London than John Petit, the same who, in the house of commons, had so nobly resisted the king's demand about the loan. Petit was learned in history and in Latin literature: he spoke with eloquence, and for twenty years had worthily represented the city. Whenever any important affair was debated in parliament, the king feeling uneasy, was in the habit of inquiring, which side he took? This political independence, very rare in Henry's parliaments, gave umbrage to the prince and his ministers. Petit, the friend of Bilney, Fryth, and Tyndale, had been one of the first in England to taste the sweetness of God's word, and had immediately manifested that beautiful characteristic by which the gospel faith makes itself known, namely, charity. He abounded in almsgiving, supported a great number of poor preachers of the gospel in his own country and

beyond the seas; and whenever he noted down these generous aids in his books, he wrote merely the words: “Lent unto Christ.” He moreover forbade his testamentary executors to call in these debts.

Petit was tranquilly enjoying the sweets of domestic life in his modest home in the society of his wife and two daughters, Blanche and Audrey, when he received an unexpected visit. One day, as he was praying in his closet, a loud knock was heard at the street door. His wife ran to open it, but seeing Lord-chancellor More, she returned hurriedly to her husband, and told him that the lord-chancellor wanted him. More, who followed her, entered the closet, and with inquisitive eye ran over the shelves of the library, but could find nothing suspicious. Presently he made as if he would retire, and Petit accompanied him. The chancellor stopped at the door and said to him: “You assert that you have none of these new books?” — “You have seen my library,” replied Petit. — “I am informed, however,” replied More, “that you not only read them, but pay for the

printing.” And then he added in a severe tone: “Follow the lieutenant.” In spite of the tears of his wife and daughters this independent member of parliament was conducted to the Tower, and shut up in a damp dungeon, where he had nothing but straw to lie upon. His wife went thither each day in vain, asking with tears permission to see him, or at least to send him a bed; the jailers refused her everything; and it was only when Petit fell dangerously ill that the latter favor was granted him. This took place in 1530, sentence was passed in 1531; we shall see Petit again in his prison. He left it, indeed, but only to sink under the cruel treatment he had there experienced.

Thus were the witnesses to the truth struck down by the priests, by Sir Thomas More, and by Henry VIII. A new victim was to be the cause of many tears. A meek and humble man, one dear to all the friends of the gospel, and whom we may regard as the spiritual father of the Reformation in England, was on the point of mounting the burning pile raised by his persecutors. Some time prior to Petit’s appearance before his judges, which took

place in 1531, an unusual noise was heard in the cell above him; it was Thomas Bilney, whom they were conducting to the Tower.

We left him at the end of 1528 after his fall. Bilney had returned to Cambridge tormented by remorse; his friends in vain crowded round him by night and by day; they could not console him, and even the Scriptures seemed to utter no voice but that of condemnation. Fear made him tremble constantly, and he could scarcely eat or drink. At length a heavenly and unexpected light dawned in the heart of the fallen disciple; a witness whom he had vexed — the Holy Spirit — spoke once more in his heart. Bilney fell at the foot of the cross, shedding floods of tears, and there he found peace. But the more God comforted him, the greater seemed his crime. One only thought possessed him, that of giving his life for the truth. He had shrunk from before the burning pile; its flames must now consume him. Neither the weakness of his body, which his long anguish had much increased, nor the cruelty of his enemies, nor his natural timidity, nothing could stop him: he strove for the martyr’s

crown. At ten o’clock one night, when every person in Trinity Hall was retiring to rest, Bilney called his friends round him, reminded them of his fall, and added: “You shall see me no more.....Do not stay me: my decision is formed, and I shall carry it out. My face is set to go to Jerusalem.” Bilney repeated the words used by the Evangelist, when he describes Jesus going up to the city where he was put to death. Having shaken hands with his brethren, this venerable man, the foremost of the evangelists of England in order of time, left Cambridge under cover of the night, and proceeded to Norfolk, to confirm in the faith those who had believed, and to invite the ignorant multitude to the Savior. We shall not follow him in this last and solemn ministry; these facts and others of the same kind belong to a later date.

Before the year 1531 closed in, Bilney, Bainham, Bayfield, Tewkesbury, and many others, struck by Henry’s sword, sealed by their blood the testimony rendered by them to the perfect grace of Christ.

Chapter 16

Wolsey’s Terror

While many pious Christians were languishing in the prisons of England, the great antagonist of the Reformation was disappearing from the stage of this world. We must return to Wolsey, who was still detained at Esher.

The cardinal, fallen from the summit of honors, was seized with those panic terrors usually felt after their disgrace by those who have made a whole nation tremble, and he fancied he saw an assassin lay hid behind every door. “This very night,” he wrote to Cromwell on one occasion, “I was as one that should have died. If I might, I would not fail to come on foot to you, rather than this my speaking with you shall be put over and delayed. If the displeasure of my lady Anne be somewhat assuaged, as I pray God the same may be, then I pray you exert all possible means of attaining her favor.” In consequence of this, Cromwell hastened down to Esher two or three

days after taking his seat in Parliament, and Wolsey, all trembling, recounted his fears to him. “Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lady Anne perhaps, desire my death. Did not Thomas A Becket, an archbishop like me, stain the altar with his blood?”.....Cromwell reassured him, and, moved by the old man’s fears, asked and obtained of Henry an order of protection.

Wolsey’s enemies most certainly desired his death; but it was from the justice of the three estates, and not by the assassin’s dagger, that they sought it. The house of peers authorized Sir Thomas More, the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, and fourteen other lords, to impeach the cardinallegate of high treason. They forgot nothing: that haughty formula, Ego et rex meus, I and my king, which Wolsey had often employed; his infringement of the laws of the kingdom; his monopolizing the church revenues; the crying injustice of which he had been guilty, — as for instance, in the case of Sir John Stanley, who was sent to prison until he gave up a lease to the son of a woman who had borne the cardinal two children;

many families ruined to satisfy his avarice; treaties concluded with foreign powers without the king's order; his exactions, which had impoverished England; and the foul diseases and infectious breath with which he had polluted his majesty's presence. These were some of the forty-four grievances presented by the peers to the king, and which Henry sent down to the lower house for their consideration.

It was at first thought that nobody in the commons would undertake Wolsey's defense, and it was generally expected that he would be given up to the vengeance of the law (as the bill of impeachment prayed), or in other words, to the axe of the executioner. But one man stood up, and prepared, though alone, to defend the cardinal: this was Cromwell. The members asked of each other, who the unknown man was; he soon made himself known. His knowledge of facts, his familiarity with the laws, the force of his eloquence, and the moderation of his language, surprised the house.

Wolsey's adversaries had hardly aimed a blow,

before the defender had already parried it. If any charge was brought forward to which he could not reply, he proposed an adjournment until the next day, departed for Esher at the end of the sitting, conferred with Wolsey, returned during the night, and next morning reappeared in the commons with fresh arms. Cromwell carried the house with him; the impeachment failed, and Wolsey's defender took his station among the statesmen of England. This victory, one of the greatest triumphs of parliamentary eloquence at that period, satisfied both the ambition and the gratitude of Cromwell. He was now firmly fixed in the king's favor, esteemed by the commons, and admired by the people: circumstances which furnished him with the means of bringing to a favorable conclusion the emancipation of the church of England.

The ministry, composed of Wolsey's enemies, was annoyed at the decision of the lower house, and appointed a commission to examine into the matter. When the cardinal was informed of this he fell into new terrors.

He lost all appetite and desire of sleep, and a fever attacked him at Christmas. “The cardinal will be dead in four days,” said his physician to Henry, “if he receives no comfort shortly from you and lady Anne.” — “I would not lose him for twenty thousand pounds,” exclaimed the king. He desired to preserve Wolsey in case his old minister’s consummate ability should become necessary, which was by no means unlikely. Henry gave the doctor his portrait in a ring, and Anne, at the king’s desire, added the tablet of gold that hung at her girdle. The delighted cardinal placed the presents on his bed, and as he gazed on them he felt his strength return. He was removed from his miserable dwelling at Esher to the royal palace at Richmond, and before long he was able to go into the park, where every night he read his breviary.

Ambition and hope returned with life. If the king desired to destroy the papal power in England, could not the proud cardinal preserve it? Might not Thomas Wolsey do under Henry VIII what Thomas A Becket had done under Henry II. His see of York, the ignorance of the priests, the superstition

of the people, the discontent of the great, — all would be of service to him; and indeed, six years later, 40,000 men were under arms in a moment in Yorkshire to defend the cause of Rome. Wolsey, strong in England by the support of the nation (such at least was his opinion), aided without by the pope and the continental powers, might give the law to Henry, and crush the Reformation.

The king having permitted him to go to York, Wolsey prayed for an increase to his archiepiscopal revenues, which amounted, however, to four thousand pounds sterling. Henry granted him a thousand marks, and the cardinal, shortly before Easter 1530, departed with a train of 160 persons. He thought it was the beginning of his triumph.

Wolsey took up his abode at Cawood Castle, Yorkshire, one of his archiepiscopal residences, and strove to win the affections of the people.

This prelate, once “the haughtiest of men,” says George Cavendish, the man who knew him and served him best, became quite a pattern of

affability. He kept an open table, distributed bounteous alms at his gate, said mass in the village churches, went and dined with the neighboring gentry, gave splendid entertainments, and wrote to several princes imploring their help. We are assured that he even requested the pope to excommunicate Henry VIII. All being thus prepared, he thought he might make his solemn entry into York, preparatory to his enthronization, which was fixed for Monday the 5th of November.

Every movement of his was known at court; every action was canvassed, and its importance exaggerated. “We thought we had brought him down,” some said, “and here he is rising up again.” Henry himself was alarmed.

“The cardinal, by his detestable intrigues,” he said, “is conspiring against my crown, and plotting both at home and abroad;” the king even added, where and how. Wolsey’s destruction was resolved upon.

The morning after All Saints day (Friday, 2nd

November) the earl of Northumberland, attended by a numerous escort, arrived at Cawood, where the cardinal was still residing. He was the same Percy whose affection for Anne Boleyn had been thwarted by Wolsey; and there may have been design in Henry's choice. The cardinal eagerly moved forward to meet this unexpected guest, and impatient to know the object of his mission, took him into his bed-chamber, under the pretense of changing his travelling dress. They both remained some time standing at a window without uttering a word; the earl looked confused and agitated, while Wolsey endeavored to repress his emotion. But at last, with a strong effort, Northumberland laid his hand upon the arm of his former master, and with a low voice said: "My lord, I arrest you for high treason." The cardinal remained speechless, as if stunned. He was kept a prisoner in his room.

It is doubtful whether Wolsey was guilty of the crime with which he was charged. We may believe that he entertained the idea of some day bringing about the triumph of the popedom in England, even should it cause Henry's ruin; but perhaps this was

all. But, an idea is not a conspiracy, although it may rapidly expand into one.

More than three thousand persons (attracted not by hatred, like the Londoners, when Wolsey departed from Whitehall but by enthusiasm), collected the next day before the castle to salute the cardinal. “God save your grace,” they shouted on every side, and a numerous crowd escorted him at night; some carried torches in their hands, and all made the air reecho with their cries. The unhappy prelate was conducted to Sheffield Park, the residence of the earl of Shrewsbury. Some days after his arrival, the faithful Cavendish ran to him, exclaiming: “Good news, my lord! Sir William Kingston and twentyfour of the guard are come to escort you to his majesty.” — “Kingston!” exclaimed the cardinal, turning pale, “Kingston!” and then slapping his hand on his thigh, he heaved a deep sigh. This news had crushed his mind. One day a fortune-teller, whom he consulted, had told him: You shall have your end at Kingston; and from that time the cardinal had carefully avoided the town of Kingston-on- Thames. But now he

thought he understood the prophecy.....Kingston, constable of the Tower, was about to cause his death. They left Sheffield Park; but fright had given Wolsey his death-blow. Several times he was near falling from his mule, and on the third day, when they reached Leicester abbey, he said as he entered: “Father abbot, I am come hither to leave my bones among you;” and immediately took to his bed. This was on Saturday the 26th of November.

On Monday morning, tormented by gloomy forebodings, Wolsey asked what was the time of day. “Past eight o’clock,” replied Cavendish. — “That cannot be,” said the cardinal, “eight o’clock.....No! for by eight o’clock you shall lose your master.” At six on Tuesday, Kingston having come to inquire about his health, Wolsey said to him: “I shall not live long.” — “Be of good cheer,” rejoined the governor of the Tower. — “Alas, Master Kingston,” exclaimed the cardinal, “if I had served God as diligently as I have served the king, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs!” and then he added with downcast head:

“This is my just reward.” What a judgment upon his own life!

On the very threshold of eternity (for he had but a few minutes more to live) the cardinal summoned up all his hatred against the Reformation, and made a last effort. The persecution was too slow to please him: “Master Kingston,” he said, “attend to my last request: tell the king that I conjure him in God’s name to destroy this new pernicious sect of Lutherans.” And then, with astonishing presence of mind in this his last hour, Wolsey described the misfortunes which the Hussites had, in his opinion, brought upon Bohemia; and then, coming to England, he recalled the times of Wickliffe and Sir John Oldcastle. He grew animated; his dying eyes yet shot forth fiery glances. He trembled lest Henry VIII, unfaithful to the pope, should hold out his hand to the Reformers. “Master Kingston,” said he, in conclusion, “the king should know that if he tolerates heresy, God will take away his power, and we shall then have mischief upon mischief.....barrenness, scarcity, and disorder, to

the utter destruction of this realm.” 2038 Wolsey was exhausted by the effort. After a momentary silence, he resumed with a dying voice: “Master Kingston, farewell! My time draweth on fast. Forget not what I have said and charged you withal; for when I am dead ye shall peradventure understand my words better.” It was with difficulty he uttered these words; his tongue began to falter, his eyes became fixed, his sight failed him; he breathed his last. At the same minute the clock struck eight, and the attendants standing round his bed looked at each other in affright. It was the 29th of November 1530.

Thus died the man once so much feared. Power had been his idol: to obtain it in the state, he had sacrificed the liberties of England; and to win it or to preserve it in the church, he had fought against the Reformation. If he encouraged the nobility in the luxuries and pleasures of life, it was only to render them more supple and more servile; if he supported learning, it was only that he might have a clergy fitted to keep the laity in their leadingstrings.

Ambitious, intriguing, and impure of life, he had been as zealous for the sacerdotal prerogative as the austere Becket; and by a singular contrast, a shirt of hair was found on the body of this voluptuous man.

The aim of his life had been to raise the papal power higher than it had ever been before, at the very moment when the Reformation was attempting to bring it down; and to take his seat on the pontifical throne with more than the authority of a Hildebrand. Wolsey, as pope, would have been the man of his age; and in the political world he would have done for the Roman primacy what the celebrated Loyola did for it soon after by his fanaticism. Obliged to renounce this idea, worthy only of the middle ages, he had desired at least to save the popedom in his own country; but here again he had failed. The pilot who had stood in England at the helm of the Romish church was thrown overboard, and the ship, left to itself, was about to founder. And yet, even in death, he did not lose his courage. The last throbs of his heart had

called for victims; the last words from his failing lips, the last message to his master, his last testament had been.....Persecution. This testament was to be only too faithfully executed.

The epoch of the fall and death of Cardinal Wolsey, which is the point at which we halt, was not only important, because it ended the life of a man who had presided over the destinies of England, and had endeavored to grasp the scepter of the world; but it is of especial consequence, because then three movements were accomplished, from which the great transformation of the sixteenth century was to proceed. Each of these movements has its characteristic result.

The first is represented by Cromwell. The supremacy of the pope in England was about to be wrested from him, as it was in all the reformed churches. But a step further was taken in England. That supremacy was transferred to the person of the king. Wolsey had exercised as vicar-general a power till then unknown. Unable to become pope at the Vatican, he had made himself a pope at

Whitehall. Henry had permitted his minister to raise this hierarchical throne by the side of his own. But he had soon discovered that there ought not to be two thrones in England, or at least not two kings. He had dethroned Wolsey; and resolutely seating himself in his place, he was about to assume at Whitehall that tiara which the ambitious prelate had prepared for himself. Some persons, when they saw this, exclaimed, that if the papal supremacy were abolished, that of the word of God ought alone to be substituted. And, indeed, the true Reformation is not to be found in this first movement.

The second, which was essential to the renewal of the church, was represented by Cranmer, and consisted particularly in re-establishing the authority of holy Scripture. Wolsey did not fall alone, nor did Cranmer rise alone: each of these two men carried with him the systems he represented.

The fabric of Roman traditions fell with the first; the foundations of the holy Scriptures were

laid by the second; and yet, while we render all justice to the sincerity of the Cambridge doctor, we must not be blind to his weaknesses, his subserviency, and even a certain degree of negligence, which, by allowing parasitical plants to shoot up here and there, permitted them to spread over the living rock of God's word. Not in this movement, then, was found the Reformation with all its energy and all its purity.

The third movement was represented by the martyrs. When the church takes a new life, it is fertilized by the blood of its confessors; and being continually exposed to corruption, it has constant need to be purified by suffering. Not in the palaces of Henry VIII, nor even in the councils where the question of throwing off the papal supremacy was discussed, must we look for the true children of the Reformation; we must go to the Tower of London, to the Lollards' towers of St. Paul's and of Lambeth, to the other prisons of England, to the bishops' cellars, to the fetters, the stocks, the rack, and the stake. The godly men who invoked the sole intercession of Christ Jesus, the only head of his

people, who wandered up and down, deprived of everything, gagged, scoffed at, scourged, and tortured, and who, in the midst of all their tribulations, preserved their Christian patience, and turned, like their Master, the eyes of their faith towards Jerusalem: — these were the disciples of the Reformation in England. The purest church is the church under the cross.

The father of this church in England was not Henry VIII. When the king cast into prison or gave to the flames men like Hitton, Bennet, Patmore, Petit, Bayfield, Bilney, and so many others, he was not “the father of the Reformation of England,” as some have so falsely asserted; he was its executioner.

The church of England was foredoomed to be, in its renovation, a church of martyrs; and the true father of this church is our Father which is in heaven.